

Memorandum of Understanding

Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey

Sample MOU

Research from across the country demonstrates that presence of positive teaching and learning conditions is essential for student success and teacher retention. By documenting and analyzing how teachers and other educators view the teaching and learning conditions of their schools and districts, educators and policymakers can make evidence-based decisions on steps to take that will improve student learning and success.

In light of this, NYSUT's Innovation Initiative launched a teaching and learning condition initiative as a way to gather information on the teaching and learning conditions of the six project school districts – Albany, Hempstead, Marlboro, North Syracuse, Plattsburgh, and Poughkeepsie. To ensure the success of the initiative, a survey was designed by the New Teacher Center and piloted in the six school districts in 2012. The survey consists of a core set of questions that address the following teaching conditions: Time, Facilities and Resources, Community Support and Involvement, Managing Student Conduct, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Professional Development, Instructional Practices and Support, and New Teacher Support. Labor/Management teams used the results to begin conversations about teaching and learning conditions in their district and to inform improvements at the building level.

The TLCI (Teaching and Learning Conditions Initiative) survey will be administered online by MLP (My Learning Plan Inc.) The voluntary anonymous survey will be administered online during a survey window determined jointly by the district's labor/management team. Educators may complete the survey from any internet-enabled computer, including the educator's personal computer, during the administration period. The school district will ensure the confidentiality of every teacher and principal taking the survey.

Our Labor/Management partnership is committed to ensuring that every educator works in — and every student attends — a school that is a great place to teach and learn. By surveying every school-based certified educator and principal, valuable information about educators' perceptions of teaching and learning conditions can be compiled and analyzed at the school and district level. Therefore, we agree and are committed to the following survey conditions and goals:

- Assuring the privacy of all survey respondents. The survey will be anonymous and confidential for all educators. The data are only as helpful as educators are willing to share essential information about their schools.
- Supporting and promoting the survey, including communicating with their members the purpose and importance of the initiative and encouraging survey participation. The more educators who take the survey in a school, the more confidence there will be in the survey results.
- Conveying that the purpose of the survey is to improve schools, not to discipline or to evaluate personnel. Teaching and learning conditions result from cultures, decisions and personalities over years. The conditions are bigger than any one person, and it will take everyone in a school to improve them. Assurances shall be provided that the survey data will be utilized for no other purposes whatsoever, including, but not limited to teacher and/or principal evaluations or discipline.

- Monitoring and proactively promoting the appropriate use of data locally among constituent members. The appropriate use of data is described in the Data Dos and Don'ts document found on the NYSUT website at www.nysut.org/TED. All parties using the results are expected to follow these guidelines. If data are used inappropriately or violations of the intent of the survey initiative are found, Partners will collectively work to address the situation.
- Providing data to educators. All educators at schools that have sufficient response rates (a 50% minimum response rate is recommended) to the survey will have access to their schools' survey results to integrate findings into school improvement planning.
- Providing tools and assistance to ensure that the survey data are used, and used appropriately. This assistance will focus on helping school-level staff to strategically determine the best practices and strategies to improve the teaching and learning conditions of the school and district. Partners will not release the data publicly in any form until it is released to the general public along with the final report.
- Ensuring that the survey data are viewed as part of a larger picture of many important factors, and are not used to unilaterally and arbitrarily judge an individual's or school's or school system's effectiveness. Survey data should be analyzed with other information to make informed decisions.
- Sharing this statement with members so that all will understand the purpose of the survey and the appropriate use of the data.

The following representatives of your School Districts offer their signatures as witnesses to the agreement in this Memorandum of Understanding dated [insert date]

School Superintendent

Union President

School Administrators Association President

School Board President