



# Using Teaching and Learning Condition in Colorado (TLCC) Survey Results Effectively

Teaching conditions are critical to educator success and satisfaction. The Teaching and Learning Conditions in Colorado (TLCC) Survey provides schools, districts, and the state with data about whether educators experience supportive school environment needed to remain in the profession and be successful with students. This dataset represents the perspectives of educators who experience these conditions every day. When considered alongside other, more neutral, and quantifiable data such as student performance and staff turnover, TLCC results provide a more complete picture of teaching and learning in Colorado schools. Getting honest input and engaging in meaningful conversations can be challenging, particularly in schools where conditions such as trust, time or leadership are limited. Using survey results in a constructive way to support school improvement is key. The following eight concepts are provided to guide analysis and use of the TLCC survey results.

## 1. TEACHING CONDITIONS SHOULD BE EXAMINED FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PURPOSES.

The survey is designed to capture educator perceptions of current teaching and learning conditions. Because these conditions reflect school wide systems and practices, no single individual should be held solely accountable for school culture. Rather, survey data should be used to help guide school improvement planning as one of multiple data artifacts.

## 2. TEACHING CONDITIONS REFLECT COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY.

The principal holds a unique and important place within the school community and can have a significant impact on professional culture. At the same time, many teaching and learning conditions extend beyond the principal’s direct control. Broader social trends and local, state, and federal policies influence how educators work within their school and classroom. The TLCC survey focuses on school-wide condition rather than individual performance, and no single person should be viewed as solely responsible for creating or changing school culture. Questions regarding school leadership are intended to reflect the work of the broader team that holds decision-making power within the school.

## 3. PERCEPTUAL DATA ARE REAL DATA.

The TLCC survey collects educators’ perceptions about the presence of important teaching conditions. These data are valid and as important as other data sources. Students’ learning conditions are closely related to educators’ working conditions, and research has consistently linked perceptions of school culture and context to student learning, educator efficacy and motivation, and future employment plans. Using perceptual data to inform school improvement is therefore critical. However, TLCC results should be examined alongside other data, such as instructional expenditures, proportion of teachers working out of field, and student to teacher ratios, to triangulate findings and provide a better understanding of the school conditions.

## 4. CONVERSATIONS NEED TO BE STRUCTURED AND SAFE.

Data-driven conversations about TLCC survey results should be intentionally structured, well facilitated, and grounded in clear expectations for the discussion. Identifying root causes and determining viable solutions can be challenging, particularly when conditions are complex or sensitive. These conversations are more productive when approached in a systematic and predictable way that allows all staff to participate in a meaningful and safe way.



## 5. IDENTIFY AND CELEBRATE POSITIVE TRENDS ALONG SIDE AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

Educators have tremendous pride in their work and want to be part of schools that support them in doing their best. Every school has strengths that can be leveraged as leaders assess and improve teaching and learning conditions. Time should be intentionally set aside to identify and celebrate positive trends and effective practices rather than focusing only on areas where conditions need improvement.

## 6. CREATE A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT DEFINES AND SHAPES TEACHING AND LEARNING CONDITIONS.

Many factors influence educators' perceptions of teaching and learning conditions. Research shows that broader social trends, media coverage, respect for the profession, and local and state policies all shape how educators experience their work and, in turn, affect their motivation and efficacy. The TLCC survey gathers input on a set of important research-based teaching and learning conditions, but it does not capture every factor that may matter in a local context. Additional areas such as teaching assignments, curricular support, assessments and accountability, and parent and community support, may need additional exploration. Survey results should therefore be seen as a starting point for building shared understanding, not a final determination of what supports educators to do their best work.

## 7. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN SOLVE.

Some factors that shape teaching and learning conditions are outside the direct control of schools and districts, such as federal and state assessment policies or funding resources. School improvement planning should focus on areas that can be addressed by the school community. District barriers to school-based solutions should be identified and constructive conversations across schools should occur locally. Other influences (e.g., federal and state policy, broader social and community context) are areas for the school to think about in partnership with others. A plan with proposed solutions that cannot be reached through the efforts of the school community is not likely to be successful.

## 8. SOLUTIONS CAN BE COMPLEX AND LONG TERM.

Teaching and learning conditions develop over time and are shaped by cumulative experiences and practices. Because many conditions took years to establish, meaningful change often requires multiple years of sustained effort. Some improvements may be relatively simple and low cost, such as more consistent communication among staff. Other solutions are more resource intensive or require more long-term commitment, like reducing class sizes, integrating technology, building trust, or creating authentic professional learning communities). A school improvement plan must pay attention both to short and long-term issues to successfully improve the school environment.