

Fall 2014



# Cross-State Analyses of Results, 2013-2014

Research Report  
2014 TELL Survey



New  
Teacher  
Center

Time **Facilities and Resources** Professional Development Teacher Leadership  
School Leadership **Instructional Practices and Support** Managing Student  
Conduct **Community Support and Involvement** New Teacher Support **Time**  
Professional Development Facilities and Resources **School Leadership**  
Teacher Leadership **Managing Student Conduct** Community Support and  
Involvement **New Teacher Support** Time Facilities and Resources Managing  
Student Conduct **Professional Development** School Leadership Time  
**Teacher Leadership** Instructional Practices and Support Managing Student



# Introduction



New Teacher Center (NTC) worked collaboratively with 11 state coalitions—including governors, state education agencies, teacher associations, other stakeholder groups, and practitioners—to implement the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning Survey (TELL) statewide in those states from the spring of 2013 to the spring of 2014. The TELL survey is a full-population survey of school-based licensed educators designed to report perceptions about the presence of teaching and learning conditions that research has shown increase student learning and teacher retention.<sup>1</sup> This research brief compares state-level aggregate TELL survey results from Colorado, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Vermont.

The conditions assessed in the TELL survey include: Time, Facilities and Resources, Professional Development, School Leadership, Teacher Leadership, Instructional Practices and Support, Managing Student Conduct, Community Support and Involvement, and, for teachers in their first three years in the profession, New Teacher Support.<sup>2</sup> (See Table 1, TELL Survey Constructs.)

Comparing the results of the TELL survey at the state level provides an additional contextual lens for each participating state to better understand its own findings. However, when comparing state-level results, it is imperative to remember the many important differences between states. Additionally, aggregating data at this level obfuscates the variations that occur within any particular state overall and within schools in each state. Thus, readers are encouraged to use the information in this report as just one of several ways to review overall findings and for framing discussions with state and local stakeholders that are also grounded in more specific local-level data.

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1. See endnotes related to the link between teaching conditions and student performance and teacher retention.

2. As new teacher support questions are offered only to a subset of the full population surveyed (teachers in the profession three years or less) they are not analyzed and reported here. A separate publication analyzing new teacher support issues will be published separately.

Many important contextual factors influence the governance of education systems and educator perceptions, and these factors are important to understand when looking at cross-state differences. At the broadest level, there are cultural and geographic differences between southern and northern states, between local control and state-oriented states, and between right-to-work and collective bargaining states. For example, states implementing right-to-work or at-will employment laws tend to be located in the south, and research generally shows that overall job-satisfaction tends to be higher in states with right-to-work legislation.<sup>3</sup> This does not necessarily mean that the teaching conditions in right-to-work states are better per se, but it does indicate that educators' perceptions and/or expectations of whether key resources and supports are in place may differ in places where contracts are accepted versus where they are negotiated. These types of differences are important to keep in mind in reviewing this report and may require additional attention and further analyses as more states participate in the TELL initiative.

Additionally, some states have worked with NTC for many years to implement the TELL survey. Specifically, the TELL survey work began in North Carolina in 2001 with extensive participation from the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission (NCPTSC) which created state standards for teaching conditions. Through the leadership of the Office of the Governor, NCPTSC and other leading education stakeholders administered a statewide survey in 2002 to assess if the standards were in place in schools, documenting the first iteration of the TELL survey. North Carolina continues to administer the survey every other year. Other states have also administered the survey multiple times: Maryland, Colorado, and Massachusetts have run the survey three times; Tennessee, Kentucky, and Vermont have administered it twice. Additional states included in this review, Delaware and Ohio, administered the survey for the first time in 2013, and New Mexico and Oregon ran it for the first time in 2014. Table 2 shows the number of TELL surveys administered in each state discussed in this report. (Note the TELL survey is typically administered every other year at the state level.)



Another difference across states, which is critical for achieving high response rates, is the level and type of support from different stakeholder groups for survey implementation. NTC encourages the involvement of a host of stakeholder groups representing teachers, superintendents, and community and business leaders working collaboratively to conduct the TELL survey. Collectively referred to as the “TELL Partners” in each state, the involvement and support of key stakeholder groups is crucial for survey success.

Our hope, given these differences, is that this analysis is used to help states make comparisons that help them better understand and interpret their own survey results.

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3. See endnotes for research related to job satisfaction and right-to-work laws.



## About the Survey

The TELL survey is statistically valid and reliable.<sup>4</sup> Descriptions of the eight survey focus areas, or “constructs,” are provided in Table 1. Each construct includes individual items. The individual items used for this analysis include a set of common questions across all state clients.

Response options for these core-area questions use a four-point Likert scale and range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Results for this brief are summarized by reporting the overall mean for each construct across all states as well as each state’s individual mean for each survey area.

The survey area means could range from one to four corresponding to the Likert scale response choices. A mean of 3.0 for a construct indicates that, when averaged together, educators in a state “agree” with all the items in the construct. Differences of means tests are conducted to see if the difference between the overall mean and each state mean is by chance. Because the numbers of respondents for the TELL surveys is large, most differences are statistically significant, meaning the differences likely did not occur by chance.

*Statistical significance does not necessarily imply practical or meaningful differences in the data.*

It should be noted, however, that statistical significance does not necessarily imply practical or meaningful differences in the data. Most state means across survey areas reported here are statistically different from the overall mean; this is due, in large part, to the very large number of respondents. Statistical significance is presented to indicate tests were conducted. Stakeholders should consider practical implications for their individual contexts.

In the graphs presented throughout this report, a blue arrow within a column indicates the state mean is statistically different from the overall mean. The orange dashed line in each graph represents the overall mean, which is presented in the first column of each graph for each survey area. When interpreting the data presented in the graphs, the reader can use the general guide of considering differences of .3 or more between the means as noteworthy, possibly indicating an important difference and area for closer review by stakeholders. Again, while differences between a state and the cross-state mean may be statistically significant (meaning they are not likely to have randomly occurred), differences are due in part to the large number of surveys collected and analyzed. Thus, small statistically significant differences may still not be large enough to merit substantial changes to current policies and practices based on the data.

Color-coded map graphics for each survey construct are also included to illustrate the range of means across states. Darker fills represent higher means. Lighter fills indicate lower means.

In addition, select survey items or questions within each construct are included. Responses for these items are reported as rates of agreement by combining the “agree” and “strongly agree” categories. Generally, items with the highest and lowest overall rates of agreement in each of the survey constructs are reported, as well as items demonstrating the widest range in rate of agreement across the states.

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4. Swanlund, A. (2011). *Identifying working conditions that enhance teacher effectiveness: The psychometric evaluation of the Teacher Working Conditions Survey*. Chicago, IL: American Institutes for Research.

This brief presents the results by survey construct/focus area in order of highest overall average to lowest overall average. Implications and recommendations are presented for stakeholders to consider within each state's unique context.

Table 1. TELL Survey Constructs

<b>Time</b> —Available time to plan, collaborate, provide instruction, and eliminate barriers in order to maximize instructional time during the school day
<b>Facilities and Resources</b> —Availability of instructional, technology, office, communication, and school resources to teachers
<b>Community Support and Involvement</b> —Community and parent/guardian communication and influence in the school
<b>Managing Student Conduct</b> —Policies and practices to address student conduct issues and ensure a safe school environment
<b>Teacher Leadership</b> —Teacher involvement in decisions that impact classroom and school practices
<b>School Leadership</b> —The Ability of school leadership to create trusting, supportive environments and address teacher concerns
<b>Professional Development</b> —Availability and quality of learning opportunities for educators to enhance their teaching
<b>Instructional Practices and Support</b> —Data and support available to teachers to improve instruction and student learning



*Collectively referred to as the “TELL Partners” in each state, the involvement and support of key stakeholder groups is crucial for survey success.*

In each of the states represented in this report, NTC administered the anonymous survey to all school-based licensed educators. See Table 2 for information about when each state conducted surveys as well as individual state-level response rates. The data for this analysis includes surveys from 377,203 respondents (out of a reported 680,016 school-based licensed educators surveyed across the 11 states), yielding a response rate of 55 percent. By social science standards for online surveys, this response rate is considered acceptable for this type of analyses.<sup>5</sup> NTC published state-specific analyses for each statewide TELL survey administration (available online—see Appendix for a list of websites with links to data, reports, tools, etc.).

Table 2. Response Rate by State, 2013-2014

Survey Year	Number of TELL Statewide Administrations	State	Total School-based Licensed Educators Surveyed	Number of Respondents	Response Rate
2014	3	Massachusetts (MA)	80,200	38,217	48%
2014	1	New Mexico (NM)	32,736	3,952	12%*
2014	7	North Carolina (NC)	105,136	93,178	89%
2014	1	Oregon (OR)	32,609	19,373	59%
2013	2	Vermont (VT)	12,210	6,699	55%
2013	2	Tennessee (TN)	74,676	61,341	82%
2013	1	Ohio (OH)	134,230	21,057	16%*
2013	3	Maryland (MD)	86,440	50,272	58%
2013	2	Kentucky (KY)	50,496	43,761	87%
2013	1	Delaware (DE)	10,392	6,153	59%
2013	3	Colorado (CO)	60,891	33,200	55%
<b>TOTAL</b>			680,016	377,203	55%

\* The response rates for New Mexico and Ohio are significantly lower than other states assessed. Please interpret New Mexico and Ohio findings with caution as results may not be generalizable to the state as a whole.

*In each of the states represented in this report, NTC administered the anonymous survey to all school-based licensed educators. The data for this analysis includes surveys from 377,203 respondents.*

5. Babbie, E. (2007). *The Practice of Social Research*. 11th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

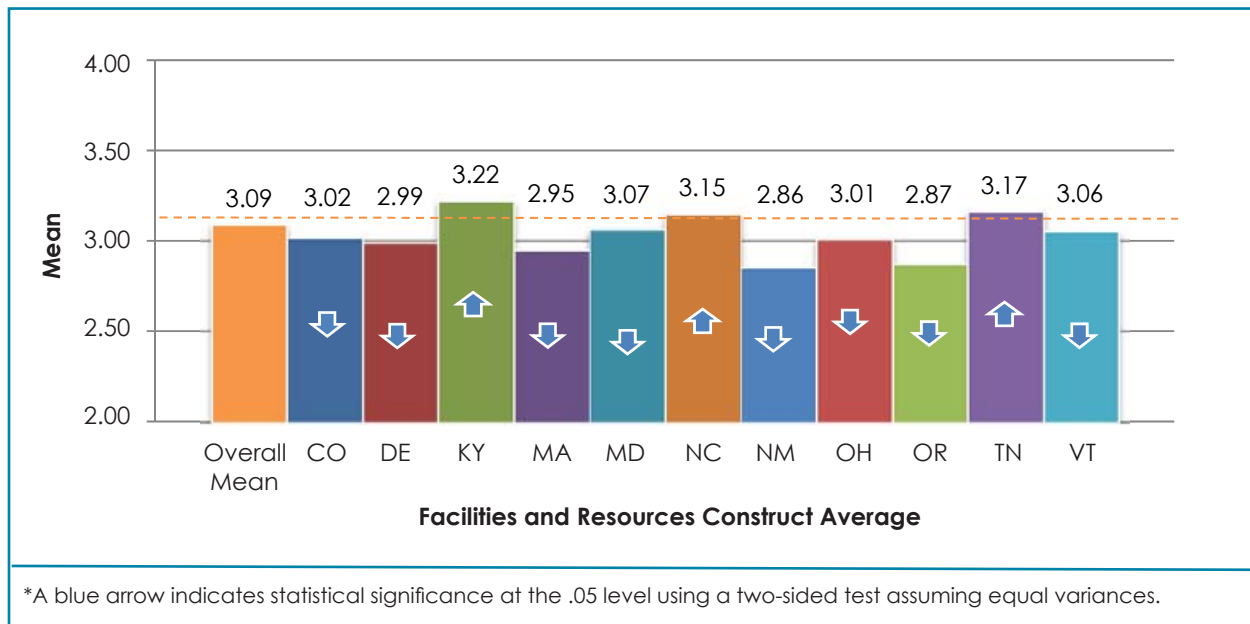
## Findings

### Facilities and Resources

**Finding: Overall, educators across states agree they have the resources and supplies necessary to support learning.**

Across states, educators report more positive conditions in the area of Facilities and Resources than for any other area of the survey. Educators indicate the highest overall mean with a state average of 3.09 for Facilities and Resources. (On a four-point scale, a 3.0 corresponds to the “agree” category.) All but four states report a mean above 3.0 for Facilities and Resources. KY educators report the highest agreement for this construct with a mean of 3.22. (This average is also the highest mean across all states and all survey constructs.) NM educators reported the least agreement with items related to Facilities and Resources with a mean of 2.86. The difference between the KY and NM mean is greater than .3, suggesting a need for more review of this area by NM stakeholders. Every state in the analysis is statistically different from the overall state average, meaning the differences between the individual state and the overall mean are not by chance. KY, NC, and TN rates of agreement are above the overall mean/state average of 3.09, represented by the orange dashed line in Exhibit 1.

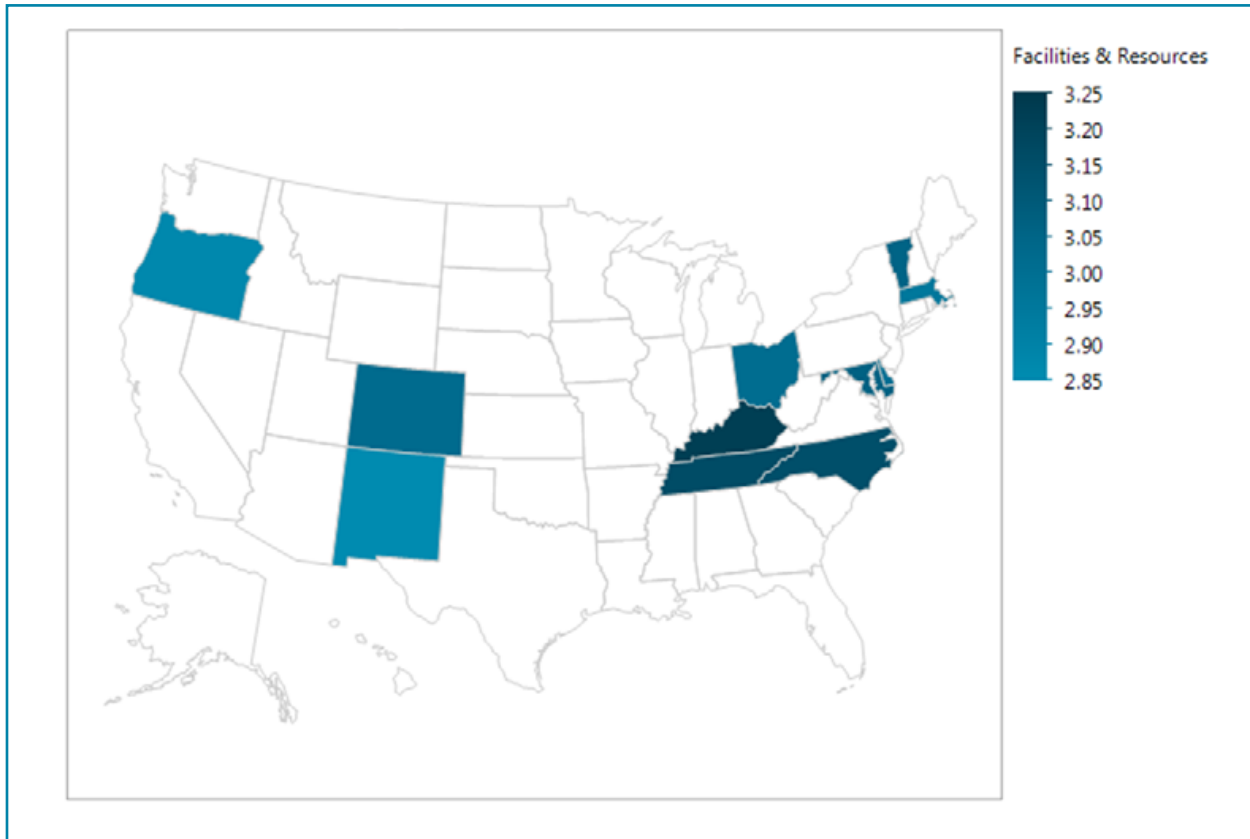
Exhibit 1. Area Mean for Facilities and Resources by State\*



*Across states, educators report more positive conditions in the area of Facilities and Resources than for any other area of the survey.*

Figure 1 provides a visual map of the range of state means for the Facilities and Resources construct area, with lower means represented by a lighter fill and higher means represented by a darker fill.

Figure 1. National Map of Area Mean For Facilities and Resources by State



## COLORADO

**Colorado has administered** the TELL Survey biennially since 2009 and has utilized the data in a variety of ways. Data from the survey demonstrated that many new teachers were not supported, leading to the funding of a state report analyzing current policies. Recommendations from the report will be considered by a task force this fall. Additionally, the survey is being used not only as a potential data source in principal evaluation, but as a means of assessing the roll out of the state's new teacher evaluation system. The Colorado Department of Education has integrated TELL results in the school improvement planning process.



In terms of select items related to Facilities and Resources, as illustrated in Table 3, most educators surveyed agree they have access to reliable phones, faxes, and emails; however, there is less agreement that educators have access to instructional technology, such as printers and computers. Rates of agreement vary widely across states on access to instructional technology as well as whether or not the physical classroom environment supports learning.

Educators in KY indicate the highest rate of agreement (94 percent) that they have reliable communication technology, compared to 81 percent of educators in MA. More than 80 percent of educators in KY agree they have adequate access to technology, such as computers and printers, compared to 66 percent or less of educators in CO, MA, NM, OH, and OR. The greatest range in responses in this construct relates to the item asking if the physical environment supports learning. There is a 21-percentage-point difference across states. Over 90 percent (91 percent) of TN educators agree the physical environment supports learning compared to 70 percent of CO educators.

Table 3. Agreement on Select Items Related to Facilities and Resources

TELL Survey Questions	CO	DE	KY	MA	MD	NC	NM	OH	OR	TN	VT
	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree										
Teachers have access to reliable communication technology, including phones, faxes and email.	90	90	94	81	87	91	83	87	90	90	88
Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and internet access.	66	69	82	64	73	79	62	66	58	79	72
The physical environment of classrooms in this school supports teaching and learning.	70	80	89	80	82	89	78	83	74	91	81

**Implication:** While educators rate Facilities and Resources the highest compared to other teaching conditions, there are areas for improvement within this condition. For example, the lowest-rated item in this area pertains to accessing instructional technology. Research shows that many factors contribute to student performance and teacher retention and some of these factors are easier to influence than others. Improving facilities can impact both student performance and teacher retention and may be more easily accomplished compared to some other areas.<sup>6</sup> For example, facilities improvements such as equipping a school with wireless internet access may be a one-time investment that lasts for many years and could be supplemented by state or federal funding. Examining TELL data within each state at the district and local level provides a chance to identify areas within the Facilities and Resources condition that can be affected.

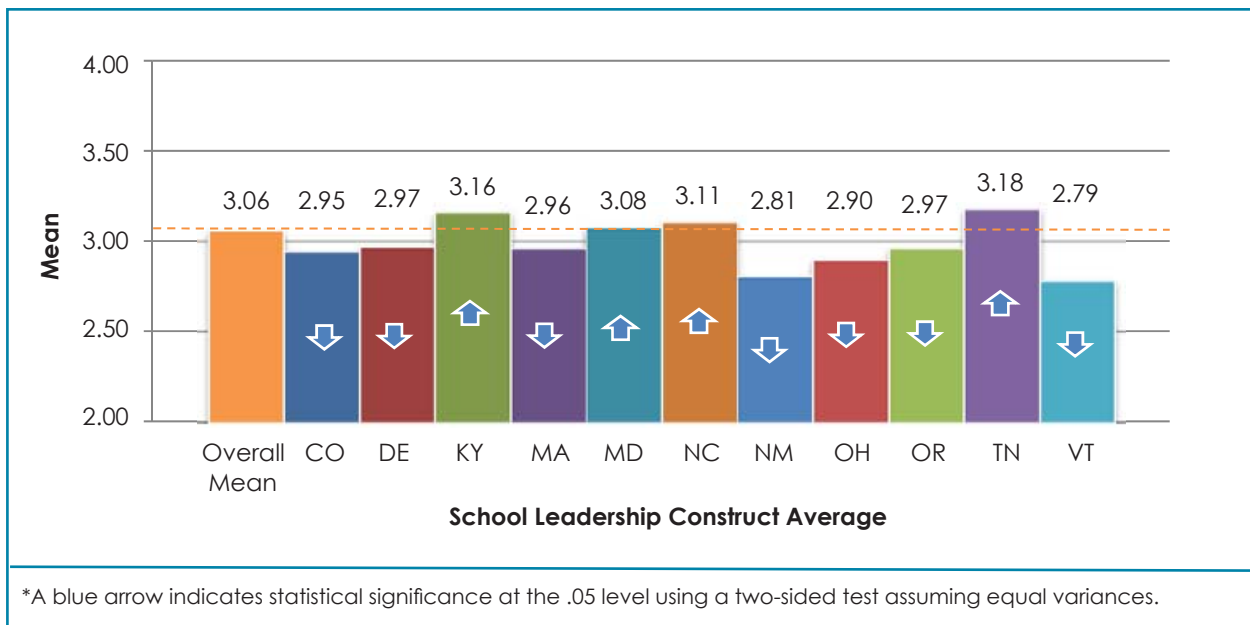
6. Buckley, J., Schneider, M., & Shang, Y. (2004). *The effects of school facility quality on teacher retention in urban school districts*. Chestnut Hill, MA: National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities.

School Leadership

**Finding:** Educator perceptions about the support provided by school leaders differ widely across states.

TN, KY, and NC rated the School Leadership area (defined on the TELL survey as any individual, group, or team that makes decisions about the direction of the school) the highest among the states, with respective means of 3.18, 3.16, and 3.11. OH, NM, and VT accounted for the lowest state ratings regarding school leadership, reporting values of 2.90, 2.81, and 2.79 respectively. The overall area mean across states is 3.06, which corresponds to the “agree” category; however, there is over a .3 difference between the three highest rated states and the bottom two (NM and VT), suggesting that educators in NM and VT disagree there is adequate school leadership. Every state in the analysis is statistically different from the overall state average. The gap between NM and VT and other states merits further review. (See Exhibit 2.)

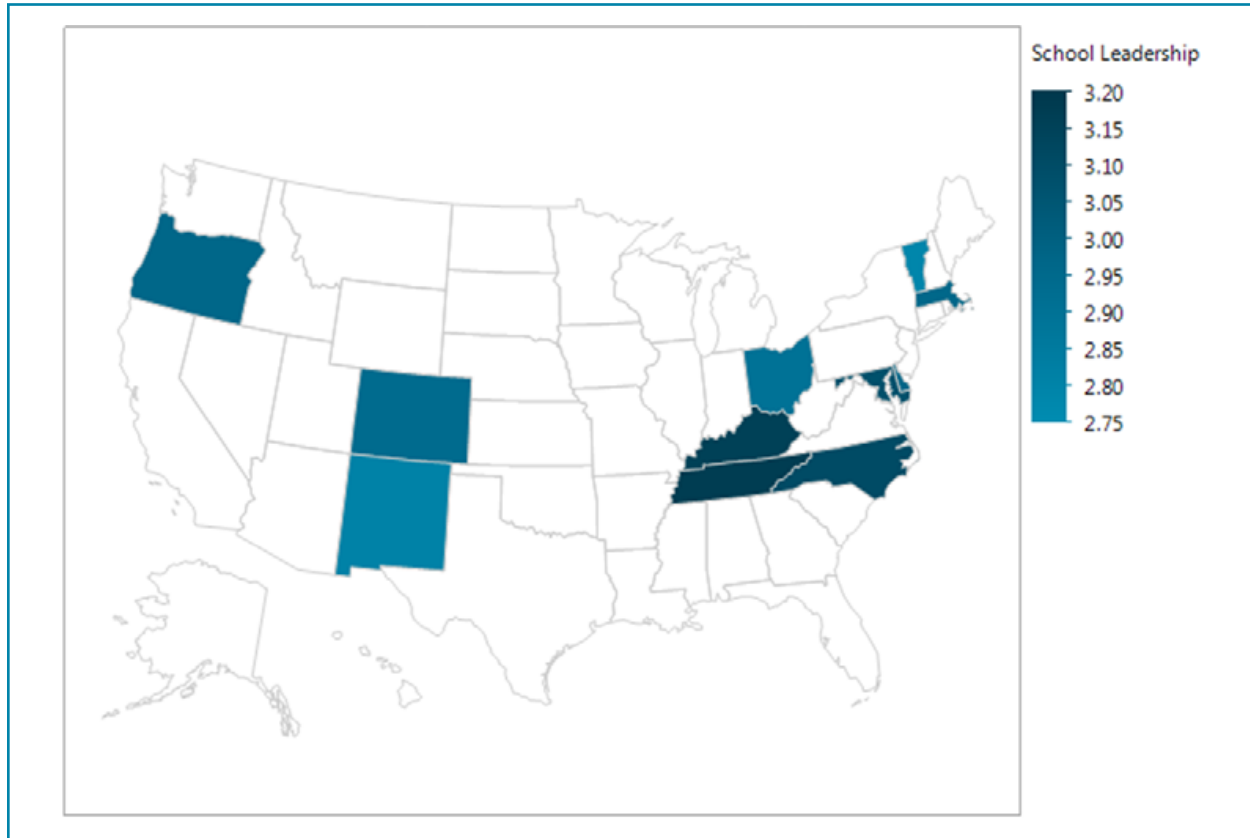
Exhibit 2. Area Mean for School Leadership by State\*



*Educator perceptions about the support provided by school leaders differ widely across states.*

Figure 2 provides a visual map of the range of state means for the construct area, with lower means represented by a lighter fill and higher means represented by a darker fill.

Figure 2. National Map of Area Mean For School Leadership by State



## DELAWARE

**Delaware has already started** using their first statewide TELL results from February 2013. In a press conference held when the results were available, state leaders outlined a plan to focus on two of the more immediate needs the survey results showed: common core and instructional practices, and new teacher support. Since then, the Delaware Department of Education has launched an educator induction and mentoring competitive grant opportunity for districts. They are providing an opportunity for interested LEAs to submit a proposal to the Department through the newly-minted “Comprehensive Induction Innovation Grant”. Through this process, LEAs will be eligible to receive funding to support the development and delivery of innovative induction and mentoring strategies. Districts must utilize their TELL Delaware new teacher section data to support their proposals.

As Table 4 demonstrates, rates of agreement across School Leadership items vary substantially between states. Most educators across the states agree that teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction. With the exception of VT and NM educators (85 percent and 89 percent), nine out of 10 educators agree that there are high standards for teachers. TN educators report the highest rate of agreement for this item (96 percent).

In terms of comfort discussing issues and concerns, 25 to 40 percent of educators across states report not feeling comfortable. This item demonstrates the lowest rate of agreement in the School Leadership area. Three quarters or less of educators in TN (75 percent), KY (72 percent), and NC (72 percent) agree they can raise issues of concern. Educators in NM (59 percent), VT (61 percent), OH (62 percent), and DE (63 percent) report the lowest rates of agreement.

Educators from different states vary the most in perceptions related to the consistency of local teacher evaluation procedures. More than eight out of 10 educators in CO, KY, MD, and NC agree that teacher evaluations are consistent in their school, whereas 60 percent of NM educators and 65 percent of VT educators indicate that teacher evaluations are consistent.

Table 4. Agreement on Select Items Related to School Leadership

TELL Survey Questions	CO	DE	KY	MA	MD	NC	NM	OH	OR	TN	VT
	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree										
Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.	90	92	92	93	94	94	89	90	91	96	85
Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.	65	63	72	66	67	72	59	62	69	75	61
The faculty and leadership have a shared vision.	72	72	84	70	79	84	68	69	71	87	59
The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.	80	79	90	74	82	84	60	78	77	79	65

**Implication:** It is important to understand how educators’ perceptions of school leadership impact implementation of major initiatives such as Common Core and new teacher evaluation systems. In states where more educators report that their faculty and leadership do not share a common vision<sup>7</sup> complex reforms may be difficult to implement. States need to assess policies related to principal preparation, recruitment, induction, and support to ensure leaders have the skills and capacity to build strong school cultures with effective decision-making processes. For a staff to work together to solve problems, there must first be a shared understanding of the most pressing concerns. Administrators play a critical role in defining areas of focus and building trust as school leaders.

7. Kelley, R., Thornton, B., & Daugherty, R. (2005). Relationships between measures of leadership and school climate. *Education*, 126 (1).

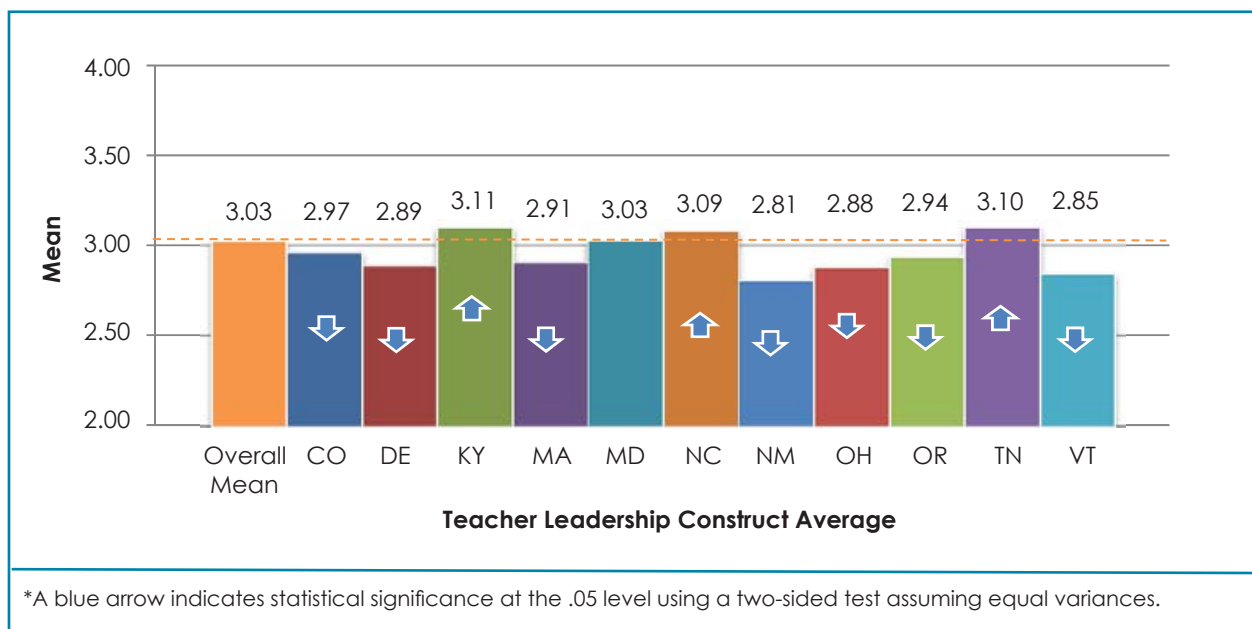


Teacher Leadership

**Finding: Educators across states report having leadership opportunities for teachers within their schools.**

As Exhibit 3 demonstrates, educators in KY, MD, NC, and TN “agree” (report a mean of at least 3.0) that teachers provide leadership within their schools and are included in decision making. State means vary little from the overall average, indicating educators from different states have similar perceptions about teacher leadership opportunities in their schools; all means are within .3 of one another. Across states, the overall area mean for Teacher Leadership is a 3.03, with seven states’ averages below 3.0. The individual state means range from a high of 3.11 in KY to a low of 2.81 in NM. Every state average in the analysis, with the exception of MD, is statistically different from the overall state mean. KY, NC, and TN are above the mean.

Exhibit 3. Area Mean for Teacher Leadership by State\*

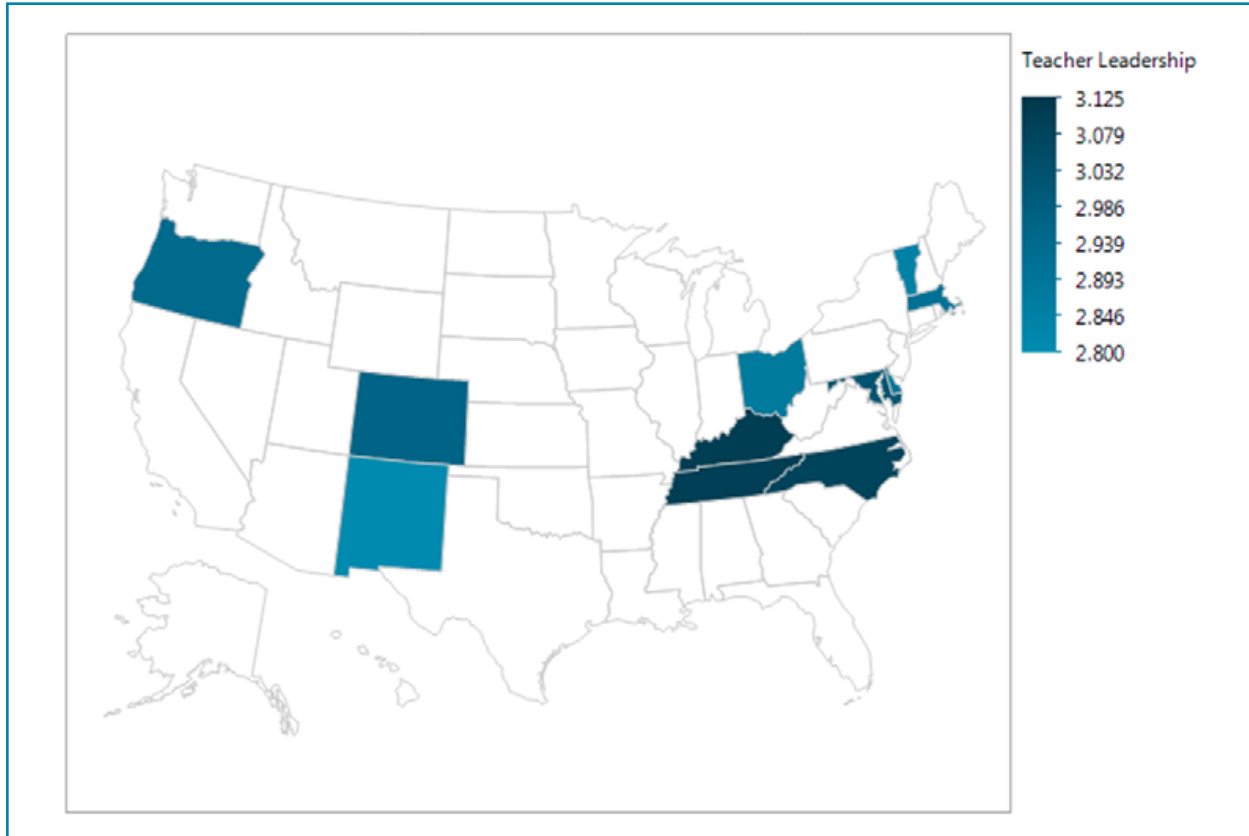


*Educators across states report having leadership opportunities for teachers within their schools.*



Figure 3 provides a visual map of the range of state means for the construct area, with lower means represented by a lighter fill and higher means represented by a darker fill.

Figure 3. National Map of Area Mean For Teacher Leadership by State



## KENTUCKY

**In 2011 Kentucky administered** its first statewide TELL survey. Prior to the survey the state had already passed legislation that required the use of educator survey data to assist school leaders in improving persistently low performing schools (called District 180 Schools). State leaders have since incorporated the use of the TELL data in the evaluation tools for administrators and in annual school and district improvement plans. Kentucky highlights schools with strong teaching conditions and high achievement, best-practice schools through its “Winner’s Circle Awards” and incorporated the use of the TELL data as part of its approved waiver of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Considering individual items associated with the area of Teacher Leadership, educators report the highest agreement rates for the item on leadership opportunities. About nine out of 10 educators in KY (90 percent), NC (92 percent), and TN (89 percent) agree that teachers have opportunities to lead in schools. (See Table 5.)

Educators report the least agreement that faculties have effective processes for making group decisions to solve problems. All rates of agreement were below 80 percent across states for this item. Educators in OR (61 percent), NM and MA (60 percent), OH (58 percent), and VT (49 percent) indicate the lowest rates of agreement in this area.

Additionally, the range of responses within a state across items in this construct varies considerably. For example in VT, 81 percent of educators report teachers are encouraged to participate in leadership roles, while less than half (49 percent) agree that schools have effective processes for making group decisions to solve problems.

Table 5. Agreement on Select Items Related to Teacher Leadership

TELL Survey Questions	CO	DE	KY	MA	MD	NC	NM	OH	OR	TN	VT
	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree										
Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.	78	84	90	84	88	92	81	84	87	89	81
The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.	66	62	75	60	70	77	60	58	61	76	49
Teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction.	78	75	85	78	82	83	68	78	79	86	80
Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.	76	72	84	74	79	81	65	73	75	83	74

**Implications:** TELL survey data consistently demonstrate that educators perceive teachers as having the most decision-making authority in matters related to instructional decisions, highlighting the need for districts and schools to consider the broader roles teachers can play in decision making on school-wide issues such as staffing, budgeting, professional development opportunities, etc. This finding may have far-reaching consequences given other research showing the importance of improving student learning through shared teacher leadership.<sup>8</sup> Similar to the area of School Leadership, as districts and schools embark on implementation of major policy changes such as implementing the Common Core and new teacher evaluation systems, having an effective process in place for teacher participation in decision making related to these complex issues at the local level is critical. States where teachers feel less empowered to contribute to school-wide issues will be further challenged.

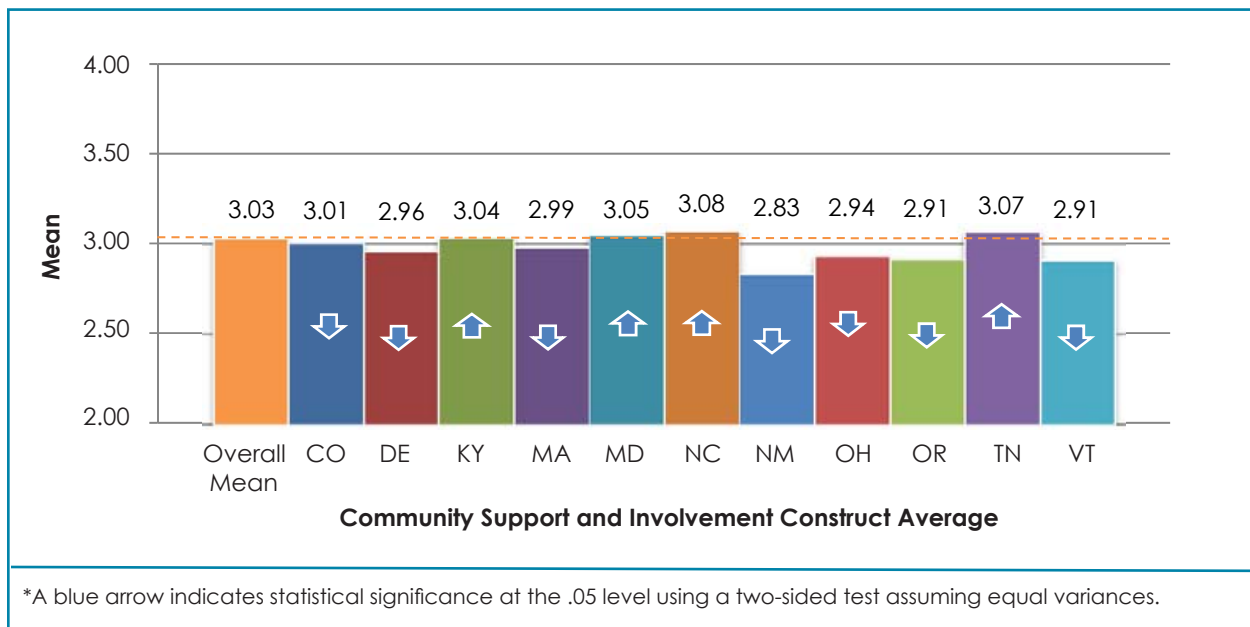
8. Louis, K., Dretzke, B., & Wahlstrom, K. (2010). How does leadership affect student achievement? Results from a national US survey. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 2 (3).

*Community Support and Involvement*

**Finding: Educators across states report the presence of community support and community involvement.**

Educators generally report positive conditions in the area of Community Support and Involvement. Educators across states largely agree they have the necessary support and engagement from parents and the community, and educator responses in this area show the lowest variation across states ranging from 2.83 (NM) to 3.08 (NC). In addition, all state means are within .3 of each other and the overall mean of 3.03. Each state in the analysis is statistically different from the overall state mean. KY, MD, NC, and TN are above the mean. (See Exhibit 4.)

Exhibit 4. Area Mean for Community Support and Involvement by State\*

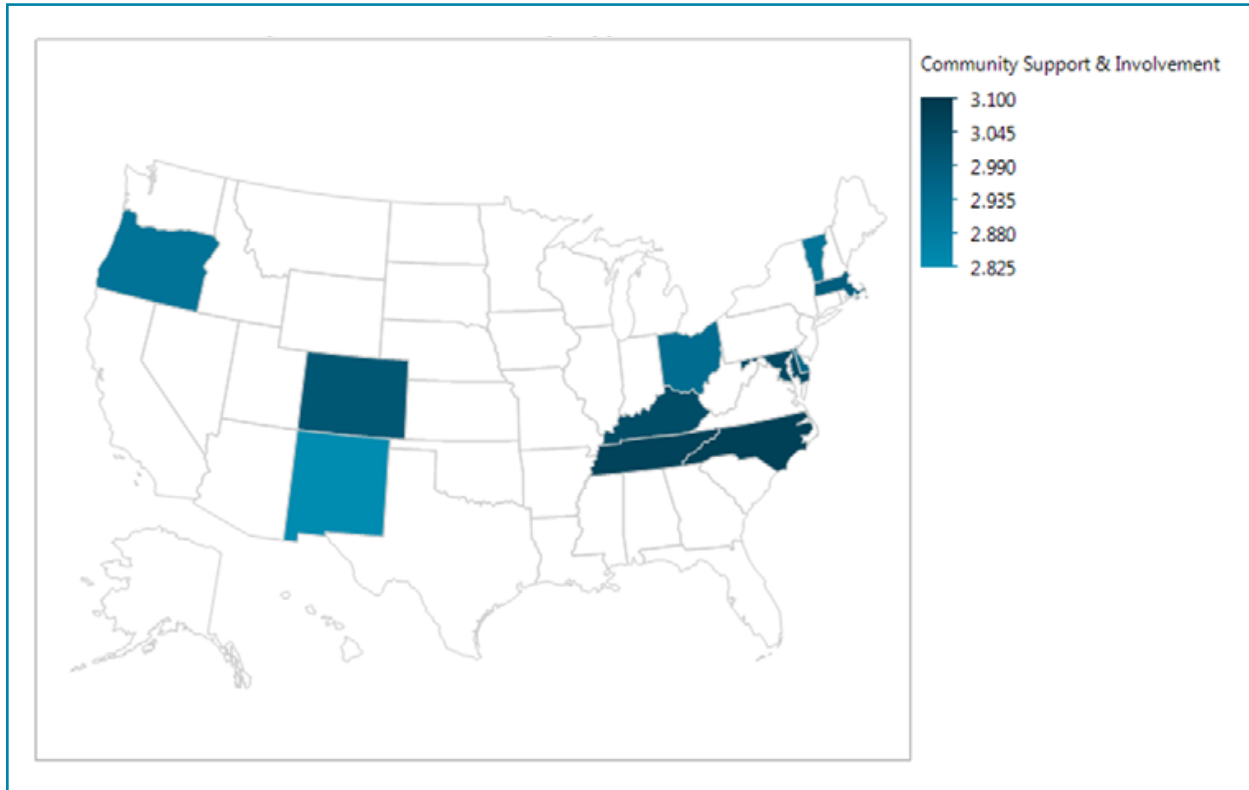


*Educators generally report positive conditions in the area of Community Support and Involvement. Educators across states largely agree they have the necessary support and engagement from parents and the community.*



Figure 4 provides a visual map of the range of state means for the construct area, with lower means represented by a lighter fill and higher means represented by a darker fill.

Figure 4. National Map of Area Mean For Community Support and Involvement by State



## MARYLAND

**The state of Maryland** has used TELL results to assess new teacher support. Since the 2009 TELL Maryland data showed that many new teachers were not assigned a mentor and those who were mentored often did not get the type and frequency of support that research shows is necessary to help new teachers get better, faster. The State Board of Education and the Governor's Office have revised and approved new regulations addressing induction. Additionally the Maryland State Department of Education's Race to the Top work with teacher induction, the TELL Survey has been integrated in Master Plans for District Professional Development and Teacher Induction.

Table 6 presents individual response data from the Community Support and Involvement area to demonstrate the range of educator perceptions across items. In each state, more than nine out of 10 educators perceive that teachers provide useful information to the community about student learning. This represents the survey item with the least amount of variation between states. On the other hand, only about seven in 10 educators on average across all states, and barely more than half of NM educators (54 percent), agree that parents or guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.

The lowest-rated item in this area was related to parent/guardian influence on school decisions. On average, only about seven in 10 educators agreed that parents/guardians are influential decision makers in their school. Educators from NM and OR represented the lowest rate of agreement with only 59 and 61 percent of educators respectively agreeing with this statement.

Table 6. Agreement on Select Items Related to Community Support and Involvement

TELL Survey Questions	CO	DE	KY	MA	MD	NC	NM	OH	OR	TN	VT
	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree										
Teachers provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning.	93	95	95	95	95	96	92	93	90	96	91
Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	72	66	71	71	72	73	54	66	68	71	73
Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school.	71	64	70	74	71	73	59	68	61	69	67

**Implications:** *Increasing community support and involvement has been a focus of education reform for decades.<sup>9</sup> The TELL survey data provide evidence that educators perceive they are encouraging participation from the community and parents. Given research showing the critical connection between parent and community involvement and student achievement, local districts and schools should closely review data related to this condition to examine how to build on the work already accomplished by schools and further promote shared educational decision-making between schools and communities.*

*Increasing community support and involvement has been a focus of education reform for decades.*

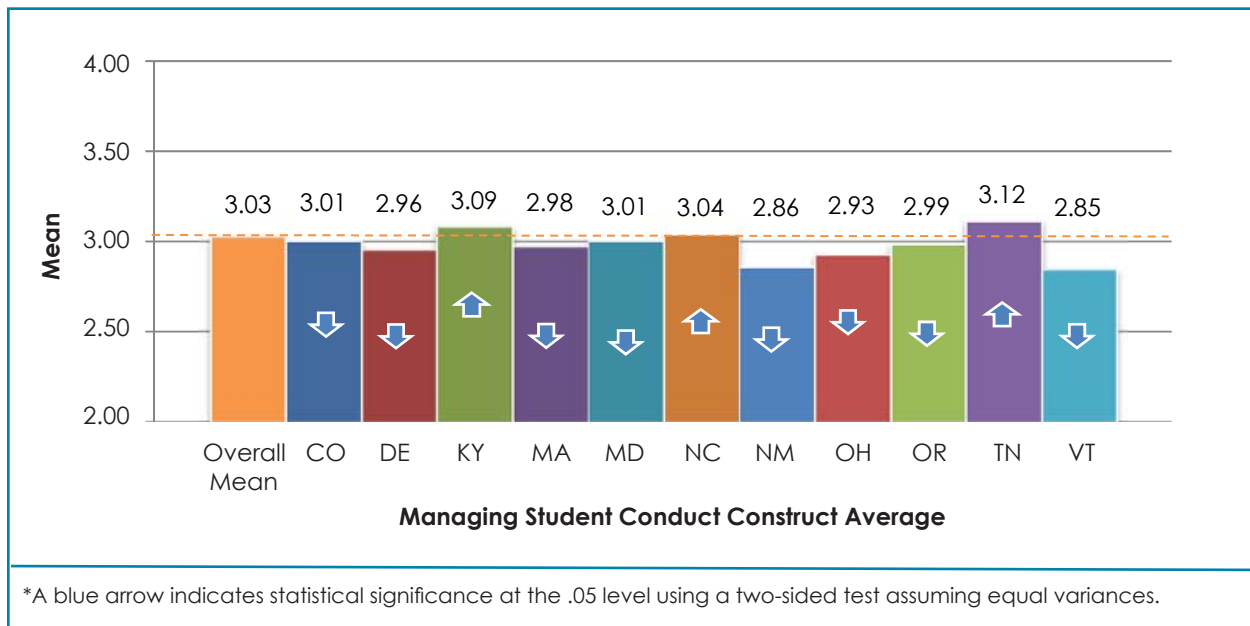
9. Conway, K. & Houtenville, A. (2008). Parental effort, school resources, and student achievement. *Journal of Human Resources*, 43(2).

Managing Student Conduct

**Finding: Overall, educators agree that conditions are in place to manage student conduct and support learning.**

Across states, the average for the Managing Student Conduct area is 3.03, indicating that educators generally “agree” with statements reflecting positive conditions in this area. State averages for this area range from a high of 3.12 in TN to a 2.85 mean in VT, and are all within the .3 guideline for comparisons. All states are statistically different from the overall state mean, with KY, NC, and TN above the overall mean and CO, DE, MA, MD, NM, OH, OR, and VT below the mean. (See Exhibit 5.)

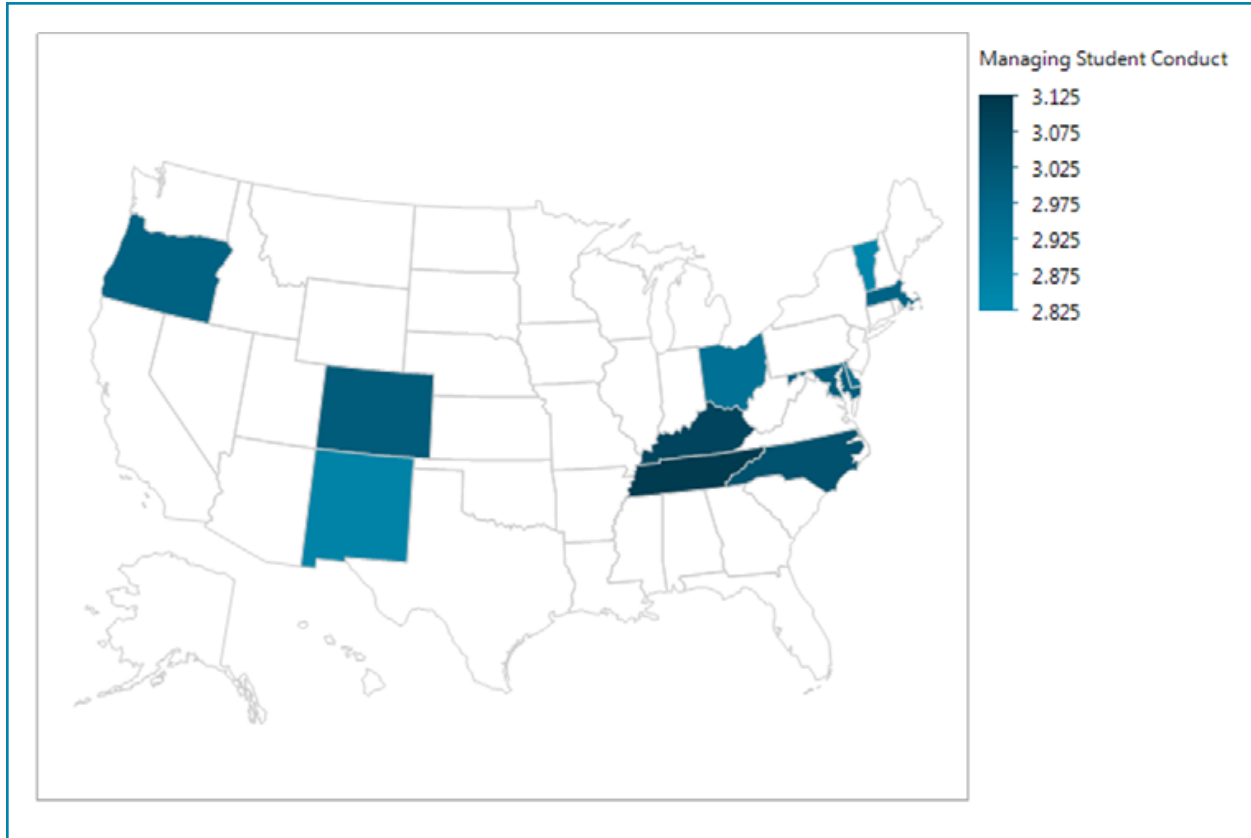
Exhibit 5. Area Mean for Managing Student Conduct by State\*



*Overall, educators agree that conditions are in place to manage student conduct and support learning.*

Figure 5 provides a visual map of the range of state means for the construct area, with lower means represented by a lighter fill and higher means represented by a darker fill.

Figure 5. National Map of Area Mean For Managing Student Conduct by State



## NORTH CAROLINA

**As the state with the longest history** of the use of the survey data, policy development is extensive. The state requires the use of the data in annual school and district improvement plans, as part of the plans to assist persistently low performing schools, as part of the required training of administrators in their preparation programs. The data is a recommended artifact as part of the evaluation of all principals. Additionally, legislation was passed to address instructional planning time for teachers during the work day.



Across states, educators generally report working in safe environments in which students understand expectations for their conduct. However, there is less agreement that school leaders consistently enforce behavior policies and rules. (See Table 7.)

More than nine out of 10 educators in CO, KY, MA, NC, OH, OR, and TN indicate their schools are safe, and the other four states are within four percentage points of a 90% agreement rate: NM (86 percent), DE (88 percent), MD (89 percent), and VT (88 percent). Across all states, more than eight out of 10 educators report that students are aware of school expectations for behavior.

However, across states, between 23 percent and 42 percent of educators do not agree that school administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct. KY (73 percent) and TN (77 percent) educators report the highest rates of agreement for this item. In VT, over 40 percent (42 percent) of educators disagree that school leaders enforce rules. This is a 19 percentage point difference from TN. Additionally, VT educators' perceptions across the items in this area range substantially from 88 percent agreement to 58 percent, a difference of 30 percentage points.

Table 7. Agreement on Select Items Related to Managing Student Conduct

TELL Survey Questions	CO	DE	KY	MA	MD	NC	NM	OH	OR	TN	VT
	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree										
The faculty works in a school environment that is safe.	92	88	93	92	89	93	86	92	92	94	88
Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.	87	84	87	85	85	85	82	83	87	88	81
School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.	79	75	83	79	78	82	72	78	81	85	74
School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	70	63	73	67	68	72	63	63	71	77	58

**Implications:** Survey data suggest educators believe that behavior policies and expectations are generally understood by students and faculty and that their schools are safe. Given that most educators perceive they work in safe environments, local systems can leverage existing student behavior-related data (i.e. discipline data) to review and evaluate current policies and practices and revise where appropriate.<sup>10</sup> Such an analysis, combined with TELL and other data, can reveal gaps in implementation of policies and expectations, beyond perception data which in states with a large range in responses is especially important. While there are time and resource issues associated with a review, reconciling if other data sources support a lack of enforcement can help school staff prioritize improvement efforts.

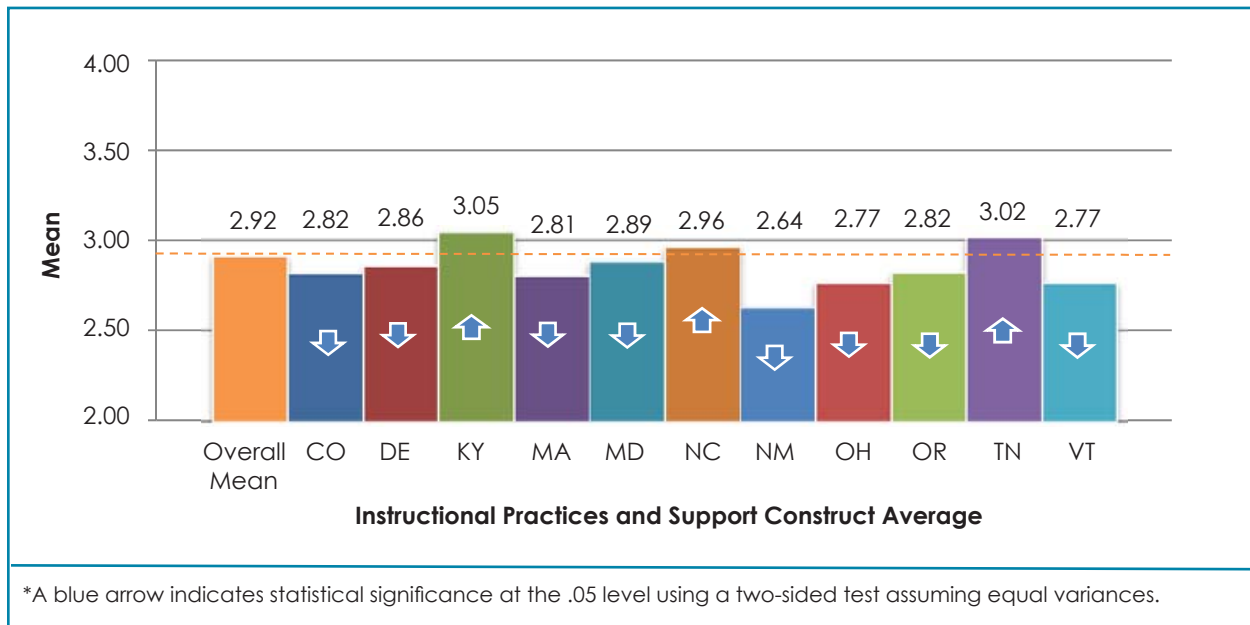
10. Hutton, T. & Bailey, K. (2007). Effective strategies for creating safer schools and communities: School policies and legal issues supporting safe schools. The Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence & Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory : Washington, DC.

*Instructional Practices and Support*

**Finding:** *Educators across states indicate they are encouraged to be innovative in the classroom; however, they also report challenges receiving state assessment data in time to inform instructional choices.*

As shown in Exhibit 6, the overall mean of 2.92 for the Instructional Practices and Support area is below the “agree” range of 3.0 or higher. Individual state means range from above 3.0 (KY and TN) to the lowest mean rating of 2.64 in NM. The difference between NM and the highest rated state (KY) is greater than .4, suggesting that stakeholders in NM may want to examine this area more closely. Every state in the analysis is statistically different from the overall state mean.

Exhibit 6. Area Mean for Instructional Practices and Support by State\*

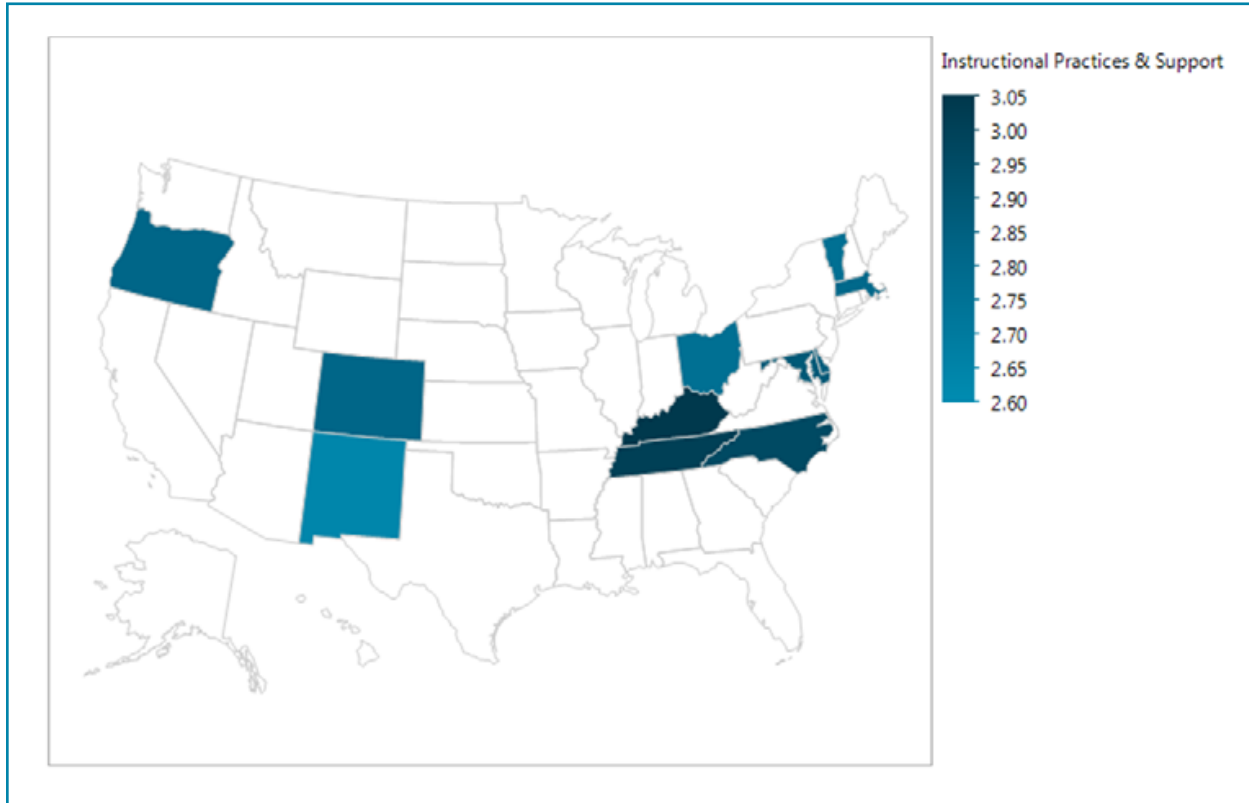


*Educators across states indicate they are encouraged to be innovative in the classroom; however, they also report challenges receiving state assessment data in time to inform instructional choices.*



Figure 6 provides a visual map of the range of state means for the construct area, with lower means represented by a lighter fill and higher means represented by a darker fill.

Figure 6. National Map of Area Mean For Instructional Practices and Support by State



## OREGON

***In the spring of 2014 Oregon administered*** its first statewide TELL survey. Hearing from 59 percent of the school based educators, state leaders have started their initial policy work by convening the TELL Partners to discuss the results according to specific regions and to identify shared areas of common focus. With significant investments from the state legislators in a Network for Quality Teaching and Learning, the TELL survey offers another means of documenting change over time in areas that the state has chosen to invest in such as mentoring, teacher leadership, and embedded professional development. The Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Education Investment Board plan to continue policy discussions during the 2014-2015 school year.

Considering specific survey items related to Instructional Practices and Support, Table 8 shows educators report the highest rate of agreement with the statement that teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction. Almost nine out of 10 educators agree with this statement with very similar rates of agreement across states.

Educators report much more variation across other items in this construct. For example, in NC, more than nine out of 10 educators (91 percent) agree that teachers work in professional learning communities to align instructional practice, while in VT, 67 percent of educators agree with this item, a difference of 24 percentage points.

The lowest-rated-item, and the item with the most range in agreement across states, pertains to how quickly teachers receive state assessment data to inform instructional choices. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of NM educators and more than half the teachers in VT (55 percent) and CO (56 percent) disagree that state assessment data is available in time to impact instructional practice. The rate of agreement varies from 74 percent in DE to 27 percent in NM, a 47-percentage-point difference.

Educators across states also report lower rates of agreement for the item stating that teachers are assigned classes that maximize their likelihood of success with students. Over seven out of 10 educators in KY and TN agree with this statement, while less than six in 10 educators in DE and NM (51 percent), MA (57 percent), OH (54 percent), and OR (56 percent) agree.

Table 8. Agreement on Select Items Related to Instructional Practices and Support

TELL Survey Questions	CO	DE	KY	MA	MD	NC	NM	OH	OR	TN	VT
	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree										
Teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction.	88	88	94	88	91	93	83	88	88	94	87
Teachers work in professional learning communities to develop and align instructional practices.	80	89	90	76	80	91	77	71	82	86	67
State assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices.	44	74	64	62	60	52	27	55	52	66	45
Teachers are assigned classes that maximize their likelihood of success with students.	64	51	74	57	64	69	51	54	56	72	60

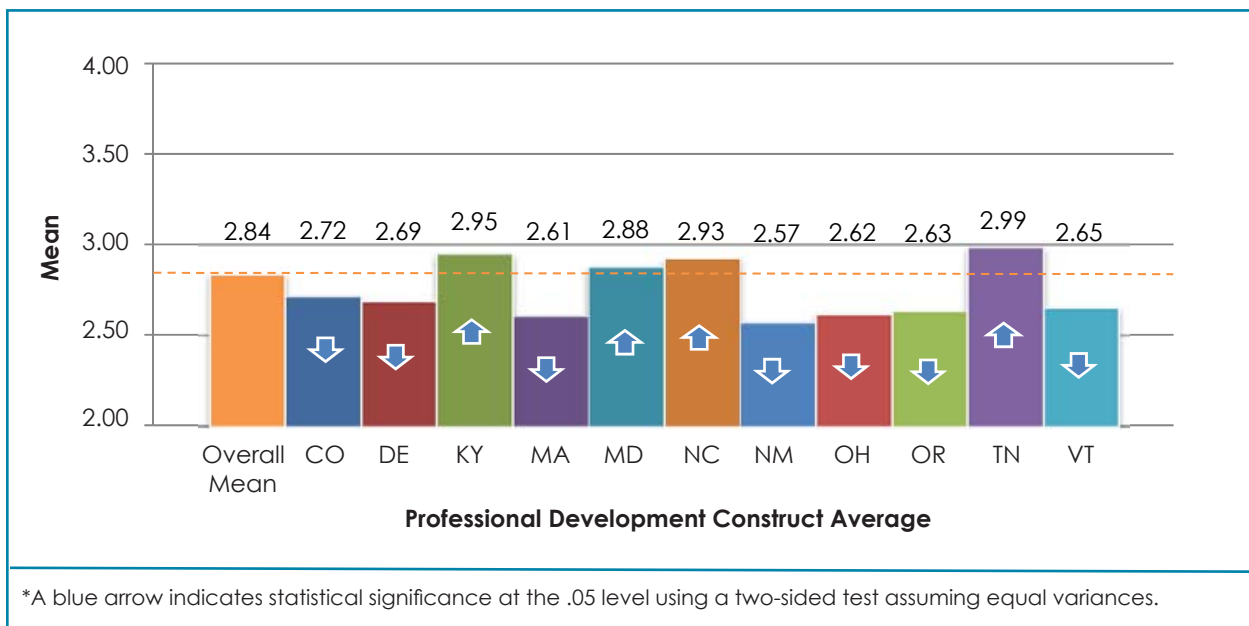
**Implications:** Educators report that teachers have instructional autonomy but are not provided additional supports such as timely data and appropriate assignments to maximize student learning. Given this condition was rated below 3.0 across most states, individual state, district, and local results should be examined carefully. While some elements such as timeliness of state data are beyond local control, teacher assignment can be within the control of local education agencies, and leaders should look for opportunities to maximize teacher backgrounds.

Professional Development

**Finding: A majority of educators across states agree that professional development is aligned with school improvement plans; however, fewer agree that professional development is differentiated or evaluated, and state responses vary widely for this area overall.**

The overall mean of 2.84 for the Professional Development area is also below the “agree” range of 3.0 or higher. (See Exhibit 7.) This is one of two survey areas where no individual state mean is above a 3.0. Individual means range from 2.99 in TN to 2.57 in NM, and there is more than a .3 gap between educators’ perceptions of this survey area for high ranking and low ranking states. The means for MA, NM, OH, OR, and VT are considerably lower than those for KY, NC, and TN and may deserve more attention. Every state in the analysis is statistically different from the overall state mean.

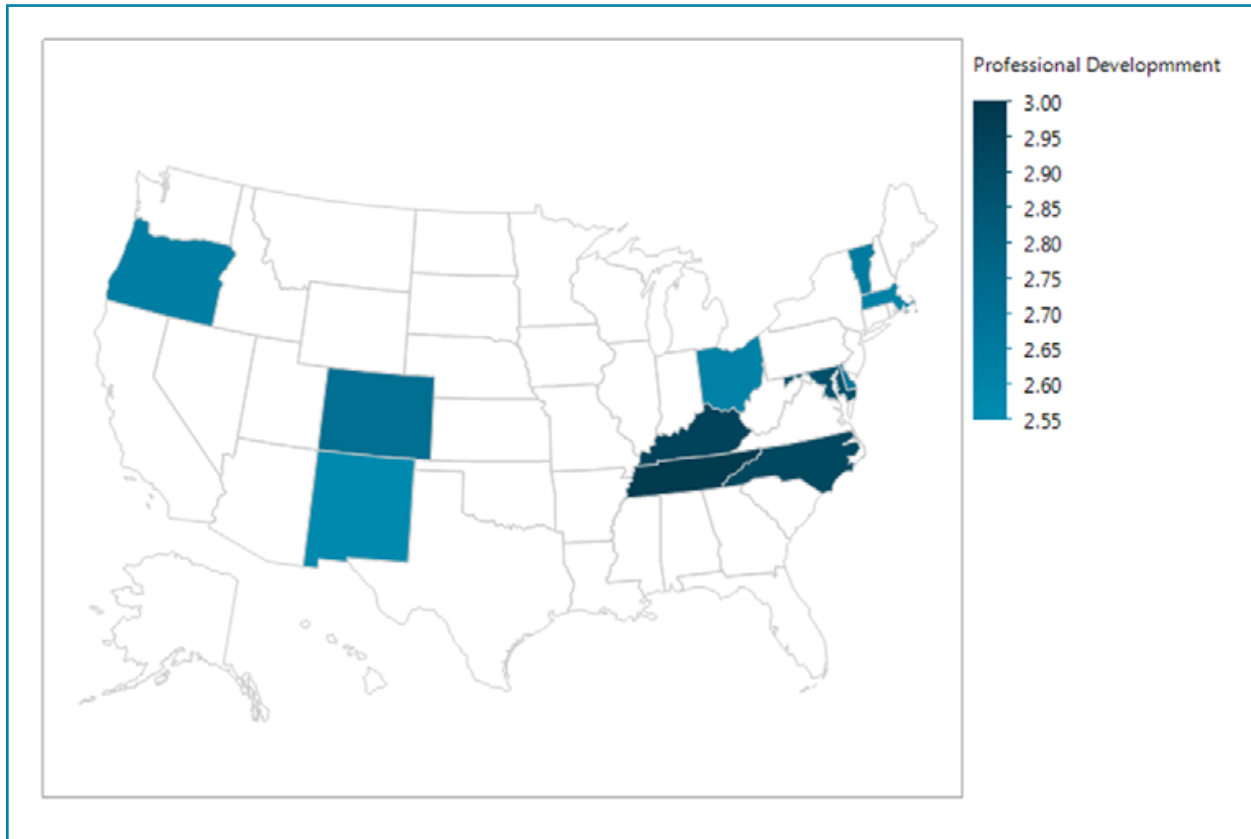
Exhibit 7. Area Mean for Professional Development by State\*



*A majority of educators across states agree that professional development is aligned with school improvement plans; however, fewer agree that professional development is differentiated or evaluated, and state responses vary widely for this area overall.*

Figure 7 provides a visual map of the range of state means for the construct area, with lower means represented by a lighter fill and higher means represented by a darker fill.

Figure 7. National Map of Area Mean For Professional Development by State



## TENNESSEE

**The Tennessee Department of Education** administered the TELL Survey in 2011 and 2013 as part of its First to the Top initiative. With a particular focus on improving the persistently low-performing schools, efforts have included the use of the survey data in school improvement plans and outreach and support to schools and districts through the Tennessee Department of Education's regional analysts and directors across the state.



As shown in Table 9, the majority of educators across states agree that professional learning opportunities are aligned with school improvement plans. Nine out of 10 educators in KY (93 percent), MD and NC (90 percent), and TN (92 percent) and more than three-quarters of educators in the remaining states agree. Educators also largely agree that they are encouraged to reflect on their own practice. KY, MD, NC, and TN all report rates of agreement above 90 percent. The remaining states all exceeded 80 percent agreement rates.

Far fewer educators agree, however, that professional development is differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers. Only in KY, NC, and TN do over 60 percent of educators agree. More than half the educators in the majority of states (CO, DE, MA, NM, OH, OR, and VT) disagree that professional development is differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers. Similarly, overall, most educators across states disagree that professional development is evaluated and results are communicated to teachers. This item also demonstrates a wide range in agreement rates across states, with some states' educators reporting rates of agreement below 40 percent. Less than two-thirds of educators across states agree with this item, ranging from 65 percent agreement in NC to 32 percent agreement in VT.

Table 9. Agreement on Select Items Related to Professional Development

TELL Survey Questions	CO	DE	KY	MA	MD	NC	NM	OH	OR	TN	VT
	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree										
Professional learning opportunities are aligned with the school's improvement plan.	83	83	93	81	90	90	75	83	83	92	82
Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice.	86	86	91	84	90	93	81	81	86	93	80
Professional development is differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers.	45	44	65	42	57	66	42	42	41	68	44
Professional development is evaluated and results are communicated to teachers.	46	42	61	40	58	65	40	38	37	64	32

**Implications:** While this teaching condition was also rated below a 3.0 by educators across all states, the rating was largely driven by the need to differentiate and evaluate professional learning and share results with teachers. While teachers are asked to provide very specific and differentiated instruction to students as well as measure the impact of the instruction, there is a dearth of research on supporting differentiated professional development for teachers. As a starting point, local education agencies may consider how the professional learning communities that largely exist across schools can be used as an organizational structure to facilitate differentiated learning for teachers.<sup>11</sup> Impacting this teaching condition area is paramount especially for stakeholders in MA, MD, NM, OH, OR, and VT.

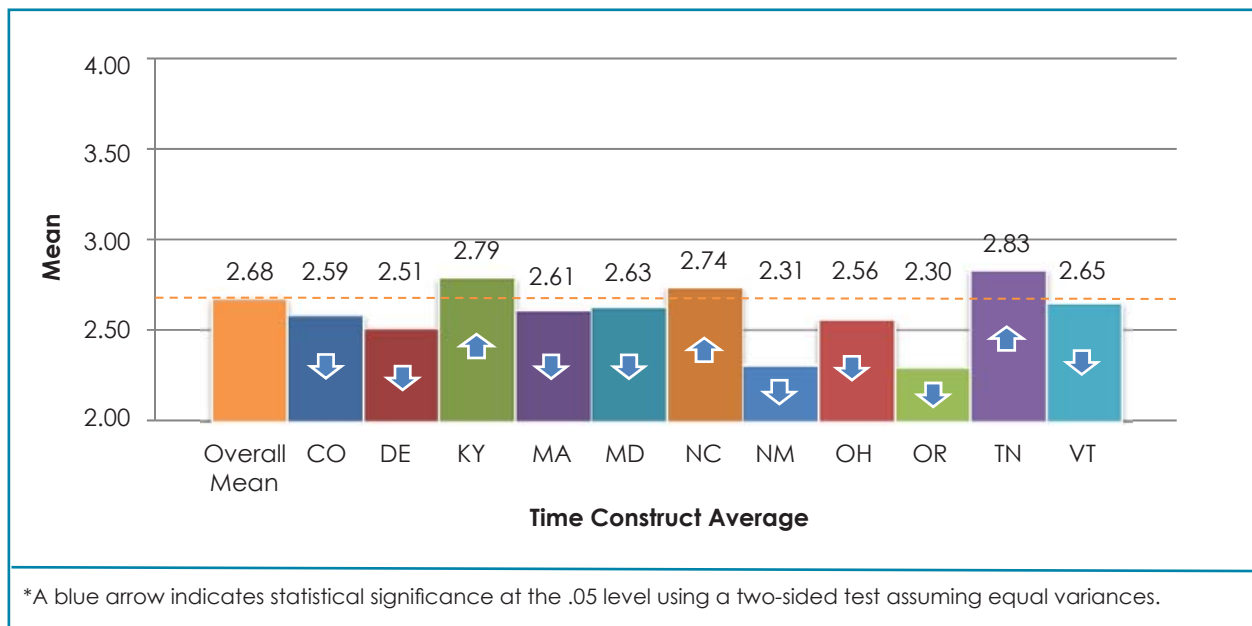
11. Bowgren, L. & Sever, K. (2009). *Differentiated professional development in a professional learning community*. Solution Tree.

Time

**Finding:** Across statewide participants, educators view Time as the condition with the most constraints.

Compared to all survey constructs, educators report the lowest overall mean for Time. (See Exhibit 8.) The overall area mean for Time is 2.68 on a four-point scale, and no state reported a mean above 3.0. The individual state means range from a high of 2.83 in TN to a low of 2.30 in OR. The difference between OR and TN is more than .5, suggesting OR may want to examine this area more closely. Every state in the analysis is statistically different from the overall state mean. KY, NC, and TN are above the mean.

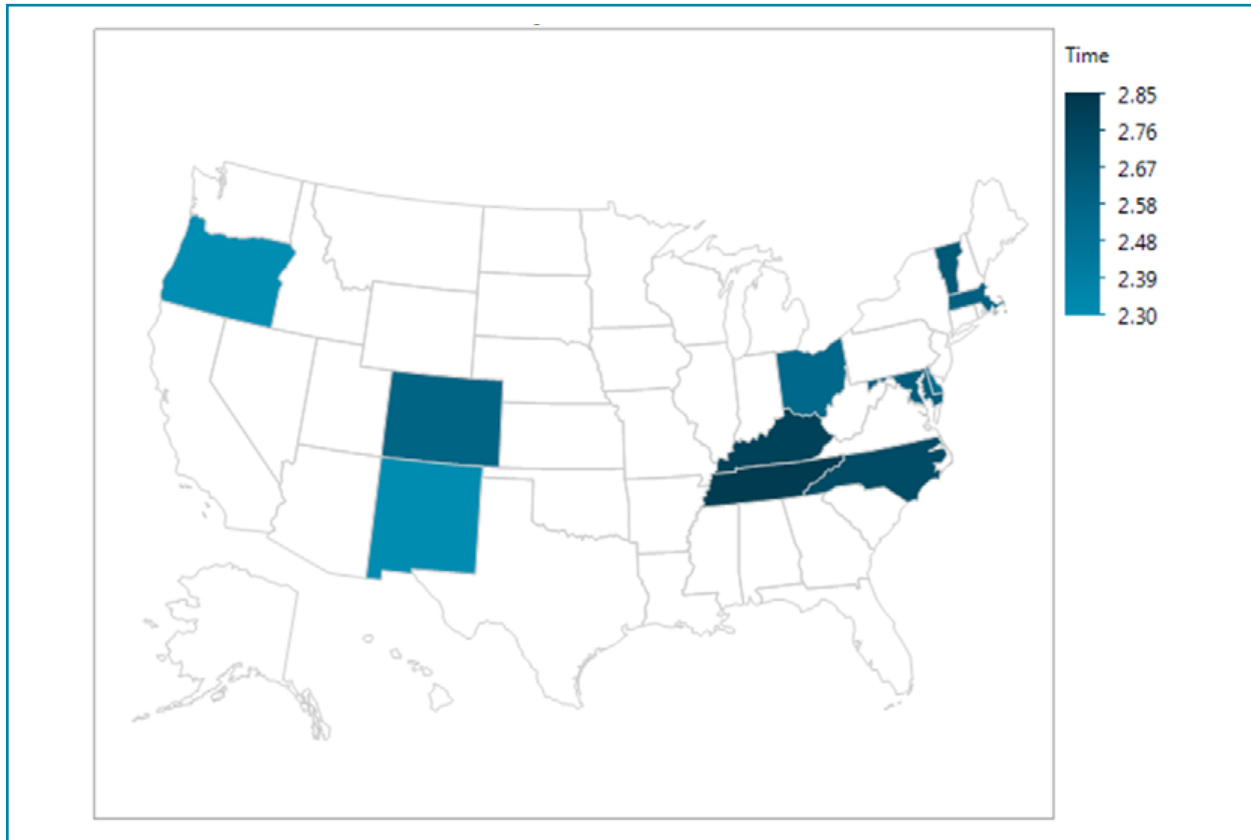
Exhibit 8. Area Mean for Time by State\*



*Across statewide participants, educators view Time as the condition with the most constraints.*

Figure 8 provides a visual map of the range of state means for the construct area, with lower means represented by a lighter fill and higher means represented by a darker fill.

Figure 8. National Map of Area Mean For Time



## NTC AND THE TELL SURVEY

*In each of the states where NTC administered* the TELL survey in 2013 or 2014, there were many valuable strategies developed to improve teaching conditions. These may include revised or new state policies or legislation, district improvement requirements, or school-level action from administrators and teacher leaders.

As Table 11 demonstrates, in the area of Time, the item with the highest overall agreement relates to teachers feeling protected from duties that interfere with teaching. KY and TN educators indicate relatively high agreement with this item (74 percent), and NM educators report the lowest agreement (49 percent).

Educators report the least agreement with the statement that efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork they do. Almost seven out of 10 educators (68 percent) in TN agree paperwork is minimized, while only about three out of 10 educators (31 percent) in NM agree with this item.

The item asking if class sizes are reasonable so that teachers can meet the needs of all students demonstrates the greatest range in rate of agreement across all states and survey items. VT educators respond most positively to this item (79 percent), and OR educators indicate the least agreement (25 percent). This represents the lowest state rate of agreement for any survey item, with only one in four OR educators agreeing that this condition is in place.

Table 11. Agreement on Select Items Related to Time

TELL Survey Questions	CO	DE	KY	MA	MD	NC	NM	OH	OR	TN	VT
	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree										
Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.	63	60	74	69	69	71	49	63	62	74	62
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.	51	39	56	48	53	57	31	48	46	68	57
Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.	57	49	64	60	56	60	42	57	25	68	79

**Implications:** Consistent with TELL surveys administered statewide for the past five years, the area of Time is regularly perceived by educators to represent the largest challenge. Educators across states indicate difficulty balancing the demands of rigorous accountability systems with meeting the needs of diverse learners. These data show that many educators responding to the TELL survey do not perceive that they have sufficient time to meet their professional obligations. Specifically, educators report being burdened by routine paperwork. Stakeholders should consider carefully examining scheduling, use of planning time, and use of non-instructional time to maximize shared learning.

*The area of Time is regularly perceived by educators to represent the largest challenge.*

## Summary

Almost 380,000 educators responded to the TELL survey across the 11 states included in this report. In summary, educators in these states agree that positive conditions in five of the eight survey areas are present in their schools. Positive conditions in the areas of Instructional Practices, Professional Development, and Time are lacking. Additionally, KY, NC, and TN educators report means that are consistently above the overall average and consistently at or above a 3.0 (agree) level, with the exception of the areas of Professional Development and Time. MA, NM, OH, OR, and VT educators' responses are consistently below the overall means for survey areas. Across all states, results indicate:

- ✓ Educators report the most positive conditions associated with Facilities and Resources.
- ✓ Educators' perceptions of School Leadership indicate that, while teachers are held to high standards, there is not an environment of trust in which teachers can raise concerns.
- ✓ Survey respondents also indicate their schools promote Community Support and Involvement as it relates to student learning but also need strategies to ensure engagement.
- ✓ Educators perceive they have instructional autonomy in the area of Instructional Practices and Support but lack access to state assessment data in time to impact instructional choices. Additionally, while teachers view professional learning as largely aligned with school improvement planning, they report that it lacks differentiation to meet individual needs and an evaluation component.
- ✓ Educators across the 11 states consistently report that they lack time to collaborate and plan and are burdened with routine paperwork.



## Recommendations

This report presents information comparing each state's data to an overall state average for each teaching condition examined in the TELL survey. Sample items within each construct are also provided to show the range of responses within a survey area. Findings and implications presented in this report should be considered within the context of the geographical and cultural differences between states, as well as the differences in the time for building survey coalitions to advocate for the survey and the number of years the survey has been implemented. Additionally, as the response rates for New Mexico (12%) and Ohio (16%) are significantly lower than the other states assessed, findings from these states in particular should be approached with caution as results may not be generalizable to the state as a whole. The following recommendations are designed to be useful across states, all of which are in different phases of their work to improve teaching and learning conditions. Some states may have already fully implemented some of these recommendations, while others may be in earlier phases of implementation.

### *Recommendation 1: Support Stakeholders at the State, District, and Local levels in Understanding and Improving Teaching Conditions*

- ✓ Establish an oversight committee of policymakers and practitioners to coordinate the development of teaching standards so all stakeholders understand the critical key elements of building a positive school environment.
- ✓ Ensure teaching standards are widely advocated and disseminated across stakeholder groups, including districts and schools.
- ✓ Create trainings and materials to be shared statewide for understanding and implementing state teaching standards.

### *Recommendation 2: Provide Supports to Help School Leadership Establish Positive Teaching and Learning Conditions in Every School*

- ✓ Create clear expectations and/or guidelines for how school leaders can build positive teaching and learning conditions, including strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers.
- ✓ 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 conditions and build trusting, supportive school environments.
- ✓ Provide professional development for principals and other school leaders that supports efforts to create positive teaching and learning conditions.

*These recommendations are designed to be useful across states, all of which are in different phases of their work to improve teaching and learning conditions.*



### *Recommendation 3: Monitor and Ensure Implementation of Teaching Standards through a Data-Driven Process*

- ✓ Create a process for collecting data to monitor implementation of teaching standards, including timelines and avenues for sharing results.
- ✓ Utilize the TELL survey (or other validated surveys measuring similar concepts) at the state, district, and school level to monitor and track teaching standards implementation.
- ✓ Gather, report, and monitor other data sources that influence the teaching and learning conditions in schools to examine educator perceptions and needs.

### *Recommendation 4: Embed Implementation of Positive Teaching and Learning Conditions in the School Improvement Process*

- ✓ Promote the involvement of multiple stakeholder groups, including the broader community, in analysis and improvement of teaching conditions at the local level.
- ✓ Ensure that teaching conditions data is used as part of the school improvement planning process.
- ✓ Provide multiple and varied professional development opportunities for school leaders to assess and use their own TELL survey 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.

This report is a compilation of the voices of those who know schools best—the dedicated educators working with students every day. More than 375,000 educators across 11 states responded to the TELL survey, providing state and local stakeholders with data necessary to improve teaching and learning conditions in schools. Policymakers, state and local education agency staff, and stakeholders have the tools to create schools that give every teacher and student the best opportunity to be successful.

*Policymakers, state and local education agency staff, and stakeholders have the tools to create schools that give every teacher and student the best opportunity to be successful.*

## Endnotes

### *Teaching conditions and student learning and teacher retention.*

- Borman, G. & Dowling, N. (2008). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(3).
- Buckley, J., Schneider, M., & Shang, Y. (2004). *The effects of school facility quality on teacher retention in urban school districts*. Chestnut Hill, MA: National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities.
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- Loeb, S., Darling-Hammond, L., & Luczak, J. (2005). How teaching conditions predict teacher turnover in California schools. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 80(3).
- Pogodzinski, B., Youngs, P., Frank, K., & Belman, D. (2012). Administrative climate and novices' intent to remain teaching. *The Elementary School Journal*, 113(2).

### *Job satisfaction and right-to-work laws*

- Robinson, C. (2010). Labor unions, corporations and right-to-work laws: Impacts on the American economy. *New Visions for Public Affairs*, (2).
- Daniel L. Reynolds, D. & Moser, H. The public's impression of labor unions in a right-to-work state: A comparison of the relationship between job satisfaction and union support. *National Social Science Association Journal*. Retrieved July 19, 2013 from: <http://www.nssa.us/journals/2007-27-2/2007-27-2-19.htm>.

## Appendix

Websites by state for locating state-specific data, reports, and tools are listed alphabetically below. Available data results are located under the results tab. Research briefs can be found under the resources tab on each site and district and local data tools are posted under the tools tab on each site.

[www.tellcolorado.org](http://www.tellcolorado.org)

[www.telldelaware.org](http://www.telldelaware.org)

[www.tellkentucky.org](http://www.tellkentucky.org)

[www.tellmaryland.org](http://www.tellmaryland.org)

[www.tellmass.org](http://www.tellmass.org)

[www.ntcteachingconditions.org](http://www.ntcteachingconditions.org)

[www.tellnewmexico.org](http://www.tellnewmexico.org)

[www.tellohio.org](http://www.tellohio.org)

[www.telloregon.org](http://www.telloregon.org)

[www.telltennessee.org](http://www.telltennessee.org)

[www.tellvermont.org](http://www.tellvermont.org)

#### ABOUT NEW TEACHER CENTER

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



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