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Early Results Show No Impact of Teacher Advancement Program in Chicago

No Measurable Effect on Teacher Retention, Student Test Scores in Second Year of Rollout

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Issue: The Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) aims to improve schools by raising teacher quality. It provides teachers with opportunities for professional growth, promotion to school leadership roles, structured feedback, and performance-based compensation. More than 200 schools around the country have implemented TAP, and its most recent expansion came via the federal [Teacher Incentive Fund \(TIF\)](#). A new report from Mathematica Policy Research, focuses on one TIF grantee, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), which began implementing TAP in 2007 and plans to continue adding 10 new TAP schools each year of the grant's four-year period.

Program: TAP enables teachers to earn extra pay and responsibilities through promotion to mentor or master teacher; they can also earn annual performance bonuses based on the value they add to student achievement and their performance in the classroom.

- The performance based pay component of TAP has been modest, with average bonuses of \$1,100 in the first year and \$2,600 in the second year of implementation.
- The program features a career ladder with more substantial salary augmentations (\$7,000 to \$15,000 per year) and a professional development model that includes weekly small group meetings and regular observations by trained classroom observers.

Study: The study, funded by a grant from the Joyce Foundation, gathered data from student test score files, a teacher survey, a set of principal interviews, and teacher administrative records for TAP and non-TAP schools. Mathematica randomly assigned 8 elementary (K–8) Chicago Public Schools to a treatment group that began implementing TAP in 2007 and the other 8 to a control group that rolled out TAP in 2008. To complement the experimental analysis the research team created a comparison sample of more than 200 additional schools by matching them according to size, average teacher experience, and student demographics to the TAP schools. This is the second of four annual impact reports to be issued by the study.

Findings:

- As of March 2009, in the second year of rollout in the district, we found no evidence that the program raised student test scores. This is consistent with findings from one year earlier.
- We found that TAP had no impact on teacher retention rates in the school or district. Similar percentages of TAP and non-TAP teachers returned in fall 2009 to the same schools where they started in fall 2008 or in fall 2007.

Quote: "We're still in the early phases of the study. In the coming years, we'll be collecting data on an expanded set of schools," said [Steven Glazerman](#), lead author of the study and a senior researcher at Mathematica. "As we review these early results, we should keep in mind that this is preliminary evidence and doesn't reflect the long-term, steady-state impacts of TAP."

Report: "[An Evaluation of the Teacher Advancement Program \(TAP\) in Chicago: Two Year Impact Report.](#)" Steven Glazerman, Allison Seifullah, May 2010.

[Learn more about TAP](#)

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