

North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NC TWCS)

CONSTRUCT BRIEFS

SEPTEMBER 2024

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North Carolina Department of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Retention	2
2. School Leadership	7
3. Teacher Leadership	15
4. Managing Student Conduct	22
5. Safety and Wellbeing	29
6. Facilities and Resources	36
8. Professional Learning and Support + Professional Development Needs	49
9. Instructional Practices and Supports + Instructional Practices and Supports Needs	58
10. Time	69
11. Equity	76

1. Retention

Survey statements

1. Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.
2. There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.
3. I feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to me.
4. I usually look forward to each working day at this school.
5. I wouldn't want to work in any other school.
6. I feel loyal to this school.
7. I would recommend this school to parents.
8. I am an important part of this school.
9. I am proud to work at this school.

Why This Is Important

According to Curran et al. (2000) only about 60% of those who are trained to teach actually enter the teaching field. One cause could be attributed to the expectations placed on teachers to be both healer and teacher in the classroom while putting in the closet their own personal reactions to the events which are affecting their students:

Only 30% of teachers were engaged and felt valued and supported in their positions. More alarming is the fact that these findings were before the added trauma and stress of the past ten years in the United States, where there have been some of the most dangerous and deadly natural disasters and school shootings of all time, and then further compounded by the past two years of the global pandemic (Gallop, 2013). All of these factors considered, one can only presume that the teacher stress levels, which in 2013 rivaled those of nurses and physicians, are even more astronomical today, creating an even greater epidemic of teachers fleeing the profession and producing more prolonged adverse effects on the future of students. (Jarrard, 2022, p. 10–11)

While the pandemic recedes into the background and schools have returned to a somewhat “normal” state, the aftereffects of shutdowns, disruptions, and loss continue to have a profound impact on our nation’s students and teachers. To keep teachers from leaving the profession altogether, it is important to create an atmosphere in which they feel respected, cared for, and supported by leadership (Frontline Education, n.d.). How is this accomplished?

Leadership must recognize that the demands on teachers to be the coach, therapist, referee, and instructor in their own classroom places an undue amount of stress on the teacher that goes beyond what they already bring to the classroom with them. Just as a student arrives carrying the concerns of whatever is happening at home or personally, teachers also do not live in a vacuum where they can easily lay aside anything personal that affects their well-being and state of mind.

Providing opportunities for teachers to do something for their own mental health or well-being communicates to teachers that someone sees them as a person, cares about them, and wants the best for them.

Giving teachers a chance to grow in their profession is also critical. The principal's role is to build the capacity of the staff, and part of this is to be an active listener/observer and to offer teachers a chance to try new things, expand their knowledge, and apply what they have learned in their classrooms. Or maybe the teacher is looking to grow in their responsibilities and leadership by taking on the role of a lead teacher or participating on a leadership team. Giving teachers a voice and choice in what they are a part of is one way of building their capacity and adding to their job satisfaction.

The best way to determine what will encourage teachers to remain in teaching and to remain at the school is to talk with them. Active listening, two-way communication, and acting on what has been communicated will go a long way to building a community in which teachers are proud members.

Self-check and Reflection

District Level Reflection

- Does the district collect attrition data gathered through employment exit conferences to determine why good teachers leave the district?
 - If yes, how are you using this data and who is it shared with?
 - If no, what process could be implemented to collect this type of data? Who will be responsible? What questions will be asked?
- Does the district ask teachers what would enhance their job satisfaction (incentives that are relevant to different teachers at different stages of their teaching career)?
 - How often?
 - How does the district respond to teachers' incentive preferences?
- What process does the district provide to support teachers who may be experiencing dissatisfaction?
 - Is it district-wide or personalized?
 - How do teachers know about the process?

- Have you provided professional development and support for principals to foster relationships with personnel and to create a safe and productive workplace in which all staff members thrive?

School-Level Reflection

- What systems are in place to support new teachers and staff in our school? Are they working?
 - How do you know?
- How do our teachers define a school that is a good place to work and learn?
 - What characteristics does this school have?
- What systems are in place to encourage and support the discussion of teacher issues and concerns?
- How is school leadership contributing to building trust within the building?
- Are teachers in the building treated differently?
 - If yes, why and what actions may be needed to ensure that all teachers feel they are treated fairly/equitably?
 - If no, how do you know?

What It Might Look Like

District-Level Actions

- Conduct an exit interview for all teachers and principals leaving the district by choice, reduction in force, or retirement.
- Ask teachers and principals for a list of incentives most relevant to them.
 - Use a suggestion box or shared google drive specifically seeking working condition satisfaction ideas, needs, and wants, and review/respond to them in a timely manner.
- Adopt and monitor a meaningful Mentoring Program that goes beyond “onboarding” and is ongoing with systematic support designed to position principals and teachers for success.
- Minimize the managerial expectations in the principal role that may prevent principals from being the instructional leaders and capacity builders in their schools.

School-Level Actions

- Make principal daily walkabouts* the norm, not the exception. This creates an opportunity to catch all staff and students being great and doing great, as well as taking a daily temperature check to identify who might need additional support so all teachers and learners thrive.
- Spotlight highlights observed from walkabouts and walkthroughs* during faculty meetings or in newsletters making sure that every teacher gets recognized at least once.
- Build trust by being trustworthy and by sharing leadership duties. When principals do not fear showing vulnerability, teachers are quick to step up and assist in duties outside of their teaching role.
- Routinize a forum that encourages and allows for respectful civil discourse.

**We make a distinction between a walkabout, which we characterize as an informal walk through the school and gives the principal an opportunity to see what is happening in areas other than individual classrooms, and a walkthrough, which we consider more of a structured process of being in classrooms to observe lessons and student engagement.*

Where To Find More Resources

Resource Title	Link	Description
Teacher Retention Strategies: Ideas to Keep Great Educators	Teacher Retention Strategies: Ideas to Keep Great Educators (frontlineeducation.com)	Blog including short list and descriptions of what might entice teachers to stay
Teacher Retention: 5 Effective Strategies for Retaining High-Quality Staff	Teacher Retention: 5 Effective Strategies for Retaining High-Quality Staff (panoramaed.com)	Article chock-full of ideas and resources
Teacher Retention 2021: Strategies to Better Understand Teacher Needs	Teacher Retention in 2021: Strategies to Better Understand Teacher Needs Webinar Short (youtube.com)	Short video
How to Build Trust in the Workplace: The Ultimate	How to Build Trust in the Workplace	This short article includes tips to strengthen workplace

Guide for Today		relationships
It all Starts with Trust and the Neuroscience of Trust	It All Starts with Trust Neuroscience of Trust	Two short blogs from the Harvard Business Review that address why trust is important and tips to build trust

NCStar Indicators related to this topic

District-Level Indicators

C03: The LEA has a plan and process to establish a pipeline of potential school leaders.

C04: The LEA has a plan and process to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers to support school improvement.

C07: The LEA has a team available to help principals as they support underperforming employees to minimize principal’s time spent dismissing low performers.

D03: The district recruits, trains, supports, and places personnel to competently address the problems of schools in need of improvement.

School-Level Indicators

D2.05 The environment of the school (physical, social, emotional, and behavioral) is safe, welcoming, and conducive to learning. (5854)

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Curran, B., Abrahams, C., & Manual, J. (2000, January 24). *Teacher supply and demand: Is there a shortage?* National Governors Association, Center for Best Practices, Education Policy Studies Division.

Frontline Education. (n.d.). *Teacher retention strategies: Ideas to keep great educators*. Teacher Retention Strategies: Ideas to Keep Great Educators (frontlineeducation.com)

Jarrard, K. M. (2022). The teacher retention crisis after natural disaster trauma and a global pandemic. [Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University]. viewcontent.cgi (liberty.edu)

2. School Leadership

Survey statements

Leadership at this school:

1. Sets clear expectations for instruction.
2. Communicates a clear vision.
3. Knows what's going on in my classroom.
4. Encourages teachers to use new knowledge and skills obtained through professional development.
5. Helps teachers improve instruction.
6. Helps teachers set clear and actionable goals for improving student learning.
7. Ensures that teachers receive coaching and support to implement new practices.
8. Creates a culture of trust in the building.
9. Makes decisions based on the best interests of their students.
10. Looks out for the wellbeing of the faculty members.
11. Effectively manages daily operations at the school.
12. Makes decisions that are reasonable and justified.

Why This Is Important

What makes a leader successful, and why is this so important for the culture and climate of the school? A leader is only as good as their followers, and people will only follow a person who has earned their trust and respect. A poor leader can undermine all the best efforts of good teachers.

To become a good leader requires building the community you have been called to serve. A leader is first a servant. Building a school community takes time and effort to bring together all those who have a vested interest in the school and the outcomes for its students, and the school leader is at the hub of this activity (Elmore, 2000; Lathan, n.d.).

Leadership, whether at the district or building level, sets the vision and goals and communicates it to the entire school community, explaining their roles in bringing the vision to fruition. The leader rallies everyone around one central mission and sets the enthusiasm and passion to drive it forward (Lucas & Valentine, 2002; Murphy, 2007).

While it is critical for leaders to establish and maintain a positive school culture, they must also remain active in the instructional side of the work and empower their teachers as experts and leaders (Marks & Printy, 2003). Not all principals come to the position with the skills of being an instructional leader, or the demands of the administrative part of the job have taken priority over being the instructional leader.

In the Hechinger Report (2011), it was further noted that in schools where there had been chronic failure (e.g., low graduation rates, low proficiency on standardized tests) an additional concern was the significant turnover in school leadership.

In six years, it (the school) had been led by nearly as many principals. Of everything we've learned about the art and science of reforming a failing school in the past decade, school leadership is second only to teacher quality in terms of importance - and the more dire a school's predicament, the greater the need for strong leadership. Because of this, the emphasis is now less on the lone dynamic teacher and more on the whole school environment. (Hechinger Report, 2011)

The district can create the conditions for sustained, productive school leadership "by setting a clear direction and tone, investing in professional development, setting up mentors for new principals, giving principals the authority to make key decisions and elevating the importance of academic achievement" (Hechinger Report, 2011).

Self-check and Reflection

District-Level Reflection

- How does the district consider each school's culture and community when hiring new principals and/or teachers? Does the district set and communicate district-wide expectations for student outcomes?
 - If yes, how are these expectations communicated to various audiences (administrators, teachers, students, staff, parents/caregivers, community)?
 - If no, what next steps might be taken to set and communicate expectations?
- How does the district give building leaders reasonable autonomy to make changes or to try innovative ideas?
- What specific professional development does the district provide for school leaders related to effective leadership factors such as:
 - Vision casting and goal setting?
 - Instructional leadership?
 - Relationship building?
 - Professional development aligned to needs (informed by student data and teacher data)?
 - School climate and culture?

- Efficient operational management to maximize outcomes

School-Level Reflection

- How does school leadership foster the growth and development of staff members in new practices?
- How do administrators currently communicate the following:
 - Students are the focus of all decisions?
 - Effective instruction is non-negotiable in our school?
 - Growth and continuous improvement mindset for staff and students?
- How do school leaders in our school build trust?
- How might school leaders in our school be limiting the development of trust among colleagues?
- How do school leaders currently perceive the faculty?
- How does the faculty currently perceive school leaders?
- Have roles and responsibilities for all staff members been clearly defined and communicated?
 - Are these roles honored by school leaders, faculty, and staff?
 - How do you know?

What It Might Look Like

District-Level Actions

- Set and model expectations for leading, teaching and learning.
- Make course corrections to its expectations and vision based on available data.
- Implement a process for hiring administrators that includes key stakeholders such as other principals, teachers, community members, and parents where appropriate.
- Seek input from principals and teachers on their specific needs for instructionally focused professional development (PD) and align those PD selections to professional growth plans.
- Offer principals opportunities for autonomy and discernment regarding budgets, scheduling, staffing, curriculum materials, assessments, and professional development.

- Set and consistently communicate student outcome expectations.
- Set and consistently communicate faculty and staff expectations.
- Provide system level interventions and support when goals and/or student outcomes are not met.
- Model student centered decision making for school leaders.
- Implement a district wide system that solicits input and feedback from stakeholders and then act upon received input (advisory councils, surveys, listening tours, etc.).

School-Level Actions

- Communicate that students are the primary focus by consistently modeling this in decisions (actions and words).
- Implement a structured process for administrators to be visible in classrooms, observing instruction and providing timely, growth-oriented feedback.
- Foster trust with staff by the principal being dependable, actively listening, and giving voice to students and staff.
- Provide leadership opportunities to individual staff members based on their specific interests and skills. When principals do not fear showing vulnerability, teachers are quick to step up and assist in duties outside of their teaching role.
- Implement a feedback process for all teachers that is timely, consistent, unbiased, supportive, confidential, and promotes self-reflection that will lead to changes in adult practices.
- Promote and model civil discourse that avoids blame and serves to energize all about solving school issues.
- Implement a process for hiring teachers that includes in the interview key stakeholders such as other teachers, community members, or parents where appropriate.
- Seek input from teachers on their specific needs for professional development (PD) including content and delivery and align those PD selections to professional growth plans.
- Ask teachers regularly and genuinely how they can support them in meeting teaching/learning goals.

Where To Find More Resources

Resource Title	Link	Description
10 Traits of Successful School Leaders	10 Effective Educational Leadership Qualities (sandiego.edu)	Short blog from the University of San Diego outlining core leadership qualities
How to Boost School Leadership in 4 Steps	How to boost school leadership in 4 steps (worldbank.org)	Short blog published by Education for Global Development that provides tips to districts in hiring and supporting good leaders
Culture Shift Initiative	http://www.adi.org/transform/	Information on professional development that equips a <i>Culture Shift Team</i> to guide the school community in reviewing the current school culture, describing the ideal school culture, and closing the gap between the two
What Is Instructional Leadership in Education? Insights to Improve as a Leader	Instructional Leadership Insights	Short blog published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) that includes links to free resources such as the eBook, <i>Building Your School Culture: An Administrator’s Guide</i> . (green box next to first picture)

NCStar Indicators related to this topic

District-Level Indicators

A01: The superintendent and other central office staff are accountable for district and school improvement and student learning outcomes.

B01: The LEA has oriented its culture toward shared responsibility and accountability.

B02: A team structure for the district and schools is officially incorporated into district policy.

B03: All district and school teams prepare agendas for their settings and keep minutes of their meetings.

B04: The LEA has an LEA Support & Improvement Team.

B07: The district examines existing school improvement strategies being implemented across the district and determines their value, expanding, modifying, and culling as evidence suggests.

B08: The district designates a central office contact person for the school, and that person maintains close communication with the school and an interest in its progress.

B09: The superintendent models and communicates the disposition of innovation and creativity to problem-solve and meet the needs of schools and students.

C01: The superintendent celebrates individual, team, and district/school successes, especially related to student learning outcomes.

C02: The LEA selects and hires qualified principals with the necessary competencies to be change leaders.

C09: The LEA designates a central office contact person that supports a cohesive and consistent implementation of the district's vision for improvement.

D05: The district intervenes early when a school is not making adequate progress.

D06: The district allows school leaders reasonable autonomy to do things differently in order to succeed.

School-Level Indicators

A1.01 The principal models and communicates the expectation of improved student learning through commitment, discipline, and careful implementation of effective practices.

A2.03 The principal spends at least 50% of his/her time working directly with teachers to improve instruction, including classroom observations.

A3.03 The principal compiles reports from classroom observations, showing aggregate areas of strength and areas that need improvement without revealing the identity of individual teachers.

A4.09 The Leadership Team monitors rates of student transfer, dropout, graduation, attendance, and post-high school outcome (e.g. student enrollment in college, student in careers).

A4.17 The school implements a reliable and valid system-wide screening process for academics and behavior that includes the assessment of all students multiple times per year and establishes decision rules to determine students in need of targeted intervention.

B1.02 The Leadership Team serves as a conduit of communication to the faculty and staff.

B1.03 KEY A Leadership Team consisting of the principal, teachers who lead the Instructional Teams, and other professional staff meets regularly (at least twice a month) to review implementation of effective practices.

B1.04 The principal effectively and clearly communicates the message of change.

B1.05 The principal offers frequent opportunities for staff and parents to voice constructive critiques of the school's progress and suggestions for improvement.

B1.06 Yearly learning goals are set for the school by the Leadership Team, utilizing student learning data.

B1.07 The school's Leadership Team/Health Council regularly reviews data which reflect the school's health, nutrition and safety policies, school environment, work-site wellness, attendance and discipline records and will use the data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs.

B2.01 School culture promotes and supports the physical, social, emotional, and behavioral health of all school personnel.

B2.02 The Leadership Team shares in decisions of real substance pertaining to curriculum, instruction, and professional development.

B2.04 The principal makes sure everyone understands their role in continuously elevating professional practice.

B2.05 The principal focuses on building leadership capacity, achieving learning goals, and improving instruction.

B3.01 The LEA/School monitors progress of the extended learning time programs and strategies being implemented and uses data to inform modifications.

B3.02 The principal collects and acts on data from a variety of sources and in a timely manner.

B3.03 KEY The principal monitors curriculum and classroom instruction regularly and provides timely, clear, constructive feedback to teachers.

B3.05 The Leadership Team implements, monitors, and analyzes results from an early warning system at the school level using indicators (e.g., attendance, academic, behavior monitoring) to identify students at risk for dropping out.

B3.06 School leaders and peer mentors regularly observe and measure instances of online, hybrid, or blended teaching to ensure instruction is implemented fully and with fidelity.

C1.02 The principal plans opportunities for teachers to share their strengths with other teachers.

C1.03 The LEA/School has established, communicated, and provided to employees clear goals and measures for employee's performance and provide targeted training or assistance for any employee receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation or warning.

C3.01 The principal celebrates individual, team, and school successes, especially related to student learning outcomes.

C3.04 KEY The LEA/School has established a system of procedures and protocols for recruiting, evaluating, rewarding, and replacing staff.

C3.05 The LEA/School has a system for performance-based incentives that is transparent and fair.

D1.03 The principal provides optimum conditions for the Leadership Team to make decisions and act on their decisions.

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3. Teacher Leadership

Survey statements

Teachers in this school:

1. Communicate this school's vision to students.
2. Empower students.
3. Establish a safe and orderly environment.
4. Take responsibility for all students' learning.
5. Use data to organize, plan, and set goals.
6. Use a variety of assessment data throughout the year to evaluate progress.

Teachers in this school have opportunities to participate in the following leadership activities:

1. Analyze data.
2. Assist in determining professional development.
3. Assist in determining school budget.
4. Create a professional learning community.
5. Develop goals and strategies through the School Improvement Plan.
6. Establish student discipline procedures.
7. Mentor and support teachers to improve effectiveness.
8. Participate in the hiring process.
9. Select instructional materials and resources.

Why This Is Important

Serving as principal in a school can be a daunting and lonely position. There are administrative tasks to oversee, schedules, buses, parents, student behavior, and the all-important job of being the instructional leader and vision carrier of the school. When these responsibilities can be shared, the load becomes easier to bear.

There is a vast amount of talent and expertise in every school building among the staff. It is the task of the principal to seek it out and help to foster leadership potential within the school's faculty and staff. Ado (2016) proposed that teacher leaders can encourage and promote professional growth among all teachers in the building and by extension, help build a healthy school culture (Smylie & Eckert, 2017). Aliu and Kacaniku (2023) state:

The changing role of teachers has called for a new paradigm of the teaching profession that recognizes the potential of teachers to lead and support school development and change. The influence teachers have on the school community and their commitment to school change are at the core of teacher leadership definitions. Preparing future teachers

to act as leaders in the schools can support the overall efforts for school improvement. (p. 37)

It may be assumed that it falls on the principal to build the capacity of teachers to become leaders; however, first the district must look to see if there are “rules in the form of policies and procedures at the organizational level that shape teacher leaders’ perceptions of opportunities and constraints” (Scribner & Bradley-Levine, 2010; as cited in Thomason, Sanzo, & Scribner, 2023, p. 69). In a study conducted by Tore & Duman Saka (2023) they state that “the best way to create school culture is to support and develop teacher leadership” (Cranston & Kusanovich, 2016; as cited in Tore & Duman Saka, 2023, p. 248).

In a world dominated by social media “influencers” a teacher leader is one who becomes an internal “influencer” in the world of teaching and leading. A teacher leader is one who leads within the classroom as well as outside the classroom by being one to watch and to mimic in using best practices (Rivera, 2021).

Self-check and Reflection

District-Level Reflection

- What policies or practices does the district have in place to encourage and support teacher leadership?
- How does the district include teacher leaders when doing onsite visits and walkthroughs?
- How does the district include teacher voice and choice in instructional related activities such as the selection of high-quality materials, curriculum development, policy development, and professional development design?
- What district structures could be used to strengthen avenues for teacher leadership?
 - For example, do teachers make presentations to the school board or to colleagues to spotlight effective practices or programs?
- How might social media outlets be leveraged to foster collaboration and teacher leadership? How could the district incentivize teachers to develop or grow their leadership skills?
 - Is the district budget adequate to sustain teacher leadership opportunities?
 - How can various funding streams (Title I and IDEA appropriations, local funds, grants, etc.) be used to incentivize teacher leadership and professional growth?

School-Level Reflection

- What structures or opportunities are currently in place to include teachers in the decision-making process?
 - For example, is there a diverse school leadership team in place to guide school-based decision-making?
 - Is the decision-making process effective and efficient?
 - How do you know?
 - Do all teachers have an opportunity to serve on the leadership team? Do teachers feel included? How do you know? Are there ways to make the decision-making process more transparent?
- What procedures are currently in place to encourage teachers to accept leadership roles?
 - Is the school-based budget adequate to sustain teacher leadership opportunities?
 - How can various funding streams (school-based Title I and IDEA appropriations, local funds, etc.) be used to incentivize teacher leadership and professional growth?
- What does professional development look like in our school?
 - How are professional development needs determined and personalized for teachers and staff?
 - Are the school's professional development efforts effective? How do you know?
 - What evidence exists to show that professional development leads to change in practice?
- What structures could be used to strengthen avenues for teacher leadership?
 - For example, do teachers make presentations to colleagues to spotlight effective practices or programs?
 - How might school newsletters, PLCs, and newsletters be leveraged to foster collaboration and teacher leadership?
- What structures are in place at the school to encourage teacher voice and choice?
- What system is currently in place to solve problems? Is it effective? What is not working?

What It Might Look Like

District-Level Actions

- Include question stems or probes such as “where do you see yourself in 3 years, 5 years, 7 years” during initial interviews and annual professional growth conversations.
- Invest in and embrace the “grow our own” approach when seeking to encourage teachers into leadership roles. This includes creating multiple pathways for teachers to engage in leadership (additional certifications, mentoring, National Board Certification, etc.). Teacher leadership opportunities might also include the provision of on-ramps for assistant teachers to move into licensed teaching positions (mentoring support, apprenticeships, instructional coaching, etc.)
- Ask principals to create an inventory of their various job responsibilities to determine which responsibilities can be distributed to willing and able teachers.
- Develop a “we will cover your class” protocol to free up teacher leaders to model lessons for colleagues or to accompany school or district leaders during walkthroughs.
- Create and fund formal leadership roles such as instructional coaches, lead teachers, or department chairs.
- Offer teacher leaders incentives such as stipends to cover costs associated with continuing education, reduced teaching workloads, etc.
- Offer leadership and coaching classes for potential teacher leaders before or after teaching hours.
- Include professional leadership goal setting in teacher professional growth plans and include their goals in the teacher evaluation process.
- Include teachers in the design and review of curriculum standards and materials.
- Provide stipends to teachers who are willing to lead professional development sessions or who are willing to mentor other teachers.
- Create formal structures for teacher leaders to provide input related to policy development, strategic planning, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and other key decision-making areas.
- Create and support teacher leader cohorts by bringing certification coursework classes directly to the school either in person or virtually.

School-Level Actions

- Create opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles. For example, serving as a grade level or department chair, a club advisor or sponsor, a mentor, or leading a special project, etc.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to lead on-site professional development sessions for colleagues or parents.
- Encourage teachers to stretch their skills by leading a “passion project.” Provide feedback and support when they take the initiative to exercise leadership.
- Secure resources to incentivize teacher leadership by leveraging existing funding streams and by seeking innovative partnerships (e.g., partnership with a university to offer discounted or free coursework).
- Seek input from teachers on school decisions such as creating school improvement plans, preparing the budget, interviewing new staff, discipline policy and enforcement, selection of curriculum materials, scheduling, planning professional development, before and after-school activities, parent and community outreach, etc.

Where To Find More Resources

Resource Title	Link	Description
Five essentials for building teacher leadership capacity	Five Essentials for Building Teacher Leadership Capacity NASSP	Blog created by <i>National Association of Secondary School Principals</i> with some basic advice
Top five takeaways for supporting teacher leadership	Top Five Takeaways for Supporting Teacher Leadership - ED.gov Blog	<i>US Department of Education</i> blog with practice ideas
Key characteristics of teacher leaders in schools	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHER LEADERS IN SCHOOLS (swosu.edu)	Article from <i>Administrative Issues Journal</i> with practical suggestions

Teacher Leadership Program Readiness Surveys	Teacher Leadership Readiness Guide	This toolkit is designed for districts to identify district conditions that support or discourage teacher leadership programs. It includes three readiness surveys (teachers, principals, and district)
Effective Teaching Practices	Effective Teaching Practices	Infographic from REL-Southeast and Institute for Educational Sciences (IES) that spotlights effective teaching practices
Ask an Expert: Elements of Effective Teaching	Elements of Effective Teaching	IES Guide that describes and summarizes evidence supporting teacher leadership areas of preparation and planning, professionalism and collaboration, learning environment, teacher expectations, instructional delivery, and assessment and feedback

NCStar Indicators related to this topic

District-Level Indicators

D01: The district provides schools with technology, training, and support for integrated data collection, reporting, and analysis systems.

D02: The district ensures that key pieces of user-friendly data are available in a timely fashion at the district, school, and classroom levels.

D07: The district provides and supports digital-age classrooms and learning opportunities through relevant and necessary infrastructure, acquisition, and technical assistance.

School-Level Indicators

B2.03 KEY The school has established a team structure among teachers with specific duties and time for instructional planning.

B2.06 The traditional roles of the principal and other administrators are distributed to allow adequate time for administrative attention to instruction and student supports.

D2.07 Instructional teams determine which blended learning model is appropriate for the school or individual classroom.

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4. Managing Student Conduct

Survey statements

1. Students follow the rules for student conduct.
2. Teachers routinely enforce the rules for student conduct.
3. School leadership supports teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.
4. School leadership routinely enforces rules for student conduct.
5. This school uses positive behavioral interventions and supports.

The following are student conduct issues at my school:

1. Bullying
2. Cheating
3. Cyberbullying
4. Disorder in classrooms
5. Disorder in unstructured areas (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, bathrooms)
6. Drug/tobacco products use
7. Gang activity
8. Physical conflicts among students
9. Robbery or theft
10. Student disrespect of teachers
11. Student possession of weapons
12. Tardiness/skipping class
13. Threats of violence toward teachers
14. Vandalism

Why This Is Important

First and foremost, student conduct within the classroom is tantamount to student learning. If a classroom is disruptive (and this does not include *intended* noise, activity from group activity or lively discussions), students are distracted and not attentive to the lesson or learning activity. Learning cannot take place in an unmanaged and out of control classroom. It doesn't have to be all the students, or even a majority, it only takes one student acting up to derail an entire lesson. As Cline et al. (2023) writes:

Gregory and Fergus (2017) found that implementing social emotional lessons into the daily schedule created a healthier school environment and saw a decrease in disciplinary issues. Poulou (2017) found that the teacher-student relationship in the classroom is essential in academic success. When teachers engage in daily social-emotional lessons, they are encouraging positive social interactions between peers and adults. When respectful behavior is set as an expectation in the classroom, instead of only being

integrated periodically throughout the year, students can focus on academics rather than social interactions. If students are required and encouraged to participate in daily social-emotional lessons, they form healthier relationships with both their teachers and peers. When the classroom climate is free of conflict, the students present fewer emotional and behavioral difficulties. (Responsive Classroom, 2017; as cited in Cline et al., 2023, p. 191)

For a district or a school, it is important to plan ahead for student conduct rather than react by waiting for the misconduct to occur:

Student conduct is a systematic approach of creating guidelines, policies, and procedures that outline expected student behavior. The primary purpose of such a policy is to ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive school environment that creates the conditions for academic excellence and personal student growth. (Team Creatrix, 2023)

There are proactive steps to take long before behavior gets out of control. Districts should have a district-wide student conduct policy which includes responsibilities for everyone in the system. Schools should follow the district policy and include expectations of parents and students in the student handbook. Camacho and Krezmien (2020) found that most student conduct policies had negative language or consequences rather than positive and “districts with more positive consequences in their handbook had lower levels of suspension rates compared to district with handbooks with more negative consequences or district with no clear discipline procedure” (Ghibaudy, 2023, pp. 15–16).

Green et al. (2021) recommended that districts evaluate their policies and the implementation of the policies on a regular basis to ensure they are positive, preventative, and equitable both in word and in practice. It is recommended that stakeholders, including principals, teachers, parents, and even students be included in the review.

Self-check and Reflection

District-Level Reflection

- How does the district communicate district-wide student conduct/discipline policies to all audiences?
 - Administrators
 - Teachers and Staff
 - Students
 - Parents/Families
- How are individual school policies or discipline procedures monitored to ensure equity and fairness?

- How are the Board and district legal counsel involved in the development and timely review of policies of each individual school to ensure they are equitable and fair?
- What is the dispute policy and procedure to follow when parents or students believe the consequences of actions have been unfairly applied or are extreme?

School-Level Reflection

- What policies, procedures, and rules are currently in place to support student conduct?
- What systems are in place to assure that all staff clearly understand student conduct policies and procedures?
 - What is in place for beginning teachers and those new to the school?
- What systems are in place to assure that all students and families clearly understand student conduct policies and procedures?
 - What is in place for those new to the school?
- What steps are in place to support students in meeting the expectations?
 - Are expectations revisited regularly?
 - What happens after a consequence is given?
- What role do administrators have in establishing clear expectations for student conduct? Teachers? Other support staff?
- What procedures or internal controls are in place to ensure that:
 - administrators apply discipline procedures consistently and fairly?
 - teachers apply discipline procedures consistently and fairly?
- If a staff member or administrator is not consistent in their discipline, is there a system for addressing the situation?
- How are faculty and administration continually communicating about student discipline—both positive and opportunities to improve?
- What role do parents play in student conduct?
 - What lines of communication are open between teachers and parents/administrators and teachers/administrators and parents, to promote positive student conduct?
- What are the top three student conduct issues at the school?

- What changes can be made to improve those issues?

What It Might Look Like

District-Level Actions

- **Create and consistently implement a Code of Conduct Guide** that establishes a clear system for positive conduct and a positive school climate. The student conduct policies should be:
 - Clearly defined
 - Clearly communicated—both expectations and consequences
 - Fair and consistent
 - Promote positive behavior over punitive consequences
 - Focus on building a supportive and nurturing learning environment
- Clearly outline roles and responsibilities.
- Conduct annual reviews of the district’s Code of Conduct Guide that includes representation/input from all stakeholder groups including administrators, teachers, students, parents, staff, school board, and community members.
- Include within the Code of Conduct Guide positive and proactive strategies to improve school discipline and clearly detail the responsibilities and rights including a dispute policy and procedure.
- Provide a copy of the Code of Conduct Guide for all stakeholders in a variety of formats (ex., hard copy, digital) and locations (ex., district office, school offices, local library).
- Create a training process or module for teachers that focuses on creating routines and conditions for managing classrooms (i.e., co-constructing norms, proactive vs. reactive, well designed, interactive lessons, handling conflict, etc.).
- Create a system to onboard and familiarize new teachers as well as new students and their families with the Code of Conduct Guide.
- Create a district multi-tiered process for providing appropriate and timely support for behavior or social-emotional concerns prior to prevent escalation.

School-Level Actions

- Communicate and create professional learning sessions for teachers that focus on classroom management, classroom procedures and norms, proactive approaches to resolve conflict, building relationships with students, MTSS, etc.
- Review the Code of Conduct Guide annually with all staff including responsibilities, rights, and consequences with teachers, students, and parents intentionally checking for understanding within those groups.
- Develop a schedule for school counselors and/or social workers that allows flexibility to provide direct support to specific students and families.
- Use the school specific NC TWCS results to identify and address the top 3 student conduct issues at the school.
- Institute a system of routine spot checks for consistency of the application of the Code of Conduct to ensure equity and fairness in administration by teachers and administrators.

Where To Find More Resources

Resource Title	Link	Description
Conduct Management and Student Success: Impact on Academic Achievement	Conduct Management and Student Success: Impact on Academic Achievement Creatix Campus	Although written for post-secondary, most suggestions are universal for all education levels
Managing Student Behavior	Slide 1 (sese.org)	South Eastern Special Education organization (IL) slide deck that addresses managing student behavior and gives examples for a walkthrough based on Danielson’s framework
Effective Classroom Management: Proven techniques for handling students with behavior problems	Effective Classroom Management: Proven Techniques for Handling Students with Behavior Problems Teach Your Heart	Website and blog that gives practice suggestions on a range of behavior related topics

	Out	
How School Discipline Impacts Students' Social, Emotional and Academic Development (SEAD)	How School Discipline Impacts Students' Social, Emotional and, Academic Development (SEAD) - The Education Trust	Article and resource guide on how schools can create physically safe and emotionally supportive environments adopting evidence-based approaches
Access for All Guide 2.0	Access for All 2.0	Digital resource/flip book that includes a wide range of practical strategies for addressing 35 common behavior or academic concerns
Norming: A Practice that Encourages Social/Emotional Competency	Norming	A topic brief on setting norms to impact classroom management, expected student behaviors, and positive school culture

NCStar Indicators related to this topic

District-Level Indicators

**There are no obvious indicators provided in NCStar that align to Managing Student Conduct, so listed here are some that might be considered to create a plan under that would include elements of district responsibility for the conditions and policies around student conduct.*

A01: The superintendent and other central office staff are accountable for district and school improvement and student learning outcomes.

A02: The superintendent models and communicates the expectation of improved student learning through commitment, discipline, and careful implementation of sound practices.

A03: The district sets district, school, and student subgroup achievement targets.

B01: The LEA has oriented its culture toward shared responsibility and accountability.

School-Level Indicators

A1.07 KEY ALL teachers employ effective classroom management and reinforce classroom rules and procedures by positively teaching them.

A2.17 ALL teachers establish classroom norms for personal responsibility, cooperation, and concern for others.

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5. Safety and Wellbeing

Survey statements

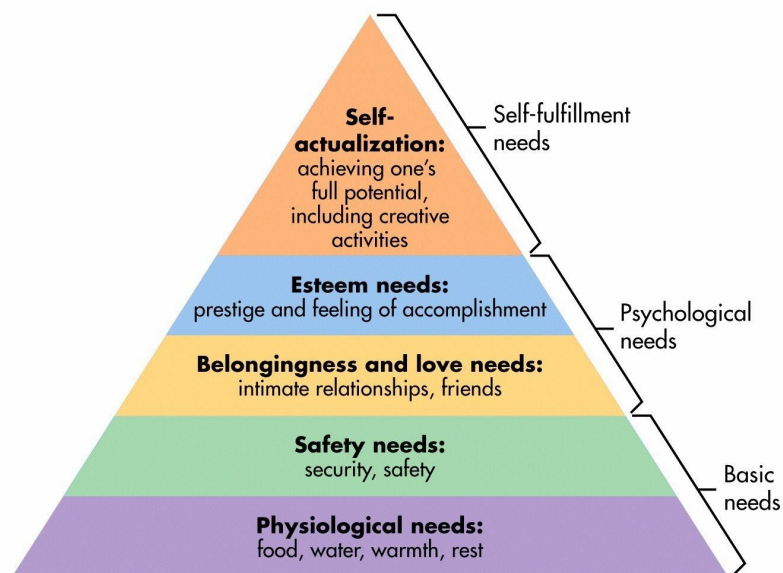
1. School safety issues are addressed quickly.
2. Students at this school are comfortable reporting bullying incidents to a teacher or other staff.
3. Teachers in this school know what to do if there is an emergency, natural disaster (tornado, flood) or a dangerous situation (e.g., violent person on campus) during the school day.
4. School staff are aware of the content in their emergency operations plan.
5. Students arrive at school with their basic needs met (e.g., school supplies, clean clothes, food, sleep).
6. This school provides adequate services to help students with social, emotional, and mental health needs.

Why This Is Important

On Maslow's hierarchy of needs, safety comes second in importance only after physical needs (food, water, shelter) are met.

As educators, we know if a child comes to school hungry, tired, or uncertain about where they will sleep, they are less likely to engage in learning. While a school cannot meet every need, it can offer breakfast and comfort to a child to provide a warm and caring space for them during the hours of school. Beyond meeting these basic needs to prepare a student to learn, the student

must feel safe. When there is fear for personal safety, the mind cannot do anything more than deal with the fear. The brain remains in "high alert" mode and the body in a fight, or flight mode. Students who attend schools where they feel safe and are surrounded by adults who are in



control and caring are able to focus on the lesson and the learning. While Fear Factor may be entertaining to watch on tv, it has no place in the classroom.

Trout et al. (2022) explain school safety as having multiple “elements” which they describe as technical, adaptive, and relational. The technical elements include such items as “policies, plans, structures, models and other such elements that are written up and handed down to be implemented” (p. 17). The adaptive elements are “mindsets, values, guiding principles, belief systems, and other such elements that are necessary for tailoring and adapting the technical elements to the needs and desires of community members” (p. 17). Finally, the relational elements involve “social capital, belonging, collectivism, and trust” (p. 17).

So, how does safety and wellbeing play into the working conditions of a school? Everything said above about students is also applicable to the staff at the building. Does the staff feel the school is a safe and welcoming place to work? A discussion of safety and wellbeing cannot be separated from a discussion about school climate. If the climate of the school is viewed as positive by staff, it increases teacher effectiveness as well as teacher satisfaction which leads to teacher retention (Bryk et al., 2010; Moore Johnson et al., 2012; Kraft & Papay, 2014; Papay & Kraft, 2017), and “teachers who work in supportive contexts stay in the classroom longer, improve at great rates and experience more success in the classroom than their peers in less-supportive environments” (Papay & Kraft, 2017, p. 16).

Self-check and Reflection

District-Level Reflection

- Does the district have partnerships or agreements with local law enforcement agencies, local emergency management agencies, etc. to leverage community and agency safety resources?
- Does the district quickly respond to safety issues at their schools whether the concern is for the facility, related to technology, and/or people?
- What is the process for inspecting buildings and grounds of the school buildings to ensure that they are safe for students and staff?
- Does the district have a district-wide emergency/safety plan that allows individual schools to add school building specific information for natural disasters or other dangerous situations?
- Are there clear procedures in place regarding digital citizenship, digital safety, data privacy, and other technology-based safety protocols?

- Does the district have a district-wide policy for bullying with a reporting mechanism that keeps the reporter anonymous and safe from retaliation?
- Does the district provide a counselor, social worker, or school safety officer at every school? Does the district provide leadership for these positions from the district level?
 - If yes, how does the district ensure that resources are adequate to support these positions and the district's vision for the positions?
 - If no, what actions should be taken to improve in this area?
- Is teacher safety, wellbeing, and support a priority for the district?
 - If yes, what specific programs or initiatives are in place to support your response?
 - If no, what actions do you suggest to improve in this area?
- How does the district provide training and support to schools and staff on safety protocols and procedures?
 - What is the frequency of these trainings?
 - Who is required to attend?
- What is the district's communication plan for emergency situations?
 - How is the communication plan tailored to various audiences?

School-Level Reflection

- What policies and protocols are in place for unsafe behavior at the school (physical, digital, emotional)?
- What is the process used by administrators to communicate quickly and consistently regarding school safety issues to staff?
- What is the protocol for students reporting school safety or bullying issues?
- When is the emergency plan reviewed for all staff?
 - Is there a more detailed safety session during new hire orientation?
 - Are drills in place to simulate emergency responses?
- What systems are in place to support students who do not have basic needs met?
- How does the school currently leverage community partners?
- How are counselors and social workers utilized at school?

- Are counselors and/or social workers available for students?
 - Are counselors and social workers also available for teachers?
- What is the overall climate of the school as perceived by:
 - certified staff?
 - non-certified staff?
 - students?
 - parents and caregivers?

What It Might Look Like

District-Level Actions

- Create a team-based framework to facilitate effective coordination of services and interventions across the district. This process should include representatives responsible for personnel, instruction, cafeteria, operations, athletics, security, transportation, facilities, etc.
- Develop a system of support that promotes physical and psychological safety for students and employees.
- Secure resources to deploy appropriately trained mental health and safety personnel for schools throughout the district.
- Adopt a continuum of mental health support within a multitiered system of supports that ensures equity of access for all schools, staff, and students.
- Hold quarterly check in meetings with safety and well-being partners to ascertain that the district is prepared to support and protect students and employees.
- Annually train and revisit safety protocols and procedures including its emergency communication plan.
- Establish clear policies and procedures regarding digital citizenship, digital safety, data privacy, and other technology-based safety protocols.
- Model and support a culture of acceptance, tolerance, and respect to foster the optimum environment for teaching and learning.

School-Level Actions

- Create a structured emergency protocol that is understood and executed consistently by all school staff.
- Communicate consistently in words and actions to all adults that a safe, orderly, and welcoming learning environment is critical to teaching and learning.
- Consider the context of the school to provide services that are most needed, appropriate, and culturally sensitive.
- Initiate school-wide multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) focused on school safety and student learning.
- Engage input from external and internal experts to ensure that there is a balance of physical and psychological safety to avoid overly restrictive measures.
- Ensure a thorough training calendar and drill schedule to equip all children and adults in the school with an understanding of emergency procedures.
- Implement timely aligned responses to support students whose basic resources are inadequate or absent.
 - Organize a school safety/well-being team to assess and identify needs, strengths, and gaps in existing services and supports.
- Evaluate the current safety of the school building and grounds by examining the physical security features of the campus.
- Conduct weekly/monthly safety walkthroughs with security and operations staff to maintain proactive precautions to ensure the safety of students and staff.
- Communicate the formal district approved process for communicating during emergency situations (chain of command, media engagement, etc.)

Where To Find More Resources

Resource Title	Link	Description
Safe school environments: Research policy and investments in Colorado	Colorado Children's Campaign	Short article on school safety with a quick synopsis of research around prevention strategies

Find Resources to Create a Safer School	SchoolSafety.gov School Safety Resources	Website that provides links to other resources around the safe schools topic
Building a school climate that makes teachers want to stay	NCTQ: Blog: Building a school climate that makes teachers want to stay	A short blog with practical suggestions
School Climate Improvement	School Climate Improvement National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) (ed.gov)	Web page with multiple resources
Reimagining school safety: A guide for schools and communities	Reimagining School Safety: A Guide for Schools and Communities (ed.gov)	Guide that includes reflection questions, exercises to try, and grounded examples of successful school safety efforts in schools and districts
A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools	A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools	A framework for improving school safety and increasing access to mental health supports

NCStar Indicators related to this topic

District-Level Indicators

**There are no obvious indicators provided in NCStar that align to Safety and Wellbeing, so listed here are some that might be considered to create a plan under that would include elements of district responsibility for the conditions and policies around student conduct.*

B09: The superintendent models and communicates the disposition of innovation and creativity to problem-solve and meet the needs of schools and students.

B10: The district proactively supports and emphasizes student-centered instruction by seeking solutions to remove barriers, including those related to policies, practices, and traditions.

School-Level Indicators

A4.05 ALL teachers teach and reinforce positive social skills, self-respect, relationships, and responsibility for the consequences of decisions and actions.

A4.06 KEY ALL teachers are attentive to students' emotional states, guide students in managing their emotions, and arrange for supports and interventions when necessary.

A4.21 The school selects, implements, and evaluates evidence-based programs that enhance social/emotional competency.

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6. Facilities and Resources

Survey statements

The following aspects of this school's physical environment are sufficient for quality instruction:

1. Air quality
2. Building cleanliness
3. Building comfort (e.g., size of classrooms; temperature; building layout)
4. Building maintenance (e.g., lead, asbestos, pest control)
5. Building security
6. Light quality
7. Noise quality
8. Reliable internet access

Why This Is Important

Across America, there is a great disparity between the age and conditions of our public schools. The COVID pandemic brought this into sharp focus when it was determined that the ventilation systems and air quality systems in many schools were sub-par. The US Department of Education (USDE) provided millions of dollars for schools to upgrade or replace old and failing systems, but even that investment could not repair the condition of many of our schools. It is not hard to guess where the worst of these schools could be found—in poor neighborhoods, remote or rural locations, and Native American reservations.

The physical conditions of high school buildings across the United States vary drastically. While many schools boast state-of-the-art facilities, many others are unattractive, unhealthy, and even unsafe. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2014) over 53 percent of school facilities in the United States require improvements to be considered satisfactory. (Ford & Alsup, 2017, p. 27)

When schools are in disrepair, there is a feeling of despondency that can settle over the entire neighborhood in which the school resides and from which the students come. This despondency can affect the attitude toward what happens within the schools' walls as well, "beyond the mere concern for safety and comfort, the conditions of the school's facilities also affect the teaching and learning process (Bowers & Urick, 2011; Cash, 1993; Earthman & Lemasters, 2011; Tanner, 2008). Buildings in poor condition or disrepair are not as conducive to teaching and learning as those that are in satisfactory or excellent condition" (Bowers & Urick, 2011; Earthman & Lemasters, 2011; Tanner 2008, in Ford & Alsup, 2017, p. 27).

Resources, which typically are thought of simply as financial resources to address facilities repair, can also mean the resources that are available for educational purposes such as

“teaching materials, technical equipment, and student materials” which have been found to “correlate with the quality and condition of school facilities” (Kozol, 2012; Uline, Tschannen-Moran, & Wolsey, 2009; Uline, Wolsey, Tschannen-Moran, & Lin, 2010, as cited in Ford & Alsup, 2017, p. 28).

A study conducted by Uline et al. (2009) found that flow of movement (traffic) within a building, the aesthetics, lighting, classrooms (size, configuration) and the overall number of people within the building on any given day all contributed to the students feeling a sense of ownership and pride in their school and their overall achievement.

Teachers are affected by the environment as well. This is their place of professional work and where they spend most of their time. The condition of the school can either positively or negatively affect the attitudes of teachers (Earthman & Lemasters, 2009; Leigh, 2012), and can even influence whether a teacher chooses to teach at that school (Ladd, 2011; Uline et al., 2010). Moore et al. (2018) found that in hard to staff schools, the reasons for teachers leaving stemmed from workplace dissatisfaction which included “instructional leadership, school culture, collegial relationships, common planning time/collaboration, teacher’s decision-making input, professional development resources, *facilities* (emphasis added), and lack of parental support and involvement” (p. 2023).

Self-check and Reflection

District-Level Reflection

- How might the district reallocate resources so that the most critical updates and improvements can be made to facilities, technology, safety, and other operationally related resources?
- How are safety procedures communicated to staff annually?
- What is the process for engaging external expertise in the design of safety plans (e.g., law enforcement, school security, school staff, custodians, etc.)?
- How and when are school safety plans monitored and adjusted?
- What is the process used by the district to conduct facility walk-throughs and school level information gathering sessions each year to assess and document needed upgrades and improvements?
- When does the district conduct a resource audit to ensure teaching materials are up to date and relevant?
- What is the process for communicating facility needs to the district?

- How are facility related needs communicated to various stakeholder groups?
- Does the district allow schools the autonomy to adjust budgets in order to address immediate facility needs that affect the safety and well-being of both staff and students?
 - If yes, what evidence is available to ensure that the process is effective and efficient?
 - If no, what process can be put in place to strengthen this area and ensure that it is effective and efficient?

School-Level Reflection

- Define what it means for a facility to be considered clean and maintained.
- What cleaning and maintenance procedures are currently in place?
 - What specific procedures might need to be revised, eliminated, added?
- If there is a specific need, do staff members know the systems in place to make a request?
- What can leadership do to contribute to the maintenance and cleanliness of the school?
- Is space around the school being utilized effectively throughout the entire school day?
 - How do you know?
 - What areas could be used more effectively?
- Is classroom space efficient to meet the needs of both staff and students?
 - If yes, how do you know? How do you set up “model classrooms” to scale efficiencies?
 - If no, what recommendations might you make to teachers and/or the district for consideration?

What It Might Look Like

Distict-Level Actions

- Conduct annual property condition assessments to evaluate the mechanical, electrical, structural, roofing, grounds, accessibility, and budgets for maintenance, repair, replacement, and new additions.

- Conduct annual technology property and property condition assessments to evaluate the hardware, software, and internet.
- Inspect annually or more frequently if needed for acoustics and noise, air quality, lighting, temperature control, classroom size, and learning space/design.
- Create a formal, time stamped, and monitored process for reporting technology, facility, safety, or maintenance needs or concerns (phone line, email, etc.)
- Develop a strategic facilities plan that continually challenges all to consider which facilities need to support teaching and learning.
- Establish and monitor clearly defined custodial routines and schedules to meet OSHA and related protocols.
- Define a system for routine daily cleaning both inside and outside of its facilities.
- Create an easy to access work order system for reporting and scheduling a timely response to technology, maintenance, or facility issues/problems.

School-Level Actions

- Create a formal and informal process for inspecting the school's on-site facilities and on-site outside facilities (playgrounds, parking lots, athletic areas, etc.) for cleanliness, safety conditions, and to optimize student engagement in learning (furniture for small groups, classroom mobility, etc.).
- Invite district level directors for facilities, cafeteria, security, and/or technology services to join the principal for campus inspections.
- Schedule walkthroughs with the principal and custodial staff to ascertain trouble spots and to celebrate bright spots.
- Create an internal (building level) reporting process with clear response timelines for teachers and other staff to report facility, technology, maintenance needs. The principal or designee then uses the district's work order protocols to report issues/problems.
- Create a formal process for all building staff to report any facility issues.
- Encourage all staff members to consistently maintain their workspaces (classrooms, offices, cafeteria, gymnasiums, etc.) according to the district's expectations.

Where To Find More Resources

Resource Title	Link	Description
National Council on School Facilities: States Advancing Effective K-12 Policy, Planning and Practice	Tools & Guides — National Council on School Facilities (facilitiescouncil.org)	Tool kits, blogs, and lots of other resources and information
PennState: The Importance of School Facilities in Improving Student Outcomes	The Importance of School Facilities in Improving Student Outcomes – Center for Evaluation and Education Policy Analysis (psu.edu)	Short article citing some of the physical school conditions that can affect learning.
National Center for Education Statistics: Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities	Introduction to School Facilities Maintenance Planning, Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities (ed.gov)	Broken into “chapters,” gives seven useful areas for districts and schools to evaluate and fix facility issues
Minnesota School Safety Center School Facility Self-Assessment Checklist	Minnesota School Safety Checklist	Example of a school safety self-assessment from Minnesota School Safety Center
School Facility Self-Assessment Checklist	GENERAL BUILDING CHECKLIST (nh.gov)	Short checklist to help access the inside and outside of a school building

NCStar Indicators related to this topic

District-Level Indicators

D04: The district regularly reallocates resources to support school, staff, and instructional improvement.

**This indicator is found under the Teacher Leadership Construct in the crosswalk; however, it could also apply here.*

D07: The strict provides and supports digital-age classrooms and learning opportunities through relevant and necessary infrastructure, acquisition, and technical assistance.

School-Level Indicators

D1.02 KEY The LEA/School has aligned resource allocation (money, time, human resources) within each school's instructional priorities.

D2.04 The LEA/School consistently implements a process to determine and to acquire necessary instructional technology.

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7. Community Support and Involvement

Survey statements

1. This school encourages parent/guardian involvement.
2. Teachers provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning.
3. Parents/guardians know what is going on in this school.
4. Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.
5. Community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students.

Why This Is Important

It is easy to find studies that stress the importance of family engagement in student success. However, it is more difficult to find studies that relate family engagement and by extension, community involvement to teacher satisfaction and retention. Family engagement/community support is one important piece of the teacher retention puzzle.

Parents play a vital role in their children’s education and schools. Parental involvement in education can have significant positive impacts on how children behave and perform in school (Boonk et al., 2018), especially when teachers and parents work together as partners (Hong, 2019).

School structures influence parent-teacher interactions by facilitating communication and developing trust between teachers and parents (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Teachers who report more supportive parental involvement are more satisfied and less likely to leave (Allensworth et al., 2009; in Miller et al., 2023, p. 8).

Beyond family engagement and support, we also include the idea of “community” which can be viewed as an outside entity that surrounds and encompasses the school and has a vested interest in its success. This includes the community within the school—faculty, staff, administration, families, and students. Teachers are more likely to stay in schools in which there is a strong sense of a community that is leveraged to “strengthen relationships, maintain communication, and encourage advocacy, all in the service of the shared mission of improving student learning” (McCauley et al., 2023, p. 14).

Self-check and Reflection

District-Level Reflection

- Does the district have a district-wide family engagement policy?
 - If yes, is it effective? How do you know?

- If no, what next step will you take to develop a meaningful family engagement plan?
- How does the district provide family-friendly information (via social media or other platforms)?
 - What data is collected to determine the effectiveness of social media communication methods?
 - What data is collected to determine the effectiveness of other communication methods?
- What is the district's policy and process to enlist community supports such as business or services at the district level or school level?

School-Level Reflection

- What opportunities are provided for parents to be included in school decision making?
 - Are there opportunities for non-English speaking parents?
 - Are flexible times allotted to accommodate various work schedules?
- How are parents included in the school improvement strategic planning process?
- What systems are in place to provide various stakeholders ways to communicate with the administrators and teachers?
- How does the school seek opportunities to involve community partners?
- What expectations are communicated to teachers and staff regarding family engagement and communication?
 - What evidence is available to support that these expectations are met?

What It Might Look Like

District-Level Actions

- Dedicates resources, infrastructure, and leadership to ensure that family and community engagement is a priority.
- Seek opportunities to engage traditionally underserved communities and partners to build relationships based on mutual respect and trust.
- Create and implement a family engagement policy that is a living document which is revised as needed with input from all stakeholders.

- Schedule and have district representatives attend family engagement events held at the district and/or school level.
- Seek and honor family and community input on current and future policy.
- Develop procedures and an environment that is accessible to families and community members (e.g., remove language barriers, special needs accessibility, transportation barriers, scheduling conflicts).
- Respond to the unique needs of families such as language and fiscal barriers and provide necessary accommodations and modifications to those families.
- Train all educators on how best to work with and support students from diverse family backgrounds.
- Use a variety of methods to communicate with families and the community whether it be by mail, email, text, phone, printed handouts sent home with students, home visits, posters, community partners, etc.

School-Level Actions

- Ensure that the principal and all staff members fully understand and support the district-wide family and community engagement policy.
- Ensure that the school, within security protocols, encourages and welcomes families.
- Link family engagement opportunities directly to student achievement. For example, hosting events that not only promote relationship building but also help families assist their child master content and grade level standards.
- Deploy a variety of methods to communicate with families and the community whether it be by mail, email, text, phone, printed handouts sent home with students, home visits, posters, community partners, etc.
- Host family engagement events at times that are accessible to families and that are attended by administrators and faculty.

Where To Find More Resources

Resource Title	Link	Description
California Department of Education’s Family	Family Engagement Toolkit - Local Control Funding Formula	An extensive toolkit with practical suggestions for improving family

Engagement Toolkit	(CA Dept of Education)	engagement
A Guide for Engaging ELL Families: Twenty Strategies for School Leaders	Engaging ELL Families: Tips for School Leaders (colorincolorado.org)	Practical guidance and tips for schools and teachers
IES and REL Pacific’s Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community	Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education: Part 1: Building an understanding of family and community engagement	Toolkit which goes beyond just family engagement to how to involve the community as well
The Case for Strong Family and Community Engagement in Schools	The Case for Strong Family and Community Engagement in Schools	Research roundup highlighting the benefits of strong family and community engagement in schools

NCStar Indicators related to this topic

District-Level Indicators

E01: The district includes parent organizations in district and school improvement planning and maintains regular communication with them.

E02: The district has assigned priority team members the task of creating a plan to work and communicate with stakeholders (e.g., municipal and civic leaders, community organizations, and parent organizations) prior and during implementation of the plan.

E03: The district establishes two-way communication channels to encourage transparency, feedback loops, and access to information for families and the community.

School-Level Indicators

E1.01 ALL teachers maintain a file of communication with parents/guardians.

E1.02 ALL teachers regularly assign, check, mark, and return homework.

E1.03 ALL teachers systematically report to parents/guardians the student's mastery of specific standards-based objectives.

E1.04 ALL teachers regularly make "interactive" assignments that encourage parent-child interaction relative to school learning.

E1.05 The "ongoing conversation" between school personnel and parents/guardians is candid, supportive, and flows in both directions.

E1.06 KEY The school regularly communicates with parents/guardians about its expectations of them and the importance of the curriculum of the home (what parents can do at home to support their children's learning).

E1.07 The school's documents (Parent Involvement Guidelines, Mission/Vision Statements, Homework Guidelines, and Classroom Visit Procedures) are annually distributed and frequently communicated to teachers, school personnel, parents, and students.

E1.09 The school provides parents/guardians with practical guidance to maintain regular and supportive verbal interactions with their children, to establish a quiet place for children's studying at home, and to model respectful and responsible behaviors.

E1.10 The school provides parents/guardians with practical guidance to encourage their children's regular reading habits at home.

E1.11 All teachers meet with family members (parents or guardians) formally at least two times a year to engage in two-way communication regarding students' cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical development outside the classroom.

E1.12 The school ensures that all parents understand social/emotional competency and their role in enhancing their children's growth in (1) understanding and managing emotions, (2) setting and achieving positive goals, (3) feeling and showing empathy for others, (4) establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and (5) making responsible decisions.

E1.13 High expectations reflect the values and norms that are evident in daily practices and procedures.

E2.01 Parent and/or Community representatives advise the School Leadership Team on matters related to family-school relations.

E2.02 The school provides a broad spectrum of communication to the community through meetings, announcements, newsletters, and a consistently updated website.

E2.04 The school consistently engages in strategies, policies, and procedures for partnering with local businesses, community organizations, and other agencies to meet the needs of the school.

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8. Professional Learning and Support + Professional Development Needs

Survey statements

1. An appropriate amount of time is provided for professional development.
2. Professional development is differentiated to meet the individual needs of teachers.
3. Professional development includes enough time to think carefully about, try, and evaluate new ideas.
4. Professional development includes opportunities to work productively with colleagues in my school.
5. Professional development enhances teachers' ability to implement instructional strategies that meet diverse student learning needs.

Please select up to three (3) areas of professional development that would most improve your instructional practice.

- Career and college options for students
- Classroom management
- Competency-based education
- Instructional strategies
- Literacy strategies
- Multilingual learners
- My content area
- North Carolina Standard Course of Study
- Personalized instruction
- Special populations (e.g., Students with Disabilities, Academically and Intellectually Gifted Students, etc.)
- Student assessments
- Safety procedures (e.g., lockdown training or fire drills)

Why This Is Important

In many of our states and districts, teachers have been leaving the field in alarming numbers with not enough new talent coming in to replace those leaving. It has become more important than ever to ensure teachers are satisfied in their profession, their school, and their opportunities for growth so they remain in the classroom.

One factor that plays into the retention of teachers is their continued education and support through professional development; however, professional development is often rolled out in a “one-size fits all” method that may support state or district initiatives, but not necessarily address the individual needs of teachers. Stebick et al. (2023) found “adult learning theory suggests there

are ways to make professional learning exceptionally powerful for the adult learner. One of the most effective ways to engage staff in high-level professional development throughout the school year is to create a safe, trusting environment of inquiry” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015; Gillis & Mitton-Kükner, 2019, as cited in Stebick et al., pp. 1–2).

Building on the work of adult learning theory (andragogy) pioneers such as Malcolm Knowles, Galustyan and colleagues (2019), highlighted the following basic principles for adult learners:

- Adult education must focus on solving specific problems
- Adult education must rely on the experience of teachers
- There should be significant knowledge and experience gained by teachers from training
- Teachers should be able to analyze and check teaching material
- Teachers should receive feedback about their progress (as cited in Bouchrika, 2024)

When the district allows the school some autonomy in choosing the professional development that best fits the needs of their staff, then teachers feel as if their professional growth is being nurtured and supported. This support adds to the feeling of being seen and heard in their school community (Fairman et al., 2020; Palermo & Thomson, 2019).

In addition to providing professional development that meets individual needs, teachers also need opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and implement it in their classroom. One powerful structure to promote both individual and collaborative reflection is through the implementation of a professional learning community. Sharing the learning within a professional learning community helps educators to strengthen their practice and builds trust between teachers as they experience authentic growth and learning (Palermo & Thomson, 2019; Yoon et al., 2007).

Self-check and Reflection

District Level Reflection

- How does the district allow autonomy to its schools to decide what professional development is needed?
- How does the district evaluate the effectiveness of professional development?
 - What is the district’s method for evaluating the outcomes of professional development?
 - How does the district monitor transfer of training to implementation (change in practice)?

- If the district plans professional development, how are teachers given a voice and choice in what they will participate in?
- Does the district provide professional learning opportunities that are scheduled in a manner that allows sufficient time to enhance adult learning?
 - If yes, how do you know?
 - If no, how can you adjust school calendars or schedules to carve out more dedicated, focused time for adult learning?
- How does the district ensure that professional learning at the district and school level is:
 - job-embedded?
 - evidence based?
 - relevant and appropriate to address identified needs of educators?
 - relevant and appropriate to address the needs of students?
- What is the process for principals to annually develop and /or revise site based professional learning plans?
- Is the budget adequate to support professional learning at the district and school levels?
 - If yes, how do you know?
 - If no, how can you reexamine current resources (human, fiscal, community) to leverage and enhance current professional learning opportunities? How does the district provide opportunities for schools to share across schools effective practices (what they have learned and how it is being implemented)?

School-Level Reflection

- What about professional development at your school is effective and “working”? How do you know?
- What about professional development at your school is not effective or “not working”? How do you know?
- What are the top three professional development needs indicated by the TWC Survey?
 - How do you plan to address these priorities?
- Are there resources/teachers that could be utilized to enhance professional development in your school?

- How can professional development opportunities be differentiated to meet the different needs of teachers?
- How does the school evaluate the effectiveness of professional development?
 - What is the school's method for evaluating the outcomes of professional development?
 - How do principals monitor the transfer of training to implementation (change in practice)?
 - When conducting walkthroughs how could principals link their feedback to professional learning activities?
- How are teachers given a voice and choice in what professional learning opportunities they participate in?
- Are teachers provided sufficient time during the school day/year for professional learning?
 - If yes, how do you know?
 - If no, how can you adjust school calendars or schedules to carve out more dedicated, focused time for adult learning?
- How does the school use on-site professional learning communities to strengthen outcomes for students? Do PLCs support on-going professional growth that is:
 - data driven and reflective of student work reviews, formative assessments, and summative assessments?
 - evidence based?
 - relevant and appropriate to address identified needs of educators?
 - relevant and appropriate to address the needs of students?
- What is the process used by the school team to annually develop and /or revise site based professional learning plans?
- Is the school's budget adequate to support professional learning?
 - If yes, how do you know?
 - If no, how can you reexamine current resources (human, fiscal, community) to leverage and enhance current professional learning opportunities?

What It Might Look Like

District-Level Actions

- Develop, implement, and maintain a Professional Development (PD) Inventory to chronical annually what PD has been offered, what PD is mandator (and for whom), and when the required PD is completed.
- Administer a personalized PD Needs Survey annually for building principals regarding the in-service training and support they need to fulfill their leadership role.
- Review the most recent Teachers Working Conditions Survey results for your district to determine the PD needs of individual teachers.
- Require teacher PD that focuses on instructional practices that have the potential to make the most impact on student learning and achievement.
- Monitor external PD providers to ensure that services are provided as expected.
- To ensure fidelity of implementation, and to make implementation adjustments as needed, require PD providers to supply outcome measures that provide evidence that the training/in-service is successful.
- Communicate the expectation that PD is meant to *change adult behaviors* that will lead to increased student achievement.
- Set the expectation that the skills and knowledge gained through PD will be shared within schools and across the district and develop an implementation plan that supports that expectation.
 - Provide district level resources and avenues to ensure that the sharing of expertise is accessible to all schools and educators.
- Choose the most effective PD models (professional learning communities, curriculum-based PD, coaching and peer observation, conferences, seminars, and institutes, National Board Certification, and university courses) to the learning needs of your principals and teachers.
 - Provide district level resources and support to ensure fidelity of implementation of the selected PD models.

School-Level Actions

- Open a constructive conversation regarding what were, in teachers’ opinions, the most valuable professional development opportunities in which they participated.
- Address and plan to provide PD on the top three preferences as identified by teachers in the NC TWCS.
- Recruit teacher leaders from the school/district who may have the expertise to address any of the top three PD preferences to plan and deliver those trainings.
- Avoid “sit and get”, “one and done” training and lean into PD offerings that are ongoing and offer repeated opportunities for teachers to practice and demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills the PD intended as training outcomes.
- Communicate the expectation that PD is meant to *change adult behaviors* that will lead to increased student achievement.
- Inspect what you expect. Do classroom walkthroughs to look for evidence of changed behaviors and practices after PD.
- Engage in the same PD as the teachers so you, as instructional leader, are better equipped to evaluate the success of the training, what to check for during teacher observations and walkthroughs, and what PD may be needed next.
- Offer multiple ways and times (if possible) to attend training such as virtual, face to face, hybrid, small group, independent, before school, during school, after school or weekend schedules.
- Allow flexibility (when possible) for teachers to choose the PD that most closely meets their needs.
- Choose the most effective PD models (professional learning communities, curriculum-based PD, coaching and peer observation, conferences, seminars, and institutes, National Board Certification, and university courses) to the learning needs of your principals and teachers.

Where To Find More Resources

Resource Title	Link	Description
How to Implement Effective Professional Development	Implementing effective professional development for	Brighter Thinking Blog with links to more resources

for Teachers	teachers Cambridge	
Making Professional Development Collaborative	Teacher Labs: Making Professional Development Collaborative	Video from Edutopia on teacher collaboration
What It's Like for Teachers to Sit Through Professional Development Meetings	What It's Like For Teachers to Sit Through Professional Development Meetings	A video on the lighter side on poor professional development (but everyone has been there)
Effective Teacher Professional Development	Effective Teacher Professional Development Learning Policy Institute	Short article provided by Learning Policy Institute with multiple ways to get more information
PD for Teachers: How Principals Can Play a Meaningful Role	https://www.newleaders.org/blog/pd-for-teachers-how-principals-can-play-a-meaningful-role	Short article on how principals can best support teachers as PD recipients

NCStar Indicators related to this topic

District-Level Indicators

C05: Professional development is built into the school schedule by the district, but the school is allowed discretion in selecting training and consultation that fit the requirements of its improvement/restructuring plan and its evolving needs.

C06: Staff development is built into the schedule for support staff (e.g., aides, clerks, custodians, cooks) as well as classroom teachers.

C08: The district implements and measures the effectiveness of personalized professional development to build the capacity of all educators through coaching, modeling, and networks of support.

C10: The district develops and supports a comprehensive professional development plan centered around district wide teaching and learning initiatives.

D08: The district supports schools working toward creating the conditions for personalized learning.

D09: The district supports a comprehensive assessment structure that includes implementation of common standards-aligned assessments and frameworks for collaboration and data analysis surrounding these common assessments.

School-Level Indicators

A2.20 All teachers use appropriate technological tools to enhance instruction.

B3.04 The LEA/School sets goals for professional development (based on data) and monitors the extent to which it has changed practice.

C1.01 The LEA/School directly aligns professional development with classroom observations (including peer observations) to build specific skills and knowledge of teachers.

C1.07 ALL pre-K teachers have specialized education in early childhood education or child development.

C1.06 The LEA/School offers an induction program to support new teachers in their first years of teaching.

C2.01 KEY The LEA/School regularly looks at school performance data and aggregated classroom observation data and uses that data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs.

C2.02 ALL teachers develop individual professional development plans based on classroom observations and self-assessments.

C2.03 The LEA/School provides all staff high quality, ongoing, job-embedded, and differentiated professional development.

C2.04 The LEA/School structures professional development to provide adequate time for collaboration and active learning.

D2.08 The school/district improvement plan identifies specific instructional leadership needs and has strategies to address them.

E1.08 Professional development for teachers includes support for working effectively with families.

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9. Instructional Practices and Supports + Instructional Practices and Supports Needs

Survey statements

1. My conversations with my evaluator after the observation were focused on improving my performance.
2. The feedback I received from my observation included specific steps to improve my instruction.
3. My evaluator delivered feedback in a constructive manner.
4. During my feedback conference, my evaluator gave me the opportunity to share my thoughts.
5. The evaluation process has helped me identify specific things I can do to improve my instruction.
6. As a result of the evaluation process, I have made positive changes to my classroom practice.

Please select up to three (3) types of support that would most improve your instructional practice.

- Access to an instructional coach
- Analyzing student work and assessments with other teachers
- A formally assigned mentor
- Co-teaching
- Common planning time with other teachers
- Developing lesson plans with other teachers
- Given non-evaluative feedback from observations of my teaching
- Opportunities to attend teacher conferences
- Opportunities to collaborate with teachers outside of my school
- Reflecting on the effectiveness of my teaching with other teachers/coaches
- Regular communication with principals, another administrator or department chair
- Time to meet with a mentor
- Time to meet with professional learning communities
- Time to observe other teachers teaching

Why This Is Important

There is no disagreement with the statement that the quality of instruction provided by a teacher is paramount to all other factors contributing to student success (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sanders, 2007; Brophy & Good, 1986; Konstantopoulus, 2014; Lavigne & Good, 2020; Ridge & Lavigne, 2020; Rubie-Davies, 2014). With that being said, there are multiple theories and methods on how to best

measure the effectiveness of teachers and improve their instructional practice. The use of testing as the single or primary gauge has been argued to be too little, too late; therefore, schools also rely on informal teacher observations, leading to a more formal evaluation process to measure instructional effectiveness.

Teacher effectiveness standards, unannounced informal observations, announced more formal observations, and summative ratings of teacher performance are only as good as:

1. The shared or common understanding by teachers and principals of the educator effective standards and behaviors being observed
2. The knowledge, expertise, and training of the observer/evaluator
3. The quality and timeliness of the feedback given to the teacher
4. The follow-up supports provided to teachers for improvement and ultimately change in practice
5. The consistency within the observation expectations (are observations calibrated across observers within the building and/or district)

Our attention for this brief focuses on the support provided rather than the instrument for observation or the training of the observer, although both are important. For the purpose of teacher retention our emphasis is on the support provided to a teacher to improve specific instructional practices that are noted as weak, or in adopting new evidence-based practices. This is especially important for teachers in the first three to five years of their teaching experience.

Using peer-to-peer informal observations is one way teachers can collaborate without the same level of apprehension as having an administrator or district personnel observe.

When teachers prepare for a dialogue with a colleague about their own teaching, they must reflect about what they chose to do and why. They must also think about the effectiveness of their choice of behaviors and be ready to discuss the future uses of certain techniques and strategies. When teachers prepare to give feedback to a peer coaching partner, they must reflect about the use of a teaching technique in a different way than they do when merely observing teaching without the obligation of feedback. They are, for example, forced to think about the appropriateness of the technique in the context in which it was used in the classroom. They have to consider how well it worked and why. They have to think deeply about how to provide the feedback and how to answer questions that a peer coaching partner might raise. (Licklider, 1995, p. 57)

Furthermore, Hambrick et al. (2019) state, “Principals receive ongoing support and coaching to strengthen their knowledge and skills about instruction and instructional leadership, especially their ability to differentiate between levels of teacher quality and to identify where and how to intervene with support” (p. 6). Therefore, it is imperative that districts provide training to their

principals and assistant principals to ensure that they are confident in not only receiving feedback, but in providing high quality, actionable feedback for teachers and staff.

Self-check and Reflection

District-Level Reflection

- How does the district ensure that administrators have a deep and shared understanding of the educator effectiveness standards?
 - What professional development opportunities are available for administrators to ensure they understand and integrate these standards into the daily instructional expectations of their school (e.g., providing meaningful feedback, evidence based instructional practice, student agency, etc.)?
- How does the district ensure that teachers have a deep and shared understanding of the educator effectiveness standards?
 - What ongoing professional development opportunities are available for teachers at all career levels related to the application of the educator effectiveness standards?
- Does the district have teams or personnel with demonstrated expertise that can be deployed to support teachers in specific content areas of the curriculum?
- Does the district allow schools to schedule uninterrupted time for teachers to meet as teams to discuss and plan instruction and to collaborate on best practices?
 - What evidence is available to determine if this time is used well and leads to improved instructional practices?
 - Is the time sufficient? How do you know?
- How does the district encourage peer-to-peer observations?
- Does the district have a standardized observation instrument for observers to use?
 - How and when are observers trained in using the instrument?
 - What is the process for ensuring that observers (administrators and instructional coaches) are consistent in the interpretation and application of the observation tool indicators?
 - What opportunities are there for administrators to conduct observations in teams and then calibrate their observations for consistency of feedback?

- How does the district team engage in the classroom observation process?
 - What opportunities exist to better leverage district level support in this process?
- Based on the top areas of need identified by teachers in the NC TWC Survey, what next steps will the district take to provide these supports?

School-Level Reflection

- What systems are in place to provide teachers with meaningful feedback about their practices?
 - How are new teachers supported with feedback?
 - How do you know if the feedback provided by the principal, assistant principal, and instructional coaches is consistent?
 - What evidence is available to demonstrate that the feedback provided leads to improved instructional practice?
- What are the top three instructional support needs identified in the NC TWC Survey for your school?
 - What resources are available to support those needs?
 - What systems might need to shift to support those needs?
 - Based on the top areas of need identified by teachers in the NC TWC Survey, what next steps will the district take to provide these supports?
- How does the principal ensure that teachers have a deep and shared understanding of the educator effectiveness standards?
 - What ongoing professional development opportunities and supports are available for teachers at all career levels related to application of the educator effectiveness standards?
- How does the principal secure internal or external resources to support teachers in specific content areas of the curriculum?
- Does the school provide frequent uninterrupted time for teachers to meet as teams to discuss and plan instruction and to collaborate on best practices?
 - What evidence is available to determine if this time is used well and leads to improved instructional practices?
 - How does the principal engage in these learning opportunities with teachers?

- Is the time sufficient? How do you know?
- How do we encourage a culture of continuous improvement and reflection among our teaching staff?
 - What opportunities do teachers have to share best practices and learn from each other?
 - What process is in place within the school to create an environment where peer-to-peer observations are encouraged and valued?

What It Might Look Like

District-Level Actions

- Adopt policies and procedures to standardize all evaluation and observation (formal and informal) processes across the district. This would include a clearly defined purpose, calibrated training for all evaluators, pre and post observation protocols, and processes that are viewed as unbiased and equitable. Include administrators in the training to ensure everyone understands the process and tools used.
- Set the expectation that instructional leaders are routinely present in classrooms. For example, the district may require principals to document a minimum of three informal observations per day, spend 50% of the day engaged in instructional activities, etc.
- Include Observation conversations that spotlight and share best instructional practices as a consistent agenda item at district level meetings, school level meetings, and board meetings.
- Develop and implement a Professional Growth Model which requires administrators and teachers to set goals including rationale, relevance to student learning, and a success measure that confirms for the observer and teacher that the goal is reached.
- Adopt and train administrators in the use of standardized and calibrated observation tools such as Peer Observation Protocols, Narrative Observation/Scripting Protocols, Look-For Checklists, and Rubric Scales.
- Design and train educators on self-reflection protocols to encourage candid consideration of how to elevate one's own instructional practices or behaviors to positively impact student outcomes.

School-Level Actions

- Create a daily schedule that provides the principal and assistant principal with dedicated, uninterrupted time to devote to classroom observations and supportive actions.
- Implement a feedback process for all teachers and staff that is timely, consistent, unbiased, supportive, confidential, and promotes self-reflection that will lead to changes in their adult practices.
- Conduct post observation conferences with teachers within 24-36 hours of the observation. Post observation/feedback conferences should include specific and actionable suggestions on how to make improvements to observed instruction.
- Provide and make readily available a menu of support for teachers so that they have some choice and voice in how to invest in professional improvements.
- Use the NC TWCS results to identify and address the top 3 instructional supports teachers expressed they need to improve their professional practices.
- Develop a school-based process and culture where peer observations are encouraged, respected, and valued. This would include creating a schedule where classrooms were “covered” to allow teachers flexible time to observe/model instruction for a colleague.
- Spotlight effective practices, instructional improvements, and innovative approaches noted during observations in staff meetings, morning announcements, and PLCs.
- Implement a Professional Growth Model which requires administrators and teachers to set goals including rationale, relevance to student learning, and a success measure that confirms for the observer and teacher that the goal is reached.

Where To Find More Resources

Resource Title	Link	Description
WWC Practice Guides	WWC Practice Guides	What Works Clearinghouse practice guides that provide practical recommendations for educators to address challenges in their PK–12 classrooms and schools. They include reviews of research, the experiences of practitioners, and the expert opinions of a panel of nationally recognized experts.

Top 10 Evidence-Based Teaching Strategies	10 Evidence-Based Practices	Tip sheet from Clemson University that includes top 10 evidence-based teaching practices
A Framework for Supporting New Teachers	How to Set Up a School-Based Program to Support New K-12 Teachers Edutopia	Short article with suggestions for how to support new teachers and encourage veteran teachers
Supporting Students in Poverty with High Impact Instructional Strategies	Instructional Practices Toolkit	This user-friendly resource spotlights 5 critical instructional strategies for PK–12 teachers and 5 key actions for principals that, when implemented effectively, improve outcomes for all students
Giving and Receiving Feedback	Ways to Process Feedback Tips for Impactful Feedback	Two blogs on strategies for giving and receiving impactful feedback from both the teacher and administrator perspectives
How Pineapple Charts Revolutionized Professional Development	Pineapple Charts	Cult of Pedagogy blog with tips to implement meaningful peer to peer observations

NCStar Indicators related to this topic

District-Level Indicators

A02: The superintendent models and communicates the expectation of improved student learning through commitment, discipline, and careful implementation of sound practices.

A03: The district sets district, school, and student subgroup achievement targets.

A04: The district provides a cohesive district curriculum guide aligned with state standards or otherwise places curricular expectation on the school.

A06: The district provides and supports digital-age classrooms and learning opportunities through relevant and necessary materials, resources, and tools.

School-Level Indicators

A1.02 ALL teachers improve their practice by responding to the principal's observations and/or observations by peers.

A1.04 ALL teachers assess student progress frequently using a variety of evaluation methods and make appropriate curriculum adjustments based on results.

A1.05 ALL teachers individualize instructional planning in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment to provide support or enhanced learning opportunities for students.

A1.06 ALL teachers provide sound instruction in a variety of modes: teacher-directed whole-class; teacher-directed small-group; independent work; computer-based.

A1.08 ALL teachers promote a growth mindset by attributing learning success to effort and self-regulation and insist upon and reward persistence to mastery.

A1.09 The school expects students to participate in activities to develop skills outside of the classroom (e.g., service learning, clubs, athletics, enrichment opportunities, internships).

A1.10 All teachers use online curricula with content, assignments, and activities clearly aligned to identified standards (state or national).

A2.04 KEY Instructional Teams develop standards-aligned units of instruction for each subject and grade level.

A2.05 ALL teachers develop weekly lesson plans based on aligned units of instruction.

A2.06 ALL teachers reinforce elements of mastered knowledge that can be retained through review, questioning, and inclusion in subsequent assignments.

A2.07 ALL teachers include vocabulary development as learning objectives.

A2.08 ALL teachers teach and model the metacognitive process (goals, strategies, monitoring, and modification) and specific learning strategies and techniques.

A2.09 ALL teachers include self-checks, peer-checks, and documentation of learning strategies as part of assignment completion.

A2.10 ALL teachers teach methods of logic, synthesis, evaluation, and divergent thinking.

A2.11 ALL teachers build student's metacognitive skills by teaching learning strategies and tools and their appropriate application as well as providing students with processes for determining their own mastery of tasks.

A2.12 ALL teachers encourage self-direction by giving students choice in the selection of topics and the application of learning strategies.

A2.13 Units of instruction include standards-based objectives and criteria for mastery.

A2.14 Units of instruction include specific learning activities aligned to objectives.

A2.15 Instructional Teams develop materials for their standards-aligned learning activities and share the materials among themselves.

A2.18 ALL teachers use cooperative learning methods and encourage student questioning, seeking help from others, and offering help to others.

A2.19 ALL teachers integrate college and career guidance and supports relevant to their subject areas into their taught curricula.

A2.21 All teachers use online curricula whose goals are measurable and clearly state what students will know or do at the end of instruction.

A2.22 All teachers and teacher teams plan instruction based on the aligned and expanded curriculum that includes rich reading, writing, memorization, and vocabulary development.

A2.23 All teachers assign rich reading and the application of the reading in written work and discussion.

A2.24 All teachers and teacher teams plan instruction based on the aligned and expanded curriculum that includes objectives for student management of their learning.

A2.25 The teacher builds students' ability to use a variety of learning tools.

A2.26 All teachers and teacher teams plan instruction with a curriculum guide that includes methods to enhance student motivation to learn.

A3.01 Instructional Teams use student learning data to identify students in need of instructional support or enhancement.

A3.02 Instructional Teams track and maintain records of student learning data to determine progress toward meeting goals as indicated in students' IEPs.

A3.04 Unit pre-tests and post-tests results are reviewed by the Instructional Teams to make decisions about curriculum and instructional plans and to flag students in need of intervention or enrichment.

A3.05 The school assesses each student at least 3 times each year to determine progress toward standard-based objectives.

A3.06 ALL teachers maintain and utilize a record of each student's mastery of specific learning objectives.

A3.07 Instructional teams and teachers use fine-grained data to design for each student a learning path tailored to that student's prior learning, personal interests, and aspirations.

A3.08 Online programs generate accessible and actionable student data about their use, performance, and progress.

A3.09 All teachers differentiate assignments to provide the right balance of challenge and attainability for each student.

A3.10 All teachers use assessment data and match instruction and supports to individual student needs.

A4.01 **KEY** The school implements a tiered instructional system that allows teachers to deliver evidence-based instruction aligned with the individual needs of students across all tiers.

A4.03 Instructional teams utilize student learning data to determine whether a student requires a referral for special education services.

A4.08 **ALL** pre-k teachers ensure that all students are involved in activities each day that are designed to stimulate development in all domains: social-emotional, physical, approaches to learning, language, and cognitive development.

A4.10 The school provides all high school students with academic supports (e.g., tutoring, co-curricular activities, tiered interventions) to keep them on track for graduation.

A4.11 The school provides all students extended learning opportunities (e.g., summer bridge programs, after-school and supplemental educational services, Saturday academies, enrichment programs).

A4.12 The school provides all high school students with opportunities for content and credit recovery that are integrated into the regular school day to keep them on track for graduation.

A4.13 The LEA/School provides all high school students with opportunities to enroll in and master rigorous coursework for college and career readiness.

A4.18 All teachers connect students' out-of-school learning with their school learning.

A4.19 All teachers employing blended learning methods make sure that technology and data enhance relationships, but do not pretend to substitute for them.

A4.20 All teachers help students articulate their personal aspirations and connect their learning to the pursuit of these aspirations.

D2.01 **ALL** teachers use online, hybrid, or blended learning as part of a larger pedagogical approach that combines the effective socialization opportunities within the classroom with the enhanced learning opportunities available through technology.

D2.02 ALL teachers enable students to place selected work into a digital portfolio that is updated throughout the student's school experiences and provides a picture of interests, skills, competencies, and growth over time.

D2.06 All teachers build students' ability to learn in contexts other than school.

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10. Time

Survey statements

1. Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.
2. The non-instructional time provided for teachers is sufficient.
3. Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.
4. Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.
5. Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.

Why This Is Important

What is the one thing that once it is gone, you can NEVER get back? Time. Time is precious. It is a limited resource, and everyone wants it. More hours cannot be added to a day, so how do we maximize the time we are given to accomplish our mission?

Ben-Peretz and Bromme (1990) stated that “time plays a significant role in the culture of schools and in the ways students and staff experience schools (in Compton-Lilly, 2010, p. 3). Teachers may feel that they have no say or control on how their time is spent as schedules are created at the administrative level and then handed down to faculty and staff. They may feel frustrated by tasks or requirements they feel are a waste of time and distract from the time they need to provide instruction for their students. For example, if teachers are expected to attend professional development sessions that don’t directly relate to their content area or curriculum standards this is likely to be perceived as taking away time from classroom instruction. Likewise, if common planning time is scheduled for teachers but not protected, teacher stress and frustration may increase.

There are a number of “time bandits” that steal away the minutes that could be used in more productive ways. In a 2021 study (Kraft & Monti-Nussbaum), it was noted that teachers and students experienced approximately 14 total interruptions in a normal school day. When calculated, it amounted to a loss of 54.5 instructional hours in the course of a school year, which is the equivalent of approximately 8 days of school. In another study, McCann and Johannesen (2004) found that new teachers identified five major concerns that affected their job satisfaction: relationships (teacher to student, teacher to parent, between colleagues, with leadership), time management and workload, curriculum, grading, and having a sense of autonomy. When these factors are not addressed, new teachers leave the field. One suggestion for mitigating the time management and workload issue for new teachers was to avoid assigning new teachers any additional responsibilities or tasks outside of their classroom duties. A RAND study (Lu & Burge, 2021) showed that teachers valued workload reduction as a factor in retention.

As noted by Snyder and Bae (2017, p. 1) if teachers are the most important factor in student outcomes, “then how their time is organized within the school day should offer considerable potential to improve the quality of instruction and realize positive benefits for students.”

In short, when teachers are provided the time to learn with and from each other, they:

- increase their own teaching capacity;
- increase the teaching capacity of their colleagues;
- improve the learning culture of the school;
- improve teacher retention;
- increase the growth of exemplary practices; and
- increase the capacity of the system to sustain improvement and continuously renew. (Snyder & Bae, p. 6)

Self-check and Reflection

To maximize and protect instructional time consider the following questions:

District-Level Reflection

- How often are teachers required to administer district-wide assessments, and how do these assessments impact instructional time?
- How does the district’s professional development schedule impact classroom instruction time?
- What non-instructional tasks (e.g., administrative duties, paperwork) can be streamlined or minimized for teachers and principals?
 - Does the district audit what they require of administrators and teachers that is considered non-instructional tasks?
 - If yes, how much time is required to complete these tasks?
 - If no, what process will the district put into place to conduct such an audit?
- How efficient are school level scheduling practices in terms of maximizing instructional time?
- What current district policies impact instructional time (e.g., discipline, attendance, etc.)?
 - Are there regular opportunities for principals to provide feedback on district policies that impact instructional time?
 - What policies are in place to minimize disruptions during the school day?

- What programs and resources might be leveraged to extend teaching and learning time outside of the normal school day?
- What expectations are communicated to principals regarding the protection of instructional time?
- How does the district support principals in managing school operations to free up instructional and planning time for teachers?

School-Level Reflection

- What activities and staff obligations occur before and after school that affect instructional or planning time for teachers?
- Do all staff understand all the reasons behind choices school leadership makes that impact time (e.g., school schedules, required planning, PLCs, required school events, etc.)?
 - Do teachers have a voice in those decisions?
- What does protected time look like in our school?
 - What is interfering with the protection of planning or instructional time?
 - How do we or can we consistently protect this time?
 - How do we know if the protected time is leading to improved instructional practice and student outcomes? How do administrators monitor and collect data to assess the impact of protected time?
 - Are there ways that responsibilities (lunchroom, playground, bus duty, study hall monitoring, etc.) can be rotated to better distribute time or burdens across school staff? Are there non-instructional duties that can be delegated to support staff to free up teachers' time for planning and collaboration?
- How can we streamline daily routines and transitions to maximize instructional time?
- How can the master schedule be adjusted to provide more common planning time for teachers?
 - Does the school provide frequent uninterrupted time for teachers to meet as teams (PLCs) to discuss and plan instruction and to collaborate on best practices?
 - What evidence is available to determine if this time is used well and leads to improved instructional practices?

- How does the principal engage in these learning opportunities with teachers?
- Is the time sufficient? How do you know?
- Do teachers have access to the necessary resources and support to plan effectively?

What It Might Look Like

District-Level Actions

- Create policies and procedures at the district level to ensure that all teachers have an individual daily planning period of at least 45 minutes.
- Require schools to create schedules that provide teachers weekly uninterrupted common planning periods with grade/content area colleagues for collaboration and calibration.
- Set the expectation that common planning time is well-managed, collaborative, and requires mutual investment, a shared vision, and protection from interruption.
- Seek input from teachers and administrators regarding what paperwork may be duplicative or burdensome, then take actions to streamline administrative tasks and reduce unnecessary paperwork.
- Review current personnel assignments, job roles, and responsibilities to identify opportunities to reassign or restructure non-instructional tasks.
- Support block scheduling or other flexible scheduling models to provide teachers with longer periods of uninterrupted planning time. Also consider scheduling dedicated blocks of time such as early release days or dedicated planning days.
- Invest in technology that facilitates lesson planning, grading, and communication.
 - Offer professional development sessions focused on time management and the use of technology and related resources that can save time in lesson preparation, grading, and classroom management.
 - Provide access to online resources, collaboration tools, and educational software that streamline planning and instruction.

School-Level Actions

- Minimize interruptions to instruction including drills, “pull-outs”, and office announcements.

- Seek input from teachers regarding what paperwork or tasks may be duplicative or burdensome, then take actions to streamline administrative tasks and reduce unnecessary paperwork.
- Create master schedules that ensure teachers have adequate and common planning periods.
- Ensure that daily planning time is protected and not used for meetings or other activities.
- Delegate non-instructional duties (e.g., lunchroom or playground supervision, bus duty, study hall monitoring, hall monitoring, etc.) to other staff members.
- Utilize support staff effectively to handle administrative tasks and provide classroom support.
- Schedule and protect time for professional learning communities (PLCs).
- Ensure that meetings are purposeful and necessary. Consider what can be handled in an email rather than a meeting.
- Ensure that teachers have access to the necessary resources, materials, and technology to plan effectively to reduce time spent in searching for what they need.
- Use student performance data to inform planning and teaching, ensuring that time is spent on effective strategies.
- Provide teachers with data analysis tools and support to help them focus their planning efforts and time where it's needed most.

Where To Find More Resources

Resource Title	Link	Description
Providing Teachers More Time and Flexibility Through Innovative Scheduling	Providing Teachers More Time and Flexibility Through Innovative Scheduling	A short article with three case studies on creative ways to address teacher time
Finding Time for Collaborative Planning	Finding Time	Article that includes example schedules and tips for carving out time for collaborative planning and reflection

What Factors Affecting Retention Matter Most to Teachers?	Research: What retention factors matter most to teachers? (schoolsweek.co.uk)	Short article citing a RAND study on teacher retention factors
Planning Time May Help Mitigate Teacher Burnout	How Much Planning Time Do Teachers Get?	Blog that details how planning and collaboration time may increase teacher retention
Time for Teachers Leveraging Expanded Time To Strengthen Instruction and Empower Teachers	Leveraging Expanded Time	Guide from the National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL) about how teachers can expand learning time to improve student achievement
Teachers' Time: Collaborating for Learning, Teaching, and Leading	Teachers' Time Cross Case Final.pdf (stanford.edu)	Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy In Education article that studies the use of teachers' time and why it matters

NCStar Indicators related to this topic

District-Level Indicators

B06: The LEA has examined current state and LEA policies and structures related to central control and made modifications to fully support school improvement.

School-Level Indicators

A1.03 The LEA/School promotes a school culture in which professional collaboration is valued and emphasized by all.

A2.01 Instructional Teams meet regularly (e.g., twice a month or more for 45 minutes each meeting) to review implementation of effective practice and student progress.

A2.02 Instructional Teams meet for blocks of time (e.g., 4 to 6 hour blocks, once a month; whole days before and after the school year) sufficient to develop and refine units of instruction and review student learning data.

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11. Equity

Survey statements

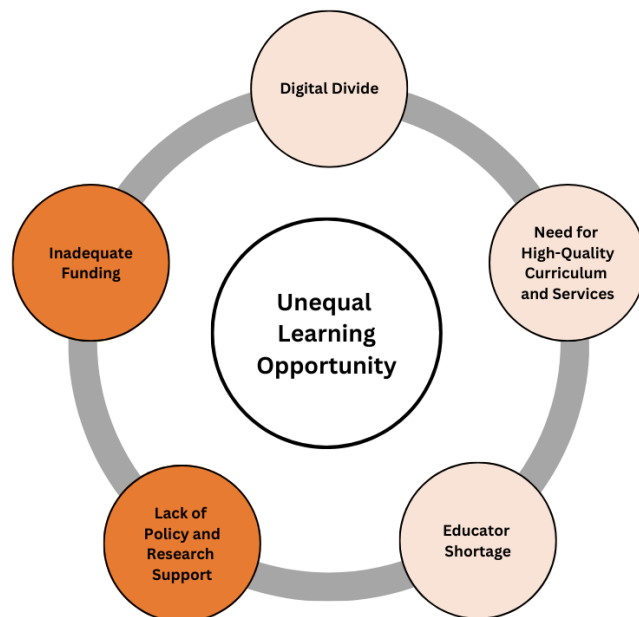
1. All students are treated equitably.
2. Teachers require all students to work hard.
3. Teachers show respect for all students' cultural beliefs and practices.
4. Instructional materials reflect the diverse backgrounds of our students and community.
5. School programs and resources are adequate to support Special Populations (e.g., Students with Disabilities, Academically and Intellectually Gifted Students, Multilingual Learners, Foster Students, etc.)
6. Our school recruits and retains a diverse teaching staff.
7. There is a culturally inclusive environment for all staff.

Why This Is Important

The National Equity Project defines educational equity as “each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential” (n.d.). They further break this down as:

- Ensuring equally high outcomes for all students by removing the assumption of success or failures that is based on a social or cultural factor
- Recognizing and ending inequitable practices, examining biases system-wide and personally, and creating inclusive environments
- Uncovering and nurturing the individual talents and interests of every student.

The Center for Public Education (2023) uses the diagram below to indicate ways that unequal learning opportunities surface in schools.



While the Center for Public Education’s report focused on both mental health and rural schools, the categories given above could be indicative of inequity of educational opportunities or barriers in any school or district.

Promoting equity within a district or school system requires a close look at each element of the educational system. Is the curriculum one that supports and honors the diversity of the students in the school? Does the teaching staff reflect the diversity of the student population? Do all teachers believe and support that all students can learn and equally challenge and grow each student to his or her potential? Does the school treat all staff equitably?

The Center for Evaluation Innovation (2017) states that evaluation should be “conceptualized, implemented, and utilized in a manner that promotes equity.” If we expect that our students are treated in a way that is respectful and fair, then we should expect that teachers are treated in a way that is respectful and fair as well.

Addressing equity in the teacher retention process is crucial for several reasons, including ensuring a diverse and inclusive educational environment, addressing systemic inequalities, and improving student outcomes. Here are some key points supported by research:

1. Promoting Diversity and Inclusion:

- A diverse teaching workforce is essential for providing students with role models from various backgrounds. Research has shown that students of color benefit from having teachers who share their racial or ethnic backgrounds, leading to improved academic performance and reduced disciplinary issues (Gershenson et al., 2018).
- Ensuring equity in teacher retention helps maintain this diversity, which in turn fosters an inclusive environment where all students feel represented and valued.

2. Addressing Systemic Inequalities:

- Teachers from marginalized communities often face unique challenges, including biases and less supportive work environments, leading to higher turnover rates (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Addressing these issues through equitable retention practices helps mitigate systemic inequalities.
- Equitable retention practices may include providing targeted support, mentorship programs, and professional development opportunities tailored to the needs of teachers from underrepresented groups.

3. Improving Student Outcomes:

- Stability in the teaching workforce positively impacts student outcomes. High teacher turnover rates are associated with lower student achievement and increased disruptions in the learning environment (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013).

- By focusing on equity in retention, schools can ensure that all students, particularly those in high-need areas, have access to experienced and effective teachers. This is critical for closing achievement gaps and promoting educational equity.

4. Enhancing Teacher Morale and Job Satisfaction:

- Addressing equity in teacher retention involves creating a supportive and inclusive work environment. This can lead to increased job satisfaction and morale among teachers, reducing burnout and turnover (Simon & Johnson, 2015).
- Teachers who feel valued and supported are more likely to stay in the profession, contributing to a more stable and effective educational system.

Addressing equity in the teacher retention process is essential for creating a diverse, inclusive, and effective educational system that benefits both teachers and students.

Self-check and Reflection

District-Level Reflection

- How does the district ensure that all students have equal opportunities to succeed?
 - Are all students provided with equal access to advanced coursework, extracurricular activities, and enrichment programs?
 - What support systems are in place for students who are struggling academically, socially, or emotionally?
 - How are we addressing the needs of students with disabilities, children in poverty, and English Language Learners?
- Are the curriculum and instructional materials reflective of the diverse cultures of our student population?
- How are teachers incorporating students' cultural backgrounds and experiences into their instructional practices?
- Are there disparities in disciplinary actions among different student groups?
 - If so, what steps are being taken to address them?
- How is the district engaging all families in the educational process?
- How is the district using data to identify and address achievement gaps among student subgroups?

- Are the district's recruitment practices designed to attract a diverse pool of candidates?
- What professional development opportunities does the district provide to support teachers in creating equitable classrooms?
 - How does the district train staff on cultural competence, anti-racism, and inclusive teaching practices?
- Are there disparities in retention rates among teachers of different backgrounds? If so, what are the underlying causes?
 - How does the district support the career advancement of teachers from underrepresented groups?
 - Is the work environment inclusive and supportive of all teachers, regardless of their background?
 - What mentorship and support systems are in place for new and veteran teachers, particularly those from underrepresented groups?
 - What actions do we take as a district to address any reported instances of discrimination or bias among staff?

School-Level Reflection

- How does the school ensure that all students have equal opportunities to succeed?
 - How do we ensure that all students are given equal access to advanced courses, extracurricular activities, and enrichment programs?
 - Are support services (e.g., counseling, special education, ESL) equitably available to all students?
 - How do we ensure that students who need additional support are identified and assisted promptly (MTSS, intervention services, etc.)?
- What systems are in place for ensuring quality instruction for all students?
- How are instructional materials evaluated for inclusion of diverse cultures at the school level?
- How do staff perceive the school environment? What changes need to be made to become inclusive for all?
- How do our hiring practices attract a diverse pool of candidates?

- Are all teachers provided with ongoing professional development on culturally responsive teaching and equity?
- How do we support teachers in applying equity-focused practices in their classrooms?
- What are our retention rates for teachers of different backgrounds, and what factors might be influencing these rates?
 - Are leadership opportunities and professional growth equally accessible to all teachers?
 - How are new hires supported? What structures are in place to support them?
 - How do staff perceive the school environment?
 - How inclusive and welcoming is our school environment for teachers of all backgrounds?
- How welcoming and inclusive is our school environment for families and students of all backgrounds?
 - What changes need to be made to become inclusive for all?
- How do we ensure that the curriculum and resources used in our school are culturally responsive and inclusive of diverse perspectives?
- Do we apply school disciplinary practices equitably across all classrooms and for all students?
- How do we effectively engage families from all backgrounds in their children's education?
- How do we address barriers that might prevent some families from participating fully in school activities (language, transportation, financial, etc.)?
- What do our data on academic achievement, graduation rates, and college/career readiness indicate about equity across different student groups?
 - How are we addressing any disparities in student outcomes?

What It Might Look Like

District-Level Actions

- Review current policies, handbooks and procedures to ensure that they create equitable conditions rather than unintentionally reinforcing disparities.
 - Ensure all students have access to advanced coursework.

- Regularly collect and analyze data on teacher demographics, retention rates, and professional development participation to identify and address equity issues.
- Engage higher education partners and community partners in the identification and recruitment of diverse candidates.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers on culturally responsive teaching practices.
- Establish mentorship programs and support networks for new and minority teachers.
- Promote equitable leadership and advancement opportunities for all staff members.
- Ensure the curriculum and instructional resources reflect diverse cultures, histories, and perspectives.
 - Incorporate materials that are relevant to all students' backgrounds and experiences.
- Ensure all students and schools have access to necessary learning materials, technology, and internet connectivity.
- Leverage existing funding streams or seek additional resources to offer additional support for students who lack resources at home.
- Develop programs for English Language Learners (ELL), special education students, economically disadvantaged, and other students with unique needs.
- Encourage the use of teaching methods that recognize and respect the cultural backgrounds of students.
- Develop multiple, responsive communication strategies that reach all families.
- Regularly collect and analyze data on student performance, attendance, and disciplinary actions and then use this data to identify and address inequities.
- Allocate resources based on student needs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

School-Level Actions

- Analyze student achievement data to identify and address achievement gaps among student subgroups.
- Adopt and implement a curriculum that reflects diverse cultures, histories, and perspectives to ensure all students see themselves represented.

- Ensure equitable access to advanced placement, honors, and gifted programs for all students.
- Provide targeted support services such as tutoring, counseling, and mentoring programs for students who need additional assistance.
- Create opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to participate in leadership roles and decision-making processes.
- Allocate resources equitably to ensure all students have access to high-quality instructional materials, technology, and extracurricular activities.
- Foster strong partnerships with families, particularly those from underrepresented communities, to support student learning and well-being.
 - Ensure that families are afforded equitable, meaningful engagement opportunities by providing supports such as childcare, transportation, language translation services, etc.
- Implement fair and equitable discipline policies that do not disproportionately impact particular groups of students.
 - Provide a robust system of support for English Language Learners (ELL), including specialized instruction and resources to help them succeed academically.
- Recruit teachers from diverse backgrounds by partnering with universities, and advertising in diverse networks.
- Establish mentorship programs to support new teachers, particularly those from underrepresented groups, to help them thrive in their roles.
- Provide ongoing professional development focused on equity, cultural competence, and inclusive teaching practices.
- Provide equitable leadership and advancement opportunities for all teachers, including those from underrepresented groups.
- Model and foster a supportive and inclusive work environment that values diversity and encourages collaboration and mutual respect among staff.

Where To Find More Resources

Resource Title	Link	Description
Designing for Equity	Designing for Equity	Interactive website from the National Comprehensive Center that includes a curated collection of resources to support states, districts, and schools in advancing equity in the workforce and in school policies and practices
Building a Strong and Diverse Teaching Profession	Building a Strong and Diverse Teaching Profession Learning Policy Institute	User friendly playbook, website, and infographic with ideas on how to build and retain a diverse teaching staff
Reviewing the evidence on teacher attrition and retention	Reviewing the evidence on teacher attrition and retention Brookings	Article from Brookings Institution explaining the factors of teacher retention
Supporting Students in Poverty with High Impact Instructional Strategies	Instructional Practices Toolkit	This user-friendly resource spotlights 5 critical instructional strategies for PK–12 teachers and 5 key actions for principals that, when implemented, effectively improve outcomes for all students
The English Learner Family Toolkit	EL Family Toolkit	Free toolkit—available in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic, and accessible as a mobile app for Android and iPhone devices—covers a wide range of topics, from helping families understand what documents they need to enroll English learners in schools to advice for educators on how to explain the importance of parent-teacher conferences and navigate language barriers that may prevent engagement

<p>Engaging Culturally Diverse Families for Student Success</p>	<p>Engaging Culturally Diverse Families</p>	<p>Website with many free resources including videos, practice guides, and other tools designed to support meaningful engagement of diverse families</p>
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NCStar Indicators related to this topic

District-Level Indicators

A05: The district supports a student-centered approach and provides an instructional framework-based on learner profiles that inform individualized learning paths and competency-based progression in a flexible learning environment.

School-Level Indicators

A2.16 Units of instruction and activities are aligned with AIG goals, ELL student progress, IEP goals and objectives for all students.

A2.27 Instructional Teams and teachers embed cultural education into learning experiences in the curriculum.

A2.28 Instructional Teams and teachers utilize culturally relevant examples in curriculum and instruction to strengthen students’ learning.

A4.02 Teams of special educators, general education teachers, and related service providers meet regularly to enhance/unify instructional planning and program implementation for students with disabilities.

A4.04 The school promotes social/emotional competency in school rituals and routines, such as morning announcements, awards assemblies, hallway and classroom wall displays, and student competitions.

A4.22 All teachers are responsive to students’ cultural backgrounds and incorporate culturally relevant material in their classrooms.

D2.03 Students with disabilities are provided with and taught effective ways to use assistive technology (as needed) to support their individual learning needs.

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