



## Teaching Conditions by Experience Level

To do their best work with students, teachers need supportive school environments that maximize their opportunity to be effective. As a part of the First to the Top Initiative, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) and a coalition of education stakeholders worked collaboratively with the New Teacher Center (NTC) to implement the second iteration of the Tennessee Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning Survey (TELL Tennessee Survey) to assess whether educators across the state report having the resources and supports necessary to encourage the most effective teaching. Findings from this initiative will inform district and school strategic planning.

The TELL Tennessee Survey is a statistically valid and reliable instrument that assesses nine research-based teaching and learning conditions: Time, Facilities and Resources, Community Support and Involvement, Managing Student Conduct, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Professional Development, Instructional Practices and Support, and New Teacher Support. Response options for core questions from TELL Tennessee use a Likert scale and range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. NTC administered the anonymous survey of all school-based licensed educators in early 2013. Over 61,000 educators (82 percent) in the state responded.

This brief is part of a series of special analyses requested by the Tennessee Department of Education to examine educators' responses on selected TELL conditions (Time, Teacher Leadership, Professional Development, and three items related to teacher evaluation) by different categories of educators, schools, and districts, which include:

- Educator years of experience,
- Alternative evaluation models (Coach, TEM (Teacher Effectiveness Measure), and TIGER (Teacher Instructional Growth for Effectiveness and Results)) compared to the statewide TEAM (Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model),
- Combined alternative evaluation models compared to statewide TEAM,
- Urbanicity status,
- CORE (Centers of Regional Excellence) regions,
- District enrollment, and
- School accountability (Reward, Priority, and Focus) status.

The current brief examines TELL Survey areas across different categories of educator experience. The TELL Tennessee Survey divides participants into six categories of experience, including: first year, 2-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-10 years, 11-20 years, and 20+ years of experience. All TELL construct areas combined will be presented to provide an overview of the pattern of responses but the focus of the brief will be on Time, Teacher Leadership, Professional Development, and teacher evaluation. Individual items associated with each survey area are listed in the endnotes.<sup>1</sup>

For this brief, results are summarized using a rate of agreement that combines the strongly agree and agree categories. The number of participants by years of experience is provided in Table 1.

Experience	Survey Participants
First Year	3,552
2-3 Years	5,698
4-6 Years	8,051
7-10 Years	9,782
11-20 Years	18,412
20+ Years	14,471

### Findings

*Beginning teachers are more positive than their veteran colleagues.*

Factors like the number of years of experience in teaching influence respondents' perceptions of whether or not conditions are present. Across constructs, beginning teachers report higher rates of agreement compared to veteran teachers (Figure 1). The largest difference between consecutive groups is found for first year teachers and second and third year teachers where there is a four percentage point difference for 2013 rates of agreement. The remaining levels of experience report stable agreement rates (no more than one to two percentage point differences in 2013 agreement rates across levels) in teachers with two to three years of experience or more. Additionally, these trends mirror those observed in 2011.

FIGURE 1. 2013 PERCENT AGREEMENT ACROSS ALL CONSTRUCTS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

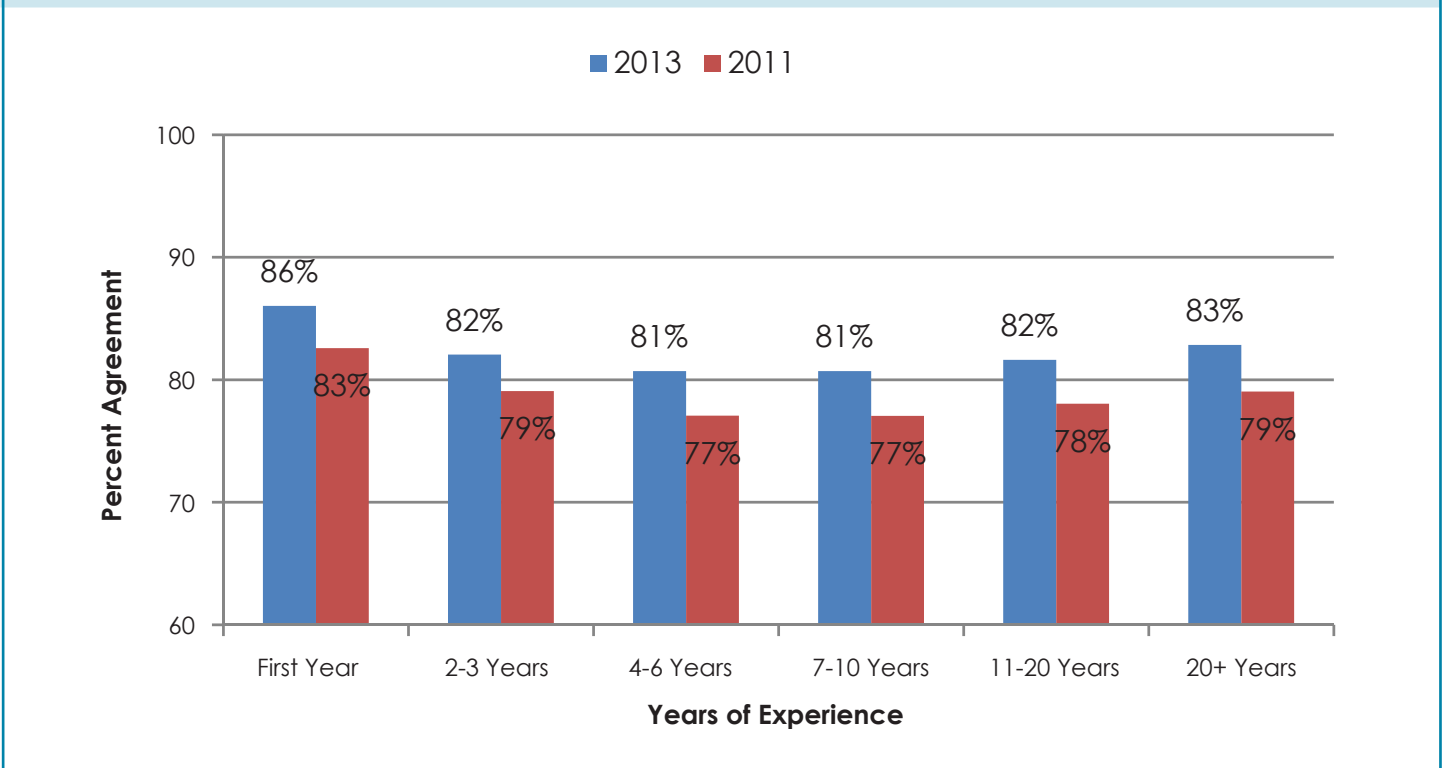


Figure 2 shows average rates of agreement by construct for first year teachers, teachers with four to six years of experience, and teachers with 11 to 20 years of experience to demonstrate differences by years in the profession. Across all constructs, beginning teachers report the most positive teaching conditions with the exception of the area of Community Support and Involvement where first year and 11 to 20 year teachers report the same rate of agreement.

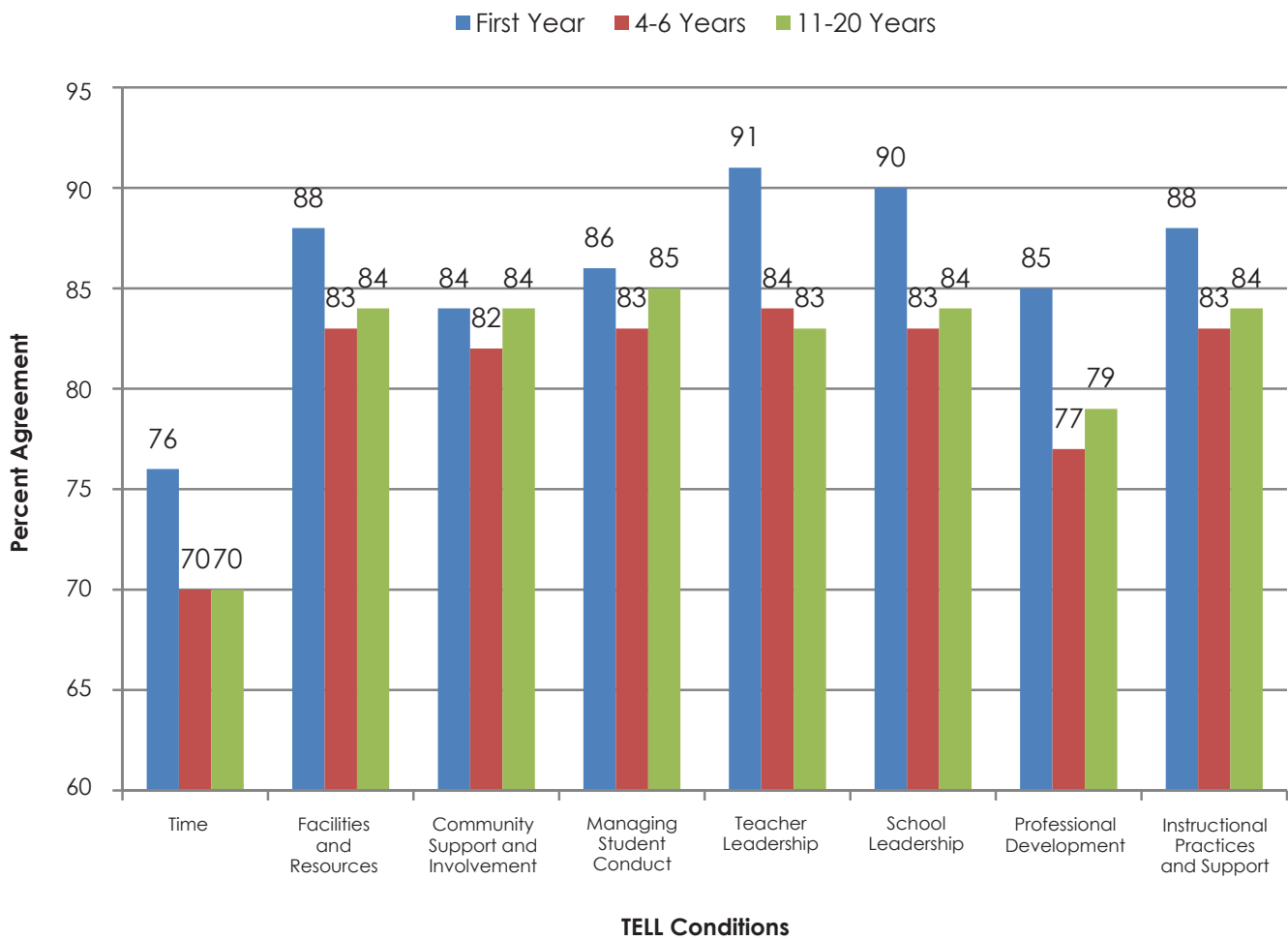
- Teachers, regardless of experience level, report similar rates of agreement for Community Support and Involvement and Managing Student Conduct.

- Educators, regardless of experience level, report the lowest rates of agreement for the Time construct.
- Teachers in their first year of experience report rates of agreement at least six percentage points higher rates of agreement than their colleagues with 11 to 20 years of experience in the areas of: Time, Teacher Leadership, and School Leadership.

These findings are similar to those observed in 2011.

Summaries of differences between 2011 and 2013 at the individual item level are presented in the following sections.

FIGURE 2. 2013 PERCENT AGREEMENT BY CONSTRUCT BY EXPERIENCE LEVELS



## Time

### *Educators report more agreement in 2013 that routine paperwork is minimized.*

- In the area of Time, a 10-percentage-point increase or more is present across all experience levels for the item, “Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine administrative paperwork teachers are required to do.” See Table 2.
- A six-percentage-point increase or more is present across all experience levels for the item, “Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.”
- The smallest range in differences between 2011 and 2013 is for the item asking if class sizes are reasonable (three to four percentage points).
- The item with the highest rate of agreement in 2013 asks educators if teachers are protected from duties that interfere with teaching students. Over four out of five (81 percent) first-year teachers agree.

TABLE 2. TIME QUESTIONS BY EXPERIENCE: 2013 TO 2011

Time Questions	First Year		4-6 Years		11-20 Years	
	2013 RA*	Change from 2011	2013 RA	Change from 2011	2013 RA	Change from 2011
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine administrative paperwork teachers are required to do.	78%	10	69%	10	66%	10
Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.	74%	7	70%	8	68%	6
Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.	75%	3	68%	4	68%	3
Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students	81%	5	73%	4	75%	5

\* RA indicates rate of agreement after combining the agree and strongly agree response options.

## **EDUCATORS REPORT MORE AGREEMENT *in 2013 that routine paperwork is minimized.***

## Teacher Leadership

*First-year teachers are more positive about teacher leadership opportunities than more veteran teachers.*

- Almost all first-year teachers agree that teachers are encouraged to participate in leadership roles and are effective leaders (95 and 94 percent respectively). See Table 3.

- The percentage point change for Teacher Leadership items ranges less than Time and Professional Development (one to five percentage points).
- The item with the least agreement and most change between 2011 and 2013 asks if there is an effective process for group decision making and problem solving.

TABLE 3. TEACHER LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS BY EXPERIENCE: 2013 TO 2011

Teacher Leadership Questions	First Year		4-6 Years		11-20 Years	
	2013 RA*	Change from 2011	2013 RA	Change from 2011	2013 RA	Change from 2011
Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.	95%	1	89%	3	87%	4
Teacher performance is assessed objectively.	94%	1	88%	3	87%	2
The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.	83%	2	74%	5	75%	4

\* RA indicates rate of agreement after combining the agree and strongly agree response options.

**ALMOST ALL FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS agree that teachers are encouraged to participate in leadership roles and are effective leaders.**

## Professional Development

*Almost all teachers agree they are encouraged to reflect on their practice, however less, agree that professional development is evaluated and results are shared with teachers.*

- Over nine out of ten (93 percent or more) educators across experience levels agree they are encouraged to reflect on their practices. See Table 4.
- The least agreement across experience levels is reported for the item, “Professional development is evaluated and results are communicated to teachers.” Agreement rates range from 76 percent for first-year teachers to 61 percent for four-to-six year teachers.
- Educators report the most change between administrations for the item, “Follow up is provided from professional development,” ranging from five to six percentage points.

TABLE 4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS BY EXPERIENCE: 2013 TO 2011

Professional Development Questions	First Year		4-6 Years		11-20 Years	
	2013 RA*	Change from 2011	2013 RA	Change from 2011	2013 RA	Change from 2011
Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice.	96%	2	93%	3	93%	4
Professional development enhances teachers' abilities to help improve student learning.	94%	2	86%	1	87%	2
Professional development is evaluated and results are communicated to teachers.	76%	4	61%	6	63%	4
Follow-up is provided from professional development in this school.	82%	5	71%	6	74%	6

\* RA indicates rate of agreement after combining the agree and strongly agree response options.

**THE LEAST AGREEMENT** across experience levels is reported for the item, “Professional development is evaluated and results are communicated to teachers.”

## Teacher Evaluation

*The only declines in response rates from 2011 to 2013 are reported for conditions related to teacher evaluation.* However, it should be noted that since the 2011 survey, all teachers in the state were introduced to a new evaluation instrument in the 2011-2012 school year.

- Almost all educators across experience levels agree teachers are held to high professional standards (95 to 97 percent). See Table 5.
- Educator rates of agreement declined across experience levels on the item asking if teacher performance is assessed objectively.
- Within each experience level, the lowest rates of agreement and the largest declines in agreement are reported for the item asking if the procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.

## Summary

Across all constructs, first-year teachers are more positive about teaching conditions compared to more veteran teachers. Additionally, across all levels of experience, educators are more positive about the items related to Time than in 2011, however, rates of agreement are still the lowest for this area compared to the other constructs. Educator rates of agreement declined between administrations for the teacher performance and evaluation items.

TABLE 5. TEACHER EVALUATION QUESTIONS BY EXPERIENCE: 2013 TO 2011

Teacher Evaluation Questions	First Year		4-6 Years		11-20 Years	
	2013 RA*	Change from 2011	2013 RA	Change from 2011	2013 RA	Change from 2011
Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.	97%	1	95%	2	96%	3
Teacher performance is assessed objectively.	91%	-2	83%	-5	83%	-5
The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.	87%	4	78%	-9	79%	-9

\* RA indicates rate of agreement after combining the agree and strongly agree response options.

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**ACROSS ALL CONSTRUCTS, first-year teachers are more positive about teaching conditions compared to more veteran teachers.**

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## Endnote

1. The Time construct pertains to the available time to plan, collaborate, provide instruction, and eliminate barriers in order to maximize instructional time during the school day. The construct includes the following questions:

- Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.
- Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.
- Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.
- The non-instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.
- Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine administrative paperwork teachers are required to do.
- Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.
- Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.

The Teacher Leadership construct pertains to the degree of teacher involvement in decisions that impact classroom and school practices. The construct includes the following questions:

- Teachers are recognized as educational experts.
- Teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction.
- Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.
- Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.
- The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.
- In this school, we take steps to solve problems.
- Teachers are effective leaders in this school.
- Teachers have an appropriate level of influence on decision making in this school.

The Professional Development construct pertains to the availability and quality of learning opportunities for educators to enhance their teaching. The construct includes the following questions:

- Sufficient resources are available for professional development in my school.
- An appropriate amount of time is provided for professional development.
- Professional development offerings are data driven.
- Professional learning opportunities are aligned with the school's improvement plan.
- Professional development is differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers.
- Professional development deepens teachers' content knowledge.
- Professional development provides teachers with strategies to involve families and other community members as active partners in their children's education.
- Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice.
- Follow up is provided from professional development in this school.
- Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to work with colleagues to refine teaching practices.
- Professional development is evaluated and results are communicated to teachers.
- Professional development enhances teachers' ability to implement instructional strategies that meet diverse student learning needs.
- Professional development enhances teachers' abilities to help improve student learning.

The TELL Tennessee Survey included a few questions related to the Department's interest in teacher evaluation. They are:

- Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.
- Teacher performance is assessed objectively.
- The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.

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## About the New Teacher Center

New Teacher Center focuses on improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers. NTC partners with states, school districts, and policymakers to design and implement systems that create sustainable, high-quality mentoring and professional development; build leadership capacity; work to enhance teaching conditions; improve retention; and transform schools in vibrant learning communities where all students succeed.



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