

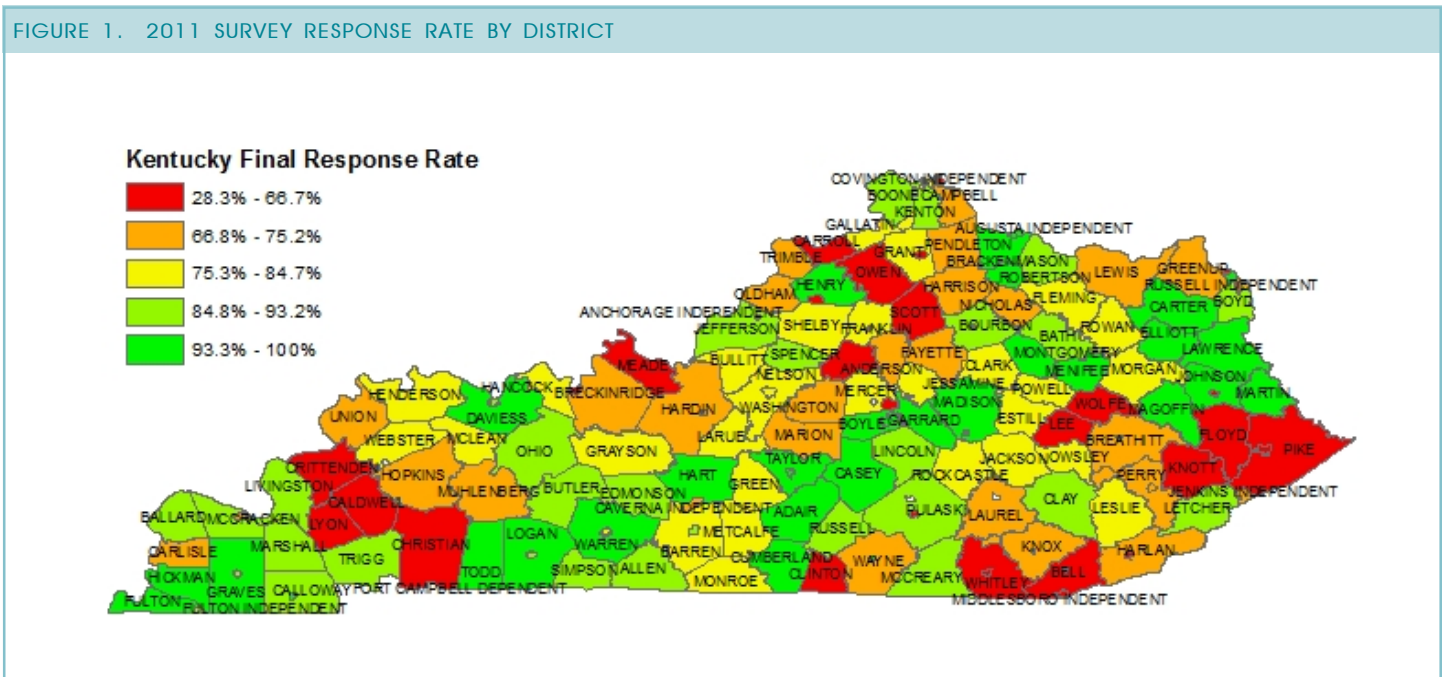
Executive Summary of General Trends

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 Kentucky Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning Survey (TELL Kentucky Survey) to assess whether critical teaching and learning conditions are present in schools across Kentucky. 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 (Figure 1).

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.

FIGURE 1. 2011 SURVEY RESPONSE RATE BY DISTRICT



The TELL Kentucky Survey assesses eight teaching conditions areas, including Time; Facilities and Resources; Community Support and Involvement; Managing Student Conduct; Teacher Leadership; School Leadership; Professional Development; and Instructional Practices and Support. Additionally, questions about induction were asked of novice teachers (those in their first three years in the profession) and principals were surveyed about supports they receive from their school district. Research by the New Teacher Center has demonstrated that these conditions are essential elements of student achievement and teacher retention. The survey was customized for the state of Kentucky and included questions specific to School Based Decision Making (SBDM) Councils.

Key Findings from Preliminary Analyses

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. These generally positive findings indicate that many essential conditions critical for teacher success are in place. Provided below are general trends as related to specific areas assessed on TELL Kentucky, noted with particular areas of emphasis for policymakers as they begin their study of the results.

- **Most educators report that they have the resources they need to effectively plan and teach.** Most educators report that teachers have access to important technology resources with more than nine out of 10 (95 percent) agreeing that teachers have access to reliable communication, more than eight out of 10 (82 percent) agreeing that the reliability and speed of internet connections in their school are sufficient to support instructional practices, and eight out of 10 (81 percent) agreeing that teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including

computers, printers, software and internet access. While these responses are positive, they also point to areas of need across the state. For example, the 18 percent of educators who disagree that the reliability and speed of internet connections in their school are sufficient to support instructional practices should be studied further to better assess whether there are disparities in resources across districts, regions, etc. as this answer reflects more than 7,500 survey respondents in Kentucky indicating that they do not have basic connectivity.

- **Many conditions that support and promote the effective management of student conduct are in place in most schools, but lack of consistency in enforcing policies may be contributing to inappropriate student behavior.** More than eight out of 10 educators (83 percent) report that policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty, that students at their school understand expectations for their conduct (85 percent), that school administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom (80 percent), and that teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct (78 percent). About seven out of 10 (70 percent) agree that school administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct or that students at their school follow those rules (71 percent), indicating that across the state more than 12,600 of the respondents are working in schools where this important support structure is not in place.
- **Educators are more positive about the support and communication they are providing to parents and the community than the support they are receiving.** Nearly all educators (93 percent) agree that teachers provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning and more than eight out of 10 (85 percent) agree that their school maintains clear, two-way communication with parents/guardians and the community. While four out of five educators (82

percent) report that the community they serve is supportive of their school, only two-thirds of educators (66 percent) report that parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.

- **Many conditions related to instructional practices and support are in place, but access to state assessment data and classroom assignments are issues of concern.** More than nine out of 10 educators (92 percent) agree that teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction and more than four out of five educators (85 percent) report that teachers work in professional learning communities to develop and align instructional practices. And while nine out of ten educators (92 percent) report using assessment data to inform their work, two-thirds report that state assessment data does not arrive in time to impact instruction. Additionally, two-thirds of respondents (68 percent) report that teachers are assigned classes that maximize their likelihood of success with students, indicating that more than 12,500 respondents may not have class assignments that maximize their success.
- **Professional development is based on relevant data and information, but quality of implementation and lack of attention to teachers' needs are concerns.** More than nine out of 10 educators (91 percent) report that professional learning opportunities are aligned with their school's improvement plan and more than eight out of 10 (84 percent) agree that professional development offerings are data-driven. There are large differences between what professional development teachers say they need and what they receive. This is particularly apparent in areas related to meeting the needs of different populations (gifted and talented children, student with disabilities, and English Language Learners). Only 60 percent of educators agree that their professional development is differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers and less than six out of 10 (57 percent) report that professional development is evaluated and results are communicated to teachers.
- **Teachers could be more meaningfully engaged in decision making processes and problem solving across the state.** Nearly nine out of 10 educators (87 percent) agree that teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles. Additionally, eight out of 10 (80 percent) report that teachers are recognized as educational experts and that teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues (80 percent). However, nearly four out of 10 educators (38 percent or nearly 16,000 educators) 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, seven out of 10 educators (69 percent) agree that their faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems and eight out of 10 (78 percent) report that educators take steps to solve problems at their school.
- **Positive views of school leadership are related to quality standards, teacher assessment and SBDM Councils, but more attention may be needed in areas related to conditions that build trust and mutual respect.** More than nine out of 10 educators (92 percent) agree that teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction and nearly nine out of 10 educators (87 percent) report that teacher performance is assessed objectively and procedures for teacher evaluations are consistent (88 percent). Additionally, 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. Given that Kentucky teachers overwhelmingly indicated that school leadership is the most critical factor in their decision

about where to work, better understanding leadership support will be critical for the state.

- **Time is an issue in multiple areas for Kentucky teachers.** Two-thirds of educators (66 percent) agree that teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues and 69 percent agree that teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students. About six out of 10 educators (63 percent) agree that there is sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students (more than 15,500 educators disagree) and half (51 percent) agree that efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine administrative paperwork required of teachers.

Resources and Next Steps

To support and inform Kentucky educators, stakeholders and policymakers about the results of this survey, a number of resources and reports are being developed, including:

- A general trends report on teaching and learning conditions across Kentucky with a variety of GIS mapping tools to better interpret the findings at the state level.
- Briefs related specifically to beginning teachers and principals and their perceptions of their teaching and learning conditions.
- A final report that builds on these initial findings will be prepared when other data sources are available from the State to better assess the connection between teaching conditions, student learning and teacher retention.
- The development of tools for schools and district to use in facilitating dialogue, direct support to select districts and stakeholders, and documenting promising practices in schools across the state.

All resources and reports will be made available electronically at www.tellkentucky.org.

About the New Teacher Center

The New Teacher Center is a national organization dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders. NTC strengthens school communities through proven mentoring and professional development programs, online learning environments, policy advocacy, and research. Since 1998, the NTC has served over 49,000 teachers, 5,000 mentors, and touched millions of students across America.



725 Front Street, Suite 400, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-600-2200 | Fax: 831-427-9017 | info@newteachercenter.org
www.newteachercenter.org