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West Virginia's VITAL Memorandum of Understanding for Coalition Members

The State Board of Education and West Virginia's Vision to Inform Teaching and Learning (VITAL) partners want to ensure that every West Virginia educator and student are in a school that is a great place to teach and learn. Research from across the country has demonstrated that the presence of important teaching conditions is vital to student success and teacher retention. By documenting and analyzing how teachers and principals view their teaching and learning conditions, educators, stakeholders and policymakers can make data-driven decisions on policies and practices that will improve student achievement.

It is with this in mind that West Virginia's VITAL has been created. By surveying all school-based licensed educators about their teaching and learning conditions, data from those who know these conditions best—the dedicated professionals working across the state—can be compiled and analyzed at the school, district and state levels.

Gathering this information for every school in the state is important.

West Virginia's VITAL partners will ensure:

- The privacy of all survey respondents. The survey will be confidential and anonymous for all educators. The data is only as helpful as educators are willing to share vital information about their school.
- Data is provided to all educators. All educators will be able to access their survey results in order to integrate findings into school improvement planning.
- Tools and assistance are provided by the state, membership organizations and others to ensure that data are used; and used appropriately.
- Data are not used to hold any individual(s) accountable. Teaching and learning conditions result from cultures, decisions and personalities over years. They are bigger than any one person and it will take everyone in a school to improve them.
- Data are not used to unilaterally and arbitrarily judge a school's effectiveness in any area. Every finding should be considered a lever to drive reform and not to fuel accountability grades or measures. Data should be analyzed with other information to make informed decisions.

West Virginia's VITAL partners commit to:

- Supporting and promoting West Virginia's VITAL initiative, including communicating to members the purpose and importance of the initiative and encouraging survey participation,
- Monitoring and proactively promoting the appropriate use of data locally amongst constituent members. If data are used inappropriately or if violations of the intent of West Virginia's VITAL are found, partners will collectively work to address the situation, and
- Assisting constituents on using the data to improve teaching and learning conditions.