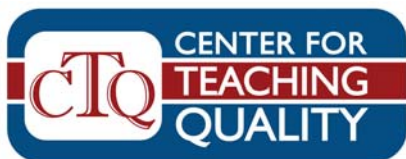# Arizona Teacher Working Conditions
Designing Schools for Educator and Student Success

*Results of the 2006 Phase-in
Teacher Working Conditions Survey*

Prepared for Governor Janet Napolitano,
the Arizona Teacher Excellence Plan (AZTEP),
the Arizona Education Association,
the Teacher Quality and Support Committee and
the Governor's P-20 Council

By
Eric Hirsch and Scott Emerick
with Keri Church and Ed Fuller

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The Center for Teaching Quality improves student learning through developing teacher leadership, conducting practical research and engaging various communities. To accomplish this mission, the Center for Teaching Quality strives to shape policies that ensure:

- **Students**, no matter what their background or where they go to school, are ready to learn; with

- **Teachers** who are caring, qualified, and competent with vast content knowledge and the ability, through quality preparation and ongoing development and support, to ensure that all children can learn; in

- **Classrooms** that have adequate resources and provide environments conducive to student learning; in

- **Schools** that are designed to provide teachers with sufficient time to learn and work together in collaboration with a principal who respects and understands teaching; in

- **Districts** that have policies and programs that support the recruitment, retention and development of high quality teachers in every school; in

- **States** that have well-funded systems that include rigorous preparation and licensing with evaluation tools that ensure performance based standards are met; in a

- **Region** that works collaboratively, using common teaching quality definitions, sharing data, and working across state lines to recruit, retain and support high quality teachers; in a

- **Nation** that views teaching as a true profession and values teachers as one of its most important resources.

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Executive Summary

Emerging research from across the nation demonstrates that school working conditions—time, teacher empowerment, school leadership, professional development, and facilities and resources —are critical to increasing student achievement and retaining teachers.

The existing national data regarding the impact of working conditions on student achievement and teacher turnover provided a meaningful impetus for 18 Arizona districts to collect and analyze data to inform local working condition reform strategies as part of a state Phase-in working conditions initiative.

Governor Janet Napolitano, the Arizona Education Association, the Arizona Teaching Excellence Plan (AZTEP) partnership, the leadership in 18 school districts and other stakeholders conducted the survey to provide information that can be used for data-driven school improvement planning, faculty conversations and consideration of district and school policies and programs. By placing the perceptions of Arizona educators at the center of school and district efforts to improve teacher recruitment and retention, the ultimate goal of the initiative is to help create a stable teaching force that allows for a high quality teacher in every classroom across the state.

Analysis of the approximately 5,200 survey responses (representing over 70 percent of educators eligible to participate in the survey) demonstrates that working conditions are correlated with AIMS results in math, reading and writing as well as teachers' future employment plans. Of the various data implications from the survey, five primary findings are highlighted in this report:

1. **Teacher Working Conditions are Correlated with Student Achievement**
   The overall findings from the analysis regarding the impact of working conditions on student achievement provide evidence to support the notion that teacher working conditions are student learning conditions. The analyses specifically point to the need to provide safe, trusting environments with sufficient instructional resources for all teachers to be successful.

2. **Teacher Working Conditions Influence Teacher Employment Plans**
   Statistically significant correlations between working conditions and teachers' desire to stay were found for all working conditions. Connections are particularly strong for the conditions of school leadership and empowerment.

3. **Teachers and Administrators View Working Conditions Differently**
   There are considerable gaps between the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the degree to which school leadership addresses teacher concerns. While some discrepancies might be expected between administrators and teachers on a measure of leadership

effectiveness, the degree of these discrepancies is startling and must be taken into consideration for any working conditions reforms to be successful.

4. **Schools Vary in the Presence of Teacher Working Conditions**
    The greatest differences in teacher perceptions of working conditions appear across schools. Basic differences between teachers themselves appear to make limited difference in how they perceive working conditions. Teachers, regardless of gender, education, race, ethnicity, and even years of experience, view working conditions similarly. However, there are differences between elementary, middle and high schools as well as AZTEP and non-AZTEP schools.

5. **Arizona Teachers are More Negative about Working Conditions than Teachers in Other States**
    In general, Arizona educators were more likely to note the presence of positive working conditions than those in Clark County, Nevada (Las Vegas) and Ohio (about one-third of respondents are from Columbus and Cleveland), but less so than their peers in Kansas and North Carolina. Of particular importance is that Arizona educators have the most negative perception about their faculty being committed to helping every student learn (10 percent lower than the next closest state/district).

More in-depth analysis of each of the five working conditions areas (along with mentoring and induction) is also provided within the body of this report.

Recommendations

From these findings and the domain analysis, recommendations for Arizona educators and policymakers are offered to enhance efforts to improve teacher working conditions.

1. Expand the Arizona Teacher Working Conditions Initiative Statewide in Spring 2007.

2. Ensure the Data from the Phase-in Is Used by Educators and Develop Assistance for Working Conditions Reform to Be Available When Statewide Data is Released.

3. Invest in School Leaders Who Can Create Positive Teaching and Learning Conditions.

4. Invest Substantially in Teacher Support.

The data available from the Phase-in Arizona Teacher Working Conditions Initiative and across the nation indicate that improving these teaching and learning conditions is a critical step to improving schools. Significant correlations between working conditions, AIMS performance and teacher employment decisions were documented in the Phase-in initiative.

Arizona educators must have the resources and support they need to serve all students well. Without comprehensive, sustained efforts to analyze and improve teacher working conditions, notable efforts to improve student learning and retain teachers cannot be fully successful.

Introduction

"This is a critical step in my goal to ensure Arizona educators are receiving the necessary tools to succeed and to create a thriving learning environment. I am pleased with the overwhelming response to this survey and will keep the results in mind as I continue efforts to improve Arizona's education system."

—*Governor Janet Napolitano*

For virtually any business or organization, the conditions in which employees work drive their satisfaction and productivity. Unfortunately, many schools across the country face persistent teacher working condition challenges that are closely related to high teacher turnover rates and chronic difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers. Turnover comes at great expense, both in the negative cumulative effect on student achievement, and as a financial drain to the state and districts that repeatedly prepare, recruit, and support teachers for the same position.

National research demonstrates the importance of addressing school conditions to improve teacher retention. Teachers who leave schools cite an opportunity for a better teaching assignment, dissatisfaction with support from administrators, and dissatisfaction with workplace conditions as the main reasons why they seek other opportunities.[1] Surveys of teachers indicate that a positive, collaborative school climate and support from colleagues and administrators are the most important factors influencing whether they stay in a school. In national surveys, teachers identified excessive workload, lack of time, and frustration with reform efforts as areas in need of focus and reform.[2]

Addressing these working conditions and building a sense of trust in schools are critical factors in reforming schools, as both have been linked to greater teacher effectiveness.[3] Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ) research examining working conditions survey results in both North Carolina and South Carolina demonstrates that teacher working conditions have a significant impact on student achievement and teacher retention.[4]

One of the most extensive examinations of working conditions data revealed "a clear but difficult lesson: if we want to improve the quality of our teachers and schools, we need to improve the quality of the teaching job."[5]

While existing national data on teacher turnover and working conditions is helpful, communities need customized data from their own schools and communities to effectively inform local reform strategies. It is with this in mind that Governor Napolitano, The Arizona Teacher Excellence Plan and the Arizona Education Association have collectively responded to this pressing need for local data results by conducting a "Phase-in" survey to document the perceptions of Arizona educators regarding their working conditions. Participating districts and stake-

holders designated this initiative as a Phase-in as opposed to a pilot, given that overwhelming desire to progress from conceiving the initiative to completing a statewide survey in 2007.

Methodology

More than 70 percent of educators in participating districts responded to the survey (5,270 total educators), the highest response rate of any statewide or pilot working conditions survey conducted to date. The response rate allows for the collection and dissemination of valuable data for 112 schools (only those with a minimum 50 percent response rate have reports available). This response rate allows districts, policymakers and community members to hear directly from classroom educators about how well their school is designed to provide sufficient time, professional development, facilities and resources, school leadership and teacher empowerment. The data results can and should help drive school improvement planning and faculty conversations and assist in efforts to improve school climate. The findings are also critical at the district and state level to assess what policies and practices are in place and which are helping to ensure that Arizona schools are great places to teach and learn.

In developing the Arizona survey instrument, CTQ drew from and improved upon survey questions from previous efforts to develop school climate and working conditions surveys in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Kansas, Ohio and Nevada. CTQ worked with an Arizona stakeholder group to customize a specific survey that improved upon an existing set of core working condition domains and questions used in previous assessments used in other states. The final Arizona survey included 34 total items, including demographic questions and mentoring questions (only asked of new teachers and those participating in mentoring efforts).

About the Participants and Respondents

The survey was conducted in participating districts in March 2006. Individual school and district (for those with higher than 50 percent response rate) reports, as well as state results, were posted in May 2006 and are available at www.aztwc.org. In total, 18 Arizona districts participated in the Phase-in initiative (Table 1).

The survey was anonymous, making it impossible to know how representative respondents were relative to the population of the districts in which they work. From the demographic questions on the survey, a profile of educators who provided the data discussed in this report can be compiled.

- Approximately 5,200 educators participated in the study;
- Ninety-one percent of responding educators were teachers;
- Two-thirds (66 percent) have been employed as educators for more than six years;
- Almost half (46 percent) have been educators for more than 10 years;
- Sixty-two percent have masters degree or higher education level;
- About 9 percent of respondents are alternative route educators;
- Almost one-third say they have served as a mentor (31 percent); and
- More than three-quarters of respondents (76 percent) are female.

Table 1. Participating Districts and Survey Response Rates*

Participating District	Educators Surveyed	Surveys Completed	Response Rate
Arizona Phase-in TOTAL	**7,474**	**5,270**	**70.51**
Alhambra Elementary District	860	645	75.00
Chinle Unified District	304	168	55.26
Creighton Elementary District	514	473	92.02
Flagstaff Unified District	867	255	29.41
Flowing Wells Unified District	312	160	51.28
Gilbert Unified District	2,374	2,161	91.03
Glendale Union High School District	895	569	63.58
Mexicayotl	15	11	73.33
Phoenix Elementary School District	554	304	54.87
Pinnacle Education	7	3	42.86
Safford Unified District	180	167	92.78
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Community Schools	32	5	15.63
San Carlos Unified District	26	19	73.08
Santa Cruz County Regional School District	4	3	75.00
Santa Cruz Elementary School District	15	1	6.67
Somerton Elementary District	49	26	53.06
Tuba City Unified District	189	139	73.54
Window Rock Unified District	225	138	61.33

* Not all schools in some districts participated in the Phase-in initiative.

1. Major Findings

This analysis provides evidence that identifying and addressing teacher working conditions in schools and districts across Arizona may be an important strategy in helping all students learn and also in keeping teachers. Teachers' reporting the presence of critical working conditions were correlated with meeting math, reading and writing standards on the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) assessment at the 5th, 8th and 10th grade levels. Furthermore, conditions of work helped to explain teachers' future employment plans. Teachers were more likely to stay in schools where they indicated the presence of strong leadership who addressed concerns and facilitated the creation of a trusting, supportive school environment. In considering the five primary findings from the initiative, policymakers, stakeholders and practitioners across the 18 districts and the state can develop a more complete understanding of how teaching and learning conditions affect teacher retention and student learning and where these working conditions are more or less likely to be in place. Of particular concern is the gap in perception of teaching and learning conditions between school leaders and teachers. These analyses show that improving these conditions is important; however, not everyone in a school is likely to see these issues in the same way and more schools across the state need data to consider and improve conditions of work.

Finding One: Teacher Working Conditions are Correlated with Student Achievement

Research from previous initiatives in North and South Carolina and Clark County, Nev., demonstrated clear connections between the conditions of work faced by teachers and their ability to impact student learning. Across these states, all five teaching and learning conditions domains—time, empowerment, leadership, professional development, and facilities and resources— were connected to improved school level performance on state assessments.[1]

Teachers are clear as to which domains they believe are most critical to improving student learning. In general, teachers in Arizona and across the nation believe that if they are given sufficient time and control over what they do, their students will learn (Figure 1). Arizona teachers in particular believe that empowerment is the key to their success with children. Almost one-third (30 percent) believe empowerment is most important and one-quarter indicated time is most critical. Arizona teachers were slightly less likely than their peers from across the country to indicate that time was most important and slightly more likely to note facilities and resources (23 percent) as being most important to them in improving student learning.

**Figure 1. Aspect of Working Conditions Teachers Believe
Is Most Important to Student Learning**

Legend: Ariz.   Ohio   Kan.   Nev.   N.C.

Professional Development
- Ariz.: 10
- Ohio: 7
- Kan.: 10
- Nev.: 7
- N.C.: 9

Empowerment
- Ariz.: 30
- Ohio: 23
- Kan.: 26
- Nev.: 34
- N.C.: 25

Leadership
- Ariz.: 12
- Ohio: 14
- Kan.: 14
- Nev.: 11
- N.C.: 15

Facilities and Resources
- Ariz.: 23
- Ohio: 21
- Kan.: 22
- Nev.: 19
- N.C.: 22

Time
- Ariz.: 25
- Ohio: 35
- Kan.: 28
- Nev.: 28
- N.C.: 29

Percent (x-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35)
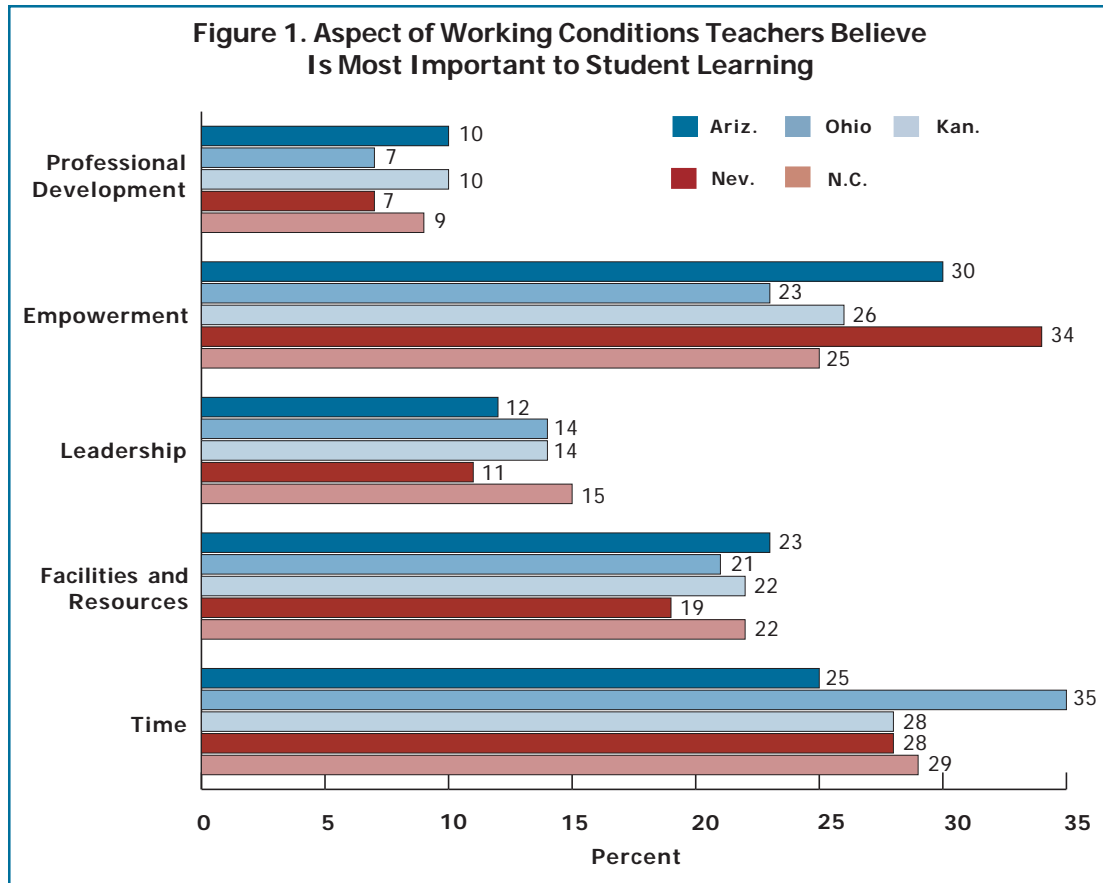
Correlations with AIMS Results

Results from the 2005-2006 AIMS assessments were downloaded from the Arizona Department of Education website (www.ade.state.az.us). The AIMS Dual Purpose Assessment (DPA) is a combination of the AIMS criterion-referenced assessment questions developed by Arizona educators and based on the state's academic standards and questions from the CTB/McGraw-Hill, norm-referenced TerraNova. The test is administered in Grades 3-8 in mathematics, reading and writing. AIMS High School is a criterion-referenced test administered in Grade 10 and offered again to students in Grades 11 or 12 who have not yet met or exceeded the standard in math, reading, and writing. As of Jan. 1, 2006, all Arizona students must pass each area to receive a diploma.[2]

As sufficient data was not available to conduct more sophisticated statistical analyses, basic correlations were run to better understand whether or not connections between working conditions areas and AIMS performance exist at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Individual questions within each domain were also examined. Given that these are correlations and the relationship between working conditions and AIMS performance cannot be isolated by controlling for other factors, results should be viewed with some caution. These correlations could be the result of numerous factors working together to influence AIMS performance. Not surprisingly, the strongest correlations with AIMS results was the proportion of high-poverty children.

5th Grade AIMS Performance

Teacher working conditions were correlated with performance on the 5th grade AIMS assessments in math, reading and writing (Table 2). Except for the area of time (for which none of the correlations were statistically significant), all correlations are in the predicted direction (negatively connected with the proportion of students failing and positively with those meeting or exceeding state standards).[3]

In particular, agreement that facilities and resources are sufficient—instructional materials, communications, office supplies, adequate professional space, safety, etc.—was strongly correlated with the proportion of 5th graders meeting Arizona math and reading standards. Leadership was also strongly correlated with math and reading results and was the only working conditions area to be significantly correlated with writing performance in 5th grade. While teachers indicated that empowerment was most important to them in improving student learning (Figure 1), empowerment was only significantly correlated with the proportion of students exceeding standards in reading.

Table 2. Correlation Between Working Conditions and 5th Gradate AIMS Results in Math, Reading and Writing

AIMS Assessment	Time	Facilities & Resources	Empowerment	Leadership	Professional Development
5th Grade Math: Falls Far Below	.167	-.381*	-.189	-.258	-.261
5th Grade Math: Approaches Standard	-.042	-.360*	-.323*	-.436**	-.181
5th Grade Math: Meets Standard	-.043	.581**	.220	.331*	.352*
5th Grade Math: Exceeds Standard	-.062	.121	.235	.297	.064
5th Grade Reading: Falls Far Below	.155	-.349*	-.278	-.445**	-.280
5th Grade Reading: Approaches Standard	.162	-.274	-.298	-.430**	-.211
5th Grade Reading: Meets Standard	-.273	.385*	.154	.333*	.249
5th Grade Reading: Exceeds Standard	.024	.128	.421**	.477**	.183
5th Grade Writing: Falls Far Below	.128	-.245	-.027	-.113	-.158
5th Grade Writing: Approaches Standard	-.043	-.246	-.185	-.340*	-.202
5th Grade Writing: Meets Standard	-.010	.267	.145	.296	.211
5th Grade Writing: Exceeds Standards	.081	.117	.319*	.290	.076

*Note: Data are correlation coefficients. The closer to 1.0 or -1.0, the stronger the correlation between variables. In social sciences, a .3 is generally accepted as a relatively strong connection. All coefficients in bold are statistically significant at the .05 level.

N= 38 schools serving K-5 populations with a 50 percent or greater response rate to the Phase-in Teacher Working Conditions Survey. Domains are a composite of questions that explain the concept as determined by factor analyses on results.

* $p<.05$ level (two-tailed)
** $p<.01$ level (two-tailed)

Correlations were run between individual question responses in schools with sufficient response rate and AIMS results as well. The following individual questions were most consistently and strongly correlated with AIMS results.

- In the area of time, teacher agreement that efforts are made to minimize routine administrative paperwork was significantly and negatively correlated with the proportion of students *approaching* standards in reading, writing and math (at P<.1 level). It was also correlated significantly and positively with the proportion of students *exceeding* standards in reading (.381) and math (.314).

- Several questions were strongly correlated with AIMS performance in facilities and resources. In particular, teachers' agreement that they work in a school environment that is safe was correlated with AIMS results at all four performance levels on all three areas of assessment (ranging from a low of .496 to a high of .696). Access to a broad range of professional support personnel and the availability of communications technology (including phone, fax, e-mail, etc.) were strongly correlated with AIMS performance in math and reading in particular as well as writing.

- In the area of empowerment, several individual questions were highly correlated with AIMS results. Parents and community member support of teachers was significant in all four performance levels on all three assessments (particularly on the proportion of students who exceed standards). Agreement that schools take steps to solve problems and that there is an effective decision making process were significantly correlated in all areas.

- Many questions in the leadership areas were significantly correlated with AIMS performance, particularly the presence of an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect (ranging from a low correlation of .372 to a high of .568 across the four performance categories and three assessment areas). Consistent enforcement of discipline policy, clearly communicating expectations to teachers and parents, and having an environment where teachers are comfortable raising issues were all significantly correlated in all AIMS areas.

- Providing sufficient resources for professional development was significantly correlated with math and reading AIMS results (but not writing). Agreement that professional development provides teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to be effective was significantly correlated with the proportion of students approaching standards and meeting standards in all three AIMS areas (ranging from a low of .291 to .454).

8th Grade AIMS Performance

Given the small number of middle schools participating in the Phase-in initiative with sufficient response rate (18), these correlations and results should be considered exploratory. As with 5th grade AIMS results, correlations are in the predicted direction in most assessment areas if a relationship was detected (Table 3).

Time is the working condition most consistently and strongly correlated with 8th grade AIMS performance, a surprising finding given the weak (and when present negative) connections found for 5th grade results. In particular, time is strongly and negatively correlated with falling far below Arizona standards in math and reading and approaching standards in writing. Aside from the time correlations, the only significant relationship detected for middle schools was the

presence of empowerment conditions and exceeding math standards. Professional development, leadership and facilities and resources were not significantly correlated with 8th grade performance in any area.

Table 3. Correlation Between Working Conditions and 8th Gradate AIMS Results in Math, Reading and Writing

AIMS Assessment	Time	Facilities & Resources	Empowerment	Leadership	Professional Development
8th Grade Math: Falls Far Below	-.682*	-.313	-.410	-.351	-.240
8th Grade Math: Approaches Standard	-.368	-.221	-.301	-.265	-.068
8th Grade Math: Meets Standard	.322	-.046	.050	.102	-.064
8th Grade Math: Exceeds Standard	.510*	.429	.475*	.371	.268
8th Grade Reading: Falls Far Below	-.567*	-.040	-.252	-.138	.008
8th Grade Reading: Approaches Standard	-.225	.027	-.085	-.063	.102
8th Grade Reading: Meets Standard	.232	-.126	.045	.-007	.-.158
8th Grade Reading: Exceeds Standard	.445	.308	.330	.299	.162
8th Grade Writing: Falls Far Below	-.040	-.136	-.211	-.172	-.069
8th Grade Writing: Approaches Standard	-.596**	-.237	-.363	-.376	-.104
8th Grade Writing: Meets Standard	.571*	.233	.367	.372	.097
8th Grade Writing: Exceeds Standards	.103	.176	.212	.203	.077

*Note: Data are correlation coefficients. The closer to 1.0 or -1.0, the stronger the correlation between variables. In social sciences, a .3 is generally accepted as a relatively strong connection. All coefficients in bold are statistically significant at the .05 level.

N= 18 schools serving grades 6-8 populations with a 50 percent or greater response rate to the Phase-in Teacher Working Conditions Survey. Domains are a composite of questions that explain the concept as determined by factor analyses on results.

* p<.05 level (two-tailed)
** p<.01 level (two-tailed)

Unlike the elementary school results, few questions were consistently correlated with AIMS performance on all three assessments for middle schools.

- Teacher agreement that class size is reasonable was strongly and consistently correlated with AIMS results. In particular, the relationship between class size perceptions and reading results (-.722 for the proportion of students falling far below standards and .417 for meeting and .403 for exceeding) was strong.

- Two other time questions were significantly correlated in all three AIMS areas and are consistent with findings from the elementary school analysis: teachers' perception that efforts are made to reduce routine administrative paperwork and that they are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.

- Two empowerment questions were consistently correlated with AIMS results. Teachers agreeing they are trusted to make sound decisions about instruction, as well as parent and community members supporting teachers, were both significantly correlated with AIMS math and writing results,

10th-12th Grade AIMS Performance

As was the case for middle schools, the small number of high schools participating in the Phase-in initiative with sufficient response rate (16), means that these correlations and results should be considered exploratory. As with 5th and 8th grade AIMS results, correlations are in the predicted direction in most assessment areas if a relationship was detected (Table 4).

As was the case at the elementary level, teacher agreement that there are sufficient resources in a functional, safe building were most consistently correlated with AIMS results in all three areas. Empowerment and leadership were significantly correlated with AIMS results (approaching and meeting standards) in reading. As was the case at the elementary and middle school level, there are virtually no significant correlations between professional development questions and AIMS results.

Table 4. Correlation Between Working Conditions and 10th-12th Gradate AIMS Results in Math, Reading and Writing					
AIMS Assessment	Time	Facilities & Resources	Empowerment	Leadership	Professional Development
10th Grade Math: Falls Far Below	-.293	-.523*	-.286	-.288	-.090
10th Grade Math: Approaches Standard	-.490	-.610*	-.475	-.480	-.158
10th Grade Math: Meets Standard	.425	.578*	.311	.300	.257
10th Grade Math: Exceeds Standard	.229	.418	.329	.345	-.064
10th Grade Reading: Falls Far Below	-.302	-.532*	-.223	-.211	-.100
10th Grade Reading: Approaches Standard	-.466	-.615*	-.555*	-.537*	-.211
10th Grade Reading: Meets Standard	.481	.635*	.515*	.499*	.276
10th Grade Reading: Exceeds Standard	.305	.510*	.447	.425	-.025
10th Grade Writing: Falls Far Below	-.609*	-.527*	-.453	-.410	-.036
10th Grade Writing: Approaches Standard	-.165	-.328	-.220	-.205	.044
10th Grade Writing: Meets Standard	.182	.259	.194	.136	-.188
10th Grade Writing: Exceeds Standards	.438	.560*	.437	.491	.275

Note: Data are correlation coefficients. The closer to 1.0 or -1.0, the stronger the correlation between variables. In social sciences, a .3 is generally accepted as a relatively strong connection. All coefficients in bold are statistically significant at the .05 level.
N= 16 schools serving grades 9-12 populations with a 50 percent or greater response rate to the Phase-in Teacher Working Conditions Survey. Domains are a composite of questions that explain the concept as determined by factor analyses on results.

* p<.05 level (two-tailed)
** p<.01 level (two-tailed)

Several questions across the five working conditions areas were identified as having consistently strong and significant correlations with AIMS results in math, reading and writing at the high school level.

- Efforts to reduce routine administrative paperwork and agreement that educators are allowed to teach with minimal interruptions were strongly correlated with AIMS math (for approaching standards), reading (approaching and meeting standards) and writing (falling far below and exceeding standards).

- Numerous facilities and resources questions were strongly correlated in all three areas, including agreement that there are sufficient instructional materials (particularly in reading), sufficient instructional technology (including training and support to use the technology) and communication technology (including phone, fax, e-mail, etc.). Additionally, as was the case at the elementary level, agreement that the school environment is safe was strongly and significantly correlated with AIMS performance (as high as a .832 correlation with the proportion of students exceeding standards in writing).

- Teacher agreement that parents and the community support teachers was significantly correlated across all three AIMS assessment areas.

- An atmosphere of trust and mutual respect and agreement that there is a fair evaluation process, that expectations are made clear to teachers and parents, and that teachers are recognized for their accomplishment were all significantly correlated with AIMS performance in all three assessment areas.

- Agreement that professional development offerings are data driven was significantly correlated with AIMS results, particularly in the areas of math and reading. A correlation of .744 between meeting math standards and agreement that professional development is data driven was present.

Conclusions on the Connection between Working Conditions and AIMS Performance

Even within the small sample of schools participating in the Phase-in, some consistent findings across elementary, middle and high schools were found.

- Arizona teachers were more likely than educators in any other state to indicate that facilities and resources were critical to their success with students. This appears to be merited as the strongest correlations between working conditions and AIMS performance were found in the area of facilities and resources. In particular, school safety and access to sufficient instructional materials are important.

- Teacher perception that empowerment is important to student learning appears to be merited. The most consistent finding across all school types is the importance of teachers' perceptions of support from parents and the community.

- Time and professional development produced the most inconsistent findings across the assessment areas and school types. However, teacher agreement that efforts are made to

reduce paperwork, and that they are allowed to focus on teaching with minimal interruption appear to be connected to AIMS results across school levels.

While there was a small number of schools with sufficient data participating in the Phase-in initiative, strong, significant and consistent correlations were found between working conditions and the proportion of students meeting Arizona standards. Implementing the survey statewide in Arizona will provide a sufficient number of schools to conduct more sophisticated analyses and explore whether there are causal connections between working conditions and student learning as measured by AIMS performance.

Finding Two: Teacher Working Conditions Influence Teacher Employment Plans

Ensuring that all Arizona students have access to high quality educators will take significant efforts to both recruit and retain educators. According to the over 5,000 educators completing the Phase-in survey, more than four-fifths (82 percent) want to stay teaching at their school, and 18 percent plan on leaving the school, the district, or the profession all together as soon as possible (Figure 2). While this percentage is lower than some other states and districts, these data are concerning as almost one-fifth of Arizona educators report wanting to leave their current teaching position as soon as possible.

Figure 2. Future Employment Plans of Arizona Teachers

Leave teaching
9 percent

Leave school and district
5 percent

Leave school, stay teaching in district
4 percent

Stay at school, but willing to leave
25 percent

Stay at school
57 percent
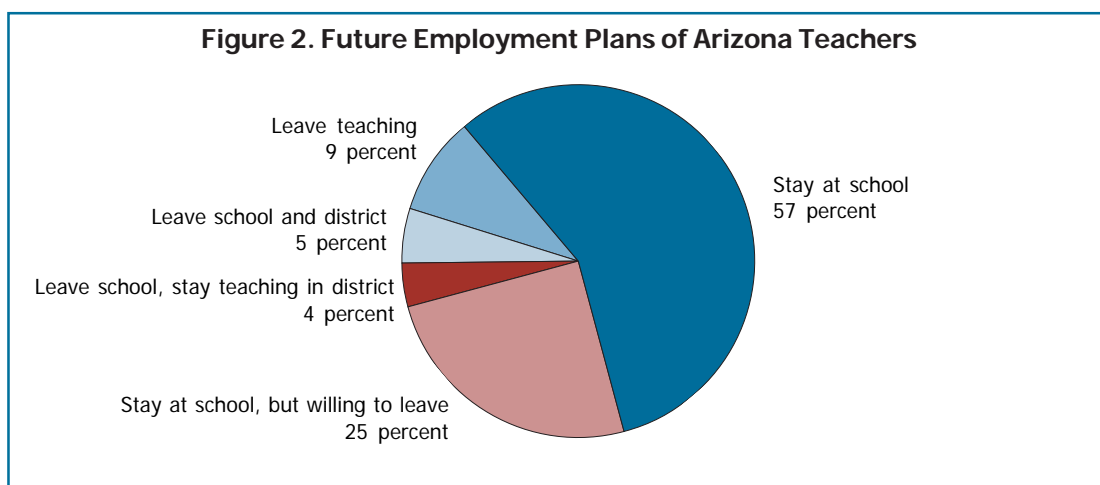
Approximately four-fifths (82 percent) of surveyed teachers want to stay teaching in their current school (referred to throughout the report as stayers), nine percent of the work force are "leavers," looking to leave teaching, and another nine percent are "movers," looking to stay in the profession, but teach elsewhere.

Educators note several important considerations influencing their future plans (Table 5). The most important factor influencing employment decisions is the support they receive from school administrators (59 percent), followed by effectiveness with the students (55 percent) and salary (50 percent). As Table 5 indicates, working conditions are critical. Leadership is of particular importance to educators, but empowerment, a collegial atmosphere, and facilities and resources are also noteworthy factors of influence.

Table 5. Influences on Teachers' Future Employment Plans	
In considering your future plans, please indicate the importance of the following in influencing your decision	Percent Indicating Extremely Important
Support from school administrators	59%
Effectiveness with the students I teach	55%
Salary	50%
Teaching assignment (class size, subject, students)	46%
Collegial atmosphere amongst the staff	46%
Personal reasons	43%
Empowerment to make decisions that affect my school and/or classroom	41%
Comfort with the students I teach	40%
Student behavior	35%
Time to do my job during the school day	34%
Facilities and/or resources	33%
Retirement options	33%
Community environment where I live	22%
Emphasis on testing and accountability	19%

The importance of leadership and its connection to retention was noted throughout the survey. When asked to select which of the working conditions studied most influenced retention decisions, leadership was by far the most important (Figure 3). Almost double the proportion of educators listed leadership (42 percent) as any other working condition. Empowerment was of particular concern to Arizona educators, as one-quarter indicated it was most important to them in their career decision, more than any other state conducting a working conditions initiative with CTQ. Time (16 percent), facilities and resources (12 percent), and professional development (5 percent) were noted by Arizona educators as less important in deciding where to work.

Teachers Stay in Schools with Positive Working Conditions

Improving working conditions can be a key lever for retaining more of these teachers. Evidence was found throughout the survey that teachers with positive perceptions about their working conditions are much more likely to stay at their current school than educators who are more negative about their conditions of work. Teachers who report planning to stay at their current school are more likely to note the presence of important working conditions (particularly in the areas of leadership and empowerment) than those planning to move schools or those planning to leave the profession entirely (Table 6).[4] While two-thirds of educators who want to stay in their school agree there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, only one-quarter (24 percent) of those who want to move agree this statement is true of where they work. Great disparities in the perceptions of stayers and movers exist in whether they are centrally involved in decision making and that they are viewed as educational professionals.

Figure 3. Aspect of Working Conditions Teachers Believe Is Most Important to Continued Teaching in Their School

Legend: Ariz. | Ohio | Kan. | Nev. | N.C.

Professional Development:
- Ariz.: 5
- Ohio: 3
- Kan.: 4
- Nev.: 3
- N.C.: 5

Empowerment:
- Ariz.: 25
- Ohio: 24
- Kan.: 21
- Nev.: 19
- N.C.: 21

Leadership:
- Ariz.: 42
- Ohio: 37
- Kan.: 36
- Nev.: 41
- N.C.: 38

Facilities and Resources:
- Ariz.: 12
- Ohio: 20
- Kan.: 21
- Nev.: 17
- N.C.: 20

Time:
- Ariz.: 16
- Ohio: 16
- Kan.: 16
- Nev.: 17
- N.C.: 18

X-axis: Percent (0, 10, 20, 30, 40)

Table 6. Perceptions of Teachers Staying, Moving and Leaving

Teaching and Learning Survey Question	Percent of Teachers Who Agree		
	Stayers	Movers	Leavers
Teachers are recognized as educational professionals.	64%	31%	44%
Teachers are centrally involved in decision-making about important education issues.	40%	17%	22%
The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions and solving problems.	53%	22%	37%
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in my school.	67%	24%	47%
Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to me.	59%	21%	39%
Professional development provides teachers with the knowledge and skills most needed to teach effectively	66%	49%	52%
Site councils provide teachers opportunities to participate in school planning and decision making.	56%	31%	41%

There are strong correlations between working conditions and plans for teachers to remain working at their current school at both the elementary and secondary level (Table 7). Statistically significant correlations between working conditions and desire to stay were found for all working conditions. Connections are particularly strong in the areas of leadership and empowerment, as suggested earlier by teachers (Figure 3). In particular, a desire to stay teaching but move to a new school had the strongest correlations with whether or not critical school leadership conditions are in place. Correlations are weakest for intent to leave as teachers are likely to leave not only due to working conditions, but also due to numerous personal reasons as well (retirement, family, etc.).

Table 7. Correlations Between Working Conditions and Future Employment Intentions

Working Conditions and School Level	Intent to Stay	Intent to Move	Intent to Leave
Elementary time	.372**	-.232	-.401**
Elementary facilities and resources	.385**	-.418**	-.075
Elementary empowerment	.571**	-.591**	-.169
Elementary leadership	.562**	-.633**	-.067
Elementary professional development	.206	-.172	-.138
Secondary school time	.481**	-.488**	-.273
Secondary school facilities and resources	.507**	-.543**	-.261
Secondary school empowerment	.483**	-.506**	-.260
Secondary school leadership	.565**	-.615**	-.281*
Secondary school professional development	.379**	-.280*	-.316*

Note: Data are correlation coefficients. The closer to 1.0 or -1.0, the stronger the correlation between variables. In social sciences, a .3 is generally accepted as a relatively strong connection

N= 53 elementary schools and 50 secondary schools (middle, high and K-12 schools) with a 50 percent or greater response rate to the Phase-in Teacher Working Conditions Survey. Domains are a composite of questions that explain the concept as determined by factor analyses on results.

* p<.05 level (two-tailed)
** p<.01 level (two-tailed)

Correlations were run between employment intentions and each question on the survey (Table 8). The questions with the strongest correlations are presented here to determine where key leverage points may be found to retain teachers. Teacher perception that performance evaluations are fair and that there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect had the strongest connections to teachers' intent to remain in their school at the elementary level. The presence of an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect is particularly critical, as this question was found to be predictive in more sophisticated analyses from other locations conducting a working conditions initiative and it was also strongly correlated with AIMS results.[5] Teacher safety appears to be critical in making decisions about where to work as well, particularly at the secondary level.

Table 8. Correlations Between Top Questions and Intent to Stay		
Teacher Working Conditions Question	Intent to Stay—Elementary	Intent to Stay—Secondary
Time: Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork I am required to do.	.514***	.466***
Facilities and Resources: The school environment in which I work is safe.	.479***	.612***
Empowerment: The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions and solving problems.	.476***	.472***
Leadership: Teacher performance evaluations are fair in my school.	.615***	.600***
Leadership: There is atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.	.554***	.609***
Professional Development: Sufficient resources are available to allow teachers to take advantage of professional development opportunities.	.405**	.430**

*** Significant at the $p<.001$ level (two-tailed)
** Significant $p<.003$ level (two-tailed)

The strength and consistency of the correlations at both the elementary and secondary level are an important finding which merits further investigation by conducting a statewide survey. This evidence suggests teachers are far more likely to stay in schools that provide them with decision making opportunities and strong supportive leadership.

Finding Three: Teachers and Administrators View Working Conditions Differently

There are considerable gaps between the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the degree to which school leadership addresses teacher concerns (Table 9).[6] While some discrepancies might be expected between administrators and teachers on a measure of leadership effectiveness, the degree of these discrepancies is startling and must be taken into consideration for any working conditions reforms to be successful. There should be little surprise that more has not been done to address and improve working conditions if school administrators do not perceive that there are issues that need to be addressed.

While teachers and principals/assistant principals are both relatively sanguine about the availability of non-instructional time, large differences exist in critical leadership and empowerment areas.

- Only one-third (36 percent) of teachers believe that they are centrally involved in decision making about important education issues compared to more than four-fifths (85 percent) of administrators who believe that teachers are centrally involved.

- While about half (54 percent) of teachers say they feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them, virtually all principals and assistant principals (90 percent) believe that is true in their school.

Of particular concern are the convergence of the following trends related to time and empowerment.

1. The areas that educators indicated as most important to them in promoting student learning were teacher empowerment (30 percent) and time (25 percent).

2. The areas where teachers have the lowest perceptions of working conditions are in the areas of time (2.69) and empowerment (3.23).

3. The areas with the greatest gaps between teachers and principals/assistant principals are in the areas of time (almost a one point (.96) difference on a 1 to 5 scale of agreement) and empowerment (.83).

Table 9. Differences in the Perception of Teachers and Administrators of Teacher Working Conditions		
Working Conditions Question/Domain	**Teacher**	**Principal/ Asst. Principal**
The non-instructional time provided to teachers is sufficient	30%	70%
Professional development enhances teachers with the knowledge and skills most needed to teach effectively	63%	90%
Teachers are centrally involved in decision making about important education issues	36%	85%
The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions and solving problems	49%	83%
Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them	54%	90%
Time Domain	2.69	3.65
Facilities and Resources Domain	3.55	4.15
Empowerment Domain	3.23	4.06
Leadership Domain	3.49	4.27
Professional Development Domain	3.50	4.10

Not only are administrators far less likely than teachers to note working conditions related problems, but they are also much more likely to believe that they are making efforts to address them (Table 10).

Across all working conditions areas, about nine in ten principals/assistant principals believe that they are making sustained efforts to address concerns. Yet, about half of teachers believe that school leadership—not defined as any particular position in the survey—continually addresses issues related to leadership (59 percent), empowerment (60 percent) and time (47 percent).   Of particular concern is the gap in perception of addressing facilities and resources issues (41 percent of teachers versus 87 percent of administrators), given the strong correlations found between resources and AIMS results.

Table 10. Perception of Teachers and Administrators About Leadership Addressing Working Conditions Concerns		
School leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about:	Teachers Agreeing	Administrators Agreeing
The use of time in my school	47%	91%
Facilities and resources	41%	87%
Empowering teachers	60%	88%
Leadership issues	59%	87%
Professional development	61%	85%

Finding Four: Schools Vary in the Presence of Teacher Working Conditions

Few differences between teachers appear to make a difference in how they perceive working conditions. Teachers, regardless of gender, education, race, ethnicity, and even years of experience, view working conditions similarly. However, there are differences between schools.

First, in all areas but time, elementary schools are more likely to have positive working conditions. At the elementary level, the lack of non-instructional time was noted as an important concern. Teachers at the high school level were the most critical, particularly in the areas of empowerment and leadership.

Second, there were wide disparities between schools participating in the survey as part of the AZTEP/Title II project, which tend to serve higher poverty and minority student populations. Title II school averages were significantly lower in all areas of the survey, except time, than other participating schools (Table 11). Of particular note is the conditions gap in the area of leadership, which educators noted was most important to them in whether or not they will remain teaching in their current school. Only one-third (32 percent) of Title II schools report an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect (a critical condition to working collaboratively and solving problems) compared to two-thirds (63 percent) of other participating schools.

There appear, however, to be few differences across schools based on the percentage of high poverty students they educate. No statistically significant correlation between the proportion of children on free and reduced lunch and any working condition area was found. More research, including more sophisticated analyses that allow for greater exploration of the connections between working conditions and high poverty schools should be conducted.

Table 11. Differences Between Title II and Other Participating Schools				
Working Condition Domain	**Title II Status**	**Number**	**Mean**	**Difference**
Time	Non-Title II	121	2.66	-0.07
	Title II	31	2.73	
Facilities and Resources	Non-Title II	121	3.55	0.31***
	Title II	31	3.23	
Empowerment	Non-Title II	121	3.28	0.39***
	Title II	31	2.89	
Leadership	Non-Title II	121	3.55	0.58***
	Title II	31	2.97	
Professional Development	Non-Title II	121	3.55	0.29***
	Title II	31	3.25	

*** Statistically significant at the p<.001 level (two-tailed)

Finding Five: Arizona Teachers Are More Negative About Working Conditions than Those in Some Other States

CTQ is working with states across the nation in conducting initiatives similar to the Phase-in Arizona Teacher Working Conditions Survey.[7] As many of these states asked questions with identical wording, comparisons can be made (Table 12).

In general, Arizona educators were more likely to note the presence of working conditions than those in Clark County, Nevada (Las Vegas) and Ohio (about one-third of respondents are from Columbus and Cleveland), but less so than their peers in Kansas and North Carolina. Of particular importance is that Arizona educators have the most negative perception about their faculty being committed to helping every student learn (10 percent lower than the next closest state/district). Arizona teachers also are less likely than their peers to note the presence of instructional technology and involvement in decision making. Only one-third (38 percent) of Arizona educators agree that they are centrally involved in education decision making compared to about half in North Carolina (53 percent) and Kansas (44 percent).

Table 12. Percentage of Teachers Agreeing with Working Conditions Questions in Arizona and Other States

Teacher Working Conditions Questions	Ariz.	N.C.	Kan.	Ohio	Clark County, Nev.
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect within the school	62%	64%	62%	50%	58%
Teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction	62%	72%	61%	56%	52%
The school leadership communicates clear expectations to students and parents	67%	72%	63%	56%	65%
The faculty are committed to helping every student learn	72%	85%	87%	82%	82%
Overall, the school leadership in my school is effective	62%	64%	59%	NA	58%
Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology	62%	74%	64%	56%	70%
Teachers are centrally involved in educational decision making	38%	53%	44%	36%	35%

2. Domain Analyses

The survey had questions in six areas: time, empowerment, leadership, facilities and resources, professional development and mentoring. This section examines trends in each area to better understand the perceptions of teachers.

Time: Ensuring Arizona Teachers Have the Opportunity to Work Collaboratively and Reach All Students

Quality teaching is time-dependent: to successfully meet the needs of diverse students, teachers need manageable student loads, so they can give their students the attention they deserve, and benefit from sufficient opportunities to continue learning themselves. In addition to instructional time, teachers need time to collaborate with colleagues, discuss and observe best practices, and participate in professional development that prepares them for changing curriculum and the challenges of teaching in the 21st century.

The availability and use of teacher time is of paramount concern to Arizona teachers. Of the five working conditions, time was by far the condition where teacher perceptions were most negative. On a one-five scale of agreement, time was the only condition with a domain average (2.7) below neutral (3.0). The domain average for time was more than a half-point lower than the next lowest domain average for empowerment (3.27). The level of dissatisfaction is consistent with the perceptions of teachers in other statewide surveys from 2004 and 2006, where educators expressed the most dissatisfaction on the time domain.

Consider the following findings regarding educators' time in Arizona:

- Only about one-third of Arizona educators (34 percent) agree that teachers have class sizes affording them the time to meet the educational needs of all students.

- Only about one-third of educators agree teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students (35 percent) and only 31 percent agree efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine administrative paperwork required of teachers.

Only 31 percent of Arizona educators agree that the non-instructional time they receive is sufficient. And only three percent strongly agree. Disparities exist across school types. Only one-quarter (23 percent) of elementary teachers feel they have sufficient non-instructional time versus half (49 percent) of high school educators.

This is driven by the fact that more than half of elementary educators report receiving three hours of time or less in an average week to plan and collaborate (compared to about one-third of middle and high school teachers) (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Non-instructional Time Available During the School Day in an Average Week
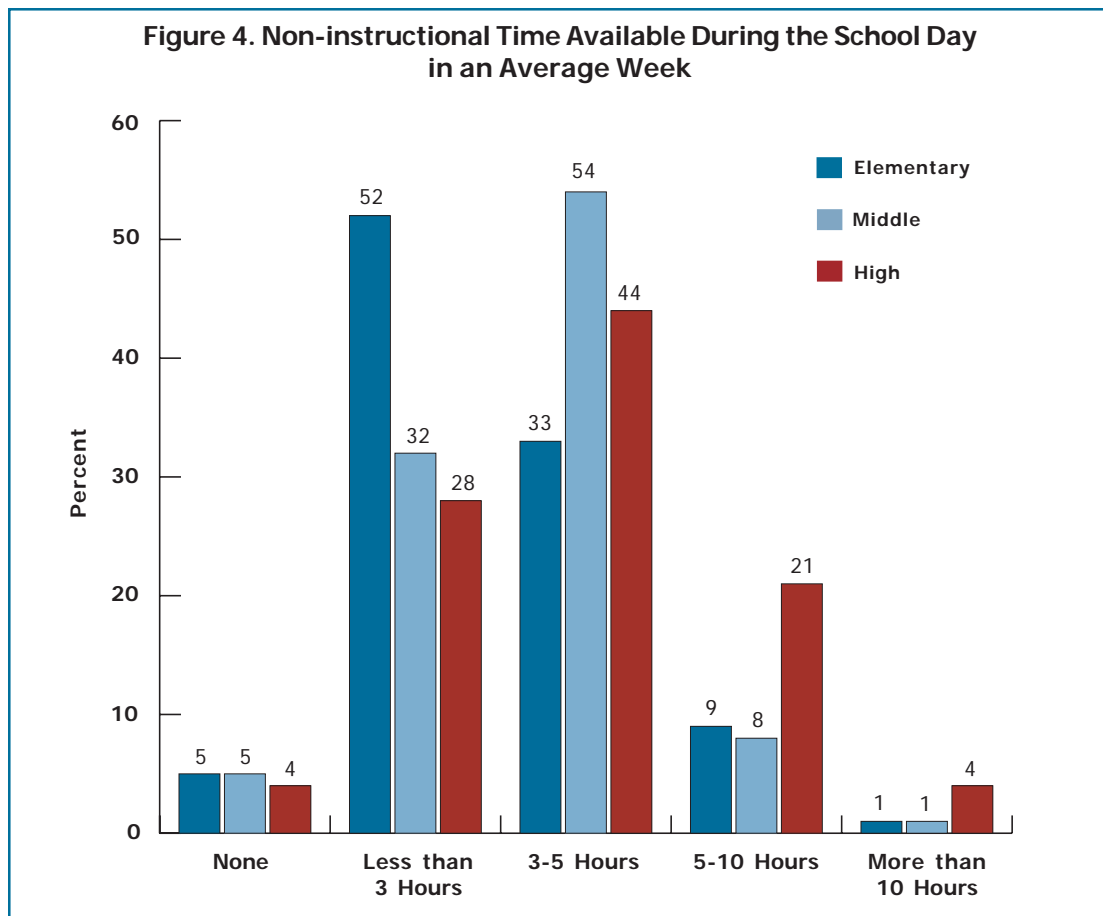
Due to this lack of time, teachers have to work many hours outside of the school day (Table 13). In an average week of teaching, 70 percent of teachers spend more than five hours on school related activities outside the regular school day. Only 10 percent of teachers spend less than three hours per week on school related activities outside the school day. This time is spent, for the most part, on grading, preparation, etc.

Table 13. Time Spent Outside the School Day on School-Related Activities During an Average Week

Activity	None	Less than 3 Hours	More than 3 but Less than 5 Hours	More than 5 but Less than 10 Hours	More than 10 Hours
School-related activities outside the regular school week	1%	9%	19%	32%	38%
Student remediation (tutor, etc.)	23%	44%	21%	8%	4%
Voluntary (coach, club, sponsor)	38%	34%	13%	7%	8%
Other school-related activities (grade, prep, etc.)	1%	19%	27%	35%	19%

Facilities and Resources: Ensuring Teachers Have the Resources to Help All Children Learn

A growing body of research confirms that the quality of facilities contributes directly to teacher turnover rates and student performance. But despite increased expenditures for school facilities, many education and community leaders, along with policymakers, remain unprepared for and unresponsive to the facility and resource needs of schools.

Schools on the cutting edge of the reform movement in facilities and resource management are creating smaller learning communities; delivering instruction through innovative and emerging technologies; reconsidering and redesigning the traditional school spaces to create smarter designs of teacher working and student learning spaces; and integrating community strengths and resources in partnerships with a wide array of public, civic, and private organizations.

Arizona educators were more positive about facilities and resources in their school than any of the other four domains. The facilities and resources domain average was 3.57, meaning that teachers were significantly more positive than negative about their facilities and resources. Consider the following (Table 14):

- A full 83 percent of educators agree that teachers and staff work in a school environment that is safe.

- About two-thirds of educators agree that they have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials and resources (64 percent) and sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, chalk, etc. (65 percent).

Table 14. Percentage of Teachers Agreeing with Facilities and Resources Questions

Facilities and Resources Areas	Percent Agreement
Teachers have sufficient access to instructional materials and resources.	64%
Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology.	62%
Teachers have sufficient training/support to utilize instructional technology.	50%
Teachers have sufficient access to communication technology.	85%
Teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies.	65%
Teachers have sufficient access to a broad range of professional personnel.	63%
Teachers and staff work in a school environment that is safe.	83%

The only area where teachers are less positive about facilities and resources is around the level of training and support they have for using instructional technology. While the majority of teachers (62 percent) agree that they have access to instructional technology, only half (50 percent) agree that they have sufficient access to training/support to utilize instructional technology.

Leadership: Ensuring Schools Have Strong Leaders Who Support Teaching and Learning

School improvement is not possible without skilled, knowledgeable leadership that is responsive to the needs of all teachers and students. Several recent reports revealed that leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school, and leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most. School leaders must combine appropriate pressures and supports as they develop an environment that encourages professional learning communities and continuous school improvement.

Arizona educators were generally positive about the concept of leadership in their respective schools. The domain average for leadership was 3.47 (on a one-five scale of satisfaction), ranking as the third highest of five working conditions, behind facilities and resources, along with professional development. Despite some positive findings around some elements of the leadership, there were also some areas for improvement. Consider the following leadership trends:

- 62 percent of educators agree that overall, the school leadership in their school is effective. An equal 62 percent of educators agree that there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect within the school.

- Arizona educators are positive about the communication efforts of school leaders. 67 percent agree that school leadership communicates clear expectations to students and parents. 64 percent agree that school leaders effectively communicate policies.

- Educators agree that school leadership is effective in holding teachers to high professional standards for delivering instruction (82 percent), providing fair performance evaluations (76 percent), and to a lesser extent, providing feedback than can help improve teaching (60 percent).

- The only areas where less than half of teachers express positive perceptions of leadership relate to time and empowerment. Only 49 percent of educators believe school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about time, and the exact same percentage agree leadership makes a sustained effort to empower teachers.

It is also important to note that questions in this section of the survey focused on school leadership, not necessarily the principal. In fact, less than half (44 percent) of teachers in the pilot identified the principal as the person who most often provides instructional leadership. A full 20 percent of survey respondents said other teachers were the people most often providing instructional leadership. While the principal is essential, many other educators play critical roles in different aspects of school leadership.

Empowerment: Ensuring Those Who Are Closest to Students Are Involved in Making Decisions that Affect Them

Teaching has historically been a profession which granted practitioners some degree of autonomy in their classrooms, but larger institutional decisions affecting their work were still controlled by administrators and policymakers. Everything from hiring, budgeting, scheduling, textbook and technology selections to professional development and curriculum is often in the hands of others. The importance of teacher empowerment in key education areas cannot be underestimated. When teachers believe that their knowledge of teaching and learning (and the students they teach) is considered a valuable factor in decision-making, they become connected to their schools and districts in powerful ways. This connection can help improve the retention of those teachers in their classrooms and, ultimately, the success of the students they teach.

Arizona educators considered empowerment to be the single most significant domain for the academic success of their students. Since it is also the domain with the second most negative teacher perceptions, much more could be done to engage teachers in important decisions. While teachers are fairly positive about the influence they have regarding decisions in their own classrooms, they feel much less engaged around school level decisions. Consider the following empowerment trends from the responses of Arizona educators:

Teachers believe they have some influence over decisions regarding classroom practices (Table 15). Fifty-nine percent of educators believe they have a large or the primary role in devising teaching techniques and 47 percent report playing a large or primary role in setting grading and student assessment practice (in each area less than ten percent reported playing no role at all). However, there is great variation across school types, as high school teachers were much more likely to note a significant role in classroom-based decisions (instructional materials, teaching, grading) than elementary educators.
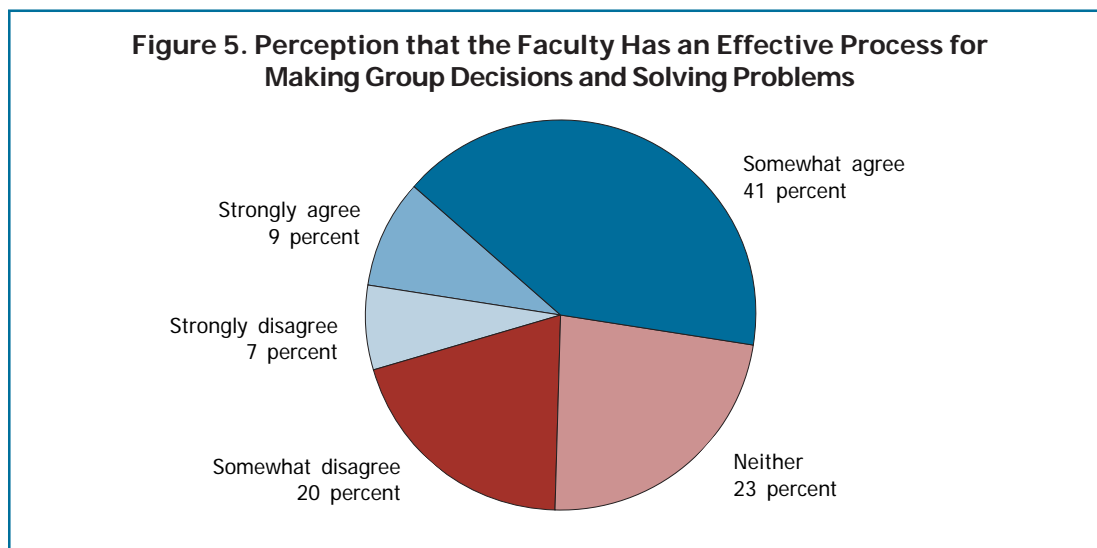
However, teachers believe their influence is much more limited on many school level decisions. Very few teachers believe they play a large or the primary role in school-level decisions such as establishing the budget (four percent), determining professional development content (15 percent), and establishing and implementing policies related to student discipline (24 percent).

Table 15. Teachers' Role in School Decision Making					
Please indicate how large a role teachers have at your school in each of the following areas:	**Responses from Arizona Educators**				
	No role at all	**Small role**	**Moderate role**	**Large role**	**Primary role**
Selecting instructional materials and resources	4%	21%	36%	31%	8%
Devising teaching techniques	2%	12%	27%	41%	18%
Setting grading and student assessment practices	6%	20%	28%	34%	13%
Determining the content of in-service professional development	21%	34%	29%	14%	1%
Establishing and implementing policies for student discipline	17%	30%	29%	21%	3%
Deciding how the school budget will be spent	48%	33%	15%	4%	0%
School improvement planning	17%	31%	30%	19%	3%
Site council planning/ decision making	20%	30%	33%	16%	2%

Given this lack of authority in school-wide decisions, teachers do not feel involved, or trusted. Only one-third (38 percent) of educators agree that they are centrally involved in decision making (only five percent strongly agree), and only 6 in 10 teachers believe that they are trusted to make sound instructional decisions and are viewed as educational experts.

This lack of efficacy may not just be related to the spheres of influence where teachers operate and their view of the recognition of their expertise, but on the processes used to make decisions (Figure 5). While about two-thirds of teachers (68 percent) believe that they take steps to solve problems, teachers were less likely to be able to identify a process for collective decision making to address those issues. Half of educators believe that there is an effective process for making group decisions and solving problem, and only nine percent "strongly" agree versus about one-quarter who disagreed that there was an effective process in place.

Figure 5. Perception that the Faculty Has an Effective Process for Making Group Decisions and Solving Problems

Somewhat agree
41 percent

Strongly agree
9 percent

Strongly disagree
7 percent

Somewhat disagree
20 percent

Neither
23 percent

Professional Development: Ensuring Teachers Can Continually Enhance Their Knowledge and Skills

Research indicates that high quality professional development is essential for high quality teaching. Given the complexity of teaching and learning in today's schools, high quality professional development is necessary to ensure that all teachers are able to meet the needs of a diverse student population, effectively use data and become active agents in their own professional growth. However, not all professional development is created equal. The most effective professional development focuses on the specific content students will learn and the specific difficulties students encounter in learning the content.

For the most part, Arizona educators were positive about their professional development experiences, ranking professional development the second highest domain average (behind only facilities and resources). Consider the following trends in the professional development domain.

- Two-thirds of teachers agree that sufficient resources are available to allow teachers to take advantage of professional development activities (66 percent) and that professional development provides teachers with the knowledge and skills most needed to teach effectively (65 percent).

- The vast majority of educators believe professional development is making a difference in their classrooms. 70 percent agree that professional development has provided strategies that have been incorporated into instructional delivery materials. And 65 percent agree that professional development has proven useful in efforts to improve student achievement.

- The areas where less than half of Arizona educators feel positive about professional development relate to time and data-driven offerings. Only 46 percent of educators agree that adequate time is provided for professional development. And 48 percent agree that professional development offerings are data-driven.

Teachers in Arizona indicated that they needed more support in differentiating instruction than in content. Teachers report needing additional professional development to effectively teach special education students (52 percent), English Language Learners (47 percent) and close the achievement gap (44 percent) (Table 16). Teachers felt most comfortable in their knowledge of their content area and methods of teaching, and had received the most professional development in these areas. However, still half of Arizona educators report that they have received less than ten hours of professional development over the past two years in their content area (despite the requirements of No Child Left Behind and the provision through the HOUSSE system to gain highly qualified status through content-based professional development). While more than four-fifths of participating educators have now had required professional development to work with English Language Learners, they still believe they need additional support to be effective with these students.

Administrators have similar perceptions on teachers professional development needs. Only one-fifth (19 percent) of administrators completing the survey indicated that teachers need more content, but about four-fifths (79 percent) noted that educators need more support in working with special education students and English Language Learners (69 percent). The greatest gap in perception of needed professional development between teachers and administrators is in the area of classroom management (20 percent of teachers indicated they need more support versus 62 percent of administrators).

Table 16. Amount of Professional Development Received and Perceptions of Where Greater Support Is Necessary			
Professional Development Area	Need Additional Support (Teachers About Selves)	Need Additional Support (Administrators About Teachers)	10+ Hours During Past Two Years
Special Education – disabilities	52%	79%	21%
Special Education – gifted	27%	40%	5%
Limited English Proficiency	47%	69%	83%
Closing the Achievement Gap	44%	50%	14%
Your Content Area	16%	19%	48%
Methods of Teaching	18%	35%	48%
Student Assessment	20%	30%	35%
Classroom Management Techniques	20%	62%	26%
Reading Strategies	32%	47%	52%

This disparity in need and opportunity does not necessarily appear to be driven by resources. Two-thirds (66 percent) agree that sufficient resources are available for them to take advantage of professional development activities, and only one-fifth (19 percent) disagree.

The mismatch may be driven more by teachers' role in selecting professional development opportunities made available to them. As discussed in the empowerment section, few teachers indicate that they are involved in determining the content of in-service programs. One-fifth of educators (21 percent) said they play no role at all, and more than half (55 percent) indicate that they play a small role at best. Only 15 percent of teachers agree they play a large role in deciding what professional development opportunities will be made available.

Induction and Mentoring: Ensuring that New Teachers Receive Sufficient Support to Be Successful and Stay in Teaching

Mentoring questions were only asked of those educators in Arizona who indicated that they had served as a mentor or were new educators (three years of experience or less in the profession). Several common questions about the frequency and effectiveness of induction were asked of both groups. As these questions were more centered on actual mentoring experiences rather than perceptions and few were on the same measurement scale, no domain average was created.

Of the approximately 5,200 respondents, about one-third (31 percent) indicated that they had served as a mentor. Approximately 18 percent of respondents were in their first three years of teaching and eligible to respond to mentee questions.

The results regarding the effectiveness of mentoring efforts for these new teachers appear somewhat mixed (Table 17). New teachers indicated that mentoring was not helpful in some areas, but highly effective providing help with several topics. In particular, mentors provided helpful general encouragement and social support (66 percent indicated it helped a lot or was critical). About half of teachers felt their mentor provided a lot of help in providing instructional strategies (50 percent), explaining school and district procedures (48 percent), and completing required products or documentation (51 percent)

However, a substantial proportion of new teachers believe that mentors are providing little or no help at all in curriculum and the subject content the mentee teaches (35 percent) and classroom management (28 percent).

Table 17. Effectiveness of Mentoring in Providing Support to New Teachers

My mentor was effective in providing support in the following areas	No help at all	Helped a little	Helped some	Helped a lot	Help was critical
Instructional strategies	8%	15%	27%	33%	17%
Curriculum and the subject content I teach	16%	19%	23%	26%	16%
Classroom management/ discipline strategies	12%	16%	25%	30%	17%
School and/or district procedures	9%	14%	28%	32%	16%
Completing products or documentation required	14%	13%	23%	33%	18%
Completing other school or district paperwork	15%	16%	23%	29%	17%
Social support and general encouragement	8%	10%	16%	36%	30%

This lack of support reported by new teachers could be due to the lack of support provided to mentors. Only 41 percent of Arizona mentors report receiving specific training to serve as a mentor and only 19 percent report having common planning time to work with mentees.

This lack of support translates into disparities in the frequency of mentoring provided (Table 18). A substantial proportion of mentees report never receiving support from their mentors in planning instruction; although mentors have very different perceptions on the frequency of support provided. Consider the following:

- While 30 percent of mentees report that they have never planned instruction with their mentor, only 5 percent of mentors report a similar lack of planning. Additionally, about triple the proportion of mentors (50 percent) report planning instruction at least weekly than mentees (17 percent).

- Additionally, 55 percent of mentors report planning with mentees during the school day on at least a weekly basis, but only 24 percent of mentees report collaborative planning with the same frequency.

- Only 9 percent of mentees report being observed by their mentor at least weekly, while 33 percent of mentors report observing their mentees weekly.

Table 18. Frequency of Mentoring Activities According to Mentors and Mentees

Mentoring Activity	Mentees			Mentors		
	Never	Less than once per month to Several times per month	At least once per week	Less than once per month	Less than once per month to Several times per month	At least once per week
Planning during the school day	26%	50%	24%	10%	36%	55%
Mentor observing mentee	18%	73%	9%	13%	54%	33%
Mentee observing mentor	38%	56%	6%	17%	51%	32%
Planning instruction	30%	53%	17%	5%	44%	50%
Having discussions about teaching	5%	55%	39%	2%	34%	63%

Given the considerable differences between mentor and mentee perceptions about what actually constitutes time spent on various mentoring activities, districts and schools will need to conduct accurate assessments to fully understand the true level of interaction within and impact of mentoring programs.

The inconsistencies in training for mentors and effectiveness of support received for new teachers might influence the degree to which mentoring helps keep new teachers in the classroom. Approximately 44 percent of all new teachers with a mentor report the experience was important or very important in the decision to remain teaching at their school. However, slightly more than a quarter of new teachers (26 percent) said the mentor experience made no difference in their career decision.

Recommendations

Governor Napolitano, the Arizona Education Association and educators in 18 school districts made a commitment to explore a critical issue: keeping the high quality teachers currently working across the state. Research has consistently demonstrated that the conditions teachers face in their schools and classrooms, although often overlooked, are essential elements to teacher retention and student success. The Phase-in Arizona Teacher Working Conditions Survey has provided data for 112 schools and compiled the perceptions of more than 5,000 educators across the state to assess whether teachers believe their schools are good places to work and learn.

The good news is that more than three-quarters (78 percent) of participating Arizona educators agree that overall, their school is a good place to work and learn. However, while educators were generally positive about many working condition areas, several concerns were identified: a lack of involvement of educators in decision making, great concerns about the amount of non-instructional time available, and concerns about the amount of support received.

Schools and communities can and should do considerably more to improve teaching and learning conditions. This report found that successful undertakings to improve these conditions could improve student achievement and help to stem teacher turnover. Given the overwhelming teacher recruitment challenges facing high growth and hard-to-staff Arizona school districts, a systemic and sustained effort to improve teaching and learning conditions is a necessary investment for Arizona.

Recommendation One: Expand the Initiative Statewide in Spring 2007

The Phase-in Arizona Teacher Working Conditions Initiative demonstrated that educators in Arizona are willing to take the time to share their perceptions about the presence of important aspects of their school environment. Almost three-quarters of educators in participating schools and districts provided data about their school, giving 112 schools, 18 districts and the state of Arizona valuable information about the conditions of work teachers face everyday. Valuable lessons on promoting, conducting and using the survey were learned that can be applied.

More importantly, sufficient connections were discovered between working conditions, AIMS results and teachers' employment plans to merit further analysis. Strong and significant correlations between AIMS results in math, reading and writing and working conditions, particularly resources and leadership, were document.

These analyses are only possible by including more schools and educators in the initiative and making more school-level data available. The larger the pool of schools with sufficient response rate—possible by surveying all schools in Arizona—the more factors that could be considered in trying to identify whether there is a causal relationship between working conditions and student learning. More information, all publicly reported and available on the state report card (school size, teacher attrition/turnover rate, percentage of teachers highly qualified, stability rate, etc.) should be made available by the Arizona Department of Education and modeled with working conditions survey data to better understand the connections between working conditions, student learning and teacher retention.

Recommendation Two: Ensure the Data from the Phase-in Is Used by Educators and Develop Assistance for Working Conditions Reform to Be Available When Statewide Data Is Released

Teacher working conditions data provides schools, districts and the state with a new resource to identify areas that can become a part of school improvement planning. This data is not about any individual, and it will take the entire faculty within the school to ensure critical teacher working conditions are in place. The data should be part of a comprehensive school improvement planning process and aligned with other strategies to ensure schools are staffed with high quality, effective teachers. To achieve this integration and alignment, stakeholders should consider the following.

- Creating standards or guidelines for teacher working conditions so all schools understand the key elements of building a positive school climate. Creating an advisory board or other body to oversee the process for drafting these standards and coordinating how to assess the degree to which they are present and how they can be improved.

- Customizing and using tools developed by the Center for Teaching Quality and available at www.teacherworkingconditions.org. The Arizona Education Association, K12 Center, Arizona Department of Education and others who provide professional development to schools should also consider integrating this data into existing training and use it to develop new opportunities.

- Creating an assistance team to help schools where important conditions of work are not present. The Clark County School District has created a model worthy of examination. The district has released teachers and brought back retired principals trained in interest based problem solving by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services to serve as school facilitators in analyzing data and reforming conditions.

- Providing some incentives for schools that create data-driven plans to improve working conditions (i.e. a per teacher or pupil allocation to actualize the plan).

- Designing and delivering (with principals and teachers from schools with the most positive teaching and learning conditions) professional development, web-based tools and other supports for analyzing and using data. This professional development should be targeted at school teams that include the principal and teachers.

Recommendation Three: Invest in School Leaders Who Can Create Positive Teacher Working Conditions

Arizona teachers were consistent and strong in their assertions throughout the survey – they want to work in schools organized for their success led by a principal who can create a supportive environment where teachers are respected and viewed as experts. Creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect was found to be one of the most important factors in explaining teachers' employment intentions in Arizona. School leaders must be able to create safe environments, where teachers are encouraged to take reasonable risks, and all can have input into school direction without fear of reprisal.

The difficulty, however, is that an atmosphere of trust can not be required from the top; it must be built from the bottom by skilled educators—principals and teachers alike—who have the time, knowledge, and skills to work collaboratively on important issues for students, classrooms and their school. Arizona stakeholders should consider the following.

- Creating clear expectations and/or standards for what principals need to know and be able to do in recruiting and retaining teachers as well as creating positive teaching and learning conditions. Particular emphasis should be placed on building trust and developing appropriate distributed leadership approaches.

- Designing and delivering professional development with principals from schools where teachers indicate there is an atmosphere of trust and respect. Consider making this professional development mandatory for new principals.

- Ensuring principal evaluations include some indicators of creating positive teaching and learning conditions. Using this survey, if at all, should be done with great caution as it is not intended to be an accountability tool, but rather a conversation starter for school improvement planning. Other indicators and measures should be considered and developed.

- Partnering with institutions of higher education to ensure new principal candidates graduate from programs that provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to create positive school climates and build an atmosphere of trust.

Recommendation Four: Invest Substantially in Teacher Support

Arizona must invest in new teacher induction and professional learning opportunities for all educators. Induction and professional development, particularly in the areas of working with diverse learners and differentiating instruction, are critical to ensuring that all Arizona teachers will be successful. To improve support for Arizona teachers, stakeholders should consider the following:

- Ensuring all mentors are trained and supported in working with new teachers. More than half of mentors (41 percent) indicated they received no training and support. Providing sufficient time for planning and appropriate training to use that time wisely is also essential.

- Designing and delivering professional development for new educators and teacher leaders that includes conversation about and consideration of teaching and learning conditions. Teacher leaders in particular need to understand their roles in creating positive and trusting atmospheres and engaging in collaborative decision making.

- Empowering teachers to design and deliver professional development, particularly around differentiating instruction. The survey indicated that less than half of teachers received significant professional development in virtually all areas, including content and student assessment. Teachers, however, most want assistance in teaching different learners—special education, English Language Learners, etc.—with different strategies. Ensure there are ample, high quality opportunities available to educators across the state.

Arizona educators must have the resources and support they need to serve all students well. Without comprehensive, sustained efforts to analyze and improve teacher working conditions, notable efforts to improve student learning and retain teachers cannot be fully successful.

Notes

Introduction

1. National Center for Education Statistics. *Teacher Attrition and Mobility: Results for the Teacher Follow-up Survey, 2000-01.* Washington, D.C.: NCES 2004-301, August 2004.

2. Hilary Loeb, Ana Elfers, Michael Knapp, and Marge Plecki with Beth Boatright. *"Preparation and Support for Teaching: Working Conditions of Teachers" Working Paper #2.* Seattle, Wash.: Center for the Study of Teaching Policy at the University of Washington, May 2004.

3. For example, see Rosenholtz, S. J. (1989). *Teachers' workplace: The social organization of schools.* New York: Longman; Talbert, J., McLaughlin, M., & Rowan, B. (1993). "Understanding context effects on secondary school teaching." *Teachers College Record, 95(1)*, 45-68, and Bryk, A.S. and Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

4. Hirsch, Eric. *Teacher Working Conditions are Student Learning Conditions: A Report of Governor Easley's 2004 Working Conditions Initiative.* Chapel Hill, N.C.: Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2005 and Hirsch, Eric. *Listening to the Experts: A Report on South Carolina's 2004 Teacher Working Conditions Initiative.* Chapel Hill, N.C.: SECTQ, 2005. For copies of the report go to www.teachingquality.org/TWC.htm.

5. Ingersoll, Richard M. *Who Controls Teachers' Work?: Power and Accountability in America's Schools.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Major Findings

1. Hirsch, Eric. *Teacher Working Conditions are Student Learning Conditions: A Report of Governor Easley's 2004 Working Conditions Initiative.* Chapel Hill: Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2005 and Hirsch, Eric. *Listening to the Experts: A Report on South Carolina's 2004 Teacher Working Conditions Initiative.* Chapel Hill, N.C.: SECTQ, 2005. For copies of the report go to www.teachingquality/TWC.htm.

2. For more information on the AIMS see http://www.ade.state.az.us/AIMS/FAQs/General.asp

3. These negative findings for time were also found in 2004 in North Carolina. These findings could be attributed to the number of topics covered in the area of time (including class size, etc.) and the fact that questions get at the notion of quantity of non-instructional time.

4. The data also indicate that teachers leaving the profession are slightly more positive about working conditions that those who are moving schools. There are two primary hypotheses for this trend:

    i.   Individuals leaving the profession do so for a host of personal reasons (family, health, etc.) at much higher rates than those moving between schools, and these are less influenced by negative perceptions of working conditions; and

    ii. The individuals most negative about leaving the profession over working conditions are most likely to leave the profession before the end of the school year when the survey was administered.

5. Hirsch, E. and Emerick S. with Keri Church and Ed Fuller. *Teaching and Learning Conditions are Critical to the Success of Students and Retention of Teachers: Final Report on the 2006 Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey to the Clark County School District and Clark County Education Association.* Chapel Hill, N.C.: Center for Teaching Quality. December 2006.

6. While these results should be interpreted with caution as only 89 principals and 64 assistant principals responded to the survey (compared to 4,803 teachers and 319 other school-based licensed personnel), they are consistent with findings from other working conditions initiatives with substantially greater principal participation. For example, even larger gaps were found in North Carolina where more than 1,400 principals responded to the survey. See Eric Hirsch and Scott Emerick with Keri Church and Ed Fuller, *Interim Report on the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey.* Chapel Hill, N.C.: CTQ, October 2006.

7. For a complete description of CTQ teacher working conditions projects see www.teachingquality.org. Information on survey design, response rate and scope of the initiative for each state can be found on their respective websites at: www.northcarolinatwc.org, www.kansastwc.org, www.ohiotlc.org, www.aztwc.org and www.nvtlc.org.