



Division of Accountability & Research

Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Survey Executive Summary April 2016

The Colorado Department of Education's Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) survey is administered statewide biennially on odd-numbered years and surveys school based educators to assess perceived teaching/working conditions at the school, district, and state level. In March 2016, Aurora Public Schools contracted with the New Teacher Center to administer the same version of the TELL survey to APS licensed staff. 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 are generated for schools with greater than 50% participation. The Aurora Public Schools district had 1877 completed surveys that represent 68.7% of all the potential participants. This compares to 2015 participation rates for the district and state of 71.8% and 51.1%, respectively (the statewide survey was not conducted this year).

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:

- Compared to 2015, agreement rates remained stable, but 5 items had agreement rate increases that exceeded 5 percentage points and 3 items had agreement rate decreases that exceeded 5 percentage points.
- Overall, 51% of items met or exceeded moderately favorable response rates of 65%. 18% of the survey items had agreement rates less than 55% (16.2% in 2015).
- The overall statement at the end of the survey that reads, "My school is a good place to work and learn" received a 74.4% agreement rate (673.3% in 2015).
- Historically, state approval rates generally exceeded those that were observed for APS. State approval rates for 2016 are not available as the state-wide survey is only administered biennially on odd-numbered years.

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 sufficient instructional time (agreement rates 49%-53%). Agreement rates on two of questions in the area of time improved from the 2015 TELL Survey administration, and most improved from 2015. Agreement rates regarding reasonable class sizes have improved from both 2015 and 2013.
- **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, and 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 guidance from school library staff to help students to become proficient in 21st century skills.
- **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 remained stable since the 2015 TELL Survey administration.
- **Managing Student Conduct: Policies and practices to address student conduct issues and ensure a safe school environment.** As in prior years, teachers reported low agreement rates to statements about students following rules of conduct and administration consistently enforcing rules for student conduct. Teachers continue to see school safety as an area of strength (79% agreement rate).
- **Teacher Leadership: Teacher involvement in decisions that impact classroom and school practices.** Agreement rates in the teacher leadership area were consistent with 2015. Teachers reported increased recognition as educational experts regarding education issues and instruction. A lower level of agreement (52.6%) was noted for the statement that teachers having influence on decision making within their school.
- **School Leadership: The ability of school leadership to create trusting, supportive environments and address teacher concerns.** In the area of school leadership, results were relatively stable since 2015. Areas of high agreement were on statements of teachers being held to high professional standards for delivering instruction, leadership facilitation of the use of data to improve learning, and leadership focus on staff professional growth. Improvement in agreement since both 2015 and 2013 was seen in the perception that faculty and leadership have a shared vision. Other areas of

improvement since 2013 were regarding perceptions of leadership's sustained efforts in addressing teacher concerns about use of time, professional development, empowering teachers, and community engagement.

- **Professional Development: Availability and quality of learning opportunities for educators to enhance their teaching.** Results suggested that the area of school professional development is a strength, and attitudes remained relatively stable since 2015. Areas of highest favorability 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.** Areas of highest favorability for instructional practices and support included statements on teachers working in professional learning communities to develop and align instructional practices, encouragement of teachers to try new things to improve instruction, the use of formative assessments to adjust instruction, and alignment of curriculum with Colorado Academic Standards. Statements 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. There were notable improvements since 2015 (and 2013) on perceptions that teachers are assigned to classes that maximize the likelihood of student success, and have autonomy to make instructional delivery decisions.