



West Virginia Vision for Improving Teaching and Learning: Facilitator Survey Prompts and Guiding Questions

by

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To help ensure all students can learn teachers need to work in schools designed for their success. Positive teaching conditions, where educators are supported and empowered, are essential to teacher retention and, ultimately, student learning.

To assess whether these conditions are present, the West Virginia State Board of Education, under the leadership of the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia Education Association and other stakeholder groups, conducted its first statewide survey of teaching and learning conditions in 2008. The survey, which was administered through the New Teacher Center at the University of California at Santa Cruz in February and March 2008, was sent to all school-based, licensed educators throughout the state of West Virginia.

Educators across the state have spoken out on the teaching conditions in their schools. *Almost 10,000 West Virginia educators (43 percent) from across the state participated in the West Virginia Vision for Improving Teaching and Learning (VITAL) Survey.* Data—only released if at least 40 percent of the school faculty or district’s school-based licensed educators responded—is now available for about 400 schools and 36 districts, providing critical information for making local and state level decisions to improve West Virginia schools.

Using this data to inform school improvement planning is essential. However, this data can be difficult to interpret, understand and utilize at the building level. This document can hopefully serve as a guide for school and district faculty in delving deeper into the results, assessing it relative to other information, and identifying the root causes of educator perceptions about their teaching and learning environments.

Convening Conversations about VITAL Data

This unique data represents the perceptions of those who understand these conditions best—the educators who experience them every day. But assessing teaching conditions is not like looking at other more neutral and quantifiable data points like student test scores, class size, etc. Getting honest, authentic input and dialogue, especially in schools where the basic building blocks of positive conditions—trust, time and leadership—are not in place can be challenging. Using information in a positive way toward school improvement is critical.

A data use guide has been posted at www.westvirginiavital.org that helps schools better understand the purpose and intent of the VITAL Survey data. In the meantime, as you sit down to discuss the survey results, the following can serve as useful reminders for how participants can stay focused on the evidence before them and on listening to multiple perspectives, rather than getting bogged down in assumptions or evaluations.¹

When looking at data,

- Stay focused on the evidence.
- Look openly and broadly; don't let your expectations cloud your vision.
- Look for patterns in the evidence that provide clues to how to put the data into a school context.

When listening to colleagues,

- Listen without judging.
- Tune in to differences in perspective.
- Use controversy as an opportunity to explore and understand each other's perspectives.
- Focus on understanding where different interpretations come from.
- Make your own thinking clear to others.
- Be patient and persistent.

When reflecting on your thinking,

- Ask yourself, "Why do I see this data in this way? What does this tell me about what is important to me?"
- Look for patterns in your own thinking.
- Tune in to the questions from your colleagues.
- Compare what you see in the data and what you experience in the school on a regular basis.

¹ These guidelines are adapted from the work of Mark Driscoll at Education Development Center and that of Steve Seidel and others at Harvard University's Project Zero.

When reflecting on the process ask,

- What do I see that is interesting or surprising?
- What have I learned from listening to my colleagues that was interesting or surprising?
- What new perspectives have my colleagues provided?
- How can I make use of my colleagues’ perspectives?
- What questions about teaching, learning or leadership has the data raised for me?

The Four Factor Areas of VITAL – Identifying Broad Areas to Prioritize

There are four *factor areas* on the VITAL Survey school and district reports: Leadership, Resources, Professional Development and Decision Making. Each is explained in the table below.

These factor areas were put together as a summary sheet to quickly view your results and represent a strategy for looking at a combination of 8 questions that together provide rich information about the issue defined by the factor name. These factors were identified by analyzing survey results and utilizing questions that held together well and best explained the ascribed area. They are aligned, but do not exactly match the sections of the survey. Our hope is that they will help you identify key teaching and learning conditions in which to delve deeper into specific questions and on which to focus your efforts.

Domain Name	Definition	Survey Questions Used for the Domain Score
Leadership	This is the average of the 8 questions from the leadership and empowerment sections of the survey that were most important in explaining the presence of leadership conditions that contribute to trusting, supportive environments, problem solving and clear communication	Q5.1: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with statements about leadership in your school. Q5.1a: There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect within the school Q5.1b: The school leadership communicates clear expectations to students and parents Q5.1d: Teachers feel comfortable raising issues that are important to them Q5.1g: The school leadership consistently supports teachers when needed Q5.1h: The leadership effectively communicates policies Q5.1i: The school leadership supports teachers’ efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom Q5.3 The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about: Q5.4a: Leadership issues Q5.4e: Empowering teachers

Domain Name	Definition	Survey Questions Used for the Domain Score
Resources	This is the average of the 8 questions from the time and facilities and resources sections of the survey that were most important in explaining the presence of critical resources such as time, technology, instructional resources, etc .	<p>Q.2.1: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the use of time in your school.</p> <p>Q2.1b: Teachers have time available to collaborate with their colleagues</p> <p>Q2.1c: The non-instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient</p> <p>Q3.1a: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school facilities and resources</p> <p>Q3.1a: Teachers have sufficient access to instructional materials and resources</p> <p>Q3.1b: Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology Including computers, printers, software, and internet access</p> <p>Q3.1c: Teachers have sufficient training and support to fully utilize The available instructional technology</p> <p>Q3.1d: Teachers have access to reliable communications technology, including phones, faxes and email</p> <p>Q3.1f: Teachers have sufficient access to a broad range of professional personnel</p> <p>Q3.1i: Teachers have adequate professional space to work productively</p>
Professional Development	This is the average of the 8 questions from the professional development section of the survey that were most important in explaining the availability and quality of professional learning opportunities	<p>Q6.1: Professional development provides teachers with the knowledge and skills most needed to teach effectively</p> <p>Q6.2: Teachers are provided opportunities to learn from one another</p> <p>Q6.3: Sufficient resources are available to allow teachers to take advantage of professional development activities</p> <p>Q6.4: Professional development offerings are data-driven</p> <p>Q6.7a: Professional development has provided you with strategies that you have incorporated into you instructional delivery methods</p> <p>Q6.8a: Professional development has proven useful to you in your efforts to improve student achievement</p> <p>Q6.9: I participate in ongoing follow up from professional development opportunities that help me improve my teaching</p> <p>Q6.10: School-based professional development provides teachers with the knowledge and skills most needed to teach effectively</p>
Decision Making	This is the average of the 8 questions from the empowerment section of the survey that were most important in explaining the role teachers play in making decisions about their classroom and school	<p>Q4.3: Please indicate how large a role teachers have at your school in each of the following areas:</p> <p>Q4.3a: Selecting instructional materials and resources</p> <p>Q4.3b: Devising teaching techniques</p> <p>Q4.3c: Setting grading and student assessment practices</p> <p>Q4.3d: Determining the content of in-service professional development programs</p> <p>Q4.3e: Establishing and implementing student discipline policies</p> <p>Q4.3f: Providing input on how the school budget will be spent</p> <p>Q4.3g: School improvement planning</p> <p>Q4.3i: Faculty senate planning and decision making</p>

A school (three bars) or district (two bars) report in relation to the domains looks like this (blue = school; green = district; red = state averages):

Domain Area	Average
Leadership	This is the average of the 8 questions from the leadership and empowerment sections of the survey that were most important in explaining the presence of leadership conditions that contribute to trusting, supportive environments, problem solving and clear communication
	4.33
	3.64
	3.70

A horizontal bar chart with three bars. The top bar is blue and represents the school average of 4.33. The middle bar is green and represents the district average of 3.64. The bottom bar is red and represents the state average of 3.70. The bars are positioned to the right of the numerical values listed in the table.

Look first at the four factor averages at the front of the report as it provides a snapshot of the school/district in all areas surveyed. These factors are provided for “at a glance” summary data in order to identify broad areas for further exploration. They are compiled by analyzing survey results and utilizing questions that held together well and best explained the domain area.

Our hope is that they will help you identify key areas of teaching and learning conditions on which to celebrate success and focus your improvement efforts. They may represent multiple sections of the survey, such as empowerment and leadership, as these areas tend to be related within the school. So, the way teachers view school leadership and whether they feel engaged in decision making are intimately related.

After identifying an area, looking at the key questions that comprise the factor (as they were the most important in

1. Are there any factors in which your school’s or district’s scores are significantly different than the state?

- Make sure the difference is both significant and meaningful. Differences in the domain average should be large enough to merit discussion and investments in reform. Given the size of the database, even the smallest differences have been found to be “statistically significant.” Differences of a few hundredths are not large. *However, while a difference of .3 may not seem like much, it could reflect large disparities in the perception of working conditions on key questions within the area on the survey.*

- Look for both positives and negatives. Positives should be acknowledged in their own right and could be illuminating when thinking through how to address other areas of greater concerns.
 - Consider other comparisons. Are there comparisons from other schools in the district or other schools and districts with similar demographics?
2. **Are any of the factor averages lower than a 3.00?** 3.00 would be considered “neutral,” so below 3.00 implies that educators in the school, generally, are more likely to disagree that working conditions in this area are present.
- Are those dissatisfaction areas unique to your school or is this an area of concern for all schools within the district?
 - Are there multiple areas of dissatisfaction that may be related to each other? If so, can you identify the root causes that may be driving dissatisfaction across multiple areas?
 - Is there strong dissatisfaction (2.50 or lower) or are teachers responding neutrally (between 2.80 and 3.10)? If strong dissatisfaction exists, exploring some immediate short term strategies and long term solutions may be necessary.
 - Go in and look more specifically at individual questions in each domain to better understand the specifics...
3. **How are specific factors and questions related to school/district goals for improving teacher retention and student learning?** *While focusing on conditions in which your school is different than others makes sense, ensuring that conversations reflect the greatest priorities of your faculty for improving student learning and retention is also important. Additionally questions for probing deeper should integrate well with reform efforts and be in areas where the school reform can have an impact.*
- Which aspect of your work environment most affects your willingness to keep teaching at your school? Which questions had the greatest connections to future employment plans?
 - Which aspect of working conditions is most important to you in promoting student learning? Which questions had the greatest connection to student achievement given previous surveys and teacher responses?

Questions and Probes within Sections of the Survey

The following questions and prompts are meant to spur discussion of individual survey questions amongst school faculty. Ideally, the conversation will help schools identify reasons for teacher perceptions, helping schools to make more informed decisions on potential reforms to address challenges or successes to scale up and apply to other school issues.

TIME Section of the Survey

Time has been the area where educators are least likely to note the presence of critical working conditions, yet it matters most for improving student learning according to educators. Critical issues surveyed in this area include: class size, time for collaboration, non-instructional time available, non-essential duties and paperwork, and time spent on educational issues outside of the school day.

Question 2.1a. Teachers have reasonable class sizes, affording them time to meet the educational needs of all students. Statewide 54 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What are the actual class sizes (teacher/pupil ratios) in the school? Are they higher than other schools in the district? In the state? Is there great variation within the school across classrooms? Across grades or content areas?
- Is this a class size issue or a professional development issue? Survey trends indicate that teachers want more professional development to differentiate instruction (work with special education, gifted, English Language Learners, etc.). Are teachers overwhelmed with numbers of students or need more support to reach the different learners they have in their classrooms?
- Is it an issue of class size or the number of preparations teachers have? Is there variation by subject taught (Language Arts for example) or grade level?

Question 2.1b. Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues. Statewide 44 percent of educators agree with the statement

- How much of the non-instructional time available to teachers is scheduled so that they can work in vertical, horizontal or subject specific teams on issues directly related to teaching and learning?
- How is the schedule determined? Is it done at the district or school level? How much flexibility is there? Has finding collaborative time been a priority (versus non-instructional time when individual planning can occur)? Can the school utilize parents/volunteers/substitutes/district personnel/principals etc. to cover non-instructional time to free up more opportunities for collaborative time?

- Is it an issue about the QUANTITY of time or the QUALITY of time? While time may be available, if it is not used efficiently and effectively to improve instruction, educators may believe what is available is not enough.
- Are changes in current attitudes, skills and relationships needed to develop high quality teacher-to-teacher professional development?

Question 2.1c. The non-instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient. Statewide 41 percent of educators agree with the statement

- While non-instructional time is defined on the survey, do you think faculty in your building considered all non-contract time with students? Did they consider time before and after school for which they are under contract?
- How much of the non-instructional time available to teachers is scheduled so that they can work in vertical, horizontal or subject specific teams on issues directly related to teaching and learning?
- How is the schedule determined? Is it done at the district or school level? How much flexibility is there? Has finding collaborative time been a priority (versus non-instructional time when individual planning can occur)? Can the school utilize parents/volunteers/substitutes/district personnel/principals etc. to cover non-instructional time to free up more opportunities for collaborative time?
- Is it an issue about the QUANTITY of time or the QUALITY of time? While time may be available, if it is not used efficiently and effectively to improve instruction, educators may believe what is available is not enough.

Question 2.1d. Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students. Statewide 54 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What non-essential duties are expected of teachers? Are there ways to cover these duties using paraprofessionals, parents, etc.? Are these duties critical to ensure the safety of students and efficient operation of the school?
- Is it an issue of the amount of duties or are there other causes? For example, if teacher absenteeism is high, other teachers, while not assigned duties, may be taking them on to cover for colleagues who are not present. Is it an issue of not enough substitutes available in the district to cover classes and duties?
- Is this a perceptual issue? Are teachers sufficiently engaged in decision-making or communicated with about duties to understand the challenges?

Question 2.3. In an average week how much non-instructional time do you have available?
Statewide 33 percent of teachers report having 3 hours or less

- Are the results surprising? Do you think teachers and school leaders in your building have similar perceptions about the amount of time available (statewide there are significant disparities between teacher and principal perception)?
- How is the schedule determined? Is it done at the district or school level? How much flexibility is there? Has finding collaborative time been a priority? Can the school utilize parents/volunteers/substitutes/district personnel/principals etc. to cover non-instructional time to free up more opportunities for collaborative time?
- How is this time utilized? Is it for individual planning or collaborative work? Is it used well – meaning the time is spent in ways which will improve teaching and learning? What structures are in place to ensure time is used efficiently and effectively?

Question 2.3a. Of those hours, how many are typically spent on supervisory duties?
Statewide 85 percent of teachers report having 3 hours or less

- What supervisory duties are expected of teachers? Are there ways to cover these duties using paraprofessionals, parents, etc.? Are these duties critical to ensure the safety of students and efficient operation of the school?
- Is it an issue of the amount of duties or are there other causes? For example, if teacher absenteeism is high, other teachers, while not assigned duties, may be taking them on to cover for colleagues who are not present. Is it an issue of not enough substitutes available in the district to cover classes and duties?

Question 2.3b. Of those hours, how many are available for individual planning?
Statewide 51 percent of teachers report having 3 hours or less

- If time is not being used for planning, how is it being used? Is it not available or is it usurped for supervisory duties or other non-instructional purposes? For meetings and correspondence with parents? To cover classes of colleagues who are absent due to a lack of availability of substitute teachers?
- How much individual planning time does the faculty want? Does it need? Are there protocols or structures around the use of this time or are teachers free to use it as desired and needed?

Question 2.3c. Of those hours, how many are available for structured collaborative planning? *Statewide 86 percent of teachers report having 3 hours or less*

- What groups of educators most need to collaborate? Grade level, content level, Professional Learning Communities, Other teams? How is common scheduling created and who determines which groups are prioritized for common time?

- What did the faculty assume the term “structured” meant? Is there time available that is not structured? What kind of structures would be conducive for improving collaborative time? For communicating successful strategies and learning from collaborative teams/grades/subjects to the entire faculty?

Question 2.4. In an average week of teaching how much time do you spend on school related activities outside the regular school work day? Statewide 55 percent of teachers report spending 5 hours or more per week

- Are the results surprising? Do you think teachers and school leaders in your building have similar perceptions about the amount of time worked outside of the day (statewide there are significant disparities between teacher and principal perception)?
- Is this a problem? Is it contributing to teacher burnout? Is it true across the entire faculty? Are there ways to ensure high quality instruction occurs but more is done during the school day?

FACILITIES AND RESOURCES Section of the Survey

Of all the areas on the survey, educators were the most likely to say that they had access to sufficient facilities and resources. Critical areas included in this section of the survey include: access to instructional resources and technology, office equipment, communication technology, adequate professional space and personnel support, and a safe, cleanly environment.

Question 3.1a. Teachers have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials and resources. Statewide 76 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What do you believe the faculty meant by sufficient? Does your school and/or district spend more or less on instructional resources than others? Are instructional materials equally available and accessible across classrooms within the school (grade, content, more veteran educators)? Across all schools within the district? Are perceptions of sufficiency influenced by the timing of resources (i.e. ordered materials come after the start of the school year)?
- What do you believe the faculty meant by adequate? Is it a question of access, or is it a question of having instructional materials that ensure teachers can be successful conveying content to all learners? Are current materials aligned with state standards? Are instructional materials appropriate for the learning needs of all students served? Are materials available in multiple medias (print, video, software, etc.)? Does the faculty have a clear understanding of how to align the resource selection process with the school’s vision, communication patterns, assessment practices, staff development procedures, and the selection of curriculum and instruction processes?

- Who makes decisions about what instructional materials are ordered? Is it a school or district decision? What role do teachers play? How are their experiences with materials gathered and assessed in making future purchasing decisions?

Question 3.1b. Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology. Statewide 70 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What do you believe the faculty meant by sufficient? Does your school and/or district have more or less technology available for instruction than others? Is technology equally available and accessible across classrooms within the school (grade, content, more veteran educators)? Across all schools within the district? Are perceptions of sufficiency influenced by the desire and/or ability of teachers to use it well for instruction (i.e. professional development on integrating technology into curriculum and teaching)
- Is this technology accessible within teachers' classrooms or only in central places (i.e. computer lab, library, media center, etc.)? If in the classroom, is it enough to be relevant and useful for instruction?
- Who makes decisions about what instructional technology is available? Is it a school or district decision? What role do teachers play? How are their experiences with technology gathered and assessed in making future purchasing decisions? What resources are available to the school to support technology use? Is the budget sufficient? Are choices made at the school and/or district level?
- Are teachers concerns about support related to technology functioning well, or about assistance in integrating it into instruction? What professional development is available to teachers to use instructional technology? Has it been effective?

Question 3.1c. Teachers have sufficient training and support to fully utilize the available instructional technology. Statewide 58 percent of educators agree with the statement

- Are teachers concerns about support related to technology functioning well, or about assistance in integrating it into instruction? What professional development is available to teachers to use instructional technology? Has it been effective?
- What resources are available to the school to support technology use? Is the budget sufficient? Are choices made at the school and/or district level?

Question 3.1d. Teachers have sufficient access to reliable communications technology, including phones, faxes and email. Statewide 72 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What do you believe the faculty meant by sufficient? Does your school and/or district spend more or less on communications technology than others? Is technology equally available and accessible across classrooms within the school (grade, content, more

veteran educators)? Across all schools within the district? Are perceptions of sufficiency influenced by the functioning of the technology (i.e. spam, server down, cell service, etc.)?

- Is this technology accessible within teachers' classrooms or only in central places (i.e. main office, lounge, etc.)?

Question 3.1e. Teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, chalk, etc. Statewide 78 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What do you believe the faculty meant by “sufficient?” Does your school and/or district spend more or less on office equipment and supplies than others? Are supplies equally available and accessible across classrooms within the school (grade, content, more veteran educators)? Across all schools within the district? Are perceptions of sufficiency influenced by the timing of resources (i.e. budget spent before end of school, etc.)?
- Who makes decisions about what supplies are ordered and how they are disseminated? Is it a school or district decision? What role do teachers play? How are their needs assessed in making future purchasing decisions?

Question 3.1f. Teachers have sufficient access to a broad range of professional personnel. Statewide 63 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What staff is available to assist teachers in meeting the educational needs of students? Can they address moderate and severe needs? Guidance and counseling? Medical?
- How is support personnel staffing determined across the district? How are needs assessed? Are resources allocated to schools with the greatest needs? What input do schools have? What input do teachers have?
- What do teachers believe is sufficient? Are expectations similar across the entire faculty? Does all staff have equal access to support personnel?

Question 3.1g. Teachers and staff work in an environment that is clean and well maintained. Statewide 68 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What are teachers' expectations around maintenance of the school? Of their classrooms? How are those expectations and concerns communicated? To whom? How are issues around physical plant generally, and maintenance in particular handled?

- How are decisions around budget and staffing for school upkeep made? Who is involved? At what level (school or district)?
- What role, if any, has parents and community played in creating and/or improving school maintenance?

Question 3.1h. Teachers and staff work in an environment that is safe. Statewide 80 percent of educators agree with the statement

- How does the school compare on indicators of student discipline such as expulsions and other indicators? Are there other ways to gauge the extent of the issue? Is it related to certain students, certain grades, or are concerns broader?
- Are perceptions consistent across staff? Are there concerns for personal safety? What is driving those perceptions?
- Does your district/school have a clear school safety policy and is the policy reinforced in all teaching and learning activities?

Question 3.1i. Teachers have adequate professional space to work productively. Statewide 67 percent of educators agree with the statement

- Is there space available for teachers to meet and work collaboratively? Is it available when teachers have time to plan and collaborate? Is it conducive to working individually or in a group? Is it permanent or temporary space?
- Are there places where teachers can meet with students and/or parents? Is classroom space sufficient to meet teacher and student needs? Is space available for not only classroom activities but also “special” activities as well?

EMPOWERMENT Section of the Survey

Teacher empowerment is viewed as critical to teacher success with students and their future employment decisions. One-third of educators believe empowerment is the most important teaching condition in promoting student learning (33 percent)—the highest of any of the teaching conditions assessed in the survey—and the one-fifth believe it is the most significant condition influencing whether teachers keep working at their current school (22 percent). Questions in this section include: teacher role in decisions within the classroom and school, how valued teachers feel as professionals, and the effectiveness of decision making processes in place within the school.

Question 4.1a. Teachers are recognized as educational experts. Statewide 63 percent of educators agree with the statement

- Recognized by whom (administration, parents, community)? What does recognition look like? What is currently done to promote teachers as knowledgeable, skilled, professionals?
- How much of the issue is internal (due to the policies and actions of the school and/or district) versus external (due to media coverage, NCLB, etc.)? Does it matter in assessing strategies and whether or not you prioritize moving forward in this area?

Question 4.1b. Opportunities for advancement within the teaching profession (other than administration) are available to me. Statewide 41 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What opportunities are available to allow teachers to remain teaching but play leadership roles (coaches, mentors, specialists, etc.)? Are these formal or informal roles? How are teachers selected? Are these opportunities open to all teachers? How teachers identified and selected for leadership roles? Is compensation available for assuming these roles? Are the roles permanent appointments or temporary or does there exist a rotation policy so more teachers have opportunities for leadership development?

Question 4.1c. Teachers are centrally involved in decision making about educational issues. Statewide 46 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What were teachers thinking when they considered “centrally”? Do you believe they thought this meant that they had to be making the decisions or part of a process?
- When is the right time to engage teachers in making decisions? Under what parameters? Are teachers happy with informing decisions? Is the process important or are there expectations about teacher input being actualized in outcomes? Are teachers willing to take on these additional responsibilities and time commitments? On what types of issues? Under what circumstances?
- How does this question line up with teacher agreement that there is an effective process for collaborative decisions? With the actual role teachers indicated are played in decisions about classroom and school decisions about teaching, hiring, budget, professional development, etc.?

Question 4.1d. Teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction. Statewide 63 percent of educators agree with the statement

- Are issues of trust broad or specific to a group or audience? The community? Parents? Media? Administrators?
- Are perceptions of trust related to teachers’ role in making decisions about teaching and learning issues? How much autonomy do teachers have on instructional issues (lesson

plans, selection of curriculum materials, pacing)? Are lesson plans reviewed? By whom? How frequently?

- How often do members of the staff collaborate to assess student progress and determine the content for in-service sessions at the school?

Question 4.1e. In this school we take steps to solve problems. Statewide 71 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What processes are in place to engage faculty in problem identification and solutions (see question 4.1e. on whether processes are effective)? Do formal committees in place address important educational issues?
- Are concerns rooted in the process (taking steps) or the effectiveness of those steps to address identified issues?

Question 4.1f. The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions and solving problems. Statewide 63 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What processes exist in the school for making decisions? Are they clear? Do all teachers participate in these processes or only some teachers? Who decides who will participate?
- What are faculty expectations around the process being “effective”? Do perceptions of effectiveness hinge on outcomes? Is the faculty more concerned with the process or whether problems are solved?
- Are the responses to the question 4.1e different? Why? Are steps made, but ultimately solutions are not found? Are solutions found through other means? Are decisions found in some areas, but not others? If so, what areas?
- Are deliberate efforts made to build a school environment that provides collaborative opportunities?
- What mechanisms are in place at your school that encourage problem solving and collaboration among teachers, administrators, and other school staff?

Question 4.1g. Teachers are supported by the community in which they teach. Statewide 59 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What support is provided by the community? Who provides it? Parents? Business? Others? Are opportunities available for the community to contribute in positive ways? In what areas? Do any areas contribute toward teachers’ instructional practices and delivery? To finding time for teachers?
- What are expectations for community support? In what areas? Can there be too much support? Is support sometimes mitigated by the amount of time necessary

to work with community members to actively contribute? How is support provided by parents? What are teachers' expectations? Are expectations broad (that teaching is valued profession, that teachers have instructional expertise) or specific (volunteer in classroom, attend parent/teacher conferences) about desired support?

Question 4.1h. Parents and community members contribute to student success.

Statewide 60 percent of educators agree with the statement

- How is support provided by parents and the community? What are teachers' expectations? Are expectations broad (that teaching is valued profession, that teachers have instructional expertise) or specific (volunteer in classroom, attend parent/teacher conferences) about desired support?
- How can parents and the community contribute to teacher success with students? What does it require? Are opportunities available at the school to contribute? Is the school open to parents and the community? What barriers are in place for them to contribute? What has been done to catalyze their interest? Have efforts been made that the community and parents have not responded to? Why? Are those barriers actionable? What actions do members of the staff take to make parents feel valued at the school?
- What will it take to create a shared sense of responsibility and a collective commitment to quality education among all stakeholders in the school?
- What types of professional development does the district/school offer for parents/community?

Question 4.3a.-i. Please indicate how large a role teachers have at your school in each of the following areas.

- Are there patterns across the areas? Do teachers play a role in issues related to teaching and the classroom, but not the school, overall? What role do teachers want to play? What is the ideal engagement for our school given the knowledge and skills of the faculty and how we are performing? Are teachers looking to lead in areas where they are not currently playing a role? If not, are there reasons teachers are not interested? Is it a matter of time available or are there perceptions that decision making processes are not effective (see question 4.1f)
- Does the whole faculty agree with the assessment of teacher role across these areas? Are some teachers involved in decisions, but their participation is not widely known? Why? Are there set protocols for teachers participating in committee work to communicate back to their peers? Are they followed? Is the whole faculty engaged in decision making? How are teachers selected to participate? Who decides?

- What major barriers do teachers face as they strive to work as a team to have positive impact on learning?

LEADERSHIP Section of the Survey

When asked which teaching condition most affects your willingness to remain teaching at your school, one-third (37 percent) of West Virginia educators indicated that school leadership was the most critical, more than any other area. Further half (52 percent) of teachers said that having supportive school leadership was “extremely important” to them in considering future career plans. Fortunately, educators are positive about several aspects of school leadership

Question 5.1a. There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect within the school. Statewide 67 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What does the faculty think a trusting environment looks/feels like? A more in depth analysis of trust from North Carolina showed that a shared vision, a collaborative and effective decision making process, and leadership that consistently supported teachers were the three most essential elements of trust – would you agree with that list? Why? Why not? Are these elements present in your school?
- What needs to be in place? If it is not in place in your school, what are some of the barriers (consider personnel, policies, programs)? Can you identify instances when teachers felt respected around a particular event or decision? What was present? Are there instances when this has not occurred? Why?
- Who contributes to building trust? What is the role of the principal? Other administrators? Department/Grade chairs? Other teachers? Are all groups essential? Can you have a trusting environment with any of those groups?

Question 5.1b. The school leadership communicates clear expectations to students and parents. Statewide 69 percent of educators agree with the statement

- Does disagreement stem from clarity of expectations or how they are communicated? How are expectations set? Are teachers engaged? Are they related to the mission and vision of the school? Are expectations consistent for all students? For all parents?
- How are expectations communicated to students? Is it the responsibility of teachers or school leadership or both to ensure students understand expectations? On all issues (i.e. behavior, student learning, attendance, etc.)? How are expectations communicated to parents? How do teachers and leadership engage parents and students? Are strategies used consistent for all students? For all parents?
- Does any of the disagreement stem from how issues related to expectations are resolved with students or parents? Are there better ways to involve students and parents?

Question 5.1c. The faculty are committed to helping every student learn. Statewide 89 percent of educators agree with the statement

- Are issues of commitment uniform across the entire faculty or are there individual(s) who other educators do not believe are committed? Why does that perception exist? Is it based on any particular actions or occurrences?
- What do educators expect “commitment” to look like? Is it a disposition or rooted in actions (or both)? Does professional development provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to help all students learn? To differentiate instruction? To be culturally competent?

Question 5.1d. Teachers feel comfortable raising issues that are important to them. Statewide 67 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What issues do teachers have within the school? Are they predominantly related to teaching (curriculum, instruction, etc.), leadership, decision making, policies and practices (at what level? School, district, state, federal), parental and community support, professional growth and learning? Are these issues uniform across the faculty or a concern for only one or a small group of teachers? Why?
- Why are teachers uncomfortable? Is it related to trust (5.1a) or how issues will be handled and resolutions and decisions are made to address them? Is the discomfort uniform across the faculty or only true for one or a small group of teachers? Why?
- Can you provide examples that illustrate whether the atmosphere is relaxed and members of the staff freely exchange ideas?

Question 5.1e. Opportunities are available to for members of the community to actively contribute to this school’s success. Statewide 73 percent of educators agree with the statement

- How is support provided by parents and the community? What are teachers’ expectations? Are expectations broad (that teaching is valued profession, that teachers have instructional expertise) or specific (volunteer in classroom, attend parent/teacher conferences) about desired support?
- How can parents and the community contribute to teacher success with students? What does it require? Are opportunities available at the school to contribute? Is the school open to parents and the community? What barriers are in place for them to contribute? What has been done to catalyze their interest? Have efforts been made that the community and parents have not responded to? Why? Are those barriers actionable? What actions do members of the staff take to make parents feel valued at the school?

- What will it take to create a shared sense of responsibility and a collective commitment to quality education among all stakeholders in the school?

Question 5.1f. The faculty senate provides effective leadership at this school. Statewide 68 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What role does the faculty senate play within the school? What decisions is it empowered to make? On what issues does it provide input and guidance to administrators? Are there requirements (statutory or regulatory) at the state or district level that are being followed that explain the role of the site councils? Are they being followed?
- How are members of the faculty senate selected? Who votes? Do members of the faculty senate share meeting agendas, minutes and other information with peers? With parents and the community? Is the faculty senate effective but some teachers who do not participate directly are unaware of successes?
- Is the faculty senate the primary way that teachers participate in making collective decisions that impact the school? Are there reasons that can be identified as to why the faculty senate may not be providing effective leadership?

Question 5.1g. The school leadership consistently supports teachers. Statewide 68 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What type of support are teachers expecting and desiring? To back them on decisions made? Instructional decisions? Discipline decisions? With whom? Parents, community, central office, other educators? What is fair to expect of school leadership?
- Is support consistent? Are there factors that contribute to school leadership decisions not to provide support? Why? What can be done? Is it inconsistent on different issues? For different teachers?

Question 5.1h. The school leadership effectively communicates policies. Statewide 70 percent of educators agree with the statement

- Does disagreement stem from the effectiveness of communication or a lack of communication? What are expectations around the amount, type, length of communication on behalf of the faculty?
- Is the issue communication of policies within the school? External to the school with parents? With the district?

Question 5.1i. Teacher performance evaluations are fair in my school Statewide 76 percent of educators agree with the statement

- How are evaluation policies set? What is required by the state and what is determined by the district? Are policies being followed and implemented consistently?
- What does “fair” mean? Are issues related to what is being evaluated? How often evaluations occur? Who is evaluating? How consistent evaluation standards and processes are across members of the faculty? What is done with information from the evaluation?

Question 5.1j. Teachers receive feedback that can help them improve teaching. Statewide 70 percent of educators agree with the statement

- Who provides feedback to teachers? Is it a function of evaluation or are there other opportunities? How is it delivered? Is it consistent throughout the year? Across all subjects and grades?
- What feedback do teachers want and need? What types of systems are necessary to provide it (observation, release, professional learning communities)? What formal structures are currently in place to provide feedback for teachers? What informal ways do teachers receive feedback?
- Are classroom observations and constructive feedback included as part of a teacher’s professional development?

Question 5.1k. The school leadership shields teachers from disruptions, allowing teachers to focus on educating students. Statewide 63 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What types of disruptions occur in the school and within individual classrooms? Are they related to the instruction of individual students? Are they from within the classroom or from outside?
- What are expectations for leadership to attend to disruptions? What is within and outside of their control? Is leadership making efforts that the faculty is unaware of? What? What could be done to communicate efforts better and bring teachers into conversations?

Question 5.1l. The school leadership support teachers’ efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom. Statewide 71 percent of educators agree with the statement

- How are issues around student conduct and discipline dealt with in the school? How are decisions made? What is taken into account? Are perceived inconsistencies specific to particular students? Particular teachers? Particular infractions?

- Are perceptions around enforcement rooted in the conduct policies themselves? How are student conduct policies created? What role do teachers play in creating them? Is there a district-wide policy around student discipline and conduct? If so, is the school following it? How as it created?
- What issues can be identified due to the perception of inconsistent enforcement? Do teachers feel less safe? Are teachers more likely to be absent, creating additional problems in the area of time (infringing on non-instructional time as teachers cover classes and/or duties for colleagues who absent)?
- What support are teachers looking for? What can school leadership do to ensure teachers feel supported while policies are being followed? Who is the support most essential with? Students? Parents? Central office?

Question 5.1m. The faculty and staff have a shared vision. Statewide 72 percent of educators agree with the statement

- Is there a vision statement? How was it created? How well known is it? Inside and outside of the school (with parents, community, students, etc.)? Is it known but not followed? By all staff or some?
- How is the vision communicated? How does it influence school policies and programs? Decision making on key education issues?

Question 5.3a.-f. The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about:

- Are efforts made in some areas more than others? Why? Statewide efforts are least likely to be perceived in the areas of leadership and empowerment (the two factors teachers say matter most in their decisions to remain working at a school), is the pattern similar in your school? What are the implications in your building? (see Core Question 1). Are efforts consistent across all members of the faculty? For similar types of concerns? Are some concerns viewed as more legitimate than others? Why? How are concerns identified and documented?
- What do teachers perceive “sustained” means? Does it refer to intensity? Consistency? What are teachers’ expectations for sustained efforts?
- Are efforts all in the process or are they directly related to outcomes and concerns being resolved? Can efforts be both formal and informal? Who do they come from within the leadership (principal, other administrators, other teachers)? What catalysts and barriers exist as the result of federal policy? State policy? District policy? School practice?

Question 5.4. Overall the school leadership in my school is effective. Statewide 62 percent agree with the statement

- See prompts throughout the leadership domain around specific aspects of leadership effectiveness
- What are teacher expectations for effective school leadership? Is leadership more effective in some areas than others? Why? What are areas where teachers continue to have concerns that are not addressed?
- Who are leaders within the school? How is leadership distributed? Are the right educators making the right decisions for the most effective decision making?

Question 5.5. Which position BEST describes the person who most often provides instructional leadership at your school? Statewide 56 percent identified the principal and 17 percent reported other teachers

- Are the right educators making the right decisions for the most effective decision making on instructional issues? What role do teachers play in decision making on instruction (see 4.3) What role does the district play in providing instructional leadership?
- How is leadership distributed in other areas (administrative, personnel, budgetary, moral, etc.)?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT Section of the Survey

About half of educators (58 percent) report that there are sufficient resources for teachers to take advantage of professional development and that ultimately it provides teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to be effective (57 percent). While a majority of teachers were positive about the effectiveness of professional development in providing new teaching strategies and improving student learning, but report that opportunities are not necessarily aligned where they have the greatest need (in differentiating instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners). Questions in this area include: the sufficiency of resources devoted to professional development, the effectiveness of professional development, and the amount of professional development needed and received.

Question 6.1 Professional development provides teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to teach effectively. Statewide 58 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What are measures used to assess effectiveness? How do teachers gauge the effectiveness of professional development? The school? The district? Is student learning the primary measure? How is that assessed?
- How are professional development activities selected? How are needs identified? What role do teachers play? Does it impact perceptions of effectiveness? Does professional

development activities focus on the areas teachers identified as their greatest need to improve their knowledge and skills (see Question 6.2a).

- How well has the professional development program helped teachers deepen their understanding of subject matter, make appropriate changes, understand individual differences, and align teaching with local/district/state standards?

Question 6.2 Teachers are provided opportunities to learn from one another. Statewide 55 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What opportunities do teachers want and expect? Are they formal and structured or informal? What activities occur during collaborative time, faculty meetings, etc. to ensure that learning takes place?
- Is time a barrier or the knowledge and skills of staff to work collaboratively? If it is about time, are issues more related to the amount of non-instructional time available overall, or whether it is scheduled to facilitate collaborative work?
- How do teachers provide professional assistance to their colleagues? What are the most effective ways of providing assistance? How willing are teachers to seek and accept assistance from colleagues?

Question 6.3 Sufficient funds and resources are available to allow teachers to take advantage of professional development activities. Statewide 58 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What would teachers believe is “sufficient”? Are perceptions of sufficiency related to amount of resources devoted across the board or the type, quality and accessibility of PD offerings available for educators? Are responses about how applicable opportunities are to addressing teacher need or about proportion of budget?
- What activities are available to teachers? Are teachers considering in district opportunities or other opportunities (university, state, conferences, etc.)? How would this impact perceptions? Are more informal types of professional development (job embedded, PLC, etc.) considered as activities? What resources are necessary?
- Are resources allocated at the school or district level? Is there an approval process for professional development activities? What role do teachers play (see 4.3d.)? Are these activities sufficient?

Question 6.4 Professional development offerings are data driven. Statewide 55 percent of educators agree with the statement.

- What data is available? How is it gathered? Is it based on student achievement? Is it based on a needs assessment of teachers? Based on evaluations of

professional development activities offered (and if so how is PD evaluated)?
What other factors are considered?

- Is a rationale for PD activities provided to teachers? Are offerings data-driven but the reasons for the offerings not shared with teachers? All teachers?

Question 6.5a:a-i. In which of the following areas, if any, do you need additional support to effectively teach your students.

- Are there clear trends? Do any of these trends surprise you? Statewide it appears that teachers are comfortable with their content knowledge but want more support in differentiating instruction to diverse learners. Are the trends similar in your school? In your district?
- Is there a needs assessment done to ensure PD is relevant to teachers' instructional needs? To student learning needs? Who does it? Is it done at the school or district level? Who decides what activities are available or approves of opportunities? What role do teachers play?

Question 6.5b:a-i. In the past 2 years have you had at least 10 clock hours in or more of professional development in each of the following area.

- Is the professional development relevant to teachers? Does it match the areas where teachers in your school indicated they had the greatest need? Is there a needs assessment done to ensure PD is relevant to teachers' instructional needs? Who does it? Is it done at the school or district level? Who decides what activities are available or approves of opportunities? What role do teachers play?
- Is there a needs assessment done to ensure PD is relevant to teachers' instructional needs? To student learning needs? Who does it? Is it done at the school or district level? Who decides what activities are available or approves of opportunities? What role do teachers play?
- Has professional development been effective? Has some types or areas been more effective than others? How do you know? How is it evaluated and how are results used to improve offerings? What follow up is provided (Question 6.9)? Is it sustained? What needs to occur for teachers to change instructional practice?
- Do teachers and administrators work cooperatively to plan, develop, and share professional development activities?

Question 6.7a. Professional development has provided YOU with strategies that you have incorporated into your instructional delivery methods. Statewide 68 percent of educators agree with the statement

- Is the professional development relevant to teachers? Does it match the areas where teachers in your school indicated they had the greatest need? Is there a needs assessment done to ensure PD is relevant to teachers' instructional needs? Who does it? Is it done at the school or district level? Who decides what activities are available or approves of opportunities? What role do teachers play?
- Has professional development been effective? Has some types or areas been more effective than others? How do you know? How is it evaluated and how are results used to improve offerings? What follow up is provided (Question 6.9)? Is it sustained? What needs to occur for teachers to change instructional practice?

Question 6.8a. Professional development has proved useful to YOU in your efforts to improve student achievement. Statewide 63 percent of educators agree with the statement

- Is the professional development relevant to teachers? Does it match the areas where teachers in your school indicated they had the greatest need? Is there a needs assessment done to ensure PD is relevant to teachers' instructional needs? To student learning needs? Who does it? Is it done at the school or district level? Who decides what activities are available or approves of opportunities? What role do teachers play (Question 4.3d)?
- Has professional development been effective? Has some types or areas been more effective than others? How do you know? How is it evaluated and how are results used to improve offerings? What follow up is provided? Is it sustained? What needs to occur for teachers to change instructional practice?
- How well has the professional development program prepared staff to teach diverse populations?

Question 6.9 I have received follow up from professional development opportunities that help me improve my teaching. Statewide 62 percent of educators agree with the statement

- What follow up has been received? Is it formal or informal? What is expected or desired from teachers? Who would provide it? What would be necessary to ensure opportunities were effective in changing practice?