Teaching Conditions in TEAM and Non-TEAM Schools

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)[1] 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 regions,
- District enrollment, and
- School accountability (Reward, Priority, and Focus) status.

The current brief compares educator perceptions in schools implementing the statewide TEAM to educator perceptions across the three alternative evaluation models combined (Coach, TEM, and TIGER) across specified TELL Tennessee Survey constructs. The statewide TEAM evaluation model and the alternative evaluation models are a component of Tennessee's new educator evaluation system. As part of Tennessee's First to the Top Act, the State Board of Education adopted the statewide model, TEAM. The Board also approved three alternative evaluation models generally specific to geographic regions: 1) Project Coach in Hamilton County; 2) TEM in Memphis City; and 3) TIGER in 12 (mostly municipal) school systems[2] statewide.† The TDOE requested a brief comparing all four evaluation models to one another and this brief comparing TEAM to the three alternative models combined. The brief comparing the four evaluation models to each other across TELL constructs is under separate cover.

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† Tennessee Department of Education. July 2012. *Teacher Evaluation in Tennessee: Report on Year 1 Implementation*.

For this brief, results are summarized using a rate of agreement that combines the strongly agree and agree categories. Readers should consider differences between groups in the larger policy context, including types of schools in each group, length of intervention, and intensity of intervention in determining the importance of differences. For example, there are qualitative differences (urbanicity, size, poverty, etc.) in the contexts where the alternative models are implemented that are not controlled for in the analyses.

TELL respondents in schools implementing the alternative evaluation model and the TEAM model are provided in Table 1. Of the more than 60,000 TELL Tennessee Survey respondents, over 50,000 are assigned to schools using the state-adopted TEAM approach. Six percent of survey respondents are in schools implementing the Coach model, 10 percent of educators are assigned to schools implementing the TEM model, and three percent are in schools implementing the TIGER model. In the following tables, the Coach, TEM, and TIGER evaluation models are combined under the "Alternative Evaluation" heading.

TABLE 1. TELL SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY EVALUATION MODEL

Program	Survey Participants	Percent
Coach	3,760	6.1
TEM	5,912	9.6
TIGER	1,658	2.7
TEAM	50,011	81.5
Total	61,341	100.0

Finding

Educators in schools implementing an alternative evaluation model are slightly more positive about their teaching conditions and the teacher evaluation process than educators in schools implementing TEAM.

Overall, the educators in the alternative evaluation group report higher increases in rates of agreement than their peers in schools implementing TEAM between 2011 and 2013 across key teaching conditions areas (Table 2).

Analyzing individual items in these TELL Tennessee Survey constructs provide more specific information on differences between evaluation groups.

TABLE 2. TEACHING CONDITIONS ACROSS KEY CONSTRUCTS BY EVALUATION MODEL: 2013 TO 2011

Construct	TEAM		Alternative Evaluation	
	2013 RA*	Change from 2011	2013 RA	Change from 2011
Time	70%	5	70%	7
Teacher Leadership	84%	5	85%	7
Professional Development	79%	4	83%	4

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

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Time

Educators in schools using TEAM and alternative models are all more positive in 2013 than 2011 on all Time questions (Table 3). In each group, 10 percent or more of the educators in 2013 report that efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine administrative paperwork that teachers are required to do compared to 2011. Educators in schools implementing one of the alternative evaluation models had the same or higher increases in rates of agreement across all Time questions compared to educators in schools implementing TEAM.

TABLE 3. TIME QUESTIONS BY EVALUATION MODEL: 2013 TO 2011				
Time Questions	**TEAM**		**Alternative Evaluation**	
	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.	68%	10	67%	13
Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions	73%	6	70%	9
The non-instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.	68%	5	70%	8
Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.	69%	7	68%	7
Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students	74%	4	74%	7
Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.	72%	6	77%	6
Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.	69%	3	67%	4
* RA indicates rate of agreement after combining the agree and strongly agree response options.				

EDUCATORS IN SCHOOLS USING TEAM *and alternative models are all more positive in 2013 than 2011 on all Time questions.*

Teacher Leadership

Educators in schools using an alternative evaluation model report slightly higher increases on individual questions related to Teacher Leadership (between one and two percentage points) than educators in TEAM schools (Table 4). At least three quarters of educators, regardless of evaluation model, agree that positive conditions related to Teacher Leadership are present in their school.

TABLE 4. TEACHER LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS BY EVALUATION MODEL: 2013 TO 2011				
Select Teacher Leadership Questions	**TEAM**		**Alternative Evaluation**	
	2013 RA*	*Change from 2011*	*2013 RA*	*Change from 2011*
Teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction.	86%	3	86%	4
Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.	83%	3	83%	4
Teachers are recognized as educational experts.	84%	4	85%	4
The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.	75%	4	77%	4
In this school we take steps to solve problems.	85%	3	85%	4
Teachers are effective leaders in this school.	88%	2	88%	4
Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.	89%	3	89%	3
* RA indicates rate of agreement after combining the agree and strongly agree response options.				

EDUCATORS IN SCHOOLS *using an alternative evaluation model report slightly higher increases on individual questions related to Teacher Leadership than educators in TEAM schools.*

Teacher Evaluation

In both groups, almost all educators agree that teachers are held to high professional standards. However, there are differences in educator perceptions between evaluation models concerning the teacher evaluation process (Table 5). Educators in schools implementing an alternative evaluation model report higher rates of agreement compared to educators in schools implementing TEAM. Additionally, the alternative evaluation model group's rates of agreement decrease less than the TEAM group between survey administrations on the following items: "Teacher performance is assessed objectively," (two percentage points compared to five) and "The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent," (two percentage points compared to 10).

Summary

Educators, regardless of evaluation model, are more positive about time, leadership opportunities, and teacher evaluation in 2013 compared to 2011. Educators in schools using an alternative evaluation model report similar or greater improvement in perceptions of conditions between 2013 and 2011 across key teaching conditions. In particular, educators using alternative evaluation models are more likely to agree that procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent and report similar perceptions on evaluation questions between administrations compared to educators in schools implementing TEAM.

TABLE 5. TEACHER EVALUATION BY EVALUATION MODEL: 2013 TO 2011				
Teacher Evaluation Questions	**TEAM**		**Alternative Evaluation**	
	*2013 RA**	*Change from 2011*	*2013 RA*	*Change from 2011*
Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.	96%	2	95%	2
Teacher performance is assessed objectively.	83%	-5	85%	-2
The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.	78%	-10	84%	-2
* RA indicates rate of agreement after combining the agree and strongly agree response options.				

EDUCATORS, REGARDLESS OF EVALUATION MODEL, *are more positive about time, leadership opportunities, and teacher evaluation in 2013 compared to 2011.*

Endnotes

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 area 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.

2. Participating districts include Sevier County, Alamo City Schools, Unicoi County, Jackson-Madison County, Hollow-Rock Bruceton SD, Lincoln County, Greenville City Schools, Cheatham County, Lebanon SSD, Lenoir City Schools, Lexington City Schools, Roane County, Maryville City Schools, Milan SSD, Fayette County, Tipton County, Bradford Special, Paris SSD, Richard City Schools, Trousdale County, South Carroll SD, Putnam County, and Union City Schools.

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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