



Educator Behavior and Organizational Dynamics in Schools: Findings from Year Two of the TEEG Program October 2009

A recent report published by the National Center on Performance Incentives (NCPI) presents findings from the second-year evaluation of the Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG) program, a statewide educator incentive program that operated in Texas. As part of this larger study, evaluators administered a survey to educators to learn about their experiences and practice during the first two years of the TEEG program (2006–07 and 2007–08 school years). Evaluators specifically examined differences in responses between educators in TEEG schools and a set of comparison schools, as well as differences between schools experiencing different patterns of participation in the TEEG program. For example, some schools were only in the first year of TEEG, others only in the second year, while a third group participated in the two consecutive school years.

Respondents were specifically asked about their professional practices during the current school year, as well as how that practice might have changed since the prior year. A discussion of findings can be grouped along three areas of professional

practice: curriculum and instruction, use of assessment data, and parent engagement.

Curriculum and Instruction

Educators were asked about their use of instructional practices such as aligning instruction with academic standards, peer tutoring, individualizing instruction, following a “pacing plan”, and analysis of student work. When asked how often these strategies were utilized, at least 75 percent of teachers reported using them at least once a week or almost daily. These findings remained similar in both years that the survey was administered (i.e., during the 2006–07 and 2007–08 school years). The most frequent behavior reported was aligning classroom instruction with curricular standards (91 percent in 2007 and 89 percent in 2008), followed by use of peer tutoring (86 percent in 2007 and 84 percent in 2008).

Survey items also addressed how teachers changed instructional practices from one year to the next. Questions focused on teachers’ use of assessment data, instructional planning, tutoring, and participation in professional development. In both school years, between 40 and 50 percent of teach-

ers reported a little more or much more time engaging in each of these practices when compared to the previous year. Furthermore, survey results suggest that respondents still changed their behavior even if their school did not participate in the second year of the TEEG program. However, teachers in charter schools and those with less teaching experience were also more likely to report significantly greater use of instructional practices in the 2007–08 school year compared to the prior school year.

Use of Assessment Data

The majority of teachers indicated frequent use of student assessment data for various instructional purposes: remediation, individualization, grouping, professional development, grouping, and parent engagement. These numbers remained consistent from the 2007 to 2008 survey, with the exception of parent engagement, which increased significantly (from 65 percent in 2007 to 77 percent in 2008) among respondents in schools participating in consecutive years of the TEEG program. Additionally, respondents in elementary schools were more likely to use assessment data than respondents in other grade level schools.

Parent Engagement

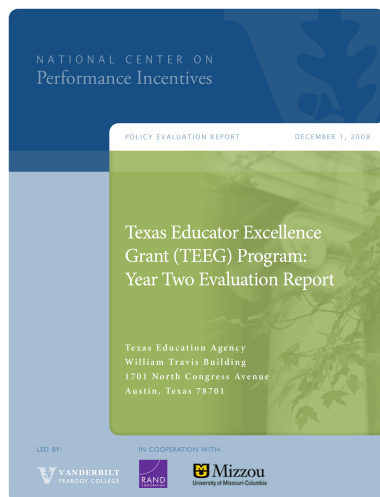
Finally, the survey addressed teachers' efforts to engage parents in student learning through a host of practices. In both 2007 and 2008, the most common activities were direct contact with parents of struggling students (80 percent in 2007 and 79 percent in 2008), and direct contact with parents of students who were improving (64 percent in 2007 and 63 percent in 2008). Other common practices reported by over half of all teachers included inviting parents into the classroom and encouraging school volunteerism. Charter school teachers were

more likely to engage in many of these parent engagement activities than their counterparts in regular public schools. Parent engagement activities were also more often reported by elementary school teachers than those in secondary schools.

Conclusion

Results from survey analysis suggest that teachers were frequently engaging in professional practices recognized as important for student learning. Additionally, there is evidence that teachers in only the first year of TEEG – as compared to those in schools participating in consecutive years of the program – increased the use of these practices by a slightly smaller degree. Additionally, teachers in charter schools indicated slightly greater use in instructional practices than those in regular schools, as did teachers in elementary schools as compared to other grade levels.

To read more about NCPI's year-two evaluation of the TEEG program, visit www.performanceincentives.org.



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