

Making Effective and Appropriate Use of Your Teaching and Learning Conditions Colorado Survey Data

The TLCC survey provides valuable data on the teaching and learning conditions in Colorado’s schools through a biennial survey of school-based educators working in every public school in the state. The purpose of the TLCC survey is to provide information to guide school and district improvement planning efforts and to inform broader research and policy discussions for supporting teacher recruitment and retention, effective school leadership, and instructional improvement. All users of TLCC survey data are encouraged to consider the following as they access, analyze and disseminate their data.

<p>Do <i>ensure the privacy of all participants.</i> The survey data are most useful when the vast majority of educators feel comfortable sharing their perspectives of the teaching conditions in their schools.</p>	<p>Don't <i>do anything to compromise the confidentiality of participants or the integrity of the survey's results.</i> Each district and school should have a plan for ensuring data security and for appropriately releasing results, analyses and findings to the public.</p>
<p>Do <i>ensure access to the results by all educators in schools with sufficient survey response rates.</i> Every educator should have access to her or his school’s survey data to facilitate the school improvement planning process.</p>	<p>Don't <i>restrict access to results to only a school’s leadership or improvement planning team.</i> The data are most useful when the results are broadly shared and discussed among all educators and other key community stakeholders.</p>
<p>Do <i>view this as an opportunity to inform professional, data-driven conversations about strategies for moving forward.</i> These conversations should be safe, structured and focused on the school rather than individuals.</p>	<p>Don't <i>use this as a tool for criticizing or evaluating individual principals or other school leaders or staff.</i> The teaching conditions present in any given school are the result of multiple factors and contexts. Focusing on issues rather than individuals makes this difficult work much easier and more productive.</p>
<p>Do <i>hold building leadership accountable for encouraging participation in the survey and using the results.</i> To create a culture that values feedback and prioritizes school improvement, it is reasonable to expect building leadership to promote participation in the survey.</p>	<p>Don't <i>hold leadership or staff accountable for the results of the survey.</i> The “leadership” category of the TLCC survey is intentionally broad to incorporate multiple sources of school leadership, including teacher leadership. District and school leaders might consider where administrator perceptions differ considerably from teachers. School leadership should encourage collection and analysis of the data without fear of reprisal.</p>
<p>Do <i>view the results within the context of progress.</i> Consider the data year-to-year and relative to other groups of schools across a district and the state. The findings are reported with bars representing the school, district and state averages for TLCC questions and domains.</p>	<p>Don't <i>use the information within the vacuum of a single school.</i> The results will prove more meaningful if used to support collaborative efforts to identify and implement best practices within and among Colorado schools.</p>
<p>Do <i>use this as an impetus for broader conversations.</i> Consider conversations regarding the climate, conditions and culture of schools and how they affect student learning and teacher retention. The findings from the survey provide a good entry point into complex discussions when used with multiple sources of school data.</p>	<p>Don't <i>view the survey as a “magic bullet.”</i> This survey will not cure all that ails a school. The context of every school’s unique culture and programs should be considered along with working conditions data. Consequently, outsiders considering school data should be sensitive to the multitude of school factors influencing results on the survey.</p>
<p>Do <i>consider the perceptual data collected by the survey as real data.</i> Educators’ perceptions of the culture and context of their</p>	<p>Don't <i>dismiss the results as opinion or not as “valid” or important as other data sources.</i> Educators’ perceptions are their reality and these data provide important insights into the learning environment of their schools.</p>

<p>school have been linked in a number of studies to student learning, future employment plans, efficacy and motivation.</p>	<p>However, other data should be used to triangulate these findings and provide a better understanding of these perceptions (e.g., instructional expenditures, proportion of teachers working out of field, teacher/pupil ratio).</p>
<p>Do <i>view the results as a snapshot in time of faculty perceptions.</i> The survey data should be considered a baseline tool for measuring improvement on a host of critical teaching and learning conditions.</p>	<p>Don't <i>assume the results are a permanent and static descriptor of the school's conditions.</i> Regardless of how positive or negative results may appear, conditions will shift. The impact of teaching and learning conditions are cumulative and residual over time. They are bigger than any individual; positive and negative influences evolve over time.</p>
<p>Do <i>regard the results as an accurate representation of the working conditions that teachers actually experience in their schools.</i> Teachers' perceptions are directly related to the reality of the conditions in their schools. For example, teachers spending more time outside the school day on teaching activities may express the most concern about time available to complete their jobs.</p>	<p>Don't <i>view this as merely an opportunity for educators to vent a litany of complaints.</i> There are negative and positive elements of the data in every Colorado school, and the degree to which teachers express dissatisfaction is undeniably linked to the real conditions within their respective schools. This is not a satisfaction survey. These are educators' perceptions of the presence of important, research-based factors in their school that affect student learning and teacher retention.</p>
<p>Do <i>use your findings to drive educators, stakeholders and the community toward more complex conceptions of teaching and learning conditions.</i> Favorable school conditions involve more than keeping the lights on in a building and paying educators sufficiently. The TLCC initiative considers a comprehensive, research-based set of factors, including professional development, time, empowerment and leadership.</p>	<p>Don't <i>regard this as an attempt to merely document the physical structure and related resources.</i> While physical facilities and resources are included in the research base, other complex factors influencing the professional teaching practices of educators are also measured.</p>
<p>Do <i>use the findings to inform school and district level decisions.</i> The data can help inform scheduling, professional development offerings, opportunities to support and cultivate teacher leadership, collaboration, and investments in facilities and resources. By making TLCC data part of the school improvement planning process, findings can be seamlessly integrated into current and emerging school improvement programs.</p>	<p>Don't <i>use this information to unilaterally and/or arbitrarily judge a school's effectiveness.</i> Every finding should be considered a tool for driving improvement and not for fueling accountability grades or measures.</p>
<p>Do <i>use the findings to help districts move from understanding building conditions to taking action.</i> Teams of community members, teachers, principals, administrators, and policymakers should consider using the data as one point of reference in planning for and implementing change in their school.</p>	<p>Don't <i>use the results as a one-shot conversation or a report that sits on the shelf.</i> The data are only useful if analyzed and used to guide improving real schools.</p>
<p>Do <i>use TLCC to help drive state and local-level policy decisions.</i> Reviewing data results with state and local decision-makers (e.g., teacher associations, school leadership, school boards, legislators) can ensure policies and resources are more responsive to the most pressing needs of students, educators, schools, and districts.</p>	<p>Don't <i>over- or under-represent the data in state and local policy decision-making.</i> Policymakers should neither ignore the power of the data, nor make policy without the context of other data points and school context.</p>