

Participant's Packet

Maryland Teaching Conditions School Improvement Guide

Day / Night Partners

Day



Night

Construct Reflections Connector

Read the Construct titles below, and spend five minutes reflecting on how well these working conditions are in place in your own school.

Rate each construct on a 4 scale, with 4 being the highest, then **write a brief explanation** as to why you believe this is true.

- 4 – These conditions are strongly beneficial to effective teacher practice and promote student learning at high levels
- 3 – These conditions are beneficial to effective teacher practice and promote student learning
- 2 – These conditions do not benefit effective teacher practice or promote student learning
- 1 – These conditions hinder effective teacher practice and student learning

CONSTRUCT	#	RATIONALE	
		Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
TIME			
FACILITIES AND RESOURCES			
COMMUNITY SUPPORT			
MANAGING STUDENT CONDUCT			
TEACHER LEADERSHIP			
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP			
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AND SUPPORT			

Effectively Using the Survey Results

Teaching conditions are critical to educator success and satisfaction. The Maryland Teaching Conditions Survey provides data to schools, districts, and the state about whether educators have the supportive school environments necessary for them to be successful with students and to remain in their schools. Over 57,000 educators (77 percent) shared their perceptions and this data is now available for virtually every school and district in the state. The data represents the perceptions of those who understand teaching conditions best—the educators who experience them every day. But assessing teaching conditions differs from looking at other neutral or quantifiable data points (like student test scores) in that getting honest, authentic input and dialogue can be challenging, especially in schools where the basic building blocks of positive conditions—trust, time and leadership—are not in place. Using the information in a positive way toward school improvement is critical, and these guidelines are meant for educators at multiple levels to efficiently and effectively utilize the Survey data as an artifact to assist in self- reflection and goal setting. As this type of survey data becomes more common, using it appropriately and constructively will become even more important in Maryland and across the nation. Please consider the following when analyzing and using the Maryland Teaching Conditions Survey:

1. Teaching conditions are an area for school improvement, not accountability.

Teaching conditions are about schools, and all members of the school community contribute to the formation of the school culture, whether it be purposeful or accidental. If individual schools, school administrators or teachers are assessed in these areas, this survey should serve as one of multiple data artifacts. Schools are encouraged to use the data to guide school improvement planning and to then assess progress toward implementation of collectively developed reforms. NTC strongly cautions against using the Survey to establish high stakes measures of teaching and learning environments. Should educators come to perceive the survey as such, results of future iterations may become skewed.

2. Teaching conditions are not about any one individual and require a community effort to improve.

Administrators hold a unique and important place within the school community and have a significant impact on the professional culture in which teachers work. However, many aspects of teaching conditions are beyond the principal's control. Broader social trends, federal, state and district policies all impact how educators view and operate within their school and classroom. Conditions are about schools, not about individuals, so no single person should be viewed as responsible for creating or reforming school culture alone. No questions on this survey were about the principal. All questions about school leadership were defined specifically as a group of individuals or team within the school.

3. Perceptual data are real data.

The survey results are perceptual data from educators about the presence of important teaching conditions, and educators' perceptions are their reality. This does not mean the data is not "valid" or as important as other data sources. Educator perceptions of the culture and context of their school have been linked to student learning, future employment plans, efficacy and motivation. Analyzing and using this information to improve schools is critical and needs to be a part of reform efforts at the school and district levels. However, other data should be used to triangulate these findings and

provide additional understanding of these perceptions such as instructional expenditures, proportion of teachers working out of field, teacher/pupil ratio, etc.

4. Conversations need to be structured and safe.

Conversations about teaching conditions are often the lifeblood of teachers' lounges. Having data-driven dialogue about the findings of the survey, the root causes of educator perceptions, and potential reforms requires structure, facilitation, ground rules and the ability to separate issues from individuals. These are not easy conversations, and they become harder if they are not tackled systematically and in a manner where all faculty can participate in a meaningful and safe way.

5. Identify and celebrate positives in addition to considering areas for improvement.

Educators have tremendous pride in the work they do, and want to work in a school that allows them to do their best teaching. All schools have successes and challenges to deal with and to draw upon as they assess and improve their context. It is critical that positives are acknowledged and celebrated, while issues are identified and addressed in order to moving forward in a positive productive manner.

6. Create a common understanding of what defines and shapes teaching conditions.

Anything and everything might be considered a part of teaching conditions. Research shows that broader social trends, media coverage, respect for the profession, local and state policies and more can all influence teachers' perceptions of their conditions and ultimately their motivation and efficacy as educators. The survey provides input from educators on a host of important research-based teaching conditions as well as areas of support, assessments and accountability, parent and community support, etc. These questions and responses are a starting point, not an ending point for understanding what is important to teachers for them to do their best work. But in order for conversations to be productive, all faculty must come to agreement about what these conditions mean for their own school and context.

7. Focus on what you can solve.

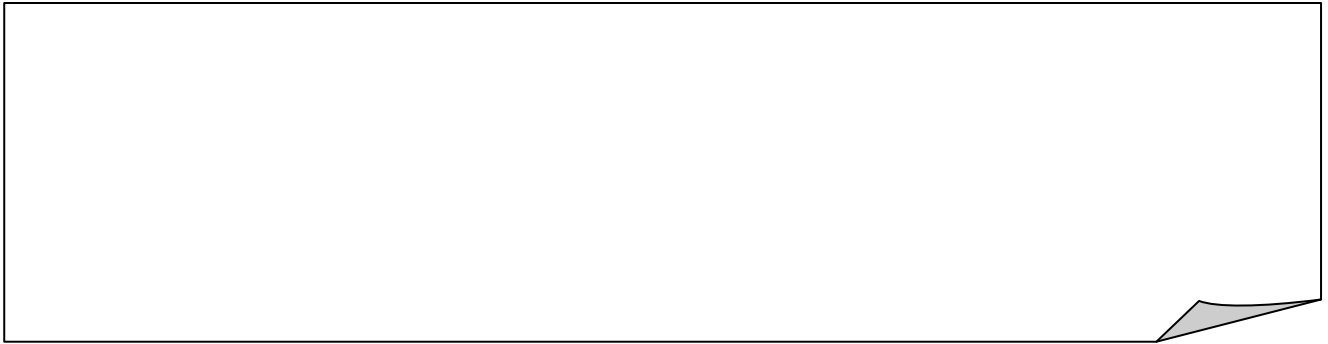
Many issues that shape teaching conditions within a school or district are outside of teacher and administrator control, such as federal and state assessment policies or funding. School improvement planning should focus on areas that can be addressed by the school community. Other influences such as federal and state policy, or broader social and community context are areas for the school to think about in concert with others, but a plan with solutions that cannot be reached through the efforts of the school community is not likely to be successful.

8. Solutions can be complex and long term.

Teaching conditions are cumulative and engrained. Many years and faculty members helped create them and it will take a similar amount of time for reform. Some solutions may be inexpensive and simple to address, like having a more consistent means of communicating amongst the faculty, while others are resource intensive (class size reduction, integration of technology) or long range (building trust, creating authentic Professional Learning Communities). A school improvement plan must pay attention both to short and long term issues to successfully improve the school environment.

“Effectively Using the Survey Results” Take Away’s and Reflections

Which items did you view as being *most critical* for your success? Explain how they fit *your* context.



Were there any sections that you disagreed with? What was the main source of conflict for you?



Which item do you think would be the easiest to implement at your school? Why?



Which item do you think would be the most difficult to implement at your school? Why?



TELL Vocabulary List

- ❖ TELL – Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning
- ❖ Teaching and Learning Conditions – the systems, relationships, resources, environments and people in your school that affect your ability to teach (or learn) at a high level
- ❖ Construct – a grouping of several specific questions, all dealing with the same topic.
 - Time, Facilities and Resources, Community Support and Involvement, Managing Student Conduct, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Professional Development, Instructional Practices and Support, and New Teacher Support
- ❖ Item – a specific individual question
- ❖ Individual Item Prompts – a series of questions that help guide a group in thinking about the data associated with one specific question
- ❖ Drill down – breaking the data into smaller pieces to analyze it for the purpose of changing one specific working condition
- ❖ Rate of Agreement – the percentage of people who said they agreed or strongly agreed that a working condition was in place
- ❖ Neither Agree nor Disagree – the percentage of people who did not feel the working condition was or was not in place. They could be ambivalent, they may not have understood the question, or they may not have experience in that arena

Construct Indicator Questions

QUESTION	School S	Level L	District D	State St	Priority
TIME 2.1d: The Non-Instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
FACILITIES AND RESOURCES 3.1a: Teachers have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials and resources.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
COMMUNITY SUPPORT 4.1c: This school does a good job of encouraging parent/guardian involvement.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
MANAGING STUDENT CONDUCT 5.1e: Administration support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
TEACHER LEADERSHIP 6.1c: Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP 7.1d: The school leadership consistently supports teachers.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 8.1k: Professional development enhances teachers' ability to implement instructional strategies that meet diverse student needs.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES 9.1f: Teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	

Time Indicator Questions

QUESTION	School S	Level L	District D	State St	Priority
2.1a Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have time available to meet the needs of all students.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
2.1b Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
2.1c Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
2.1d The non-instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
2.1e Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
2.1f . Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	
2.1g Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.					
		S-L	S-D	S-St	

Maryland Indicator Questions

QUESTION		School S	Level L	District D	State St		Priority
			S-L	S-D	S-St		
			S-L	S-D	S-St		
			S-L	S-D	S-St		
			S-L	S-D	S-St		
			S-L	S-D	S-St		
			S-L	S-D	S-St		
			S-L	S-D	S-St		
			S-L	S-D	S-St		

What is working/not working? EXAMPLE

ITEM to EXAMINE

POSITIVE FACTORS

EFFECT ON SCHOOL/MY TEACHING

MOVING FORWARD

District gives protected work days and ½ days for PLCs



Dedicated, protected group planning time



Expand my interaction to include folks from other schools to get more input and ideas
Be prepared to maximize this planning time

Front office is good about turning away parents who come unannounced



Keeps my time protected. Allows me more time to plan with colleagues



Sincerely thank the front office staff for their help.

Administration does a good job of only calling meetings when it is absolutely necessary, and gives us notice.



The meetings are more engaging and welcomed. My time is protected.



Thank the administration. Reinforce the steps they are taking. Be committed to engaging in the meetings when they are called.

CHALLENGING FACTORS

EFFECT ON SCHOOL/MY TEACHING

MOVING FORWARD

Kids are coming to me during my planning time to get additional help



It is helping the kids, but hurting my planning and preparation with colleagues



Designate specific days of the week as off-limits to students

Subs are not available so we often have to cover other classes during our planning



Often unexpected and really hurts my planning time and scheduling of important activities with colleagues



Can we develop a rotating system within the school so we know better when we will be asked? Is it equitable?

Not using my time as efficiently as I could be.

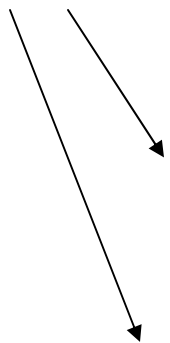
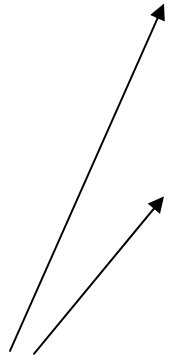


Causing me to need more protected time than necessary to accomplish goals

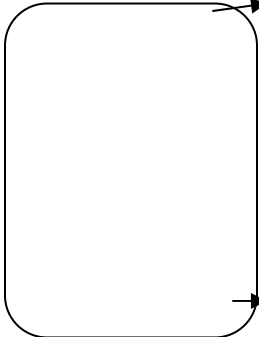


Chart what I am doing with my time to determine where I am inefficient. Work with veteran teachers and administrators to consider different approaches

2.1 B Teachers have time available to collaborate with their colleagues.



What is working/not working?

ITEM TO EXAMINE	POSITIVE FACTORS	EFFECT ON SCHOOL/MY TEACHING	MOVING FORWARD
			
	CHALLENGING FACTORS	EFFECT ON SCHOOL/MY TEACHING	MOVING FORWARD

What is Ideal? What are the Challenges?

Item:

2.1 B: Teachers have time available to collaborate with their colleagues.

WHAT WOULD THE IDEAL LOOK LIKE?

Teachers never have to cover other teachers' classes.

Teachers are never asked to a last minute meeting for EC.

School team/grade level/subject area meetings are efficient and pertinent. Everyone gets along and contributes equally.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

Not practical.
There will be times teachers must cover for one another

Knowing when manifestations are due
Scheduling all parties ahead of time and keeping everyone up to speed

Skill of facilitator, relationships
Needs of staff are different

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES?

Put a rotation in place for teacher coverage so the amount of times each teacher is called on is equitable. Reward teachers who do cover other classes.

Reflect on the meeting process and improve the efficiency of the process. Mandate teachers are notified ahead of time. Teachers are chosen that work with the child. The process is equitable for teachers.

Provide an outline for each kind of meeting, perhaps a model of what the meeting should look like. Make some meetings optional for skilled staff.

What is Ideal? What are the Challenges?

Item:

WHAT WOULD THE IDEAL LOOK LIKE?

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

**HOW DO WE OVERCOME
THE CHALLENGES?**



Graffiti Wall Ideal

Item _____

CHALLENGE 1	CHALLENGE 2	CHALLENGE 3
Ways to Overcome	Ways to Overcome	Ways to Overcome

Item Prompt Discussion Record

Reflective Question	Key Facts	What is in our Control?	Moving Forward

School Improvement Initiative

Objective: Teacher's planning time is held sacred for PLC work.

What does success look like? All Teachers will meet daily and uninterrupted in their subject or grade level PLC to plan differentiated, rigorous daily and unit plans, analyze student work, and create assessments.

What steps are needed?	What must be included for success?	How will we measure success?	What resources are needed?	By when? With whom?
Understand clear meeting structure and processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A facilitator, reporter and recorder • An agenda for each meeting • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone feels the time was well spent • A log of agendas • Everyone participates equally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLC facilitator training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team leaders take the Oct. 15th facilitator's training offered by the district
Create a coverage schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teachers must participate • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No teacher has covered more than 1 class a month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone to make the schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative assistant, by Oct.1.
Create a set meeting place and schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time before or after the meeting for personal needs and student mini-conferencing • time for content/grade level, EC meetings parent conferencing, and administrative business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a place to meet and a set schedule that we adhere to for 2 months in a row. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space • Someone to make the schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal will assign the place for all meetings • Admin. Assistant will create meeting schedule with dept. chairs

How will we maintain our success?
true professional learning communities.

We all pledge to honor our meeting times and to create

School Improvement Initiative

Objective:

What does success look like?

What steps are needed?	What is included?	How will we measure success?	What resources are needed?	By when? With whom?

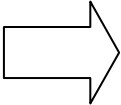
How will we maintain our success?

Sample Change an Ideal Situation into an Objective

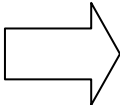
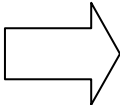
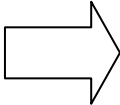
Ideal Situation

Objective

Ex. Teachers never have to cover other teachers' classes.



Ex. Teachers' planning time is held sacred for PLC work.



2+2=4 Goal Setting

Thinking about our objective, what one step is most critical to our success in making this goal a reality?



Find someone with a different idea and record it below.



Now, share your two ideas with a new partner, and record their two ideas.



Meeting Evaluation

Your feedback is important to continuously improve our dialogue and address teaching and learning conditions.

Please rate the following from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree:

- 1. The presentation was clear and easy to understand. SA A N D SD
- 2. The presenters were prepared. SA A N D SD
- 3. We utilized the FCPS Working Conditions Survey data to engage in data driven dialogue. SA A N D SD
- 4. All educators were engaged in the dialogue and activities. SA A N D SD
- 5. Presenter/participant interaction was sufficient. SA A N D SD
- 6. The materials provided were easy to understand. SA A N D SD
- 7. I was given enough time to do the activities. SA A N D SD

Some things I thought were very helpful:

Some things I thought could use improvement:

Additional Comments or Additional Support the District Could Provide: