

Some Tips for Getting the Most Out of the Survey Data

Working conditions are not about any one individual and it will take a community effort to improve.

It is important to remember that the conditions identified in this survey are about schools and not about individuals. No one person should be viewed as solely responsible for creating or reforming school culture.

Interpreting the survey responses should be about identifying the positives as well as negative responses within the school.

Educators take tremendous pride in the work they do and all want to work in a school that allows them to do their best work. All schools have successes to draw upon as well as areas in need of improvement. Ensuring that positives are acknowledged and celebrated is as important as identifying and addressing issues.

Changing some conditions may take time.

Just as some conditions took years to develop, they may also take time to change.

When viewing the responses from your child's school, some solutions may be inexpensive and simple to address, like having a more consistent means of communicating amongst the faculty, while others may depend on school funding (class size reduction, integration of technology) or long range (building trust, creating authentic Professional Learning Communities).

How Can I Get Involved?

There are many ways parents can contribute to improving their school. Here are a couple of ways you may consider to get started:

- **Advocate:** Many schools work together with a Parent Teacher Association where parents can help to improve the school.
- **Communicate:** Communicate regularly with your child's entire school staff. They all have great ideas about how to address some of the school conditions.
- **Volunteer:** Volunteering can include tutoring, language translation, field trip chaperone, testing, sports activities, concerts, or even an extra pair of hands in a classroom activity.
- **Serve:** Serving on advisory councils and school committees can offer you an important role in shaping larger school programs.

Stay informed about your child's school and district by visiting web pages like <http://education.vermont.gov>. This website provides valuable information on events, services, testing, school policies, student safety information, and opportunities for parents and the community to be engaged in the learning process.

Contacting The New Teacher Center

For further information about the Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey and the work of the New Teacher Center please contact:

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Durham, North Carolina 27713
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Launching the Next Generation

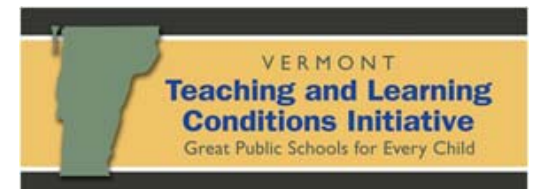
The Vermont Teaching and Learning Conditions Initiative

A Parent Guide to School Improvement

What Is the Vermont Teaching and Learning Conditions Initiative?

The Vermont Teaching and Learning Conditions Initiative provides information to schools, districts, and the state about whether licensed educators and Education Support Professionals (ESPs) have the supportive school settings necessary for them to do their jobs well and be successful with students. Schools with positive teaching conditions are schools with positive learning results.

As a parent, you can look up the responses from your school and see what teachers, ESPs and faculty say about what they think of the conditions that will allow them to best serve your child. It can also be an important guide for you in determining where you may be able to help the work of the school and its staff.



What Are Teaching and Learning Conditions?

The Initiative assesses many conditions that can affect the quality of the school and classroom learning environment. They include:

Time—Available time to plan, collaborate and provide instruction and barriers to maximizing time during the school day.

Facilities and Resources—Availability of instructional, technology, office, communication, and school resources to teachers.

Community Engagement—Community and parent/guardian communication and influence in the school.

Empowerment—Teacher involvement in decisions that impact classroom and school practices.

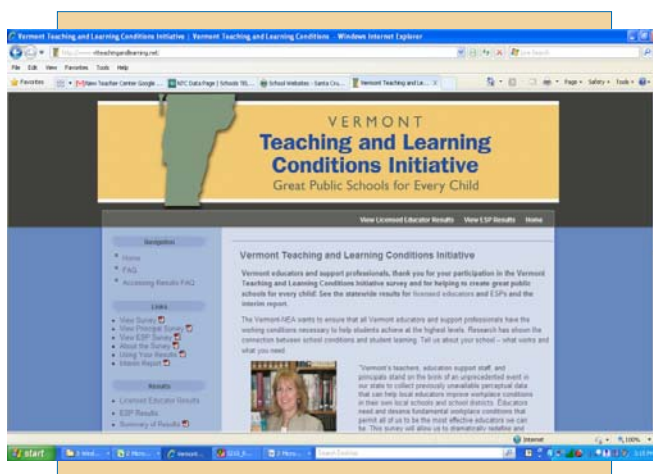
School Leadership—The ability of school leadership to create trusting, supportive environments and address teacher concerns.

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



Where Do I Find This Information?

Every school with sufficient response (at least 40 percent) in Vermont has a complete data report that can be accessed online at www.vtteachingandlearning.net. Simply click on either the Licensed Educator or ESP prompt in the 'Results' section of the site and follow the prompts to locate your child's school. This website also provides tools and resources to better understand the findings.



Why Are Teaching and Learning Conditions Important?

Research demonstrates that teachers leave, NOT because of the kids, but because of the same conditions we face in our own jobs every day—bosses, resources, time to do the job, etc.

Research on Vermont survey results has shown that these conditions not only impact whether your children's teachers want to stay working in their current school, but also their effectiveness in the classroom.

Why Should I Get Involved?

Actively participating in your child's school with the goal of improving teaching and learning conditions is not only beneficial to the school environment and the entire community, it also has important implications for the development of your child. By taking some time to review the responses to the survey, you will gain a first-hand perspective of your child's learning environment. As often has been stated "teacher working conditions are student learning conditions."

The amount of time your child's teacher has to plan for instruction during their work day, how involved teachers are permitted to be in the decision making processes such as establishing and enforcing discipline policies, and the support of school leadership all affect the success your teachers have in maximizing the learning environments within their classrooms.

Knowing what teacher working conditions are in place can be invaluable in your efforts to ensure that your child is supported. Additionally, participating in your school improvement shows your child that you value education, the community, and the activities your child is involved in.

