

Professional Educator Program: Progress to Date
Year 1 Report
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Introduction

This study seeks to understand how the New Haven Public Schools (NHPS) is implementing a major initiative to reform human capital management, or the ways in which it attracts, develops, evaluates, and rewards its personnel. Human capital management is “the ‘people side’ of education reform,” (Strategic Management of Human Capital, 2009, p. 1). This represents a shift in focus from “curriculum and assessment to teacher and administrator recruitment, retention and compensation” (Strategic Management of Human Capital, 2009, p. 1). NHPS has received a Teacher Incentive Fund IV from the U.S. Department of Education to build its human capital system as outlined in its proposed Professional Educator Program (PEP). The theory of action underlying PEP is that aligning teacher and school leader recruitment, hiring, professional development, and evaluation to a larger, unified vision of teaching and learning will enhance student performance. New Haven is one of first urban districts to implement a coordinated approach to developing human capital.

Our study examines whether PEP has changed NHPS personnel practices, how and why such changes occurred, and the effects of these changes on educator practice and student performance. This report documents NHPS’s progress related to PEP during the 2013-14 school year.

In short, we found that the district has made notable progress in several key areas. First, NHPS has established the Talent Council to govern PEP. This body draws diverse representatives and has developed a system and process through which to work together. Second, teachers participating in PEP express a high degree of enthusiasm for this work. They report that their work through PEP is meaningful and impactful, with positive implications for their work with students in the classroom. Third, there is movement towards using PEP to provide particular support for high-needs schools. Lastly, our data suggest that PEP has drawn on educator effectiveness data and connected to teachers’ evaluation goals. We expand on these topics below.

In addition, areas for growth within PEP include articulating a unifying vision of PEP and communicating this vision within and beyond the district, increasing the involvement of and communication with principals, and broadening the focus of human capital reform to include recruitment and hiring. We discuss these issues in depth in the following pages.

Methods

Our study follows a mixed methods research design to understand educators’ views on the implementation of PEP, their experiences with PEP, and early evidence on how PEP may be shaping students’ opportunities to learn in schools. Between September 2013 and June 2014, we collected qualitative and quantitative data describing the implementation of new human capital practices (PEP) within the New Haven Public Schools.

Research Questions

We examined three research questions related to policy implementation, educator experiences and policy outcomes:

PEP Policy Implementation

1. Have NHPS's human capital practices changed relative to before PEP was implemented?
 - a. To what degree does educator evaluation affect educators' practice?
 - b. To what degree is educator effectiveness considered in human capital decisions?
 - c. To what degree have human capital practices provided targeted support to high-need schools?

Educator Experiences with PEP

2. How do educators view specific changes to NHPS's human capital practices?

PEP Policy Outcomes

3. Did student performance improve after PEP implementation?

Sample

To gain an understanding of how PEP was implemented in NHPS, we selected a sample including educators at the district and school level. These included district and union leaders, principals, and teachers.

We interviewed 7 district leaders in the fall of 2013. These leaders were selected because of their key roles in human capital development within the New Haven Public Schools.

We interviewed 9 school leaders during 2013-14. These leaders were selected to include leaders of different levels (high school, elementary) and those of schools with and without teachers holding PEP roles.

We conducted three rounds of interviews with New Haven teachers participating in new leadership roles created through PEP. Between 15 and 26 individuals participated in each round. In the fall of 2013, we invited all teacher facilitators to participate in group interviews. In total, 15 of the 54 district teacher facilitators participated in the first round of interviews. In January 2014, all teacher facilitators were invited to a second round of interviews with facilitated group members. Three teacher facilitators were interviewed with their group members during the second round of interviews for a total of 20 participants. In the spring of 2014, all teacher facilitators were invited to participate in a third round of interviews with their group members. Three teacher facilitators and 23 facilitated group members participated in the third round of interviews.

The same three teacher facilitators were interviewed in rounds two and three. Their group members consisted of the same participants in rounds two and three, with an addition of two group members in round three. Four members from a different facilitated group participated in round three interviews (see Table 1 for interview sample by phase of data collection).

TEVAL Sample

In addition to the above data collection, we interviewed a separate sample of teachers and leaders on the specific topic of TEVAL. We included three interview questions on PEP in

these interviews, and these data contribute to the analyses and conclusions discussed below. In total, 44 participants were interviewed within this portion of the project.

Table 1: Sample

Role	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	TEVAL	Total*
District Leaders	7				7
School Leaders		3		5	8
Teacher Facilitators	15	3	3		18
Teachers	0	17	23	39	46
Total	31	20	26	44	83

*Participants who were interviewed in multiple rounds are counted only once in this sum.

Survey Sample

We invited all 2013-14 teacher facilitators, their facilitated group members and 2013-14 super tutors to participate in a survey in June 2014. In all, 100% of teacher facilitators, or 54 participants, responded the survey. Approximately 68% of the facilitated group members, or 191 participants, responded to the survey and 51% of super tutors, or 50 participants, responded to the survey.

Table 2: Survey Sample

Role	Number of Respondents (n)	Response Rate (%)
Teacher Facilitator	54	100%
Teachers (group members)	191	68%
Super Tutors	50	51%
Total	295	

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through one-on-one interviews, group interviews, and surveys. Questions were tailored to address the four major research questions outlined above. Interviews were transcribed and coded using Dedoose qualitative software. Survey data were collected using SurveyMonkey. Data were analyzed using basic descriptive techniques.

Findings

In interviews, we asked participants to describe specific changes to human capital practices in the district over the 2013-14 school year. Across participants with varied roles, increased leadership opportunities for teachers was the most commonly described change. Participants were also able to discuss differentiated opportunities for leaders to develop careers in the New Haven Public Schools. Individuals were less likely to describe specific changes to professional development in the district. Some but not all participants positioned the teacher facilitator program as a new form of professional development. Most participants described gradual changes to the district's teacher and principal evaluation system. Participants expressed confusion about changes to

compensation, perhaps because contract negotiations were still underway at the time of some interviews. No participants described changes to hiring.

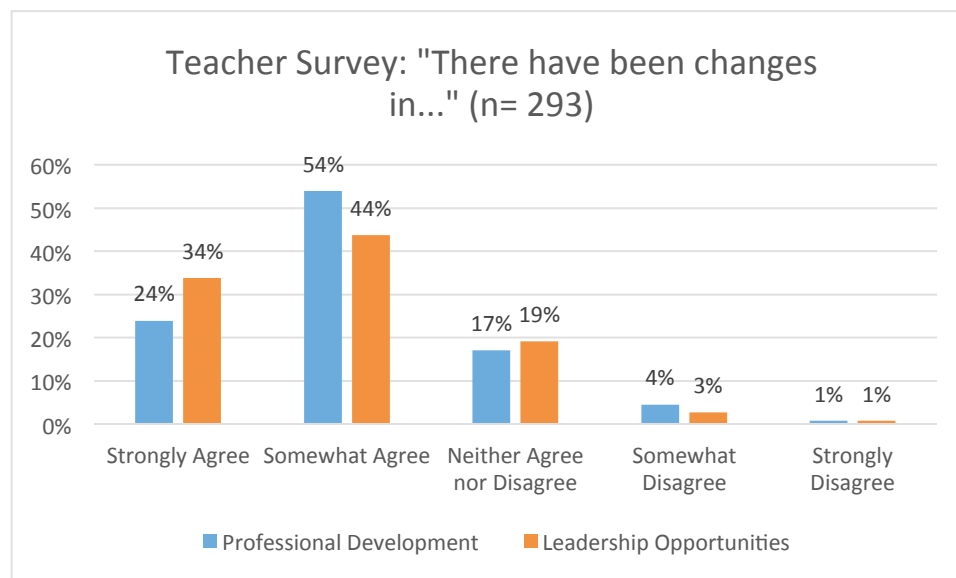
Has PEP Changed NHPS Human Capital Practices?

Participants across all levels reported key changes to particular human capital practices in the New Haven Public Schools. Specifically, participants cited the introduction of new roles for teachers and the inclusion of TEVAL ratings in the qualifications of these roles as examples of new practices in the district.

Teachers' Views

When asked whether NHPS's human capital practices changed relative to before PEP was implemented, 78% of teachers surveyed agreed that there had been changes in professional development and leadership opportunities for teachers (Figure 1). Teacher comments on the survey and in interviews reported changes in professional development, teacher leadership roles, and, to a lesser extent, TEVAL.

Figure 1.



The most frequently cited change in professional development was a shift toward “more teacher-led and small group” professional development at the school site level. Teachers stated that this change made professional development “...structured so each teacher can meet his/her goals” because “...PD has been somewhat tailored to meet [their] needs.” Teachers reported that the differentiation of professional development provided “more opportunities for teacher sharing and collaboration” because “peer dialogue is more relevant than large group presentations.”

Teachers also mentioned the introduction of new leadership roles as a positive change in the district's human capital practices. Because we sampled teachers participating in these roles, it is not surprising that they mentioned the Teacher Facilitator, Super Tutor, and Curriculum Facilitator roles as examples. “We just recently... got the email about new

positions opening up for teachers. There's Teacher Facilitator, Curriculum Facilitator, Super Tutor and then there's an option where you can propose something else and that was something that I've never seen before so that was exciting." One relatively new teacher who participated in a facilitated group expressed his pleasure at receiving an opportunity to apply for the Curriculum Facilitator position early in his teaching career. "I think that's exciting," he stated, "because I never would have thought... I would have that opportunity and it's nice to have that available."

Overall, 21% of teachers did not report changes in human capital practices in the district (Figure 1). This may be in part due to their lack of awareness or confusion about the purpose and vision of PEP. In an interview, one teacher stated, "... I hope that someone has a vision, but we don't know necessarily. Just because someone in central office may have that vision, it doesn't mean that we know what that vision is." A teacher elsewhere in the district described PEP in this way, "I think that is part of the talent something. I'm not even sure actually." Another teacher in a group interview described the relationship between the Teacher Facilitator program and human capital practices as, "...we're part of the PEP Grant and I'm not sure if [TEVAL] is part of that as well, but we don't intermingle."

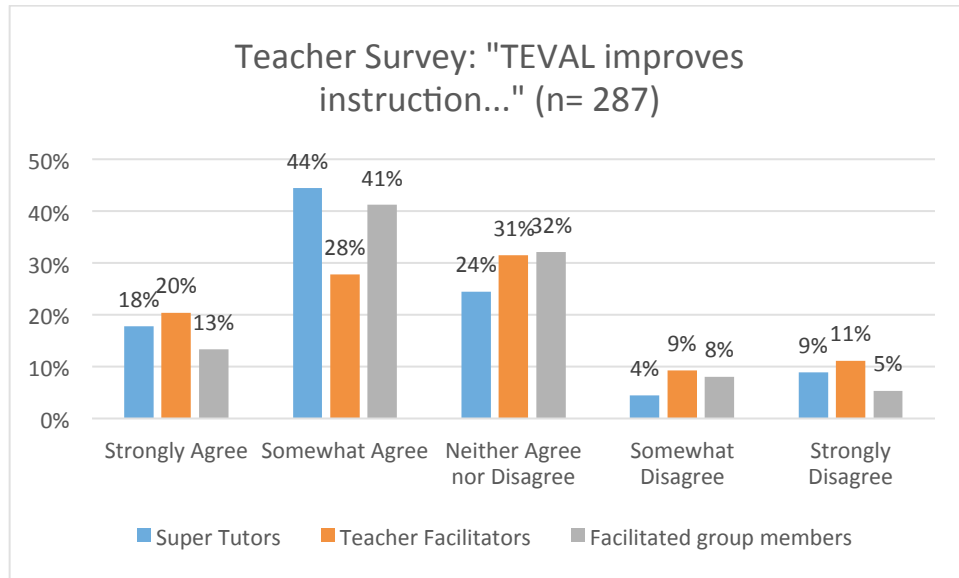
Has Evaluation Affected Educators' Practice?

Participants at the school level reported varied views on evaluation's effects on their practice.

Teachers' Views

When surveyed on the effects of TEVAL on educator practices, teachers' views were generally positive but also varied by their role. Three survey questions examined TEVAL's relationship with teachers' instruction, planning and effort. In responding to all three questions, Super Tutors were most positive about the effects of TEVAL on their practice, facilitated group members were somewhat positive and the Teacher Facilitators were least positive (Figure 2).

Figure 2.

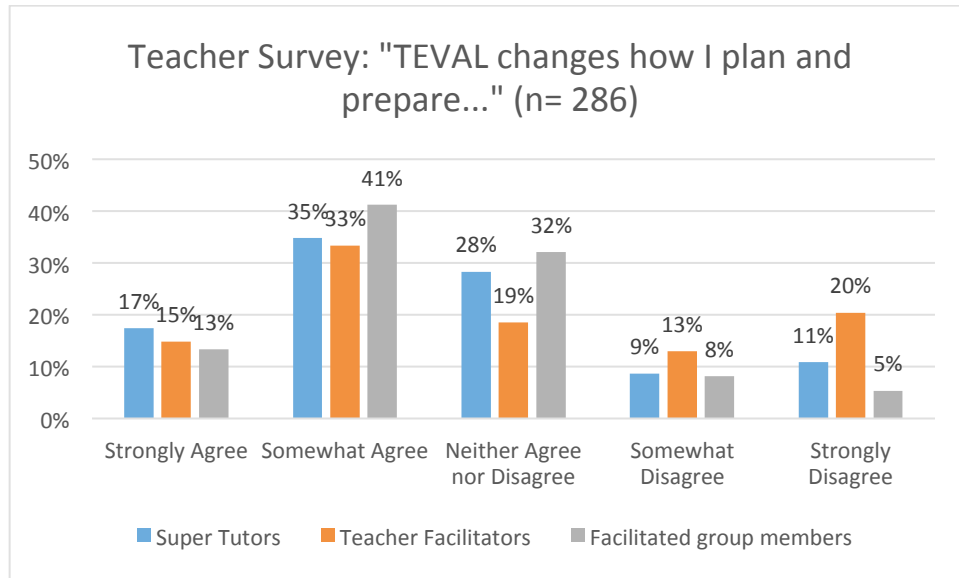


When asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement that “TEVAL improves instruction”, 62% of Super Tutors (n=45) responded affirmatively. Over half, 54%, of facilitated group members (n=187) agreed that TEVAL improves instruction. Among Teacher Facilitators surveyed (n=54), fewer than half, or 48%, agreed that TEVAL improves instruction.

One Super Tutor wrote, “I found New Haven schools’ TEVAL to be top notch and above many schools in the state.” Facilitated group members expressed a more ambivalent attitude toward TEVAL as indicated in Figure 2. One wrote, “TEVAL makes me aware of certain areas of instruction, but the 10 minute-walk-in observations can be misleading.” Comments from Teacher Facilitators were noticeably more critical of TEVAL, as reflected in Figure 2. One stated, “TEVAL seems to be just a dressed up evaluation. It doesn’t touch the core of teaching.” Another Teacher Facilitator wrote, “I feel TEVAL is not really a serious process at our school. I feel as if it is just something that needs to be done, not something that changes how I do my job.”

The difference between survey participants by leadership role persisted when responding to the statement, “TEVAL changes how I plan and prepare for my instruction.” Over half of Super Tutors (n=46), or 52%, agreed that TEVAL affected teachers’ planning (Figure 3). One Super Tutor wrote, “I am an organized person, who uses data to plan for group instruction...TEVAL has given me another tool to assist in this effort...”

Figure 3.

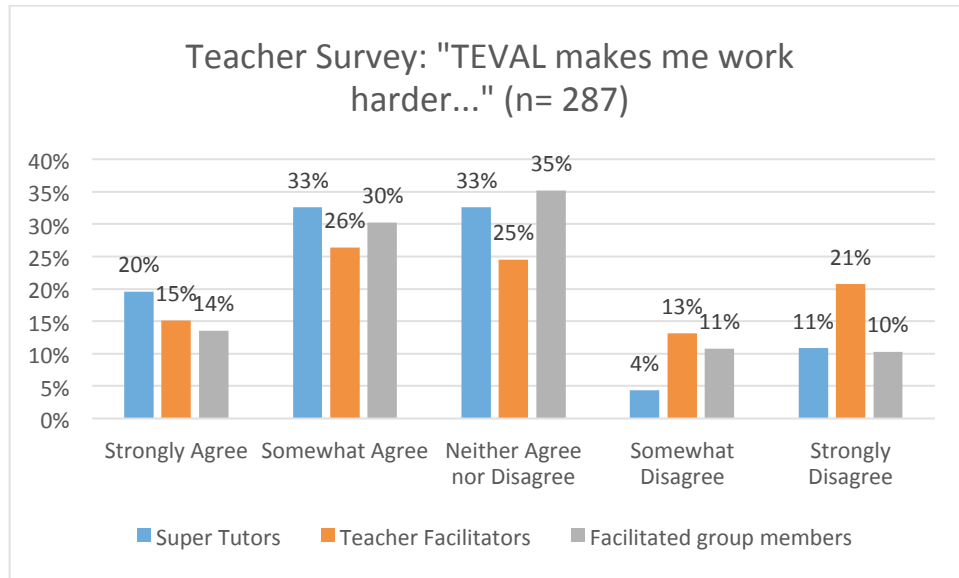


On the same question, 54% (n=187) of facilitated group members expressed agreement. The majority of facilitated group members felt that TEVAL affected their planning. Fewer than half, or 48%, of Teacher Facilitators (n=54) agreed that TEVAL affected their planning.

Perhaps more importantly, 33% of Teacher Facilitators disagreed that TEVAL changed how they planned and prepared, while only 18% of Super Tutors and 13% of facilitated group members disagreed (Figure 3). A few Teacher Facilitators specifically stated that planning under TEVAL did not "...allow for individual student situations." They explained that TEVAL is of limited use in planning because it "...fails to address socioeconomic and behavioral issues of students..." Others argued that they held high standards for students regardless of TEVAL.

Survey participants responded in a similar pattern to the statement, "TEVAL makes me work harder." Over half of Super Tutors (n= 46), or 53%, agreed that TEVAL made them work harder. A similar proportion (54%) of facilitated group members (n=185) agreed with this statement. A comparable proportion, 48%, of Teacher Facilitators (n=53) agreed that TEVAL made them work harder (Figure 4).

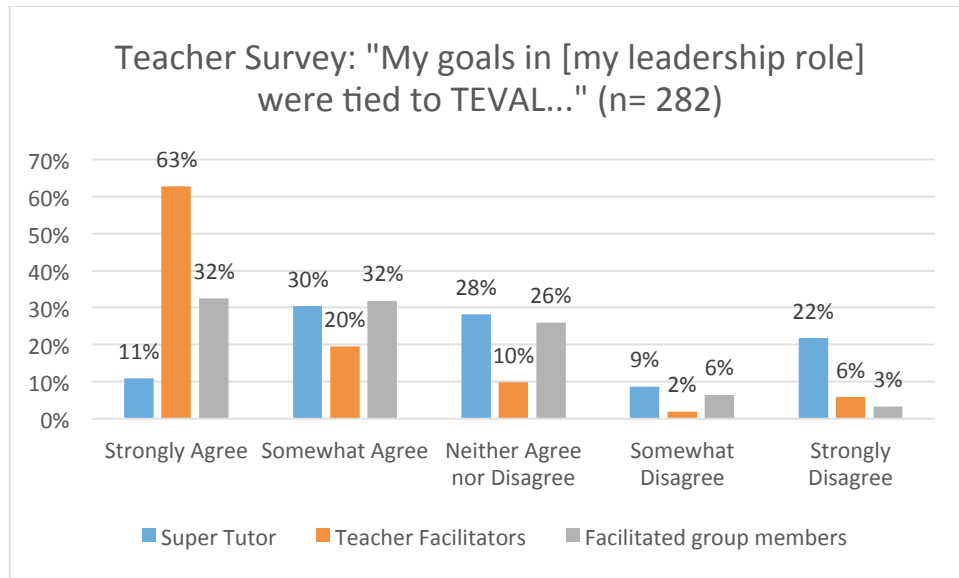
Figure 4.



In response to an item stating that TEVAL made them work harder, Teacher Facilitators were more likely than those in other roles to disagree, with 34% disagreeing with the statement (Figure 4). In interviews, Teacher Facilitators offered some explanations for these patterns. For example, one Teacher Facilitator commented, “Neither TEVAL, nor any other extrinsic motivation, is responsible for my strong work ethic.” Another added, “I work hard because my parents instilled in me a valuable work ethic.” Another said, “TEVAL has not affected my continual and constant commitment to my students. I believe that I was an effective teacher prior to TEVAL, during TEVAL, and after TEVAL.” One facilitated group member echoed the sentiment adding, “....filling out a TEVAL is a waste of my time. I put my heart and soul into my work.”

The survey also asked teachers in these roles about the relationship between TEVAL and their work within their role. In contrast to their responses on the items regarding TEVAL’s impact on their practice, Teacher Facilitators expressed strong agreement that there was a direct connection between TEVAL and their leadership role. Super Tutors, on the other hand, reported much less connection between their role and their TEVAL goals. Facilitated group members again responded in between the extremes of the other two roles (Figure 5.)

Figure 5.



An great majority, or 83%, of Teacher Facilitators (n= 51) agreed that their goals in their leadership position were tied to TEVAL. Several Teacher Facilitators reported that their "...team goals were purposely aligned with TEVAL goals" and one Teacher Facilitator revealed that "...my TEVAL goals drove my choice of group [members]."

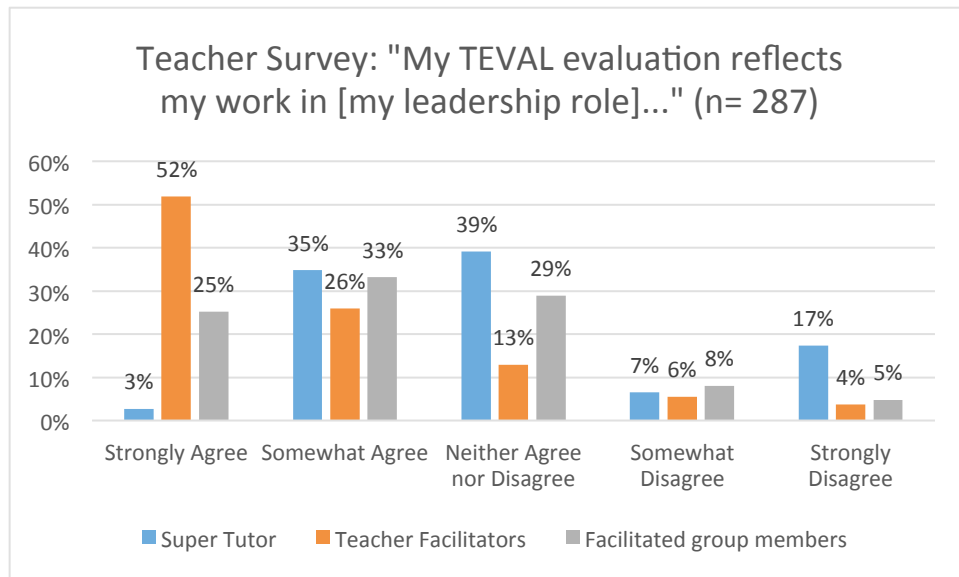
Approximately 63% of facilitated group members (n= 185) also agreed that their role was tied to TEVAL. Some qualified their agreement, however, because TEVAL goals focused more on student scores than professional growth. A facilitated group member wrote, "I find TEVAL useful, but feel frustrated that there is no opportunity to set goals that aren't directly related to student achievement."

Only 41% of Super Tutors (n= 46) agreed that their goals as a Super Tutor were tied to TEVAL. Relatedly, 31% of Super Tutors disagreed that their role was tied to TEVAL, while only 8% of Teacher Facilitators and 9% of facilitated group members disagreed (Figure 5). We received no comments on the survey from Super Tutors to explain the disconnection between TEVAL goals and their Super Tutor roles. In some ways, this finding is counterintuitive. One would think that Super Tutors would see a connection between their tutoring work with students after school and those students' performance on assessments that linked to their TEVAL goals. However, this assumes that the students Super Tutors work with are the same students whose performance is measured in their TEVAL goals, and the content and skills of their tutoring work also overlaps with their TEVAL goals. These assumptions may not hold, which could explain the disconnect between Super Tutors' tutoring work and TEVAL.

Asked to rate their level of agreement to a statement that "My TEVAL evaluation reflects my work in my leadership role", the response pattern repeats. The majority, 78%, of Teacher Facilitators (n=54) responded affirmatively. One Teacher Facilitator said, "I

think TEVAL is still evolving into something that is going to—that could be utilized in a powerful way. I think that people are having talks about letting TEVAL really reflect what [they’re] doing in the classroom.” More than half, or 58%, of facilitated group members (n=187) agreed that their TEVAL evaluation reflected their work in a facilitated group. Among Super Tutors surveyed (n=46), only 38% agreed that their evaluation reflected their work as a Super Tutor (Figure 6).

Figure 6.



It is not clear why facilitated group members would see less connection between TEVAL and their participation in a facilitated group than their group leaders, the Teacher Facilitators. One reason may be that Teacher Facilitators knew of their positions prior to setting their TEVAL goals and were therefore able to incorporate their leadership work into their goals. We will examine this potential connection more closely in the coming year.

Surveys sampled a particular group of teachers: those involved with PEP teacher leadership roles. In interviews with a more diverse sample of teachers, these participants reported that TEVAL’s primary effect was to concentrate their work on their evaluation goals. Few teachers cited concrete ways in which TEVAL improved their practice and many participants said that they wanted more feedback from administrators on their instruction.

Effects on Principal Practice

Principals reported that the new educator evaluation requirements have influenced how they rate the quality of instruction in their schools. Central office has worked with principals this year to calibrate how they rate teachers’ instruction. Some principals claim that this has helped them to better understand the usefulness of a more even distribution

in ratings. As one principal described it, “the calibration was useful because it kind of brought us down from the, from those extremes and of rating this, the teachers, as high. A good teacher – a solid teacher – is a three. It’s not a five.” When describing whether this shift in scoring had any effects on teachers, one principal said, “it was a little jolting of the teachers and what we need to see...and I think they brought their game.”

Many principals also talked about how the new evaluation system asks them to provide more feedback focused on instruction to teachers. Rather than observing instruction once a year and primarily attending to classroom management and climate during informal walk-throughs, principals report spending more time in the classroom observing instruction. Principals also report that these shorter, more focused observations allow them to provide more specific feedback more frequently to teachers. One principal commented, “that immediate feedback was very important because it’s fresh and it’s right there, immediate feedback.”

Principals’ Reports on Effects on Teacher Practice

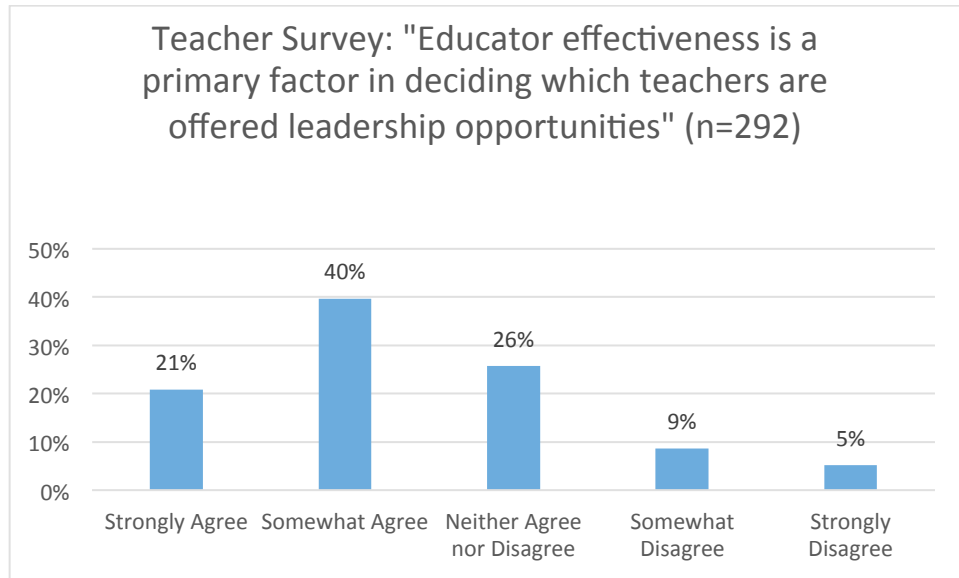
Some principals stated that teachers’ instruction has improved due to the new teacher evaluation system. One principal said, “I’m seeing them more focused.”

Another principal raised the point that many of the teachers in her school do not yet have the self-awareness to be able to understand their own practice well enough to articulate it for others. “It’s this reflection, this questioning that TEVAL has. I’m hoping that it will be helpful even to the higher level teachers to reflect more, to be more reflective. And once you become more reflective, you’re able to share that and you’re able to be more intentional about it.”

What role has educator effectiveness played in human capital decisions?

In general, survey participants (n= 292) report that educator effectiveness plays a large role in teacher leader selection. Approximately 61% of teachers surveyed agreed with the statement that “educator effectiveness is a primary factor in deciding which teachers are offered leadership opportunities” (Figure 7).

Figure 7.



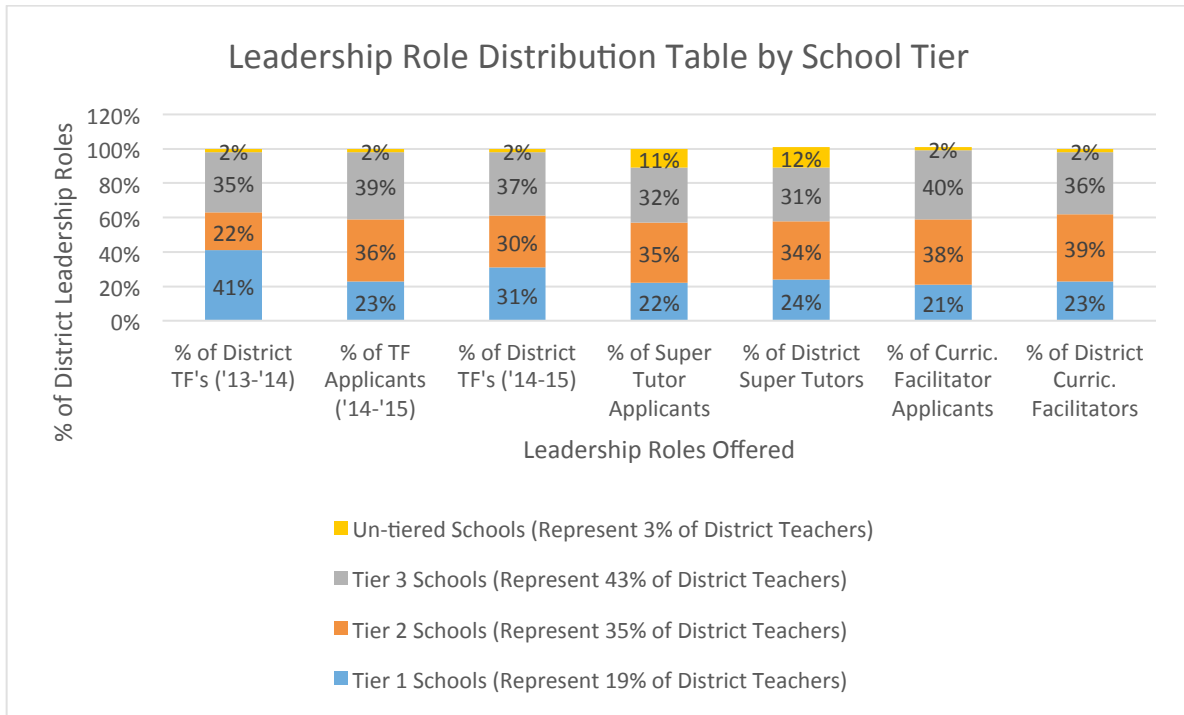
A significant portion of teachers (almost 40%), however, either did not know or disagreed that effectiveness is a key decision factor. “There is no rhyme or reason to NHPS personnel practices,” wrote one facilitated group member. There is less evidence that educator effectiveness has been considered in other human capital areas of professional development or hiring.

How have human capital practices targeted high-need schools?

One of the goals of the Teacher Incentive Fund grants has been to provide targeted supports to high-need schools. Accordingly, one of our research questions asks “to what degree have human capital practices provided targeted support to high-needs schools?” “High-needs” can be defined in a number of ways. For this analysis, we used the most recent tier rankings to determine which New Haven schools were the most “high-needs”. Since the district stopped using the tiering system, it has added three additional schools. Therefore, our calculations include Tier 1 schools, Tier 2 schools, Tier 3 schools and Un-tiered schools (Figure 8).

From late 2010 until early 2013, New Haven categorized schools into three tiers “based on absolute student performance on scores, growth on tests, and school climate surveys...” (New Haven, 2013, p.1). Tier 1 schools had the highest student test scores, growth, and climate survey ratings. Tier 2 schools performed lower than Tier 1 schools. Tier 3 schools had the lowest test scores, growth and climate survey ratings. Given the TIF focus, one would expect Tier 3 schools, as the schools with the highest level of need, to have comparable or higher proportions of teachers in specialized roles funded by the grant (New Haven, 2013).

Figure 8.



As shown in Figure 8, Tier 1 schools account for 19% of district teachers. Tier 2 schools represent 35% of district teachers. Tier 3 schools account for the largest portion of district teachers, 43%. Un-tiered schools represent 3% of district teachers. If the distribution of teacher leadership roles were equitable, we would expect the proportions of teachers in leadership roles to reflect the distribution of teachers in the district, with 19% of roles going to teachers in Tier 1 schools, 35% going to teachers in Tier 2 schools, 43% going to teachers in Tier 3 schools, and 3% going to teachers in untiered schools.

When we examined the leadership role distribution of Teacher Facilitators, Super Tutors and Curriculum Facilitators by tier, however, we noted a systematic underrepresentation of Tiers 2 and 3 and an overrepresentation of Tier 1.

The Teacher Facilitator program was the first leadership role implemented under PEP. For 2013-2014, there were 54 Teacher Facilitators. Approximately 41% of these first Teacher Facilitators worked in Tier 1 schools. Approximately 22% of Teacher Facilitators worked in Tier 2 schools, 35% of Teacher Facilitators worked in Tier 3 schools, and 2% of Teacher Facilitators worked in Un-tiered schools (Figure 8). Teacher Facilitators were thus significantly overrepresented in Tier 1 schools and underrepresented in Tier 2 and Tier 3 schools.

For the 2014-2015 school year, Teacher Facilitator applicants were distributed more closely with their expected percentages. Teacher Facilitator applicants from Tier 1 schools represented 23% of applications. Applicants from Tier 2 schools represented 36% of the Teacher Facilitator applicant pool and 39% of Teacher Facilitator applicants represented Tier 3 schools. About 2% of applicants came from Un-tiered schools (Figure 8).

However, the actual Teacher Facilitators hired for 2014-2015, however, again favored Tier 1. In 2014-2015, Tier 1 accounts for 31% of district Teacher Facilitators, well above their proportion in the district (19%). Tier 2 schools will have 30% of the Teacher Facilitators. Tier 3 schools will have 37% of the district Teacher Facilitators. Un-tiered schools will have 2%. Although there is movement towards the expected distribution of Teacher Facilitators by school tier, Tier 1 schools remain overrepresented for this role (Figure 8).

The selection rate of Teacher Facilitators also reveals that, although applicants for Teacher Facilitator positions are distributed throughout the tiers at close to expected rates, a teacher is more likely to be hired if they are from a Tier 1 school. For example, Tier 1 applicants account for 23% of all Teacher Facilitator applications, but 31% of hires (Figure 8).

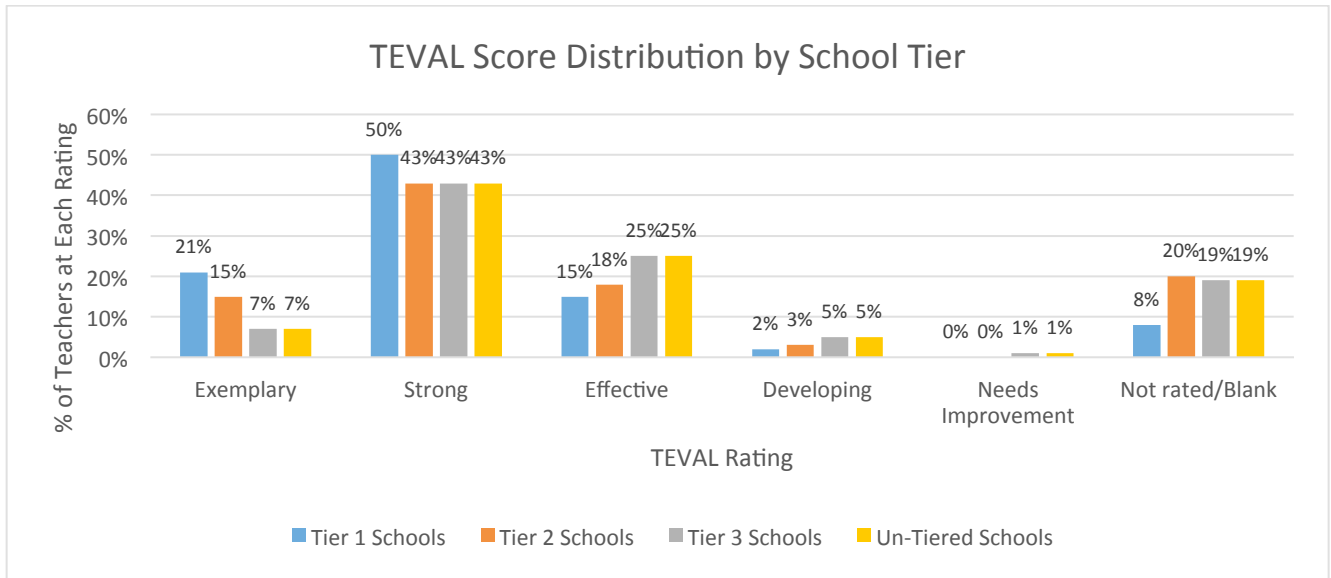
The Super Tutor role shows a much more modest overrepresentation of Tier 1 teachers receiving a leadership position. Tier 1 schools produce 22% of Super Tutor applicants and 24% of hires. Tier 2 schools produce 35% of Super Tutor applicants and a slightly lower (34%) of Super Tutors hired. Tier 3 schools account for 32% of the applicants and 31% of hires. The Un-tiered schools, with 3% of the total district population, produced 11% of the total applicants and 12% of the hires. Although the overrepresentation of Tier 1 is slight for this role, it is important to note that Tier 3 is also substantially underrepresented among Super Tutors (Figure 8).

The Curriculum Facilitator role data reveal smaller deviations from the distribution of teachers district wide. Tier 1 schools producing slightly higher than expected rates of applications (21% of total applications). Tier 2 schools represented 38% of Curriculum Facilitator applicants, also slightly higher than expected. Teachers from Tier 3 schools entered 40% of Curriculum Facilitator applications, lower than the expected 43%. Un-tiered schools produced 2% of the Curriculum Facilitator applications. The hiring pattern for the Curriculum Facilitator across tiers bears some consideration. Tier 1 and Tier 2 applicants were more likely to be hired for the Curriculum Facilitator role than Tier 3 teachers. Tier 1 schools will have 23% of the district's Curriculum Facilitators and Tier 2 schools 39%, both higher than expected rates. Tier 3 schools will only have 36% of Curriculum Facilitators, even though they had 40% of all applications.

What could explain the higher rate of hiring Tier 1 teachers for leadership positions compared with Tier 3 teachers? One answer may be that teachers in Tier 1 schools are more likely to obtain TEVAL ratings that are required for these positions. We examined the 2012-2013 TEVAL ratings of New Haven teachers by tiers. It is important to note that these data come from one year of TEVAL and may deviate from the general trend across the four years of TEVAL's existence. However, if they represent general trends, they may help explain why Tier 3 teachers were less likely—sometimes substantially so—to hold PEP leadership roles.

As shown in Figure 7, 71% of teachers in Tier 1 schools achieved “exemplary” and “strong” ratings. In contrast, 58% of Tier 2 teachers were rated as “exemplary” or “strong.” Tier 3 and Un-tiered teachers were rated as “exemplary” or “strong” just 50% of the time (Figure 9).

Figure 9.



Only 15% of teachers in Tier 1 schools were evaluated as “effective,” but 18% of teachers in Tier 2 schools were rated as “effective.” Fully 25% of teachers in Tier 3 and Un-tiered schools received the “effective” rating. Teachers evaluated as “developing” represented 2% of Tier 1 teachers, 3% of Tier 2 teachers and 5% of Tier 3 and Un-tiered teachers. Interestingly, there were no teachers in either Tier 1 or Tier 2 schools (accounting for over half, or 54%, of the total teachers in the district) rated as “needs improvement”, while 1% of teachers in Tier 3 and Un-tiered schools were rated as “needs improvement.”

The most striking difference in TEVAL ratings between the tiers was in the number of teachers “not rated” or having a “blank” evaluation. In Tier 1 schools, 8% of teachers were reported as “not rated” or “blank.” In contrast, 20% of Tier 2 teachers were reported as “not rated” or “blank,” while 19% of Tier 3 and Un-tiered teachers received “not rated” or “blank” status regarding their TEVAL. We are not certain why these teachers received no rating, but the practical implication of this categorization is that these individuals cannot qualify for PEP leadership positions. The absence of ratings for almost one-fifth of teachers in these schools may explain why teachers in Tier 2 and 3 schools tended to be under-represented in PEP leadership positions.

How have educators experienced PEP?

We found key differences with educators’ experience with PEP across level. District leaders articulate a relatively clear vision for PEP and express optimism about its capacity to change practice. Teachers in the sample generally echo this optimism and report overall positive experiences with PEP. Principals report more confusion and skepticism regarding the initiative than do teachers or district leaders.

District Leaders’ Experiences

District leaders articulate a vision for PEP. Across all seven district leaders interviewed, participants said that a key aspect of PEP was its focus on building teacher empowerment and professionalism. For example, the superintendent stated one aspect

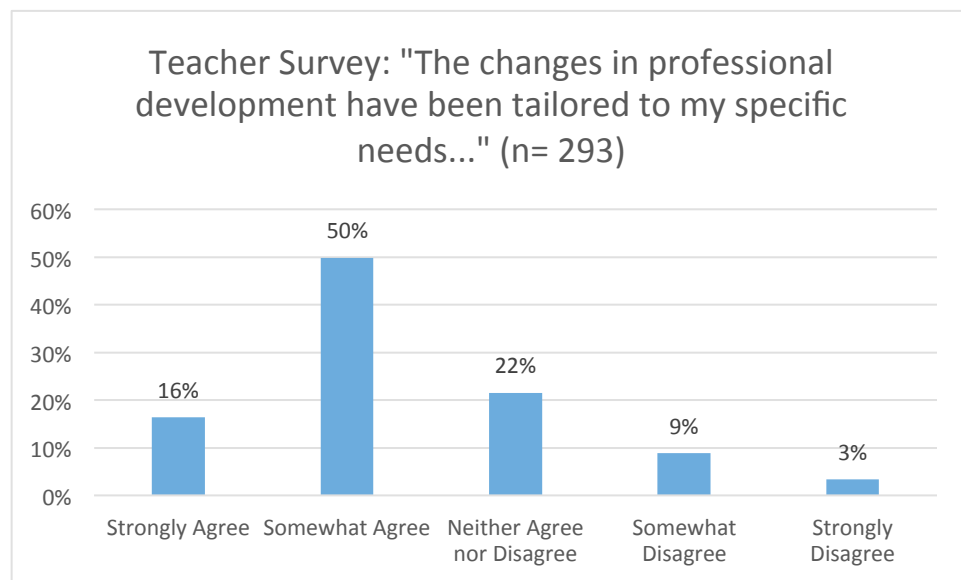
of the theory of action behind PEP in this way: “if we’re creating meaningful career trajectories for our educators it’s going to strengthen both their own teaching and the profession as a whole and ultimately improve student learning.” A second key piece of the theory of action is an emphasis on intrinsic motivation. As the superintendent said, “for the vast majority of our professionals that if we’re engaging them more deeply and more intrinsically it’s going to lead to better practice and that the career trajectory is an important way ... to engage them more intrinsically in the task of education over time.”

District leaders further expressed that a guiding principle of PEP was the inclusion of different perspectives and stakeholders in the initiative. The most concrete demonstration of this has been the development of the Talent Council, which oversees the project. District leaders further agreed that a key piece of PEP was its ultimate focus on improving student outcomes. Lastly, participants expressed positive views on the overall direction of change embodied by PEP. For example, the union president identified a primary benefit of PEP: “[W]e have all kinds of new opportunities for people to take on different types of roles, leadership roles and whatever, but stay in the classroom.” He added, “I think this is exciting for teachers.” District leaders differed on specific aspects of PEP, such as what constituted a teacher leadership role and the particulars of compensation for these roles, but generally agreed on the broad goals of the initiative.

Teachers’ Experiences

In general, teachers viewed changes to New Haven Public Schools human capital practices as mostly positive. Most teachers surveyed (n= 293), or 61%, agreed that the more teacher-led professional development was “...tailored to my specific needs” (Figure 10).

Figure 10.



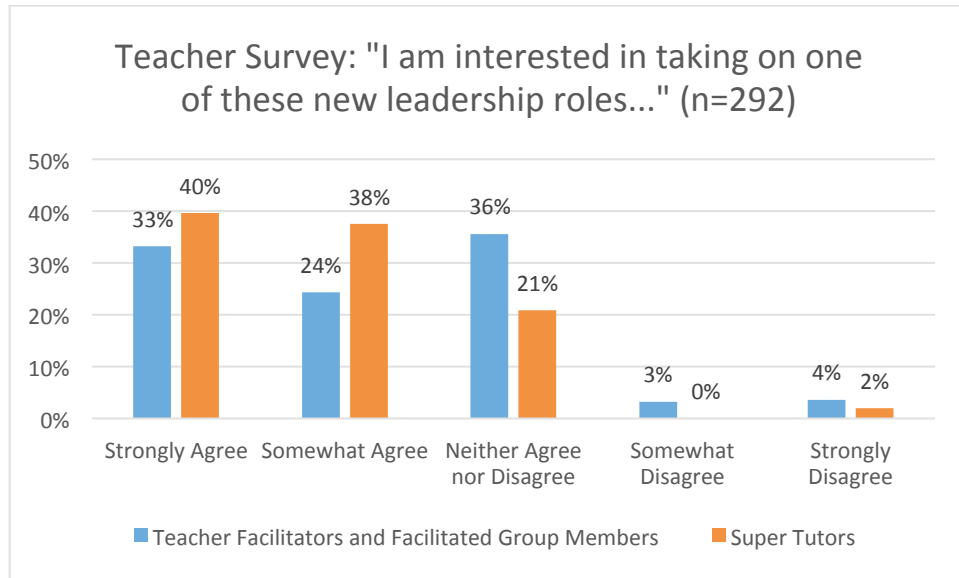
Most teachers felt that the facilitated groups provided professional development that was more differentiated and provided more teacher voice. For example, one teacher said, “I think this [professional development] is more meaningful because we are working on things that we know we need in our classroom. It may not be something that another school down the street needs in their classrooms and in their building so it gives us the chance to do what is best for our students and what we see.”

One Teacher Facilitator commented, “I liked the way the meetings were teacher centered, or based on teacher activities.” In a group interview, a Facilitated group member stated, “we’re trying to make our staff meetings more professional development and less things you could send out in an email.” Another group member added that the change would, “...make our meeting time more beneficial. I do see an improvement.” A Teacher Facilitator from a different school reported a similar improvement at her site saying, “we’ve become more in control of our building level professional development and it’s based on more around the needs of the staff than just on building an agenda to fill hours in a day.”

A little over one-third of teachers, or 39%, were ambivalent toward or disagreed with the statement that professional development has become more tailored to individual needs. These individuals may be looking at NHPS professional development more broadly, and considering new roles through PEP as only one form of professional development. For example, one Teacher Facilitator, when asked about changes to professional development said, “...other than what’s happening with the teacher facilitators, everything has been pretty much the same.”

Teachers also cited positive reactions to changes in leadership roles within the district (Figure 11). Of the Teacher Facilitators and their group members (n= 247), 57% expressed interest in pursuing one of the new leadership roles. A much higher percentage of Super Tutors (n= 48), or 78%, said they were interested in taking on a new leadership role.

Figure 11.



In many interviews, Facilitated group members expressed hesitation to pursue a new leadership role because they wanted to continue to work with their current group. One group member stated, "I consider this a family. I would move heaven and earth to be here with this group."

Teachers surveyed (n= 292) were also extremely positive about how new leadership opportunities could affect the quality of their work as teachers. Approximately 90% of Super Tutors (n= 48) agreed with the statement that "new leadership opportunities will help me do my best work" (Figure 12). Many Super Tutors cited collaboration with other teachers and additional support as benefits from their leadership role.

Figure 12.



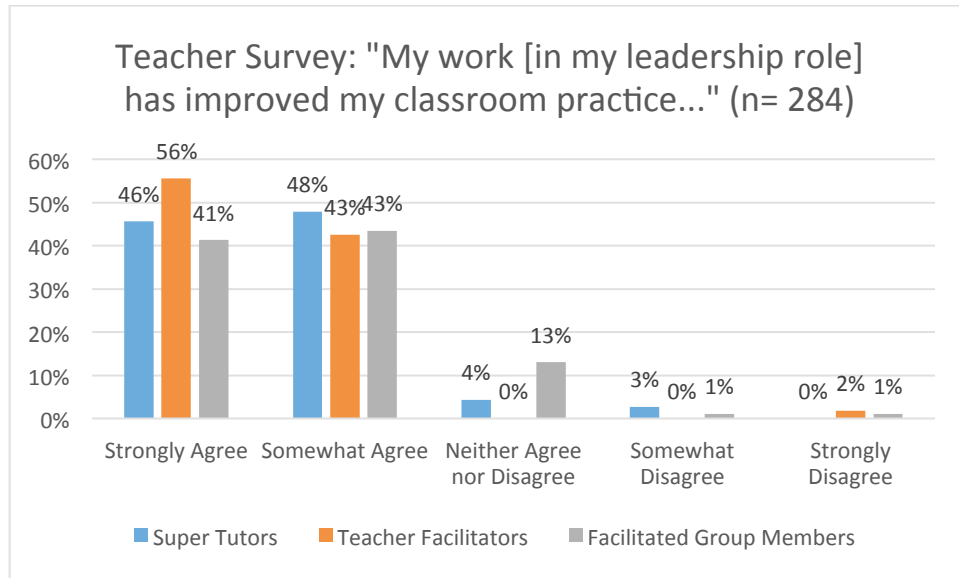
For example, one Super Tutor reported that serving in this role allowed him to connect with a colleague who “provided...excellent resources and support.” Another credited their role as an opportunity to meet “...with other Super Tutors I would not otherwise have come in contact with during the course of the year.”

Teacher facilitators and their group members (n= 244) were also positive about their leadership role affecting their work quality. Approximately 73% of Teacher Facilitators and their group members expressed agreement that the new leadership roles would help them do their best work (Figure 12). In an interview, a Teacher Facilitator spoke about the relationships that had been fostered within the group and the effects on their teaching practice. She said, “...this is a safe place for them [facilitated group members]. They do take some of the concepts and they actually do use them in their classroom and come back.” A group member added, “This group has given me more confidence then I have ever had.”

The most common roadblock cited by all participants was the need for more time to work in their leadership roles. Most Teacher Facilitators and group members interviewed felt that time to work in their leadership roles should be built into the daily schedule. The most commonly cited need for teachers in leadership roles was more time to collaborate during the work day. One Teacher Facilitator spoke for many in saying, “The groups were not given ample opportunities to meet. School hours and staff meeting hours were not to be used so we had to meet on our own time.”

The vast majority of teachers surveyed agreed that their work within their leadership roles improved their classroom practice (Figure 13). The responses to this question show a distinct difference between the benefits of work within a leadership role and the perceived effects TEVAL has on teacher practice (Figure 2 and Figure 3). Teachers appear to see a stronger connection between their own efforts and improved practice. This makes sense, given that fewer teachers view TEVAL as closely related to their practice.

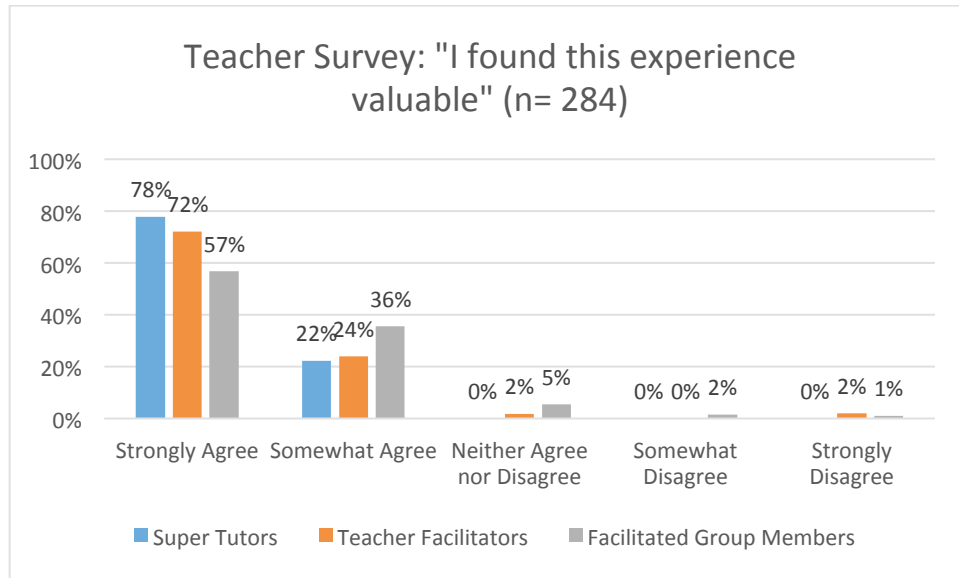
Figure 13.



Almost all, or 98%, of Teacher Facilitators (n= 54) felt their leadership role had improved their practice in the classroom. Similarly, 94% of Super Tutors (n= 46) believe their practice had improved because of their leadership role. Facilitated group members (n= 184) were slightly less convinced that their participation improved their practice with 84% of respondents in this category in agreement with the statement. Very few teachers surveyed reported that their practice had not improved as a result of their work within a leadership role.

Similarly, almost all teachers surveyed found their experience within a leadership role to be valuable (Figure 14). 100% of Super Tutors who responded to the question (n= 45) found their experience within their role to be valuable. Similarly, 96% of Teacher Facilitators (n= 54) found their leadership experience to be valuable. Facilitated group members (n= 185) were highly positive as well, with 93% agreeing with the statement, "I found this experience valuable".

Figure 14.



Some Super Tutors found their experience so valuable they "...wish [they were] able to do this from the beginning of the year." Another Super Tutor wrote, "I hope I have the opportunity to continue serving in this role next year!" A Teacher Facilitator reflected, "Being able to share strategies with other educators was valuable for my experience as a teacher. In addition, I found that this experience fostered a positive learning environment for passionate professionals." In an interview, a facilitated group member summed up by saying, "It was valuable and wonderful. I am grateful I was chosen as part of [the group]".

It appears, however, that some facilitated group members did not have a positive experience in these groups. In a survey comment, one group member criticized their facilitated group for being loosely focused on the group's "needs," instead of a more constructive agenda. Another group member commented on their facilitated group saying, "though very interesting, it did not apply to my setting."

Principals' Experiences

Overall, principals reported much less positive experiences with PEP than did teachers. Principals' concerns focused on the vision and goals of PEP, uneven implementation, lack of consideration of their perspective, and changes to PEP mid-year. These topics are discussed below.

Understanding the Vision and Goals of PEP

In general, principals had difficulty articulating a clear understanding of the vision and goals of PEP. One principal said, "I'm just confused, I'll be honest with you." Another explained that, "It is really unclear to me what is, like, the true vision of this program. Like, what do they really want?"

A few principals attributed their confusion around new human capital practices to the transition in district leadership. However, all of the principals who participated in this study agreed that a lack of clear, consistent communication from the district around PEP hindered their ability to support implementation. Almost all principals reported that they learned about PEP only through teachers in their building who were participating in PEP activities. Many principals also gave examples of teachers who would be great facilitators, but did not know about the opportunity to become one this past year.

Uneven Implementation and Support for Teacher Leadership

While principals unanimously approved of diversifying the pathways through which teacher could express greater leadership, they all shared concerns over what they saw as lack of support provided to teachers in new PEP leadership roles and lack of communication from the district regarding PEP and. Said one principals, "I'm letting them do this facilitation and they are, like, flailing at it. They're not leaders. So, to get them on a leadership track, you're asking them to do things. You're asking them to then facilitate this protocol in which it's supposed to be organic and authentic and it's not, because they don't know what they're doing."

Principals also reported that implementation was uneven and poorly communicated, leaving them unsure about who was managing the new leadership roles. The principals themselves were often confused about PEP, which they felt hindered their ability to support teachers within their schools. Among principals who participated in focus groups, there was confusion over which protocols teacher facilitators were allowed or encouraged to use. Principals further reported that the district changed expectations for PEP roles mid-year and engaged in little communication with principals and assistant principals about the PEP initiative.

In addition to principals feeling like they were unable to support implementation within their buildings, many reported that the uneven support from the district obscured the collaborative vision of PEP. One principal reported, "I have to say, this has been one of those things that I think could be really positive for the district, but it is being rolled out really poorly. Also, it's being rolled out in a way that is not in keeping with what the district says its vision is. The district has a very clear vision and I don't think that this talks to it. This isn't about collaboration and collective responsibility...It's not in practice, certainly not."

Four themes emerged as principals described why in their view there was uneven implementation of PEP: modifications were made mid-school year, which undermined PEP with teachers; there were few opportunities for principal input in the design and implementation of PEP; the new leadership roles of PEP added to existing work overload for teachers; and PEP was frequently misaligned with principals' priorities for the school. Each of these is discussed further in this section.

Modifications Mid-School Year. Principals reported that as changes were made in procedures, they were not always communicated in ways that fit teachers' initial understanding of their new roles. For example, at one school, teacher facilitators bought into a teacher-led approach in which they would leverage their expertise and skillsets into various types of professional development for teachers. The principal described a high degree of initial buy-in and enthusiasm from most teachers in the school. When teacher facilitators were told that proposals had to be approved after they had already begun their work and a formal process for tracking teacher participation would be instituted, principals reported that teacher facilitators and the principal stopped seeing the groups as following an organic, school-based, teacher-led reform. The principal qualified her loss of interest, saying "I don't want it to be phony. I want it to be meaningful."

Lack of Principal Input. Another mechanism that principals described as hindering the success of PEP was a lack of administrator input, both during the conceptualization of the initiative's strategies, as well as during the initial roll out. Principals attributed the lack of administrator input in the design with implementation issues that could have been avoided. For example, one principal questioned how the Talent Council was formed. "I don't know how they, like, did they apply to be on that? Was it open to everybody and I missed that memo?" She and others in the focus group expressed that more transparency around who was eligible and then selected to make governing decisions about PEP could have led to better opportunities to integrate the initiative into daily school operations.

The lack of opportunities for principals to contribute continued to be problematic as implementation decisions were made. One principal described how being out of the loop made integrating PEP into her building difficult. "So one of, I think, the most important things for us to do is really take an evaluation of, 'Are we doing what we say we believe in?' If we are not, where is that gap and then how can we use this opportunity to shape the behavior to fit the values?...I don't feel like I have the time and head space, certainly not with this program...because nobody gave us that opportunity to be part of shaping what this was going to look like." Some principals stated that they were not consulted to give recommendations for teachers who applied to be teacher facilitators. Others described the recommendation process as an "impromptu" and "rapid fire" conversation in a hallway. This was particularly problematic when applicants were not selected, as principals had no information to provide to their teachers. According to one principal, this undermined her authority with her staff and fed teacher mistrust of the reform initiative as a whole.

Work Overload. PEP created new venues for teacher leadership, which required additional work on the part of teachers who participate. Principals explained that some teachers' reluctance to participate is due to the considerable demands of being a New

Haven Public School teacher. “You’re not going to have a grassroots movement around doing extra work when you literally have to do so much in your day as a teacher.” Principals who were able to convince teachers to take on the extra work of becoming a teacher facilitator or participating in facilitated teacher groups strategically aligned this work with other existing teacher tasks. In one school with a fair amount of teacher participation, the principal coached teachers to use the facilitated time together to work towards goals required by other initiatives. “There should be a match,” she said, “whether it’s your school improvement plan or there is an identified need. Originally, I had said [to teachers], ‘you’ll link it to your professional goals for TEVAL.’”

One principal pointed out that the lack of integration between PEP and other school-based improvement strategies is sometimes due to too many reforms being implemented at once. “[The district] basically said, ‘you can do this if you want,’ but we have professionals in our building who are trying to do some things. So, what am I supposed to say?” Because teachers were given the opportunity to choose PEP activities over other reform efforts, the implementation of both is diluted and effort is spread too thinly to make changes with either.

Misalignment with Principals’ Priorities. One foundational aspect of PEP that principals emphasized is the agency given to teachers through creating new leadership roles. There was a mixed reaction to whether increased teacher agency will create positive changes in schools. On one hand, principals appreciate that PEP supports teacher-led reforms. Said one principal, “I think it’s remarkable, the impact, and it’s exciting and it’s sort of a breath of fresh air. And it’s nice to be sharing the wealth of everything that’s on our plate [with teachers].”

However, other principals were highly sensitive to the unintended conflicts generated when some teachers are given increased authority over selecting areas for school improvement that are not necessarily aligned with the principal’s priorities for the school.

Equity of PEP

Principals questioned the equity of compensating some teachers for extra work, but not others who were also involved in valuable work outside of PEP. Teachers in one school who were not involved in teacher facilitator groups were asked to participate on a committee with a heavy workload without compensation while PEP facilitators were not asked to serve on the committee and received compensation. Some principals described letting teacher facilitators convene their groups during regularly scheduled professional development time, and then struggling to justify to the rest of her staff why they were not being paid for their engagement in professional development during that time.

Some of the issues principals raised concerning the equity of opportunities provided through PEP stem from the policies regarding who is eligible for new teacher leadership roles. A few principals raised the issue of coaches not being allowed to become teacher facilitators, even though they have demonstrated the skills necessary to successfully facilitate professional growth. Said one principal, “I did say publicly to our coaches at our first leadership meeting in August, I said this is, I feel, really awkward that you guys weren’t a part of it...and you do more for this school and that some people are going to get paid and some people aren’t.”

Factors for Successful Implementation

When talking about the role of teacher facilitators as mechanisms for targeting existing goals for the school, one principal described the importance of having a strong foundational climate before asking teachers to participate in facilitated groups. “If you have a good climate in your school, [teachers] know what they need. It’s only going to help them be better and help them improve their own instruction. So they’re going to do it. They’re going to be invested in it and we can give them time for it because we know that this is something that is important to us. It’s important to the teachers and we can be working together.”

Some principals also pointed out the benefits of embedding teacher facilitation in a concentrated effort within the school to reduce tensions around a minority of teachers being compensated for extra work while others performed similar work for no pay. One principal attributed the success at her son’s school to a strong concentration of teacher facilitators and school-wide involvement in implementation.

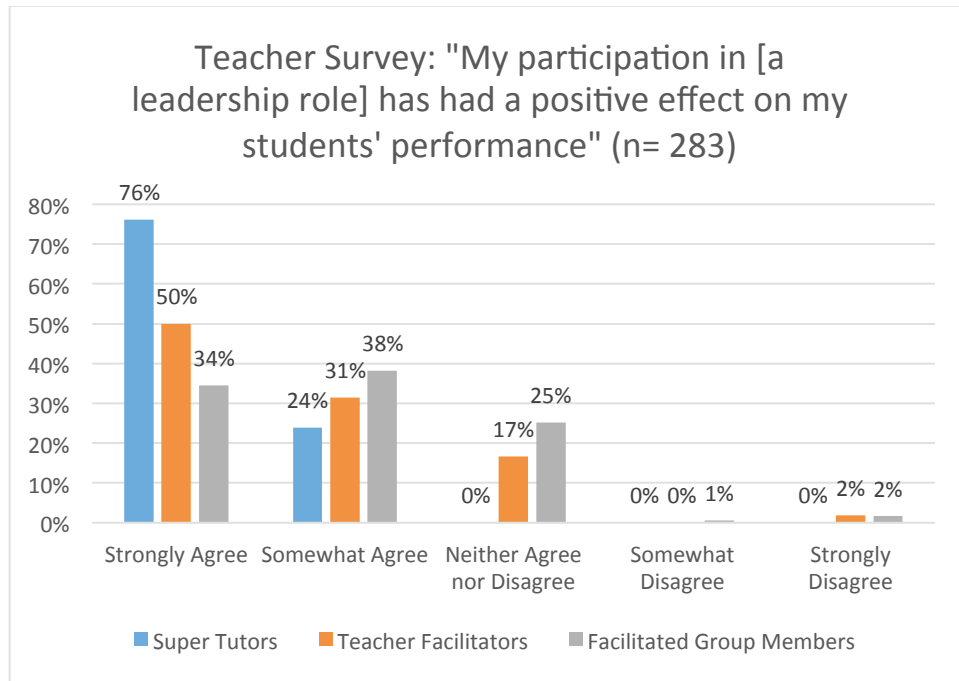
In many cases, principals commended the strong engagement of teacher facilitators and credited their charisma and passion. In one school, a teacher facilitator on maternity leave has continued to lead her group and the principal reported that the dedication of these teachers was due, in large part, to the leadership and dedication of this teacher facilitator. One principal stated that most of the teacher facilitators in her school are making an impact on teacher practice. “They’re enhancing instruction; they’re building strong PLCs.” Another principal said, “we’re seeing and having very fruitful dialogues and those are taking place at every fourth grade level meeting.” In most cases, principals shared at least some teacher facilitators were positively leading teacher learning that translate to changes in teacher practice.

How is PEP influencing key outcomes?

The desired outcome of changes in human capital practices is to see improvement in student achievement. PEP is a new initiative. It is too early to examine the impact of PEP on teacher and student outcomes. Furthermore, the goal of this evaluation is not to ascertain impact, but to consider how PEP might shape educators’ opportunities to improve their practice in ways that might benefit students. Our data suggest that teachers think that PEP is having a positive effect on their practice.

Most teachers reported seeing a positive effect on students’ performance as a result of their participation in leadership roles (Figure 16). However, these results differ by role. All Super Tutors, working directly with small groups of students in their role, reported that their efforts have resulted in improved student performance. In all, 100% of Super Tutors (n= 46) reported positive student outcomes. On open-ended survey questions, Super Tutors report, “...classroom grades have improved”, “more students completed significant tasks” and “a couple of students that were previously ‘substantially deficient’ are now reading at goal”.

Figure 16.



A high percentage, 81%, of Teacher Facilitators (n= 54) and 70% of facilitated group members (n= 183) also reported that their work had a positive effect on students' performance. However, as might be expected the line between facilitated work and student performance was more indirect than for Super Tutors. One Teacher Facilitator explained, "...insights from other teachers helped my practice, which in turn has helped my students".

Teacher Facilitators said that their work had "improved student engagement", helped them prepare "...better developed presentations", and integrate "...the technology discussed with the group to then use it in the classroom." Facilitated group members reported "...working on developing more differentiated materials...and strategies" as a result of their facilitated group. They also reported learning and applying new strategies for classroom management, "...controlled and effective communication" and for "...dealing with learning and behavioral problems."

One Facilitated group member who was unsure of his effect on student performance stated that, in their group, "There was not much of a focus on our students, more so on adults." This teacher did not yet see a 'trickle-down' impact on student achievement. In contrast to Super Tutors, who see an immediate, direct effect on students, Teacher Facilitators and their group members can only wait and see. One Teacher Facilitator optimistically cautioned, "Our work needs more time to deeply affect student performance. We are in [the] early stages of change and those embedded practices take time"

Discussion

Research on organizational change has shown us that the implementation of major reforms presents formidable challenges (Hall & Hord, 2011). In its early stages of adoption, PEP appears to be no different than many other district-wide initiatives, with some evidence that it has lacked coherence with other reform efforts. We learned that principals were not well informed of or connected to the Teacher Facilitator groups. Teacher Facilitators were not necessarily adequately prepared for their new roles and many had to meet on their own time outside of the regular school day. Some principals were concerned with the perceived inequity of compensating some teachers for teacher leadership work, but not others who were also committing valuable service efforts outside of PEP. Finally, our analysis revealed an underrepresentation of investment in leadership capacity in higher-need schools.

Challenges but also many positive outcomes were evident in the first year and half of PEP's implementation. Among PEP's early successes is its overall contribution to professional development of teachers in New Haven. The data here point to favorable perceptions among district leaders, teacher leaders, and teachers with regard to both the process and outcomes of professional development. Teachers have been provided new leadership opportunities as Teacher Facilitators, Super Tutors, and Curriculum Facilitators, among other ad hoc roles. Teacher Facilitators lead small groups of teachers, or "professional learning communities (PLCs)," which has allowed differentiation of professional development both across and within schools. The small group approach to professional development has introduced a new mode in which individual teachers, school teams, and entire schools are learning. With time, this shift could result in more relevant, meaningful, and impactful learning opportunities for all teachers in the district. Findings suggest the experiences of Teacher Facilitated groups have had a positive influence on teacher practice, although it is still early to tell whether these practices are directly affecting students.

The newly formed PLCs, while providing rich opportunities for teachers, have also raised questions about how well they are aligned with principal and district priorities for reform. Can these groups effectively contribute to school and district-wide professional development? Not all teachers are represented in the groups, and at least in the early going, principals have not been as involved in the work as they should be. Lack of coordination with building leaders is obviously a significant problem if PLCs are to succeed.

Our inquiry into new teacher leader roles has surfaced questions over how teacher leadership is being defined in New Haven. What does it mean to be a teacher leader in New Haven? Super Tutors do not appear to be teacher leaders in the same way as are Teacher or Curriculum Facilitators. Super Tutors receive extra pay and take on a new role that goes beyond classroom teacher, but are they truly teacher leaders? Super Tutors work directly with students and thus can have a very direct effect on student achievement, whereas Teacher Facilitators work directly with adults to indirectly affect student achievement.

Recommendations

Based on our findings to date, we propose the following recommendations:

1. **Develop a larger unifying vision of PEP and make it public.** Given that the initiative is being implemented across a large number of schools, re-emphasize a consistent message regarding the components of PEP, their inter-relationships, and how they are intended to work individually and collectively. District leaders should clearly communicate goals of PEP to principals, in particular, so that they can support its implementation. PEP must be coordinated with the priorities of the principal if it is going to work in a coherent fashion for school improvement.
2. **Build opportunities for principals to participate in and benefit from PEP.** Principals' experiences with PEP to date differ markedly from those of teachers participating in roles through this initiative. The district should address this divergence head-on, involving more principals in considering how to support these roles. At the same time, PEP has focused on creating opportunities for teachers. More systematic attention should be paid to developing or reinforcing comparable opportunities for professional growth and support for principals and assistant principals.
3. **Consider the purposes of various PEP components and their relationship.** PEP has created several new leadership opportunities and new roles for teachers. New Haven should re-conceptualize how teacher leadership fits into its larger human capital development plan. New Haven should articulate what it means to be a true teacher leader, beyond a title and role. Do Super Tutors qualify as teacher leaders or is this just a different role for classroom teachers with extra compensation?
4. **Consider the needs of high-need schools within the context of PEP.** Given the apparent unequal distribution of teacher leader roles across performance levels of New Haven Schools, more attention should be given to investing in high-need schools.
5. **Consider other components of the human capital continuum.** Lastly, in the early years of PEP New Haven has focused on revising its professional development and career structure for teachers. These efforts built upon the work NHPS has done to craft a robust evaluation and development system for teachers and leaders in the district. In the coming years, the district should turn to recruitment and hiring to develop and align these key levers with others within a robust human capital system.

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