

Tennessee



Schools

Athens City

City Park School
Ingleside School
North City School
Westside School
Athens City Middle School

Etowah City

Etowah Elementary School

Jackson County

Dodson Branch Elementary

Manchester City

College Street Elementary
Westwood Elementary
Westwood Middle School

Morgan County

Coalfield School

NIET partnered with five rural Tennessee school districts to implement TAP in eleven schools. Athens City, Manchester City and Etowah City school districts began implementing TAP districtwide, while one school each in Morgan County and Jackson County began TAP implementation.

These districts previously used the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) evaluation system, which is based on the TAP evaluation rubric. While using TEAM, these districts voted to transition to full TAP system implementation for the 2012-2013 school year. With TAP, these school districts gained access to NIET's Comprehensive Online Data Entry System (CODE), allowing them to better manage and analyze teacher evaluations. Additionally, these districts began implementation of TAP cluster and leadership team meetings, and restructured their compensation systems.

During the 2013-2014 school year, these eleven Tennessee TIF 4 schools completed their first year of implementation of the TAP System which includes evaluation with the TAP Rubrics and the PBC System.

The Districts (implementation year demographic data provided)

Athens City

Athens City School District is northeast of Chattanooga and contains two primary schools, two intermediate schools, and one middle school. The Tennessee Department of Education reported 1,776 students enrolled across the five schools during the 2011-2012 school year. Of these, 52.1% were male, 75% were White, 14.6% were African American, and 63.2% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Etowah City

Etowah City is a single school system located in Etowah serving students in grades K-8. The Tennessee Department of Education reported 342 students enrolled during the 2011-2012 school year. Of these, 52.9% were male, 90.1% were White, and 77.8% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Jackson County

Jackson County School District contains two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Dodson Branch elementary school, the TAP implementation school, serves students in grades PK-8. The

Tennessee Department of Education reported 1,597 students enrolled across the four schools during the 2011-2012 school year. Of these, 50.3% were male, 97.3% were White, and 75.6% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Manchester City

Manchester City School District contains three schools: College Street Elementary, Westwood Elementary, and Westside Middle School. The Tennessee Department of Education reported 1,423 students enrolled across the three schools during the 2011-2012 school year. Of these, 52.1% were male, 80.7% were White, 10.1% were Hispanic, 6.3% were African American, and 71% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Morgan County

Morgan County School District, in Wartburg, Tennessee, is about 50 miles east of Knoxville. This district contains eight schools. Coalfield School, the TAP implementation school, serves students in grades PK-12. The Tennessee Department of Education reported 3,229 students enrolled across the eight schools during the 2011-2012 school year. Of these, 52.2% were male, 98.6% were White, and 68.5% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Key Evaluation Findings

Summary of Key Actions through the 2013-14 Year

- Representatives completed site visits to existing TAP schools in Knox County.
- Leadership team members (principals, assistant principals, master and mentor teachers) from all districts completed TAP CORE training.
- TAP Leadership Team members attended the 2014 National TAP Conference.
- TAP Leadership Team members attended the 2014 TAP Summer Institute.
- Two highly-trained, certified Executive Master Teachers were hired to work with the districts.
- All districts posted and completed a competitive hiring process for mentor and master teachers.
- All districts partnered with higher education institutions.
- All teachers were evaluated with announced and unannounced observations utilizing the TAP rubric.
- All teachers received a specific area of reinforcement (strength) and an area of refinement (growth) based on the indicators of the TAP Teaching Standards rubric.
- All leadership members were evaluated using the TAP Leadership Team rubric.
- All districts made human capital management decisions regarding recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal, promotion, and professional development utilizing the observational and student achievement data implemented from the TIF grant.

Impact Summary

Three focus groups—one for career teachers, one for mentor and master teachers, and one for administrators—were held in both years of implementation. Teachers and administrators reported increased knowledge and understanding of effective TAP implementation. Further, as highlighted in the quotes below, teachers observed improvements in classroom practices, and credited these changes to TAP.

Overall, teachers reported seeing impacts of the TAP system on both their teaching practices and student behavior and outcomes. Regarding teacher practices, the contributions of cluster meetings were emphasized. Teachers reported appreciation for having time to reflect on certain topics, like academic

feedback, and for having the opportunity to brainstorm with other teachers. One teacher stated, “My lessons are fabulous now. They are much better than they used to be.” Teachers mentioned that they have learned to teach their students to do more critical thinking, and have learned how to do this in various ways, and in various subjects.

Differences in student behavior and outcomes were also discussed during the career teacher focus group. Teachers noted that, as a result of the changes teachers made in their teaching practices, students appeared more engaged. Specifically, teachers mentioned that students are now paying closer attention, asking more questions, and, overall, are taking more responsibility for their own learning.

Master and mentor teachers also discussed teachers engage in more professional conversations with one another because of TAP implementation. One mentor teacher reported, “*conversations about teaching are up 2 million percent! We used to just teach all day, now we talk about teaching, we plan to teach, we are better at teaching.*”

“Yes, [TAP] is extra work, but I feel better about what I’m doing in my classroom. I feel more prepared. I feel more professional.”

-TN Career Teacher

“I see evidence every week of little things that teachers take out of cluster and go back and I will see these implemented... You are witnessing these things that are making a better classroom teacher and better student learning.”

-TN Master Teacher

With TAP implementation, these TAP schools showed statistically significant ($p < .10$) above average growth in percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) state test. In Reading Language Arts and in Math, the TAP schools gained an average of 3 percentage points more than the state average.

Figure 1: Change in Percent of Students Scoring Proficient/Advanced on TCAP, 2012-2014

