TELL Kentucky Survey

District 180 Priority Schools

Research Brief

Teaching Conditions in 2010-2011 District 180 Priority Schools

In 2011, more than 80 percent of Kentucky educators (42,025) shared their perceptions of their teaching conditions through the TELL Kentucky Survey. Nearly every district, 174 of 177, and nearly all traditional public schools, 1285 of 1395, met the reporting threshold—40 and 50 percent respectively. With such high response rates across the state, critical information was captured to gauge the successes and areas of concern in each school community. Data from these respondents were made available in May 2011 at www.tellkentucky.org.

As part of Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) efforts to improve the persistently lowest achieving schools, the KDE and the United State Department of Education (USDOE) have identified schools that qualify for a School Improvement Grant (SIG). School Improvement Grants (SIGs) are grants awarded by the USDOE to state education agencies (SEAs) under Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (aka ESEA, reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2002). The SEAs, in turn, award sub-grants to local educational agencies (LEA's, also known as school districts) for the purpose of supporting focused school improvement efforts. In 2009, the Obama administration, and specifically U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, challenged the education community to make the lowest-achieving schools its highest priority. With funds allocated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the U.S. Department of Education dramatically increased the funds provided to SEAs under section 1003(g) while issuing program requirements that charged the SEAs with channeling the funds to LEAs for the "persistently lowest-achieving schools" to support rapid improvement through four intervention models:

- The "turnaround model" in which the LEA replaces the principal and rehires no more than 50 percent of the staff, gives the principal greater autonomy, and implements other prescribed and recommended strategies.

- The "restart model" in which the LEA converts or closes and reopens a school under a charter school operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.

- The "school closure model" in which the LEA closes the school and enrolls the students in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving.

- The "transformation model" in which the LEA replaces the principal (except in specified situations), implements a rigorous staff evaluation and development system, institutes comprehensive instructional reform, increases learning time and applies community-oriented school strategies, and provides greater operational flexibility and support for the school.

Kentucky has adopted two of the abovementioned models, specifically, turnaround and transformation. Of the approximately 42,000 educators responding to the TELL Kentucky 2011 Survey, 1081 were assigned to schools receiving SIG funds. Year 1 SIG recipients (Cohort 1 Schools) were identified as the highest priority schools and were the first to receive assistance service from KDE starting prior to school year 2010-2011; Year 2 SIG recipients began receiving assistance on July 1, 2011. In 2011, KDE further identified and prioritized these schools in the new accountability model, calling them the District 180 Priority Schools.

This research brief analyzes the 2010-2011 District 180 priority Schools, Cohorts 1 and 2, to assess whether and how teaching conditions differ compared to other schools in Kentucky in order to illuminate potential challenges and opportunities to student learning, teacher recruitment, professional development and retention.

Findings

School Councils, Community Engagement and Student Conduct
District 180 Priority Schools Report Concerns about School Councils, Community Engagement and Student Conduct

Although District 180 Priority Schools are generally less positive across most survey questions, the greatest disparity exists in the areas of school council, community engagement and student conduct (Table 1). Differences may still exist, even after one year of additional funding, due to the external and limited span of control to effect immediate change in these areas. To improve these conditions, significant systemic change is critical.

- District 180 Priority Schools teachers are significantly less positive than their state counterparts with regard to student conduct in understanding school policy and procedures (57 percent versus 70), enforcing rules (83 percent versus 93) and the consistent enforcement of rules (72 percent versus 80).

- When considering community engagement, District 180 Priority School teachers are uniformly less positive. Additionally, only seven out of 10 (72 percent) District 180 Priority School educators agree that parents are influential decision makers while nearly nine out of 10 (85 percent) teachers across the state believe this condition is in place.

It is important to highlight the evident disparity of agreement between District 180 Priority Schools and statewide schools when examining school councils. Four out of nine questions that had the greatest difference on the Survey were about school councils. It is apparent that school councils are viewed positively by educators across the state. However, in the lowest achieving schools, school councils appear to be struggling. District 180 Priority School educators are less positive in several areas that directly affect student learning:

- Only six out of ten (65 percent) District 180 Priority School educators agree that teachers are assigned classes that maximize student success, while nearly eight in 10 (77 percent) statewide agree.

- Seven out of 10 District 180 Priority School educators report that teachers are trusted to make sound educational decisions compared to eight out of 10 statewide.

- Nearly six out of 10 (58 percent) District 180 Priority School educators agree that teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction compared to nearly seven out of 10 (68 percent) statewide.

Table 1. Areas Where Year 1 Cohort Schools Are Considerably Less Positive Than Their State Counterparts			
2011 TELL Kentucky Survey Question	**Rate of Agreement (Agree/Strongly Agree)**		
	District 180 Priority Schools– Cohort 1	*State*	*Difference*
Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.	38%	71%	-33%
Teachers on the school council are representative of the faculty (i.e. experience, subject/grade, etc.)	51%	80%	-29%
The school council makes decisions that positively impact school staffing and schedules.	58%	84%	-26%
Community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	56%	82%	-26%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about new teacher support	63%	88%	-25%
The school council makes decisions that positively impact instruction (i.e. curriculum, instructional practices, etc.).	57%	82%	-25%
Parents/guardians know what is going on in this school.	42%	66%	-24%
Teachers provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning.	58%	81%	-23%
Parents on the school council are representative of the diversity within the school community.	63%	86%	-23%
School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.	56%	78%	-22%
Teachers are effective leaders in this school.	63%	84%	-21%
Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	59%	78%	-19%
Professional development enhances teachers' abilities to improve student learning.	63%	82%	-19%
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	67%	83%	-16%
The community we serve is supportive of this school.	70%	85%	-15%

Professional Development
Educators in District 180 Priority Schools Are More Positive About Professional Development Than Their Colleagues Across the State

Educators in District 180 Priority Schools are more likely to note positive teaching conditions in the area of professional supports (Table 2), due in part to the additional resources from state and federal funds that disproportionately flow to schools serving persistently low-achieving schools, and high-poverty schools.

Table 2. Areas Where Year 1 Cohort Schools Are More Positive Than The State			
2011 TELL Kentucky Survey Question	**Rate of Agreement (Agree/Strongly Agree)**		
	District 180 Priority Schools– Cohort 1	*State*	*Difference*
Teachers use assessment data to inform their instruction.	90%	85%	5%
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.	68%	63%	5%
Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice.	72%	67%	5%
In this school, follow up is provided from professional development.	77%	73%	4%
Professional development deepens teachers' content knowledge.	91%	88%	3%
An appropriate amount of time is provided for professional development.	87%	84%	3%
Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to work with colleagues to refine teaching practices.	60%	57%	3%
Professional development offerings are data driven.	93%	91%	2%

- Smaller, but significant differences around several aspects of professional development were found, including enhancing the teacher's ability to implement instructional strategies that meet diverse learning needs, and professional learning opportunities are aligned with the school improvement plan.

- District 180 Priority Schools are also more positive in several areas that impact instruction, including class sizes (68 percent versus 66), access to supplies (83 percent versus 81), using assessment data to inform instructional practices (90 percent versus 85) and minimizing routine paperwork (68 percent versus 63) allowing teachers more time to focus on instruction.

Teachers in District 180 Priority Schools, and Across the State, Have Professional Development Needs That Have Not Yet Been Met

While District 180 Priority School educators are more positive than their colleagues about professional development, there appear to be some challenges in providing sufficient support in key areas, particularly around differentiating instruction to diverse learners. Over half of the teachers in District 180 Priority Schools indicate a great need for professional development in the areas of integrating technology into instruction (60 percent), differentiating instruction (66 percent), working with students with disabilities (60 percent), gifted and talented instruction (56 percent), methods of teaching (51 percent), student assessment (53 percent), reading strategies (52 percent) and closing the achievement gap (69 percent) (Table 3).

In nearly all areas, District 180 Priority School teachers express more need for professional development than their statewide counterparts. Similarly, District 180 Priority School teachers expressed that they had received professional development more than their statewide counterparts in all areas except for closing the achievement gap (44 percent versus 45, respectively) and integrating technology into instruction (42 percent versus 47, respectively).

- Content area, methods of teaching, and student assessment are the only areas where District 180 Priority Schools, and statewide teachers alike, are receiving more professional development than they indicate that they need.

- Teachers across the state agree that the greatest need for professional development is for academically gifted students, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners.

Despite these needs, few District 180 Priority School teachers received significant professional development (at least 10 or more clock hours over the past two years) for working with several high needs populations. While about two-thirds of District 180 Priority School teachers received significant professional development in their content area (66 percent), integrating technology into instruction (60 percent) and closing the achievement gap (69 percent), only one out of 10 had equivalent support in working with English language learners and two out of 10 in working with the academically gifted (16 percent).

	Table 3. Professional Development Needs and Offerings			
2011 TELL Kentucky Survey Question	*District 180 Priority Schools– Cohort 1*		*State*	
In which of the following areas (if any) do you need/had professional development to teach your students more effectively?	**Need**	**Had**	**Need**	**Had**
Special education (students with disabilities)	60%	30%	56%	26%
Special education (gifted and talented)	56%	16%	53%	9%
Differentiating instruction	66%	56%	62%	52%
English Language Learners	33%	10%	36%	7%
Closing the Achievement Gap	69%	44%	64%	45%
Your content area	42%	66%	39%	57%
Methods of teaching	51%	63%	42%	51%
Student assessment	53%	62%	45%	63%
Classroom management techniques	47%	34%	35%	26%
Reading strategies	52%	50%	48%	45%
Integrating technology into instruction	60%	42%	62%	47%

DISTRICT 180 PRIORITY SCHOOLS
Year 1 Cohorts Are Generally More Positive Than Their Year 2 Counterparts

Kentucky is offering a second round of school improvement grants to an additional 14 schools in the state. The following analysis establishes baselines for those Year 2 Cohort Schools and draws comparisons from their Year 1 counterparts. When TELL Kentucky is re-administered in 2013, analyses will be conducted to examine the growth for both Cohorts longitudinally.

First-Year District 180 Priority Schools Are More Positive About School Leadership Than Second-Year Grant Recipients

Year Two Cohort Schools are less positive about leadership than their first year counterparts and the rest of the state. Nearly eight out of 10 First Year Cohort Schools agreed that school leadership:

- Facilitates data to improve student learning (81 percent)
- Makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about teacher leadership (78 percent)
- Makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about instructional practices and support (76 percent)

For the same questions, Cohort 2 educators agreed only two thirds of the time (69, 64, and 64 percent respectively). When asked if school leadership helps support teachers, Cohort 2 agreed only 81 percent of the time while Cohort 1, agreed more than nine out of 10 times, more in line with the state average (92 percent).

While still significant, smaller gaps exist in instructional support and practice. Nine out of 10 respondents in Cohort 1 agreed that 'provided supports (i.e. instructional coaching, professional learning communities, etc.) translate to improvements in instructional practices by teachers' while only 85 percent of Cohort 2 agreed. Nearly three quarters (72 percent) of Cohort 1 respondents agreed that teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice, while less than three out of five Cohort 2 respondents agreed the same condition was in place at their school.

Table 4. Greatest Disparity Between Year 1 Cohort Schools and Year 2 Cohort Schools

	SIG–Cohort 1	SIG–Cohort 2	State
The school leadership consistently supports teachers.	93%	81%	92%
Local assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices.	89%	83%	92%
Provided supports (i.e. instructional coaching, professional learning communities, etc.) translate to improvements in instructional practices by teachers.	90%	85%	92%
Professional development offerings are data driven.	93%	83%	91%
Professional development deepens teachers' content knowledge.	91%	83%	88%
The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.	81%	69%	87%
Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school.	72%	60%	85%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about teacher leadership	78%	64%	83%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about instructional practices and support	76%	64%	80%
The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.	79%	60%	79%
Professional development is differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers.	64%	59%	72%
The faculty and leadership have a shared vision.	68%	55%	70%
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.	64%	55%	68%

The disparity between the two groups may exist from first year Cohort Schools already receiving funding to target school leadership areas, specifically, removing school council decision making responsibilities. As detailed in Table 5, School Improvement Cohort Schools are generally less positive than the state when responding to school improvement questions.

Table 5. Year 1 and Year 2 Cohort Schools Perceptions of School Councils

Survey Question	SIG–Cohort 1	SIG–Cohort 2	State
Teachers on the school council are representative of the faculty (i.e. experience, subject/grade, etc.)	63%	77%	88%
Parents on the school council are representative of the diversity within the school community.	51%	61%	80%
The school council makes decisions that positively impact instruction (i.e. curriculum, instructional practices, etc.).	63%	72%	86%
The school council makes decisions that positively impact school staffing and schedules.	57%	64%	82%
Overall, the school council provides effective leadership in this school.	58%	62%	84%

In District 180 Priority Schools Cohort 1, school councils have been limited in their scope of responsibility. They are either operating in a capacity that is consultative or they have been removed altogether. Therefore, we can see, in Cohort 1 that less than two thirds of all respondents agreed that they are representative of the faculty, the school community, are impacting instruction, and are effective.

Alternatively, Cohort 2 Schools report that they are still more effective and play a larger role in the school community than their Cohort 1 peers, but are still significantly less positive than the rest of the state.

Seven out of ten (72 percent) Second Year Cohort Schools agreed that their school council is making decisions that positively impact instruction while nearly nine out of 10 (86 percent) respondents across the state agreed the same condition was in place. Six out of 10 agreed that the school council in their school is making decisions that impact school staffing and are providing effective leadership (64 and 62 percent respectively) while more than eight out of 10 (82 and 84 percent respectively) respondents across the state agreed those conditions were in place at their school.

Areas for Targeted Intervention
Although Year 1 Cohort Schools Have Demonstrated Significant Gains Compared to Year 2 Cohort Schools, More Targeted Intervention Is Necessary

For both Cohorts, setting expectations for student conduct is a challenge (Table 6). Less than four out of 10 (38 percent, Cohort 1, and 41 percent, Cohort 2) respondents agree that this condition is in place, compared to nearly three quarters of all state respondents (71 percent). Seven out of 10 Cohort Schools (67 percent, Cohort 1 and 71 percent, Cohort 2) agree that students at their school follow the rules of conduct while more than 8 out of ten state respondents agree this condition is in place.
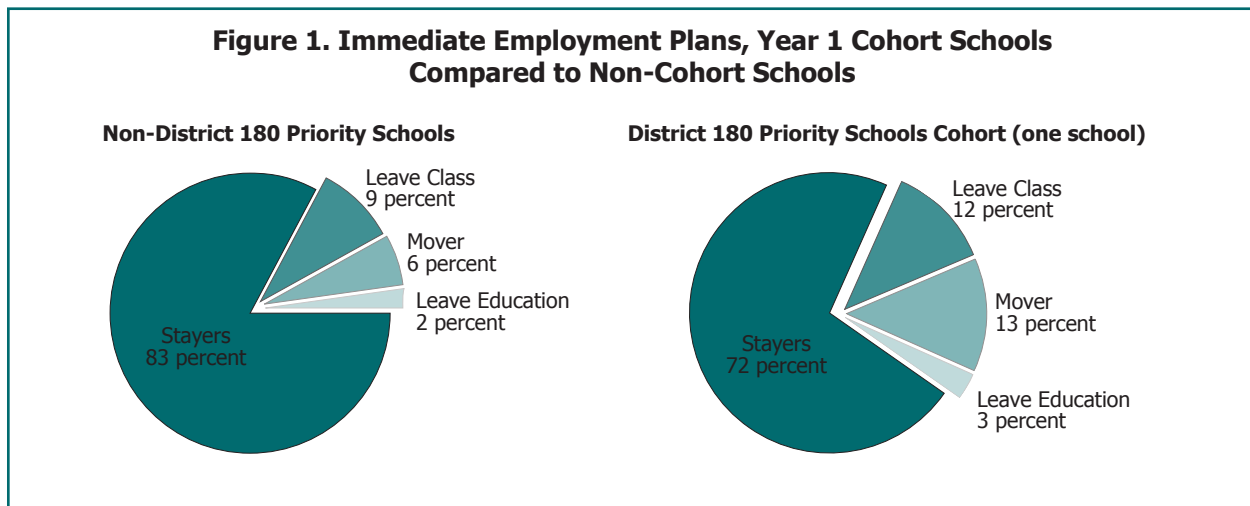
Student conduct may be a problem due to faculty misunderstanding of policy and procedures, nearly half of District 180 Priority school faculty (42 percent, Cohort 1 and 47 percent Cohort 2) do not understand these policies and procedures while seven out of 10 state respondents agreed this condition was in place. Also, nearly half of Year 1 and Year 2 Cohort Schools (44 and 47 percent respectively) disagreed that school administrators support educators' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom compared to four out of five (78 percent) agreeing at the state level.

Table 6. Year 1 and Year 2 Cohort Schools Targeted Areas of Concern			
Survey Question	*SIG– Cohort 1*	*SIG– Cohort 2*	*State*
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	67%	71%	83%
Community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	56%	44%	82%
Teachers provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning.	58%	47%	81%
Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	59%	42%	78%
School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.	56%	53%	78%
Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.	38%	41%	71%
Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.	57%	53%	70%
The non-instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.	40%	43%	51%

Teacher Retention
Teachers in District 180 Priority Schools Are Less Likely to Stay

Given the disparities in teaching and learning conditions in District 180 Priority Schools in the areas of Community Engagement and Managing Student Conduct, it is not surprising that fewer District 180 Priority School teachers report wanting to remain teaching in their current school. An examination of the self-reported future employment plans of teachers shows that a greater proportion of District 180 Priority School teachers are likely to leave their current school (Figure 1). Seventy two percent of District 180 Priority School teachers report that their immediate plans are to remain teaching in their current school ("stayers"), compared to 83 percent of other teachers across the state. They are also more likely to want to "leave" teaching to move into another position within education or move to a new school and remain teaching. While teachers in District 180 Priority Schools are more inclined to leave their current teaching assignment than teachers in non-District 180 Priority Schools, it appears both groups' immediate career plans are motivated by very similar conditions. Both groups indicate School Leadership (34 percent) as the condition which affects their decision to stay, followed by Managing Student Conduct (18 percent), and Time during the Work Day (11 percent).

Figure 1. Immediate Employment Plans, Year 1 Cohort Schools Compared to Non-Cohort Schools

Non-District 180 Priority Schools

Leave Class
9 percent

Mover
6 percent

Leave Education
2 percent

Stayers
83 percent

District 180 Priority Schools Cohort (one school)

Leave Class
12 percent

Mover
13 percent

Leave Education
3 percent

Stayers
72 percent

New Teacher Support
School Improvement Cohort Schools Need to Provide Better Support to Novice Teachers

Novice teachers in District 180 Priority Schools are consistently less positive about their teaching conditions than novice teachers in the rest of the state. Significant disparities exist in all constructs, the most notable relate to community support and engagement, school councils, and managing student conduct (Table 7).

Of the five school council questions asked on the Survey, three fell in the top ten questions with the greatest disparity between novice teachers (those who have been teaching three years or less) in District 180 Priority Schools relative to novice teachers in the rest of the state.

- Among novice teachers across the state, nine out of 10 agreed (90 percent) that school councils provide effective leadership while less than two thirds (65 percent) of teachers in District 180 Priority Schools agreed.
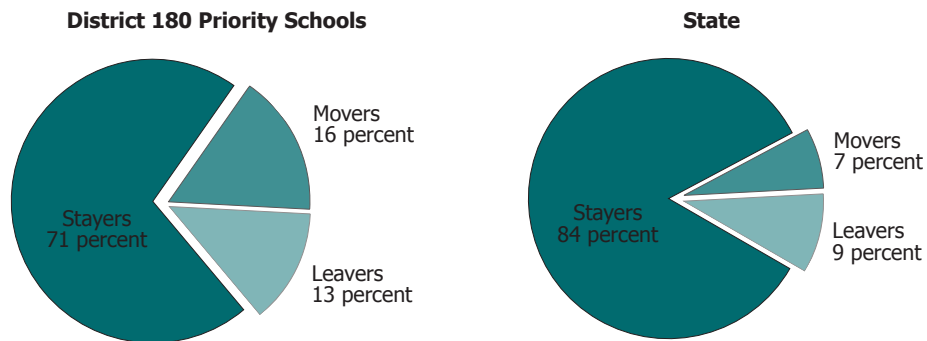
- Less than three out of five (58 percent) District 180 Priority Schools novice teachers agree that parents on the school council are representative of the diversity within the school community while nearly 4 out of 5 (79 percent) of novice teachers across the state agree.

- Among District 180 Priority Schools novice teachers more than three out of 10 (31 percent) disagree that the school council is making decisions that positively impact school staffing and schedules while only one out of 10 (12 percent) statewide novice teachers disagree.

Table 7. Novice Teacher Disparities, School Improvement Cohort Schools v. Rest of State			
Survey Question	*SIG Beginning Teachers (3 Years or Less)*	*State Beginning Teachers (3 Years or Less)*	*Difference*
Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school.	26%	65%	-39%
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	29%	65%	-36%
The community we serve is supportive of this school.	47%	81%	-34%
Community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	47%	78%	-31%
Parents/guardians know what is going on in this school.	52%	81%	-29%
Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	37%	65%	-28%
Overall, the school council provides effective leadership in this school.	65%	90%	-25%
Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	57%	80%	-23%
This school maintains clear, two-way communication with the community.	64%	87%	-23%
Parents on the school council are representative of the diversity within the school community.	58%	79%	-21%
The school council makes decisions that positively impact school staffing and schedules.	69%	88%	-19%

There is also great disparity in the immediate employment plans of novice teachers at District 180 Priority Schools and the rest of the state (Figure 2). District 180 Priority Schools are having more trouble keeping their novice teachers than the rest of the state. Seven out of 10 (71 percent) novice teachers plan to stay teaching in their school, compared to more than eight out of 10 (84 percent) novice teachers in the rest of the state. Similarly, novice teachers are more than twice as likely (16 percent compared to 7 percent) to move to a different school, either in district or in state than novice teachers in the rest of the state.

Figure 2. Immediate Employment Plans, Novice Teachers, DISTRICT 180 PRIORITY SCHOOLS and State

District 180 Priority Schools

Stayers 71 percent
Movers 16 percent
Leavers 13 percent

State

Stayers 84 percent
Movers 7 percent
Leavers 9 percent

Summary

Overall, educators in District 180 Priority Schools are less positive about teaching conditions than others in Kentucky. Significant challenges are present in District 180 Priority Schools, particularly in the areas of Community Engagement, School Councils and Managing Student Conduct. District 180 Priority Schools educators are significantly less likely to note that parents/guardians and the community are supportive and engaged in school decision making and that students understand and follow student conduct rules. Addressing District 180 Priority School teachers' desire for additional support in assisting students with diverse learning needs may help these schools in working with students, families and the community at large.

Comparisons between year 1 Cohort Schools, year 2 Cohort Schools and the rest of the state help identify the areas of greatest improvement for year 1 Cohort Schools, targeted improvement for year 2 Cohort Schools and a goal for both groups moving forward.

A complete list of survey results and reports related to the TELL Kentucky Survey can be found at www.tellkentucky.org.

About the New Teacher Center

New Teacher Center seeks to reduce the achievement gap in our nation's schools by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers through comprehensive mentoring and professional development programs. NTC partners with school districts, policymakers and leaders in education to implement programs that build leadership capacity, enhance working conditions, improve teacher retention and transform schools into vibrant learning communities. Founded in 1998, NTC headquarters are in Santa Cruz, California.

In the last academic year, 24,195 new teachers (4% of all new teachers in the U.S. last year) received instructional mentoring and professional development support from 7,534 New Teacher Center trained mentors and over 1.4 million students had a better new teacher in their classroom as a result.