

Lessons for School Leaders

Feedback From the 2019 Tennessee Educator Survey



3 LESSONS

for school leaders stand out from the 2019 Tennessee Educator Survey:

1

PROTECT TEACHERS' PLANNING TIME

2

EFFECTIVELY AND CONSISTENTLY HANDLE STUDENT DISCIPLINE

3

FOSTER AN OPEN AND TRUSTING CULTURE AMONG STAFF

Teachers Want Protected Planning Time



3 hours per week seems to be the tipping point:

72% of teachers who report **more than three hours** agree their planning time is sufficient.

VS

46% of teachers with **less than three hours** agree their planning time is sufficient.

Teachers' Views of School Leadership Hinge on how Leaders Handle Discipline

When teachers **agree** that school leadership effectively handles student discipline and behavior problems, **93%** like the way things are run at their school.



When teachers **disagree** that leadership effectively handles student discipline and behavior problems, **40%** like the way things are run at their school.

Urban teachers report **20 fewer minutes** of individual planning per week than other teachers in the state. They are 14% less likely to report their planning time is sufficient.

“Teachers desperately need enough planning time to hunt resources and collaborate with other teachers (NOT in formal PLCs with regimented and lockstep dialogues, but in the myriad informal ways we support each other).”
– Teacher

Dealing With Discipline Costs Teachers Instructional Time



When teachers **do not** think leadership effectively handles discipline, **20%** lost more than 45 days of instructional time dealing with discipline.

VS

When teachers **do** think leadership effectively handles discipline, **7%** lost more than 45 days of instructional time dealing with discipline.

Teachers Value Transparency and Responsiveness in School Leadership



I LIKE THE WAY THINGS ARE RUN AT THIS SCHOOL

When teachers **DISAGREE** staff is comfortable raising issues with leadership,

23% like how things are run at their school.



When teachers **AGREE** staff is comfortable raising issues with leadership,

92% like how things are run at their school.

“*Teachers need real support, we need to feel like we can come to administrators with issues without negative consequences.*”
– Teacher



How to apply these findings to your school:

- 1 Review teacher responses** to the following Tennessee Educator Survey items to understand the extent to which statewide lessons apply to your school:
 - About how many minutes per week during school hours do you have for individual planning/prep time?
 - My individual planning time is sufficient.
 - School leadership effectively handles student discipline and behavioral problems.
 - The staff feels comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them with school leaders.
- 2 Examine the competing demands** on teachers' time and **consider whether or not planning time is truly protected** in your school.
- 3 Consider strengthening or expanding structures for teachers to share concerns with you**, using input from your educators.

Lessons for District Leaders

Feedback From the 2019 Tennessee Educator Survey



2 LESSONS

for district leaders stand out from the 2019 Tennessee Educator Survey:

1

PROVIDE TEACHERS WITH COMPREHENSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

2

WHEN POSSIBLE, ALLOW TEACHER CHOICE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Teachers Spend Substantial Time Supplementing Their Curriculum, Especially Assessments and Tasks

70%

of teachers report spending more than **4 hours per week** creating or sourcing instructional materials.



19%

of teachers report spending more than **10 hours per week** creating or sourcing instructional materials.



1 in 4

teachers in urban districts report spending more than **10 hours per week** creating or sourcing instructional materials.



How do teachers view their curriculum/instructional materials?

73% believe they are easy to use,

68% believe they are engaging, and

64% believe they include high-quality lessons as designed,

BUT

46% believe they contain adequate assessments and tasks.

“It takes all of our planning time and more of our own time to find appropriate materials and make up our own assessments to meet the standards and sometimes they are not even adequate assessments.”

– Teacher

Teachers Continue to Report Individualized Professional Development (PD) Sessions Are the Most Helpful



23%

of teachers engage in **self-selected PD** once a month or more

&

84%

of teachers find it somewhat or very helpful.

43%

of teachers engage in **whole-school PD** once a month or more

&

59%

of teachers find it somewhat or very helpful.



54%

of **URBAN TEACHERS** participate in whole-school PD monthly or more

VS

38%

of other teachers in the state.



15%

of **RURAL TEACHERS** say they choose their formal PD themselves "always" or "most of the time"

VS

23%

of other teachers in the state.

“ I always use strategies and techniques I get from PD I choose on my own. I almost never use what I get in required school and district PD. ”

– Teacher



How to apply these findings to your district:

- 1** Review teacher responses to the following Tennessee Educator Survey items to understand the extent to which statewide lessons apply to your district:
 - On average, how many hours per week do you spend creating or sourcing materials to use for classroom instruction including planning time during and outside of school hours?
 - I have received specific professional learning suggestions that are tailored to my needs.
- 2** Set a high bar for curriculum quality in your district. Advocate for high-quality instructional materials that include strong assessments and tasks.
- 3** Look for opportunities to incorporate more teacher choice into existing professional development offerings. Use mandated school-wide or district-wide PD sessions sparingly and strategically.

Lessons From New Teachers

New teacher feedback from the
2019 Tennessee Educator Survey



First-year teachers find mentors valuable, but there appears to be room for improvement in the coaching activities in which mentors engage.



7 in 10 first-year teachers report they had a **mentor assigned to them** by their school or district.

New teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their **mentor teacher:**

83%	78%	85%	87%
HELPED THEM NAVIGATE THEIR SCHOOL	PROVIDED FREQUENT FEEDBACK	PROVIDED USEFUL FEEDBACK	WAS APPROACHABLE FOR HELP

However, **1 in 3** new teachers report their mentors frequently engaged with them in high-leverage coaching activities, such as observations, co-designing or co-teaching lessons, analyzing student work, or debriefing lessons.

1 in 4 NEW TEACHERS RECEIVED NONE OF THESE HIGH-LEVERAGE COACHING ACTIVITIES.




“My mentor was vital to my success. Without her availability, I think I would have left the profession very quickly, instead of ending my 18th year.”
– Teacher

Leveraging relationships is one of the most important aspects of preparing, recruiting, and developing new teachers.



Relationships Matter for New Teachers



Only **4 in 10** new teachers report feeling **“well prepared”** for their first year of teaching, a decline of seven percent from last year.



53%

OF TEACHERS FEEL WELL PREPARED BY THEIR CLINICAL EXPERIENCE.



42%

OF TEACHERS FEEL WELL PREPARED BY COURSEWORK.

59% OF NEW TEACHERS SELECTED THEIR DISTRICT BASED ON PRE-EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS, INCLUDING STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE, PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS, OR FAMILIARITY WITH SCHOOL OR DISTRICT LEADERSHIP.



“ I learned so much in the few days that I observed other teachers in my school after I had been in my own classroom. The classes I’ve taken are not as beneficial as the time I’ve spent one-on-one with other teachers. ”
– Teacher

How to apply these findings to support early-career teachers:

- 1 Remember that **it is common for new teachers to feel that they are not well prepared.** As part of onboarding, incorporate opportunities for teachers to form relationships that would sustain them through these early years.
- 2 Provide mentors for all first-year teachers and give mentors clear expectations. Ensure that mentors are supported to frequently engage in coaching activities that will **provide high-quality feedback.**

How to apply these findings for educator preparation providers:

- 1 Be mindful that the **clinical experience is critical for future teachers’ career trajectories**, both in their preparation to teach and in building networks.
- 2 Consider supporting local school districts in their efforts to develop
 - **Recruitment strategies** that build authentic relationships, and
 - **Structured mentorships** that provide high-leverage coaching supports for new teachers.