



Building and Supporting a System  
OF  
Effective Teachers and Leaders

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To learn more about Louisiana TAP and the TIF grant,  
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The Louisiana State TAP Team

Welcome to Louisiana TAP!

TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement provides Louisiana schools, educators, and students with exciting opportunities for new learning and achievement. TAP, a nationally-proven and recognized school reform model, began as a grass roots effort in five Louisiana schools in 2003-2004 and has grown to more than 80 schools serving approximately 2,800 teachers and 38,000 students.

The TAP System honors the teaching profession. Louisiana TAP schools recognize and value the integrity of the TAP system, its four critical elements, and the premise on which TAP was built: that a talented teacher makes a difference. TAP provides a balance of support and accountability. It fosters partnerships at the national, state, local, and school level. TAP promotes collaboration, communication, and trust. Through TAP we demonstrate our beliefs that every teacher has the right to become a better teacher; that what the teacher does in the classroom impacts learning, and that quality teaching results in increased student achievement.

Louisiana TAP schools acknowledge that to make a difference requires hard work – and are proud of the results of that hard work. We are proud that Louisiana schools were the recipients of the 2008 and 2009 TAP Founders awards. We are proud that the TAP Award of Distinction, honoring an organization for its dedication and commitment to TAP, has been awarded to Louisiana for three (3) consecutive years (2010, 2011, and 2012). We are proud that students in Louisiana TAP schools have gained in student achievement faster than the state average, closing achievement gaps in math and English Language Arts.

We believe that, through our national, state, district, and school partnerships, TAP will continue to serve the needs of Louisiana teachers and students. On behalf of the Louisiana TAP State Team, I extend to you an invitation to learn more about the elements that comprise TAP’s comprehensive reform model and how we have been able to leverage TAP to benefit our schools and students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila Talamo".

Sheila Talamo  
State Director | Louisiana TAP  
Louisiana Department of Education



# TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement

Research has shown that the single most important school-related factor in determining student achievement is the quality of the classroom teacher. Similarly, research has concluded that school leadership has significant effects on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teachers' instruction (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003). Developed in 1999 by education reform pioneer Lowell Milken, TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement, is a comprehensive, systemic school reform model that addresses the most important element in a school – human capital – and it does so by working with educators to systematically increase their skills and thereby increase student achievement.

The TAP System *restructures* schools and offers teachers and school leaders a thriving learning environment with powerful opportunities to receive support and excel, while holding them accountable for their performance. Through the four (4) key interrelated elements of TAP, educators are strengthening their instructional capacity and increasing student achievement. The four elements were developed based upon scientific research, as well as best practices from the fields of education, business and management.

## TAP Elements of Success

**Multiple Career Paths:** for educators as career, mentor and master teachers

**Ongoing Applied Professional Growth:** through weekly cluster meetings, follow-up support in the classroom, and coaching

**Instructionally Focused Accountability:** through multiple classroom observations and evaluations utilizing a research-based instrument and rubric that identified effective teaching practices

**Performance-Based Compensation:** based on multiple measures of performance, including student achievement gains and teachers' instructional practices



# Louisiana TAP: Building and Supporting a System of Teachers and Leaders

The TAP System provides teachers with professional development that is ongoing, job-embedded, collaborative, student-centered and led by expert instructors. TAP restructures the school schedule to provide time during the regular school day for teachers to meet, learn, plan, mentor and share with other teachers. This common time allows teachers to constantly improve the quality of their instruction and, hence, increase their students' academic achievement. TAP also provides professional development opportunities and ongoing support for school leaders, which are designed to build their capacity as the instructional leader of the school.

In Louisiana, professional development opportunities include a variety of learning experiences offered at the school, district, and state level. In addition to onsite support provided by State Executive Master Teachers, master and mentor teachers in Louisiana TAP schools participate in networking and support meetings that are designed to build their instructional knowledge and capacity to support the career teachers within their respective schools. Similarly, principals of Louisiana TAP schools engage in networking and

support meetings focused on providing them with the skills to effectively implement TAP with fidelity and support the needs of career, mentor, and master teachers at their school.

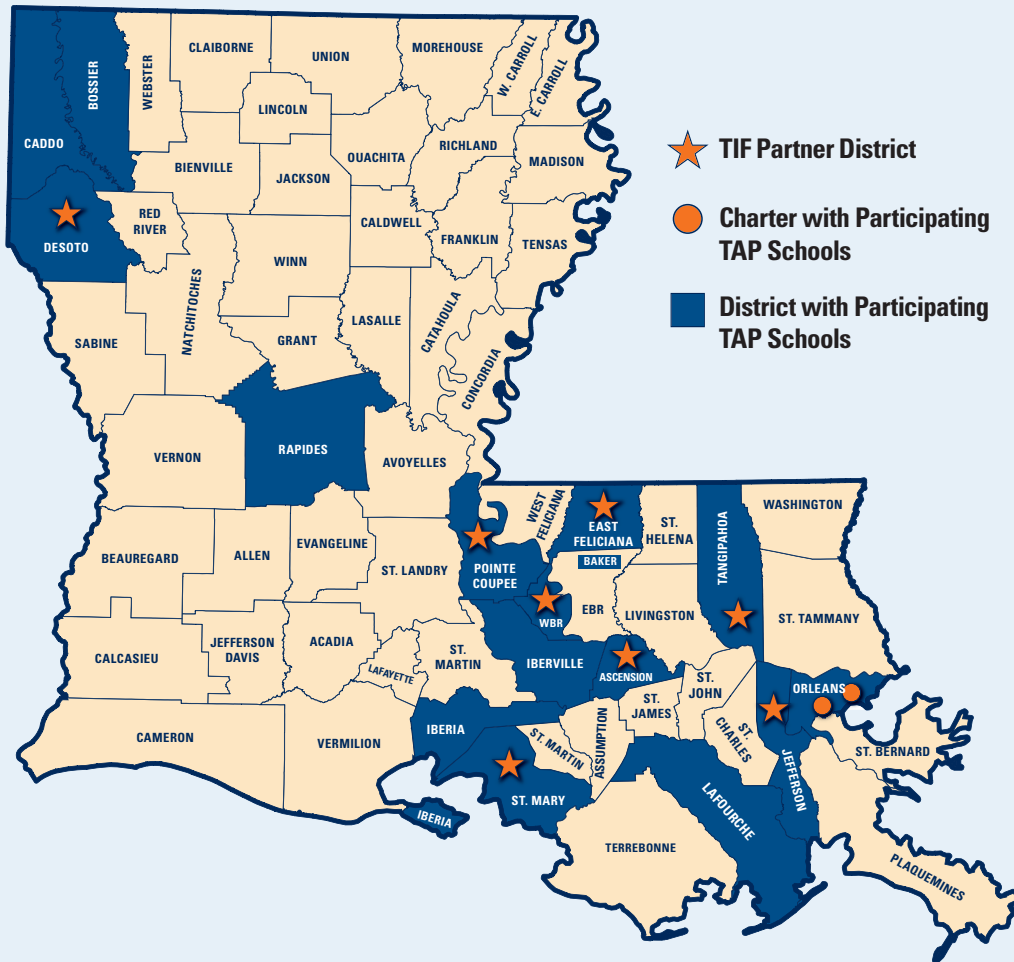
Throughout the year, educators in Louisiana TAP schools and districts have opportunities to engage in state-sponsored activities such as Louisiana TAP Summer Institute (TSI), TAP Core Trainings, Regional Trainings and Field Trips. In addition, trainings focused on the TAP evaluation process are convened for those individuals serving as evaluators within TAP schools.

Unique to Louisiana, districts and schools interested in learning more about Louisiana TAP and possibly becoming Louisiana TAP schools are provided with a year-long “Pre TAP” experience. This experience consists of a TAP orientation, visits to a Louisiana TAP school(s), as well as multiple opportunities to plan for the successful implementation of TAP.

The Louisiana TAP State Team is committed to providing ongoing support that builds the effectiveness of teachers and leaders in Louisiana schools!



# The Growth of the TAP System in Louisiana



Initiated in 2003 as a grass roots effort in five schools in the state, Louisiana TAP has become a major state reform and priority of the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) to improve teacher and leader quality and student achievement. Through its partnership with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), an independent public charity that supports and manages the implementation of the TAP system nationally, as well as district/school partnerships, Louisiana has leveraged TAP to benefit schools and students across the state.

In 2010, the LDOE became one of sixty-two entities from across the country to receive a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which is focused on 1) improving student achievement, 2) increasing educator effectiveness, and 3) building the capacity of local school systems to implement and sustain a performance-based compensation system. The TAP System serves as the foundation of Louisiana's TIF grant. As a result of its TIF funding, eight (8) partner districts will directly benefit from additional resources to implement TAP in its schools.

# Louisiana TAP: Improving Student Achievement

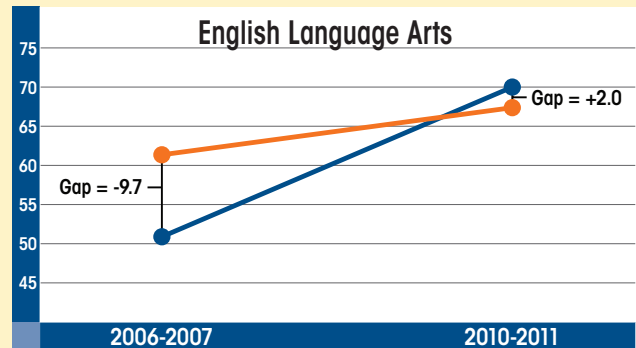
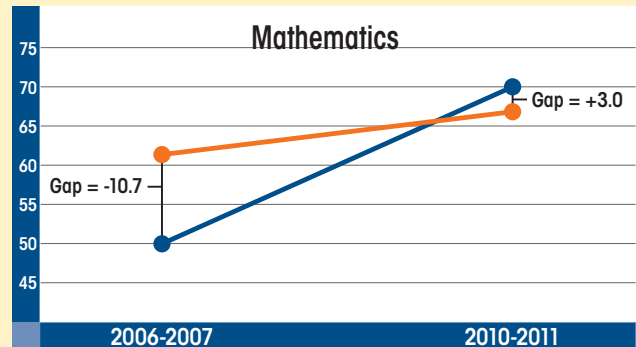
The ultimate goal of TAP™ is to raise student achievement. The method for getting there is to create incentives and support structures that will maximize teacher and leader effectiveness. Research has shown that TAP not only improves the academic performance of students, but also promotes a high level of teacher collegiality, reduces teacher turnover and attracts talented teachers to high-poverty schools.

Students in Louisiana TAP schools have gained in student achievement faster than the state average, closing achievement gaps in math and English Language Arts, while serving a higher-minority, higher-poverty population of students as compared to the statewide average. The two upper right charts on this page show ten (10) Louisiana schools which implemented TAP continuously over a five-year period from 2006-2011, versus the state average for the same five-year period. Louisiana TAP schools reversed an achievement gap of nearly 11 points below the state to 3 points above the state in math, and of nearly 10 points below the state to 2 points above the state in English Language Arts.

Louisiana TAP uses a value-added model as a means of measuring the academic growth of students. Value-added analysis uses statistical methodology and individual student achievement data to measure academic gain or “value-added” for a group of students over a specific period of time. The chart on the bottom right of this page provides a historical perspective relative to the school-wide value-added scores for Louisiana TAP schools.

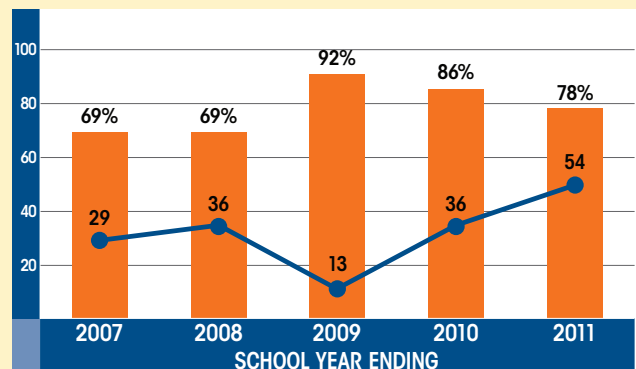
A value-added score of 3 reflects one year of academic growth, and a score above 3 reflects more than one year of academic growth. During 2010-11, approximately 78% of Louisiana TAP schools received a value-added score of 3 or above.

## Percent of Students Scoring *Basic* or Above



● Statewide      ● TAP

## Louisiana TAP Schools Grow in Number and Student Achievement



■ % of TAP Schools Receiving Value-Added Score of  $\geq 3$

● Number of TAP Schools

**“TAP is the vehicle with which we have become a team with a central goal in mind – student success!”**

**- Emily Hagan-Hurst**, Master Teacher | Jackson Elementary | East Feliciana Parish

**“Our teachers are constantly collaborating about effective teaching practices, and student engagement has increased because of the innovative strategies learned through TAP.”**

**- Linda D’Amico**, Superintendent | Pointe Coupee Parish

**“Teaching in isolation has become a thing of the past...We continue to grow, knowing that TAP provides the missing piece-- strategic and systematic support.”**

**- Nicole Bolen**, District Executive Master Teacher | DeSoto Parish

**“After only one year of implementing TAP, our ongoing review of student work via laser-focused leadership team meetings, field testing, and cluster assignments have solidified the foundation for exemplary student achievement.”**

**- Dr. Jonathan Szymanski**, Principal | Port Allen Middle School | West Baton Rouge Parish

**“From encouraging teachers to work and plan together as a team focused on the achievement of every student to assisting teachers in studying and using data to drive instruction, TAP has led our faculty, staff, and students to work together to improve our levels of performance.”**

**- Diane Henry**, Mentor | Forest Hill Elementary | Rapides Parish

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*Louisiana Believes*

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