

Initial Findings from the 2013 TELL Delaware Survey

To do their best work with students, teachers need supportive school environments that maximize their opportunity to be effective. With the leadership of Governor Jack Markell, Secretary Mark Murphy, and the Delaware Department of Education, a coalition of education stakeholders, working with the New Teacher Center, administered the Delaware Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning Survey (TELL Delaware Survey). The survey is designed to assess whether educators across the state report having the resources and supports necessary to facilitate effective teaching. Findings from this initiative will inform school improvement planning and district and state policy.

About the Survey

The TELL Delaware Survey is a statistically valid and reliable instrument¹ that assesses eight research-based teaching and learning conditions. The eight constructs are empirically linked to student achievement and teacher retention and include: Time, Facilities and Resources, Community Support and Involvement, Managing Student Conduct, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Professional Development, and Instructional Practices and Support.² See Table 1 for descriptions of each area. Additionally, the TELL Survey includes questions for novice teachers (those in their first three years in

the profession) to assess induction support and for principals to assess district-level supports. Response options for core questions use a Likert scale and range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. For this brief, results are summarized using a rate of agreement that combines the strongly agree and agree categories.

This summary will provide a brief overview of major trends emerging from preliminary analyses at the state aggregate level.

Note: The results presented in these initial findings may vary slightly (within one percent) from the statewide data available in the web-based "detailed report" due to rounding the agree and strongly agree categories separately and then again rounding to a whole number. The "summary" report as well as the holding the cursor over the detailed report bar graph provides agreement rates to a tenth of a percent. Additionally, some small variation (less than one percent) may result from final cleaning and data posting that occurred after these trends were compiled. In all cases, these small variations do not change reported trends.

1. 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.

2. See endnotes for research.

TABLE 1. 2013 TELL DELAWARE 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

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

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

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

Response Rate

NTC administered the anonymous survey to all school-based licensed educators in early 2013. Over 6,000 educators (59 percent) in the state responded (Table 2). Response rates vary by school type. As Table 2 demonstrates, 60 percent of regular school educators participated in the survey, 64 percent

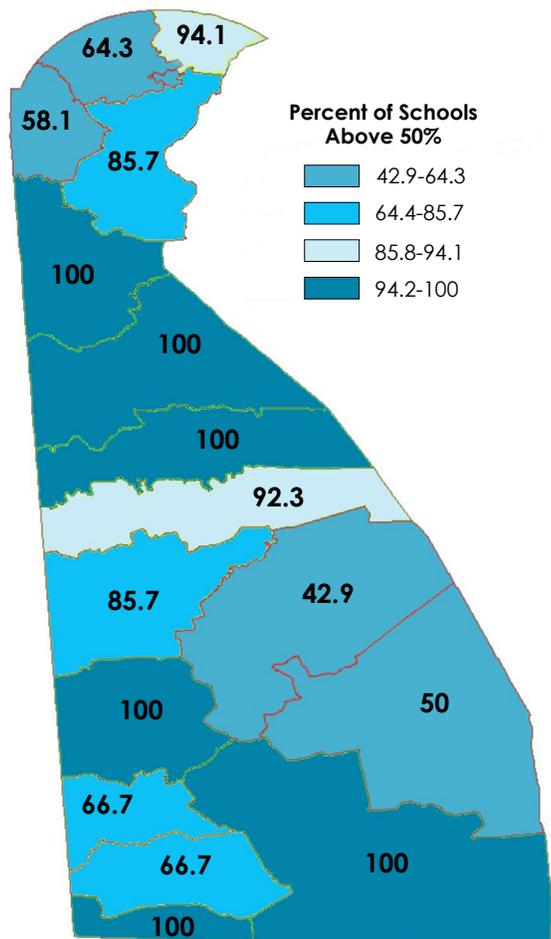
of charter school educators responded, and 39 percent of vocational school educators responded.

As Figure 1 illustrates, 78 percent of schools (175 out of 225) met the 50 percent response rate threshold required to receive an individual school-level data report. All results may be viewed online at www.telldelaware.org.

TABLE 2. 2013 SURVEY RESPONSE RATE BY SCHOOL TYPE

School Type	Headcount	Responded	Percent Responded
Regular	9,126	5,488	60.1
Charter	680	438	64.4
Vocational	586	227	38.7
Total	10,392	6,153	59.2

FIGURE 1. PERCENT OF SCHOOLS WITHIN DISTRICT ABOVE 50 PERCENT



Color formatting does not prescribe whether a response rate is positive or negative, instead it illustrates where a district resides relative to its peers.

Seventy-eight percent of Delaware schools (175 out of 225) met the 50 percent response rate threshold required to receive an individual school-level data report.

Preliminary Findings

The rates of agreement by item and survey area were reviewed. Preliminary findings identify items across conditions with relatively high or low levels of agreement. Items and rates of agreement are reported within select survey areas below.

Delaware educators agree there are structures to support their professional growth. Evidence from the TELL Delaware Survey suggests that the majority of respondents agree that there are high expectations for their instruction, their performance is assessed fairly, and they receive useful feedback. The items below provide specific question stems and the rate of agreement after combining agree and strongly agree categories.

- Almost all educators report that teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction (92 percent).
- More than four out of five educators (84 percent) agree that teacher performance is objectively assessed.
- About the same percentage (82 percent) agrees that teachers receive feedback that can help them improve teaching.

Delaware educators agree there are structures to manage student behavior and a safe school environment. Nearly nine out of 10 educators (88 percent) agree that their faculty works in a school environment that is safe. Educators also agree that policies and procedures for student conduct are understood and implemented by teachers.

- More than four out of five educators acknowledge that policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty (81 percent).
- About the same percentage agree that students at their school understand expectations for their conduct (84 percent).

- More than three-quarters of educators (78 percent) report that teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.

Educators agree teacher expertise is valued and should contribute more to the decision making processes and problem solving across the state. Survey results suggest that teachers are viewed as leaders and experts.

- Nearly eight out of 10 educators (79 percent) agree that teachers are effective leaders in their school.
- More than three-quarters of educators (76 percent) report that teachers are recognized as educational experts.
- More than four out of five educators (84 percent) agree that teachers are encouraged to participate in a school leadership role.

While these items suggest acknowledgment of teacher expertise across the state, fewer educators agree that teachers are effectively utilized in other areas.

- About half of educators agree that teachers have an appropriate level of influence on decision making in their schools (53 percent).

- Less than two-thirds of educators indicate that teachers have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery (63 percent).

- Additionally, about half of educators agree that teachers are assigned classes that maximize their likelihood of success with students (51 percent).

Educators report less agreement with items related to time.

Of all the constructs measured, Delaware educators agree less that teachers have sufficient time to teach and plan. Lower rates of agreement are consistent across all questions associated with time (Table 3).

- Less than four out of 10 educators (39 percent) agree that efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.
- Fewer than half of educators agree that the non-instructional time provided for teachers is sufficient (47 percent).
- Fewer than half of participating educators agree that class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students (49 percent).

TABLE 3. QUESTIONS RELATED TO TIME

Survey Questions	Percent Agree
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.	39.0
The non-instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.	46.9
Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.	49.3
Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.	55.9
Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.	56.7
Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.	59.5
Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.	68.1

Next Steps

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

- A series of tools for schools and districts to use in facilitating dialogue on their teaching and learning conditions and how to utilize this as an artifact to inform school improvement planning.

- Additional analyses and reports examining the connections of teaching and learning conditions with student achievement and teacher retention; validity and reliability of the survey instrument; and a variety of group comparisons (i.e. principals and teachers, charter and non-charter).

All resources and reporting will be made available electronically at www.telldelaware.org.

Endnotes

Borman, G. & Dowling, N. (2008). *Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research*. Review of Educational Research, 78(3).

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About the 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 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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