

The New Teacher Center's "Teaching Conditions Initiative" Executive Summary 2012

What is the Teaching Conditions Initiative?

The New Teacher Center (NTC), through its Teaching Conditions Initiative, provides a unique and valuable service to educators in schools, districts and states across the United States. This initiative consists of two parts: 1) administering an anonymous, online survey about teaching conditions in one year, and 2) working with the client in the year to utilize results from the survey in school improvement plans and policies.

NTC's Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Survey has been externally validated and nationally recognized. Using the school as the unit of analyses, the survey consists of a core set of questions that address the following teaching conditions: New Teacher Support, Instructional Practices & Support, Managing Student Conduct, School Leadership, Teacher Leadership, Community Engagement & Support, Use of Time, Professional Development and Facilities & Resources.

Since 2008, NTC has heard from over 769,000 educators across twenty states. The survey results provide more than 19,000 schools with data to incorporate into school improvement planning as well assisting state policymakers with information and research to reform policy and practice. (See Table 1 for client names and numbers.)

The NTC teaching conditions survey instrument consists of a core set of questions that have been externally validated. This work is research driven and has shown connections between positive teaching conditions and student achievement and teacher retention. NTC works with each client to discuss relevant additional questions that can be incorporated to customize the survey for the client. The anonymous survey is administered online during a 4-5 week window; educators receive a seven-digit confidential access code and may complete the survey from any Internet location during the administration period. There is a real time response rate tracker for the state, district, and school so all stakeholders can view the response rates.

NTC provides the results of the survey on a website. Results are provided for the state, district, and to schools that have reached the agreed-upon minimum response rate threshold (usually 50%). Results are posted in a variety of formats for the client to encourage easy use of the data in school improvement planning. All associated tools and reports also are posted on the identified client's website, which has a link to NTC's website. NTC maintains the websites in-house and warehouses the data collected since 2008, making NTC the only organization in the nation to house the responses from over one million

"As the State Superintendent for the Public Schools of North Carolina, I have worked closely with the NTC since we first contracted with the organization to partner in our administration of the survey. NTC has been a valuable partner in this on-going initiative, and its expertise in the successful launch of the survey, availability of the results, and use of the data to assist schools and districts has been tremendous. In 2008, 2010, and 2012 North Carolina has had over 100,000 educators respond to the survey each year. NCDPI continues to work with NTC in assisting schools and districts in utilizing their data for school improvement planning. I highly recommend the New Teacher Center to administer a statewide teaching conditions survey for another state."

Dr. June St. Clair Atkinson
Superintendent, North
Carolina Public Schools

educator surveys and provide longitudinal and cross state comparisons.

NTC identifies and works with a Coalition of Partners in each state to develop and integrate policies related to the findings from the survey. This is a multi-year process and builds on the positive relationships established as a result of this work. The independent research connections of NTC data between positive teaching conditions and student achievement as well as teacher retention have been the drivers of various policies across states.

Integral to policy development is a focus on the Persistently Low Achieving (PLA) schools. Starting in 2004 with the work in North Carolina, NTC has provided specific analyses of the survey data for assistance teams and PLA schools to use in their work towards school improvement. These analyses show a common finding: strong connections to student achievement and teacher retention, especially in the constructs of Community Engagement, School Leadership and Managing Student Conduct.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2012

In 2012, NTC administered statewide surveys in North Carolina and Massachusetts; district wide surveys in Nashville, TN, the Innovation Districts (which included select districts in Rhode Island (RIFT) and New York (NYSUT)), Fairfax, VA, and Pittsburgh, PA. Additionally, NTC administered a teaching conditions survey to 44 schools participating in the Teacher Incentive Fund in Indiana and worked in select persistently low performing schools in Ohio as part of their Race to the Top grant.

Highlights include:

1. **North Carolina**- For the third survey in a row more than 100,000 educators (86 percent) responded; 2,501 schools (95 percent) reached the minimum threshold for school-level data.
2. **Massachusetts** –Over 42,400 educators (52 percent) responded; Data is available at for almost 1,100 schools and over 200 school districts. www.tellmass.org
3. **Ohio** – As part of the state’s Race to the Top award the state identified 17 persistently low achieving schools to participate in a pilot of the survey. The response rate was 68% (620 educators) across four districts. Data is available for all participating schools. www.tellohio.org
4. **Pittsburgh Public Schools** – Over 94 percent response rate across the district was achieved in the second survey administered by NTC in the district in the last two years. <http://pittsburghteachingconditions.org/>
5. **Metro Nash Public Schools (MNPS)** - the district response rate was 70 percent, representing 4,389 educators. www.tellmnps.org
6. **Indiana TAP Schools**- As part of the state’s federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant, NTC conducted the TELL Survey in 46 participating schools. Working with the state, NTC benchmarked results, provided training and integrated the system into the bonus system for school administrators. www.tellindiana.org

(Please visit www.newteachercenter.org for details on any of the above.)

NTC helped us launch the teaching conditions survey with phenomenal participation (over 80%) for the first year of our statewide survey in 2011.

NTC has provided excellent coaching and support on how to utilize the working conditions data to improve teaching and learning in Kentucky. Currently, we are preparing for the second statewide survey to be administered in the spring of 2013.

The future of our children will be brighter thanks to our collaborative efforts with teachers and NTC.”

Dr. Terry Holliday
Commissioner,
Kentucky Public Schools

In 2011-2012, NTC also has continued analyses and policy development with NTC’s clients from the previous survey in 2011: Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, Colorado, Austin (TX), Oakland (CA), and Fairfax (VA).

Highlights include:

Maryland

- NTC's work (P&P, SLD and ExA) with the Maryland State Department of Education to integrate the findings from the 2011 TELL Maryland Survey into NTC's new teacher support work as part of the Race to the Top contract.
- Governor O'Malley's TELL Summit in Maryland, held in May, 2012.

Kentucky

- NTC worked with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to develop Kentucky Teaching Conditions Standards. This is the second state to adopt such standards and will provide a strong foundation for continuing efforts across the state to improve teaching and learning conditions.
- NTC worked with KDE on the appropriate use of the TELL survey as state leaders design the new evaluation instrument for principals as well as the new template for the annual school improvement plan.

National

- In May 2012, at a U.S. Department of Education convening of state and district education leaders from across the country and the heads of eight influential policy organizations (US DOE, AFT, NEA, CCSSO, AASA, NSBA, Council of Great City Schools and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services), Secretary Duncan and the leaders signed a shared vision for transforming the teaching profession. They set common goals, and agreed on what it will take to meet them. The statement points to "Conditions for Successful Teaching and Learning" as one of seven critical elements of a transformed profession. NTC was invited to present at this conference and conducted one of only five expert workshops on this topic.
- NTC presented at the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality to highlight the successful integration of the NTC mentoring and TELL work in to the state's Race to the Top grant in September, 2012.

(Please visit www.newteachercenter.org for details on any of the above.)

IN PREPARATION FOR SPRING 2013

In addition to follow-up policy work from the spring 2012 survey clients, NTC will be working with the following clients to administer surveys in 2013. (NOTE: * indicates a repeat client; ** indicates a repeat statewide client)

1. Tennessee **
2. Maryland**
3. Kentucky**
4. Colorado**
5. Delaware
6. Ohio
7. IN TAP schools *
8. Pittsburgh Public Schools*
9. SEED Grant in Hillsborough

NTC also is involved in discussions with Vermont and anticipates a statewide survey in the spring 2013.

SUMMARY

NTC continues to be the national leader in addressing teaching conditions as a strategy for school improvement and student success. The comprehensive approach that is used, from high-level policy reforms to improving practice in schools and classrooms, benefits millions of students.

Table 1. NTC Teaching and Learning Conditions Surveys 2008-2012

| State and Year Teacher Working Conditions Survey Implemented | Total School-Based Licensed Educators Surveyed | Number of Respondents | Schools with Sufficient Response Provided Data |
|---|--|-----------------------|--|
| North Carolina (2012) | 116,025 | 100,042 | 2,589 |
| Metro Nash Public Schools (2012) | 6,236 | 4,389 | 138 |
| Pittsburgh (2012) *† | 2,676 | 2,515 | 63 |
| Massachusetts (2012)* | 80,906 | 42,404 | 1,077 |
| Ohio (Priority Schools RttT) (2012) | 912 | 620 | 17 |
| RI/NY (Innovation districts) (2012) | 5,467 | 2,923 | 127 |
| Fairfax County, VA (2012)* | 15,471 | 12,406 | 200 |
| Indiana (TIF Participants) (2012) | 1,806 | 1,412 | 45 |
| Kentucky (2011) | 52,349 | 42,025 | 1,100 |
| Tennessee (2011) | 74,614 | 57,391 | 1,500 |
| Maryland (2011) | 70,000 | 45,901 | 869 |
| Colorado (2011) | 62,984 | 29,466 | 850 |
| Austin, TX (2011) | 9,492 | 8,289 | 236 |
| Pittsburgh (2011) | 2,900 | 2,699 | 66 |
| Oakland, CA (2011) | 2,258 | 1,380 | 76 |
| Gates MET Initiative (2010) | 35,000 | 12,798 | 250 |
| North Carolina (2010) * | 119,038 | 105,688 | 2,500 |
| Fairfax County, VA (2010) | 14,362 | 10,761 | 200 |
| Colorado (2009) | 64,494 | 23,108 | 624 |
| Vermont (2009)* | 9,535 | 4,221 | 166 |
| Maryland (2009) | 70,021 | 43,400 | 1,000 |
| Alabama (2008) | 59,792 | 28,188 | 1,000 |
| West Virginia (2008) | 22,699 | 9,842 | 400 |
| Fairfax County, VA (2008) | 14,976 | 8,642 | 200 |
| Illinois (2008) | 9,207 | 2,977 | 100 |
| Kansas (2008) | 39,231 | 16,656 | 700 |
| Massachusetts (2008) | 85,702 | 39,811 | 1,200 |
| Maine (2008) | 19,167 | 5,136 | 150 |
| North Carolina (2008) | 120,159 | 104,249 | 2,300 |
| TOTAL | 1,187,479 | 769,339 | 19,743 |
| *Surveys conducted more than one time in these locales. The indicated iteration had the highest response. | | | |
| †Surveys included Educational Support Professionals (ESPs) or Paraprofessionals. In 2009, Vermont conducted a concurrent but separate ESP survey. | | | |