

Eye on Evaluation

DATA AND ACCOUNTABILITY DEPARTMENT



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Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) at Wilburn Elementary School: Year 3 Evaluation Report

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Introduction

Wilburn Elementary School is a Title I school with a population of approximately 700 students. Wilburn operates on a year-round calendar that includes students on four different tracks or schedules, with each track having its own calendar. Under this configuration, the traditional 180-day school year is divided into nine-week quarters with a three week break at the end of each quarter. Students are in school the same number of days as their counterparts in traditional schools; the days are simply redistributed throughout the year. Schedules are staggered so that, at any given time, three tracks are in school and one is on break.

In 2010 Wilburn received a 5-year Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant through the US Department of Education. This program supports efforts to develop and implement performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems in high-need schools. Goals include:

1. Improving student achievement by increasing teacher and principal effectiveness;
2. Reforming teacher and principal compensation systems so that teachers and principals are rewarded for increases in student achievement;
3. Increasing the number of effective teachers teaching poor, minority, and disadvantaged students in hard-to-staff subjects; and
4. Creating sustainable performance-based compensation systems.

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SUMMARY

Implementation

Based on interviews and observations, the four TAP principles were implemented with fidelity during the 2010-11 school year, with one exception—teacher evaluations. Feedback was slow, and teachers had concerns about the reliability of the ratings. The impact on teachers was negative.

Student Outcomes

Compared to 2009-10, reading and math proficiency improved in grades 3 and 5 in 2010-11 but not grade 4. However, compared to proficiency before TAP began, only Grade 5 had improved reading proficiency and none of the grades (3, 4, and 5) had higher proficiency in math.

Grade 4 had positive trends for Academic Change (growth) in both reading and math.

At Wilburn, TIF funding is being used to support the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), freeing up Title I dollars that had been used previously. Wilburn is currently in its third year of implementing TAP.

TAP is a comprehensive school reform initiative designed to attract, retain, and motivate quality teachers. The four principles upon which TAP is based are:

- multiple career paths,
- ongoing, applied professional growth,
- instructionally-focused accountability, and
- performance-based compensation (Agam, Reifsneider, & Wardell, 2006).

According to TAP descriptions, it is critical that all four principles are fully implemented to ensure success of a school or district. As noted above, a distinguishing feature of TAP compared to other school reform efforts is its merit pay, which is based on teacher performance and student academic growth.

As a part of TAP, Wilburn teachers have the opportunity to participate in multiple career paths, receive rewards based upon their evaluations and student growth, receive job-imbedded professional development that is relevant, and receive evaluations based on an instructionally focused rubric. Anticipated long-term goals are an increase in teacher effectiveness, improved student learning of the curriculum (based on formative and summative assessment results), and closing achievement gaps.

TAP was introduced in Wilburn Elementary School by staff vote in the 2008-09 school year to improve the effectiveness of Wilburn's teaching staff, offer additional support in implementing other initiatives such as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP®), and to decrease staff-development related absences, when possible. Wilburn decided not to take a full year for planning (including hiring, training, and certifying the leadership team), as is typical of most schools that adopt TAP, but combined their planning year with their first year of implementation.

For the first year of TAP implementation mathematics was the focus improvement area. For Years 2 and 3 the focus has been on reading, given that students' proficiency in reading is very low. Improving students' reading abilities was also seen as one way to continue to help students' increase their mathematics proficiency levels.

In November, 2010, in part due to low student performance, Wilburn was designated as one of four "Renaissance Schools" by the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) as part of the district's Race to the Top initiative. The Renaissance model includes signing bonuses, performance-based compensation, an infusion of technology, and an extra teacher per grade level. A selection process was held to staff the Renaissance schools. Current employees at each Renaissance school, including Wilburn, who wished to participate in the project, were required to reapply for positions for the 2011-12 academic year. Those not wishing to reapply could request a transfer to another school.

Under the Renaissance Model, Race to the Top funds will be used to implement a signing bonus and performance-based compensation plan across the four schools.¹ Variables used to determine teacher performance bonus pay include the overall academic success of the school, academic success of individual teachers and/or teachers' annual performance review.²

METHODOLOGY

The data used to compile this report include TAP research, the program's logic model, and data gathered via meetings with the TAP Project Director at WCPSS, the Senior Director of Program Accountability in WCPSS Evaluation and Research department, interviews with the principal, and interviews with 24 teachers including specialists, arts and physical education teachers, and classroom teachers. Included in interviews with teachers were interviews with Mentor teachers as well as one Master teacher. Copies of the interview protocols used are included in the Appendix. Additional data were collected via document review including a review of the TAP manual, a description of the program components, the TAP lesson rubric, and the TAP teacher evaluation rubric. Test data for 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 by grade and area (Reading and Mathematics) are included in this report; 2010-11 data are not included as they are not available as of the date of this report.

TAP IMPLEMENTATION AT WILBURN

Tables 1-4 compare the four TAP components and describe implementation of these components at Wilburn. **As is described, Wilburn implemented TAP with fidelity for the 2010-11 school year across all four principles.**

In terms of multiple career paths, TAP offered the opportunity for teachers to become mentor and master teachers without leaving the teaching profession. For the 2009-10 school year, eight Mentors were hired from within the school based on an interview process and the meeting of criteria set by TAP.

¹ Wilburn staff will receive only the sign-on bonus with Race to the Top funds. The performance-based compensation will come from the Teacher Incentive Fund Grant.

² Determinations for performance-based compensation for Wilburn staff will follow the eligibility criterion presented in the 2010 WCPSS Teacher Incentive Fund grant application.

**Table 1
Implementation - Multiple Career Paths**

TAP Program Description	TAP Implementation at Wilburn
Teachers advance professionally without having to leave the classroom.	Based on interest, ability, and accomplishments, teachers are given the opportunity to advance professionally by becoming Mentor teachers. This new career path means teachers do not have to leave the classroom to continue to work with students and have more opportunity to work with their colleagues. As a Mentor teacher, teachers take on additional responsibilities, including leadership responsibilities, and receive supplemental pay.
Master and Mentor teachers are chosen through a competitive, performance-based selection.	For the 2009-2010 school year, eight Mentors were hired from within the school based on an interview process (with questions developed by TAP about designing, planning, and implementing instruction; classroom management; and working with teaching teams and parents). All Mentor teachers were required to be working towards a Master's degree and to have earned a 3.5 or higher average on a scale of 1 to 5 as part of the prior years' evaluations using the TAP Instructional Rubric. The Master teachers from 2009-10 continued in the 2010-11 school year, until one left in March to take an administrative position. After an extensive local search another Master teacher was hired in April. However, she did not receive training until June, and thus could not perform many of Master teacher duties.
Master and Mentor teachers have expert curricular knowledge and outstanding instructional skills and work effectively with others.	Master and Mentor teachers design and deliver professional development to cluster groups and individual teachers while determining content knowledge and pedagogical skills that should be shared/enhanced as part of cluster meetings. Both are part of the leadership team and participate in setting school goals, supporting professional development, and using data to assess how students are progressing and what strategies are needed to improve achievement.
Master and Mentor teachers set specific annual student learning goals.	The professional development provided in cluster meetings focused on reading. Reading was selected as the focus area based on 2009-10 reading scores. Strategies that were emphasized were based on specific analyses of End-of-Grade data, MAP data, and formative classroom assessments. Teachers presented student data at weekly cluster meetings and discussed findings. Teachers also collected data from their assessments of students on learning skills emphasized during cluster meetings and shared these data then as well.
Master and Mentor teachers oversee TAP activities and provide leadership and support through group and individual coaching. Ongoing classroom-based support is provided through team teaching and classroom demonstrations.	Master and Mentor teachers met weekly to determine which strategies and skills to emphasize in order to increase students' reading achievement. Strategies were field-tested with Wilburn students at different grade levels before they were shared with other teachers. In addition, Master and Mentor teachers offered team teaching, classroom demonstrations, and feedback as part of pre- and post-conferences, to help improve their colleagues' teaching although few teachers utilized team teaching or classroom demos.
Master and Mentor teachers conduct teacher evaluations.	Master and Mentor teachers, along with the principal and assistant principal, were responsible for conducting evaluations. Each teacher was evaluated six times (2 announced, 4 unannounced), using a structured evaluation rubric developed by TAP called the TAP Instructional Rubric.

As was described above, multiple career paths were implemented at Wilburn for the 2010-11 school year. These included opportunities for two teachers to serve as Master teachers, and multiple teachers to serve as Mentor teachers.

**Table 2
Implementation - Ongoing, Applied Professional Growth**

TAP Program Description	TAP Implementation at Wilburn 2010-11
Teachers advance professionally without having to leave the classroom	Teachers spent 90 minutes per week in professional development as part of track-level cluster team meetings. While teachers were away from their classroom, teacher assistants provided instructional practice to students.
Professional development is provided on a regular basis (1 - 2 hours weekly).	Professional development occurred during the school day for 90 minutes each week. Teachers also met regularly outside of cluster meetings (such as at grade level meetings) to discuss the professional development they had received.
Professional development is job-embedded, collaborative, and is focused on instructional practices based on specific students' instructional needs.	TAP professional development was based on school, class, and teacher data and feedback and employed research-based strategies that had been field-tested and shown to be successful with Wilburn students. Professional development was sustained; follow-up and evaluation were also provided.
Principal, Mentor, and Master teachers receive training and certification from TAP for conducting professional growth activities and teacher evaluations effectively.	The principal and Master teachers received four days of training in August 2008 on "Preparing to Become a TAP School", which focused on the four principles of TAP and explained the TAP Instructional Rubric. They also received additional training in "Preparing to Become a Certified TAP Evaluator" and Becoming a Certified TAP Evaluator." New Mentor teachers received this training last summer to prepare them to conduct evaluations during the 2010-11 school year.
Professional development allows teachers to learn new strategies that improve quality of instruction.	The 2010-11 emphasis of professional development was on reading. Master and Mentor teachers met weekly to review data to determine the best strategies to meet students' needs and improve their reading. Strategies were field-tested with Wilburn students to ensure that they worked and then shared with teachers at track-level cluster meetings.
Evaluations are based on TAP standards/rubrics and student growth.	TAP has developed a detailed rubric for evaluating teachers' lessons. This rubric includes 19 indicators ranging from lesson planning to problem-solving. All teachers are trained in the content of this rubric. All evaluation components are linked to this instructional rubric.
Each teacher is evaluated 4-6 times a year with announced and unannounced evaluations. Pre-conferences are conducted prior to upcoming evaluation.	Each teacher was evaluated 6 times in 2010-11 with 2 announced observations and 4 not announced. Pre-conferences were provided prior to the two announced evaluations.
Feedback on observations is provided: post-conferences followed the evaluations to discuss needed refinements.	All evaluations ended with a post-conference where teachers were provided detailed information about their lesson and how it was rated. Unfortunately, many post-conferences were not conducted in a timely manner.
Group and individual coaching and demonstration lessons are regularly conducted by Mentor and Master teachers.	Group coaching was conducted through weekly cluster groups with individual coaching available to teachers on an as-needed basis. As part of clusters, demonstration lessons were provided.

Although multiple professional development opportunities were provided to teachers during the 2010-11 school year, teachers reported that evaluation feedback was not provided in a timely manner, thus reducing how instructive it could have been.

Table 3
Implementation - Instructionally-Focused, Performance Based Accountability

TAP Program Description	TAP Implementation at Wilburn
Teachers are held accountable for meeting the TAP Teaching Skills, Knowledge, and Responsibilities Performance Standards and are evaluated based on those standards.	The TAP Evaluation Rubric contains 19 indicators that are detailed, specific, and focused on research-based best practices for lesson planning and delivery. A weighted point system is used to measure each indicator as "exemplary", "proficient", and "needs improvement".
Teachers are evaluated based on academic growth of their students. All teachers are evaluated collectively based on the learning growth of all students in the school.	In grades K - 3 and for art, music, physical education, and special education teachers, where End-of-Grade test scores are not available, the quality of classroom instruction and school-wide student growth each represent 50% of a teachers' evaluation weight. In grades 4-5, due to the availability of End-of-Grade test scores, quality of classroom instruction is weighted 50%, the teachers' student growth is weighted 30%, and entire school growth is weighted 20%.
Announced and unannounced observations are conducted by trained and certified evaluators. Pre-conference sessions are offered with announced observations and post-conferences are offered after all observations to discuss reinforcements and refinements.	Six observations (two announced and four unannounced) were conducted in each classroom. Pre-conferences were conducted prior to announced observations. Post-conferences followed all observations.

Instructionally-focused performance-based accountability was implemented in 2010-11 as part of TAP. This included holding teachers responsible for TAP Teaching Skills, Knowledge, and Responsibilities Performance Standards and evaluating teachers on the academic growth of their students.

**Table 4
Implementation - Performance-Based Compensation**

TAP Program Description	TAP Implementation at Wilburn
Compensation is provided to all teachers based on multiple evaluations of teaching and student growth at the classroom level and school levels.	Performance-based compensation was implemented in the 2010-11 school year based on 2009-10 data.
The performance awards are recommended to be allocated in the following manner: based on performance standards (50%), individual classroom achievement (30%), and school-wide achievement growth (20%).	Only grades 4-5 have EOG scores that will be used to measure student growth. They will provide 30% of the student performance measure for all teachers in the school and an additional 20% for K-3 teachers, and art, music, physical education, and special education teachers. In grades K-3 and for art, music, physical education, and special education teachers, where End-of-Grade test scores are not available, the quality of classroom instruction and school-wide student growth each represent 50% of a teachers' evaluation weight.
Salary augmentation is given to Master and Mentor teachers according to their additional responsibilities and authority.	Salary augmentation was given to Master and Mentor teachers in 2010-11 according to their additional responsibilities and authority. Master teachers are paid a salary differential of \$9,900 per year; Mentor teachers are paid a salary differential of \$5,000 per year.

Performance-based compensation was implemented as part of TAP in 2010-11 with teachers receiving compensation based on their students' academic growth. In addition, Master and Mentor teachers received supplements for their work as part of TAP.

TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON TAP IMPLEMENTATION

Based on multiple teacher interviews conducted in May 2011, teachers had both positive and negative things to say about TAP. For example, all teachers reported engagement in critical professional learning activities and other practices to guide their planning and lessons, such as:

- Engaging in regular student-focused professional development;
- Using more formative assessments to assess student understanding and identify areas where re-teaching may be needed;
- Analyzing and reviewing data to guide instructional planning and practices; and
- Learning new strategies that improved their quality of instruction.

However, it is clear that there are some areas in which TAP implementation could be improved. Many teachers had concerns about some areas. These areas include:

- Providing more timely communication regarding evaluation findings;
- Implementing a formal feedback mechanism where teachers can share their concerns with the Leadership Team about TAP implementation;

- Reducing or attempting to reduce teachers' time away from their class as much as possible;
- Ensuring that Cluster Meetings are meaningful to all teachers for the full 90 minutes; and
- Working with teachers to determine the best possible schedule for Cluster Meetings.

Additional concerns that were voiced by teachers during May 2011 interviews were less about TAP but still important to note. These include concerns about student behavior and the impact of being a Renaissance School:

- Teachers in the upper grades, in particular, were worried that student behavior was increasingly left unchecked by administrators and that TAP has taken over such that administrators have little time available to address behavior problems among students. In the past Wilburn had used the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.(PBIS) model for directing student behavior, but many felt that TAP had "over-ridden" the use of this model.
- Being named a Renaissance School negatively affected morale, especially for teachers who had not yet been interviewed for jobs or knew where they will be placed the next year. Many teachers noted that it was hard to understand why students' test scores had dropped for the 2009-10 school year even with TAP in place, but many said they came back with an even stronger commitment to TAP. However, the announcement in November 2011 that Wilburn would be a Renaissance School and that all personnel had to reapply for their jobs was an incredibly negative blow to the school. As one teacher put it, being named a Renaissance school "has been a total disaster." One teacher summed it up by sharing, "TAP is stressful enough and Renaissance has taken over everything." Some teachers were planning to leave because they did not want to be in limbo about their jobs for the next year and others because they were leery of a new administration. However, some decided to reapply to Wilburn as they hoped that TAP would be continued at the school and that it would be remodeled to address their major concerns (time spent out of the classroom, lack of formal feedback mechanisms, and lack of post-conferences and true reflection/discussion around observations).

TAP IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

As noted previously, TAP is designed to increase the overall achievement of students by increasing teachers' effectiveness. However, Table 5 and Figure 1 show this has only occurred in reading at grade 5 over time. Grades 3 and 4 had similar or lower proficiency rates in 2010-11 than before they began TAP (2007-08). Across grade cohorts, patterns were more positive.

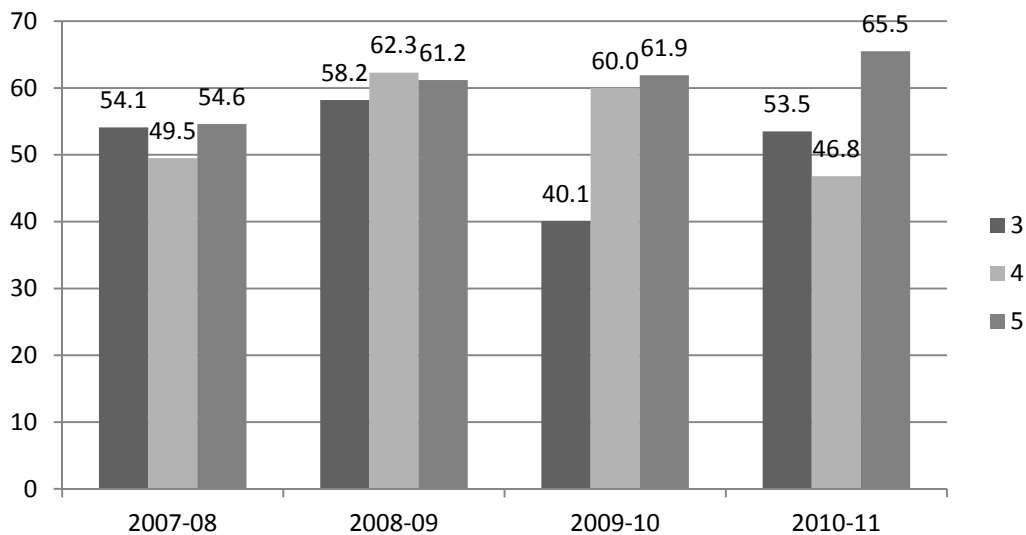
- In Year 2, the percentage of students at or above grade level in reading stagnated (Grades 4 and 5) and decreased at Grade 3.
- In Year 3, the percentage of students at or above grade level in Grade 5 increased slightly (3.6 percentage points) and in Grade 3 increased dramatically (13.4 percentage points). Unfortunately, in Grade 4 this percentage decreased dramatically (13.2 percentage points). (Based on results within grades in Table 5.)

- When examined across grades, we see that those in grade 3 in 2007-08 increased in reading proficiency rates in 2008-09 in grade 4 and stayed fairly stable in 2009-10 in grade 5 (see red bold font). The 2008-09 cohort of third graders actually increased in proficiency in reading in both grades 4 and 5 (see green italics font). The 2009-10 cohort of third graders was quite low compared to the rest, and improved by 6.7 percentage points in proficiency in 2010-11 (see underlined numbers).

Table 5
Reading: Percent of Students At or Above Grade Level

Grade	2007-08	2008-09 (TAP Year 1)	2009-10 (TAP Year 2)	2010-11 (TAP Year 3)
3	54.1	<i>58.2</i>	<u>40.1</u>	53.5
4	49.5	62.3	<i>60.0</i>	<u>46.8</u>
5	54.6	61.2	61.9	<i>65.5</i>

Figure 1
Reading: Percent of Students At or Above Grade Level

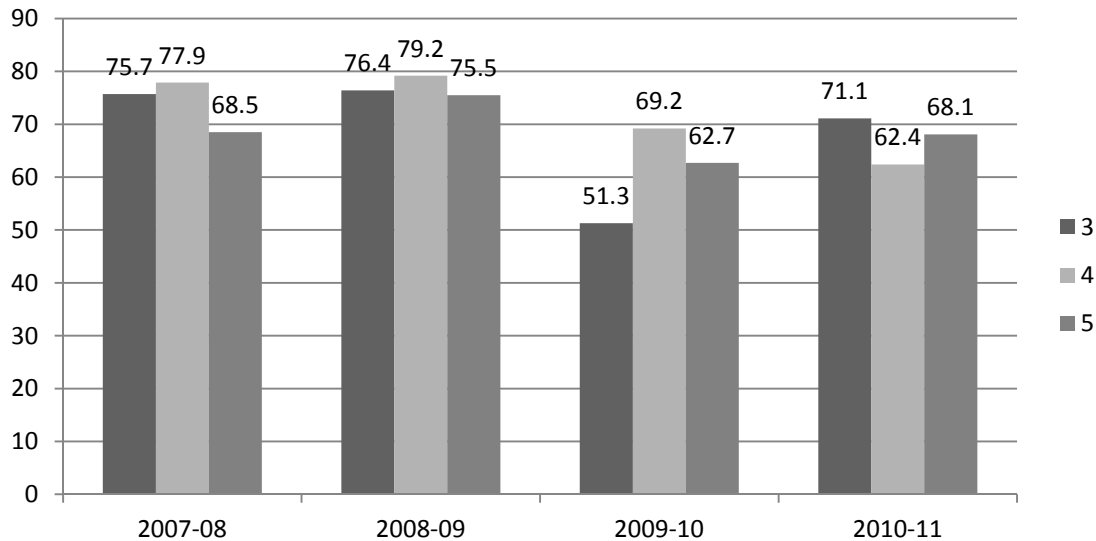


In mathematics, student proficiency was not higher at any grade in 2010-11 than before TAP began (although Grade 5 is similar). Students made gains in the first year of TAP when mathematics was the focus for that year. However, in 2009-10 (Year 2 of TAP) the percentage of students scoring at or above grade level for Grades 3, 4, and 5 declined considerably (Table 6 and Figure 2). In Year 3, the percentage of students scoring at or above grade level increased in Grades 3 (9.8 percentage points) and Grade 5 (5.4 percentage points), but dropped in Grade 4 (6.8 percentage points). The positive patterns of improvement for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 third grade cohorts in reading were not evident for mathematics (see bold and italics). On the other hand, the percentage of 2009-10 third graders who reached proficiency in 2010-11 as fourth graders did increase (see underlining).

Table 6
Mathematics: Percent of Students At or Above Grade Level

Grade	2007-08	2008-09 (TAP Year 1)	2009-10 (TAP Year 2)	2010-11 (TAP Year 3)
3	75.7	<i>76.4</i>	<u>51.3</u>	71.1
4	77.9	79.2	<i>69.2</i>	<u>62.4</u>
5	68.5	75.5	62.7	<i>68.1</i>

Figure 2
Mathematics: Percent of Students At or Above Grade Level



The NC ABCs Academic Change scores are based on changes in individual student's scores from the previous year. (See box for more details on the definition.) These "growth scores" provide another way to look at schools' achievement, and they reveal a somewhat different pattern for Wilburn. Table 7 and Figure 3 show that increases in the percentage of students meeting their growth targets were evident at both grades 4 and 5 in 2010-11 compared to the prior two years. This is particularly encouraging for grade 4 students, who actually reached "high growth" if we apply the school standard of 60% or more to the grade levels. Grade 5 is still below that standard for high growth, but also considerably better in 2010-11 than previously.

Academic Change scores indicate that 4th grade teachers, while not able to move as great a percentage of students to performing at or above grade level, actually helped more students reach their growth targets than was true at grade 5. Patterns of improvement over time are similar at the two grades. Please note that growth data are not available for 3rd graders after 2008-2009 (when the fall pretest was dropped from the state accountability system).

State ABCs Growth Model and Academic Change Scores

Students are expected to do at least as well this year as they have in the past, compared to other NC students who took the same statewide test in the year standards were set (usually the first year the test was given). Academic Change scores are calculated for each student who has scores from the current and past school year.

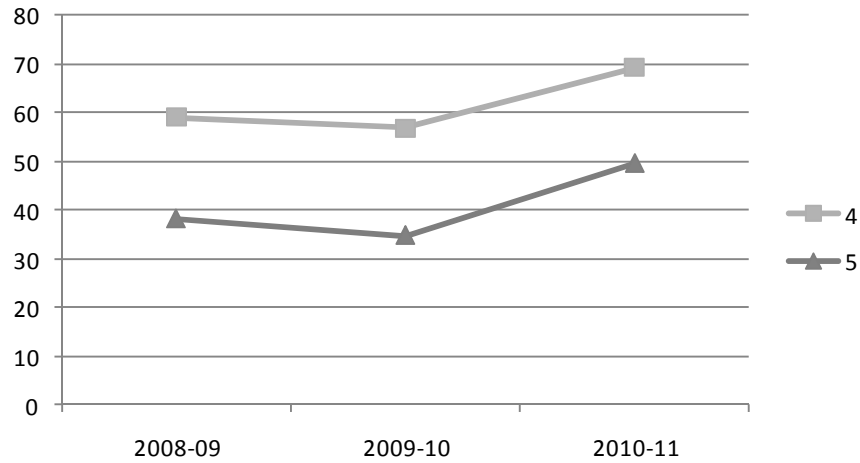
Schools meet "expected growth" if students, on the average, show a year of growth in a year's time. Schools meet "high growth" if 60% of students in a school meet their individual growth targets.

Table 7
Reading: Percent of Students Meeting Growth Targets
(Academic Change ≥ 0)

Grade	2008-09 (TAP Year 1)	2009-10 (TAP Year 2)	2010-11 (TAP Year 3)
4	59.1	56.9	69.3
5	38.1	34.7	49.5

Note: Grade 3 Academic Change cannot be calculated because the state no longer offers a Grade 3 Pretest.

Figure 3
Reading: Percent of Students with Academic Change ≥ 0



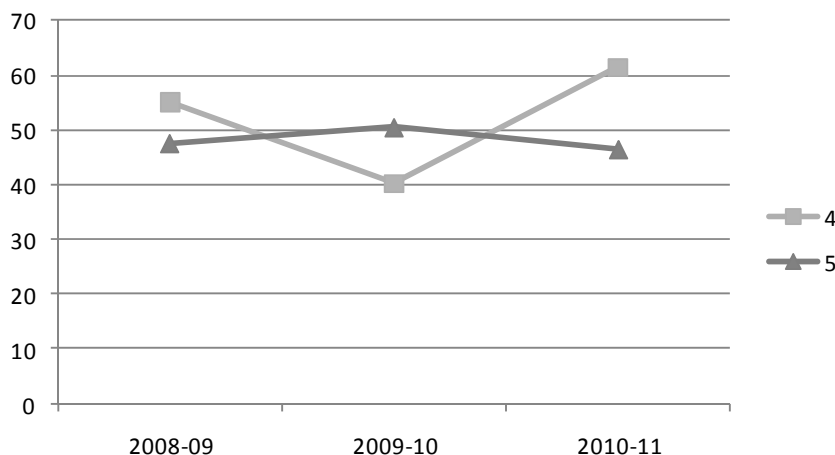
In mathematics, increases in the percentage of students meeting their growth targets were evident at both grades 4 and 5 in 2010-11 compared to 2009-10, but not when compared to 2008-09.

- Grade 4 students showed considerable improvement in 2010-11 compared to 2009-10 (with a 21 percentage point improvement in students making growth), but the improvement compared to 2008-09 was a more modest; six percentage points. Grade 4 reached “high growth” if we apply the state standard used for schools.
- Grade 5 patterns were less positive, with a lower percentage of students reaching their growth targets in 2010-11 than in 2009-10. Percentages have actually changed very little across the three years. Grade 5 did not reach the “high growth” standard of 60%.

Table 8
Mathematics: Percent of Students Meeting Growth Targets
(Academic Change ≥ 0)

Grade	2008-09 (TAP Year 1)	2009-10 (TAP Year 2)	2010-11 (TAP Year 3)
4	55.0	40.2	61.4
5	47.6	50.5	46.5

Figure 4
Mathematics: Percent of Students with Academic Change ≥ 0



Math patterns suggest grade 4 teachers did a better job of promoting growth for more of their students in 2010-11 than in 2009-10 despite reading being the focus area. The same was not true for grade 5.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

IMPLEMENTATION

Based on interviews and observations, it seems reasonable to conclude that the four principles upon which TAP is based were implemented with fidelity during the 2010-11 school year, with one exception—teacher evaluations. Slow feedback was likely less helpful than it could have been. While there may be legitimate reasons for why this happened so frequently, the effect was quite negative on teachers, for whom the evaluations most matter and are seen as high stakes. The doubts of some teachers about the reliability of the ratings also would likely decrease the extent to which they took the feedback to heart.

Although teacher interviews, conducted in May 2011, suggest that some teachers at Wilburn were critical of TAP, especially regarding usefulness and reliability of evaluations, it is important to note that these interviews were conducted during the period in which teachers were re-applying to teach at Wilburn or interviewing for new teaching assignments. Much was up in

the air, including which teachers would be returning to Wilburn, and where other teachers would be headed, or if they would even have jobs for the next year if they were new or non-tenured teachers.

There are many positive aspects of TAP that teachers did note, especially around their own professional development. Teachers reported:

- Engaging in regular student-focused professional development;
- Using more formative assessments to assess student understanding and identify areas where re-teaching may be needed;
- Analyzing and reviewing data to guide instructional planning and practices; and
- Learning new strategies that improved their quality of instruction.

However, teacher interviews do point to the need to better support teachers' involvement with TAP, including providing them formal mechanisms where they may discuss their perceptions of TAP. As noted, in 2010-11 teachers were very troubled that the TAP Leadership Team were not hearing the concerns they had about such things as time away from students, how post-conferences were not being conducted in a timely manner, and the reliability or lack thereof of observation ratings. Involving more teachers in something like the school's Leadership Team where they can have input into TAP implementation may go a long way to maintaining and/or increasing buy-in of TAP.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Of critical importance is how students performed in 2010-11, the third year of TAP. A recent independent study by Glazerman, McKie, and Carey (2009) found that positive student impacts with TAP may require considerable time to take hold. Other research studies (Schacter et al., 2002; Schacter et al., 2004; Solomon et al., 2007; and Springer et al., 2008) have shown that favorable results in terms of students' performance and growth can occur in 1-3 years. These studies also documented considerable variability in outcomes across state, site, and grade level, as well as level of implementation.

Findings from past and current achievement data indicate that in Year 3 of TAP, Wilburn teachers in Grades 3 and 5 were able to reverse troubling trends in reading proficiency rates.. While grade level trends are important, they do not take into account changes in student cohorts which can occur. Within Grade 4, proficiency declined but growth trends were positive. Across grades, the percentage of students coming into grade 4 scoring at grade level was considerable lower than for those entering grade 5, which helps to explain these results.

Potential reasons for the improvements in reading proficiency at Grades 3 and 5 but substantial decreases (Grade 4) in the percentage of students scoring at or above grade level are hard to pinpoint. One factor is that the 2010-11 fourth-grade students came in with lower proficiency overall than prior groups, as well as lower proficiency than was evident for grades 5. In addition,

fourth grade teachers could have been better at promoting growth for students already at grade level than for those starting out below grade level. It is also possible that delays in feedback and concerns about reliability of ratings were greater at grade 4 than the other grades.

Mathematics patterns were less positive than reading patterns, which may relate to the fact that math is no longer the main focus area for TAP.

Another year of data will make patterns easier to discern. The impact of the change in staffing brought on by Renaissance status will be interesting to watch. Losing teachers with TAP experience could have a negative impact if teachers were just about to break through to make big differences in their practice. The main question with respect to student achievement data is whether reading scores will increase in 2011-12, and what effect such a gain, if it occurs, may have on math scores.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for future years of TAP include the following:

- Greater teacher involvement with TAP, including providing them formal mechanisms where they may discuss their perceptions of TAP.
- More timely follow-up to observations (by meeting with teachers within one week of conducting observations) in order to debrief with teachers about the rating he or she received, the reasoning behind it, and suggestions for improvement.
- Reduce the time, to as large a degree as possible, that teachers are out of the classroom on any given day, including as part of TAP training.
- Consider teachers' patterns of growth and performance change at grades 3 through 5 in making teacher retention decisions. At grades K-2, review data available from reading book levels, math strands, and other available assessment measures. For all grades, consider the extent to which teachers were implementing TAP with fidelity.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Wilburn Elementary School TIF Evaluation Semi-Structured Interview Protocol - Teachers

1. Do you consider yourself a TAP school - why or why not?
2. How helpful are cluster meetings? What have they done for you (e.g., improved instruction, increased focus on reading achievement, improved collaboration)? What about team meetings?
3. The four elements of TAP are:
 - Multiple career paths
 - Ongoing applied professional growth
 - Instructionally focused accountability
 - Performance-based Compensation

Let's talk about each one – do you think these elements are evident in your school and how do you feel about them?
4. What would you like TAP to look like at your school to best promote student achievement?
5. How would you describe teachers' buy-in of TAP this year? What about compared to last year?
6. How do you think you will perform as a school this year?
7. What more could be done to improve student achievement at your school?
8. How many of you want to stay here next year?

**Wilburn Elementary School TIF Evaluation
Semi-Structured Interview Protocol - Mentor Teachers**

1. What made you want to be a Mentor Teacher?

2. Please describe your role as a Mentor Teacher.

3. The four elements of TAP are:
 - Multiple career paths
 - Ongoing applied professional growth
 - Instructionally focused accountability
 - Performance-based Compensation

Let's talk about each one – do you think these elements are evident in your school and how do you feel about them?

4. What would you like TAP to look like at your school to best promote student achievement?

5. How would you describe teachers' buy-in of TAP this year? What about compared to last year?

6. How do you think you will perform as a school this year?

7. What more could be done to improve student achievement at your school?

8. How many of you want to stay here next year? Want to continue as TAP Mentor Teachers?

**Wilburn Elementary School TIF Evaluation
Semi-Structured Interview Protocol - Master Teacher**

1. What made you want to be a Master Teacher?

2. Please describe your role as a Master Teacher.

3. The four elements of TAP are:
 - Multiple career paths
 - Ongoing applied professional growth
 - Instructionally focused accountability
 - Performance-based Compensation

Let's talk about each one – do you think these elements are evident in your school and how do you feel about them?

4. What would you like TAP to look like at your school to best promote student achievement?

5. How would you describe teachers' buy-in of TAP this year? What about compared to last year?

6. How do you think you will perform as a school this year?

7. What more could be done to improve student achievement at your school?

8. How many of you want to stay here next year? Want to continue as TAP Mentor Teachers?

Wilburn Elementary School TIF Evaluation Semi-Structured Interview Protocol - Principal

1. The four elements of TAP are:
 - Multiple career paths
 - Ongoing applied professional growth
 - Instructionally focused accountability
 - Performance-based Compensation

Let's talk about each one – do you think these elements are evident in your school and how do you feel about how they are working?

2. How helpful are cluster meetings? What have they done for you (e.g., improved instruction, increased focus on reading achievement, improved collaboration)? What about team meetings?
3. Do teachers have PLT time beyond their cluster and grade level meetings? If one of those functions as their PLT meeting, is the format and content any different than the WCPSS model (which is largely based on DuFours)?
4. How would you describe teachers' buy-in of TAP this year? What about compared to last year?
5. What structures are in place to monitor student achievement? (Ask about all assessments, timing, and use)
6. How do you think you will perform as a school this year?
7. What more could be done to improve student achievement at Wilburn?