

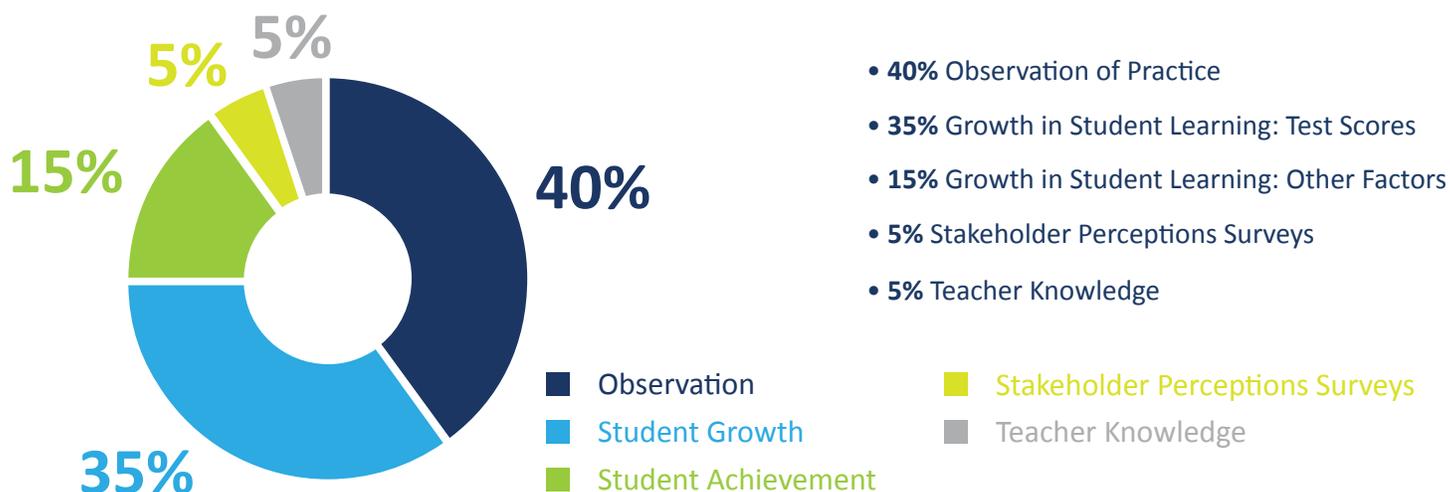
The Memphis Teacher Effectiveness Measure: Teachers Ensuring Effective Year One Implementation

Summary

The 2011-2012 school year was a landmark year for Memphis City Schools (MCS). The new evaluation system, the Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) was implemented district wide for the first time with 32,000 observations completed. Throughout the year, MCS partnered with Teach Plus to collect teacher feedback on TEM implementation. Teach Plus feedback was useful to MCS in developing TEM 2.0.

Background on the TEM

Designed with the input and advice of teachers in 2010-2011, the TEM was created to promote teacher effectiveness in all Memphis City Schools classrooms with the goal of having an effective teacher in every classroom every day. Historically, teachers in Memphis were evaluated through a single measure – observation by their principal (or his/her designee) with two ratings—satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The TEM includes: measures of student growth in the classroom, measures of student achievement, classroom observations, stakeholder feedback (student perception), and assessments of teacher knowledge.² The components of the TEM are measured as follows: (See figure 1).



Based on state law, professionally licensed teachers received 4 observations throughout the year, and apprentice licensed teachers received 6 observations. MCS certified 605 trained observers to complete the observations. Often the observers were principals, but district staff and other in-school staff also completed observations.

Teach Plus' Role: The Teaching Policy Fellows

The Teaching Policy Fellowship is a highly selective program for teachers to have impact on policies that affect them and their profession. During a cohort experience that spans one and a half years, Teaching Policy Fellows meet in monthly sessions that offer:

- Personal interaction with key education leaders;
- A challenging course of study in education policy, research, and best practices from across the nation; and
- The opportunity to advocate for policies that will better serve students and retain excellent teachers.

In September 2011, MCS partnered with the Memphis cohort of Teaching Policy Fellows to develop an all-district in-service survey for teachers to give feedback on the TEM. In-service surveys were completed in both the fall and spring and Fellows gave feedback on key aspects of content to probe in both surveys.

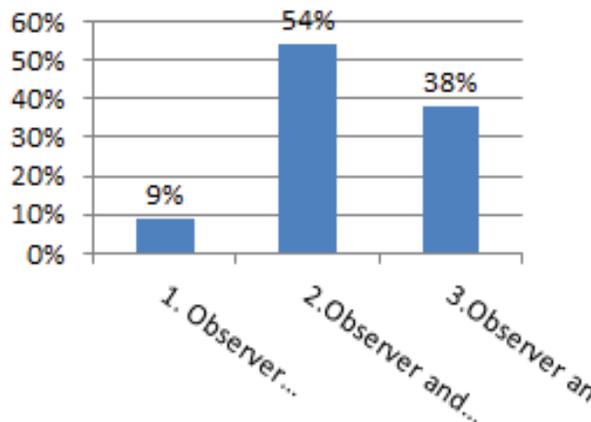
Teach Plus' Role: Network Events

Teacher Effectiveness Measurement: Effective Implementation



The current software requires observers to determine final score before feedback conference. Which of the following is your preference?

1. Observer determine score before conference
2. Observer and teacher determine final score during conference
3. Observer and teacher determine scores separately, discuss, then agree on final score



BE PART OF THE EQUATION

As the TEM was implemented, MCS collaborated with Teach Plus to collect teacher feedback through Teach Plus Network events, working groups and TEM Summative sessions.

Teach Plus sponsored two events on TEM implementation and invited all MCS teachers to attend. At the first of two events, "The TEM: Teachers Ensuring Effective Implementation," teachers shared their thoughts on TEM

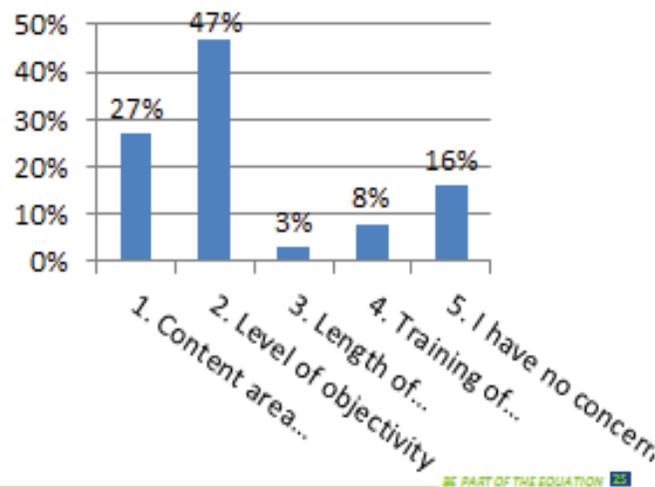
implementation from August-November 2011. At that time, observers finalized scores prior to the post-conference (before the teacher had the opportunity to discuss his/her scores with the observer). 92% of teachers said they preferred an alternative to this practice. As a result of this feedback, MCS requested a change in the Randa Tower observation software to allow the teacher and observer to discuss the observation scores during the post-conference before the scores are finalized.

Teacher Effectiveness Measurement: Effective Implementation



Which of the following is your biggest concern about the person conducting your observation?

1. Content area knowledge
2. Level of objectivity
3. Length of observation
4. Training of observer on rubric
5. I have no concerns



Teachers identified two major concerns in regard to their observers: 47% of teachers were concerned about the observer’s level of objectivity and 27% were concerned about the observer’s content area knowledge. Teachers at the event suggested outside observers could be more objective during the observations and during the feedback and support stage.

Qualitative data was also collected at this event through in depth small group discussions. Teachers shared their suggestions on the following topics:

- Re-imagining PLCs to foster collaboration within school grade levels and content area teams as well as foster cross-school collaboration (could replace the standard faculty meeting)
- Providing teacher support that aligns with the TEM, i.e, Mediasite videos aligned to each content and grade level to show proficiency in each of the TEM indicators, real time coaching, and observing other successful teachers.
- Supporting principals to reduce their responsibility in the area of school operations so they can devote more time to completing observations and providing feedback. District level observers, instructional facilitators, peer reviewers and/or content specialists as observers could serve this purpose.

Policy Impact

Teach Plus revisited TEM implementation with teachers at the March 2011 Teach Plus Network Event, “Your Evaluations, Your Voice: Building the TEM to Last,” to collect further teacher feedback after a larger number of observations were completed (roughly 76% of all teacher observations – 24,000 – were completed by the TEI April Stock Take report) with a focus on teacher support.

In support of the findings at this event the following adjustments for TEM 2.0 were made:

- Plan and Reflect domains of the Teaching and Learning Framework will not be implemented until 2013-2014.
- Scores from the Fall and Spring implementations of the TRIPOD survey (used for 5% of the TEM Summative Score) will be averaged for a final score, instead of just using the score of the Spring Implementation – 67% of teachers supported this implementation decision at the “Building the TEM to Last” event.
- Principals will be required to complete a PGSP (Professional Growth & Support Plan) immediately following the first observation and will not be able to complete any future observations before a PGSP is completed.
- School teams attended TEM 2.0 training together in July 2012 - 96% of teachers in attendance at the March 29th event said they would agree to attend TEM training with principals.

“Teach Plus has been a critical partner in capturing teacher voice about TEI and other education reform efforts through its Teaching Policy Fellows and the Teach Plus Network events. Teach Plus served as an external facilitator for our district team’s meetings with MCS teachers and principals participating in the observation field test in Spring 2011 and with the Teacher Evaluation Working Group in determining key aspects of the 2011-12 TEM Evaluation system.”
- Memphis City Schools’ Teacher Effectiveness Initiative Stock Take Progress Report, October 1, 2011 (pg. 31)

Future Opportunities for Teacher Voice in TEM Implementation

With the roll out of TEM 2.0 for the 2012-2013 school year, it is as important as ever to solicit teacher feedback to guide and improve implementation. Because student achievement is the overall goal of increasing teacher effectiveness, further research on aligning the TEM with student achievement data is warranted. With the future inclusion of the Plan and Reflect domains in the TEM, teachers have an opportunity to shape and define the full scope of teacher effectiveness. In future decision making, it is also key to seek teacher feedback in the selection of a teacher evaluation model for the unified district. Bringing teachers together from both MCS and SCS is an opportunity to build culture and community around one shared teacher evaluation metric. Steps can be taken this year to ensure a smooth transition for all teachers into a shared standard of observation and evaluation in the 2013-2014 school year.