



Division of Accountability & Research

Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Survey Executive Summary April 2015

In February 2015, the Colorado Department of Education distributed the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) survey. The TELL survey is a biennial statewide survey of school based educators to assess perceived teaching/working conditions at the school, district, and state level. One of the main purposes of the TELL survey is to provide additional data for school and district improvements. TELL results are also expected to inform state level policy (CDE, 2011).

The TELL survey was conducted anonymously, and reports generated for schools and districts with greater than 50% participation. The Aurora Public Schools district had 1938 returned surveys that represent 71.8% of all the potential participants. This compares to a 51.1% participation rate for all of the teachers in the state.

TELL survey questions focus on: time, facilities and resources, community support and involvement, managing student conduct, teacher leadership, school leadership, professional development, instructional practices and support, future employment plans, new teacher support and district support for school leadership.

The bullets below summarize agreement rates and changes for the Aurora Public Schools on the TELL Survey:

- In 2015, 18 items had agreement rate increases that exceeded 5% and 10 items had agreement rate decreases that exceeded 5%.
 - In 2013, 13 items had agreement rate increases that exceeded 5% and 4 items had agreement rate decreases that exceeded 5%.
- Positive change in agreement rates of 5% or more were noted between the 2011 and 2015 survey for 38 of 62 items with 9 items decreasing 5%.
- Overall, 65% of items exceeded moderately favorable response rates of 60%. 16.2% of the survey items had agreement rates less than 50% (12.5% in 2013).
- The overall statement at the end of the survey that reads, “My school is a good place to work and learn” received a 73.3% agreement rate (66.4% in 2013).
- Historically, state approval rates generally exceeded those that were observed for APS. Currently, state approval rates for 2015 are not available.

Presented below are highlights on each of the TELL Survey assessed areas.

- **Time: Available time to plan, collaborate and provide instruction and barriers to maximizing time during the school day.** Past statewide results show teachers consistently report time as the biggest challenge. APS teachers also reported relatively lower agreement rates on questions asking about reasonable class size, and sufficient instructional time (agreement rates 45%-50%). Agreement rates on most questions in the area of time improved from the 2013 TELL Survey administration.
- **Facilities and resources: Availability of instructional, technology, office, communication, and school resources to teachers.** Teachers reported they have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials, reliable communications technology, sufficient access to a broad range of professional personnel and that the physical environment of classrooms supports teaching and learning. Teachers report they would like additional training and support to fully utilize available instructional technology.
- **Community Support and Involvement: Community and parent/guardian communication and influence in the school.** Teachers reported overall that the community they served is supportive of the school and that teachers provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning. Teachers agreed less with the statement that parents/guardians are influential decision makers in the school. Agreement rates on most questions in the area of community support improved from the 2013 TELL Survey administration.
- **Managing Student Conduct: Policies and practices to address student conduct issues and ensure a safe school environment.** Teachers reported lower agreement rates to statements about students following rules of conduct at school and administration consistently enforcing rules for student conduct than in previous years. Teachers continue to see school safety as an area of strength (77.3% agreement rate).
- **Teacher Leadership: Teacher involvement in decisions that impact classroom and school practices.** Teachers reported higher agreement rates in the teacher leadership area than in 2011 and 2013. Teachers reported increased recognition as educational experts and that teachers in the school take steps to solve problems. A lower level of agreement was noted for the faculty having an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems (52.9% agreement rate).
- **School Leadership: The ability of school leadership to create trusting, supportive environments and address teacher concerns.** In the area of school leadership, questions that had large agreement rate decreases were on the teacher evaluation process improving teachers' instructional strategies and the perception that the components of the teacher evaluation process accurately identified effectiveness. Areas of high agreement for school leadership were on statements of teachers being held to high professional standards for delivering instruction and the school leadership facilitating the use of data to improve student learning.
- **Professional Development: Availability and quality of learning opportunities for educators to enhance their teaching.** Teachers reported overall increased agreement rates in the area of school professional development. Areas of high

agreement rates include professional learning opportunities that are aligned with the school's improvement plan and that teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice. Questions with lower rates of agreement included the presence of differentiated professional development to meet the needs of individual teachers and that professional development is evaluated with results communicated to teachers.

- **Instructional Practices and Support: Data and supports available to teachers to improve instruction and student learning.** Teachers reported areas of relative strength for instructional practices and support as the ability for teachers to work in professional learning communities to develop and align instructional practices and that provided supports (e.g., IC's, PLC's) translate to improvements in instructional practices by teachers. Statements in the area of instructional practices and support with decreased agreement rates were on state assessment data being available in time to impact instructional practices and state/local assessments being used to improve student learning.