

Harmony Supporting Top Educators Program (H-STEP) Year Two Evaluation Report

February 2019



Prepared for:



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Harmony Public Schools (HPS) received a five-year, \$26.7 million grant through the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) in 2016. During the 2016-17 school year, HPS launched its TIF-supported project, the Harmony Supporting Top Educators Program (H-STEP). The project's first year was dedicated to planning and designing initiatives that align with four human capital management system (HCMS) levers identified as likely to improve the effectiveness of HPS educators:

- Lever 1: Deepening and differentiating professional development for teachers;
- Lever 2: Deepening and differentiating professional development for administrators;
- Lever 3: Developing more consistency in career pathways across the district;
- Lever 4: Rewarding teaching and leading with financial incentives.

Project implementation began in earnest during the 2017-18 school year (Year Two). This report builds on the Baseline Year Evaluation Report by providing updated information about how the project is being perceived and whether it is impacting student learning, educator performance, and teacher recruitment and retention outcomes.

CTAC is collecting and analyzing four types of data for this evaluation: perceptual data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups; educator data including teacher and administrator evaluations, recruitment and retention information, financial incentive payouts, and micro-credential credit issuance; student performance data including MAP, STAAR, and EOC assessments; and artifacts of program implementation. Based on the ongoing analysis of these data, key findings and recommendations are as follows:

Year 2 Efforts

After a year of consultation and preparation, HPS began phasing in several of the H-STEP project's core components in 2017-18. Major developments included implementing Professional Learning Communities and adopting a Student Learning Objectives criterion for non-tested teachers in the network's Performance-Based Compensation (PBC) Plan. By creating a dedicated project website, sending regular emails, and thoughtfully soliciting staff input, HPS laid the foundation for stronger communication. Planning for project components scheduled to launch in 2018-19 moved forward deliberately.

Project Implementation

The purpose of the H-STEP Program became clearer to principals and teachers in Year Two. HPS created new avenues for educators to participate in the development of H-STEP, and educators appreciate that their input was solicited with respect to the refinement of the bonus criteria. Although educators are generally aware of the program's individual elements, they are less familiar with the overarching H-STEP project. Communication occurred primarily via email and on dedicated digital platforms, but HPS district and campus leaders have not consistently reinforced H-STEP's core messages and information.

Professional Development

The launch of Professional Learning Communities, particularly those that bring together educators from across HPS districts, is roundly viewed as a highlight of the network's approach to professional development (PD). Educators suggest that they would find trainings more useful if they are differentiated based on professional experience and longevity within the HPS system and if they more directly address the realities of their classrooms.

Career Pathways

Educators largely consider the network's career pathways either unclear or not designed with them in mind. These concerns appear particularly pronounced among educators working in more geographically remote schools, teachers in co-curricular subjects, and educators who work with students with disabilities and English Language Learners. The micro-credentialing program did not play a significant role in creating and aligning career pathways across HPS in 2017-18 as the initiative did not formally launch until August 2018.

Financial Incentives

Confusion about the financial incentives associated with H-STEP persisted into Year Two. The adoption of an SLO measure, which was intended to make the PBC system more inclusive, occurred well into the school year. This rollout compounded existing levels of confusion about the structure of the bonus system. Educators generally agree that non-monetary considerations play a key role in dictating whether they remain in their roles and express a range of views on whether performance bonuses meaningfully drive retention. The total number and average dollar amount of performance-based bonuses funded by the TIF grant increased in 2017-18 with newly-eligible, non-tested teachers accounting for a significant portion of this increase.

Student Performance Outcomes

CTAC reviewed five years of data from NWEA MAP, STAAR, and EOC assessments and conducted a Difference-in-Difference analysis to determine whether HPS students have demonstrated gains relative to students attending observationally similar schools.

On MAP assessments, students attending TIF campuses have narrowed performance gaps with their peers attending Non-TIF campuses at many grade levels in all tested subjects since 2015-16. After seventh grade, the average HPS MAP scores — in all subjects, at all grade levels, and at both TIF and Non-TIF campuses — exceeds the national norm. Students who remain enrolled in the HPS system for five consecutive years make consistently more progress on MAP assessments than do their peers who have attended HPS for shorter periods of time.

Further, HPS students attending TIF campuses have narrowed the performance gap on the STAAR assessment with their peers at Non-TIF campuses since the commencement of the H-STEP project. The increase in the percentage of students who "met" or "mastered" expectations on STAAR exams between 2015-16 and 2017-18 was greater on TIF campuses than on Non-TIF campuses. Across all subjects, grade levels, and campuses, average STAAR scores are consistently above the cut-off line that demarcates "satisfactory" performance.

Students attending TIF campuses are eliminating performance gaps with students on Non-TIF campus on EOC Algebra exams. In 2017-18, grade 9 students attending TIF campuses outperformed their peers at Non-TIF campuses on EOC Algebra exams, and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding their expected growth on these exams increased on TIF campuses while decreasing on Non-TIF campuses. Whereas the percentage of students at Non-TIF campuses who met or mastered expectations on EOC exams has decreased across the board since 2015-16, the percentage of students on TIF campuses who scored in the two highest performance tiers on their EOC exams has increased in each subject.

The Difference-in-Difference analysis reveals HPS students on TIF campuses have exhibited greater overall growth on the STAAR assessment relative to students attending comparison schools during the project's first two years. H-STEP has also had a positive impact on STAAR Math outcomes.

Educator Evaluation Ratings

Overall teacher performance remains statistically similar on TIF and Non-TIF campuses. Teachers cite improvements in the quality of observations and evaluations they are receiving. However, many teachers do not believe that their administrators are receiving effective training on how to improve as instructional leaders.

Principal evaluation ratings and goal attainment data trended in opposite directions. In 2017-18, principals became more likely to receive the highest-possible ratings on their evaluations but less likely to meet their end-of-year goals. Instructional Leadership was the evaluation standard on which the smallest percentage of principals received Distinguished or Accomplished ratings. Similarly, Instructional Leadership was the standard on which the highest percentage of assistant principals received Developing or Needs Improvement ratings.

Retention and Recruitment Data

Since the onset of the H-STEP project, the percentage of new teacher hires with extensive teaching experience and graduate degrees has increased. HPS campuses retained over 80% of their teachers and principals in both 2016-17 and 2017-18. Teachers who are retained year-over-year are less likely than the general teaching population to receive Ineffective ratings.

Implications and Next Steps

Harmony's efforts to strengthen its HCMS is already resulting in more thoughtful policies and protocols, engendering educator goodwill, and improving the overall quality of the network's schools. The rollout of key project elements in Year Two is generally well-received, and staff roundly appreciate the opportunity to provide input and to help shape the project's trajectory.

In several areas, Harmony's efforts to operationalize its vision can still be strengthened. Areas for improvement are described below:

Issue One: Communication and Ownership

- Use email and dedicated digital platforms to reinforce information that has already been communicated verbally.
- Create professional development opportunities that address the realities of what teachers are experiencing in their classrooms.
- Prioritize outreach to educators who are situated in more geographically isolated regions, who teach co-curricular subjects, and who work with Special Education and ELL students.

Issue Two: Principal Preparation

- Build the capacity of principals to have ongoing conversations with their teachers about how PD and financial incentives are connected to their individualized career pathways.
- Orient PD toward the instructional development of school leaders. Principals need to possess comfort and credibility as instructional leaders.
- Examine the relationship between the decrease in year-end goal attainment on principal evaluations and the increase in “Distinguished” ratings on standards aligned with the T-PESS rubric.

Issue Three: Mid-Course Corrections

- Time the rollout of major project initiatives to maximize their ability to shape educator practice.
- Publicize and celebrate the specific modifications made in response to educator feedback.

Issue Four: Student Outcomes

- Probe the EOC Algebra data.

Summary

Harmony continues to make significant progress implementing the H-STEP project. Measures taken in Year Two were characterized by more robust communication and continued responsiveness to educator input. Student performance and teacher retention data are trending positively on TIF campuses, indicating that the grant project is starting to demonstrate some of its intended effects. For HPS to strengthen H-STEP over the final three years of the grant period, it will need to equip district and campus leaders to fully own the responsibility for effective implementation of the project. Educators who perceive the project to be clear, coherent, and applicable to their individual roles are likelier to view professional development, career pathways, and performance-based compensation as contributing to their growth and advancement within the HPS network.

II. OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

A. Overview

Teacher Incentive Fund Grant

Harmony Public Schools (HPS) received a five-year, \$26.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education in September 2016 to support new strategies to improve the effectiveness of its educators. The Harmony Supporting Top Educators Program (H-STEP) project, which was funded under the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) program, identified four human capital management system (HCMS) levers to address this goal:

- Lever 1: Deepening and differentiating professional development for teachers;
- Lever 2: Deepening and differentiating professional development for administrators;
- Lever 3: Developing more consistency in career pathways across the district;
- Lever 4: Rewarding teaching and leading with financial incentives.¹

At the time of the TIF application, HPS operated 46 campuses located in seven educational agencies. Thirty-nine were designated as “TIF Project Schools” where implementation of initiatives aligned with these four levers would be concentrated. Relative to their peers attending other schools in the HPS network, students at TIF Project Schools are more likely to be low-income, Hispanic, and classified as “Limited English Proficient.”

Table 1. HPS Student Demographics (2017-18)

	TIF	Non-TIF
Female	48.1%	49.6%
Gifted	11.6%	15.1%
Limited English Proficient	26.9%	22.8%
Retention	0.2%	0.1%
Ethnicity		
White	11.9%	15.8%
Asian	8.8%	18.4%
Black	18.0%	18.4%
Hispanic	59.3%	44.1%
Others	2.0%	3.3%
Economically Disadvantaged		
Free Lunch	61.3%	49.0%
Reduced Lunch	7.4%	7.7%
Total	68.6%	56.7%

¹ In this report, the terms “TIF” and “H-STEP” are used interchangeably to reference work resulting from the TIF grant award.

By the start of the 2018-19 instructional year, HPS was operating 56 campuses. None of the campuses opened subsequent to the TIF application have been designated as TIF Project Schools.

Goal of this Report

This report assesses the efficacy of the H-STEP project after two years of implementation with a specific focus on the 2017-18 instructional year. Building off the *Harmony Supporting Top Educators Program (H-STEP) Baseline Year Evaluation Report*, which chronicled the first year of project implementation and offered recommendations for continuous improvement, this Year Two report provides updated information about how the project is being perceived and whether it is achieving its intended outcomes. In this report, we note and explore trends in the data, assessing the causal effect of the H-STEP program on key outcome measures when possible. After describing our findings and their implications, we offer recommendations for improvement.

CTAC begins by describing the steps that HPS took to implement H-STEP in 2017-18. Next, we explain the methods that we used to collect data. This is followed by an analysis of how effectively the project was implemented in Year Two. Subsequently, we assess the impact of the project on student learning, educator performance, and teacher recruitment and retention. Finally, we summarize our findings and discuss implications from the evidence gathered.

Year Two Efforts

Year One focused primarily on planning and design and included some early ramp-up activities. Implementation of the H-STEP project began in earnest in 2017-18. Specific measures undertaken in Year Two of the grant period are described below.

Professional Learning Communities. HPS implemented Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at the campus and district levels in 2017-18. Campus Level PLCs — which convened either weekly, biweekly, or once every three weeks at the discretion of school leaders — consisted of grade-level or department meetings to plan common assessments, review student data, share effective strategies, and create action plans. District Level PLCs — which convened twice over the summer and quarterly during the school year — focused on unpacking standards, reviewing district assessment data, and discussing instructional strategies. The Central Office created a PLC Toolkit for leaders and participants to reference during meetings.

Leadership Training. HPS held a four-day leadership summit in July 2017 and engaged with the University of Texas at Austin's Institute of Public Schools Initiative (IPSI) to provide ongoing training to principals and assistant principals throughout the 2017-18 school year. Additionally, two cohorts of prospective leaders attended four training sessions during the 2017-18 year through the Harmony Aspiring Leaders Academy (HALA).

Teacher Professional Development. HPS implemented new coaching protocols in 2017-18 after partnering with Corwin Press to train instructional coaches and curriculum directors over the summer. HPS adapted the Jim Knight Group's coaching materials and created toolkits for both coaches and teachers. Additionally, HPS built out its digital library by licensing resources from the Danielson Group and *Teach Like a Champion* and making them available on internal staff portals.

Student Learning Objectives. HPS piloted Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to measure student growth in non-tested subjects. Teachers in non-tested subjects could earn performance-based bonuses by completing SLO templates, rubrics, submission forms, and scoresheets, and then uploading the materials to a designated Google drive. HPS created and disseminated guidelines outlining the process for teachers in non-tested subjects to earn \$1,000 performance bonuses based on their SLO submissions.

Micro-Credentials. In partnership with BloomBoard, Harmony identified a set of micro-credentials aligned to the network's teacher evaluation system.² Communication to leaders began in May 2018, and the initiative launched three months later. During this planning phase, HPS awarded micro-credential credits to 12 of the 27 educators who participated in its *Personalized Professional Learning* program.

Dedicated H-STEP Website. HPS created a dedicated website to share information and resources related to the H-STEP project.³ The site contains details about project-related initiatives (including PLCs, SLOs, and micro-credentials), descriptions of key project partners, and a contact page for interested parties to post questions or comments. CTAC's Baseline Year Evaluation Report is also posted on the site, affording HPS stakeholders an opportunity to remain apprised of the project's status and impact as it phases in.

Performance-Based Compensation. During the 2017-18 school year, HPS surveyed all internal stakeholders to collect feedback about the network's bonus structure and to solicit input regarding future redesign. Subsequently, it established a bonus redesign committee to propose changes to the performance bonus system that would go into effect during the 2018-19 school year. It then posted a slide deck outlining the proposed changes on the designated H-STEP website and opened a public comment period prior to presenting the proposal to the HPS Board of Directors.

Summary: Year Two Efforts

After a year of consultation and preparation, HPS began phasing in several of the H-STEP project's core components in 2017-18. Planning continued apace for initiatives scheduled to launch in Year Three of the grant period.

² The term "network" refers to the entire interconnected HPS system including its campuses, district offices, and central headquarters.

³ The website is publicly accessible at <https://www.tifgrant.harmonytx.org>.

B. Methodology

CTAC employed a mixed-methods approach in order to produce this interim report. To assess the ongoing implementation and impact of the H-STEP project, CTAC collected and assessed both qualitative and quantitative data. This approach allows us to triangulate findings to increase the specificity of our analysis. The multiple sources of data include: (a) interviews and focus groups with educators, parents, and students; (b) survey responses from educators, parents and students; (c) teacher, principal, and assistant principal evaluation data; (d) teacher and principal recruitment and retention data; (e) financial incentive payout data; (f) micro-credentialing data; (g) student achievement data; and (h) artifacts.

The following questions guided this report:

- How was H-STEP implemented in 2017-18?
- Has H-STEP had a discernible impact on student outcomes, educator performance, or teacher retention?
- How have teachers' and principals' beliefs and attitudes towards H-STEP evolved over the first two years of project implementation?
- What are central office and district administrators' beliefs and attitudes toward H-STEP?
- How do educator, parent, and student perceptions of H-STEP reflect broader issues within the Harmony Public Schools network?
- What additional support do educators need in order to implement H-STEP with greater fidelity?

These questions focus on both the execution and the impact of the H-STEP project over its first two years. In assessing the fidelity with which H-STEP has been implemented and the effect it has had on key outcomes, this report is designed to help inform HPS's attempts to engage in continuous improvement efforts over the life of the grant.

Data Collection

Interviews and Focus Groups

CTAC conducted confidential interviews and focus groups in Spring 2018 with a host of stakeholders using semi-structured protocols developed in collaboration with HPS. Protocols were customized to the role of the participant and examined the perceptions of frontline educators on the implementation and impact of the four levers of H-STEP. The study team conducted thematic analyses to identify common themes and key issues in the discussion based on similarities across interview and focus group participants. Two principal interviews were conducted over the phone, and all the other interviews and focus groups were held on site. Each interview was approximately one hour long, and each focus group was approximately 90 minutes long.

Table 2. Interview and Focus Group Participants (2017-18)

	Central / District Offices	H-STEP Campuses	Non H-STEP Campuses
Central Office Administrators	9	N/A	N/A
District Superintendents	2	N/A	N/A
Area Coordinators	6	N/A	N/A
Instructional Coaches	10	N/A	N/A
Principals	N/A	9	2
Deans of Academics	N/A	7	2
Teachers	N/A	55	17
Parents	N/A	14	0
Students	N/A	18	0
Total (n = 151)	27	103	21

To protect the identity of individual participants throughout this report, CTAC has grouped district superintendents, area coordinators, and instructional coaches together as “district administrators.” Similarly, we have grouped principals and deans of academics together as “principals.”

Surveys

CTAC reviewed data from three distinct types of surveys: (1) an H-STEP Survey that seeks feedback from HPS personnel specifically about the implementation of this TIF program; (2) Professional Development Feedback Surveys circulated at the conclusion of all PD sessions funded wholly or partially through H-STEP; and (3) a School Climate Survey administered to educators, parents, and students.

H-STEP Survey. In partnership with HPS, the CTAC study team developed and launched a confidential survey on April 10, 2018. CTAC updated HPS twice per week on the progress of survey participation. HPS staff sent multiple reminders to maximize the number of responses. The survey was closed on May 7, 2018. Expanding our reach to generate a broader range of perspectives, we also circulated the 2017-18 survey to Non-TIF campus educators and to central office and district administrators.

Table 3. H-STEP Survey Response Rates (2016-17 and 2017-18)

	2016-2017	2017-2018
By Primary Position		
Central Office Administrators	N/A	50.5%
District Administrators	N/A	56.4%
Classroom teachers	82.6%	84.1%
Non-classroom teachers (e.g., interventionists, reading specialists)	100.0%	100.0%
Special programs educators (e.g., ESL/SPED/GT coordinators and teachers)	89.0%	71.2%
Principals	100.0%	100.0%

	2016-2017	2017-2018
Assistant principals	99.1%	86.9%
Other campus administrators (e.g. operation manager, counselor, testing coordinator)	89.2%	100.0%
By H-STEP Campus Status		
H-STEP Campuses	87.6%	84.9%
Non H-STEP Campuses	N/A	87.9%
HPS Total (n = 2,627)	87.6%	85.7%

The total number of survey responses increased from 1,968 in 2016-17 to 2,627 in 2017-18. Respondents represented the following groups: H-STEP Teacher (n = 1,520); Non H-STEP Teacher (n = 575); H-STEP Principal (n = 126); Non H-STEP Principal (n = 43); Central Office Administrator (n = 52); and District Administrator (n = 84). The remaining 227 respondents either did not specify their roles or described themselves as an “other” campus administrator.

As was the case in 2016-17, CTAC’s analyses included examining responses from teachers belonging to three distinct groups: classroom instructors, non-classroom teachers (e.g. interventionists and reading specialists), and special programs educators (e.g. ESL/SPED/GT coordinators and teachers). Because teachers from each group responded in a highly consistent fashion, CTAC grouped their responses together in the “teacher” category. Similarly, CTAC again grouped responses from principals and assistant principals into one category (“principal”). We also conducted Mann-Whitney U tests to examine the statistical significance of the differences across groups and years.

Professional Development Feedback Surveys. From August 1, 2017 to May 14, 2018, HPS provided 464 professional development (PD) activities related to the H-STEP initiative. After each PD session funded wholly or partially by the H-STEP project, participants were invited to complete a brief survey that sought feedback about the quality, usefulness, and relevance of the PD. Participants were assured that their responses would be kept strictly confidential and that the results would only be reported in the aggregate. HPS collected a total of 1,661 responses from 640 educators. Survey respondents included 15 central office administrators, 23 district administrators, 446 educators from H-STEP campuses (i.e., 3 principals, 403 teachers, and 40 operational and support staff), and 156 educators from Non H-STEP campuses (i.e., 1 principal, 139 teachers, and 16 operational and support staff).

School Climate Surveys. CTAC reviewed data from 2017-18 School Climate Surveys administered by HPS. For all stakeholder groups, the survey consisted of a battery of questions presented on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For educators, survey questions centered on: (a) satisfaction; (b) mission and vision; (c) leadership; (d) communication; (e) feedback and recognition; and (f) work environment. In total, 1,633 HPS staff members completed the School Climate Survey. Respondents represented the following groups:

Central Office Administrators (n = 63); District Administrators (n = 73); H-STEP Teachers (n = 772); Non H-STEP Teachers (n = 280); H-STEP Other (n = 338); and Non H-STEP Other (n = 107).⁴

Parents and students were asked questions that generally fell within the following categories: (a) expectations; (b) student support; (c) communication; (d) family engagement; and (e) school culture. Distinct from the surveys circulated among HPS educators, the format consisted of questions presented on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Parents and students were asked the same battery of 34 questions. Participation rates varied according to question with n-sizes ranging from 1,066 to 2,826 for parents and 1,408 to 4,552 for students.

Teacher, Principal, and Assistant Principal Evaluation Data

CTAC analyzed teacher, principal, and assistant principal evaluation data. Teacher performance data were gathered from observations conducted by HPS over the past four school years, i.e. the two that immediately preceded the onset of the H-STEP project (i.e. 2014-15 and 2015-16) and the first two years of the project period (i.e. 2016-17 and 2017-18). We reviewed evaluation ratings across five key indicators embedded in the Harmony Teacher Evaluation and Support System (H-TESS) rubric: (1) setting instructional outcomes; (2) managing classroom procedures; (3) using questioning and discussion techniques; (4) engaging students in learning; and (5) using assessment in instruction. These data included evaluation scores for 145 teachers in 2014-15; 1,634 teachers in 2015-16; 2,059 teachers in 2016-17; and 2,309 teachers in 2017-18.

Additionally, CTAC reviewed principal evaluation data from the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 school years. HPS principal evaluations assess whether principals attain year-end goals in two overarching categories: professional practice and student growth. Moreover, the evaluations are aligned to five components of the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS) rubric: (1) instructional leadership; (2) human capital; (3) executive leadership; (4) school culture; and (5) strategic operations.

CTAC also analyzed assistant principal evaluation data from 2017-18. Because longitudinal data are not available, our analysis does not address changes in assistant principal performance that have occurred since the inception of the H-STEP project.

Staff Recruitment and Retention Data

CTAC reviewed staff recruitment and retention data from the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. With respect to recruitment, CTAC analyzed the educational qualifications, professional credentials, and experience levels of job applicants. CTAC also reviewed staff retention rates across the HPS network and disaggregated the data by professional role, TIF campus status, and teacher evaluation ratings.

⁴ The "Other" category encompasses campus-based, non-instructional personnel including school administrators, medical professionals/nurses, secretaries/clerical assistants, teacher assistants, and professional counselors/coordinators.

Financial Incentive Payout Data

CTAC reviewed data related to bonuses and stipends awarded under Harmony's Performance-Based Compensation (PBC) system. As part of the H-STEP project, HPS expanded its "Priority Schools" program in order to provide more intensive supports and services to additional high-risk schools. Accordingly, while eight priority schools were identified in Harmony's 2016 TIF proposal, that number nearly doubled to 15 in 2017-18.⁵ Educators at Priority Schools are eligible for supplemental bonuses based on school-wide improvement on the state's accountability system. To preserve consistency in our analysis, CTAC defines "Priority Schools" in this report as those explicitly enumerated as such in Harmony's 2016 TIF application.

Micro-Credentialing Data

A micro-credential is a digital form of certification indicating that an educator has demonstrated mastery of a specific competency. The 2017-18 year was the first year for which micro-credentialing data exist. CTAC reviewed data concerning program offerings, participation, and credit issuance.

Student Achievement Data

To assess the impact of the H-STEP initiative on student achievement, CTAC analyzed outcomes on NWEA MAP, STAAR assessments, and End-of-Course (EOC) exams at H-STEP campuses, Non H-STEP campuses, and a set of comparison schools extrinsic to the HPS network.⁶

Selection of comparison schools. Using publicly available data from the Texas Education Agency website covering the 2013-14 through 2015-16 school years, CTAC identified a set of comparison schools from other districts across the state. To identify comparison schools, we selected the following variables:

- Student characteristics including demographics (ELL, economically disadvantaged, ethnicity, and at-risk) and disciplinary placement;
- Teacher characteristics including demographics (ethnicity and gender), experience, average salary, and average number of students per teacher;
- Geography (i.e. location in a region within which HPS also operates); and
- STAAR results.

⁵ The following 8 schools were identified as priority schools in HPS' 2016 TIF proposal: Harmony Science Academy – Austin; Harmony Science Academy – Houston; Harmony School of Excellence – Endeavor; Harmony School of Innovation – San Antonio; Harmony School of Innovation – Austin; Harmony School of Innovation – Laredo; Harmony Science Academy – Lubbock; Harmony Science Academy – Odessa. In 2017-18, one school — Harmony Science Academy – Houston — was declassified. The remaining seven schools retained their "priority" designation and were joined by Harmony School of Excellence – Austin; Harmony School of Science – Houston; Harmony School of Fine Arts and Technology – Houston; Harmony School of Exploration – Houston; Harmony Science Academy – Bryan; Harmony Science Academy – Fort Worth; Harmony Science Academy – Grand Prairie; and Harmony Science Academy – Waco.

⁶ The NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is a nationally normed, computer-adaptive assessment that HPS administers semi-annually, first as a diagnostic instrument and later as a formative instrument to measure progress toward mastery over the course of the year. Texas administers STAAR assessments annually as summative measures of student learning.

CTAC used a probit model to estimate propensity scores for elementary, middle, and high schools. As a robust check, we ran a separate probit regression for elementary schools. Results indicated that the estimated propensity scores between the two regressions were significantly correlated. Consequently, schools with the closest estimated propensity scores to the H-STEP campuses in 2015-16 were identified as the comparison schools. To confirm that the same comparison school set would be valid for prior years of student data, we ran additional probit regressions based on 2013-14 and 2014-15 results. Again, the relationship between the estimated propensity scores from across all three years was robust.

We employed a school-level Difference-in-Difference (DiD) model to strengthen the analysis. Specifically, by comparing H-STEP schools to the above-described and identified schools both before and after the implementation of the H-STEP initiative, the model controls for observable and measurable student and teacher characteristics that may have contributed to student growth. In addition, it allows for a higher level of “control” over time-invariant, unobservable, and immeasurable factors such as a student’s innate ability.

Equation (1) provides the basic structure of the model in estimating the effect of the TIF initiative on student achievement.

$$Y_{st} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(TIF_s) + \beta_2(POST_t) + \beta_3(TIF_s \times POST_t) + X_{st} + e_{st} \quad (1)$$

Here Y_{st} is the average standardized STAAR test score of school s at time t . This outcome is modeled as a function of the following variables: variable TIF_s , which is coded 1 for a TIF school and 0 otherwise; variable $POST_t$, which is coded 1 if the observed test score comes from the post-implementation period of the TIF initiative and 0 otherwise; and an interaction term of TIF_s and $POST_t$. The estimated effect of the TIF initiative is measured by β_3 , which identifies the average effect on student achievement of the TIF initiative. In addition, a vector of school-level covariates X_{st} is included to control any observed differences in the TIF schools and the comparison schools.⁷

Artifacts

CTAC reviewed artifacts and data related to the implementation of the H-STEP project. These include, non-exhaustively,

- The dedicated H-STEP website;
- Harmony’s TIF proposal;
- Performance-Based Compensation materials, including Harmony’s 2017-18 PBC Plan and proposed changes for 2018-19;
- Communications materials, including internal correspondence and email analytics;
- Professional Development resources, including the Professional Learning Communities toolkit, session schedules and agendas, and tutorials for accessing online modules and feedback surveys, submitting external PD requests, and logging credits;

⁷ A complete list of comparison schools is included in the Appendix.

- Micro-credential information, including role cards and internal messaging; and
- Instructional support materials, including the instructional playbook, framework, and resource centers.

Limitations

Four limitations are apparent in the data. *First*, as described above, Harmony's list of Priority Schools does not remain static. To generate valid year-over-year comparisons, our analysis of H-STEP implementation and impact within Priority Schools remains based on the list of eight campuses included in HPS's 2016 TIF application.

Second, STAAR exam progress measures for English language learners were discontinued in 2017-18. Thus, while we disaggregated our analysis of HPS students meeting their expected growth targets in Reading and Math by ELL status in our Baseline Report, we were unable to reproduce that analysis during Year Two.

Third, the identification numbers assigned to applicants and educators in the staff recruitment, promotion, evaluation, and retention databases at HPS can vary between files. The network's transition to the Skyward system in 2016-17 compounded these issues. This resulted in data frictions when we attempted to merge files.

Fourth, two changes to how STAAR data are reported, which went into effect after the 2016-17 assessment cycle, affected the Difference-in-Difference analysis. Most significantly, prior to 2016-17, TEA reported on the percentage of students who met or exceeded their expected progress. For the past two assessment cycles, TEA instead published student growth rates. To account for this shift, CTAC used the percentage of students approaching grade level or above, a measure that was reported for all three years, as the student achievement measure.

Additionally, prior to 2016-17, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) assigned one of three labels to a student's STAAR score: Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, or Advanced. For the past two assessment cycles, TEA has used a four-tier rating system: Does Not Meet Grade Level, Approaches Grade Level, Meets Grade Level, and Masters Grade Level. This shift included an adjustment to the underlying cutoff scores, which resulted in possible inconsistencies in the data between the years that preceded 2016-17 and the years that followed.

It should be noted that the DiD findings are eligible to meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards with reservations. Although the DiD model yields estimates on the causal effects of the TIF initiative, these estimates would be subject to the standard reservations as outlined by the WWC standards due to factors that are beyond the model's reach.

These limitations do not impair our ability to discern consistent findings from the available data or to generate an accurate assessment of the H-STEP project after two years. The findings that emerge from the data have significant implications for HPS management as it seeks to maximize the potential of the project to achieve its intended outcomes.

Summary: Methodology

CTAC collected and analyzed four types of data for this evaluation: perceptual data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups; educator data including teacher and administrator evaluations, recruitment and retention, financial incentive payouts, and micro-credential credit issuance; student performance data including MAP, STAAR, and EOC assessments; and artifacts of program implementation. By triangulating data from multiple sources, juxtaposing TIF schools against internal and external comparison sets, and monitoring longitudinal trend lines, we are able to create a clear snapshot of how effectively H-STEP has achieved its aims to date.

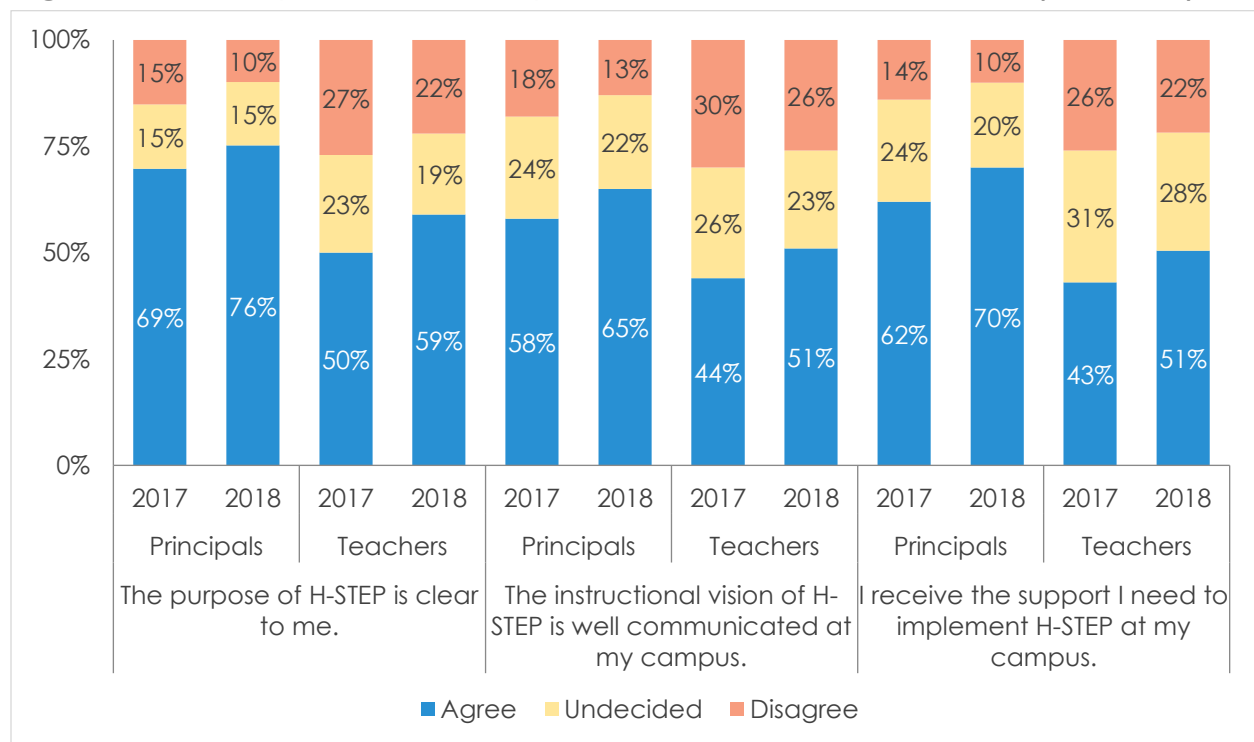
III. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A. Year Two Progress

In surveys, interviews, and focus groups, CTAC asked educators about their perceptions of H-STEP implementation during the project’s second year. Respondents addressed topics ranging from their overall understanding of the project to the efficacy of the network’s communication efforts. In general, CTAC found that HPS educators are more familiar with, and supportive of, many of the program’s core elements. However, educators do not necessarily associate these well-regarded initiatives with the H-STEP project on the whole.

The purpose of the H-STEP Program became clearer to principals and teachers in Year Two. Principals and teachers believe that communication about the instructional vision of H-STEP improved year-over-year, and both also indicate that they feel more supported in their efforts to implement the program on their campuses (see Figure 1). This positive trend line indicates that Harmony’s intensified messaging efforts have been fruitful.

Figure 1. Perceptions of Campus Conditions and Culture (2017-18)



On balance, principals continue to possess greater clarity about H-STEP’s purpose and vision, and feel more supported in their efforts, than do teachers. Whereas 76% of principals agree that the purpose of H-STEP is clear, only 59% of teachers feel similarly.

Educators appreciate that their input was solicited with respect to the refinement of bonus criteria. HPS principals and teachers credit the central office for seeking input about the eligibility criteria for bonuses and creating new opportunities for educators outside of core subject areas to earn stipends.

“[Central Office Administrators] shared with us the grant information and sought input on how to give incentives. . . For the non-tested teachers, they are trained. They know what to do, what documents to submit online. They are informed.”

- H-STEP Principal

“We did not have input when [H-STEP] was initially rolled out . . . [so] it is nice now that there is something for the non-tested teachers with the Student Learning Objectives.”

- H-STEP Principal

Harmony created new avenues for educators to participate in the development of the H-STEP program in 2017-18 by disseminating a survey regarding proposed changes to the performance bonus structure and soliciting written feedback during a public comment period. These outreach efforts resulted in enhanced two-way communication.

Educators are generally aware of the program’s elements but do not necessarily associate them with H-STEP. Harmony staff members express widespread familiarity with recent structural shifts such as adjustments to the network’s bonus framework and the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Familiarity with the project’s components, however, does not translate into broad familiarity with the overarching project itself.

The rollout of PLCs, particularly at the district level, was generally well-received by HPS educators.

“Leadership around PLCs is new this year. We have PLCs when we go to other campuses. I enjoy the 1st grade PLCs, sharing and collaborating. We created a Google Classroom for all 1st grade teachers across Harmony to share lesson plans.”

- H-STEP Teacher

“Working with teachers across the district who teach the same subject / grade I do is very helpful. We are able to get ideas from each other.”

- H-STEP Teacher

Administrators also see benefits accruing from the development of PLCs.

“Adding PLCs with TIF has been huge for HPS, for teachers to have purpose, best practices, and data sharing from professional development.”

- District Administrator

HPS educators often fail to ascribe the launch of these individual components to the H-STEP project. Although H-STEP was conceived as an integrated, cohesive undertaking, HPS educators tend to view it as a collection of independent components that lack a clear connection to a broader whole.

“I asked two veteran teachers at this campus what H-STEP was so that I could complete this survey and neither one knew what it was any more than I did.”

- H-STEP Teacher

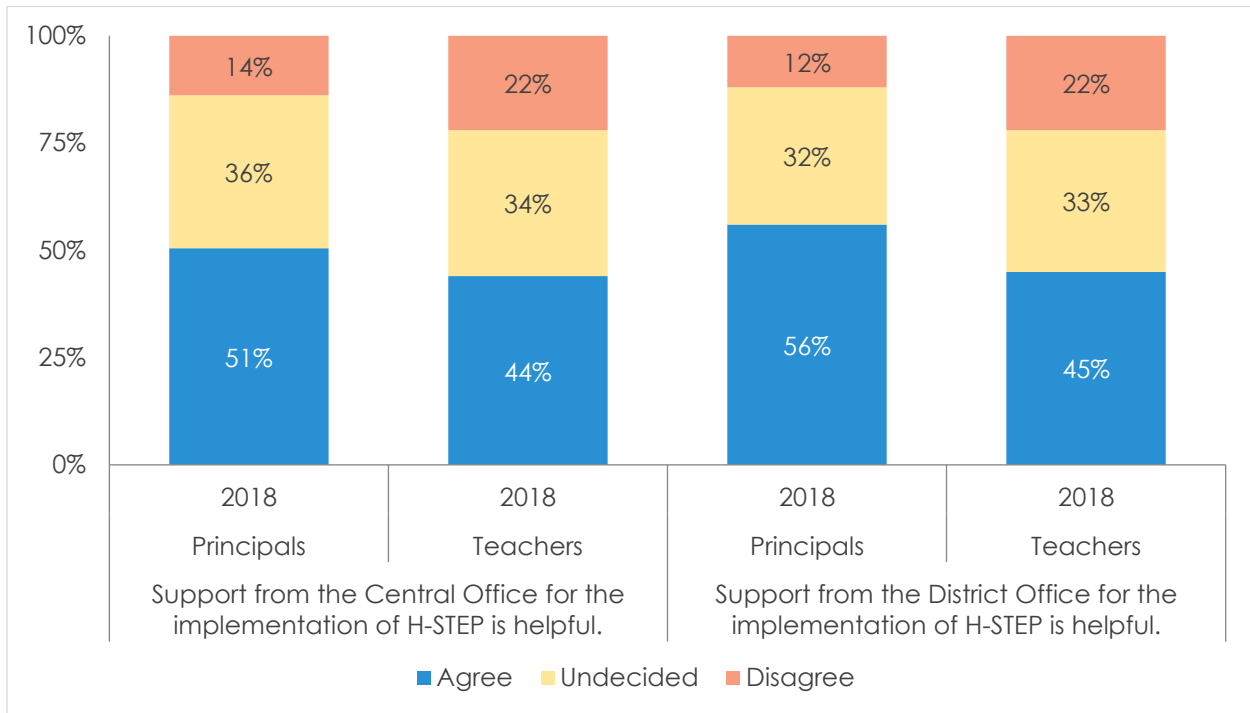
Without a clear understanding of how the project’s various components are mutually dependent, educators perceive each ensuing phase as an entirely new network initiative that supplants rather than builds upon what immediately preceded it.

“The interesting thing about Harmony is they move fast. They will embrace something new, and we are going to go for it and we are all in. They will do really quick training, and they jump. It does become daunting because there are a lot of programs to keep track of. It seems like we are always trying to learn a new thing.”

- District Administrator

Teachers and principals largely do not perceive the district and central offices as providing the essential support needed to implement H-STEP effectively on their campuses. As seen above in Figure 1, 70% of principals feel that they receive the necessary support to implement H-STEP on their campuses. As demonstrated in Figure 2 below, however, smaller percentages of principals find the support provided from the district office (56%) and the central office (51%) to be helpful. Similarly, 51% of teachers agree that they receive the necessary support to implement H-STEP effectively. Again, the percentage of teachers who find H-STEP support from the district office (45%) and central office (44%) to be helpful is comparatively smaller.

Figure 2. Perceptions of H-STEP Implementation Support (2017-18)



The district and central offices are responsible for ensuring that campus-based educators understand how professional development, career pathways, and performance-based compensation work in concert to enhance the quality of instruction in HPS classrooms. And, in Year Two, these administrators took several important steps to ensure that project-related information was broadly available. To this point, however, “H-STEP” has not been transformed into commonly understood shorthand that captures each of the project’s individual components and the project as a unified whole.

HPS leaders have not adequately reinforced messages communicated via email and on dedicated digital platforms. Teachers state that they primarily receive information about H-STEP via email. However, as seen in Table 4, an increase in email traffic has not engendered a proportionate increase in teacher awareness and engagement.

Table 4. H-STEP Email Analytics (2017-18)

Date	Topic	Number of Recipients	Open Rate	Click Rate
2/15/18	SLOs	1305	83.2%	7.4%
2/20/18	SLOs	1458	74.9%	8.3%
2/26/18	SLOs	1458	73.1%	3.6%
3/29/18	Bonus Maximization	1613	78.4%	6.4%
4/16/18	H-TESS & Performance Bonus	1805	91.0%	7.8%
4/26/18	H-STEP Survey	1805	69.2%	13.3%
5/17/18	Performance Bonus Redesign	1804	81.3%	24.1%
5/18/18	Non-Tested Teacher Bonuses (SLOs)	1457	74.9%	9.3%

Some teachers cite both the density of the content of the emails and their unfamiliarity with the emails' senders as barriers to mastering their substance.

“They talked about it in the first year. I never paid attention. Then I got a lot of emails, not from our administrators but from the Central Office. I feel that if it comes from our administrator, it is more important. Some of the emails are really wordy. Emails should be short with bullets.”

- H-STEP Teacher

One teacher, who sought information beyond what was provided in emails and on the dedicated TIF website, recalls asking a principal for clarity about the H-STEP project.

“[My principal] said, ‘I don’t really know.’ If she is not informed, I cannot be informed.”

- H-STEP Teacher

Some principals confirm that they feel ill-equipped to import the network’s message to their campuses.

“H-STEP has not been clearly explained on any level, and there is currently little to no support from district or central office for this. I honestly don’t feel comfortable explaining any of this to my teachers.”

- H-STEP Principal

District administrators play a key role in transmitting pertinent information to principals so that they can, in turn, communicate with their campus teams. However, some of these administrators also express poor understanding of the H-STEP project.

Educators at all levels of the HPS system express a need for greater understanding of H-STEP as a whole.

“I do not know much about H-STEP. I didn’t get specific trainings on it. We have a shared Google drive where administrators post documents. If you are willing to learn, you can do that. That’s where I learned of H-STEP. Mostly, it’s voluntary. Otherwise, no.”

- District Administrator

Thus, despite Harmony’s attempts to convey pertinent information electronically, educators at all levels of the HPS system express a need for greater understanding of H-STEP as a whole. Numerous principals and district administrators sometimes feel insufficiently prepared to transmit H-STEP’s core messages and information. One principal spoke frankly about the

implementation challenges over the project's first two years while retaining optimism that improvements would continue to occur over the life of the grant.

“Our teachers have no understanding of or involvement in H-STEP, have not been able to explore the career pathways, take differentiated PD, or really take advantage of what it means to be a TIF campus. Many teachers do not receive applicable PD, teachers have not been able to take advantage of TIF funds for additional PD, and they are not aware of the career pathways. A handful of teachers are attempting the SLO implementation, but they were very confused about what it was and what its purpose was. There are so many amazing opportunities from the TIF grant, and I think as we continue into the life of the grant, more of it will reach the campuses. I am thankful for this opportunity for our teachers!”

- H-STEP Principal

Summary: Year Two Progress

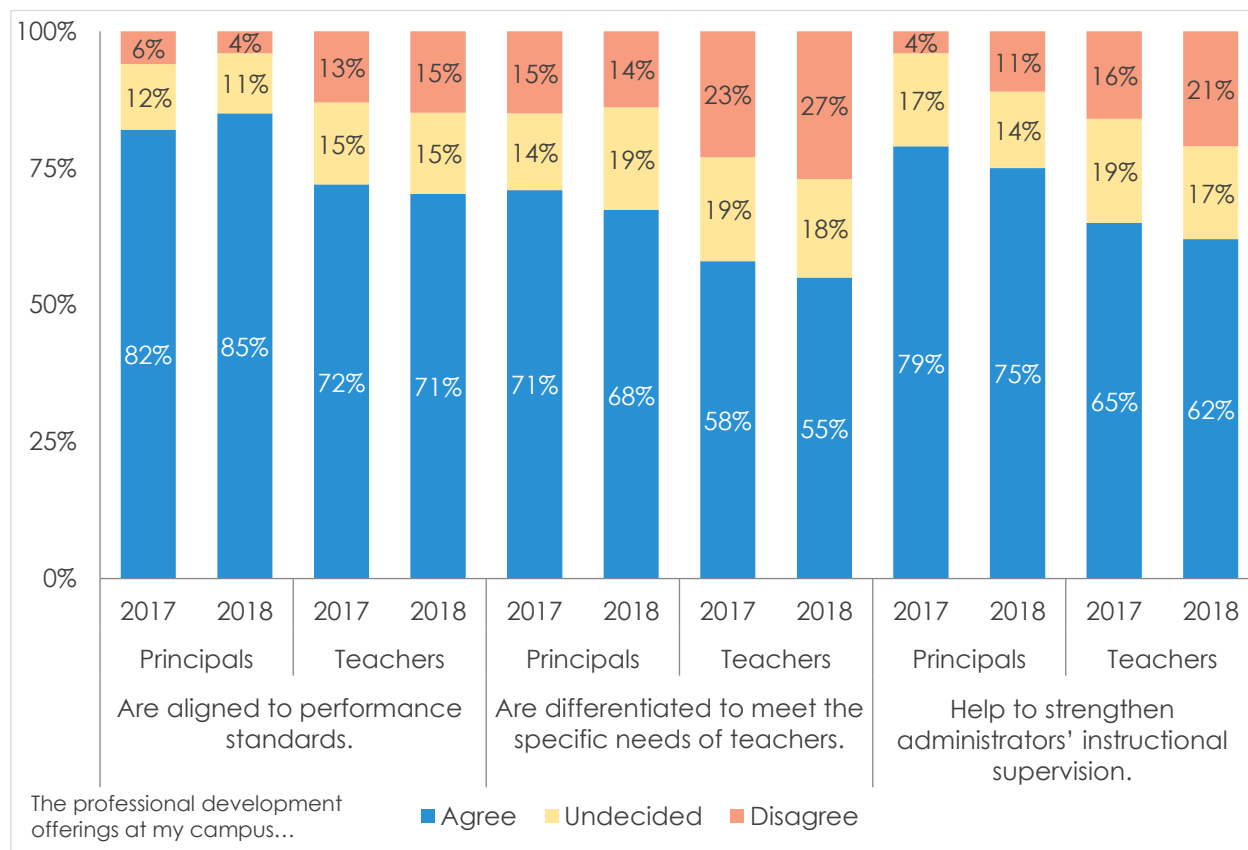
HPS made strides in Year Two to clarify the project's aims and generate buy-in from staff. Educators are generally more familiar with H-STEP's key components. However, they do not necessarily connect the individual components to the overarching project. By creating a dedicated project website, sending regular emails, and thoughtfully soliciting staff input, HPS has laid the foundation for stronger communication. HPS leaders at multiple levels of the organization, however, would like to have more support so that they can more effectively message the project to their teams.

B. Levers 1 and 2: Professional Development

Deepening and differentiating professional development for teachers and administrators are key H-STEP project objectives. In surveys, interviews, and focus groups, HPS educators expressed their views on the quality, usefulness, and relevance of PD sessions offered during the 2017-18 instructional year. CTAC reviewed information from both the H-STEP Educator Survey and the Professional Development Feedback Surveys circulated at the close of all trainings funded either wholly or partially by Harmony's TIF grant. Respondents also offered suggestions for how the network's approach to PD can continue to improve over the life of the H-STEP project.

The launch of PLCs was roundly viewed as a highlight of the network's approach to PD in 2017-18. In general, the majority of H-STEP teachers and principals believe that the PD offerings available on their campuses improve teacher practice and help educators meet the learning needs of all students. Principals continue to be more positive about the quality of PD than are teachers. For example, while 68% of principals believe that PD offerings are differentiated to meet the specific needs of teachers, only 55% of teachers believe that to be the case (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Perceptions of Professional Development (2017-18)



The advent of PLCs during the 2017-18 school year was a key development. Teachers, principals, and administrators from the central and district offices all cite PLCs as a welcome addition to the network’s PD profile.

“This PLC made my year, literally, the resources and information provided made my first year of middle school possible (from someone who SWORE to never teach middle schoolers!).”

- H-STEP Teacher

Nine out of 10 times, teachers who responded to PD Feedback Surveys in 2017-18 indicated that they believed the training sessions would contribute to improvements in their instructional practice and to student learning gains.

The launch of Professional Learning Communities, particularly those that bring together educators from across HPS districts, is roundly viewed as a highlight of the network’s approach to professional development.

Table 5. Educators' Responses to Professional Development Feedback Surveys (2017-18)

The content and materials of this PD event...	Central Office Administrators (n = 26) ⁸		District Administrators (n = 32)		H-STEP Teachers (n = 1,092)		Non H-STEP Teachers (n = 414)	
	A ⁹	N	A	N	A	N	A	N
Provided information relevant to my work.	88%	12%	91%	6%	94%	4%	92%	7%
Helped me better understand the issues.	81%	15%	91%	6%	91%	7%	90%	8%
Were based on current, up-to-date information.	88%	8%	97%	3%	93%	5%	93%	7%
Were well organized.	73%	15%	94%	3%	91%	7%	92%	6%
Were delivered at the appropriate pace (i.e., not too slow or too fast).	54%	23%	91%	0%	90%	6%	91%	7%
Were easy to understand.	88%	8%	94%	3%	92%	6%	92%	6%
Will contribute to improvement in my instructional practices (for teachers only).					91%	7%	89%	10%
Will contribute to improvement in student achievement.	77%	23%	94%	3%	92%	6%	90%	9%

Thus, even with implementation challenges still being ironed out, PLCs are seen as valuable by the overwhelming majority of respondents.

Educators are more likely to view PD sessions as high-quality than as applicable to their specific roles. Most educators agree that the quality of the PD supported wholly or partially by Harmony's TIF grant is either excellent or good. Over 90% of the responses submitted by teachers at the conclusion of PD sessions indicate that the session had been either excellent or good.

Table 6. Educators' Responses to "Overall, how would you rate the quality of this PD event?" (2017-18)

	Central Office Administrators (n = 26)	District Administrators (n = 32)	H-STEP Teachers (n = 1092)	Non H-STEP Teachers (n = 414)
Excellent	38.5%	62.5%	51.6%	49.0%
Good	38.5%	34.4%	40.0%	43.5%
Fair	19.2%	3.1%	6.9%	7.2%
Poor	3.8%	0.0%	1.5%	0.2%
Total Excellent and Good	76.9%	96.9%	91.7%	92.5%

⁸ The numbers in the parentheses represent the total number of times that educators responded to the survey item. The number of educators and the number of times that they responded to the surveys are: 15 central office administrators for 26 times; 23 district administrators for 32 times; 403 H-STEP teachers for 1,092 times; and 139 Non H-STEP teachers for 414 times.

⁹ "A" is a composite of Agree and Strongly Agree. "N" is Neither Agree nor Disagree. The percentage of educators who Disagree or Strongly Disagree can be calculated by subtracting A and N from 100%.

Teachers responding to PD Feedback Surveys indicate that the information presented was applicable to their work 70% of the time.

Table 7. Educators’ Responses to “How likely are you to apply the information presented today to your work?” (2017-18)

	Central Office Administrators (n = 26)	District Administrators (n = 32)	H-STEP Teachers (n = 1092)	Non H-STEP Teachers (n = 414)
Very Likely and Likely	57.7%	75.0%	69.6%	71.0%
Somewhat likely	38.5%	25.0%	28.6%	28.5%
Not at all likely	3.8%	0.0%	1.8%	0.5%

Continuing to drive toward a more precise calibration between training content and audience increases the chances that participants will find PD sessions useful. For example, multiple stakeholder groups indicate that early-year PDs are not highly applicable. Veteran HPS teachers note that they would prefer PD to be differentiated “based on how long you are here.” Seasoned teachers new to the HPS system lament having to “go through all the training [as though they are] new to the profession.” And truly inexperienced teachers express a desire for more practical, nuts-and-bolts PD that would better prepare them to succeed in Harmony classrooms.

“The concepts we were working with are pretty basic. This PD would be great for someone who is studying to be a teacher. I would have preferred to work to take the scaffolding and differentiation practices and apply it to a case study classroom. I want to apply knowledge to learn how to better use it in my classroom, not just review basic concepts.”

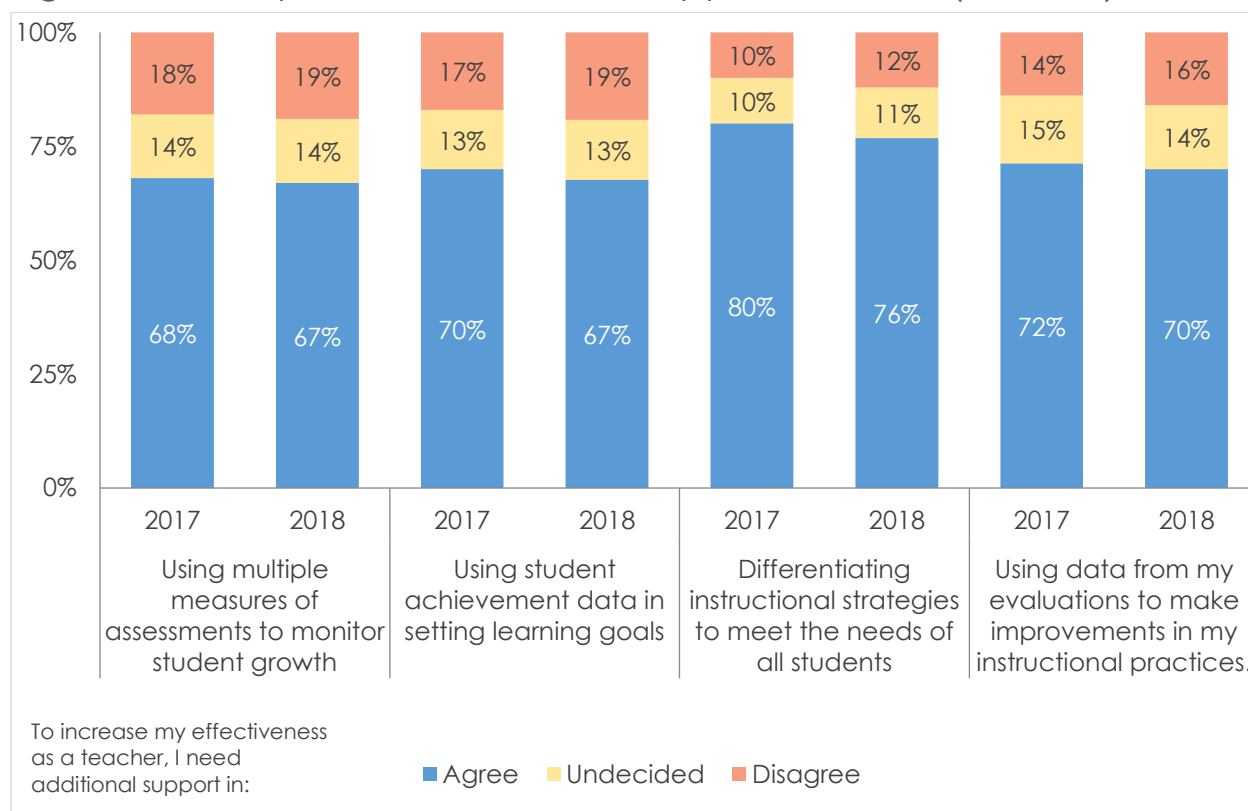
- H-STEP Teacher

“Being new to Harmony, I feel like I went through a lot of trainings that I did not get much out of. There are many strategies, methods, etc. in my subject that I was not trained on or informed about, which has made me feel very ineffective in teaching. I believe there needs to be better training in the basics of our subjects and the different ways we can go about teaching those basics that our students must know.”

- H-STEP Teacher

Relative to 2017, a slightly smaller percentage of teachers indicate that they would benefit from additional support in each of the specific focus areas covered on the H-STEP Survey (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Perceptions of Additional Support Needed (2017-18)



Alternatively, teachers suggest that HPS focus its capacity building energies elsewhere. In addition to greater differentiation based on teaching experience and longevity within the HPS network, educators frequently stress a need for additional support in two areas: (1) working with students with disabilities and English language learners; and (2) classroom management.

A significant number of HPS educators note that they would benefit from additional support with respect to addressing the needs of students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Both principals and teachers express concern that students with disabilities are not reliably having their needs met.

“Teachers are expected to work miracles with SpEd students who have been continuously passed through from year to year, and it isn't fair to the teacher or the student. All the accommodations in the world won't matter if the teacher doesn't have the support to provide them.”

- H-STEP Teacher

General education and special education teachers both agree that they need to be prepared to work collaboratively to make work accessible to students with disabilities.

“As a teacher in Special Education, I believe the general education staff needs training from the district to understand SpEd and our special populations.”

- H-STEP Teacher

The need for additional support in addressing behavioral challenges was also a recurring theme throughout survey, interview, and focus group responses. One district administrator acknowledged that HPS “does not have the tools to be sure to manage behavior” and speculated that difficulty delivering instruction might undermine the network’s focused efforts to improve teacher retention. Another indirectly underscored the need for strong PD by highlighting the connection between expertise and behavior management.

“A great lesson could be interrupted by the classroom management issues. Some teachers of course have a better handle on those. The more experience you get with those, the better you become. It takes time to get better at getting your students engaged which can reduce behavior problems.”

- District Administrator

Summary: Professional Development

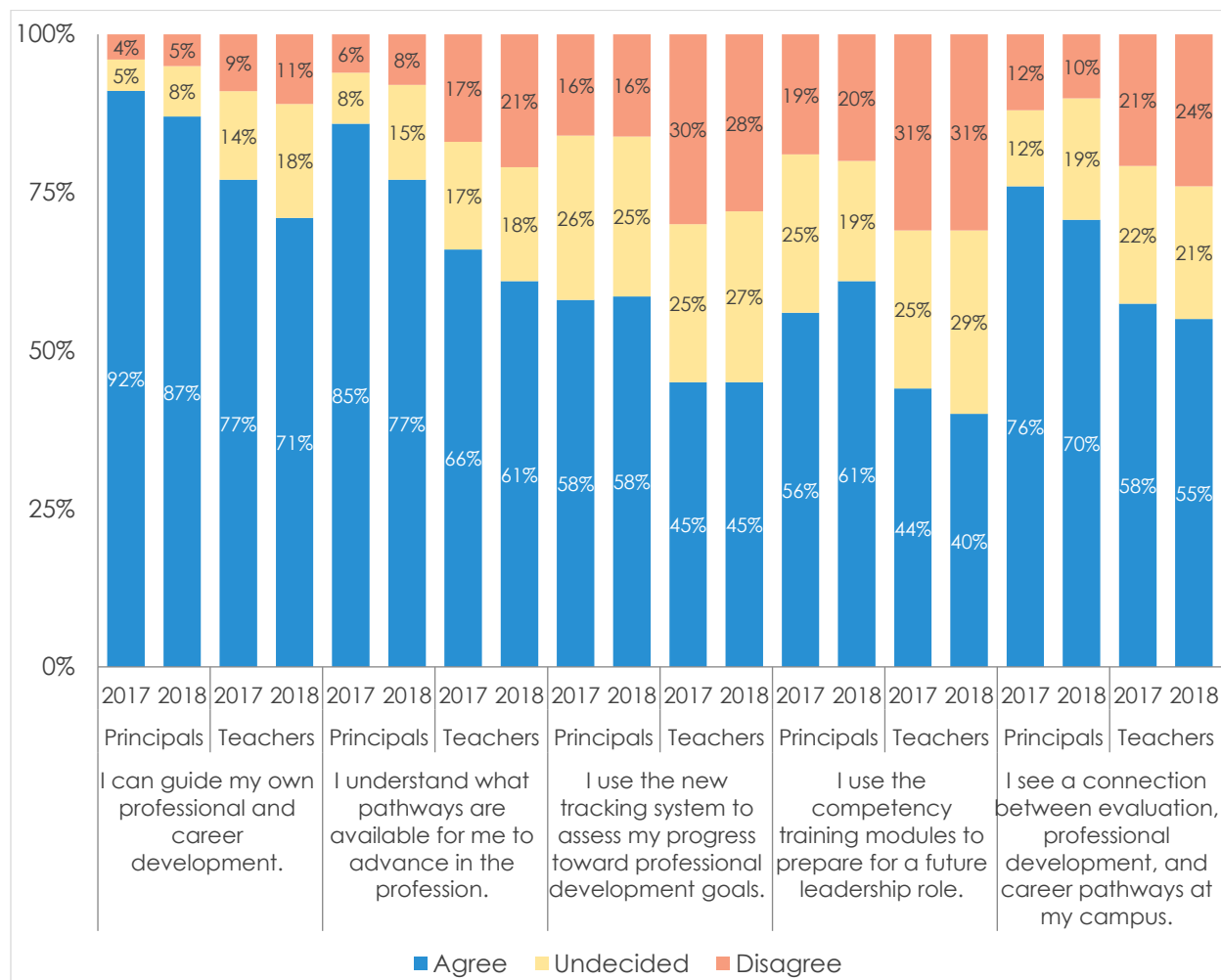
The implementation of Professional Learning Communities, particularly those that bring together educators from across HPS districts, was a highlight of the 2017-18 year. Educators responding to feedback surveys indicate that they would find trainings more useful if they were differentiated based on professional experience and longevity within the HPS system and if they more directly address the realities of their classrooms.

C. Lever 3: Career Pathways

The third lever identified in the H-STEP logic model is the development of more consistent career pathways across the HPS network. Accordingly, CTAC asked educators about their understanding of the network’s career pathways. In surveys, interviews, and focus groups, educators elaborated on their perceptions of whether those pathways are clearly defined and relevant to their roles within the network. CTAC also reviewed data about Harmony’s micro-credential initiative, which is a key component of the network’s efforts to create greater consistency in career pathways.

HPS educators consider the network’s career pathways either unclear or not designed with them in mind. In general, perceptions of HPS career pathways became slightly more negative in 2017-18. Relative to 2016-17, the number of principals who believe that they can guide their own professional and career development decreased by five percentage points (from 92% to 87%) while the number of teachers who possess that belief decreased by six percentage points (from 77% to 71%) (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Perceptions of Career Pathways (2017-18)



On the positive side, teachers express a general understanding of opportunities to take on additional responsibilities as PLC leaders, department heads, and curriculum writers. One stated that it is “pretty cool” to see how many teachers are working on Master’s degrees with the support of HPS. Principals also appear cognizant of the need to provide teachers with growth opportunities.

“Leadership roles for teachers are open for everyone. My door is open for teacher requests, and I keep an eye out for teacher-leaders. If teachers are doing a good job and want a change to leadership roles, I will recommend them.”

- H-STEP Principal

The precise contours of these career pathways remain hazy to some and seemingly unattainable to others. This aspect of the network’s human capital management system remains unclear to some teachers. As seen in Figure 5, the percentage of both principals and teachers who understand what pathways are available to them to advance in their profession decreased in

Year Two by eight and five percentage points respectively. As one of the project's explicit aims is to enhance consistency in career pathways across the network, this perception cuts at the heart of what H-STEP is trying to accomplish.

"I don't think there is a career ladder. You are a teacher one year, and then a mentor, then a department head, then a central office administrator. I do not think there are trainings to become an administrator."

- H-STEP Teacher

Beyond the gaps in understanding the career pathways, educators in certain roles express concern that the H-STEP program is not designed with them in mind. This concern appears particularly acute among teachers in co-curricular subjects (e.g. physical education) and among those who work with Special Education and ELL students. For both groups, the following barriers to advancement were identified:

- A lack of content-specific PD opportunities;
- A lack of PLC opportunities, particularly for teachers in more geographically remote regions; and
- Unrealistic SLO targets that make the possibility of earning a bonus feel remote.

In particular, the challenges deriving from geographical isolation mirror larger concerns about the physical distance that now separates Harmony's nerve center from some of its more geographically outlying campuses. With respect to career pathways, this distance presents a barrier to the formation of PLCs and an impediment to upward mobility as promising educators cannot avail themselves of opportunities that arise on nearby HPS campuses.

"Because the 'special' teachers are spread out, it is harder to get them together. This is particularly a problem for those schools that are farther away."

- H-STEP Teacher

One principal noted that the distance poses financial as well as logistical challenges.

"Travel is very expensive from here. There are trainings in Houston but they have to spend money to get teachers there. The cost of travel is becoming more than the costs of training."

- H-STEP Principal

More generally, some HPS educators believe that geographical dispersion places a strain on the network's ability to customize supports for its various regions.

“With a system as large as Harmony there needs to be more control ceded to the cluster and the campuses [since] what is needed for success varies greatly cluster by cluster and campus by campus. It is hard to meet the needs of so many students and teachers from a location that is often hundreds of miles away from them.”

- H-STEP Teacher

Through two years, access to clear career pathways remains more straightforward for certain HPS educators than for others.

Because the initiative did not formally launch until August 2018, the micro-credentialing program did not play a significant role in creating and aligning career pathways across the HPS network in 2017-18. A key component of Harmony’s approach to creating and aligning career pathways across its network is the development of a comprehensive micro-credentialing program. A micro-credential is a digital form of certification indicating that an educator has demonstrated mastery of a specific competency. To earn a micro-credential, educators must apply their learnings in their practice, collect evidence, and demonstrate their competence.

As part of its H-STEP project, HPS is providing PD micro-credentials to educators with the twin aims of recognizing and rewarding educators for their accomplishments and enabling them to steer their own career development. In 2017-18, 14 micro-credentials were awarded to Harmony educators. Of these, 12 were conferred by HPS, one was issued by EverFi, and one was awarded by the Texas Education Agency.

Table 8. Micro-Credential Credit Issuance by Organization (2017-18)

Organization Name	Program Name	Status	
		Denied	Granted
EverFi	FinEd Certified Teacher Program Spring 2018	0	1
Harmony Public Schools	Personalized Professional Learning	12	12
TEA Micro-credential Pilot	TEA Micro-credential Pilot	0	1

Twenty-seven educators participated in the HPS *Personalized Professional Learning* program. Twelve of those 27 (44.4%) received a micro-credential for their participation. Of the remaining 15, 12 educators (44.4%) were denied credit, and three educators (11.1%) uploaded evidence of participation but did not earn credit.

To accelerate progress on this initiative, Harmony is partnering with BloomBoard, an education technology company that designs customized micro-credentialing platforms for schools and districts. The 2018-19 year is serving as a pilot during which micro-credentials will be developed for new teachers and select roles for more seasoned educators (including mentor teachers, system course leaders, PLC leaders and curriculum writers).¹⁰ Implemented effectively, these

¹⁰ The initiative went live to HPS educators in August 2018 and will consequently be reviewed in the Year Three report.

opportunities may help redress some lingering sentiment among teachers that career advancement at HPS requires leaving the teaching profession.

“The opportunities usually have to do with moving up and out of the classroom to do other things. Unless you want to be a coach or an administrator, there are not many places to go.”

- H-STEP Teacher

Summary: Career Pathways

Some educators consider the network’s career pathways unclear or unattainable. These sentiments are particularly prevalent among Harmony educators working in more geographically remote schools, teachers in co-curricular subjects, and educators who work with students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Micro-credentials did not play a meaningful role in creating consistency across career pathways in Year Two as the initiative did not formally launch until August 2018.

D. Lever 4: Financial Incentives

The TIF grant is enabling HPS to bolster its existing performance-based compensation system and to create greater financial incentives for educators excelling in the network’s highest-need campuses. CTAC reviewed the data concerning performance-based compensation awards attributable to the H-STEP program to determine how these incentives have been distributed. We also used surveys, interviews, and focus groups to solicit educator and parent perceptions on the clarity of the network’s PBC system, the manner in which it was implemented in Year Two, and its ongoing effects on educator behavior.

Perceptions of Performance-Based Compensation

Confusion about key aspects of the project persisted into Year Two. The financial incentive system associated with H-STEP remains unclear to many who would benefit from it. From the central office to the classroom, there is continuing uncertainty and misinformation.

“For me, I have only vague information about whether the bonus is based on this or that. The details were never laid out. It’s difficult to understand the criteria. I can tell I don’t know.”

- H-STEP Teacher

“A lot of teachers like it that if students do well, they get a bonus. Everyone loves money. The problem is we don’t know the criteria and how to work towards it.”

- H-STEP Teacher

Part of this confusion is attributable to the manner in which the PBC Plan was adjusted in Year Two. In its TIF proposal, HPS described plans to “design, pilot, and refine” different approaches to measuring student achievement and growth of individual teachers in non-tested subjects over the first three years of the grant period. Midway through Year Two, however, HPS introduced a mechanism for teachers in non-core subjects to earn bonuses via Student Learning Objectives. The timing of this rollout added to preexisting confusion about the structure of the bonus system.

“The plan for non-core subject teachers was initiated late to our system, and we did not use funds last year for these teachers. [The SLO plan] started late and was rushed and we barely had time to train the teachers and to use those as motivation. It will get better next year.”

- District Administrator

“Student Learning Objectives came out of nowhere in January, and they rushed to have training. There is no good manual for how the compensation is given out. Teachers do not understand why the grant is supporting some and not others. Student Learning Objectives . . . will work, but it won’t work unless there is buy-in.”

- District Administrator

Moreover, one district administrator indicated that the bonus structure for Special Education teachers had been “problematic” and was consequently being revisited.

“To be more efficient, we need clarifications on how to apply it to the special education and teachers in the non-tested subject areas. We need attainable goals. I think some of the goals are not realistic.”

- H-STEP Teacher

Mid-course corrections are critically important to the successful implementation of an initiative, particularly when based on evidence of what is and what is not working. The challenge is to make and convey these shifts with clarity to ensure sustained buy-in from those directly impacted. In this instance, the shift occurred abruptly, and the central office’s message was not consistently reinforced on campuses.

“H-STEP has a great vision, but I do not feel that it is being properly followed through at the campus level.”

- H-STEP Teacher

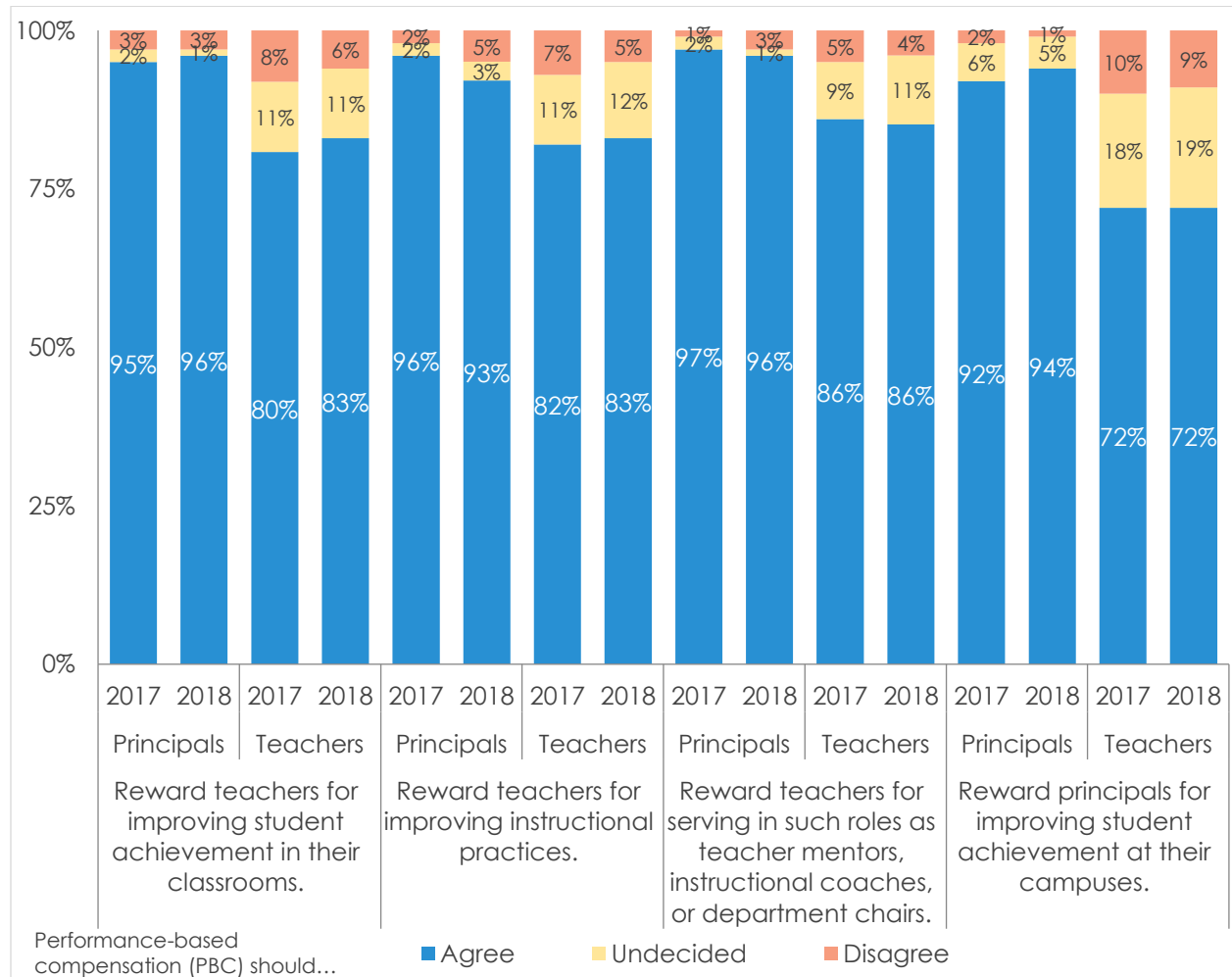
“I believe the H-STEP program is a good program, but I feel our teachers and myself need more clarification as to how their target goals (for bonuses) are determined.”

- H-STEP Principal

In light of recommendations from the bonus redesign committee, additional changes to the PBC Plan took effect at the start of the 2018-19 school year. With the system having been modified three times in as many years, effective communication will continue to be essential for H-STEP to be implemented with fidelity.

Perspectives on whether PBC motivates educators to perform more effectively — and to remain in the HPS system — vary markedly. A majority of survey respondents representing all stakeholder groups believe that PBC is an appropriate mechanism for rewarding teachers whose students exhibit academic growth. Sizable majorities of both principals (96%) and teachers (83%) believe that PBC should reward teachers for improving student achievement in their classrooms (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Perceptions of Performance-Based Compensation (2017-18)



Additionally, parents are generally supportive of the concept that teachers whose students demonstrate gains should receive additional compensation.

“I definitely think they should get [bonuses]. They are way underpaid, and they work their booties off.”

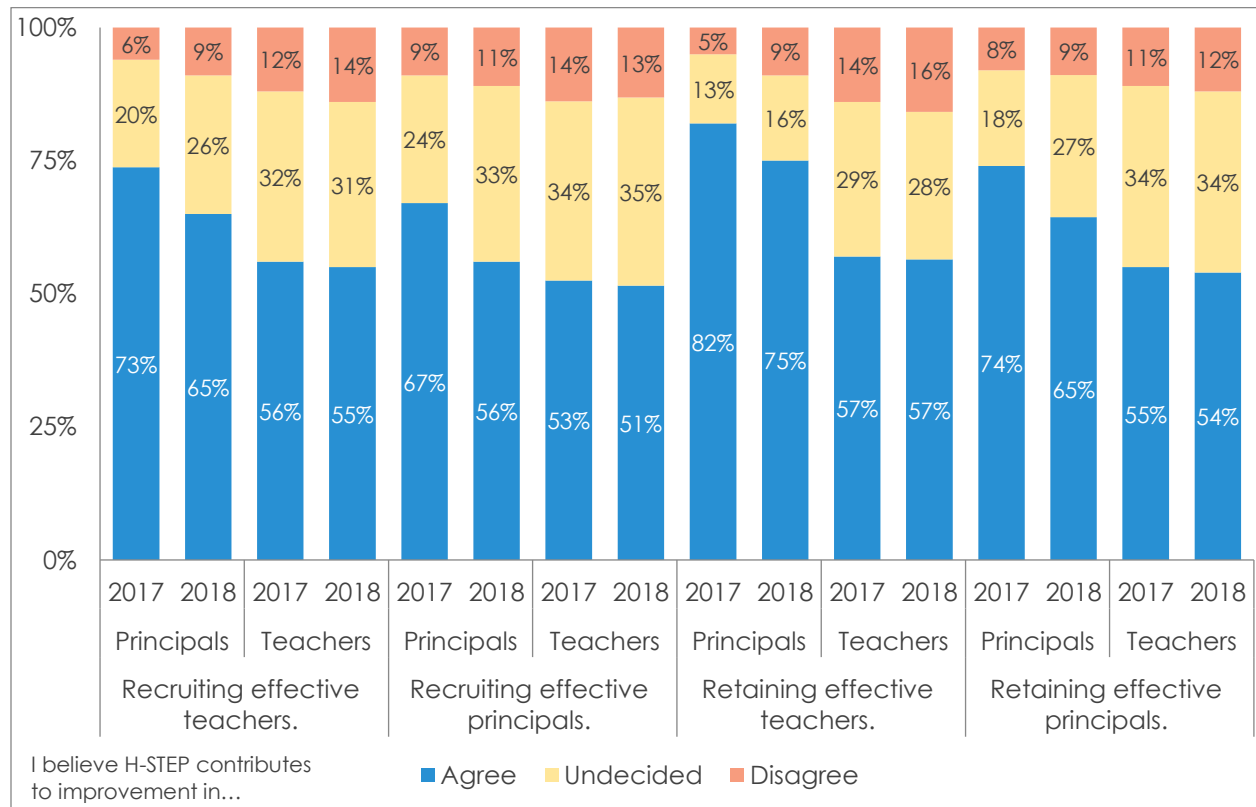
- Parent

“We live in a performance-based society. If I don’t perform then I can lose my job. What has to be created are high expectations of performance so you have star performers to teach our students, the tools to be successful, and opportunity to repair their faults.”

- Parent

However, HPS educators remain conflicted about whether H-STEP contributes to improvements in teacher and principal recruitment and retention efforts. In Year Two, principals became more skeptical about the prospect of H-STEP enhancing Harmony’s ability to recruit and retain effective educators. Relative to 2016-17, the number of principals who believe that H-STEP contributes to improvements in teacher recruitment decreased by eight percentage points (from 73% to 65%) while the number who believe that the project enhances teacher retention efforts decreased by seven percentage points (from 82% to 75%) (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Perceptions of H-STEP’s Impact on Educator Recruitment and Retention (2017-18)



Other administrators continue to believe that financial incentives play a meaningful role in shaping educator behavior.

“I have heard teachers talking about the incentives in a very positive way. I do think it motivates them.”

- District Administrator

“I do like the TIF program for teachers for the extra motivation. I think it’s good for them to have some monetary rewards for going as much as they can push. It’s really not a whole lot of money, just a little bit, but it makes them happy.”

- H-STEP Principal

While some educators indicate that financial incentives — particularly those that ensure compensation packages keep pace with those at local ISDs — play a role in shaping their decisions on where to work, others emphasize the primacy of other considerations.

“As an educator, the bonus is the success of our kids. I am glad when kids pass the stupid STAAR tests.”

- H-STEP Principal

“Usually it is the administrator that you work with that keeps teacher retention strong. We would just like a positive tone.”

- H-STEP Teacher

“There are a lot of things teachers consider. I don’t think a bonus is a priority. Getting enough support, making people feel valuable, that what they do is worth something — that is what is important. This feeling is a better motivator for people to stay in Harmony or seek a job in Harmony than a bonus.”

- District Administrator

Financial Incentive Payouts

HPS has awarded over \$5 million in TIF-funded performance bonuses over the first two years of the grant period. In 2016-17 and 2017-18, HPS awarded 3,828 performance bonuses to H-STEP campus educators. The aggregate amount of these bonuses was \$5,066,775, and the mean bonus amount was \$1,324. In each year, the bonuses ranged from \$50 to 4,000. The standard deviation was highest for principals (\$1,043) and teachers in tested subjects (\$1,004) and smallest for teachers in non-tested subjects (\$124), indicating that educators who earned bonuses based on their SLO submissions tended to receive similar payouts.

Table 9. TIF-Funded Performance Bonuses (2016-17 and 2017-18)

Performance Bonus Type	Year	# of Bonuses	Mean (\$)	Sum (\$)	Min (\$)	Max (\$)	Std. Dev. (\$)
Priority School	2016-17	389	1,028	400,000	156	1,875	526
	2017-18	525	1,048	550,278	147	2,500	580
Principal	2016-17	37	1,684	62,300	100	4,000	995
	2017-18	39	2,421	94,400	800	4,000	1,043
Assistant Principal	2016-17	91	1,426	129,800	300	3,000	872
	2017-18	94	1,960	184,200	800	3,000	751
Tested Teacher	2016-17	806	1,714	1,381,700	50	3,000	962
	2017-18	822	1,796	1,475,925	50	3,000	1,004
Non-tested Teacher	2016-17						
	2017-18	143	979	140,000	250	1,000	124
Coordinator	2016-17	61	791	48,250	250	2,000	464
	2017-18	44	688	30,250	250	3,000	682
Other Staff	2016-17	439	668	293,250	250	1,000	313
	2017-18	338	818	276,423	125	1,000	261
Sub-Total	2016-17	1,823	1,270	2,315,300	50	4,000	869
	2017-18	2,005	1,372	2,751,475	50	4,000	884
Grand Total		3,828	1,324	5,066,775	50	4,000	878

The number of bonus awards increased from 1,823 to 2,005 in Year Two, an increase of 10.0%. The average award amount increased from \$1,270 in 2016-17 to \$1,372 in 2017-18, an increase of 8.0%. The total dollar amount of performance bonuses increased by \$436,175, an increase of 18.8%. Non-tested teachers, who became eligible for bonuses after the SLO criteria were added to the PBC Plan in early 2018, accounted for \$140,000 (32.1%) of that increase.

Table 10 below focuses on the TIF-funded performance bonuses awarded to principals and teachers on H-STEP campuses. Whereas a principal or a teacher may receive multiple types of performance bonuses (e.g., a *Priority School* bonus and a *tested teacher* bonus), the data are aggregated at the individual level. The table presents the bonuses that teachers and principals receive each year.

These data show that the number of principals who received at least one performance bonus is highly comparable across the two years. Specifically, 129 principals received one or more performance bonus in 2016-17, and 133 principals earned at least one bonus in 2017-18. The number of teachers who received at least one performance bonus increased by 16.5% (or 169 teachers) from 1,023 in 2016-17 to 1,192 in 2017-18. This jump is largely explained by the 143 teachers in non-tested subjects who earned bonus awards for which they were not eligible the previous year.

Table 10 shows a different trend for the average dollar amount of performance bonuses that principals and teachers receive. The average award amount increased significantly for principals from 2016-17 to 2017-18. On average, principals received \$1,799 in performance bonuses in 2016-17. In 2017-18, that number increased by 39.4% (or \$709) to \$2,508. The changes for

principals are both statistically and practically significant. For teachers, the average dollar amounts are slightly higher in 2017-18, but not statistically significantly higher than in 2016-17.

Table 10. TIF-Funded Performance Bonuses Earned by Principals and Teachers on H-STEP Campuses (2016-17 and 2017-18)¹¹

	2016-17			2017-18			Diff.
	# Educators	Mean (\$)	Sum (\$)	# Educators	Mean (\$)	Sum (\$)	
Principals	129	1,799	232,100	133	2,508	333,600	0.000
Priority Campus	26	1,808	47,000	25	2,720	68,000	0.005
Other Campus	103	1,797	185,100	108	2,459	265,600	0.000
Teachers	1,023	1,776	1,816,890	1,192	1,802	2,147,629	0.589
Priority Campus	216	2,029	438,285	243	2,061	500,829	0.774
Other Campus	807	1,708	1,378,605	949	1,735	1,646,800	0.603

Summary: Financial Incentives

Confusion about the structure of the incentive system persisted into Year Two. Harmony’s adoption of an SLO measure designed to make the PBC system more inclusive was rushed and compounded preexisting levels of confusion. While educators express a range of views on whether performance bonuses meaningfully drive retention, they generally agree that non-monetary considerations may play a determinative role in whether educators remain at their schools. The total number and average dollar amount of performance-based bonuses funded by the TIF grant increased in 2017-18. Expanding the eligibility criteria to include educators in non-tested subjects largely accounts for the increase in awards issued to teachers on H-STEP campuses.

¹¹ *Principals* refers to principals and assistant principals on H-STEP campuses; *Teachers* refers to classroom teachers, non-classroom teachers (e.g., interventionists, reading specialists), and special programs educators (e.g., ESL/SPED/GT coordinators and teachers) on H-STEP campuses.

IV. STUDENT OUTCOMES

The logic model underpinning the H-STEP project posits that initiatives connected to the four HCMS levers will result in stronger and more equitable educational outcomes across the HPS network. To determine whether instructional improvements and enhanced support for educators' career progressions have led to academic gains for the network's highest-need students, CTAC reviewed five years of data from NWEA MAP assessments (grades K-10), STAAR assessments (grades 3-8), and end-of-course assessments (grades 8-10). Additionally, CTAC conducted a Difference-in-Difference analysis to determine whether HPS students have demonstrated gains relative to students attending observationally similar schools. In the paragraphs that follow, we review the data from each of these sources independently. At the end of this chapter, we summarize key findings, identify trends, and report general conclusions.

A. Measures of Academic Progress Outcomes

CTAC examined average MAP scores for students at each grade level to assess whether students attending TIF campuses have begun to close the performance gaps relative to their counterparts at Non-TIF campuses. HPS administers the MAP assessment to all students semiannually and to select groups of students more frequently. For the purposes of this report, CTAC focused on the fall MAP administrations. Because this test is taken early in the school year, scores reflect knowledge acquired in previous school years and carried over to the fall. Additionally, because HPS admits students via lottery, the incoming performance level of each new cohort varies year-to-year. Accordingly, these data largely track the performance of the HPS program at a given grade level and not the academic progress of discrete cohorts of students.

Performance gaps between TIF and Non-TIF campuses are narrowing at many grade levels in all tested subjects. On MAP Reading, Language, and Math exams, the gap in average scale score between TIF and Non-TIF campuses narrowed at most grade levels in 2017-18 relative to the pre-TIF baseline. Table 11, which displays MAP Reading scores across the HPS network over the past five years, is representative. On average, students enrolling in Non-TIF campuses are higher achieving at baseline. In eight of the 11 tested grades, however, the gap between TIF and Non-TIF campuses decreased between 2015-16 and 2017-18. The performance gap persisted at the middle school level (grades 6-8). At the grade levels in which the gap narrowed, that outcome was often attributable more to a performance decrease at Non-TIF schools than to a performance increase at TIF campuses.

Table 11. MAP Reading Averages by School Year, Grade, and TIF Status (2013-14 through 2017-18)*

Grade	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF
K	141.6	146.0	140.2	145.1	141.1	144.6	140.6	144.3	141.1	143.0
1	159.0	165.7	159.0	167.7	159.9	165.7	160.5	165.4	161.2	164.4
2	175.9	180.7	176.5	183.6	177.6	183.7	176.6	180.9	178.1	182.1

Grade	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF
3	187.8	192.3	187.1	195.3	187.7	196.0	187.6	194.2	187.6	192.0
4	196.9	201.8	197.6	203.3	196.6	202.3	197.0	204.3	197.1	201.5
5	204.9	212.7	204.4	209.1	205.1	210.3	204.0	210.1	205.2	209.0
6	209.7	215.6	209.1	215.2	209.5	213.4	210.4	215.3	209.7	214.1
7	214.5	221.7	213.2	220.2	214.3	219.7	213.8	220.4	215.0	220.5
8	218.4	224.9	218.8	224.3	218.4	223.3	217.7	224.2	219.1	224.2
9	221.2	226.8	221.6	229.4	223.0	227.5	221.5	227.5	222.0	223.2
10	227.6	234.5	226.7	231.3	226.8	231.5	224.4	231.1	225.3	228.8

*Based on a total of 126,935 valid observations.

HPS students attending TIF campuses also closed the performance gap with their peers attending Non-TIF campuses on the MAP Science exams. On the Science assessment, the decrease in performance on Non-TIF campuses was accompanied by a slight increase in performance on TIF campuses.

Tables containing MAP Language, Math, and Science data from the past five school years are included in the Appendix.

Students attending Non-TIF campuses begin to exceed the national averages on MAP exams earlier than do their peers attending TIF campuses. As seen in Table 12, HPS students on Non-TIF campuses outperform the national average on MAP exams starting in early grades. In Reading, Language, and Science, Non-TIF campuses surpass the national norm beginning in the first tested grade (i.e. kindergarten for Reading, grade 3 for Language, and grade 4 for Science). In Math, HPS students attending Non-TIF campuses surpass the national average from grade 1 onward.

Table 12. MAP Averages by Grade and TIF Status Relative to National Norms (2017-18)

Grade	Reading			Language			Math			Science		
	HPS		National Norm	HPS		National Norm	HPS		National Norm	HPS		National Norm
	TIF	Non-TIF		TIF	Non-TIF		TIF	Non-TIF		TIF	Non-TIF	
K	141.1	143.0	141.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	136.9	139.5	140.0	N/A	N/A	N/A
1	161.2	164.4	160.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	160.8	164.3	162.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	178.1	182.1	174.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	180.4	183.6	176.9	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	187.6	192.0	188.3	188.5	192.5	189.4	189.2	192.6	190.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	197.1	201.5	198.2	197.4	201.8	198.8	201.5	203.9	201.9	195.8	198.3	194.6
5	205.2	209.0	205.7	205.0	208.9	205.6	211.6	215.0	211.4	202.4	204.1	200.2
6	209.7	214.1	211.0	208.9	213.1	210.7	215.5	220.2	217.6	206.2	207.9	204.3
7	215.0	220.5	214.4	214.1	219.3	214.0	223.9	230.0	222.6	209.4	211.3	207.2
8	219.1	224.2	217.2	218.9	222.9	216.2	231.2	235.7	226.3	212.7	214.5	210.3
9	222.0	223.2	220.2	221.2	222.7	218.4	235.4	236.6	230.3	N/A	N/A	N/A
10	225.3	228.8	220.4	224.3	227.6	218.9	239.6	244.6	230.1	N/A	N/A	N/A

By contrast, HPS students attending TIF campuses do not regularly outperform the national averages in Reading, Language, and Math until middle school. After seventh grade, the average HPS MAP score — in all subjects, at all grade levels, and at both TIF and Non-TIF campuses — exceeds the national norm.

Notably, HPS students on TIF campuses exceed the national averages on the MAP Science exam at all grade levels. This finding speaks to the strength of Science instruction across HPS elementary and middle schools.

After seventh grade, the average HPS MAP score—in all subjects, at all grade levels, and at both TIF and Non-TIF campuses—exceeds the national norm.

Students who remain enrolled in the Harmony system make consistently more progress on nationally normed assessments relative to the general student population. CTAC compared the performance of HPS students who took the fall MAP exam during each of the past five school years with the performance of all HPS students in those corresponding grades. For example, the top half of Table 13 below includes students in grades K-6 who took the Reading assessment in 2013-14, remained in HPS, and took the MAP assessment each of the ensuing four years. The bottom half includes all students in grades K-6 who took the Reading exam in 2013-14, all students in grades 1-7 who took the exam in 2014-15, and so forth, up to and including all students in grades 4-10 in 2017-18. As evidenced in Table 12 above, the MAP exam is structured so that the national norm increases at each successive grade level. The upward trend line visible on both the top and bottom half of Table 13 below reflects that assessment design. Students naturally perform at a higher level as they progress through the school system.

The data indicate that students who remain enrolled in the HPS system for five consecutive years are lower achieving at baseline than their peers. In 2013-14, the average MAP scale scores of those for whom five consecutive years of data are available lagged the average scores recorded by all students at those corresponding grade levels on all four assessments. By the time these students have attended an HPS school for five years, however, they consistently outperform those who enroll at a later date.¹²

Table 13. Fall MAP Exam Scale Score Averages (2013-14 through 2017-18)*

School Year	Reading		Math		Language		Science	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF
Fall Scores (students with consecutive scores from 2013-14 to 2017-18)								
2013-14	184.3	186.3	187.7	188.9	196.0	200.5	191.8	198.3
2014-15	194.7	200.4	199.9	204.9	203.3	210.8	199.3	204.7

¹² Students who remain enrolled at HPS do not overtake their peers on the MAP Science exam after five years. The Science exam is only administered in Grades 4-8, significantly reducing the number of students who are able to sit for the exam five consecutive times and limiting the potential for early interventions to bear out in the data.

School Year	Reading		Math		Language		Science	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF
2015-16	203.8	209.6	210.5	216.7	210.0	216.5	204.7	209.0
2016-17	211.1	214.6	219.4	222.9	215.7	220.2	208.4	211.5
2017-18	217.3	219.6	227.3	229.4	219.9	224.5	212.5	213.9
Fall Scores (all students in corresponding grades)								
2013-14	186.3	188.8	189.6	190.8	201.5	205.4	195.8	199.3
2014-15	194.0	203.8	199.4	208.3	206.7	211.7	201.8	205.3
2015-16	202.5	208.4	209.2	215.3	212.1	216.2	206.1	207.7
2016-17	208.2	213.0	216.0	220.6	215.0	220.5	207.4	212.4
2017-18	212.8	217.0	221.8	226.1	218.7	222.8	212.7	214.5

*The number of valid observations are 13,205 in the top half of the table and 85,903 in the bottom half of the table.

Average student growth between the fall and winter MAP assessments has not increased over the first two years of the H-STEP program. CTAC also examined the average growth scores of students who sat for both the fall and winter MAP assessments within a given school year (Table 14). Relative to the pre-TIF baseline, students did not make significantly more progress during the school year in 2017-18. This finding suggests that early-year modifications to the network's PD program did not immediately impact student growth outcomes.

Table 14. MAP Average Growth by Year, Subject, and TIF Status (2013-14 through 2017-18)

School Year	Reading		Math		Language		Science	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF
Fall to Winter Growth								
2013-14	3.19	2.96	4.99	6.25	2.58	2.90	1.41	1.78
2014-15	5.87	4.45	7.90	7.70	4.02	3.79	2.89	3.02
2015-16	4.26	4.84	6.69	7.16	3.20	3.20	2.57	2.72
2016-17	5.21	5.08	7.22	7.40	4.01	3.76	3.24	2.81
2017-18	4.84	4.59	6.37	6.56	3.12	3.37	2.37	2.76

B. STAAR Outcomes

In general, students attending TIF campuses have narrowed the performance gap on the STAAR assessment with their peers at Non-TIF campuses. CTAC examined STAAR student assessment results for grades 3-8. On the STAAR Reading exam (Table 15), the gap in average scale score between TIF and Non-TIF campuses has decreased at five of six grade levels since the inception of the H-STEP project. This trend was not discernible after one year of project implementation. That is, in 2017-18, these performance gaps narrowed relative to the 2015-16 baseline notwithstanding a minor widening in 2017 during the project's first year.

Table 15. Average STAAR Reading Scale Scores by Year, Grade, and TIF Status (2013-14 through 2017-18)*

Grade	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		Cut-Off Scores**	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	13-14 to 14-15	15-16 to 17-18
3	1419.2	1476.80	1409.6	1490.45	1418.0	1484.02	1426.0	1478.70	1422.3	1449.62	1331	1345
4	1495.7	1546.12	1494.5	1540.50	1495.1	1531.25	1502.3	1549.38	1501.2	1527.36	1422	1434
5	1560.2	1620.07	1560.9	1600.99	1571.6	1608.83	1557.9	1599.81	1576.9	1607.55	1458	1470
6	1599.4	1639.74	1597.2	1643.75	1594.4	1631.48	1591.2	1635.24	1578.1	1613.74	1504	1517
7	1645.2	1690.69	1651.2	1705.73	1650.1	1699.11	1652.7	1703.14	1664.7	1722.46	1556	1567
8	1708.0	1752.92	1698.5	1738.29	1702.4	1740.04	1698.9	1737.81	1705.6	1735.07	1575	1587

*Based on a sample of 79,549 observations.

**Cut-off scores distinguish between those in the "not met" range and those considered "satisfactory."

On the STAAR Math exam, the gap in average scale score between TIF and Non-TIF campuses has decreased in each of the project's first two years at four of the six tested grades. In eighth grade, the gap narrowed in 2016-17 but then widened beyond the 2015-16 baseline in 2017-18 due primarily to a significant performance increase at Non-TIF campuses. On the STAAR Writing exam, the gap in average scale score between TIF and Non-TIF campuses decreased in Grade 4 (from 131.4 points in 2016 to 95.4 points in 2017-18) but increased in Grade 7 (from 214.8 points in 2015-16 to 224.9 points in 2017-18). And, the two-year trend line on the STAAR Science exam shows the performance gap between TIF and Non-TIF campuses narrowing in both Grade 5 and Grade 8.

Across all subjects, grade levels, and campuses, average HPS STAAR scores are consistently above the cut-off line that demarcates "satisfactory" performance. Tables containing STAAR Math, Writing, and Science data from the past five school years are included in the Appendix.

Students at TIF campuses have steadily narrowed performance gaps on key STAAR indicators. CTAC examined combined proficiency levels for STAAR scores across all grade levels in order to measure the average percentage of students scoring within each of the exam's four performance levels. On balance, students at Non-TIF campuses continue to test at higher proficiency levels. However, on all exams, the gap between the percentage of students on TIF campuses and the percentage of students on Non-TIF campuses who scored in the "did not meet expectations" range narrowed between 2015-16 and 2017-18 (see Table 16).

Table 16. STAAR Proficiency Levels Across All Grades (2013-14 through 2017-18)

	Did Not Meet Expectations		Approaching		Met		Mastered	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF
Reading								
2013-14	18.1	9.3	39.9	30.7	23.9	27.5	18.1	32.5
2014-15	20.5	12.6	39.6	31.8	20.8	22.1	19.2	33.5
2015-16	22.9	13.4	34.2	28.8	22.0	25.5	20.9	32.3
2016-17	23.9	14.8	32.9	28.1	21.2	22.3	22.1	34.8
2017-18	24.6	16.9	31.8	29.0	20.8	22.5	22.8	31.6
Math								
2013-14	23.1	14.4	42.4	34.9	19.6	23.8	14.9	27.0
2014-15	23.1	14.7	40.3	32.9	20.9	24.3	15.7	28.1
2015-16	23.9	14.1	35.1	29.2	24.3	25.7	16.7	31.1
2016-17	20.3	14.0	32.8	28.7	26.2	26.0	20.7	31.4
2017-18	18.5	13.2	33.2	29.3	26.2	25.2	22.1	32.2
Writing								
2013-14	29.9	11.8	43.2	38.8	23.6	37.3	3.4	12.0
2014-15	30.5	18.4	40.8	30.4	22.7	35.0	6.0	16.3
2015-16	32.9	19.9	32.3	30.0	24.8	30.5	10.0	19.6
2016-17	33.5	23.9	32.5	29.8	25.3	30.1	8.7	16.2
2017-18	35.2	27.1	26.1	20.7	28.5	33.3	10.2	18.9
Science								
2013-14	31.8	19.1	38.6	33.5	18.2	26.6	11.4	20.8
2014-15	34.6	23.8	36.8	36.9	18.8	24.7	9.8	14.6
2015-16	28.6	21.7	37.6	34.6	21.9	27.1	11.9	16.5
2016-17	30.5	19.6	33.4	31.0	22.8	27.0	13.3	22.4
2017-18	28.2	22.7	35.0	34.7	22.8	21.9	14.0	20.7
Social Studies								
2013-14	38.4	18.8	38.2	38.9	13.0	18.9	10.4	23.4
2014-15	36.1	22.5	44.2	44.5	13.2	19.8	6.4	13.2
2015-16	36.6	32.3	36.1	32.8	15.5	16.7	11.9	18.2
2016-17	38.8	26.3	34.2	38.1	12.5	14.8	14.5	20.8
2017-18	36.0	32.3	36.4	31.1	13.5	16.0	14.2	20.6

Relatedly, the increase in the percentage of students who “met” or “mastered” expectations on STAAR exams between 2015-16 and 2017-18 was greater on TIF campuses than on Non-TIF campuses. For example, the percentage of students on TIF campuses who “met” or “mastered” expectations on the Math exam increased by over seven percentage points (from 41.0% in 2015-16 to 48.3% in 2017-18). Over the same time period, the percentage of students on Non-TIF campuses who scored in those two categories increased by less than one percentage point (from 56.8% to 57.4%). And, while the percentage of students on TIF campuses who tested at

“met” or “mastered” levels on the STAAR Reading exam increased slightly from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (from 42.9% to 43.6%), the percentage of students who scored in those categories on Non-TIF campuses actually decreased from 57.8% to 54.1%.

The overall percentage of students meeting or exceeding expected growth on STAAR Reading and Math exams has remained relatively constant. In addition to the proficiency metrics shown above in Table 16, STAAR measures whether students reach their expected growth targets. Since 2015-16, the percentage of HPS students on TIF campuses who met or exceeded their expected STAAR growth increased in Math (from 65.5% to 66.7%) but decreased in Reading (from 66.1% to 67.9%). The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expected growth remains higher in Non-TIF campuses on both Reading and Math exams (see Table 17).

Table 17. Percent of Students Meeting Expected Growth in Math (2013-14 through 2017-18)*

	Total	Percent of Students		
	Number of Students	Did Not Meet Expected Growth	Met Expected Growth	Exceeded Expected Growth
TIF				
2013-14	7,705	31.1	49.0	19.8
2014-15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2015-16	9,921	34.6	50.4	15.1
2016-17	9,866	30.4	49.6	20.1
2017-18	9,632	33.3	47.8	18.9
Non-TIF				
2013-14	2,033	30.4	47.3	22.4
2014-15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2015-16	2,489	26.7	51.6	21.7
2016-17	2,659	29.5	46.8	23.7
2017-18	3,258	29.2	44.0	26.8

* Because Texas changed the test blueprints and scale scores in 2014-15, no progress measure can be calculated for that year.

C. End-of-Course Exam (EOC) Outcomes

Students on TIF campuses are eliminating performance gaps with students on Non-TIF campuses on EOC Algebra exams. Extending a trend evident on the STAAR Math exam data, students attending TIF campuses continue to reduce performance gaps on Algebra EOC exams. Generally speaking, because higher-performing students are tracked into Algebra in an earlier grade, the EOC scale scores posted by eighth grade students are higher than those of their ninth grade peers. And, the average scale score at both grade levels easily exceeds the cut-off score for the “satisfactory” category (see Table 18).¹³

¹³ A limited number of students in grade 7 and in grades 10-12 also sat for the EOC Algebra exam. Those scores were omitted from this analysis.

Table 18: End-of-Course Scale Scores by Year, Grade and TIF Status, Algebra*

Grade	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		Cut-Off Scores**	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	13-14 to 14-15	15-16 to 17-18
8	4,431.8	4,733.4	4,427.3	4,773.2	4,652.5	4,878.4	4,642.3	4,747.6	4,611.1	4,713.5	3,500	3,550
9	3,902.2	4,038.5	3,929.0	4,088.8	4,039.3	4,194.9	4,110.1	4,164.6	4,191.5	4,113.2		

* Based on a sample of 11,572 valid observations.

** Cut-offs scores distinguish between those in the "not met" range and those considered "satisfactory."

Intriguingly, grade 9 students attending TIF campuses outperformed their peers at Non-TIF campuses in 2017-18. This data point stands out as a critical instance in which students on TIF campuses performed better in absolute terms than their peers at Non-TIF campuses.

Relatedly, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding their expected growth on EOC Algebra exams has increased on TIF campuses since 2015-16 (from 67.5% to 73.9%) but has decreased on Non-TIF campuses (from 78.4% to 74.1%) over the same period (see Table 19).

Table 19. Percent of Students Meeting Expected Growth in Algebra (2013-14 through 2017-18)

	Total	Percent of Students		
	Number of Students	Did Not Meet Expected Growth	Met Expected Growth	Exceeded Expected Growth
TIF				
2013-14	1,386	45.5	31.6	22.9
2014-15	1,554	46.0	30.0	24.1
2015-16	1,700	32.6	32.4	35.1
2016-17	1,802	29.8	32.8	37.4
2017-18	1,718	26.2	33.4	40.5
Non-TIF				
2013-14	425	29.4	29.2	41.4
2014-15	357	24.9	27.5	47.6
2015-16	449	21.6	26.7	51.7
2016-17	489	27.0	29.5	43.6
2017-18	726	25.9	32.6	41.5

This pattern was not as pronounced on EOC English exams. For the purposes of this review, English I and English II scores were averaged. Again, the average scale score of students at all grade levels exceeded the cut-off score. While the gap in average scale score between ninth grade students on TIF and Non-TIF campuses decreased between 2015-16 and 2017-18, the gap

between tenth grade students increased. And, since the inception of the H-STEP project, the percentage of students who meet or exceed expected growth on EOC English exams has modestly increased on both TIF and Non-TIF campuses (see Table 20).

Table 20. Percent of Students Meeting Expected Growth in English (2014-15 through 2017-18)

	Total	Percent of Students		
	Number of Students	Did Not Meet Expected Growth	Met Expected Growth	Exceeded Expected Growth
TIF				
2014-15	1,136	39.4	59.6	1.1
2015-16	1,200	37.7	60.7	1.7
2016-17	1,259	39.2	59.3	1.5
2017-18	1,126	35.0	63.6	1.4
Non-TIF				
2014-15	250	40.8	57.6	1.6
2015-16	254	37.0	61.8	1.2
2016-17	342	37.7	59.9	2.3
2017-18	513	36.1	59.8	4.1

The percentage of students on TIF campuses who “met” or “mastered” expectations on EOC exams has steadily increased over the past two years. To examine EOC scores at the student level, CTAC examined the percentage of students who tested within each of the four performance tiers over time (see Table 21). On balance, students at Non-TIF campuses continue to test at higher absolute performance levels than do their peers at TIF campuses.

The percentage of students on Non-TIF campuses who “met” or “mastered” expectations on EOC exams decreased in each subject from 2015-16 to 2017-18. For example, the percentage of students at Non-TIF campuses who met or mastered expectations on English EOC exams decreased from 73.3% in 2015-16 to 71.7% in 2017-18. Similarly, the percentage of students at Non-TIF campuses who scored in those tiers on EOC Algebra exams decreased from 75.8% in 2015-16 to 71.9% in 2017-18.

By contrast, the percentage of students on TIF campuses who “met” or “mastered” expectations on EOC exams increased. Most notably, the percentage of students on TIF campuses who scored in the top two performance tiers on the EOC Algebra exam increased by 10.6 percentage points over the past two years while the percentage of students attending Non-TIF campuses scoring at the top two levels decreased by 3.9 percentage points. The same trend is evident in English (increase of 3.9 percentage points on TIF campuses, decrease of 1.6 percentage points on Non-TIF campuses), Biology (increase of 4.1 percentage points on TIF campuses, decrease of 11.5 percentage points on Non-TIF campuses), and US History (increase of 7.8 percentage points on TIF campuses, decrease of 0.6 percentage points on Non-TIF campuses).

Table 21. EOC Proficiency Level by Year and TIF Status, Percent of Students (2013-14 through 2017-18)

	Did Not Meet Expectations		Approaching		Met		Mastered	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF
English								
2013-14	18.7	11.5	23.5	16.3	50.2	57.1	7.5	15.1
2014-15	19.4	10.9	24.1	16.8	50.0	61.4	6.6	10.9
2015-16	21.6	12.0	21.3	14.7	49.2	57.7	8.0	15.6
2016-17	23.8	13.2	17.9	14.5	50.2	55.9	8.0	16.5
2017-18	18.6	12.0	20.4	16.4	52.5	57.8	8.6	13.9
Algebra								
2013-14	10.0	4.0	42.0	27.1	24.4	23.6	23.7	45.4
2014-15	12.4	6.0	37.9	19.5	23.4	21.9	26.2	52.6
2015-16	11.0	5.0	27.2	19.2	25.1	19.4	36.7	56.4
2016-17	9.7	8.4	26.7	17.4	24.6	21.3	39.0	52.9
2017-18	6.7	5.1	20.9	23.1	27.3	23.8	45.1	48.1
Biology								
2013-14	4.5	3.7	39.5	41.7	46.0	44.0	10.0	10.6
2014-15	6.7	3.1	36.6	27.1	43.3	49.3	13.4	20.6
2015-16	9.1	4.0	32.4	17.8	45.4	47.2	13.1	30.9
2016-17	8.9	5.4	27.0	17.9	45.8	41.2	18.2	35.5
2017-18	6.2	6.3	31.2	27.0	43.9	37.7	18.7	28.9
US History								
2013-14	4.1	0.6	36.6	28.6	43.3	49.1	16.1	21.7
2014-15	4.7	2.7	23.9	15.1	38.0	37.1	33.4	45.2
2015-16	3.2	1.2	24.1	14.5	39.3	38.7	33.3	45.7
2016-17	3.3	0.8	20.4	17.8	36.9	33.2	39.4	48.2
2017-18	3.7	2.1	15.9	14.1	35.4	31.1	45.0	52.7

Moreover, as is the case on STAAR exams, the gap between students on TIF campuses and students on Non-TIF campuses testing at “did not meet expectations” levels has narrowed since the inception of the H-STEP project. In 2017-18, a slightly larger percentage of students on Non-TIF campuses actually scored at the lowest performance level on the EOC Biology exam.

D. Difference-in-Difference (DiD) Outcomes

To assess the impact of the TIF project, CTAC conducted a Difference-in-Difference analysis using STAAR Overall, Reading, and Math results as measured by percentage of students approaching grade level or above.

As shown in the leftmost column of Table 22 below, *HPS TIF campuses registered greater overall growth on the STAAR assessment relative to the comparison schools during the first two years of the TIF project.* When analyzing subject matter results separately, we find that the TIF project had a positive impact on Math outcomes. Before H-STEP, on average, the percentage of students approaching grade level or above was higher in comparison schools (79.022) than in TIF campuses (78.728). In the project’s first two years, the percentage of students approaching grade level or above in TIF campuses (82.792) surpassed the percentage of students approaching grade level or above in comparison schools (81.889). This resulted in a growth difference of 1.197 percentage points.

Table 22. School-Level Difference-in-Difference Regression Analysis on STAAR Proficiency Standards (2015-16 to 2017-18)¹⁴

	STAAR Overall		STAAR Reading		STAAR Math	
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Before						
Comparison	78.230		78.744		79.022	
TIF	76.331		77.341		78.728	
Diff (Comparison-TIF)	-1.898	2.219	-1.403	2.374	-0.294	2.608
After						
Comparison	78.528		78.142		81.889	
TIF	77.006		76.355		82.792	
Diff (Comparison-TIF)	-1.522	1.559	-1.787	1.687	0.904	1.524
Diff-in-Diff	0.377	2.712	-0.384	2.913	1.197	3.020

We note that these estimates are not statistically significant. Since H-STEP is still in its early stages, these data indicate that the project is on the right track. We would expect to see a more significant impact as the grant period progresses. CTAC intends to continue refining these measures as the grant period moves forward, data are extended, and additional student achievement measures become viable for analysis.

Summary: Student Performance Outcomes

CTAC reviewed five years of student performance data from NWEA MAP, STAAR, and EOC assessments. Since the inception of the H-STEP project prior to the 2016-17 school year, the two-year trend line shows that students attending TIF campuses are narrowing performance gaps relative to students attending Non-TIF campuses.

¹⁴ The Overall results are based on 93 comparison schools. The Reading results are based on 92 comparison schools as one school did not report data for the 2017-18 year. The Math results are based on 89 comparison schools as four did not report data for either 2016-17 or 2017-18.

On MAP Reading, Language, and Math exams, the gap in average scale score between TIF and Non-TIF campuses continues to narrow. The gap has also been narrowed on MAP Science exams, where the decrease in performance on Non-TIF campuses has been accompanied by a slight increase in performance on TIF campuses.

The two-year trend line shows that students attending TIF campuses are narrowing performance gaps relative to students attending Non-TIF campuses.

On the STAAR Reading exam, the gap in average scale score between TIF and Non-TIF campuses has decreased at five of six grade levels since the inception of the H-STEP project. This trend was not discernible after one year of project implementation. In 2017-18, the gaps narrowed relative to the 2015-16 baseline notwithstanding a minor widening in 2016-17 during the project's first year.

On the STAAR Math exam, the gap in average scale score between TIF and Non-TIF campuses has decreased in each of the project's first two years at four of the six tested grades. In Grade 8, the gap narrowed in 2016-17 but then widened beyond the 2015-16 baseline due primarily to a significant performance increase at Non-TIF campuses.

On the STAAR Writing exam, the gap in average scale score between TIF and Non-TIF campuses decreased in Grade 4 but increased in Grade 7. The two-year trend line on the STAAR Science exam shows the performance gap between TIF and Non-TIF campuses to be narrowing in both Grade 5 and Grade 8.

The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expected growth on STAAR Reading exams has increased slightly in Non-TIF campuses but decreased in TIF campuses since 2015-16. Conversely, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expected growth on STAAR Math exams has increased in TIF campuses but decreased in Non-TIF campuses. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding percentage growth remained higher in Non-TIF campuses on both Reading and Math exams.

Whereas the percentage of students at Non-TIF campuses who met or mastered expectations on EOC exams has decreased across the board since 2015-16, the percentage of students on TIF campuses who scored in the two highest performance tiers on their EOC exams has increased in each subject.

Students attending TIF campuses outperformed their peers at Non-TIF campuses on grade 9 Algebra End-of-Course Exams in 2018. Relatedly, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding their expected growth in Algebra has increased on TIF campuses since 2015-16 but decreased on Non-TIF campuses.

The Difference-in-Difference analysis reveals HPS students on TIF campuses have exhibited greater overall growth on the STAAR assessment relative to students attending comparison schools during the project's first two years. H-STEP has also had a positive impact on STAAR Math outcomes.

V. EDUCATOR OUTCOMES

The four HCMS levers targeted by the H-STEP project are designed to improve educator performance and to enhance educator recruitment and retention efforts at Harmony’s highest-need campuses. To assess the efficacy of the program-related initiatives described in Chapter III, CTAC analyzed the following data: teacher, principal, and assistant principal evaluation ratings; perceptual data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups regarding evaluations and observations; and staff recruitment and retention data from the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. In this chapter, we review the findings from these analyses and assess the overall impact of the H-STEP on educator outcomes through the project’s first two years.

A. Evaluation Ratings

Teachers

H-STEP has not had a significant impact on the distribution of high-performing teachers within the HPS network. CTAC compared the last four years of teacher evaluation data across all HPS campuses. These data were examined at the overall level as well as at the indicator level. For the purposes of this review, we averaged ratings on the same indicator for the same teacher when more than one observation was conducted. The following scale is used to determine the level of performance:

- 1.0-1.99 — Ineffective
- 2.0-2.74 — Effective: Emerging
- 2.75-3.49 — Effective: Proficient
- 3.50-4.00 — Highly Effective

Distribution of Overall Observation Ratings: TIF vs. Non-TIF

Table 23 compares the distribution of observation ratings in the last four years for teachers from TIF campuses and teachers from Non-TIF campuses. The table shows that there have been no statistically significant differences on the observation ratings between TIF and Non-TIF teachers from 2014-2015 to 2017-2018. There is a pattern of moderate levels of increase, however, in observation ratings over time for both the TIF and Non-TIF campus teachers.

Table 23. Distribution of Overall Observation Ratings: TIF vs. Non-TIF (2014-15 through 2017-18)

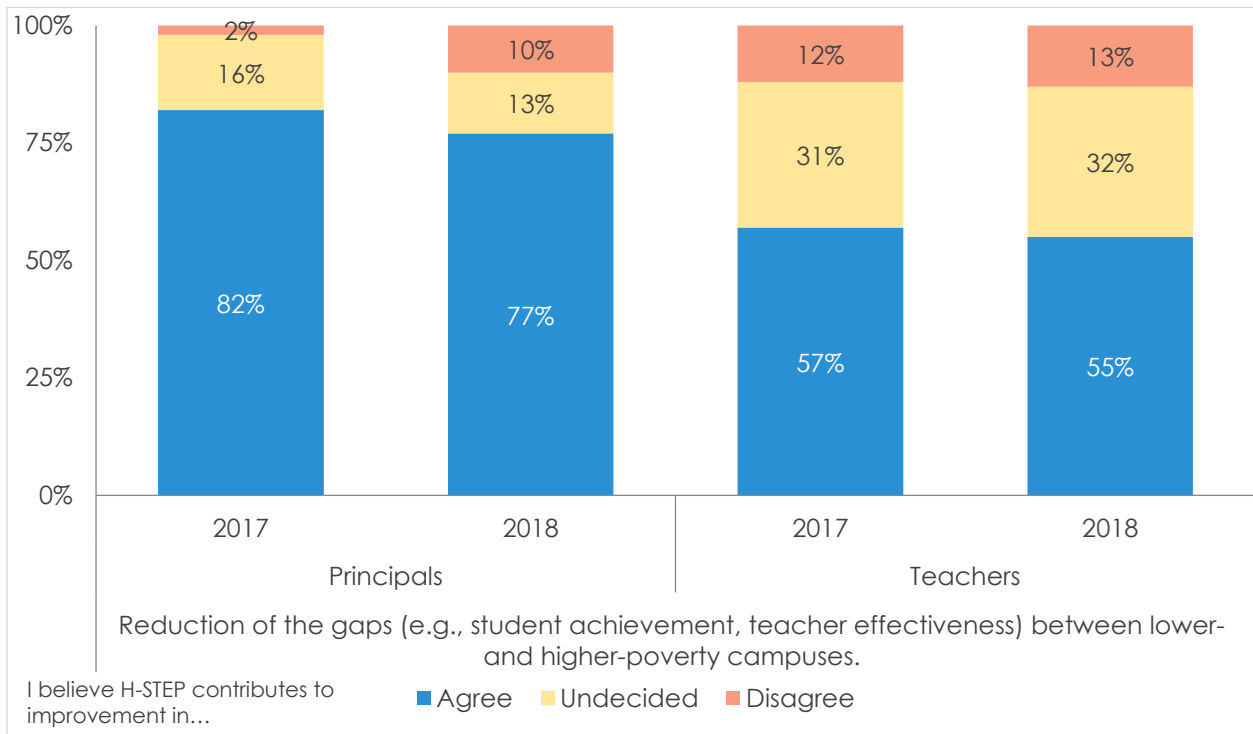
Year	Campus Type	N of Teachers	Distribution of Observation Ratings				Average Rating
			Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective	
2014-15	TIF	115	1.7%	47.8%	47.8%	2.6%	2.51
	Non-TIF	30	13.3%	33.3%	50.0%	3.3%	2.43
2015-16	TIF	1,326	5.2%	31.4%	57.6%	5.8%	2.64
	Non-TIF	308	7.5%	30.5%	51.0%	11.0%	2.66

Year	Campus Type	N of Teachers	Distribution of Observation Ratings				Average Rating
			Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective	
2016-17	TIF	1,663	3.8%	30.4%	57.8%	8.1%	2.70
	Non-TIF	396	4.5%	29.3%	52.8%	13.4%	2.75
2017-18	TIF	1,716	2.0%	28.3%	57.9%	11.8%	2.79
	Non-TIF	593	3.4%	27.7%	57.5%	11.5%	2.77

Note. The average ratings were calculated based on a four-point Likert scale: 1 = Ineffective; 2 = Effective: Emerging; 3 = Effective: Proficient; 4 = Highly Effective.

Figure 8 shows similar levels of confidence among HPS educators that H-STEP would help reduce student achievement and teacher effectiveness gaps between TIF and Non-TIF campuses in Years One and Two. The majority of the educators (77% of principals, and 55% of teachers) in Year Two agree or strongly agree that H-STEP helps to reduce gaps (student achievement, teacher effectiveness) between lower- and higher-poverty schools.¹⁵

Figure 8. Perceptions of H-STEP's Impact on Reduction of Educator Effectiveness and Student Achievement Gaps (2016-17 and 2017-18)



As discussed in Chapter IV, TIF campuses have narrowed achievement gaps when compared to Non-TIF campuses on several key performance measures since the project's launch in 2016-17.

¹⁵ It should be noted that teachers at TIF campuses have consistently earned evaluation ratings on par with those of their peers at Non-TIF campuses (see Table 23). Thus, to the extent that HPS considers these measures to be a reliable proxy for educator effectiveness, no teacher quality gap in need of remediation existed prior to the onset of the H-STEP project.

Distribution of Observation Ratings by Indicator: TIF vs. Non-TIF

In HPS, teachers are rated on five individual indicators: 1c: setting instructional outcomes; 2c: managing classroom procedures; 3b: using questioning and discussion techniques; 3c: engaging students in learning; and 3d: using assessment in instruction. Table 24 shows the ratings on each individual indicator.

From 2014-15 to 2017-18, the distributions of observation ratings by indicator for TIF and Non-TIF teachers are comparable. Both groups are demonstrating improvement over time on the indicators. In 2017-18, teachers from TIF campuses had higher ratings on average than teachers from Non-TIF campuses on *Engaging Students in Learning* and lower ratings on *Setting Instructional Outcomes*.

Table 24: Distribution of Observation Ratings by Indicator: TIF vs. Non-TIF (2014-15 through 2017-18)

Standard	School Year	TIF Schools					Non-TIF Schools				
		Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective	Average Rating	Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective	Average Rating
Setting Instructional Outcomes	2014-15	1.8%	30.1%	61.1%	7.1%	2.73	13.3%	33.3%	40.0%	13.3%	2.53
	2015-16	3.8%	27.3%	54.3%	14.5%	2.79	6.6%	27.7%	47.5%	18.2%	2.77
	2016-17*	2.7%	27.2%	52.3%	17.9%	2.85	3.6%	24.1%	45.7%	26.6%	2.95
	2017-18*	1.7%	26.4%	46.9%	24.9%	2.95	3.0%	20.6%	47.2%	29.2%	3.03
Managing Classroom Procedures	2014-15	1.7%	29.6%	53.0%	15.7%	2.83	3.3%	30.0%	46.7%	20.0%	2.83
	2015-16	2.2%	27.6%	55.5%	14.7%	2.83	4.2%	27.1%	47.1%	21.6%	2.86
	2016-17	2.4%	25.7%	53.5%	18.4%	2.88	3.8%	24.5%	44.7%	27.0%	2.95
	2017-18	1.9%	25.5%	44.6%	28.0%	2.99	1.9%	24.3%	47.0%	26.8%	2.99
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	2014-15	1.8%	49.6%	41.6%	7.1%	2.54	10.0%	43.3%	36.7%	10.0%	2.47
	2015-16	5.2%	34.9%	51.2%	8.7%	2.63	7.3%	34.4%	46.4%	11.9%	2.63
	2016-17	3.8%	33.8%	50.4%	12.0%	2.71	4.1%	37.8%	44.0%	14.1%	2.68
	2017-18	2.3%	36.8%	44.5%	16.4%	2.75	4.6%	39.1%	39.0%	17.4%	2.69
Engaging Students in Learning	2014-15	0.9%	35.7%	53.0%	10.4%	2.73	10.0%	33.3%	26.7%	30.0%	2.77
	2015-16	4.2%	31.0%	52.3%	12.5%	2.73	5.9%	28.8%	48.0%	17.3%	2.77
	2016-17	2.5%	30.0%	51.9%	15.6%	2.81	5.6%	26.3%	48.6%	19.5%	2.82
	2017-18*	1.6%	26.7%	46.9%	24.8%	2.95	2.4%	28.3%	48.6%	20.7%	2.88
Using Assessment in Instruction	2014-15	0.0%	38.9%	48.7%	12.4%	2.73	0.0%	43.3%	33.3%	23.3%	2.80
	2015-16	2.4%	28.6%	55.9%	13.1%	2.80	4.9%	31.2%	48.1%	15.9%	2.75
	2016-17	2.2%	29.2%	51.4%	17.2%	2.84	3.1%	28.2%	48.6%	20.1%	2.86
	2017-18	1.3%	26.5%	50.3%	21.9%	2.93	1.3%	27.0%	50.1%	21.6%	2.92

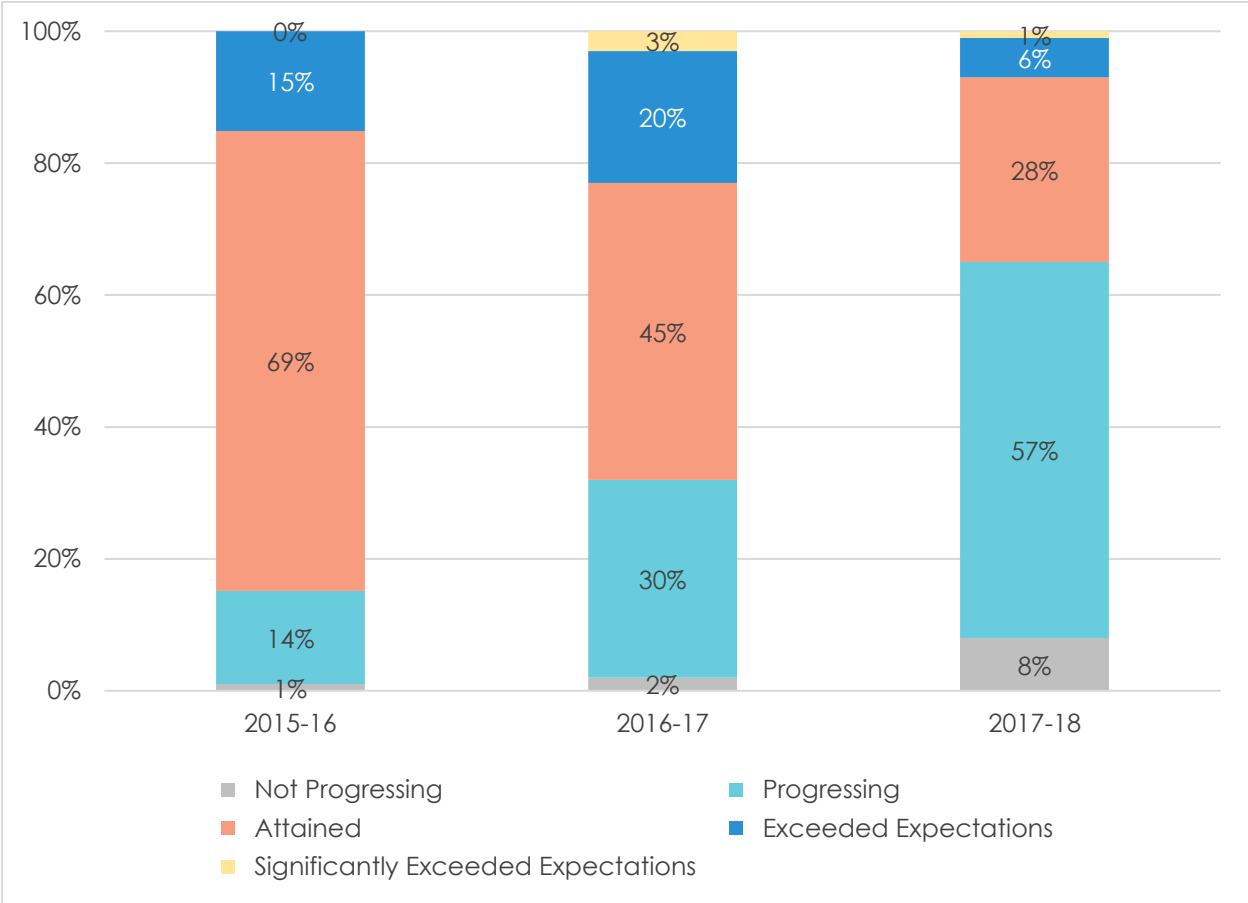
Note. The average ratings were calculated based on a four-point Likert scale: 1= Ineffective; 2 = Effective: Emerging; 3 = Effective: Proficient; 4 = Highly Effective. * Indicates the difference is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Additional tables comparing the distribution of ratings between educators on TIF priority campuses and educators on TIF non-priority campuses are included in the Appendix.

Campus Leaders

Principal evaluation ratings and goal attainment data trended in opposite directions. A notable disconnect emerged within the principal evaluation data. While the percentage of principals rated as Distinguished increased on all T-PESS standards in 2017-18, the percentage of principals who attained their end-of-year goals decreased. Fewer principals were rated as having Attained or Exceeded Expectations in 2017-18 than in prior years. Nearly two-thirds of principals (65%) did not attain their goals in 2017-18 (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Principals' Overall Goal Attainment (2015-16 through 2017-18)



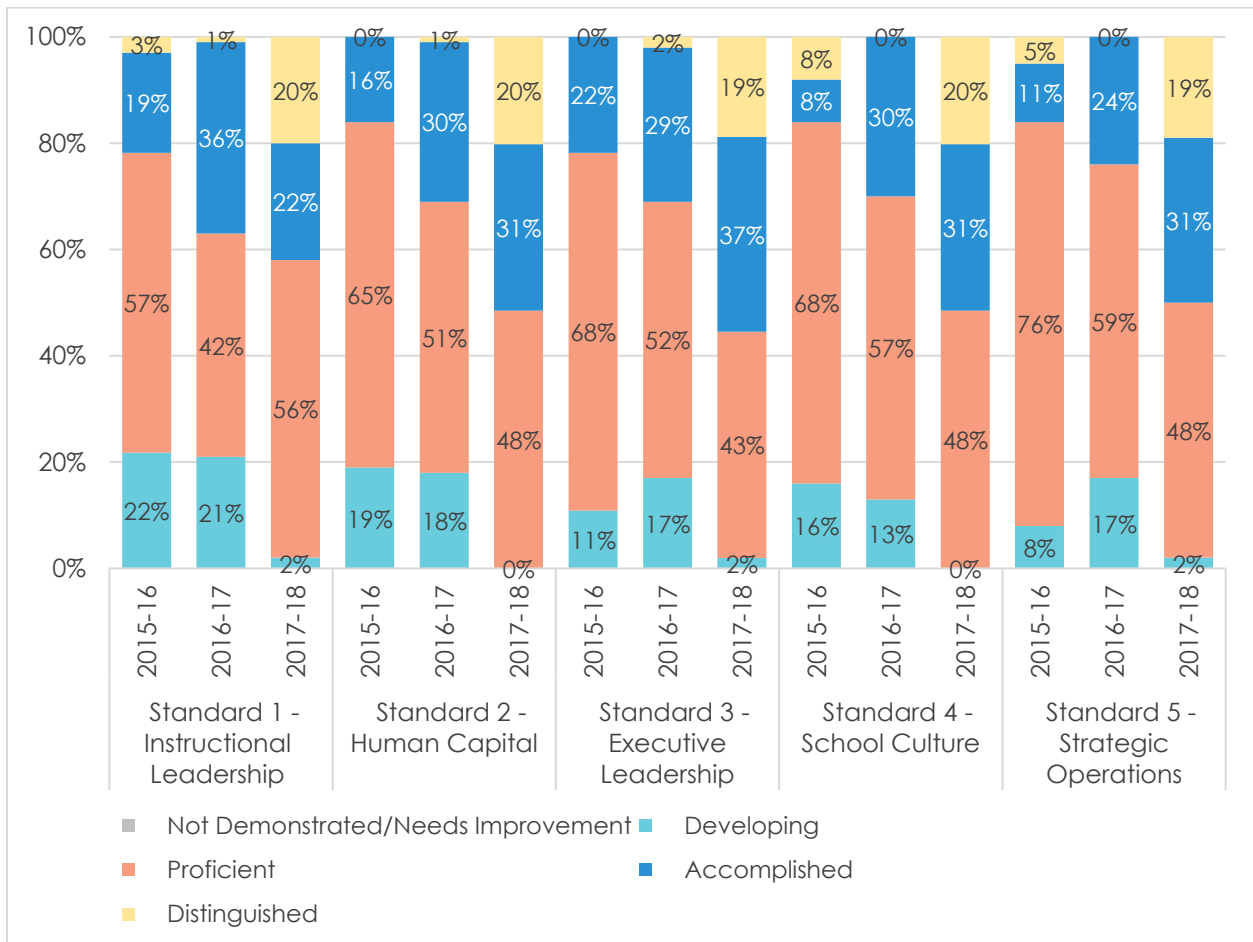
Whereas 40% of principals attained their Professional Practice goals in 2017-18, only 31% attained their Student Growth goals (see Table 25).

Table 25: Principals' Attainment of Professional Practice and Student Growth Goals (2017-18)

Goal Attainment Level	Professional Practice (PP) Goals (n = 50)		Student Growth (SG) Goals (n = 52)		Total (combined PP and SG Goals) (n = 102)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Not Progressing	5	10%	3	6%	8	8%
Progressing	25	50%	33	63%	58	57%
Attained	19	38%	10	19%	29	28%
Exceeded Expectations	1	2%	5	10%	6	6%
Significantly Exceeded Expectations	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%

By contrast, significantly more principals were rated as “Distinguished” across all five standards in 2017-18 (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Principals' Ratings by Year and Standard (2015-16 through 2017-18)



Standard 1 (Instructional Leadership) is the indicator on which the fewest principals are rated as either Distinguished or Accomplished (see Table 26).

Table 26: Principal Evaluation Ratings by Standard (2017-18)

	Standard 1: Instructional Leadership	Standard 2: Human Capital	Standard 3: Executive Leadership	Standard 4: School Culture	Standard 5: Strategic Operations
Not Demonstrated/ Needs Improvement	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Developing	2%	0%	2%	0%	2%
Proficient	56%	48%	43%	48%	48%
Accomplished	22%	31%	37%	31%	31%
Distinguished	20%	20%	19%	20%	19%

This finding is consistent with other data points that identify the instructional leadership capacity of HPS principals as a critical focus area for the network.

The instructional leadership capacity of HPS principals as a critical focus area for the network.

Instructional Leadership is an area for further growth for assistant principals. Assistant Principal evaluation data were made available to CTAC for the first time following the 2017-18 instructional year. On the evaluation rubric, a higher percentage of assistant principals were rated as Developing or Needs Improvement on Standard 1 (Instructional Leadership) than on any other standard (see Table 27).

Table 27: Assistant Principal Evaluation Ratings by Standard (2017-18)

	Standard 1: Instructional Leadership (n = 51)	Standard 2: Human Capital (n = 47)	Standard 3: Executive Leadership (n = 46)	Standard 4: School Culture (n = 44)	Standard 5: Strategic Operations (n = 44)
Not Demonstrated/ Needs Improvement	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Developing	20%	13%	7%	11%	14%
Proficient	41%	51%	52%	52%	50%
Accomplished	27%	30%	30%	32%	27%
Distinguished	10%	6%	11%	5%	7%

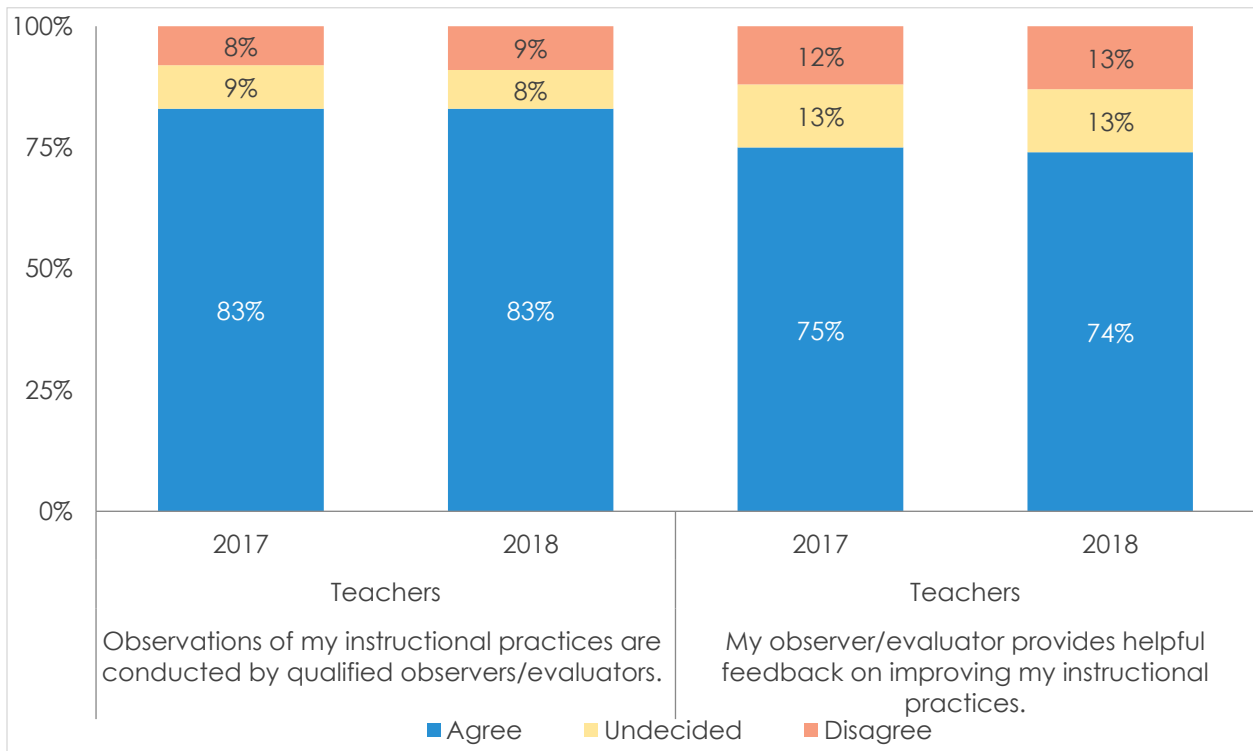
Moreover, Table 28 shows that a significantly smaller percentage of assistant principals attained their Student Growth goals than their Professional Practice goals (53% for the former, 86% for the latter). To ensure teachers are developing and students are progressing, HPS will need to continue strengthening the instructional capacity of its assistant principal corps.

Table 28: End-of-Year Goal Attainment for Assistant Principals (2017-18)

Goal Attainment Level	Professional Practice (PP) Goals (N = 40)		Student Growth (SG) Goals (N = 30)		Both PP and SG Goals (N = 70)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Not Progressing	0	0%	1	3%	1	1%
Progressing	6	15%	13	43%	19	27%
Attained	23	58%	9	30%	32	46%
Exceeded Expectations	11	28%	7	23%	18	26%
Significantly Exceeded Expectations	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Teachers report both improvements in instructional support and opportunities for continued growth. Some teachers report having witnessed a noticeable improvement in the quality of instructional support since the inception of the project period. The majority of HPS teachers believe that their observations are conducted by qualified individuals who offer them helpful feedback on how to improve their instructional practice (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Teachers' Perceptions of Observer Qualifications and Feedback (2016-17 and 2017-18)



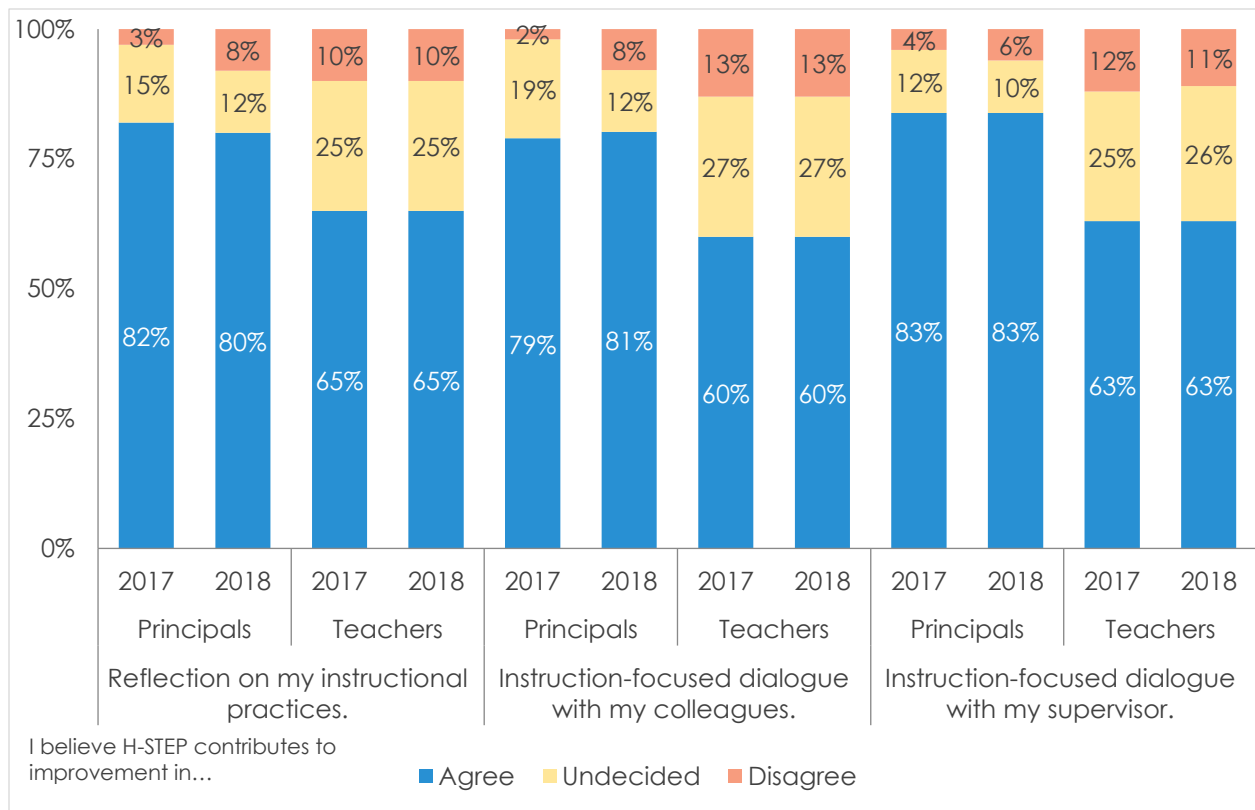
When improvements in the observation and evaluation processes are noted, they are tied to a broader shift across HPS from a compliance mindset to one that places a premium on coaching and development.

“Observation should be part of coaching to help the teacher improve. The evaluation process is trying to change that culture from a ‘gotcha’ [culture] into a coaching [culture]. I like the evaluation system we are going through now, it helps the person grow.”

- H-STEP Teacher

Additionally, a majority of teachers agree that H-STEP promotes instruction-focused dialogue with their supervisors and reflection on their own instructional practices (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Perceptions of H-STEP’s Impact on Instruction and Dialogue (2016-17 and 2017-18)



Not only do these conversations support instructional improvement, they may contribute to enhanced educator longevity.

“Before, there was generalized feedback from observations. It wasn’t anything specific. There was not a plan set into place for how you could grow. Many left because they did not get feedback. Having the support and the core training is going to make them like their job better.”

- District Administrator

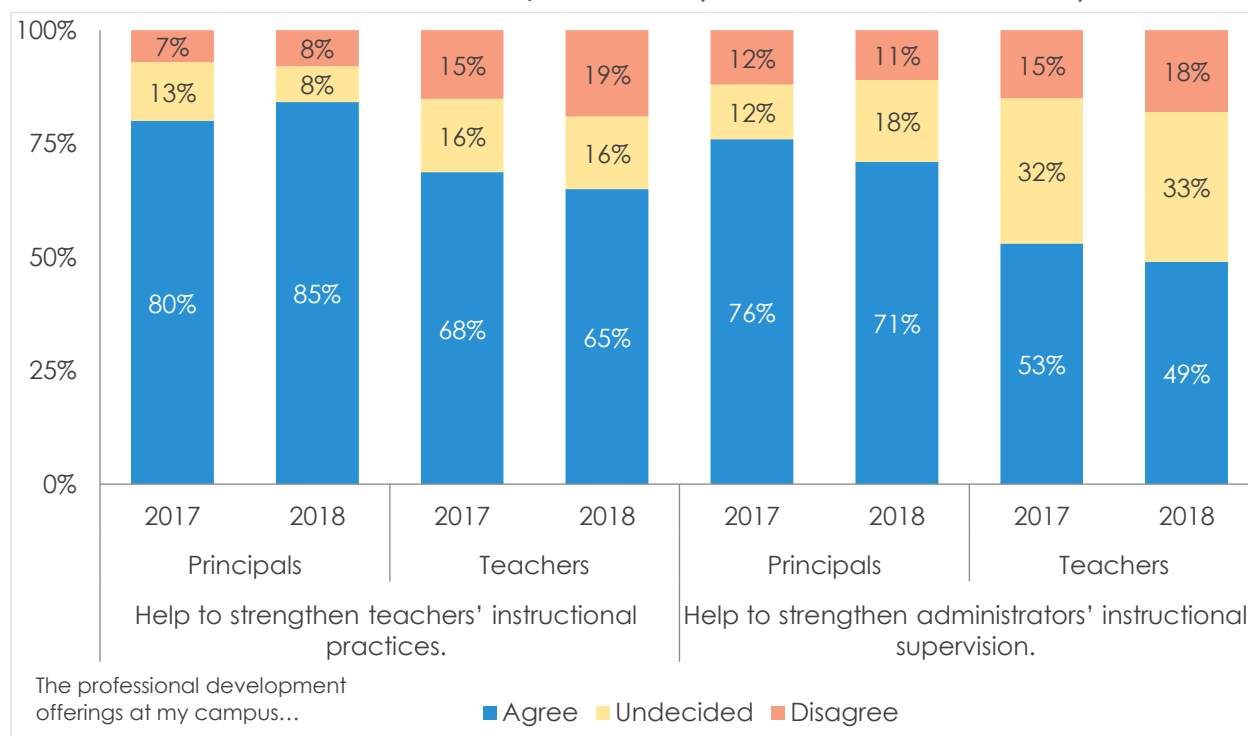
Others report that the process has further room for improvement. Specifically, teachers believe that their administrators would benefit from additional training on how to communicate effectively throughout the evaluation process.

“Evaluators should get better training on the process and the importance of it, how it affects teachers, and the importance of meaningful discussions after the observation is complete. After speaking to several teachers I see that some evaluators don't discuss and give low scores to teachers without giving them an opportunity to explain or understand their scores. These types of situations hurt the relationship between the two and I believe in the future may affect our teacher retention if it hasn't already. Teachers should be allowed to give feedback to their evaluator's supervisor immediately after the process is complete to make the evaluators more accountable for their role in the process.”

- H-STEP Teacher

As seen in Figure 11, three out of four H-STEP teachers believe that they receive helpful instructional feedback as a result of their observations. Beyond the formal evaluation process, however, teachers are less confident that their instructional leaders are being prepared to offer them valuable coaching and development. Fewer than half of the H-STEP teachers surveyed in 2017-18 believe that PD helps to strengthen their administrators' instructional supervision (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Perceptions of the Impact of Professional Development on Instructional Practice and Supervision (2016-17 and 2017-18)



Because teachers do not participate in principal trainings, they base their impressions on how principals conduct themselves as instructional leaders. If they perceive administrators to be ill-prepared to offer meaningful instructional support, they are likely to attribute that deficiency to the network's leader preparation efforts. Reflecting on this likelihood, one central office administrator identified a misalignment between training provided for principals and expectations regarding their ability to support teacher practice.

“I think that we should seriously consider training all administrators and develop an effective, strategic plan for putting this into action. It’s absolutely imperative that we develop the skills and confidence of our administrators, ensuring they’re well trained to implement all initiatives we take on. They cannot effectively provide support for their teachers if they don’t receive proper training. We leave administrators at a disadvantage when we only train the teachers, making the teachers more competent with the new initiative than the administrators.”

- Central Office Administrator

Through two years of the H-STEP project, teachers continue to believe that their administrators need additional support and development to become effective instructional leaders. For the H-STEP project to achieve its full potential, teachers will need to be observed and evaluated by administrators who can communicate effectively and help educators develop their craft.

Summary: Educator Evaluation

Average teacher evaluation ratings are trending upward across the HPS network. Overall teacher performance remains statistically similar on TIF and Non-TIF campuses. Although teachers cite improvements in the quality of observations and evaluations they are receiving, many do not believe that their administrators are receiving effective training on how to improve as instructional leaders.

Teachers need to be observed and evaluated by administrators who can communicate effectively and help educators develop their craft.

In 2017-18, principals became more likely to receive the highest-possible ratings on their evaluations but less likely to meet their end-of-year goals. Instructional Leadership was the evaluation standard on which the smallest percentage of principals received Distinguished or Accomplished ratings and the highest percentage of assistant principals received Developing or Needs Improvement ratings.

B. Recruitment and Retention

To assess the impact of H-STEP on the composition of Harmony's workforce, CTAC reviewed staff recruitment and retention data from the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. Specifically, CTAC analyzed the educational qualifications, professional credentials, and experience levels of

job applicants. Additionally, CTAC reviewed staff promotion and retention rates across HPS and disaggregated the data by professional role, TIF campus status, and teacher evaluation ratings.

In 2017-18, HPS increased the percentage of new teacher hires with graduate degrees and the percentage who arrive with extensive teaching experience. The percentage of new teacher hires with Master’s or Doctorate degrees increased by 7.4 percentage points (from 29.5% in 2016-17 to 36.9% in 2017-18) (see Table 29). Moreover, the percentage of new teacher hires with 10-19 years of prior teaching experience increased by 1.5 percentage points (from 13.6% to 15.1%) and the percentage with 20+ years of prior experience increased by 2.7 percentage points (from 4.5% to 7.2%) (see Table 30). Although the percentage of uncertified applicants for teaching positions decreased in 2017-18 from 23.7% in the previous year to 21.2%, the percentage of new teacher hires who possess valid in-state certification remained consistent from 2016-17 (75.0%) to 2017-18 (75.1%) (see Table 31).

Table 29: Teacher Applicant Education (2016-17 and 2017-18)

	2016-17				2017-18			
	All		Hired		All		Hired	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Bachelor	3,389	65.7%	347	70.5%	3,123	65.4%	289	63.1%
Master and Doctor	1,768	34.3%	145	29.5%	1,651	34.6%	169	36.9%
Total	5,157	100.0%	492	100.0%	4,774	100.0%	458	100.0%

Table 30: Teacher Applicant Experience (2016-17 and 2017-18)

	2016-17				2017-18			
	All		Hired		All		Hired	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-2 Years	2,094	40.6%	209	42.5%	2,034	42.6%	185	40.4%
3-9 Years	1,916	37.2%	194	39.4%	1,765	37.0%	171	37.3%
10-19 Years	859	16.7%	67	13.6%	756	15.8%	69	15.1%
20+ Years	288	5.6%	22	4.5%	219	4.6%	33	7.2%
Total	5,157	100.0%	492	100.0%	4,774	100.0%	458	100.0%

Table 31: Teacher Applicant Certification (2016-17 and 2017-18)

	2016-17				2017-18			
	All		Hired		All		Hired	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No Certificate	1,222	23.7%	92	18.7%	1,011	21.2%	90	19.7%
Non-Texas Certificate	377	7.3%	31	6.3%	343	7.2%	24	5.2%
Texas Certificate	3,558	69.0%	369	75.0%	3,420	71.6%	344	75.1%
Total	5,157	100.0%	492	100.0%	4,774	100.0%	458	100.0%

Note: Texas certification includes both traditional university certification programs and approved alternative certification providers.

The percentage of retained teachers who received Proficient ratings on their evaluations increased in Year Two. Relative to 2016-17, the percentage of retained teachers rated as either Proficient or Effective increased by 3.2 percentage points on TIF campuses (from 52.7% to 55.9%) and by 4.4 percentage points on Non-TIF campuses (from 50.7% to 55.1%). Moreover, the percentage of retained teachers rated as Ineffective decreased on TIF campuses from 2.1% in 2016-17 to 1.0% in 2017-18 (see Table 32).

Table 32: Teacher Evaluation Distribution, Retained Teachers by TIF Status (2016-17 and 2017-18)

	2016-17				2017-18			
	TIF		Non-TIF		TIF		Non-TIF	
	No.	%	No.	Percent	No.	%	No.	Percent
Ineffective	22	2.1%	6	2.3%	14	1.0%	11	2.3%
Effective: Emerging	480	45.2%	124	47.0%	595	43.1%	208	42.6%
Effective: Proficient	550	51.8%	131	49.6%	763	55.2%	266	54.5%
Highly Effective	10	0.9%	3	1.1%	9	0.7%	3	0.6%
Total	1,062	100.0%	264	100.0%	1,381	100.0%	488	100.0%

In each of the project's first two years, TIF campuses retained a slightly higher percentage of their teachers and principals than did Non-TIF campuses. In 2017-18, TIF campuses retained 83.0% of their teachers and principals while Non-TIF campuses retained 81.8% of those educators (see Table 33).

Table 33: Retention Distribution in 2016-17 and 2017-18 (Teacher and Principal by TIF Status)

	2016-17						2017-18					
	TIF		Non-TIF		District-level		TIF		Non-TIF		District-level	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Retained	1,642	84.9%	465	84.4%	4	100.0%	1,530	83.0%	604	81.8%	2	100.0%
Resign	249	12.9%	75	13.6%	0	0.0%	274	14.9%	125	16.9%	0	0.0%
Retired	3	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	0.3%	3	0.4%	0	0.0%
Terminated	40	2.1%	11	2.0%	0	0.0%	34	1.8%	6	0.8%	0	0.0%
Total	1,934	100.0%	551	100.0%	4	100.0%	1,844	100.0%	738	100.0%	2	100.0%

CTAC was able to review evaluation outcomes for 32 of the 37 teachers who received promotions prior to the 2017-18 school year. Twenty-two of those teachers (68.8%) were rated Effective: Proficient while 10 (31.2%) were rated Effective: Emerging (see Table 34).

Table 34: Promotion Distribution (2017-18)

Role before promotion	2017-18	
	Number	Percent
Administrator	8	6.6%
Teacher	37	30.3%
Assistant Teacher	31	25.4%
Coordinator/Counselor	15	12.3%
Other staff	31	25.4%
Total	122	100.0%

Additional tables containing HPS recruitment and retention data are included in the Appendix.

Summary: Recruitment and Retention Data

The composition of Harmony’s educator workforce continues to evolve. Since the onset of the H-STEP project, the percentage of new teacher hires with extensive teaching experience and graduate degrees has increased. HPS campuses retained over 80% of their teachers and principals in both 2016-17 and 2017-18, and teachers who are retained year-over-year are less likely than the general teaching population to receive Ineffective ratings. These trends are encouraging. Harmony is holding onto its strongest teachers at a high rate and replacing ineffective teachers with more experienced educators.

VI. IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The TIF grant award and the onset of the H-STEP project are catalyzing a shift within the HPS network toward a heightened focus on educator growth and development. In several key areas, this focus is already resulting in more thoughtful policies and protocols, engendering educator goodwill, and improving the overall quality of the network's schools. In other areas, Harmony's efforts to operationalize its vision can still be strengthened. The TIF grant is affording HPS an opportunity to reimagine its approach to human capital management while continuing its growth as one of the country's largest charter networks.

A. Reasons to celebrate

In Year Two, HPS progressed from planning the H-STEP project to executing its design. The rollout of key project elements, most notably Professional Learning Communities, is generally well-received. The creation of a dedicated H-STEP website and the dissemination of regular email communication fosters a greater sense of clarity about the project's scope and aims.

Harmony regularly seeks out feedback from educators and makes responsive modifications to its project design in real-time. Staff generally appreciate the opportunity to provide input and to help shape the project's trajectory. Harmony's willingness to honor concerns originating on its campuses reflects a spirit of inclusiveness.

On key student achievement measures, students attending TIF campuses continue to narrow performance gaps with their peers enrolled at Non-TIF campuses. Redressing these internal disparities was a key driver of H-STEP's design, and the progress on this front through the project's first two years is consistent.

Teachers on TIF campuses are receiving comparable evaluation ratings to those on Non-TIF campuses. Harmony is retaining its effective teachers at a high rate and supplementing its educator workforce with progressively larger percentages of experienced and well-credentialed teachers.

B. Areas for improvement

Issue One: Communication and Ownership

Overview

H-STEP remains an abstraction to many HPS educators. A number of teachers neither associate the project's core components with the project itself nor perceive the project as having a direct impact on their professional practice or eligibility for additional compensation. Accordingly, Harmony must take affirmative measures to ensure that each educator possesses a specific understanding of how the H-STEP project affects their growth and development.

In Year Two, HPS made significantly more project-related information available to staff. Building on this progress, the next step for HPS to improve communication and ownership will be to ensure that key individuals take responsibility for messaging the project's features and objectives. The recommended steps outlined below are offered in the spirit of moving HPS educators from a generic understanding of how H-STEP may benefit HPS to how it will benefit them individually.

Recommended Action

Use email and dedicated digital platforms to reinforce information that has already been communicated verbally. Campus-based educators are more familiar with the existence of project-related digital communications than with their substance. Creating the central repository of information on the dedicated project portal was a key Year Two milestone. The next step is for HPS campus and district leaders to convey pertinent H-STEP information in-person before referring their teams to written materials.

Create professional development opportunities that address the realities of what teachers are experiencing in their classrooms. For campus-based educators to embrace the idea that H-STEP is truly designed to support daily practice, they must be provided with professional development that feels highly pertinent to their lived experiences. PD sessions should be differentiated by educator knowledge and capacity, overall experience level, and longevity within the HPS system. HPS should offer specific sessions on working with students with disabilities and English Language Learners and on minimizing off-task behaviors. PD content that teacher perceive as practical and immediate will engender educator buy-in to H-STEP and improved classroom practices.

Prioritize outreach to educators who are situated in more geographically isolated regions, who teach co-curricular subjects, and who work with Special Education and ELL students. From the standpoint of both access to career pathways and eligibility for performance-based compensation, these educators are among the most likely to perceive H-STEP as not designed with them in mind. To counteract this perception, HPS should place paramount emphasis on two-way communication with these stakeholders, informing them about how the project pertains to their positions and inviting suggestions on how to make it progressively more relevant.

Issue Two: Principal Preparation

Overview

Principals are the connection between central office decision-making and school-level implementation. Because policies are only effective insofar as they are clearly communicated and consistently upheld, principals must be equipped to support the implementation of H-STEP on their campuses. In general, unfamiliarity with H-STEP's intricacies dissuades principals from attempting to explain the project's substance or its underlying rationale. However, while referring staff to their inboxes or to the network's dedicated TIF website may lessen the likelihood that erroneous information gets transmitted, principals must be adept and comfortable in leading TIF-related initiatives and conversations in order to weave the project into the core fabric of their campuses.

Recommendations

Build the capacity of principals to have ongoing conversations with their teachers about how PD and financial incentives are connected to their individualized career pathways. For incentive programs to be successful, educators must be motivated to modify their behavior to achieve desired outcomes. If educators are unaware of how incentives can be earned, or feel that their efforts are unlikely to earn additional compensation, the system will not achieve its intended aims. Harmony's PBC Plan changes annually, and even the most well-informed educators may have difficulty understanding how these adjustments affect their earnings. By sitting with each staff member at regular intervals throughout the school year and explaining how that individual can qualify for incentives, principals will demystify the bonus structure, make the messaging relevant to motivated teachers, and help educators understand that H-STEP was crafted with them in mind.

Orient PD toward the instructional development of school leaders. Principals need to possess comfort and credibility as instructional leaders. This is the most important factor in ensuring that H-STEP results in sustained improvements in educator practice across the HPS network. Notwithstanding the additional training provided by IPSI and the pre-service preparation afforded by HALA, principals are lagging on the Instructional Leadership indicator of their evaluations. When deepening and differentiating PD for administrators — both during the pathway to the principalship and while they are on the job — HPS should be fully committed to ensuring that principals have the tools to recognize and support effective instruction.

Examine the relationship between the decrease in year-end goal attainment on principal evaluations and the increase in "Distinguished" ratings on standards aligned with the T-PESS rubric. Concurrent with a marked increase in the percentage of principals achieving Distinguished designations on all T-PESS standards in their evaluations, the percentage of principals who attained their end-of-year professional practice and student growth goals declined markedly. To ensure the reliability of its principal evaluation system, HPS should explore this relationship, identify the cause, and determine whether any recalibrations are warranted.

Issue Three: Mid-Course Corrections

Overview

Mid-course corrections, particularly those based on thoughtful analysis of formative data, are vital to the success of any major initiative. Harmony's ability to incorporate educator feedback into its project design and make informed adjustments in real time is encouraging. Incorporating SLO criteria into the PBC Plan sent a strong signal to teachers in non-core subjects that their work is valued. The manner in which that shift was enacted, however, blunted some of its positive force.

Recommendations

Time the rollout of major project initiatives to maximize their ability to shape educator practice. Harmony's iterative data-collection process creates a regular feedback loop and helps enable HPS to secure educator input on an ongoing basis. Including an SLO criterion for teachers in non-core subjects created a more equitable, responsive PBC system. Because the shift occurred well into the school year, however, educators were not well-positioned to pursue these incentives. Before instituting material mid-course corrections, HPS would benefit from equipping district and campus leaders to explain the changes to their teams and to support the efforts of educators attempting to earn the incentives.

Publicize and celebrate the specific modifications made in response to educator feedback. To demonstrate that H-STEP's evolution is the byproduct of thoughtful collaboration with campus-based staff, HPS should be explicit about how modifications to the project are adopted. For example, HPS should indicate how public comments have informed proposed changes to the network's bonus structure.

Issue Four: Student Outcomes

Overview

On many key metrics, students attending TIF campuses are narrowing performance gaps with their counterparts attending Non-TIF campuses. In absolute terms, average proficiency levels tend to be higher at Non-TIF campuses.

Recommendations

Probe the EOC Algebra data. In general, students attending TIF campuses are making more rapid progress vis-à-vis their peers at Non-TIF campuses on Math measures than on Reading or Language metrics. Ninth grade students at TIF campuses are outperforming their peers at Non-TIF campuses on EOC Algebra exams. Given the rarity of students at TIF campuses outscoring their peers attending Non-TIF campuses in absolute terms, HPS should explore the circumstances that are contributing to their success on this measure. If any pedagogical, curricular, or structural variables can be isolated and replicated at scale, HPS would be wise to view these classrooms on TIF campuses as laboratories of experimentation that can provide valuable insights for the rest of the network.

APPENDIX

MAP Outcomes

Tables A, B, and C supplement Table 11 by providing MAP Language, Math, and Science data from the past five school years. As is the case on the MAP Reading assessment, students attending TIF campuses have narrowed the performance gap with their peers at Non-TIF campuses at the majority of tested grades since 2015-16.

Table A. MAP Language Averages by School Year, Grade, and TIF Status (2013-14 through 2017-18)*

Grade	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF
3	188.8	194.1	188.1	195.8	188.4	195.7	188.2	194.5	188.5	192.5
4	198.1	203.0	197.3	203.6	197.2	202.6	197.1	203.7	197.4	201.8
5	204.5	211.7	204.4	208.2	205.2	210.6	204.4	208.9	205.0	208.9
6	210.4	214.4	209.7	214.2	209.9	212.5	210.0	214.3	208.9	213.1
7	213.1	220.4	213.7	218.7	214.0	218.2	213.1	219.3	214.1	219.3
8	217.4	222.7	218.5	224.5	218.4	223.3	218.1	223.4	218.9	222.9
9	220.6	224.4	221.1	226.0	222.2	226.5	221.1	226.0	221.2	222.7
10	225.0	230.0	226.1	229.5	225.6	229.9	224.4	229.8	224.3	227.6

*Based on a total of 96,150 valid observations.

Table B. MAP Math Averages by School Year, Grade, and TIF Status (2013-14 through 2017-18)*

Grade	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF
K	139.9	144.1	138.7	144.0	137.1	142.7	136.7	141.2	136.9	139.5
1	159.8	165.4	159.9	167.1	159.6	165.5	160.5	165.7	160.8	164.3
2	177.2	183.3	178.5	184.2	180.6	186.8	179.4	183.9	180.4	183.6
3	189.0	192.2	188.3	195.6	189.3	196.1	188.8	194.4	189.2	192.6
4	201.4	205.5	202.5	205.1	201.1	207.8	201.0	207.3	201.5	203.9
5	210.2	215.7	211.0	214.7	212.3	217.6	210.9	217.7	211.6	215.0
6	217.4	223.1	216.9	222.1	215.9	219.3	216.3	221.1	215.5	220.2
7	222.5	231.5	225.2	230.2	224.4	229.6	222.7	230.7	223.9	230.0
8	229.5	237.1	231.5	238.2	230.5	236.5	230.3	237.8	231.2	235.7
9	234.3	242.4	236.6	242.6	236.9	243.7	236.0	241.8	235.4	236.6
10	239.6	249.2	242.3	247.6	241.7	248.6	240.3	248.1	239.6	244.6

*Based on a total of 126,586 valid observations.

Table C. MAP Science Averages by School Year, Grade, and TIF Status (2013-14 through 2017-18)*

Grade	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF
4	195.8	199.3	196.3	199.3	195.8	199.4	196.4	200.3	195.8	198.3
5	200.5	205.7	201.8	205.3	202.7	205.4	201.7	204.9	202.4	204.1
6	206.4	211.5	206.3	208.4	206.1	207.7	206.7	209.4	206.2	207.9
7	208.6	214.0	208.1	212.8	208.6	212.2	207.4	212.4	209.4	211.3
8	211.5	216.4	211.7	216.2	211.3	215.8	211.8	216.6	212.7	214.5

*Based on a total of 63,511 valid observations.

STAAR Outcomes

Tables D, E, and F supplement Table 15 by providing average STAAR scale scores in Math, Writing, and Science for the past five school years. Across all subjects, grade levels, and campuses, average scores are consistently above the state's cut-off score that establishes "satisfactory" performance levels.

Table D: Average STAAR Math Scale Scores by Year, Grade and TIF Status*

Grade	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		Cut-Off Scores**		
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	2013-14	2014-15	15-16 to 17-18
3	1442.8	1491.7	1421.1	1515.2	1430.3	1515.4	1451.5	1494.9	1453.5	1490.4	1392	1347	1360
4	1530.6	1604.3	1532.4	1565.7	1527.5	1594.1	1550.2	1587.9	1569.9	1581.0	1471	1453	1467
5	1608.9	1667.3	1599.8	1637.4	1618.3	1660.5	1618.5	1674.8	1638.9	1672.7	1489	1487	1500
6	1634.2	1687.8	1639.1	1696.8	1638.8	1699.8	1658.6	1716.9	1655.9	1714.7	1509	1523	1536
7	1644.2	1707.9	1683.0	1735.7	1679.4	1760.0	1699.0	1763.8	1698.4	1759.0	1551	1563	1575
8	1665.4	1703.1	1676.6	1711.9	1696.4	1712.2	1707.6	1713.3	1717.5	1738.8	1583	1583	1595

*Based on a sample of 75,697 valid observations.

**Cut-offs scores distinguish between those in the "not met" range and those considered "satisfactory."

Table E: Average STAAR Writing Scale Scores by Year, Grade and TIF Status*

Grade	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		Cut-Off Scores**	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	13-14 to 14-15	15-16 to 17-18
4	3700.9	3924.6	3685.3	3851.2	3736.1	3867.5	3664.6	3775.9	3683.6	3779.0	3500	3550
7	3816.4	4025.2	3870.0	4106.4	3895.6	4110.3	3892.4	4094.1	3925.2	4150.0		

*Based on a sample of 26,716 valid observations.

**Cut-offs scores distinguish between those in the "not met" range and those considered "satisfactory."

Table F: Average STAAR Science Scale Scores by Year, Grade and TIF Status*

Grade	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		Cut-Off Scores**	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	13-14 to 14-15	15-16 to 17-18
5	3728.3	3961.1	3663.2	3811.1	3751.7	3850.8	3729.5	3915.5	3737.9	3821.3	3500	3550
8	3768.3	3961.3	3765.2	3916.0	3847.1	3981.0	3856.4	4030.6	3896.0	4018.2		

*Based on a sample of 25,513 valid observations.

**Cut-offs scores distinguish between those in the "not met" range and those considered "satisfactory."

Table G supplements Table 17 by showing the percentage of students who met their expected growth targets on STAAR Reading exams over the past five school years. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expected growth in Reading increased in Non-TIF campuses since 2015-16 but decreased in TIF campuses.

Table G. Percent of Students Meeting Expected Growth in Reading (2013-14 through 2017-18)

	Total	Percent of Students		
	Number of Students	Did Not Meet Expected Growth	Met Expected Growth	Exceeded Expected Growth
TIF				
2013-14	8,079	38.5	44.4	17.1
2014-15	8,811	38.2	41.8	20.0
2015-16	10,398	35.5	44.2	20.3
2016-17	10,321	38.4	40.9	20.7
2017-18	10,160	36.5	40.6	23.0
Non-TIF				
2013-14	2,234	35.3	46.8	17.9
2014-15	2,291	33.3	43.8	22.9
2015-16	2,670	33.9	45.3	20.8
2016-17	2,869	32.8	43.6	23.6
2017-18	3,537	32.1	41.3	26.6

EOC Outcomes

Table H supplements Table 18 by showing scale scores on EOC English exams over the past five school years. Students attending Non-TIF campuses outperform their peers at TIF campuses, and the average scale scores of all students at both grade levels comfortably exceed the cut-off score that determines "satisfactory" performance.

Table H: End-of-Course Scale Scores by Year, Grade and TIF Status, English I and II*

Grade	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		Cut-Off Scores**	
	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	TIF	Non-TIF	13-14 to 14-15	15-16 to 17-18
9	4052.1	4193.7	4055.1	4212.5	4060.2	4279.9	4092.5	4269.9	4132.9	4205.6	3500	3550
10	4177.1	4380.4	4119.1	4292.8	4167.6	4300.4	4140.6	4331.6	4176.8	4334.7		

*Based on a sample of 18,991 observations.

**Cut-offs scores distinguish between those in the "not met" range and those considered "satisfactory."

Difference-in-Difference Outcomes

Table I provides a comprehensive list of the comparison schools selected for inclusion in the Difference-in-Difference analysis.

Table I. Comparison Schools

Campus Name	County Name	Region Name	Grade Span	Propensity Score	Propensity Block
Academy of Accelerated Learning	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 05	0.295	2
Alamo Leadership Academy	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'PK - 05	0.172	1
Amigos Por Vida - Friends For Life Charter School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 08	0.058	1
Aristoi Classical Upper School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'06 - 10	0.135	1
Austin Achieve Public Schools - Middle School	Travis	Region 13: Austin	'06 - 09	0.661	4
Austin Discovery School	Travis	Region 13: Austin	'KG - 08	0.071	1
Beta Academy	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'KG - 06	0.193	1
Brooks Academy of Science and Engineering	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'KG - 12	0.126	1
Brooks Estrella Academy	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'KG - 06	0.173	1
Brooks International Studies Academy	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'KG - 06	0.107	1
Bush Elementary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 04	0.046	1
Bussey Elementary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'KG - 04	0.291	2
C.O.R.E. Academy	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'KG - 10	0.250	2
Carl Wunsche Sr. High School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'09 - 09	0.101	1
Cedar Park Charter Academy	Bell	Region 12: Waco	'PK - 12	0.093	1
Clark Elementary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'EE - 05	0.116	1
Cypress Lakes High School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'09 - 12	0.044	1
Cypress Ranch High School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'09 - 12	0.142	1
DaVinci School for Science & the Arts	El Paso	Region 19: El Paso	'06 - 12	0.174	1
East Austin College Prep Academy	Travis	Region 13: Austin	'02 - 06	0.074	1
Epps Island Elementary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'KG - 05	0.064	1

Campus Name	County Name	Region Name	Grade Span	Propensity Score	Propensity Block
Glenn York Elementary	Brazoria	Region 04: Houston	'EE - 05	0.158	1
Global Learning Village	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'KG - 12	0.686	4
Great Hearts Irving	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'KG - 07	0.104	1
Great Hearts Monte Vista	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'KG - 05	0.294	2
Great Hearts Northern Oaks	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'KG - 07	0.254	2
Harlingen Leadership Academy	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'PK - 05	0.111	1
Henry Ford Academy Alameda School	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'09 - 12	0.151	1
Highland Park Gifted and Talented Academy	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'PK - 08	0.336	2
Johnson Elementary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'KG - 04	0.044	1
Katherine Anne Porter School	Hays	Region 13: Austin	'09 - 12	0.237	2
KIPP 3rd Ward School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 05	0.109	1
KIPP Academy West Middle	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'05 - 05	0.521	3
KIPP Austin Collegiate	Travis	Region 13: Austin	'09 - 12	0.394	2
KIPP Austin Comunidad School	Travis	Region 13: Austin	'KG - 04	0.042	1
KIPP Austin Connections Elementary School	Travis	Region 13: Austin	'KG - 04	0.295	2
KIPP Austin Leadership Elementary School	Travis	Region 13: Austin	'KG - 03	0.325	2
KIPP Austin Obras	Travis	Region 13: Austin	'KG - 03	0.359	2
KIPP Connect Primary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 03	0.098	1
KIPP Dream Prep	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 04	0.117	1
KIPP Explore Academy	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 04	0.334	2
KIPP Generations Collegiate	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'09 - 12	0.221	2
KIPP Gulfton Middle School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'05 - 06	0.182	1
KIPP Houston High School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'09 - 12	0.215	2
KIPP Legacy Preparatory School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 04	0.198	1
KIPP Northeast College Preparatory	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'09 - 11	0.332	2
KIPP Poder Academy	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'05 - 05	0.131	1
KIPP Polaris Academy For Boys	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'05 - 08	0.043	1
KIPP Sharp College Prep Lower School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 04	0.176	1
KIPP Shine Prep	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 04	0.091	1
KIPP Sunnyside High School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'09 - 12	0.116	1
KIPP University Prep High School	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'09 - 12	0.064	1
La Fe Preparatory School	El Paso	Region 19: El Paso	'PK - 08	0.117	1
Lee Elementary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 05	0.046	1
Living Way Leadership Academy	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'PK - 10	0.189	1
Magnolia Montessori For All	Travis	Region 13: Austin	'EE - 04	0.097	1
Marshall Elementary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'KG - 05	0.046	1

Campus Name	County Name	Region Name	Grade Span	Propensity Score	Propensity Block
Meadowland Charter School	Kendall	Region 20: San Antonio	'02 - 12	0.352	2
Meridian World School	Williamson	Region 13: Austin	'KG - 12	0.486	3
Moreno Elementary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'EE - 05	0.042	1
Oleson Elementary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'KG - 04	0.062	1
Premier Learning Academy	Galveston	Region 04: Houston	'KG - 12	0.201	2
Raul Yzaguirre School For Success	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'09 - 12	0.463	3
Raul Yzaguirre School For Success	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'KG - 08	0.318	2
Ray and Jamie Wolman Elementary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'EE - 05	0.047	1
Red Duke Elementary School	Brazoria	Region 04: Houston	'EE - 05	0.074	1
Rhodes School - Northshore	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 07	0.045	1
Rusk School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'EE - 08	0.089	1
School of Science and Technology	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'06 - 12	0.083	1
School of Science and Technology - Alamo	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'KG - 08	0.067	1
School of Science and Technology Discovery	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'KG - 08	0.124	1
Shearn Elementary School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 05	0.158	1
Smith Academy	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'KG - 04	0.043	1
Texas Empowerment Academy Elementary School	Travis	Region 13: Austin	'KG - 05	0.088	1
Texas Preparatory School	Hays	Region 13: Austin	'KG - 06	0.210	2
Texas Preparatory School - Austin	Hays	Region 13: Austin	'KG - 06	0.600	3
Tompkins High School	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'09 - 12	0.046	1
Varnett School - East	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 05	0.068	1
Varnett School - Northeast	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 05	0.285	2
Vista Del Futuro Charter School	El Paso	Region 19: El Paso	'KG - 06	0.168	1
Waco Charter School	McLennan	Region 12: Waco	'PK - 05	0.053	1
Wells Branch Leadership Academy	Bexar	Region 20: San Antonio	'PK - 10	0.627	4
YES Prep Public Schools - 5th Ward Titans	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'06 - 10	0.387	2
YES Prep Public Schools - Brays Oaks	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'06 - 12	0.524	3
YES Prep Public Schools - East End	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'06 - 12	0.302	2
YES Prep Public Schools - Gulfton	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'06 - 12	0.147	1
YES Prep Public Schools - North Central	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'06 - 12	0.271	2
YES Prep Public Schools - North Forest	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'06 - 12	0.080	1
YES Prep Public Schools - Northside	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'06 - 10	0.300	2
YES Prep Public Schools - Southeast	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'06 - 12	0.352	2
YES Prep Public Schools - Southwest	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'06 - 12	0.147	1
YES Prep Public Schools - West	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'06 - 12	0.331	2
Zoe Learning Academy Koinonia Campus	Harris	Region 04: Houston	'PK - 06	0.068	1

Evaluation Ratings

Tables J and K supplement Tables 23 and 24 by disaggregating teacher observation ratings by TIF Priority and TIF Non-Priority Campuses. Teachers at Non-Priority Campuses have consistently earned higher ratings both overall and on individual indicators than their peers at Priority Campuses.

Table J: Distribution of Overall Observation Ratings: TIF Priority vs. TIF Non-Priority Campuses (2014-15 through 2017-18)

Year	Campus Type	N of Teachers	Distribution of Observation Ratings				Average Rating
			Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective	
2014-2015	TIF Priority	23	0.0%	56.5%	43.5%	0.0%	2.43
	TIF Non-Priority	92	2.2%	45.7%	48.9%	3.3%	2.53
2015-2016*	TIF Priority	217	8.3%	41.5%	47.9%	2.3%	2.44
	TIF Non-Priority	1,109	4.6%	29.4%	59.5%	6.5%	2.68
2016-2017	TIF Priority	293	2.0%	36.2%	58.0%	3.8%	2.63
	TIF Non-Priority	1,370	4.2%	29.1%	57.7%	9.0%	2.72
2017-2018	TIF Priority	318	1.9%	28.6%	63.2%	6.3%	2.74
	TIF Non-Priority	1,398	2.1%	28.3%	56.7%	13.0%	2.81

Note. The average ratings were calculated based on a four-point Likert scale: 1= Ineffective; 2 = Effective: Emerging; 3 = Effective: Proficient; 4 = Highly Effective. * Indicates the difference is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Table K: Distribution of Observation Ratings by Indicator: TIF Priority vs. TIF Non-Priority Campuses (2014-15 through 2017-18)

Standard	School Year	TIF Priority Schools					TIF Non-Priority Schools				
		Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective	Average Rating	Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective	Average Rating
Setting Instructional Outcomes	2014-15	4.3%	34.8%	52.2%	8.7%	2.65	1.1%	28.9%	63.3%	6.7%	2.76
	2015-16*	5.5%	39.0%	49.0%	6.5%	2.57	3.5%	25.2%	55.3%	15.9%	2.84
	2016-17	2.7%	27.3%	59.4%	10.6%	2.78	2.7%	27.1%	50.7%	19.4%	2.87
	2017-18*	0.9%	26.4%	57.5%	15.1%	2.87	1.9%	26.4%	44.5%	27.2%	2.97
Managing Classroom Procedures	2014-15	0.0%	34.8%	56.5%	8.7%	2.74	2.2%	28.3%	52.2%	17.4%	2.85
	2015-16	2.8%	25.0%	63.0%	9.3%	2.79	2.1%	28.1%	54.1%	15.7%	2.83
	2016-17	1.4%	24.9%	60.1%	13.7%	2.86	2.6%	25.8%	52.1%	19.5%	2.89
	2017-18	2.2%	19.2%	51.9%	26.7%	3.03	1.9%	27.0%	42.9%	28.3%	2.98
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	2014-15	0.0%	43.5%	47.8%	8.7%	2.65	2.2%	51.1%	40.0%	6.7%	2.51
	2015-16*	7.5%	42.9%	41.5%	8.0%	2.50	4.8%	33.3%	53.1%	8.9%	2.66
	2016-17	2.4%	35.2%	54.6%	7.8%	2.68	4.1%	33.5%	49.4%	13.0%	2.71
	2017-18	1.9%	37.7%	49.1%	11.3%	2.70	2.4%	36.6%	43.4%	17.6%	2.76

Standard	School Year	TIF Priority Schools					TIF Non-Priority Schools				
		Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective	Average Rating	Ineffective	Effective: Emerging	Effective: Proficient	Highly Effective	Average Rating
Engaging Students in Learning	2014-15	0.0%	34.8%	60.9%	4.3%	2.70	1.1%	35.9%	51.1%	12.0%	2.74
	2015-16*	5.1%	35.5%	52.1%	7.4%	2.62	4.1%	30.1%	52.4%	13.5%	2.75
	2016-17*	1.0%	34.1%	58.0%	6.8%	2.71	2.8%	29.1%	50.5%	17.5%	2.83
	2017-18*	1.6%	27.4%	55.0%	16.0%	2.86	1.6%	26.5%	45.1%	26.8%	2.97
Using Assessment in Instruction	2014-15	0.0%	43.5%	39.1%	17.4%	2.74	0.0%	37.8%	51.1%	11.1%	2.73
	2015-16*	2.4%	44.3%	46.2%	7.1%	2.58	2.4%	25.5%	57.8%	14.3%	2.84
	2016-17*	1.0%	42.8%	47.6%	8.6%	2.64	2.4%	26.3%	52.2%	19.1%	2.88
	2017-18*	1.9%	28.6%	56.0%	13.5%	2.81	1.1%	26.0%	49.1%	23.7%	2.95

Note. The average ratings were calculated based on a four-point Likert scale: 1= Ineffective; 2 = Effective: Emerging; 3 = Effective: Proficient; 4 = Highly Effective. * Indicates the difference is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Recruitment and Retention

Tables L, M, and N supplement Tables 29, 30, and 31 by providing additional information about applicants for all positions within the HPS network over the past two years. Because some non-instructional positions do not require a college degree, the percentage of all applicants who possess a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctorate diplomas is smaller than the percentage of applicants for teacher positions who have successfully completed those degree programs.

Table L: Application Distribution (2016-17 and 2017-18)

	2016-17		2017-18	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Paraprofessional	4,437	100.0%	3,939	100.0%
Withdrawn/Rejected	46	1.0%	82	2.1%
Accepted	4,022	90.6%	3,570	90.6%
Hired	369	8.3%	287	7.3%
Substitute	498	100.0%	501	100.0%
Withdrawn/Rejected	22	4.4%	25	5.0%
Accepted	358	71.9%	354	70.7%
Hired	118	23.7%	122	24.4%
Teacher	5,157	100.0%	4,774	100.0%
Withdrawn/Rejected	613	11.9%	702	14.7%
Accepted	4,052	78.6%	3,614	75.7%
Hired	492	9.5%	458	9.6%
Professional and Administrator	2,468	100.0%	2,875	100.0%
Withdrawn/Rejected	127	5.1%	167	5.8%
Accepted	2,266	91.8%	2,649	92.1%
Hired	75	3.0%	59	2.1%

Table M: Applicant Education (2016-17 and 2017-18)

	2016-17				2017-18			
	All		Hired		All		Hired	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
High School or Lower	1392	11.1%	127	12.0%	1232	10.2%	116	12.5%
No Degree with College Hours	938	7.5%	80	7.6%	816	6.7%	66	7.1%
Associate	667	5.3%	51	4.8%	592	4.9%	39	4.2%
Bachelor	5849	46.6%	555	52.7%	5731	47.4%	440	47.5%
Master and Doctor	3714	29.6%	241	22.9%	3718	30.8%	265	28.6%
Total	12560	100.0%	1054	100.0%	12089	100.0%	926	100.0%

Table N: Applicant Experience (2016-17 and 2017-18)

	2016-17				2017-18			
	All		Hired		All		Hired	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-2 Years	4944	39.4%	496	47.1%	5009	41.4%	447	48.3%
3-9 Years	4715	37.5%	381	36.1%	4368	36.1%	301	32.5%
10-19 Years	2161	17.2%	134	12.7%	2133	17.6%	131	14.1%
20+ Years	740	5.9%	43	4.1%	579	4.8%	47	5.1%
Total	12560	100.0%	1054	100.0%	12089	100.0%	926	100.0%

Tables O, P, and Q supplement Tables 32 and 33 by providing additional information about staff retention over the past two school years. The percentage of total staff retained in 2016-17 and 2017-18 is slightly lower than the percentage of teachers and principals retained over that period.

Table O: Retention Distribution in 2016-17 and 2017-18 (Total Staff)

	2016-17		2017-18	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Retained	3177	80.4%	3412	82.0%
Resign	662	16.8%	654	15.7%
Retired	4	0.1%	10	0.2%
Terminated	109	2.8%	83	2.0%
Total	3952	100.0%	4159	100.0%

Table P: Retention Distribution in 2016-17 and 2017-18 (Teacher and Principal)

	2016-17		2017-18	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Retained	2111	84.8%	2136	82.7%
Resign	324	13.0%	399	15.4%
Retired	3	0.1%	9	0.3%
Terminated	51	2.0%	40	1.5%
Total	2489	100.0%	2584	100.0%

Table Q: Retention Distribution in 2016-17 and 2017-18 (Total Staff by TIF Status)

	2016-17						2017-18					
	TIF		Non-TIF		District-level		TIF		Non-TIF		District-level	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Retained	2265	79.5%	626	79.9%	286	89.1%	2228	80.8%	878	83.1%	306	89.0%
Resign	498	17.5%	135	17.2%	29	9.0%	452	16.4%	166	15.7%	36	10.5%
Retired	4	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	0.3%	3	0.3%	0	0.0%
Terminated	81	2.8%	22	2.8%	6	1.9%	72	2.6%	9	0.9%	2	0.6%
Total	2848	100.0%	783	100.0%	321	100.0%	2759	100.0%	1056	100.0%	344	100.0%