



# TELL Kentucky

## Creating Supportive School Conditions for Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness



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## Executive Summary

To do their best work with students, teachers need supportive school environments that maximize their opportunity to be effective. With the leadership of Governor Steve Beshear and the Kentucky Department of Education Commissioner, Dr. Terry Holliday, a coalition of education stakeholders, working with the New Teacher Center, created the Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning Survey (TELL) Kentucky Survey to assess whether critical teaching and learning conditions are present in schools across the state. The anonymous survey of all school based licensed educators was conducted in early spring 2011 with over 42,000 educators (80 percent) of the state responding.

Data are available for the state, all school districts, and for the 1,286 (out of 1,395) schools in Kentucky that met or exceeded the 50 percent threshold for reporting. All results may be viewed online at [www.tellkentucky.org](http://www.tellkentucky.org). Key findings documented in this report include:

## Findings

- Overall, Kentucky educators are satisfied with the teaching and learning conditions in their school.** More than eight out of 10 educators (84 percent) agree that their school is a good place to work and learn and more than four out of five teachers (83 percent) want to continue teaching in their current school building. In comparisons with five other states conducting similar surveys, Kentucky educators are more positive about their teaching conditions in several important areas including access to instructional technology and having sufficient time for professional learning opportunities that are well aligned with their school improvement plan. The area of greatest concern noted by teachers is Time. Many Kentucky educators report that class sizes are insufficient for them to meet student needs and only half agree that efforts are made to minimize paperwork that can distract from time for instruction.
- Positive views of school leadership are related to quality standards, teacher assessment and School Based Decision Making (SBDM) Councils, but more attention may be needed in areas related to conditions that build trust and mutual respect.** Educators' perceptions of school councils are largely favorable as more than eight out of 10 (84 percent) agree that overall, their SBDM Council provides effective leadership in their school. But three out of 10 educators (or more than 12,600 teachers in the state) disagree that there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in their school and nearly three out of 10 (28 percent) report that teachers are not comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important.
- Community Support and Involvement is most strongly connected with school-level student performance.** Nearly all educators agree that teachers provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning and that their school maintains clear, two-way communication with parents/guardians and the community. The influence that Community Support and Involvement has a strong and statistically significant influence on student learning while controlling for student, teacher and school characteristics.

- **Community Support and Involvement and School Leadership are critical influences on teachers' future employment plans.** The analysis of individual teacher employment plans and estimated retention rates in TELL Kentucky Schools indicate that leadership support, community involvement, and the processes and systems in place to manage student conduct are important areas to address to enhance teacher retention. Teachers are more likely to remain working in schools where there are parents and school leaders that create trusting environments where teachers feel safe and engaged.
- **Many beginning teachers are reporting that supports are in place to help them adjust to their new work environment and enable them to do their best work.** For more than eight out of 10 beginning teachers (85 percent), mentors are assigned and some level of support is taking place. Eight out of 10 beginning teachers (80 percent) also agree that their school leadership consistently supports teachers. These supports appear to have had a positive impact on new teachers' employment plans. New teachers who want to remain working in their current school are significantly more likely to have received induction support than those who want to remain teaching, but move to another school.
- **Principals are positive about district supports and are more positive about whether conditions are in place across schools than teachers.** Principals report having the supports they need from districts to create positive teaching and learning environments in their schools. However, principals are significantly more likely than teachers to believe that positive school conditions are in place, particularly around areas of trust, support and effective decision making.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Recommendation 1: Support Schools and Districts in Understanding and Improving Teaching Conditions***

- Create state standards for teaching conditions so all school faculty members understand the key elements of building a positive school climate.
- Ensure that teaching conditions data be used as part of the school improvement planning process.
- Provide professional development opportunities through multiple means for school leaders to assess and use their own TELL Kentucky results to inform decisions for school improvement planning.
- Recognize schools of varying demographics that have excellent teaching conditions and successful students.
- Provide incentives and/or resources for schools that create data-driven plans to improve teaching conditions.



***Recommendation 2: Help School Leadership Establish Positive Teaching and Learning Conditions in Every School.***

- Create clear expectations and/or standards for what school leaders need to know and be able to do in recruiting and retaining teachers as well as creating positive teaching and learning conditions.
- Partner with institutions of higher education to ensure new principal candidates graduate from programs with the knowledge and skills they need to create positive teaching and build trusting supportive school climates.
- Continue to provide professional development for principals and other school leaders that support efforts to create positive teaching and learning conditions.

***Recommendation 3: Support Schools in Engaging the Broader Community in Efforts to Understand and Improve Working Conditions.***

- Ensure that teaching conditions analysis and reform is a community effort.
- Identify and document successful community engagement practices through a thorough examination of teaching conditions data.

***Recommendation 4: Ensure that Every New Teacher Is Inducted into the Profession and Receives More Frequent Support to Improve Instruction.***

- Kentucky leaders should investigate expanding its Kentucky Teacher Induction Program (KTIP) beyond the one year, especially in District 180 schools.
- The Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) should investigate strategies to provide accountability to ensure every new teacher receives a qualified mentor.

***Recommendation 5: Continue to Provide Systemic Opportunities for Teachers to Grow Professionally and Participate in Decisions that Impact Their Schools and Classrooms.***

***Recommendation 6: Use TELL Kentucky and Other Mechanisms to Collect Educators' Views on Teaching and Learning Conditions to Inform Local and State Human Capital Decisions.***

- Establish an oversight committee of policymakers and practitioners to coordinate the survey, and the design and implementation of strategies to improve teaching conditions.
- Gather, report and monitor other data sources that influence the teaching and learning conditions in schools to illuminate the perceptions of educators.



- Utilize survey questions (or others from validated surveys measuring similar concepts) from TELL Kentucky at the district or school level as necessary to monitor and track how faculty are responding to reforms.
- Provide teacher leaders and principals with other opportunities and incentives to conduct action research on similar topics.

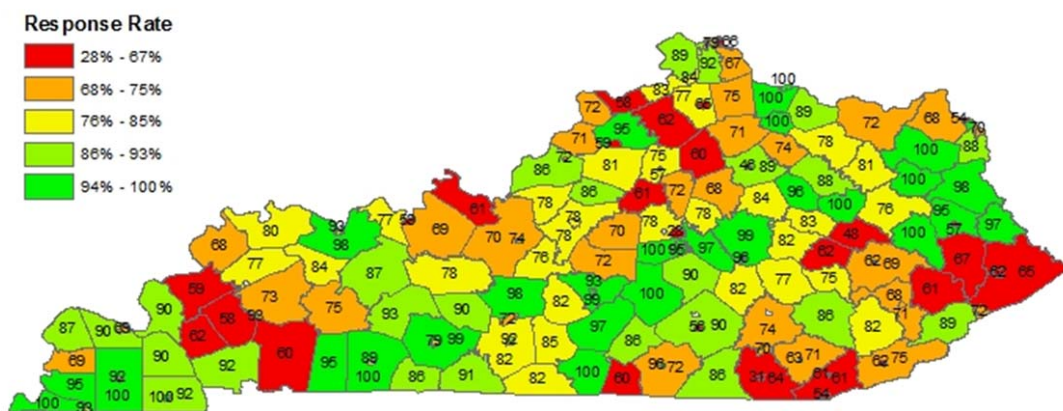
The TELL Kentucky Survey data is a compilation of the voices of those who know schools best—the dedicated educators working with students every day. More than 42,000 of Kentucky’s educators responded with what they need to be effective. Policymakers, KDE and stakeholders have begun the long process of supporting schools in creating schools that give every teacher and student the best opportunity to be successful.

## Introduction

Kentucky's policymakers, stakeholders and practitioners want to ensure that every Kentucky educator has the supportive conditions necessary for them to have the best opportunity to be effective. To determine whether these critical conditions are in place across the state, a coalition of education stakeholders convened in the fall of 2010 and developed the Kentucky Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning Survey (TELL Kentucky). The anonymous survey of all school-based licensed educators was conducted from March 1-25, 2011. Over 42,000 participants representing more than 80 percent of the state's educators responded to the survey. Data are available for 92% of the schools in Kentucky that met or exceeded the 50% threshold for reporting (Figure 1).

Additionally, every school in 128 of the 176 districts met or exceeded the school level response rate threshold of 50 percent. Almost all schools—1,286 of 1,395 schools in Kentucky (92 percent)—met or exceeded the threshold to be provided detailed and summary school level reports about their teaching and learning conditions. By hearing directly from educators who intimately understand teaching conditions, the state has the opportunity to make data-driven decisions to establish policies and practices that make all schools great places to work and learn.

**Figure 1. 2011 Survey Response Rate by District**



## About the Survey

The TELL Kentucky Survey assesses eight teaching conditions areas: Time, Facilities and Resources, Community Support and Involvement, Managing Student Conduct, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Professional Development, and Instructional Practices and Support. These areas—referred to in this brief as constructs—are research-based and have been shown via analyses by the New Teacher Center and other researchers to influence student achievement and teacher retention. A ninth area on new teacher support is also assessed, but since those questions are only answered by teachers with three years or less experience, they are discussed and analyzed separately.

### 2011 TELL Kentucky Survey Constructs

**Time**—Available time to plan, collaborate, provide instruction, and eliminate barriers in order to maximize instructional time during the school day

**Facilities and Resources**—Availability of instructional, technology, office, communication, and school resources to teachers

**Community Support and Involvement**—Community and parent/guardian communication and influence in the school

**Managing Student Conduct**—Policies and practices to address student conduct issues and ensure a safe school environment

**Teacher Leadership**—Teacher involvement in decisions that impact classroom and school practices

**School Leadership**—The ability of school leadership to create trusting, supportive environments and address teacher concerns

**Professional Development**—Availability and quality of learning opportunities for educators to enhance their teaching

**Instructional Practices and Support**—Data and support available to teachers to improve instruction and student learning

A set of core, validated questions from previous teaching conditions surveys was utilized to examine each of these construct areas, while other questions were developed specifically for the state concerning School Based Decision Making (SBDM) Councils. The TELL Kentucky survey was offered to all school-based, licensed educators including teachers, principals, vice principals, and other education professionals (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, library media specialists, etc.) in the state. Most of the questions were asked of all respondents, although some were asked only of specific groups. For example, only teachers in their first three years and those indicating that they served as mentors were asked about induction. Further, a set of questions about district support in creating positive teaching conditions was asked specifically of principals and a set of questions concerning supports for new principals was asked of new principals in their first three years.

This report presents:

1. Summary analyses for each of the survey constructs assessed. Detailed maps are provided to illuminate disparities in teaching conditions across school districts for the question in each construct that was deemed statistically to be most typical of how educators answered all questions in the section. Additional maps are provided in two sections to emphasize disparities documented across the state. As this data is meant to be formative and about improvement, it is presented to show how statewide averages may not fully represent the range of conditions faced by educators across districts and schools.

2. Teaching conditions in Kentucky are compared to other states where NTC conducted initiatives similar to the TELL Kentucky Survey in order to put overall findings in context.
3. An exploration of the connections between the presence of supportive teaching condition, student performance and teacher retention.
4. An examination of how teaching conditions vary across school types, characteristics of students served, teacher characteristics and role within the school.
5. Recommendations for state policymakers to consider toward improving conditions throughout the state.

Summary and detailed reports are also already available for every school that reached the 50 percent response rate threshold of participation. All of these resources are available electronically at [www.tellkentucky.org](http://www.tellkentucky.org).

*Teaching conditions in Kentucky are compared to other states where NTC conducted initiatives similar to the TELL Kentucky Survey in order to put overall findings in context.*

## General Trends

Overall, most Kentucky educators are satisfied with the teaching conditions in their school. More than eight out of 10 (84 percent) agree that their school is a good place to work and learn and four out of five teachers want to continue teaching in their current school building (83 percent) in the immediate future. Additional findings support that overall educators are positive about their school environments and teaching conditions.

*Overall, most Kentucky educators are satisfied with the teaching conditions in their school.*

- Many educators in Kentucky agree with questions related to behaviors that promote positive teaching conditions. More than three-quarters of educators (78 percent) report that they take steps at their school to solve problems. A slightly higher proportion (80 percent) agrees that the faculty and leadership have a shared vision. More than nine out of 10 educators (92 percent) report that teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction. These findings suggest that some conditions are in place across the state that positively influences the direction of teaching and learning.
- Educators across Kentucky are positive about the facilities and resources in their school. Over nine out of 10 educators (95 percent) report that teachers have access to reliable communication technology and that the physical environment of classrooms in their school supports teaching and learning. Additionally, nearly nine out of 10 educators (86 percent) agree that the physical environment of classrooms in their school support teaching and learning.
- More than nine out of 10 educators (93 percent) agree that their faculty work in a school environment that is safe.
- More than eight out of 10 (84 percent) agree that overall, their school council provides effective leadership in their school.

While there are many positive conditions in place across the state,, there are also some conditions that are in need of additional attention and potential reform.

- Many educators report that the amount of time available to teachers to address a variety of teaching-related activities is inadequate for them to produce their best work.
- Fewer than two-thirds of educators (64 percent) report receiving state assessment data in a timely manner. This is concerning in that more than nine out of 10 educators (92 percent) agree that teachers use assessment data to inform their instruction
- Some conditions related to professional development, including accommodating teacher needs for and implementation of professional development are lacking. In some instances, these deficiencies may mean valuable resources for professional development are not being allocated toward areas that are critically needed. In other instances, lack of professional development in areas teachers need to improve their practice and meet the needs of all of their students may negatively impact student learning.

## Time: Positive conditions related to time are not in place for many educators across Kentucky.

Having enough time to do all the things necessary for teachers to be effective in their role is a common challenge in schools across the country. Responses from educators in Kentucky on survey questions about issues that affect teachers' time reflect this national trend. Fewer than six out of 10 educators (59 percent) agree that teachers have reasonable class sizes, affording them time to meet the needs of all students. Roughly two-thirds of educators (65 percent) report that teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions. Seven out of 10 (69 percent) report that teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students. About half (51 percent) agree that efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine administrative paperwork teachers are required to do.

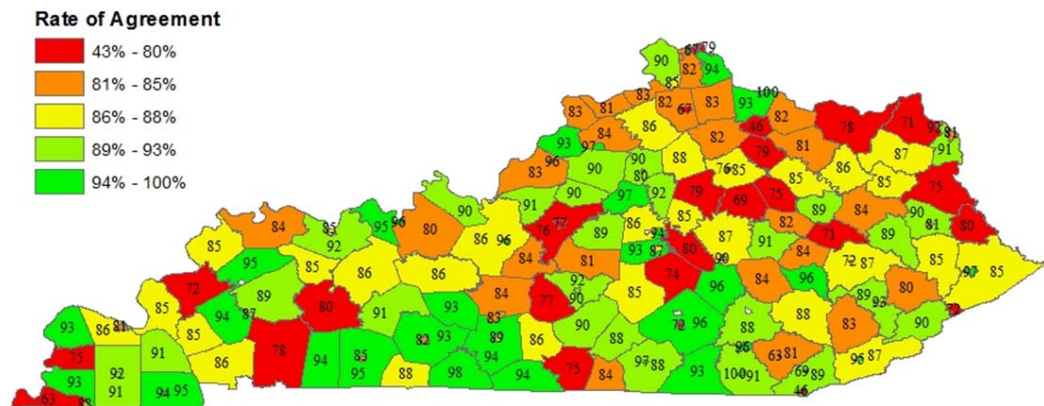
Similar response rates are reported on questions more directly related to the amount of time available to teachers to do their work.

- Six out of 10 educators (63 percent) agree that teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.
- Two-thirds of educators (66 percent) agree that teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.
- Six out of 10 educators (61 percent) report that the non-instructional time provided for teachers in their school is sufficient. Put another way, almost four out of 10 educators across the state (39 percent) did not agree that they had enough non-instructional time. When that percentage is converted into a number for context, 16,389 educators across the state are reporting that they do not have the non-instructional time they need.

State level aggregates can mask important and sometimes large differences at the district and school level. Figure 2 illustrates agreement rates reported at the district level by quintile. Between seven and nine out of ten educators agree that they have sufficient non-instructional time in districts in the highest quintile compared to between one-third and half of teachers in districts most challenged in providing time. Examining results at the school level reveals even more variability in results.

*Having enough time to do all the things necessary for teachers to be effective in their role is a common challenge in schools across the country. Responses from educators in Kentucky on survey questions about issues that affect teachers' time reflect this national trend.*

**Figure 2. The Non-Instructional Time Provided for Teachers in My School Is Sufficient**



In addition to questions capturing what supports for time are in place for Kentucky educators, the Survey also included a battery of questions about how teachers spend their time in any given week (Table 1). These responses provide more detail regarding how much time teachers engage in a variety of work activities.

- Teachers receive little time to plan and collaborate with colleagues. About six out of ten teachers (62 percent) spend one hour a week or less with their colleagues working together. However, nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of teachers report having more than one hour a week of individual planning time with almost half (47 percent) reporting three hours a week or more.
- Nearly fifty percent of educators (49 percent) report that not enough effort is being made to minimize the amount of routine administrative paperwork teachers are required to do and over half (54 percent) of teachers report spending more than one hour a week completing paperwork.
- Almost six out of ten educators (56 percent) report spending less than one hour a week communicating with parents/guardians and/or the community, an important component of teaching practice.
- More educators report spending an hour a week or more preparing for assessments (66 percent) and delivering assessments (67 percent) than utilizing assessment results (63 percent).



**Table 1. Where Teachers Spend Their Work Hours in an Average Week**

	None	Less than or equal to 1 hour	More than 1 hour but less than or equal to 3 hours	More than 3 hours but less than or equal to 5 hours	More than 5 hours but less than or equal to 10 hours	More than 10 hours
Individual planning time	2.2	23.9	27.3	32.7	12.0	1.9
Collaborative planning time	16.1	45.8	27.0	8.7	2.0	.3
Supervisory duties	8.0	45.5	32.4	9.5	3.6	1.0
Required committee and/or staff meetings	3.3	50.6	39.2	5.5	1.2	.3
Completing required administrative paperwork	4.2	42.1	36.0	11.8	4.3	1.6
Communicating with parents/guardians and/or the community	2.1	53.9	36.0	6.2	1.4	.4
Addressing student discipline issues	3.1	53.4	29.6	8.7	3.5	1.7
Professional development	14.2	55.6	22.3	4.1	1.6	2.2
Preparation for required federal, state, and local assessments	5.9	28.3	31.6	15.9	9.1	9.2
Delivery of assessments	3.7	29.0	44.9	15.2	5.0	2.2
Utilizing results of assessments	3.4	33.6	41.1	14.0	5.1	2.7
In an average week of teaching, how many hours do you spend on school-related activities outside the regular school work day (before or after school, and/or on weekends)?	1.1	5.6	18.0	22.1	26.9	26.4

In addition to questions about where teachers are spending their time during work hours, teachers were also asked how much time they spend outside regular work hours on school activities. More than half of teachers (53 percent) report spending five or more hours each week outside regular work hours on school work activities with more than one-quarter (26 percent) spending more than 10 hours each week.

### **Facilities and Resources: Most educators report that they have the resources they need to effectively plan and teach.**

To improve effectiveness in the classroom, teachers need access to current teaching materials, supplies, and resources. In addition, the environment in which teachers work and students learn needs to be safe and clean. Many educators across the state report that adequate facilities and sufficient resources are in place at their schools.

On questions related to the physical space in which teachers work, more than eight out of 10 educators agree that positive conditions are in place.

- Eighty-six percent agree that the physical environment of classrooms in their school supports teaching and learning.
- Eighty-two percent report that teachers have adequate space to work productively.
- Eighty-three percent agree that their school environment is clean and well maintained.

Kentucky educators are also largely positive about conditions related to access and sufficiency of educational materials and resources.

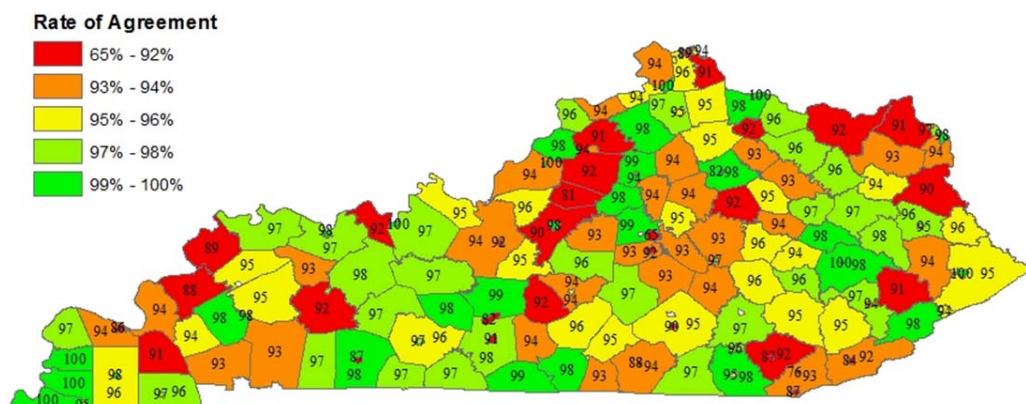
- More than eight out of 10 (83 percent) agree that teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, and that teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and internet access (81 percent).
- About eight out of 10 educators (81 percent) agree that teachers have sufficient access to a broad range of professional support personnel and appropriate instructional materials (79 percent).
- Eighty-two percent report that the reliability and speed of internet connections in their school are sufficient to support instructional practices.
- More than nine out of 10 educators across the state (95 percent) report that teachers have access to reliable communication technology, including phones, faxes and email.

*Many educators across the state report that adequate facilities and sufficient resources are in place at their schools.*

Aggregated to the district level, even most schools in the lowest quintile of agreement are reporting that more than nine out of 10 educators agree this condition is in place (Figure 3). It appears that access to communications technology is nearly universal.

That said, small percentages of educators disagreeing can still be a significant number of teachers serving tens of thousands of children. For example, in the first bullet above, 17 percent—or more than 7,100 educators—disagree that teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, and 19 percent or nearly 8,000 educators do not agree that teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and internet access.

**Figure 3. Teachers Have Access to Reliable Communication Technology, Including Phones, Faxes and E-mail**



**Community Support and Involvement: Kentucky educators are positive about the support and communication they are providing parents, but less confident about the role that parents play at the school and the support they provide teachers.**

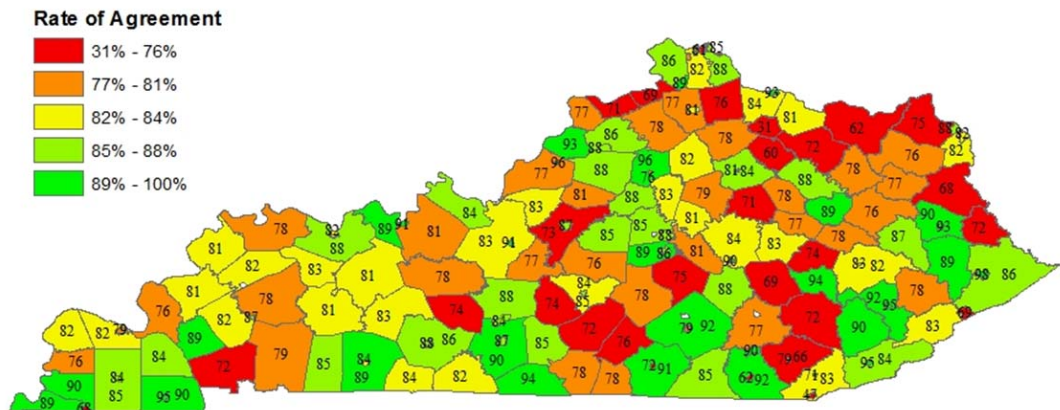
Engaging parents, guardians, and the community in the educational process is an essential component of highly effective schools. Schools need the support of parents, guardians, and the community to support their policies, voice concerns and suggestions, and keep educators informed of important information about their children. Parents, guardians, and the community need to clearly understand school policies and curriculum goals. They have a right to be well-informed about their child's progress and learning challenges. Educators, parents, guardians, and community member need the support, honesty, and clarity of each other in order to provide the best environment for student learning.

Most Kentucky educators positively view the support and communication their schools provide parents and the community.

- More than nine out of 10 (93 percent) agree that teachers provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning.
- More than four-fifths of educators report that their school maintains clear, two-way communication with the community (85 percent) and that their school does a good job of encouraging parent/guardian involvement (85 percent).
- More than three-quarters of educators (78 percent) report that community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students compared to two-thirds (66 percent) agreeing that parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.
- Eight out of 10 educators (82 percent) agree that the community they serve is supportive of their school.

At the state level, more than eight out of 10 educators (81 percent) agree that parents/guardians know what is going on in their school. When aggregated to the district level, wide variations are present across Kentucky. Districts in the highest quintile response rate report that between 89 and 100 percent of educators agree that this condition is in place compared to a range of 31 to 76 percent in the lowest quintile (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Parents/Guardians Know What Is Going on in This School**



Educators are less positive about the impact of parents/guardians on school policies and practices with two-thirds of educators (67 percent) agreeing that parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school.

### **Managing Student Conduct: Most schools are viewed as safe, but lack of consistency in the enforcement of rules may be contributing to inappropriate student behavior.**

For students to be successful, a carefully managed environment needs to be established and maintained. Rules and expectations must be clearly understood by both students and staff and those rules need to be enforced consistently over time. Ensuring that effective policies are in place will help make the learning environment safe and optimal for student achievement.

Safety is a core component of successful schools and managing student conduct. Schools with a safe environment enable students to focus on learning. In Kentucky, more than nine out of 10 educators (93 percent) report that their faculty works in a school environment that is safe. While this is a very encouraging rate of agreement, more careful examination of this condition at the school level is critical to identifying schools that do not have safe conditions and providing supports to ameliorate this situation.

Data analyses reveal discrepancies between understanding the rules for appropriate student conduct and the consistent enforcement of those rules.

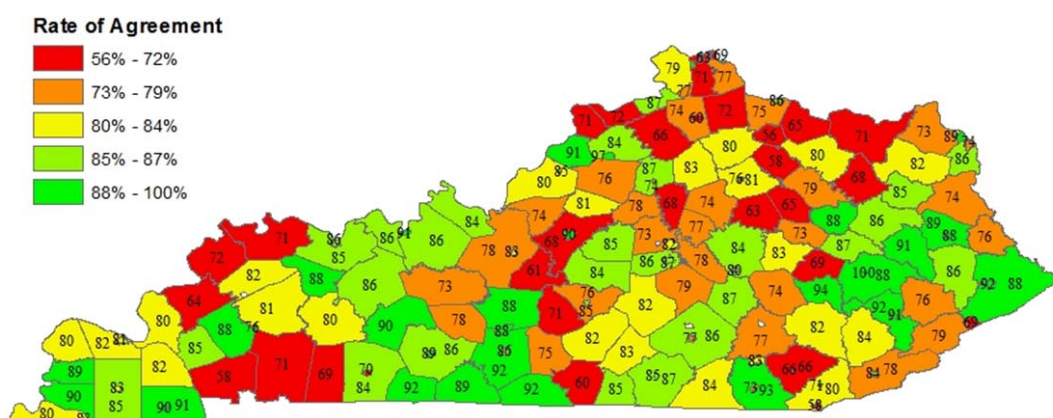
- More than eight out of 10 educators (85 percent) report that students at their school understand expectations for their conduct. About the same proportion (83 percent) agrees that policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.

Yet, fewer educators report that there is consistent enforcement of these rules.

- Fewer than eight out of 10 educators (78 percent) agree that teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct. Seven out of 10 educators (70 percent) report that school administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.
- Eight out of 10 (80 percent) report that school administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.

Student conduct appears to be more of a challenge in some districts than others. There are a number of school districts where fewer than half of educators agree that there is consistent rule enforcement by school administrators (Figure 5, lowest quintile). Of critical concern is that fewer than 10 percent of educators agree that this condition is in place in five schools in the state.

**Figure 5. School Administrators Consistently Enforce Rules for Student Conduct**



Inconsistency in enforcement may be contributing to aberrant student behavior as statewide seven out of 10 educators (71 percent) agree that students follow rules of conduct.

### **Teacher Leadership: More teachers could be more meaningfully engaged in decision making processes and problem solving across the state.**

Having opportunities to participate in decision-making around teaching, classroom, and school issues is an important component of teacher empowerment. Engaging teachers in meaningful leadership opportunities contributes to the retention of quality teachers. In Kentucky, nearly four out of 10 educators (38 percent) do not agree that teachers have an appropriate level of influence on decision making in their school. In questions related to teacher empowerment and decision making:

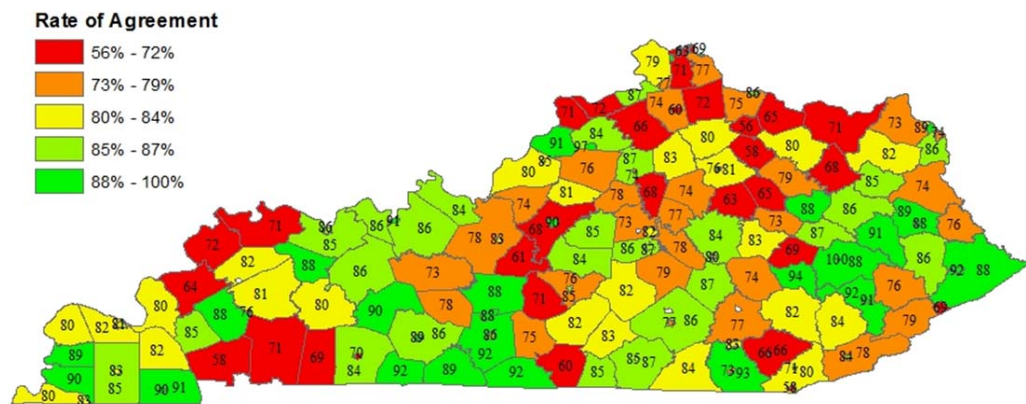


- Fewer than seven out of 10 educators (69 percent) agree that their faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.
- Fewer than eight out of 10 educators (78 percent) report that they take steps to solve problems at their school.

On survey questions associated with teacher leadership and instructional capacity, teachers are slightly more positive.

- Eight out of 10 educators (80 percent) agree that teachers are recognized as education experts.
- About the same proportion (81 percent) agrees that teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction.
- Eight out of 10 (80 percent) report that teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues at the school level. Examining this question at the district level, three-fifths of districts report an 80 percent or greater response rate across the state with the lowest quintile ranging between 56 and 72 percent (Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Teachers Are Relied Upon to Make Decisions About Educational Issues**



While their inclusion in decision-making processes is variable, educators are generally in agreement that teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles (87 percent). Moreover, more than eight out of 10 (84 percent) agree that teachers are effective leaders in their school.

Survey results provide a measure of the level of engagement of teachers in a variety of school activities and leadership opportunities (Table 2). These results parallel findings presented earlier, namely that teachers are more engaged in areas related to the classroom.

- More than eight out of 10 educators (86 percent) report that teachers play a moderate or large role in devising teaching techniques.
- Eight out of 10 participants (80 percent) acknowledge that teachers play a moderate or large role in selecting instructional materials and resources.
- More than three-quarters of educators (78 percent) report that teachers are moderately or largely engaged in setting grading and student assessments.

Educators report that teachers are less engaged in activities outside their own classroom. Fewer than half of responding educators report that teachers are moderately or largely engaged in providing input on how the school budget will be spent (33 percent), selection of teachers new to the school (39 percent), and determining the content of in-service professional development programs (49 percent).

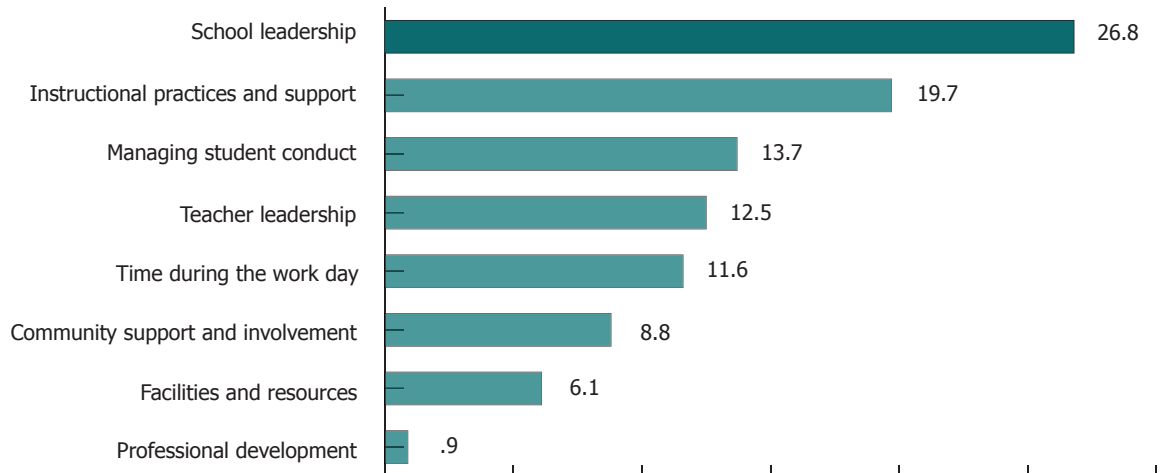
**Table 2. Role of Teachers in Decision Making**

Please indicate the role teachers have at your school in each of the following areas	No role at all	Small role	Moderate role	Large role	Don't know
Devising teaching techniques	1.8	10.3	31.1	55.0	1.8
Selecting instructional materials and resources	2.3	14.5	31.9	47.8	3.5
Setting grading and student assessment practices	4.1	16.0	35.1	42.7	2.2
Establishing student discipline procedures	9.0	25.6	37.9	25.3	2.2
School improvement planning	7.5	26.4	37.7	24.8	3.6
Determining the content of in-service professional development programs	15.6	32.2	33.8	15.2	3.3
The selection of teachers new to this school	21.3	34.7	27.0	11.9	5.1
Providing input on how the school budget will be spent	25.6	35.4	24.6	8.6	5.7

**School Leadership: Positive views of school leadership are related to quality standards, teacher assessment, and school councils, but more attention is needed in areas related to conditions that build trust and mutual respect.**

School leadership and those conditions that contribute to trusting, supportive, and empowering environments are essential components of effective teaching conditions making school leadership one of the most important components of successful schools. In fact, when asked which aspect of teaching conditions most affects their willingness to keep teaching at their school, more than one quarter (27 percent) selected school leadership (Figure 7), more than any other construct.

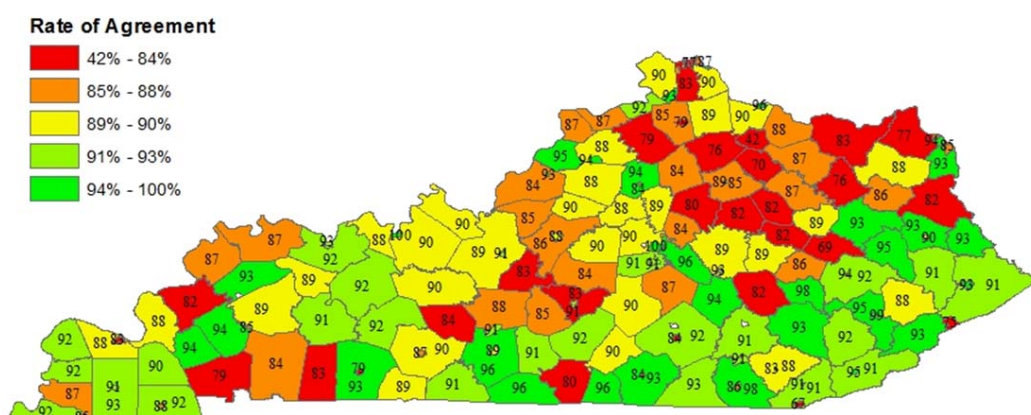


**Figure 7. Aspect of Teaching Conditions Affecting Teachers' Willingness to Keep Teaching**

There are a number of areas where Kentucky educators are positive about conditions related to school leadership. Among the highest rates of agreement are on questions about instructional supports and teacher evaluation.

- Nearly all educators responding to this survey (94 percent) report that their school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.
- More than nine out of 10 educators (92 percent) agree that teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.
- Nearly nine out of 10 educators (88 percent) agree that the procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.
- More than eight out of 10 (84 percent) agree that teachers receive feedback that can help them improve teaching.
- About the same proportion (87 percent) agrees that teacher performance is assessed objectively. When disaggregated at the district level, however, large differences are present (Figure 8), particularly in the lowest quintile. The lowest response rate quintile ranges from 42 to 84 percent due to an outlier. Without that outlier, districts in the lowest quintile average a 78 percent rate of agreement.

**Figure 8. Teacher Performance Is Assessed Objectively**



Lower rates of agreement are found in the battery of school leadership questions related to issues that promote trust amongst colleagues. Seven out of 10 educators (70 percent) agree that there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in their school. Or conversely, three out of 10 responding educators (or roughly 13,000 educators) do not agree that there is a trusting environment in their school. The issue of trust is a powerful lever for how everyday decisions are made by educators as well as whether they choose to stay teaching in their school. Nearly nine out of 10 (88 percent) educators who responded positively to this question planned to remain teaching in their current school, while only seven out of 10 (72 percent) educators disagreeing this condition is in place plan to continue teaching in their current school.

- About two-thirds (68 percent) of educators agree that teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.
- Three-quarters of educators (75 percent) report that school leadership consistently supports teachers.
- More than three-quarters of educators (77 percent) agree that the faculty is recognized for accomplishments.
- Eight out of 10 educators (80 percent) agree that the faculty and leadership have a shared vision.

The survey also provides more specific information regarding which areas school leadership is making a sustained effort to address (Table 3).

- Educators across the state are most positive that school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about instructional practices and support (85 percent). More than eight out of 10 educators report that their school leadership makes a sustained effort to address issues related to Community Support and Involvement (83 percent), Facilities and Resources (82 percent), and Teacher Leadership (81 percent).

- Of the areas identified, educators are least positive that school leadership consistently addresses issues related to time (75 percent) and leadership (74 percent). This is a concern as School Leadership was shown (Figure 7) to be the aspect of teaching conditions that most affect teachers' willingness to keep teaching.

More careful study of school and district level conditions will be valuable to identify specific schools that need additional support in these very important aspects of school leadership.

**Table 3. Areas Educators Indicate School Leadership Makes a Sustained Effort to Address Teacher Concerns**

<b>The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about:</b>	<b>Percent Agreement</b>
Instructional Practices and Support	85.4%
Community Support and Involvement	82.8%
Facilities and Resources	81.7%
Teacher Leadership	80.6%
New Teacher Support	80.3%
Professional Development	76.6%
Managing Student Conduct	75.9%
Time	75.1%
Leadership Issues	73.8%

**Professional Development: Professional development is based on relevant data and information, but quality of implementation and lack of attention to teachers' needs are concerns.**

Regular, on-going effective professional development that addresses teachers' needs is critical to developing teachers' knowledge and skill acquisition as professional development keeps teachers informed about best practices and current research.

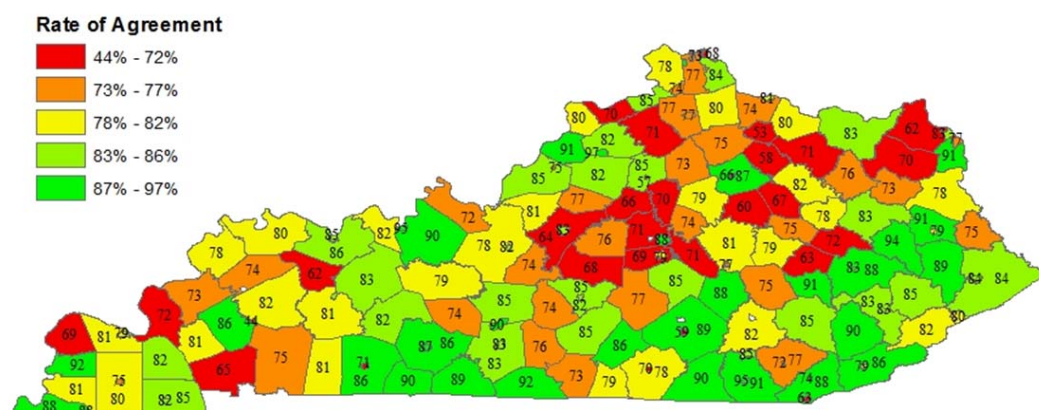
The highest rates of agreement in the area of Professional Development suggest data are used to design offerings and that offerings are aligned with the state's school improvement planning system. This process may be contributing to the fact that more than eight out of 10 (85 percent) agree that professional development enhances teachers' abilities to improve student learning.

- More than nine out of 10 educators (91 percent) agree that professional learning opportunities are aligned with the school's improvement plan.
- More than four-fifths of educators (84 percent) report that professional development offerings are data driven.

Many educators agree that there are resources available for professional development and that the professional development offered is helpful to improving teacher practice and meeting student needs.

- Three quarters of educators (75 percent) report that sufficient resources are available for professional development in their school.
- More than eight out of 10 educators (82 percent) agree that there is an appropriate amount of time provided for professional development.
- Eight out of 10 educators (80 percent) agree that professional development enhances teachers' ability to implement instructional strategies that meet diverse student learning needs. Examined at the district level, however, wide variation is present, with a 44 to 72 percent rate of agreement present in the lowest quintile (Figure 9).

**Figure 9. Professional Development Enhances Teachers' Ability to Implement Instructional Strategies that Meet Diverse Student Learning Needs**



Some conditions related to accommodating teacher needs and implementation of professional development are lacking. Limited attention to these areas can dilute the effectiveness of the offerings.

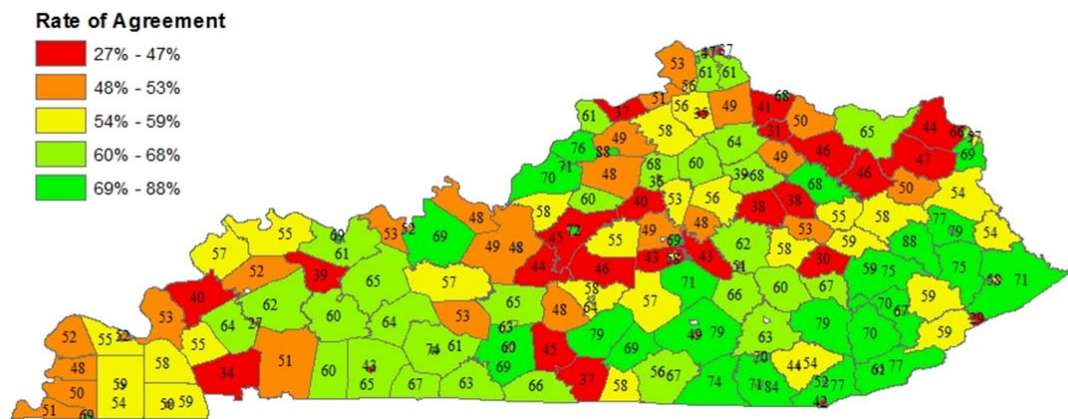
- Fewer than six out of 10 educators (57 percent) report that professional development is evaluated and results are communicated to teachers.
- Two-thirds of educators (67 percent) report that there is follow-up from professional development.
- Fewer than three-quarters of educators (73 percent) agree that professional development provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to work with colleagues to refine teaching practices.
- Slightly more than seven out of 10 (72 percent) agree that the professional development they receive deepens teachers' content knowledge.

- About seven out of 10 educators (71 percent) agree that teachers have sufficient training to fully utilize instructional technology.

Differentiating professional development for teachers is important to providing educators training that best meets their needs.

- Six out of 10 educators (60 percent) agree that their professional development is differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers. When examined at the district level (Figure 10), large differences are present with less than half of educators agreeing that this condition is present in the lowest quintile of districts compared to more than two-thirds of educators in the highest quintile.

**Figure 10. Professional Development Is Differentiated to Meet the Needs of Individual Teachers**



To better understand professional development in Kentucky, teachers were asked what professional development they needed in order to teach their students more effectively (Table 4). The survey also asked in what areas teachers had received 10 or more hours of professional development over the past two years. These findings demonstrate large differences between what professional development teachers say they need and what they receive.

The areas of greatest need as indicated by teachers are related to closing the achievement gap (64 percent), differentiating instruction (62 percent), and integrating technology into instruction (62 percent). In all three cases, the need exceeds the amount of teachers reporting they had extensive training in these areas.

- Over half of educators (53 percent) report a need for training to support gifted and talented children compared to nine percent who received 10 or more hours over two years.
- While 56 percent of teachers report a need for professional development training to support special education students with disabilities, only about one quarter (26 percent) had 10 or more hours of training in the past 2 years.

- Thirty-six percent of teachers report a need for training to support English Language Learners compared to seven percent who received training in the area.
- Nearly two-thirds of teachers (64 percent) indicate a need for training to close the achievement gap, and less than half (45 percent) acknowledge receiving ten or more hours of training in the area.

In areas related to assessment, methodology, and content area, a higher percentage of teachers are reporting having received substantial training than are indicating a need.

- More than four out of 10 teachers (45 percent) report needing training on student assessment, yet more than six out of 10 (63 percent) have received a significant amount of training in recent years.
- Four out of 10 teachers (42 percent) indicate a need for training on teaching methods, yet more than half (51 percent) have received a sizable amount of training in this area over the past two years.
- Fewer than four out of 10 teachers (39 percent) report a need for training in their content area, and more than half (57 percent) have received 10 or more hours in the topic over the past two years

**Table 4. Difference in Professional Development Need versus Receipt**

Professional Development Area	Percent Indicating a Need in 2011	Percent Indicating They Had 10 or More Hours over the Past Two Years
Closing the Achievement Gap	63.9	45.1
Differentiating instruction	62.3	51.5
Integrating technology into instruction	62.1	46.6
Special education (students with disabilities)	55.8	26.1
Special education (gifted and talented)	53.1	8.8
Reading strategies	48.2	45.0
Student assessment	44.6	62.8
Methods of teaching	42.2	50.6
Your content area	39.4	56.6
English Language Learners	36.2	7.2

Examining these differences at the state, district, and school levels will help educators make better use of their limited resources to maximize the impact of the professional development they provide teachers.



**Instructional Practices and Support: Many conditions related to instructional practices and support are in place, but access to state assessment data is an issue as are classroom assignments.**

Instructional practices which maximize the productivity and effectiveness of the faculty are important drivers of student achievement. Positioning teachers where they can be most successful and empowering them to take ownership of decisions around instructional pedagogy are critical to supporting teacher efficacy and enhancing student learning.

Some conditions related to instructional practices and support are largely in place that support and promote teachers to produce their best work.

- More than nine out of 10 educators (92 percent) agree that teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction.
- More than four-fifths of educators (85 percent) report that teachers work in professional learning communities to develop and align instructional practices.
- More than eight out of 10 (82 percent) agree that provided supports (i.e. instructional coaching, professional learning communities, etc.) translate to improvements in instructional practices by teachers.

Other conditions may be inhibiting teachers from being able to develop and implement their highest-quality work.

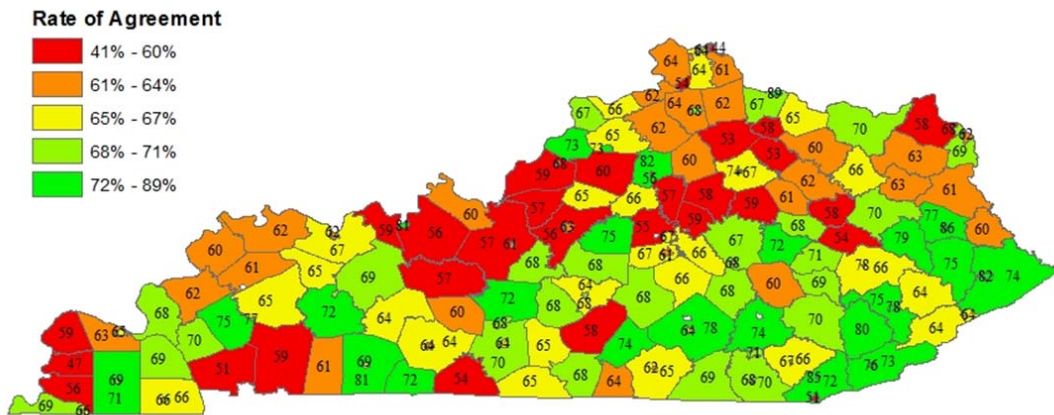
*A large difference is present in the timeliness of educators receiving assessment results between state and local assessments.*

- About two-thirds of respondents (68 percent) report that teachers are assigned classes that maximize their likelihood of success with students.
- About three-quarters of educators (77 percent) agree that teachers have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery.
- More than one-third (37 percent) of educators are reporting that they do not have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.

A large difference is present in the timeliness of educators receiving assessment results between state and local assessments. More than eight out of 10 (86 percent) agree that they have access to local assessment data in time to impact instructional practices compared to two-thirds of educators (64 percent) receiving state assessment data in a timely manner. At the district level, the challenge of providing state assessments is more acute, with some district's reporting less than half of their educators have timely access (Figure 11).

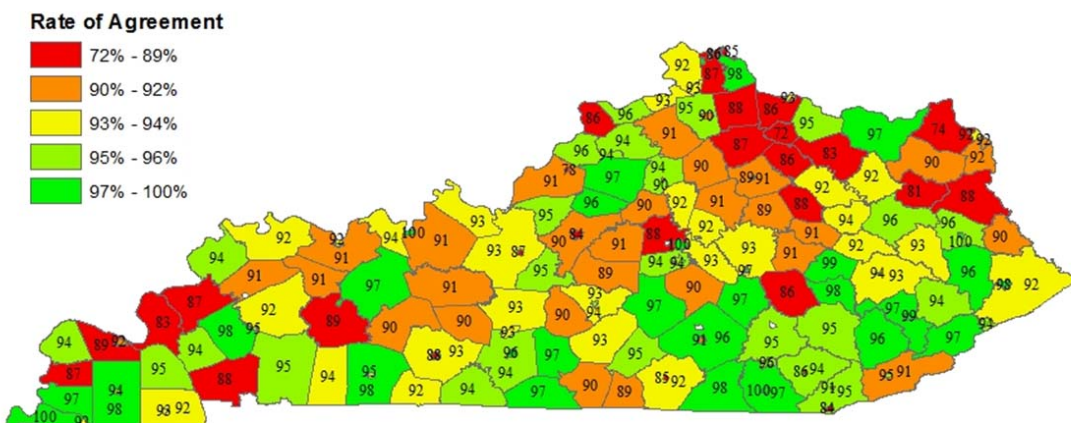


**Figure 11. State Assessment Data Are Available in Time to Impact Instructional Practices**



Lack of provision of assessment data in timely manner is concerning as more than nine out of 10 educators (92 percent) across the state agree that teachers use assessment data to inform their instruction. Even in districts reporting the lowest rates of agreement to this condition, between 72 and 89 percent of educators agree they utilize assessment results to drive instruction (Figure 12). This prevalence of using assessment data to drive instruction across the state emphasizes the need to provide those resources in a timely and efficient manner.

**Figure 12. Teachers Use Assessment Data to Inform Their Instruction**



## How Kentucky's Results Compare to Other States

Comparing the results of the TELL Kentucky survey at the state level with similar recently administered TELL Surveys conducted by the New Teacher Center (NTC) in other states across the country can add an additional contextual lens to interpreting the findings. For this comparison, state level aggregate results from the states of Colorado, Maryland, North Carolina, and Tennessee were examined with Kentucky's survey results where questions remained common across all five states. Each of these surveys was administered no earlier than 2010.

In this examination, Kentucky educators are more positive than their colleagues in a number of areas (Table 5).

- Kentucky educators are more apt to agree that they have access to instructional technology (81 percent) and office equipment (84 percent) than their peers in other states.
- Educators in Kentucky are also more positive about aspects of professional development. Specifically, they are the most likely to indicate that they have sufficient time to receive professional development (82 percent) and that the learning opportunities they receive are well aligned with their school improvement plan.
- Nearly eight out of 10 Kentucky educators (79 percent) agree that teachers have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery, more than any other state examined.

**Table 5. Areas Where Kentucky Educators Are More Positive Than Other States**

Survey Questions	Kentucky	Colorado	Maryland	North Carolina	Tennessee
Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and internet access.	<b>81.0%</b>	68.7%	79.2%	80.0%	77.0%
Teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc.	<b>83.8%</b>	82.4%	82.1%	81.1%	81.1%
The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.	<b>87.9%</b>	85.6%	83.8%	86.6%	87.8%
An appropriate amount of time is provided for professional development.	<b>81.6%</b>	64.2%	74.7%	78.8%	80.3%
Professional learning opportunities are aligned with the school's improvement plan.	<b>90.8%</b>	85.2%	87.9%	91.4%	89.2%
Teachers have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery (i.e. pacing, materials and pedagogy).	<b>78.8%</b>	72.0%	72.5%	77.5%	76.9%

There are also areas where Kentucky educators report their teaching conditions are less prevalent than their colleagues (Table 6).

- Some critical aspects of time are less positively viewed in Kentucky than in other states. A lower percentage of educators in Kentucky agree that their class sizes are reasonable (61 percent) or that efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do (51 percent) than their peers in other states.
- While more than eight out of 10 Kentucky educators agree that their school is clean and well-maintained and that teachers have adequate space to work productively, that percentage is slightly less than other states in the analysis.
- Less Kentucky educators are reporting that steps are taken to solve problems in their schools (79 percent) compared to other states.
- Kentucky educators lag slightly behind their peers on the critical issue of Community Support and Involvement. Less than two-thirds (65 percent) agree that parents/guardians are influential decision makers in their school compared to a high of 71 percent in North Carolina. While more than eight out of 10 (86 percent) Kentucky educators agree that their school maintains clear, two-way communication with their community, nine out of ten (90 percent) educators in Tennessee agree. Eight out of ten (81 percent) agree that the community they serve is supportive of their school compared to 85 percent in North Carolina.
- Kentucky educators are slightly less positive than their colleagues in other states that some areas of managing student conduct are in place. Seven out of ten (72 percent) agree that students in their school follow rules of conduct compared to a high of 74 percent in Tennessee. Eight out of ten (80 percent) agree that teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct compared to 84 percent of Tennessee educators.

*Kentucky educators lag slightly behind their peers on the critical issue of Community Support and Involvement.*

**Table 6. Areas Where Kentucky Educators Are Less Positive Than Other States**

<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Kentucky</b>	<b>Colorado</b>	<b>Maryland</b>	<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>Tennessee</b>
Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.	<b>61.5%</b>	61.9%	63.6%	65.0%	66.7%
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.	<b>50.5%</b>	51.4%	53.8%	54.4%	57.4%
The school environment is clean and well maintained.	<b>83.5%</b>	85.7%	83.2%	85.7%	84.0%
Teachers have adequate space to work productively.	<b>83.3%</b>	84.0%	84.1%	86.4%	85.7%
In this school we take steps to solve problems.	<b>79.4%</b>	82.0%	81.0%	83.0%	82.3%
Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school.	<b>65.4%</b>	69.2%	70.4%	70.9%	66.4%
This school maintains clear, two-way communication with the community.	<b>86.0%</b>	86.3%	87.9%	89.1%	89.9%
The community we serve is supportive of this school.	<b>81.3%</b>	82.9%	82.5%	84.5%	82.1%
Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.	<b>85.5%</b>	89.0%	86.5%	86.7%	87.4%
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	<b>71.6%</b>	76.9%	72.9%	73.3%	74.3%
Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	<b>79.6%</b>	80.3%	82.6%	82.8%	83.8%

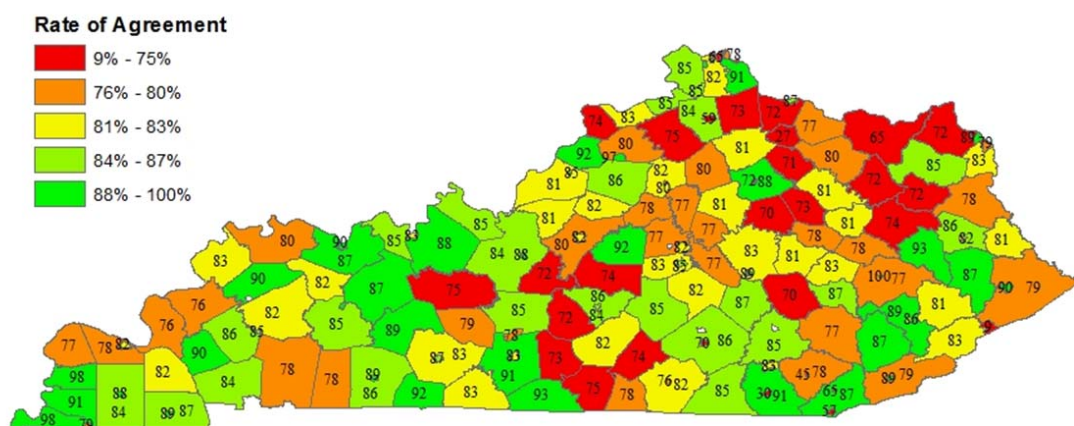
## School-Based Decision Making Councils Are Viewed Favorably

A series of questions were developed specifically for Kentucky assessing the adherence to statutory requirements and the effectiveness of School Based Decision Making Councils (SBDM). Educators' perception of SBDMs are largely favorable as more than eight out of 10 (84 percent) agree that overall, their school council provides effective leadership in their school. Consider the following:

- Nearly nine out of 10 educators (88 percent) agree that teachers on their school council are representative of the faculty in terms of years of experience, subject/grade taught, etc.
- More than four-fifths of educators (86 percent) report that their school council makes decisions that positively impact instruction (i.e. curriculum, instructional practices, etc.).
- Eight out of 10 educators (82 percent) agree that their school council makes decisions that positively impact school staffing and schedules.

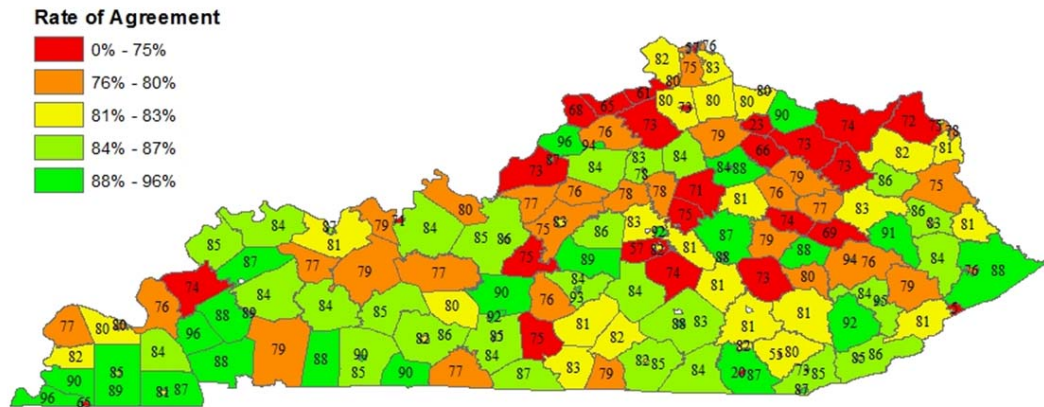
While this finding suggests that many educators across the state agree their councils are positively influencing staffing and schedules, Figure 13 illustrates that this largely positive view of school council impact is not in place for some districts. In particular, less than three out of 10 educators report that the SBDM positively impacts staffing scheduling in three districts.

**Figure 13. The School Council Makes Decisions that Positively Impact School Staffing and Schedules**



Similarly, while the diversity of the SBDM is generally viewed as positive, there are districts where this is not the case. Eight out of 10 educators (80 percent) report that parents on the school council are representative of the diversity within the school community. But in one district, for example, only five percent of educators perceive the SBDM is representative of the community (Figure 14).

**Figure 14. Parents on the School Council Are Representative of the Diversity Within the School Community**



These findings are important as it appears there is a statistically significant correlation between having representative and effective SBDMs and whether positive teaching and learning conditions are in place within a school (Table 7). In particular, schools with effective SBDMs also exhibit many other positive conditions around trust, decision making and problem solving.

**Table 7. Correlations Between School Council Conditions and Select Survey Questions Pertaining to School Leadership**

School-Based Decision Making Council Questions	In this school we take steps to solve problems	The faculty and leadership have a shared vision	There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school	Teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction	Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues
Teachers on the school council are representative of the faculty (i.e. experience, subject/grade, etc.).	.253**	.246**	.254**	.218**	.229**
Parents on the school council are representative of the diversity within the school community.	.244**	.243**	.236**	.221**	.232**
The school council makes decisions that positively impact instruction (i.e. curriculum, instructional practices, etc.).	.398**	.398**	.372**	.356**	.367**
The school council makes decisions that positively impact school staffing and schedules.	.421**	.414**	.409**	.367**	.385**
Overall, the school council provides effective leadership in this school.	.447**	.437**	.419**	.378**	.398**

**Note:** Data are correlation coefficients. The closer to 1.0 or -1.0, the stronger the correlation between variables. In social sciences a .3 is generally accepted as a relatively strong connection.  
 \* correlations significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)  
 \*\* correlations significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)



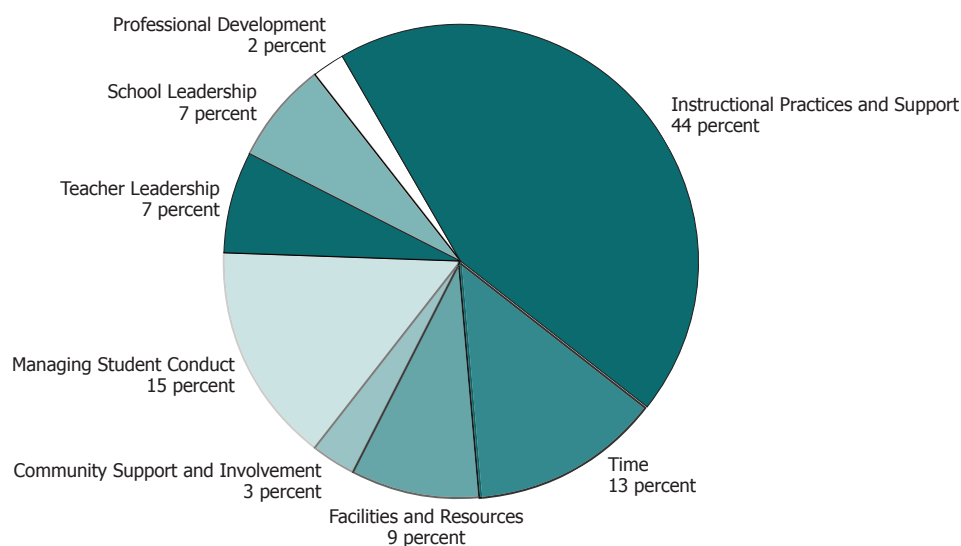
## *The Presence of Positive Teaching Conditions and Student Performance*

Research demonstrates clear connections between perceptions of educators about their teaching conditions and their ability to influence student learning (Hirsch et al. 2008a, b, c, d; Hirsch and Emerick, 2007, 2006; Leana and Pils, 2006; Leithwood, 2006). This section of the report analyzes the relationship between survey responses aggregated to the school level and school performance on the Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT) for both math and reading for each of the 1,286 schools with a sufficient response rate (see Appendix C for definitions of the KCCT and other variables).

### **What Matters Most to Educators to Promote Student Learning**

When forced to choose which of the eight constructs on the TELL Kentucky Survey is most important in their efforts to promote student learning, more than four out of 10 educators (43 percent) cited Instructional Practices and Support (Figure 15). Instructional practices was selected about three times more often than the next most reported teaching condition, Managing Student Conduct (15 percent).

**Figure 15. Which Aspect of Teaching Conditions Is Most Important to Promote Student Learning**



### **Strong Correlations Exist Between Some Constructs and Student Achievement**

Strong, significant, and positive relationships exist between the presence of several teaching conditions as reported on the TELL Kentucky Survey and student achievement (as indicated by a combination of math and reading test scores obtained from KDOE) (Table 8). As noted below the table, correlation coefficients over .3 are considered strong and worthy of further investigation in social sciences. There was a statistically significant connection between the presence of positive teaching conditions and achievement on ALL conditions assessed.



- Correlations demonstrate that teachers' perception that instructional practices in the school make a difference is well founded. Strong positive relationships exist between student achievement and Instructional Practices and Support at the elementary and middle school levels (.338, .334 respectively).
- The strongest correlations with survey constructs and student achievement are in the area of Community Support and Involvement (.579 Elementary, .600 Middle, and .604 High) even though only three percent of educators reported this construct was the most important to their ability to improve student learning (Figure 1).
- The connection between student achievement and Managing Student Conduct (.461 for elementary schools, .433 for middle schools, and .313 for high schools) was also particularly strong.

**Table 8. Correlation Coefficients Between Survey Factors and Student Achievement**

Math/Read Percent Proficient	Time	Facilities and Resources	Student Conduct	Teacher Leadership	School Leadership	Professional Development	Community Support and Involvement	Instructional Practices and Support
Elementary	.271**	.206**	<b>.461**</b>	.286**	.278**	.120**	<b>.579**</b>	<b>.338**</b>
Middle	.268**	<b>.378**</b>	<b>.433**</b>	<b>.302**</b>	.249**	.091**	<b>.600**</b>	<b>.334**</b>
High	.139*	.208**	<b>.313**</b>	.236**	.196**	.072**	<b>.604**</b>	.234**

**Note:** Data are correlation coefficients. The closer to 1.0 or -1.0, the stronger the correlation between variables. In social sciences a .3 is generally accepted as a relatively strong connection.  
 \* correlations significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)  
 \*\* correlations significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

## Differences Are Present Between the Highest- and Lowest-Performing Schools in How They View Their Teaching and Learning Conditions

To further assess the differences in student performance on the TELL Kentucky Survey between higher and lower performing schools, schools with sufficient response on the survey were divided into quartiles across each grade level (elementary, middle and high schools) based on student achievement (math/reading composite). Complete tables of these analyses can be found in Appendix A.

- Findings at the elementary and middle school levels are very similar, with the highest achieving schools having the strongest levels of agreement that positive teaching conditions are in place. In particular, Managing Student Conduct and Community Support and Involvement show the greatest gaps between the lowest and highest achieving quartiles.
- Results of the high school analysis reveal that educators in the lowest achieving schools are slightly more positive than their highest achieving colleagues in the areas of Time (1.5 percent difference), School Leadership (5.4 percent difference), Professional Development (1.4 percent difference) and Instructional Practices and Support (2.0 percent difference). These small differences appear to be specific to high schools and, as will be discussed, are in areas that were not found to significantly impact student achievement when controlling for student, teacher and school characteristics.

To look at which specific questions within these constructs varied the most across high and low performing schools, an individual item analysis was conducted across student performance quartiles (Table 9). The individual item analysis revealed similar findings at all levels; specifically, the questions with the greatest differences between high and low performing schools are in the areas of Community Support and Involvement and Managing Student Conduct.

- About three-quarters of educators (74 percent) in the lowest performing schools report that the community they serve is supportive of their school compared to more than nine out of 10 in the highest performing schools (94 percent). More than four-fifths of educators (85 percent) in the highest performing schools agree that parent/guardian support contributes to their success with students, 31 percentage points higher than the lowest-performing schools.
- More than eight out of every 10 educators (83 percent) in high performing schools agree that parents/guardians are influential decision makers in their school. The lowest performing schools agree only about half of the time (54 percent).
- Three out of five teachers in the lowest performing schools agree that students follow rules of conduct (62 percent) and that administrators consistently enforce those rules (63 percent) while more than four out of five teachers agree the same condition is in place at the high-performing schools (89 and 83 percent, respectively).

*There was a statistically significant connection between the presence of positive teaching conditions and achievement on ALL conditions assessed. The strongest correlations with survey constructs and student achievement are in the area of Community Support and Involvement.*

**Table 9. Greatest Differences Between Elementary\* Achievement Highest and Lowest Quartile by Survey Item**

TELL Kentucky Survey Questions	Quartile 1 Lowest	Quartile 2	Quartile 3	Quartile 4 Highest	Difference Between Highest and Lowest Performing Quartiles
Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	53.9	67.3	75.6	84.8	30.9
Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school.	54.5	68.1	76.3	83.2	28.8
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	62.0	78.1	83.6	89.5	27.5
School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	63.0	73.5	81.2	83.3	20.3
The community we serve is supportive of this school.	74.0	83.9	89.6	94.1	20.1

\* Findings at the Middle and High School levels were similar to those of Elementary Schools

## A Deeper Look at Teaching Conditions and Student Achievement

To better understand the connections between teaching conditions and student achievement, statistical models were created for elementary, middle, and high schools to examine the relationship between student achievement (in reading and math, as a composite variable as designated by the KDOE) and four sets of influences: teaching conditions, student background, teacher background, and school characteristics (See Appendix B for a full presentation of the statistical models, definition of terms, and data used).

This modeling moves beyond simple correlations presented thus far by controlling for various environmental factors to better determine whether there is a direct relationship between particular teaching conditions and achievement. For example, the correlations presented in Table 8 could be due to the fact that low performing schools tend to serve high poverty populations and that positive teaching conditions, particularly those involving community and student conduct, are less likely to be present in high-poverty schools. The models presented isolate and examine the connection between achievement and teaching conditions to determine its predicted impact. While these models do not allow for a direct, causal link between teaching conditions and student achievement to be established, they ensure that documented relationships are due to perceptions reported on the TELL Kentucky Survey and are not due to poverty, school size, etc., as could be the case with correlation coefficients.

For the purpose of continuity in reporting, regression analyses were presented using agreement rates. As a secondary measure for verifying accuracy, regression models were also calculated using factor means. Both methods were found to be within one percent of each other in explaining the variability in the data set that is accounted for by the statistical model.

Results of each of the statistical models, by level, are presented in Appendix B. To understand the relative influence of teaching conditions controlling for other variables, standardized coefficients are compared. For example, for every one-point increase in the rate of agreement with a survey construct, an estimated increase in the percentage of students performing at or above proficiency is used to help understand the impact of improving teaching conditions.

While there are many consistent findings across school levels, there are some unique results as well. These unique findings should be analyzed and understood, but are often a byproduct of aspects of the statistical model (i.e., number of schools, variables included, etc.). This does not negate the importance of specific models, and analyses will focus on common findings across school levels.

### Elementary School Performance

The statistical model for elementary performance was fairly robust, explaining 49 percent of the variance in achievement across the state's elementary schools with sufficient response on the TELL Kentucky Survey, with about 12 percent of those differences attributable specifically to the presence of positive teaching and learning conditions. Time, Student Conduct, and Community Support and Involvement constructs all have a statistically significant effect on elementary school students' performance while controlling for student, teacher, and school characteristics.

- Community Support and Involvement had the strongest impact of the teaching condition constructs, further validating correlation findings described earlier. For every five percent increase in agreement that questions in this Survey area are in place, the percent of students at or above proficiency within the school could be expected to increase by one percent.
- Managing Student Conduct exhibited a greater influence on student achievement than the other significant areas documented. Time (.12 percent point increase in school achievement for each one percent point increase in agreement, .084 percent point increase in school achievement for every one percent increase in agreement, respectively).
- The variables with the strongest and most significant impact on school level achievement were student characteristics such as percent minority teachers and percent students receiving free and reduced price lunch—a finding that transcends subjects and levels across districts and states and is found in virtually all research analyzing student achievement.

## **Middle School Performance**

The model for middle school performance was robust, explaining 65 percent of the variance in students scoring proficient or above. Teaching conditions accounted for approximately 11 percent of the total variance explained, with Community Support and Involvement, again, exhibiting the strongest connection to school level student achievement results.

- For every one-percent greater rate of agreement across questions in the Community Support and Involvement, it could be expected that the percentage of students proficient or above will have a corresponding improvement will increase .463 percent.
- Similar results were found in the area of student characteristics, particularly poverty in analyzing the percentage of student eligible for free and reduced price lunch (FRL), but in the negative direction. For every one percent increase in the proportion of FRL eligible students in the school, the percentage of students proficient would be expected to decline by .421 percent.
- School Leadership related negatively to school level performance. For every percent increase in agreement on questions in the School Leaders area, aggregate student performance declined .165 percentage points. One explanation for this finding may relate to the immediate outcome of instituting new school leadership. Often, new leadership brings initial questioning as educators slowly adapt to new changes in culture, process, etc. even when these may be viewed as positive changes outside the school. Getting educators “on board” with new ways of working together and seeing an impact on school performance may not be realized until long after the intervention occurs.
- Student and teacher characteristics had strong influences on student performance. The percentage of minority students served, student teacher ratio, and the average experience of teachers all had a significant relationship with school level performance.

## High School Performance

The model for school level performance was fairly robust, explaining 51 percent of the variance in the percent of students scoring proficient or above at the high school level. Teaching conditions accounted for nearly 18 percent of this variance, with Community Support and Involvement having a larger effect than percent of students in poverty.

- For every percentage-point change in rate of agreement for Community Support and Involvement, student achievement would exhibit a corresponding increase of .555 percentage points. This outcome is .222 percentage points greater than FRL.
- Other teacher and student characteristics that showed very strong and significant relationships were Percent of English Language Learner Students, and Percent of Teachers with Advanced Degrees.

Across all school levels Community Support and Involvement had significant and strong influence on the performance of students across schools. As expected, the most predictive, non-teaching condition was the poverty of students served. While controlling for the poverty of students served, schools with a more engaged and involved parents/guardians and community have had stronger student performance.

Overall, the findings from this student achievement modeling support the premise that teaching conditions are essential elements of schools with strong student performance. In most models, and at all levels, Community Support and Involvement exerted a significant influence on student performance on Kentucky state assessments. As schools and districts analyze the results of the TELL Kentucky Survey, stakeholders should explore the different ways to incorporate their community into their everyday operations and engage parents in a productive, meaningful way.

Time and Managing Student Conduct were also strong and significant predictors of school-level performance for elementary schools. Ensuring that school improvement plans use the TELL Kentucky Survey data, particularly in these areas, will help to ensure teachers have the supports they need to be effective in improving student learning.

*While controlling for the poverty of students served, schools with more engaged and involved parents/guardians and community have had stronger student performance.*

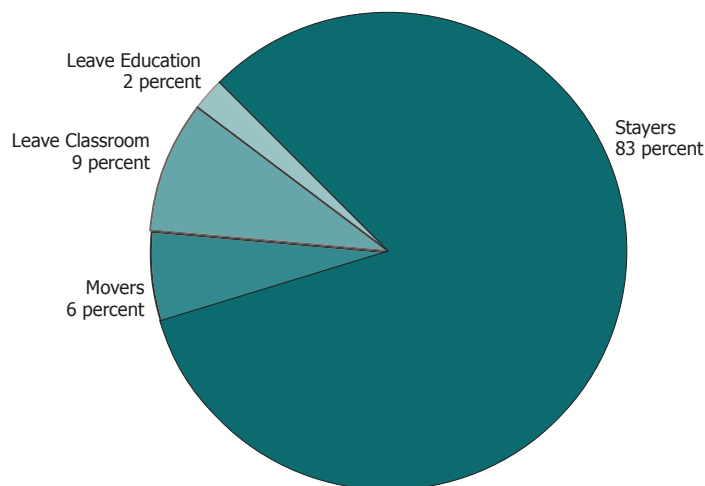
## *Teaching Conditions Influence Decisions About Where and Whether to Teach*

The TELL Kentucky data exposes what individuals who work in schools already know: teaching conditions have a powerful influence on teacher retention. Analyses conducted in this section utilize responses to the TELL Kentucky Survey about teachers' employment intentions. These intentions were aggregated in schools with sufficient response rate and used to create a "predicted teacher retention" rate. Analyses of actual teacher retention rates could not be conducted as data is currently not collected and available from the Kentucky State Department of Education.

To develop a predicted teacher retention rate, participant responses to question 10.1, "Which of the following best describes your immediate professional plans?" Responses were grouped into four categories. "Stayers" responded that they would remain teaching in their schools. "Movers" responded that they want to continue teaching, but either leave their current school and remain in their district or teach in a different district. "Leave Classroom" includes teachers who indicate that they are going to leave teaching for another position in education. Those educators intending to leave the profession entirely are considered "Leave Education".

More than eight out of 10 Kentucky teachers (83 percent) responding to this survey indicate that they want to "stay" at their current school in the immediate future. Six percent of respondents were "movers", wanting to continue teaching but in a different school or district. Those that are interested in "leaving the classroom" to take a position somewhere else in education comprises nine percent of respondents, while only two percent want to "leave education" altogether (Figure 16).

**Figure 16. Immediate Employment Plans of Teachers**



## Positive Perceptions of Teaching Conditions Are Connected to Expected Teacher Turnover

When asked which single teaching condition teachers perceive as being the most important to their future employment plans, nearly three out of 10 (27 percent) selected School Leadership, more than any other construct (refer to Figure 7 on page 14). Teachers cited Community Support and Involvement, shown to be a critical component of student achievement, as one of least likely to be the top influence on where/whether they teach (6 percent).

*The greatest differences in the perceptions between Stayers and Movers are in the area of leadership support and trust. Twice as many Stayers than Movers agree that their school leadership: consistently supports teachers; makes an effort to address concerns regarding leadership issues; has a shared vision with faculty; and makes an effort to address concerns about managing student conduct.*

To examine the relationship between teaching and learning conditions and teachers' immediate employment plans, an analysis was conducted to identify which individual questions in the survey contained the greatest disparity between Stayers and Movers.

Similar to what teachers cited as the most important construct affecting their immediate employment plans, virtually all of the questions with the greatest disparity between Stayers and Movers are about School Leadership (Table 10). Leavers of the classroom were likely to perceive their conditions similar to stayers, likely due to the fact that those wanting to pursue other opportunities in education are not necessarily dissatisfied with teaching, but looking for new opportunities elsewhere within education. Additionally, many of the teachers leaving education do so for a variety of non-teaching related reasons, such as retirement, personal reasons, etc.

Teachers who want to continue to teach, but in another setting appear to be doing so, at least in part, because of teaching conditions, particularly school leadership. Kentucky teachers who want to remain teaching in their school in the immediate future are far more likely to note the presence of supportive school environments, especially as it pertains to school leadership.

- More than twice as many Stayers agree that their school is a good place to work and learn than those teachers that plan to move (88 percent versus 43 percent).
- The greatest differences in the perceptions between Stayers and Movers are in the area of leadership support and trust. Twice as many Stayers than Movers agree that their school leadership:
  - o Consistently supports teachers (78 to 33 percent, respectively),
  - o Makes an effort to address concerns regarding leadership issues (76 to 35 percent),
  - o Has a shared vision with faculty (83 to 44 percent), and
  - o Makes an effort to address concerns about managing student conduct (78 to 40 percent).
- Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of those who want to stay teaching in their current school agree that there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect while only about one-quarter (29 percent) of those wanting to remain teaching but in a different school report the presences of a trusting school environment.



**Table 10. Survey Items with the Greatest Disparity Between Stayers and Movers**

TELL Kentucky Survey Items	Percent Agreement				
	Stayers	Movers	Leave Classroom	Leave Education	Stayers minus Movers
The school leadership consistently supports teachers.	77.6	32.7	69.5	51.6	44.9
Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.	87.6	43.1	81.2	63.1	44.5
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.	73.3	28.9	62.9	47.8	44.4
Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.	69.6	27.1	60.2	45.8	42.5
The school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school.	81.8	40.5	71.4	58.8	41.3
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about leadership issues.	76.2	35.1	64.6	51.7	41.1
The faculty and leadership have a shared vision.	83.0	43.5	72.8	59.4	39.5
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about managing student conduct.	77.7	39.7	69.2	57.6	38.0
<b>Note:</b> Items are sorted by the greatest differences between immediate stayers and immediate movers.					

Those wanting to stay teaching in their current school were more positive about conditions on every single question on the TELL Kentucky Survey than teachers who want to teach elsewhere.

## Statistical Models Explaining Immediate Employment Plans

In order to assess the relationship between teaching conditions and immediate employment plans, an estimated teacher retention rate was created for more than 1,200 schools with sufficient response rate on the TELL Kentucky Survey. The percentage of teachers indicating that their immediate employment plan is to stay at their school was compiled.

All of the teaching conditions constructs on the TELL Kentucky Survey were positively and significantly correlated with the estimated teacher retention rate (Table 11). In all cases, a .3 correlation coefficient or above was documented, indicating a strong relationship. And in virtually all cases, there are stronger correlations between future employment plans and teaching conditions than those documented on aggregate school achievement.

- The strongest correlations exist in the areas of Community Support and Involvement and Managing Student Conduct. However, given that these conditions are most closely connected with the poverty level of students served, these stronger correlations may be explained by teachers leaving school with low income populations. This finding is contrary to what teachers cited as the most important factor to continue teaching at their current school, only six percent cited Community Support and Involvement compared to 27 percent for School Leadership.

- School and Teacher Leadership Constructs have significant and strong relationships with estimated teacher retention. The correlation coefficients for these areas were nearly as strong as Community Support and Involvement and Managing Student Conduct.

**Table 11. Correlations Between Teaching Conditions Constructs and Estimated Teacher Retention Rates**

TELL Kentucky Construct	Correlation with Estimated Teacher Retention Rate
Time	.323**
Facilities and Resources	.312**
Managing Student Conduct	.449**
Teacher Leadership	.423**
School Leadership	.424**
Professional Development	.226**
Community Support and Involvement	.472**
Instructional Practices and Support	.397**

**Note:** Expected Retention is the percentage of total responding teachers indicating a desire to stay teaching in the school in all schools with at least 50 percent participation on the TELL Kentucky Survey. Data are correlation coefficients. The closer to 1.0 or -1.0 the stronger the correlation between variables. In social sciences a .3 is generally accepted as a relatively strong connection.  
 \*\*All correlations significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

To better understand these correlations and teachers' desire to remain in their positions, statistical models were created for expected retention rates in elementary, middle, and high schools while examining the influence of teaching conditions, student background, teacher background, and school characteristics (see Appendix C). This modeling moves beyond simple correlations to determine whether there is a direct relationship between teaching conditions and expected teacher retention in light of the multitude of factors that influence employment plans.

Taken together, the analysis of individual teacher employment plans and estimated retention rates in TELL Kentucky Schools indicate School Leadership as well as Community Support and Involvement, and Managing Student Conduct are critical areas to address to enhance teacher retention.

### Elementary School Estimated Retention

The model for expected teacher retention in elementary schools explains 36 percent of the variance in the estimated teacher retention rates, with half of that variance explained by the presence of positive teaching conditions.

The School Leadership and Community Support and Involvement Constructs were statistically significant predictors of higher estimated retention rates. School Leadership had the greatest influence on estimated teacher retention, four times the effect than Teachers' Average Years of Experience (.340 compared to .080). Community Support and Involvement was also a strong predictor of estimated teacher retention, having an

effect three times greater than significant teacher characteristics such as the Percent of Courses Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers (.215 compared to .072).

As was the case in the student achievement modeling, there are strong and significant relationships between the community supporting the teacher and the rate at which teachers plan to continue teaching in their current school.

## Middle School Estimated Retention

At the middle school level, the model for estimated teacher retention explained about 44 percent of the variance in estimated turnover rates, with approximately 20 percent attributable to the presence of positive teaching conditions. Again, Community Support and Involvement was a statistically significant predictor in explaining higher estimated teacher retention rates, as was Student Conduct, and Time. The construct of Managing Student Conduct had about as much predictive value as the Average Years of Teacher Experience (.195 and .144 respectively). Having adequate Time to work and Community Support and Involvement had similar effect on the estimated retention, for every percent a teacher agreed on each of those constructs, the estimated retention rate grew approximately .2 percentage points (.253 and .213 respectively).

Surprisingly, the School and Teacher Leadership constructs were not significant predictors of estimated teacher retention at the middle school level. Given the importance of these two constructs for the regression models at the elementary and high school levels and its significance in the correlation analysis, these findings are likely unique to this specific model.

## High School Estimated Retention

The model at the high school level has many limitations and only explained 12 percent of the variance in percentage of Stayers across secondary school examined in the analysis. In this model, teaching conditions account for two-thirds of the total variance (eight percent). This is important to note given that only two variables, School Leadership and Average Years of Teaching Experience, were found to be statistically significant in the model. School Leadership exerts twice the influence on teacher retention than the Average Years of Teacher Experience (.290 to .145 respectively).

Taken together, the analysis of individual teacher employment plans and estimated retention rates in TELL Kentucky Schools indicate School Leadership as well as Community Support and Involvement, and Managing Student Conduct are critical areas to address to enhance teacher retention. Teachers are more likely to remain working in schools where there are parents and school leaders that create trusting environments and where teachers feel safe and engaged.

*Taken together, the analysis of individual teacher employment plans and estimated retention rates in TELL Kentucky Schools indicate School Leadership as well as Community Support and Involvement, and Managing Student Conduct are critical areas to address to enhance teacher retention.*

## *Influences on the Presence of Positive Teaching and Learning Conditions*

Not only do individual characteristics of educators impact perception of teaching conditions, but aspects of the school—grade level served, school size, and students served (student poverty level and demographics)—make a difference as well.

Poverty was inversely related to all teaching conditions except Time and Professional Development.

Both school size (Average Daily Membership) and student poverty level (Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible) are significantly correlated with many of the teaching conditions assessed on the TELL Kentucky Survey (Table 12).

Schools serving high-poverty student populations (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2007; Hirsch 2007, 2006a,b) often struggle to provide the types of teaching conditions that attract and retain teachers.

- Poverty was inversely related to all teaching conditions except Time and Professional Development. This finding is similar to other states and is likely due to federal and state policies that provide additional professional development resources and staffing (i.e., Title I and Title II) to schools serving high-poverty populations.
- The strongest correlation is between student poverty level and Community Support and Involvement. The more affluent the student population, the more teachers feel supported by parents and the community and report stronger communication. Other correlations with poverty, while significant, are weak. This finding is important given the documented importance of Community Support and involvement to teacher retention and student learning (and important to note those findings were in models that controlled for the impact of poverty).
- Significant but small negative relationships are present between the size of the school and all teaching condition constructs. Generally, the larger the school, the less positive educators are that they have supportive teaching conditions in place at their schools. This is partly a function of more positive conditions reported within elementary schools (which are usually smaller than middle and high schools).

**Table 12. Correlation Between Poverty and School Size and Teaching Conditions**

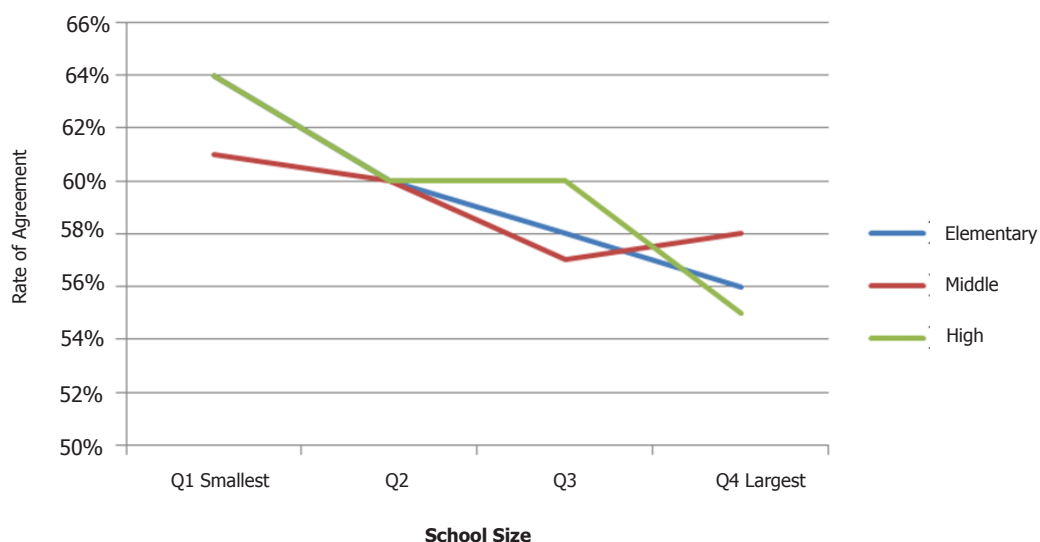
TELL Kentucky Construct	School Size (ADM)	Student Poverty (Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible)
Time	-.229**	.030
Facilities and Resources	-.111**	-.008
Managing Student Conduct	-.230**	-.105**
Teacher Leadership	-.229**	-.039
School Leadership	-.203**	-.039
Professional Development	-.199**	.128**
Community Support and Involvement	-.065*	-.368**
Instructional Practices and Support	-.215**	-.017

**Note:** Data are correlation coefficients. The closer to 1.0 or -1.0, the stronger the correlation between variables. In social sciences a .3 is generally accepted as a relatively strong connection.  
 \* correlations significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)  
 \*\* correlations significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

There are significant differences between smaller and larger schools while controlling for school level as well. Smaller schools, regardless of level tended to report more positive conditions in the areas of Time, Instructional Practices and Support, Teacher Leadership and School Leadership. The relationship for time is highlighted to show this connection (Figure 17) within each level. In this example, the smallest schools are able to provide more time to plan and collaborate and shield teachers from duties, paperwork and interruptions that can distract from instruction. Results were more stable across school size in the areas of Professional Development and Community Support and Involvement.

**Figure 17. Educator Response Rate to Questions in the Time Construct by Level and School Size**

**Note:** Q1 represents the quartile with the smallest schools. Q4 contains the largest schools.



## Perceptions of Teaching Conditions Vary by School Level

In many areas of the survey, educators in elementary schools are more likely to report the presence of positive teaching conditions. High School educators tend to have the least positive perceptions of their teaching conditions. This is particularly evident in the areas of Managing Student Conduct, Community Support and Involvement, and Professional Development (Table 13).

- Elementary educators are much more likely to agree that teachers (87 percent compared to 59 percent) and school administrators (75 percent compared to 63 percent) consistently enforce rules for student conduct than their high school colleagues. Additionally, nearly eight out of 10 elementary educators (78 percent) report that students at their school follow rules of conduct compared to about six out of 10 (62 percent) high school educators. School size (elementary schools are much smaller) and differences in student development (elementary students are much littler) may be contributing to these large differences.
- Elementary school educators are more in agreement that several elements pertaining to Community Support and Involvement are in place than their high school colleagues. Nearly nine out of 10 educators (88 percent) at the elementary school level report that parents and guardians know what is going on in their school compared to less than seven out of 10 (68 percent) of high school educators. Elementary educators also report receiving more support from parents and guardians than high school educators (71 percent compared to 58 percent). The presence of more engaged parent and guardian support may be due to the inherent developmental needs of younger children.
- More elementary educators (80 percent) report that their professional development deepens their content knowledge than high school educators (58 percent). Having to navigate multiple subjects at the elementary level may make professional development offerings more useful to them. Conversely, more narrowly focused subjects taught at the high school may be making the relevance of many professional development offerings limited if they are not differentiated.

*In many areas of the survey, educators in elementary schools are more likely to report the presence of positive teaching conditions.*

While elementary educators tend to be more positive than their middle and high school colleagues in many aspects of their teaching and learning conditions, they are less satisfied about the time available to plan, collaborate and provide instruction in their schools.

**Table 13. Survey Items with the Greatest Differences in Rate of Agreement by Grade Level**

TELL Kentucky Survey Item	Percent Agreement			Difference between ES-HS
	Elementary	Middle	High	
Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	87%	74%	59%	29%
Professional development deepens teachers' content knowledge.	80%	67%	58%	22%
Parents/guardians know what is going on in this school.	88%	78%	68%	20%
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	78%	66%	62%	16%
School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	75%	65%	63%	13%
Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	71%	64%	58%	13%
The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.	73%	67%	61%	13%
In this school, follow-up is provided from professional development.	71%	66%	59%	12%

**Note:** The difference between high school and elementary educators is significant at the .05 level for all items.



## District 180 Schools

As part of the Kentucky Department of Education's efforts to improve the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state, the KDE and U.S. Department of Education identified schools that qualify for federal School Improvement Grants (SIG). These grants, awarded to the state and given to local districts through sub-grants are designed to support focused school improvement efforts.

Of the approximately 42,000 educators responding to the TELL Kentucky Survey, 1,081 of them were assigned to schools receiving SIG funds. Year one SIG recipients (Cohort 1 Schools) were identified as the highest priority schools and first received assistance prior to the 2010-11 school year; Year 2 SIG recipients (Cohort 2 Schools) began receiving assistance on July 1, 2011. KDE further identified and prioritized these schools in the new accountability model, calling them the District 180 Priority Schools.

In a separate and detailed report presented to KDE in December 2011 and posted online at [www.tellkentucky.org](http://www.tellkentucky.org), NTC analyzed teaching conditions across the District 180 Priority Schools to better understand how they differed from other Kentucky schools in order to illuminate potential challenges and opportunities to student learning, teacher recruitment, professional development and retention. Five findings were presented:

1. District 180 Priority Schools were more likely to report concerns about SBDMs, Community Engagement and Support and Managing Student Conduct. As presented earlier in this report, Community Engagement and Support is a significant predictor of student learning and an essential element of teacher retention. Further, schools with more effective SBDMs are more likely to have efficient and effective decision making processes and a more positive, trusting environment.
2. Educators in District 180 Priority Schools are more positive about the professional development they receive than their peers across Kentucky, due in part to the additional resources from state and federal funds that disproportionately flow to schools serving low-achieving and high-poverty schools. However, in nearly all areas, District 180 Priority School teachers express a greater need for professional development in areas such as differentiating instruction, teaching strategies, classroom management techniques and content.
3. Year 1 Cohort schools are generally more positive than their Year 2 Counterparts, demonstrating benefits from the funding and interventions initiated in Cohort 1 Schools in 2010. But while Year 1 Cohort Schools have improved, more targeted interventions may be necessary, particularly in the area of Managing Student Conduct and creating positive and safe teaching and learning environments for the faculty and students.
4. Teachers in District 180 Priority Schools are less likely to remain teaching in their current schools.
5. New teachers in District 180 Priority Schools were far less likely than other novice educators to report positive teaching conditions, particularly in the critical areas of Community Support and Involvement and Managing Student Conduct.

*District 180 Priority Schools were more likely to report concerns about SBDMs, Community Engagement and Support and Managing Student Conduct.*

## Supporting Beginning Teachers

Understanding beginning teacher perceptions of their conditions and induction support has critical implications for the effectiveness of novice educators as:

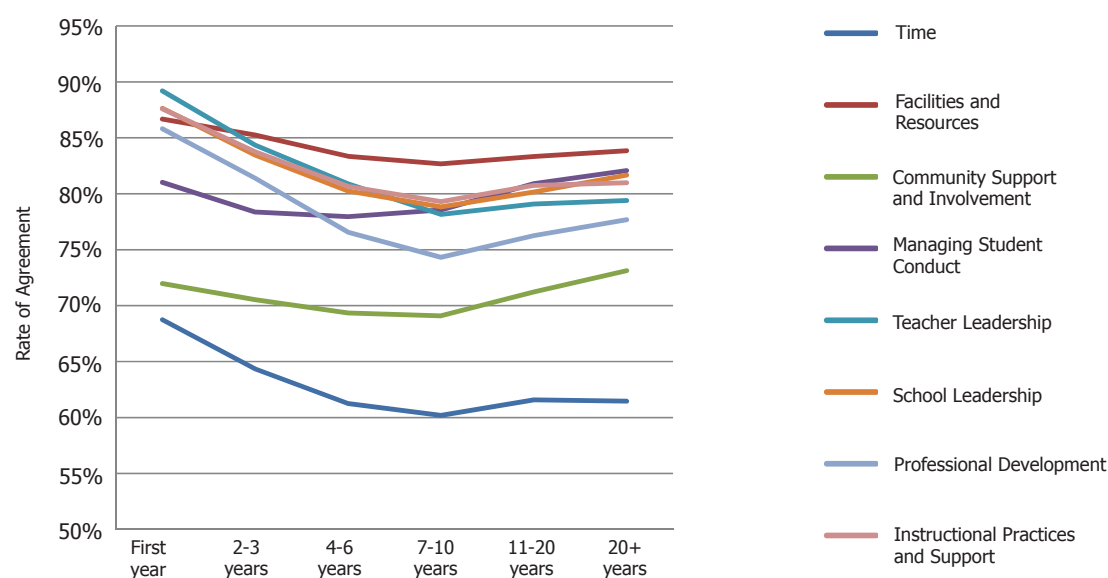
- Beginning teachers need additional supports to enable them to learn and refine best teaching practices, classroom management, and lesson planning, and acclimate to the school community. When adequate supports are in place for beginning teachers, they have the best chance of delivering high-quality instruction and expediting pedagogical mastery.
- Research has shown that teaching conditions significantly affect teacher turnover. In particular, Leadership within elementary schools, teachers' role in decision making at the middle school level, and Facilities and Resources in high schools are statistically significant in explaining teacher retention (Hirsch and Church, 2009). In an educational environment where teacher attrition is high and teachers new to the profession are less inclined to view teaching as a life-long career, the profession can ill-afford to lose its newest members due to a lack of adequate supports.

*In each construct presented, teachers in the middle of their careers, those teachers with between seven and 10 years of experience, report the least positive teaching and learning conditions.*

A total of 5,613 TELL Kentucky Survey respondents (13 percent) are teachers in their first three years in the profession, with 2,001 (five percent) in their first year of teaching. Beginning teachers are more likely to agree that they have positive teaching conditions in most areas compared to their more seasoned colleagues (Figure 18).

In each construct presented, teachers in the middle of their careers, those teachers with between seven and 10 years of experience, report the least positive teaching and learning conditions. Given that this traditionally is the time when teachers are making decisions about whether to stay in the profession for a career, this finding is particularly important. Ensuring educators at this critical juncture are engaged and supported may be an important strategy to keeping veteran educators in the classroom.

**Figure 18. Average Teacher Level of Agreement by Survey Area Across Experience Levels**



- Beginning teachers report higher rates of agreement than their veteran colleagues in relation to having reasonable class sizes (65 compared to 58 percent), efforts to minimize routine paperwork (57 compared to 50 percent), and having sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all the students (69 compared to 62 percent). All but one question in the time section of the survey was more positively viewed by beginning teachers. Beginning teachers are slightly less positive that they are allowed time to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions (64 percent beginning teachers versus 65 percent veteran teachers).
- Teachers in their first three years are more positive about conditions related to teacher leadership than their veteran colleagues. On every question related to teacher leadership beginning teachers are more in agreement that positive conditions are in place than veteran teachers. The average difference between the two groups is five or more percentage points.

*Beginning teachers are less positive about some conditions related to Managing Student Conduct than their veteran colleagues.*

- School leaderships' more consistent support of beginning teachers may be contributing to higher response ratings related to trust, and voicing concerns. Eight out of 10 beginning teachers (80 percent) agree that their school leadership consistently supports teachers compared to three-quarters of veteran teachers. This higher consistency of support may be paying off in establishing a professional working relationship between school leadership and beginning teachers. Beginning teachers also report a higher rate of agreement than veteran teachers that there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in their school (76 percent compared to 70 percent), and that teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them (73 percent compared to 67 percent).

Beginning teachers are less positive about some conditions related to Managing Student Conduct than their veteran colleagues. Of all the constructs examined, Managing Student Conduct is the only area that beginning teachers are notably less positive than veteran teachers.

- More than seven out of 10 veteran teachers (72 percent) agree that students at their school follow rules of conduct compared to about two-thirds of beginning teachers (65 percent).
- Eighty-six percent of veteran teachers report that students at their school understand expectations for their conduct compared to about eight out of 10 beginning teachers (82 percent).

These findings are understandable given that managing student conduct is one of the more difficult skills for a teacher to master and beginning teachers have the least amount of skill and experience in this area.

### **Induction Support Is Provided to Many New Educators, but for Some It Is Ineffective**

For many beginning teachers in Kentucky, there are supports in place to provide them the best chance for success in the classroom (Table 14).

- More than one-third of beginning teachers (38 percent) who were assigned a mentor met at least weekly to address student or classroom behavior with their mentor, and more than nine out of 10 (93 percent) met at least on occasion to discuss classroom behavior.

- More than one-third (37 percent) met with their mentor weekly to reflect on their practice and more than nine out of 10 (94 percent) report engaging in this activity at least occasionally throughout the school year.

However, not every new teacher is receiving these supports. Of the more than five thousand beginning teachers who responded to the survey, 804 (15 percent) were never assigned a mentor. Of those new teachers who were assigned a mentor, many are not receiving the kinds of supports that research demonstrates is necessary to improve performance and keep them in the profession.

- More than 10 percent of beginning teachers who were assigned a mentor never met with them to develop lesson plans (11 percent), analyze student work (14 percent), review assessments (13 percent), or align their lesson planning with the state and local curriculum (12 percent).

**Table 14. Frequency of Mentoring Activities Reported by New Teachers**

<b>Mentoring Activity</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>At Least Once Per Week</b>
Observing my mentor's teaching	37.5	54.4	8.2
Analyzing student work	14.0	58.3	27.7
Reviewing results of students' assessments	13.2	61.1	25.7
Aligning my lesson planning with the state curriculum and local curriculum	12.2	54.2	33.6
Developing lesson plans	11.1	56.3	32.6
Addressing student or classroom behavioral issues	7.3	54.8	38.0
Reflecting on the effectiveness of my teaching together	5.6	57.2	37.2
Being observed teaching by my mentor	5.5	84.0	10.5

Those beginning teachers who were assigned a mentor and met with them report variable quality in the support they received (Table 15).

- About six out of 10 beginning teachers report that their mentor was effective in providing emotional support (63 percent) and that the mentor's support in instructional strategies helped significantly (56 percent).
- About half of new teachers indicate that the support they received in classroom management strategies (54 percent), complying with policies and procedures (54 percent), working collaboratively (51 percent), or completing paperwork (51 percent) was helpful.

**Table 15. Percent of Beginning Teachers Indicating that Mentor Support Helped “Quite a Bit” or “A Great Deal”**

<b>Mentor Provided Support</b>	<b>Quite a Bit/A Great Deal</b>
Providing emotional support	62.7
Instructional strategies	56.4
Classroom management strategies	54.1
Complying with policies and procedures	53.9
Working collaboratively with other teachers at my school	51.4
Completing administrative paperwork	51.2
Differentiating instruction based upon individual student needs and characteristics	48.2
Creating a supportive, equitable classroom where differences are valued	47.9
Using data to identify student needs	47.7
Subject matter I teach	42.7
Connecting with key resource professionals (e.g., coaches, counselors, etc.)	42.0
Enlisting the help of family members, parents and/or guardians	35.3

Many of the areas where beginning teachers indicate that the support they receive is not effective are also areas in which they report needing additional professional development or having had little professional development (Table 16).

- As noted previously, beginning teachers are less positive about the conditions related to Managing Student Conduct than veteran teachers. Additionally, only about half of beginning teachers who were mentored (54 percent) report that the support they received from their mentor to address classroom management strategies was particularly useful (Table 3). About the same percentage (55 percent) indicate a need for additional professional development in classroom management techniques, yet only three out of 10 (31 percent) report having had 10 or more hours of professional development on this topic (Table 4).
- Beginning teachers often have difficulty meeting the needs of their different students and their learning styles. Fewer than half of beginning teachers report that the mentoring supports they received on differentiating instruction (48 percent) or equity (48 percent) helped significantly (Table 3). Huge discrepancies between the professional development needed and received were reported by beginning teachers on topics that would help them improve this essential teaching skill (Table 4). Three-quarters of beginning teachers (74 percent) agree there is a need for professional development in differentiating instruction while only four out of 10 (44 percent) received such training. While more than seven out of 10 beginning teachers (72 percent) report a need for professional development to help students with disabilities, only one quarter (25 percent) received a meaningful amount of support. Eight times as many beginning teachers report a need for professional development on working with gifted and talented children than the number who actually received support in this area (67 percent compared to 8 percent). Large differences are also present in the amount of professional development needed versus received for working with English Language Learners (45 percent compared to 7 percent) and Closing the Achievement Gap (70 percent compared to 29 percent).

**Table 16. Difference in Beginning Teacher Professional Development Need versus Receipt**

Professional Development Area	Percent Indicating a Need in 2011	Percent Indicating They Had 10 or More Hours over the Past Two Years
Differentiating instruction	74.3	43.8
Special education (students with disabilities)	71.8	25.1
Closing the Achievement Gap	70.4	29.1
Special education (gifted and talented)	67.4	8.1
Reading strategies	60.9	34.8
Methods of teaching	58.4	48.1
Student assessment	58.4	49.5
Classroom management techniques	55.9	31.2
Integrating technology into instruction	54.9	39.1
Your content area	46.0	50.3
English Language Learners	44.9	6.7

Despite these limitations in mentor delivery and effectiveness, beginning teachers are generally positive about their overall mentoring support, in large part because they are in such need of support. More than eight out of 10 beginning teachers who received a mentor (84 percent) report that the support they received improved their instructional practice. The same percent agree that the support their mentor provided helped them to improve their students' learning. Additionally, more than three-quarters of beginning teachers (76 percent) report that the additional support they received as a beginning teacher was important in their decision to continue teaching at their school.

## Impact of Support

The support received by new teachers, be it mentoring or other assistance such as an orientation, common planning time, seminars specifically for new teachers, etc., appear to have had a positive impact on new teachers' employment plans (Table 17). New teachers who want to remain working in their current school are significantly more likely to have received support than those who want to remain teaching, but move to another school.

- Nearly nine out of 10 beginning teachers intending to stay (89 percent) report receiving regular communication from their principal or administrator compared to less than two-thirds (64 percent) of those intending to move to a different school.
- More than half of beginning teachers intending to stay (53 percent) agree that they had formal time to meet with their mentor compared to one-third (33 percent) of beginning teachers who intend to move to another school.

*Kentucky has much to be proud of regarding the support of its beginning teachers. More than eight out of 10 (84 percent) of beginning teachers in their first three years of teaching who participated in the TELL Kentucky Survey indicate that they want to remain teaching at their school in the immediate future.*

- Large differences are present between beginning teachers intending to stay at their school and those intending to move to another school in their access to professional learning communities (73 percent compared to 57 percent), common planning time (74 percent compared to 62 percent), seminars specific to new teachers (73 percent compared to 61 percent), and release time to observe other teachers (45 percent compared to 35 percent). Clearly such supports impact teachers' decisions about where to teach.

**Table 17. New Teacher Support by Immediate Future Employment Plans**

New Teacher Support Offered	Percent Indicating They Received Support		
	Stayers	Leavers	Difference
Regular communication with principals, other administrator or department chair	88.5	64.0	24.5
Formal time to meet with mentor during school hours	52.8	32.7	20.1
Access to professional learning communities where I could discuss concerns with other teacher(s)	73.1	57.3	15.8
Common planning time with other teachers	74.2	62.4	11.8
Seminars specifically designed for new teachers	72.6	60.9	11.7
Release time to observe other teachers	44.8	34.5	10.3
Formally assigned mentor	86.1	76.2	9.9
Reduced workload	14.9	8.3	6.6
Orientation for new teachers	85.3	81.5	3.8
I received no additional support as a new teacher.	12.2	19.7	-7.5

Kentucky has much to be proud of regarding the support of its beginning teachers. More than eight out of 10 (84 percent) of beginning teachers in their first three years of teaching who participated in the TELL Kentucky Survey indicate that they want to remain teaching at their school in the immediate future. Additionally, a comparison of beginning teacher survey results to their veteran teacher colleagues shows that beginning teachers are more positive about many teaching conditions in their school and more likely to report that school leadership is making efforts to support them than experienced teachers.



## Supported Principals Provide More Positive Teaching Conditions

Assessing the supports schools, school leaders and principals in particular is important given the critical role principals play in establishing school policies, setting the tone within the school, providing leadership and implementing school improvement plans. For principals to be able to best support teachers and students, they must themselves be supported in efforts to lead and learn. While questions on the survey focus on school leadership (which includes, but is not limited to the principal) a series of questions specifically for principals were asked to better assess the support they receive as school leaders. 1,057 Kentucky principals responded not only to questions about the teaching conditions in their school, but also to the supports they receive from their district.

## Principals Are Positive About Many Aspects of the Supports They Receive

Principals in Kentucky are very positive about several aspects of the support they receive from their district, enabling them to create positive teaching conditions in their school. Overall, nine out of ten principals (91 percent) agree that their school is a good place to work and learn. Eighty-six percent of principals who responded indicate that their immediate plans are to continue as principal at their current school with less than one percent indicating that their plans are to serve as a principal in a different school within the same district.

Kentucky principals report tremendous support from central office in areas related to decision-making, school support, and leadership development, as noted below:

- Principals are encouraged about many conditions related to decision making in their school and district. Approximately nine out of 10 principals agree that principals are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction in their district and that central office supports appropriate school improvement decisions when challenged by parents and the community (88 percent and 91 percent, respectively).
- Nearly all principals (96 percent) report that their school is provided sufficient data to make informed decisions, with more than eight out of 10 (86 percent) agreeing that the district involves them in decisions that directly impact the operations of their school.
- More than nine out of 10 principals (93 percent) agree that their district has a clearly defined mission and vision for all schools and that their district defines expectations for schools (93 percent).
- Many principals report that their district engages in activities that promote trusting relationships and provide positive environments to grow professionally across schools. Nearly nine out of 10 principals (90 percent) agree that their central office provides principals support when they need it and nine out of 10 principals (91 percent) agree that their district encourages cooperation among schools and provides constructive feedback to principals toward improving performance (89 percent).

*Principals in Kentucky are very positive about several aspects of the support they receive from their district, enabling them to create positive teaching conditions in their school.*

## Principals Need More Time to Effectively Support Teachers and Students

Although more than eight out of 10 principals (84 percent) agree that they have time available to collaborate with colleagues, the greatest concern expressed by principals across the state is the time they have to do their job. Increasing demands and expectations of principals to effectively manage schools in the 21st Century are placing additional strains on the amount of time principals have available to meet their many obligations.

Fewer than two-thirds of the principals that responded to the survey (64 percent) report that their central office has streamlined procedures to minimize their time on non-instructional tasks and slightly more principals (68 percent) agree that they are provided time for networking and collaboration outside of the district. About the same proportion (67 percent) agrees that they have sufficient time to focus on instructional leadership issues (e.g., data analysis, professional development, etc.).

## New Principal Support Is Inconsistent Across the State with Few Principals in Their First Three Years Receiving Mentoring

Of the 1,057 principals responding to the survey, 270 (26 percent) are in their first three years as a principal. Given the importance of the principal to so many aspects of a school's culture and climate, inducting new principals is critical. Unfortunately, the supports in place for new principals are inconsistent across the state with fewer than forty percent of new principals being assigned a mentor. Of those who are assigned a mentor, many do not engage in support activities with their mentor (Table 18).

- Four out of 10 new principals (40 percent) receiving mentoring never once observed their mentor's school.
- Sixteen percent of principals assigned a mentor report never being observed by that mentor.
- Sixteen percent of principals assigned a mentor never met with them to develop school improvement plans.

**Table 18. Frequency of New Principal Mentoring Support**

	Never	Less than once per month	Once per month	Several times per month	Once per week	Almost daily
Observing my mentor's school	40.2	26.5	17.6	7.8	3.9	3.9
School improvement planning with my mentor	15.9	26.2	21.5	17.8	11.2	7.5
Being observed in my school by my mentor	15.7	21.3	25.9	21.3	8.3	7.4
Coaching conversations with my mentor	1.9	11.1	17.6	32.4	24.1	13.0
Having discussions with my mentor about leadership	.9	8.4	21.5	30.8	22.4	15.9

*New principal support is inconsistent across the state with few principals in their first three years receiving mentoring.*

Most of the principals who received support, report value in the mentoring support provided. For example, about nine out of 10 mentored new principals agree that their mentor was effective in providing support related to teacher evaluation (89 percent) and instructional leadership (90 percent). More than four out of five new principals report effective support by their mentor in addressing staffing issues (85 percent), helping them with school improvement planning (88 percent), providing support in teacher remediation (86 percent), and providing support in data-driven decision making (86 percent). Overall, more than eight out of 10 beginning principals (85 percent) agree that their mentoring experience has been important in their effectiveness as a school leader. More than seven out of 10 (72 percent) agree that their mentoring experience has been important in their decision to remain as principal in their current school.

## **Principals and Teachers View Teaching Conditions Differently, with Principals Much More Positive in General**

While some differences in perceptions of teaching conditions should be expected between “bosses” and “employees” in any industry, the disparity between principals’ and teachers’ views of teaching conditions is notable in Kentucky. The 1,057 principals responding to the survey are significantly more likely (15 percent higher on average) than the 42,025 teachers to note the presence of positive teaching conditions. Table 19 presents the questions from the survey with the greatest differences between principals and teachers.

- The greatest difference between principals and teachers on the survey is in the area of time. Nearly nine out of 10 principals (87 percent) report that efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do compared to less than half of teachers (49 percent).
- Large differences between principals and teachers are present on important questions that are related to the effectiveness of communication between the two groups. Nearly all principals (98 percent) report that teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them compared to two-thirds of teachers (66 percent). About the same proportion of principals (97 percent) agrees that there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in their school compared to seven out of 10 teachers (69 percent). Ninety-five percent of principals report that their faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems compared to two-thirds of teachers (67 percent). The quality of communication and ultimately trust between the two groups has been strongly correlated with overall student performance at all school levels as well as teacher retention.
- Large differences are also present on questions related to Managing Student Conduct. Nearly all principals (99 percent) report that school administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct compared to about two-thirds of teachers (68 percent). Ninety-seven percent of principals agree that students at their school follow rules of conduct compared to less than seven out of 10 teachers (69 percent). Managing Student Conduct has been found to be strongly correlated with aggregate school level achievement at all levels.

*While some differences in perceptions of teaching conditions should be expected between “bosses” and “employees” in any industry, the disparity between principals’ and teachers’ views of teaching conditions is notable in Kentucky.*

**Table 19. Teacher and Principal Perceptions of Teaching, Learning and Leading Conditions**

TELL Kentucky Survey Questions	Percent Agreeing		Percent Difference
	Principals	Teachers	
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.	86.8	48.5	38.3
Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.	98.3	65.7	32.6
School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	99.0	67.8	31.2
Teachers are assigned classes that maximize their likelihood of success with students.	95.4	65.7	29.7
The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.	95.3	67.2	28.1
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.	96.8	69.1	27.7
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	97.0	69.4	27.6
Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions	90.8	63.4	27.4

Not only are principals more likely to believe that positive teaching conditions are present, they are also more likely to indicate that school leadership makes sustained efforts to address teacher concerns that exist (Table 20).

**Table 20. Teacher and Principal Perceptions of School Leadership Efforts to Address Teaching, Learning and Leading Conditions**

TELL Kentucky Survey Questions	Percent Agreeing		Percent Difference in Perception
	Principals	Teachers	
Leadership issues	98.9	72.1	26.7
The use of time in my school	98.5	73.3	25.2
Managing student conduct	98.8	74.2	24.6
Professional development	97.3	75.2	22.2
Teacher leadership	99.0	79.3	19.8
Facilities and resources	98.9	80.4	18.5
New teacher support	98.1	79.0	19.1
Instructional practices and support	99.5	84.4	15.1
Community support and involvement	96.9	81.8	15.1

Teachers and principals also have different perceptions about the role of teachers in decision making in classrooms and schools.

- About 24 percent more principals (84 percent) than teachers (60 percent) agree that teachers have an appropriate level of influence on decision making in their schools.
- Although almost all principals (99 percent) agree that teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues, about three-quarters (78 percent) of teachers agree.
- Similarly, almost all principals agree that teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction compared to only eight out of 10 teachers (99 percent versus 80 percent, respectively).

Across the entire TELL Kentucky Survey, principals are more positive about conditions than teachers on all but two questions. There was a large difference (13 percent) present between the two groups that state assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices (51 percent of principals compared to 64 percent of teachers). In the area of Professional Development, principals are slightly less in agreement (72 percent) that sufficient resources are available for professional development in their school than teachers (75 percent).

The large gaps present between principals and teachers on many questions in the survey do not imply that principals do not want to address conditions in their schools, but rather they do not perceive that they are issues to the same extent as teachers. There are no correct or wrong answers to whether these conditions exist. However, differences in perception have ramifications for school operations and improvement planning. Ideally district- and school- specific results from the TELL Kentucky survey can be used to facilitate faculty dialogue, sharing of perspectives, and collectively identifying areas of focus for reform.

*The large gaps present between principals and teachers on many questions in the survey do not imply that principals do not want to address conditions in their schools, but rather they do not perceive that they are issues to the same extent as teachers.*

## Conclusion

Thanks to the leadership of Governor Steve Beshear and the Kentucky Department of Education Commissioner, Dr. Terry Holliday and a coalition of education stakeholders, more than 42,000 educators shared their perspectives about their school on the TELL Kentucky Survey. Findings indicate that educators across the Commonwealth have many of the supportive conditions essential to maximize teacher effectiveness and promote student learning. However, disparities across schools and districts in areas related to Community Support and Involvement, School Leadership and Managing Student Conduct—particularly in high-poverty and persistently low-achieving schools—pose challenges for the state, particularly given analyses demonstrating strong connections between the presence of these conditions and student performance.

*It is the goal that, with this report in hand, educators, stakeholders and practitioners can utilize tools and better target reform strategies that are the most likely to influence teacher effectiveness.*

Many of the almost 1,300 schools with data have examined their results—available online at [www.tellkentucky.org](http://www.tellkentucky.org) since spring 2011—and have begun the difficult work of identifying issues and developing school improvement plans to address challenges. NTC, in partnership with stakeholder groups participating in the TELL Kentucky Coalition and the KDE, has developed and posted tools for educators on the TELL Kentucky Survey website and directly worked across the state to help schools better understand and improve teaching conditions. It is the goal that, with this report in hand, educators, stakeholders and practitioners can utilize tools and better target reform strategies that are the most likely to influence teacher effectiveness.

These efforts are noteworthy and represent a significant investment of time to respond to the concerns of the state's educators. Further, KDE and the State Board of Education have made significant changes to the state's educator evaluation and school improvement planning processes to incorporate TELL Kentucky data. However, schools districts, and the state can do more to improve school conditions across Kentucky. This report demonstrates that improving specific teaching conditions is likely to yield positive results in student learning and teacher retention. Given the support and retention challenges faced by many schools and districts, systematic and sustained efforts to improve teaching conditions are essential to the state's continued efforts to provide students with the best education possible.

### Recommendation 1: Support Schools and Districts in Understanding and Improving Teaching Conditions.

TELL Kentucky data provides schools, districts and the state with a new resource to identify areas that can and should become a part of school improvement planning. This data is not about any individual, and it will take efforts made by the entire school faculty to ensure critical teaching conditions are in place. The data should be part of a comprehensive school improvement planning process and aligned with other strategies to ensure schools are staffed with high-quality, effective teachers.

- **Create state standards for teaching conditions so all school faculty members understand the key elements of building a positive school climate.** North Carolina is the only state in the country with working conditions standards (online at [www.ncteachingconditions.org](http://www.ncteachingconditions.org)) and Ohio has School Climate Guidelines for schools. Kentucky should empower the **Education Professional Standards**



**Board** (EPSB) or another advisory group or body to oversee the creation of similar standards, and the coordination of continually assessing whether these standards are present in schools across the state and how they can be improved.

- **Ensure that teaching conditions data be used as part of the school improvement planning process.** The Kentucky Department of Education is currently designing the elements of the new accountability system, of which a new school and district improvement planning template is created. This template should include TELL Kentucky Survey data and the state should ensure that the survey and other measures of teaching conditions are considered by schools and districts across the state.
- **Provide professional development opportunities through multiple means for school leaders to assess and use their own TELL Kentucky results to inform decisions for school improvement planning.** Encourage local schools and districts to provide professional support to school and teacher leaders on how to improve school conditions and incorporate reforming teaching conditions and other aspects of school climate into supports provided by KDE.
- **Recognize schools of varying demographics that have excellent teaching conditions and successful students.** By creating such a list of schools—elementary, middle, high—across wide ranging free and reduced lunch, rural, urban, etc. the state can provide models of best practices for all schools in the state. Leaders in these schools can be excellent resources for professional development.
- **Provide incentives and/or resources for schools that create data-driven plans to improve teaching conditions.** A “venture capital” fund (with state and/or private funds) should be created with resources available for schools to improve teaching conditions, thereby encouraging schools to study and utilize their data.

*Teachers are more likely to remain working in schools where there are parents and school leaders that create trusting environments where teachers feel safe and engaged.*

## Recommendation 2: Help School Leadership Establish Positive Teaching and Learning Conditions in Every School.

Teachers are more likely to remain working in schools where there are parents and school leaders that create trusting environments where teachers feel safe and engaged. The analysis of individual teacher employment plans and estimated retention rates in TELL Kentucky Schools indicate leadership support, community involvement, and the processes and systems in place to manage student conduct are important areas to address to enhance teacher retention.

- **Create clear expectations and/or standards for what school leaders need to know and be able to do in recruiting and retaining teachers as well as creating positive teaching and learning conditions.** Particular emphasis should be placed on building trust and developing appropriate distributed leadership approaches in schools. This may be most essential in the District 180 schools—given connections between poor teaching conditions and student achievement. The state should ensure that the redesign of the principal preparation program currently underway reflect key competencies for improving student learning conditions. Once reviewed and revised, these standards must be clearly and consistently communicated.

- **Partner with institutions of higher education to ensure new principal candidates graduate from programs with the knowledge and skills they need to create positive teaching and build trusting supportive school climates.** All school administration programs should be based on clear, consistent standards for providing aspiring principals with preparation in creating positive teaching conditions and distributed leadership models.
- **Continue to provide professional development for principals and other school leaders that support efforts to create positive teaching and learning conditions.** Increasing demands and expectations of principals to effectively manage schools in the 21st Century are placing additional strains on the amount of time principals have available to meet their many obligations. While most Principals in Kentucky are very positive about several aspects of the support they receive from their school district, leaders in Kentucky should ensure that administrators are provided the induction and professional development they need to have the knowledge and skills to help hire, support and continually assess teacher effectiveness.

### **Recommendation 3: Support Schools in Engaging the Broader Community in Efforts to Understand and Improve Working Conditions.**

The influence that Community Support and Involvement has on student achievement in Kentucky cannot be understated. The strongest correlations with survey constructs and student achievement reside in the area of Community Support and Involvement. In an examination of individual survey questions with the greatest differences between the highest achieving schools and the lowest achieving schools, three of the top five questions reside in the construct of Community Support and Involvement.

*The influence that Community Support and Involvement has on student achievement in Kentucky cannot be understated.*

Engaging parents and the community at-large in efforts to improve teaching conditions and student learning should be a priority for districts in the state. The TELL Kentucky Survey school level teaching conditions data is already public. Districts should actively involve parent/guardians and the community to ensure they understand the importance of teaching conditions and their critical role in supporting schools to address issues.

- **Ensure that teaching conditions analysis and reform is a community effort.** Professional development and training should include active parents/guardians through Parent Teacher Associations and the community at large. The business community, higher education and parents are all integral to the success of schools and could be strong, stable partners in long-term teaching conditions reform. Communicating about how teaching conditions data can be used by each of these audiences (businesses to promote local schools, universities to make more strategic placement of teacher candidates in supportive clinical settings, etc.) and how they can help schools address concerns should be developed and disseminated by TELL Kentucky partners.
- **Identify and document successful community engagement practices through a thorough examination of teaching conditions data.** While each school has a different context, much can be learned from schools where teachers have indicated that critical conditions of work are in place and the community is a supportive, engaged partner. With data from 1,286 schools, successful schools could be identified, practices documented, lessons culled, and practical strategies disseminated for improving teaching conditions.

### Recommendation 4: Ensure that Every New Teacher Is Inducted Into the Profession and Receives More Frequent Support to Improve Instruction.

Kentucky has much to be proud of regarding the support of its beginning teachers. More than eight out of 10 (84 percent) of beginning teachers in their first three years of teaching who participated in this survey indicate that they want to remain teaching at their school in the immediate future. While findings on new teacher support were generally positive, it is important to point out that roughly 15 percent of Kentucky's beginning teachers, or 804 educators, were never assigned a mentor.

- **Kentucky leaders should investigate expanding its Kentucky Teacher Induction Program (KTIP) beyond the first year, especially in District 180 schools.** The relatively positive responses by new teachers in Kentucky reflect there is much happening across the state that is working well, however, more needs to be done beyond the first year of induction. In the District 180 schools there is a greater need to address new teacher support, both in the first and second years of teaching.
- **The Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) should investigate strategies to provide accountability to ensure every new teacher receives a qualified mentor.** NTC has recently published reports for all fifty states on whether 10 hallmarks of effective state policy to induct new teachers are in place. The EPSB can use this report along with TELL Kentucky Survey data to better assess policies and practices that can encourage schools to provide positive induction experiences to all novice educators.

*The Education Professional Standards Board should investigate strategies to provide accountability to ensure every new teacher receives a qualified mentor.*

### Recommendation 5: Continue to Provide Systemic Opportunities for Teachers to Grow Professionally and Participate in Decisions that Impact Their Schools and Classrooms.

Kentucky has a long history of empowering teachers through the School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) Councils established in statute in the 1980's. TELL Kentucky Survey responses results indicate strong positive relationships between effective school councils and conditions related to school decision making, alignment of purpose, trust, and problem solving. Where the Councils are in place, representative of the faculty and community, and working effectively, teachers are engaged in problem-solving and there is an atmosphere of trust within the school. These practices and strategies related to SBDM Councils should be continued. Kentucky leaders should further study the role of the SBDM Councils in the few districts where teachers did not agree the SBDM Councils are effective.

### Recommendation 6: Use TELL Kentucky and Other Mechanisms to Collect Educators' Views on Teaching and Learning Conditions to Inform Local and State Human Capital Decisions.

Whereas important data has been gathered through the survey, it is only a single means to capture educators' perceptions for one snapshot in time. Schools change rapidly. Principal and teacher turnover in many schools is chronic, new policies and practices at the school, district and state levels change the way schools operate, new businesses move in and out of the community, etc. Gathering data on teaching conditions is

essential for monitoring improvements and the impact of new policies and practices. Evidence from North Carolina (where a similar survey has been conducted six times), demonstrates that teaching conditions results improved in schools where educators indicated that they had used prior survey results. These improvements were most evident in the areas included in the School Leadership construct, an area analyses demonstrated was essential to keeping teachers in Kentucky elementary and secondary schools.

The Kentucky Board of Education has included future administrations of the TELL Kentucky Survey in its 2012-2014 Biennial Budget Proposal. In addition to funding the cost to administer and report the biennial survey, the state should consider:

- **Establish an oversight committee of policymakers and practitioners to coordinate the survey, and the design and implementation of strategies to improve teaching conditions.** An explicit and representative group under the leadership of the Kentucky Department of Education and other policymakers should be created to oversee aspects of documenting and improving teaching conditions. This could fall under the purview of the Next Generation Professionals or other groups established by the State Board of Education.
- **Gathering, reporting and monitoring other data sources that influence the teaching and learning conditions in schools to illuminate the perceptions of educators in areas such as** student teacher ratio, technology, safety indicators, instructional expenditures, expenditures and evaluation of professional development and new teacher support, etc.
- **Utilizing survey questions (or others from validated surveys measuring similar concepts) from TELL Kentucky at the district or school level as necessary to monitor and track how faculty are responding to reforms.**
- **Providing teacher leaders and principals with other opportunities and incentives to conduct action research on similar topics through case studies** and gathering other information on teaching, learning and leading in their school and amongst the school community at large (parents, students, etc.).
- **The use of additional data** that can help better understand the school context in which educators work in areas identified on the survey such as Community Engagement, as well as data availability and utilization is necessary.

*The TELL Kentucky Survey data is a compilation of the voices of those who know schools best—the dedicated educators working with students every day.*

The TELL Kentucky Survey data is a compilation of the voices of those who know schools best—the dedicated educators working with students every day. More than 42,000 of Kentucky's educators responded with what they need to be effective. Policymakers, KDE and stakeholders have begun the long process of supporting schools in creating schools that give every teacher and student the best opportunity to be successful.

## Appendix A. Differences in Achievement Quartile by Factor

Elementary School Differences in Achievement Quartile by Factor					
	Percent Agreement				
TELL Kentucky Factors	Quartile 1 Lowest	Quartile 2	Quartile 3	Quartile 4 Highest	Difference Between Highest and Lowest Performing Quartiles
Time	56.2	58.2	61.8	65.1	8.9
Facilities and Resources	83.0	83.1	85.9	87.4	4.4
Managing Student Conduct	77.7	84.5	89.3	90.9	13.1
Teacher Leadership	72.9	75.3	79.6	82.7	9.8
School Leadership	78.2	80.9	85.1	86.1	7.9
Professional Development	74.1	73.0	75.9	77.7	3.7
Community Support and Involvement	74.3	81.9	87.4	91.6	17.3
Instructional Practices and Support	79.6	81.8	84.6	85.9	6.3

Middle School Differences in Achievement Quartile by Factor					
	Percent Agreement				
TELL Kentucky Factors	Quartile 1 Lowest	Quartile 2	Quartile 3	Quartile 4 Highest	Difference Between Highest and Lowest Performing Quartiles
Time	55.9	54.0	60.4	66.0	10.2
Facilities and Resources	79.2	82.2	84.2	88.5	9.3
Managing Student Conduct	72.3	74.3	81.3	88.2	15.9
Teacher Leadership	68.0	67.8	75.8	79.0	11.0
School Leadership	76.1	76.0	82.3	84.7	8.5
Professional Development	68.8	64.2	71.6	72.8	4.0
Community Support and Involvement	65.1	74.5	81.4	87.0	21.9
Instructional Practices and Support	77.7	78.9	81.6	84.5	6.8

*Appendix A. Differences in Achievement Quartile by Factor (continued)*

High School Differences in Achievement Quartile by Factor					
	<i>Percent Agreement</i>				
TELL Kentucky Factors	Quartile 1 Lowest	Quartile 2	Quartile 3	Quartile 4 Highest	Difference Between Highest and Lowest Performing Quartiles
Time	58.5	57.2	59.2	57.0	-1.5
Facilities and Resources	80.0	78.5	80.9	82.4	2.4
Managing Student Conduct	68.7	74.9	70.7	85.3	16.6
Teacher Leadership	64.7	65.6	66.2	71.4	6.7
School Leadership	73.4	74.2	75.8	68.0	-5.4
Professional Development	63.6	61.6	62.2	62.2	-1.4
Community Support and Involvement	62.1	69.3	73.2	91.8	29.7
Instructional Practices and Support	74.4	76.3	76.6	72.4	-2.0

## Appendix B. Statistical Models for Student Learning

Models for student achievement examine the relationship between teaching conditions, other school, teacher, and student factors, and student achievement, by school level (elementary, middle, and high). For these models, school-level achievement performance composite scores were regressed onto critical student-, teacher- and school-level factors and teaching conditions factors.

Because student achievement, school, teacher, and student factors, and teaching conditions domain averages were aggregated at the school level, Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression was used. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) is frequently used in analyzing student achievement to account for data that are nested (in classes with teachers, nested in schools, nested in districts, etc.) and therefore not independent of each other. Although TELL Kentucky uses student- and teacher-level data, these data have been aggregated to the school level. For example, students' free and reduced lunch status is reported as a school-level average. This decision was guided by the fact that the dependent variables employed in these analyses are measured at the school level. The use of school-level data versus students-level data linked to teachers results from the decision to ensure the anonymity of all respondents to the TELL Kentucky Survey. This decision, while potentially limiting some of the types of analyses that could be calculated using this data, promotes high response rates and minimizes threats to internal validity influenced by teacher mistrust in assurances of confidentiality.

The generic linear regression model can be explained as: case specifies that the dependent variable (Composite Performance Index)  $Y_i$  is a linear combination of the parameters. For example, in a simple linear regression used to model  $N$  data points (observations) there is one independent variable:  $x_i$ , and two parameters,  $\beta_0$  and  $\beta_1$ :

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Student}_i) + \beta_2 (\text{School}_i) + \beta_3 (\text{Teacher}_i) + \beta_4 (\text{Teaching Conditions}_i) + \beta_i, \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, N$$

Where  $Y_i$  is the aggregate percentage proficient or above on the MSA or HSA,  $\beta_0$  is the constant,  $\beta_{1-4}$  are the blocks of independent variables and  $\beta_i$  is the error term. Independent variables were entered together, without the use of stepwise or other entry methods. Results were then standardized and converted to a 0-to-100 scale to aid in interpretation of results.

### Independent Variables Included in the Models

- **Percent Free and Reduced Lunch:** The number and percentage of students whose applications for free/reduced price meals meet the family size and income guidelines (as promulgated annually by the U.S. Department of Agriculture) and students approved through direct certification. The counts are reported as of the student's last day of enrollment in the school system—either the last day in school or the date the student withdrew. The percentage is calculated by dividing the number of students receiving free or reduced price meals by the June net enrollment.
- **Average Years of Teacher Experience:** The total years of experience for each teacher in a school divided by the total number of teachers in that school.



- **Percent Teachers Non-White:** The sum of the teachers in ethnic/racial groups other than white as defined by the state divided by the total number of teachers.
- **Percent Teachers With Advanced Degree:** The percentage of teachers with degrees above a Bachelor's degree in a school.
- **Percent Limited English Proficient:** The term 'limited English proficient', when used with respect to an individual, means an individual—
  - o (A) who is aged 3 through 21;
  - o (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
  - o (C) (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
    - (ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and
    - (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
    - (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
  - o (D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual—
    - (i) the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments described in section 1111(b)(3);
    - (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
    - (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.
- **Student/Teacher Ratio:** The number of students divided by the number of teachers in a school.

### Dependent Variable Considered in the Models

- **Percent Proficient or Above on the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT):** The Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) is one of the state-required assessments. The results from the reading and mathematics content are used to meet federal testing and reporting requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The KCCT is a criterion-referenced test based on Kentucky's content standards. The test items measure Kentucky Core Content for Assessment (v4.1), a subset of the Program of Studies. Both of these documents define student expectations by content area and grade level. For these models, this number represents the composite percentage of students scoring either proficient or distinguished on the fifth grade, eighth grade, and 10th grade reading and math.

Additional information may be found at the Kentucky State Department of Education Web site at <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/>.

## Statistical Model Explaining Elementary School Reading and Mathematics Composite

Model Summary			
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.591	.493	.488	.07513

Coefficients					
Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.591	.038		15.739	.000
Percent Free and Reduced Lunch	-.002	.000	-.345	-9.731	.000
Percent Teacher Non-White	-.003	.000	-.226	-7.451	.000
Time Construct	.063	.028	.084	2.240	.025
Managing Student Conduct Construct	.102	.034	.120	3.001	.003
Community Support and Involvement Construct	.176	.039	.207	4.467	.000
Instructional Practices and Support Construct	.011	.057	.009	.197	.844

## Statistical Model Explaining Middle School Reading and Mathematics Composite

Model Summary			
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.807	.652	.642	.06199

Coefficients					
Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.728	.060		12.039	.000
Percent Free and Reduced Lunch	-.003	.000	-.421	-7.777	.000
Percent Teacher Non-White	-.002	.000	-.286	-6.194	.000
Student/Teacher Ratio	-.005	.002	-.119	-2.549	.012
Average Years of Teacher Experience	.004	.002	.106	2.306	.022
School Leadership Construct	-.133	.047	.165	-2.840	.005
Community Support and Involvement Construct	.341	.047	.463	7.179	.000

## Statistical Model Explaining High School Reading and Mathematics Composite

Model Summary			
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.717	.514	.499	.07171

Coefficients					
Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.256	.096		2.667	.008
Percent Free and Reduced Lunch	-.002	.000	-.333	-4.766	.000
Percent Limited English Proficient	-.004	.002	-.128	-2.288	.023
Percent Teachers With Advanced Degree	.004	.002	.138	2.498	.013
School Leadership Construct	-.111	.059	-.140	-1.860	.065
Community Support and Involvement Construct	.401	.061	.555	6.539	.000

## Appendix C. Statistical Models for Expected Teacher Retention

Models for expected teacher retention examine the relationship between teaching conditions, other school, teacher, and student factors, and student achievement, by school level (elementary, middle, and high). For these models, school-level teacher retention estimates were compiled as an aggregate percentage of responding teachers in schools with at least a 50 percent response rate on the TELL Kentucky Survey that they intended to remain working in their current school (Question 10.1). Survey performance composite scores were regressed onto critical student-, teacher- and school-level factors and teaching conditions factors.

Because expected retention, school, teacher, and student factors, and teaching conditions domain averages were aggregated at the school level, Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression was used. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) is frequently used in analyzing student achievement to account for data that are nested (in classes with teachers, nested in schools, nested in districts, etc.) and therefore not independent of each other. Although TELL Kentucky uses student- and teacher-level data, these data have been aggregated to the school level. For example, students' free and reduced lunch status is reported as a school-level average. This decision was guided by the fact that the dependent variables employed in these analyses are measured at the school level. The use of school-level data versus students-level data linked to teachers results from the decision to ensure the anonymity of all respondents to the TELL Kentucky Survey. This decision, while potentially limiting some of the types of analyses that could be calculated using this data, promotes high response rates and minimizes threats to internal validity influenced by teacher mistrust in assurances of confidentiality.

The generic linear regression model can be explained as: case specifies that the dependent variable (Composite Performance Index)  $Y_i$  is a linear combination of the parameters.

For example, in a simple linear regression used to model  $N$  data points (observations) there is one independent variable:  $x_i$ , and two parameters,  $\beta_0$  and  $\beta_1$ :

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Student}_i) + \beta_2 (\text{School}_i) + \beta_3 (\text{Teacher}_i) + \beta_4 (\text{Teaching Conditions}_i) + \beta_i, \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, N$$

Where  $Y_i$  is Expected Teacher Retention,  $\beta_0$  is the constant,  $\beta_{1-4}$  are the blocks of independent variables and  $\beta_i$  is the error term. Independent variables were entered together, without the use of stepwise or other entry methods. Results were then standardized and converted to a 0-to-100 scale to aid in interpretation of results.

### Independent Variables Included in the Models

- Percent Free and Reduced Lunch:** The number and percentage of students whose applications for free/reduced price meals meet the family size and income guidelines (as promulgated annually by the U.S. Department of Agriculture) and students approved through direct certification. The counts are reported as of the student's last day of enrollment in the school system—either the last day in school or the date the student withdrew. The percentage is calculated by dividing the number of students receiving free or reduced price meals by the June net enrollment.

- *Average Years of Teacher Experience:* The total years of experience for each teacher in a school divided by the total number of teachers in that school.
- *Percent of Courses Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers:* The total number of courses taught by highly qualified teachers as defined by the state divided by the total number of courses offered at the school.
- *Percent Teachers Non-White:* The sum of the teachers in ethnic/racial groups other than white as defined by the state divided by the total number of teachers.
- *Percent Students Non-White:* The sum of the students in ethnic/racial groups other than white as defined by the state divided by the total number of students.
- *Reported Acts:* The number of assault, drug, and weapons reports.
- *ADM:* Average Daily Membership

Additional information may be found at the Kentucky State Department of Education Web site at <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/>.

### **Dependent Variable Considered in the Models**

- *Predicted Retention Rate:* The percentage of responding teachers indicating that they want to remain teaching in their current school on the TELL Kentucky Survey (Q. 10.1)

### Statistical Model Explaining Elementary School Estimated Teacher Retention

Model Summary			
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.603	.364	.358	.07823

Coefficients					
Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-.316	.360		-.878	.380
Percent Free and Reduced Lunch	.000	.000	-.071	-1.828	.068
Percent of Courses Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers	.009	.004	.072	2.360	.019
Average Years of Teacher Experience	.003	.001	.080	2.545	.011
Percent Teacher Non-White	-.002	.000	-.177	-5.225	.000
School Leadership Construct	.259	.035	.340	7.301	.000
Professional Development Construct	-.047	.032	-.061	-1.451	.147
Community Support and Involvement Construct	.170	.039	.215	4.334	.000

### Statistical Model Explaining Middle School Estimated Teacher Retention

Model Summary			
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.659	.435	.416	.08853

Coefficients					
Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.409	.051		7.963	.000
Average Years of Teacher Experience	.006	.003	.144	2.476	.014
Percent Teacher Non-White	-.001	.001	-.052	-.593	.553
Time Construct	.201	.056	.253	3.623	.000
Managing Student Conduct Construct	.154	.062	.195	2.488	.014
Professional Development Construct	-.059	.065	-.065	-.909	.364
Community Support and Involvement Construct	.174	.059	.213	2.963	.003
Percent Student Non-White	-.001	.001	-.135	-1.524	.129

## Statistical Model Explaining High School Estimated Teacher Retention

Model Summary			
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.347	.120	.107	.09711

Coefficients					
Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.536	.063		8.547	.000
Reported Acts	-.001	.001	-.093	-1.345	.180
Average Years of Teacher Experience	.007	.003	.145	2.127	.035
Teacher Leadership Construct	.238	.056	.290	4.260	.000



## About New Teacher Center

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New Teacher Center focuses on improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers. NTC partners with states, school districts, and policymakers to design and implement systems that create sustainable, high-quality mentoring and professional development; build leadership capacity; work to enhance teaching conditions; improve retention; and transform schools in vibrant learning communities where all students succeed.



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