Summary of Results for the South Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey 2023

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SC TEACHER | TEACHER WORKING CONDITIONS

RESEARCH TEAM

Angela Starrett, Ph.D.

Steve Barth

Ruiqin Gao, Ph.D.

Christine DiStefano, Ph.D.

Jin Liu, Ph.D.

Jungsun Go

Ashlee Lewis, Ph.D.

SC TEACHER provides comprehensive research about South Carolina's educator workforce. We are expanding a robust statewide data network to report results that will inform policy and practice.

GROWING DATA + GAINING INSIGHT

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+ HIGHLIGHTS

The SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey (SCTWCS) was designed to include 11 areas of working conditions (seven resources and four demands) with job satisfaction and intentions to stay in the classroom as outcomes; three areas of mentor support for new teachers (support for teaching, support outside of teaching, and proximity) are also included.

Main Findings Regarding Teacher Working Conditions in South Carolina

- Resources of staff cooperation, principal communication, and classroom autonomy were rated the highest among the teachers' working conditions but were not the strongest factors related to teachers' job satisfaction and intent to stay in the profession.

- Student misbehavior was the least favorable area among the 11 working conditions but was not strongly related to teachers' job satisfaction and intent to stay in the profession.

- Teachers' perceptions of the time available to complete their duties were strongly associated with intending to stay in the profession and choosing a teaching career again.

- Student engagement varied the most depending on the school context. SCTWCS results indicated that student engagement was rated highest in elementary schools, schools located in suburban and rural areas, and schools with lower levels of student poverty.

- Administrative support and influence over school policy demonstrated a consistent association with teachers' job satisfaction and intent to stay in the profession. Teachers, on average, reported positive perceptions of administrative support, but the perceived influence on decision-making and school policy was rated much lower.

Recommendations for Further Study of Teacher Working Conditions in South Carolina

- More participation from districts and teachers will lead to a more accurate reflection of working conditions of South Carolina teachers. Efforts should be made to establish stronger relationships and communication with non-participating districts.

- Staggering the administration of the administration of SCTWCS and the School Climate Survey to avoid overlapping time frames and increasing awareness and understanding of the purpose and goals of the surveys among participants can help avoid confusion.

- In addition to presenting preliminary findings to key audiences, a detailed study of the survey content, the extent to which items correspond with their intended categories, and their relationship with specific outcomes are planned for refining the survey, thereby enhancing the accuracy and quality of data obtained in future SCTWCS administrations.

- Incorporating SCTWCS data with other South Carolina teacher data sources (e.g., School Climate Survey, Teacher Exit Survey, South Carolina Department of Education data warehouse) can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the state's teacher workforce. Merging SCTWCS findings with existing databases that furnish demographic, preparation, and evaluation information can provide valuable insights into the individual needs and career trajectories of South Carolina teachers.

+ INTRODUCTION

INSTRUMENT AND PARTICIPATION

- The survey examined teachers' working conditions (resources and demands), job satisfaction, intent to remain in the profession, and mentor support for new teachers.
- A total of 17,954 teachers across 44 districts and 849 schools participated in the survey.

KEY QUESTIONS

We examined the following key questions regarding working conditions in SC schools:

1. How do classroom teachers across South Carolina perceive their working conditions?

2. How do teacher working conditions for South Carolina teachers differ by:

   a. organization level?

   b. poverty level?

   c. school location?

3. How do teacher working conditions relate to:

   a. job satisfaction?

   b. intent to remain in the classroom?

4. How do new teachers in South Carolina perceive their mentoring support?

TEACHER WORKING CONDITIONS, JOB SATISFACTION, AND INTENT TO REMAIN IN PROFESSION

- Working conditions rated the most highly by participating teachers were staff cooperation, principal communication, and classroom autonomy. Student behavior was the lowest rated area.

- Teachers mostly agreed that they intend to remain in the profession and that they make a difference in their students' lives. Their perspectives on whether they would choose teaching again, however, were more mixed.

WORKING CONDITIONS BY SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

- Student engagement varied the most depending on the school context, with engagement rated highest in elementary schools, suburban and rural schools, and schools with lower levels of student poverty.

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG WORKING CONDITIONS, JOB SATISFACTION, AND INTENT TO REMAIN

- All areas of teacher working conditions correlated highly with teachers' job satisfaction and their intent to stay in the profession.

- Interestingly, neither the three highest-rated working conditions nor the lowest-rated area had the strongest associations with teachers' overall satisfaction with their jobs nor their intent to stay in the classroom.

- Administrative support and influence over school policy demonstrated a consistent association with teachers' job satisfaction and intent to stay in the profession.

- Teachers' perceptions of having adequate time to complete their duties were strongly associated with intending to stay in the profession and choosing a teaching career again.

MENTOR SUPPORT

- While new teachers largely agreed that their assigned mentor supported them well, many did not have a mentor who taught in their content area or grade level.
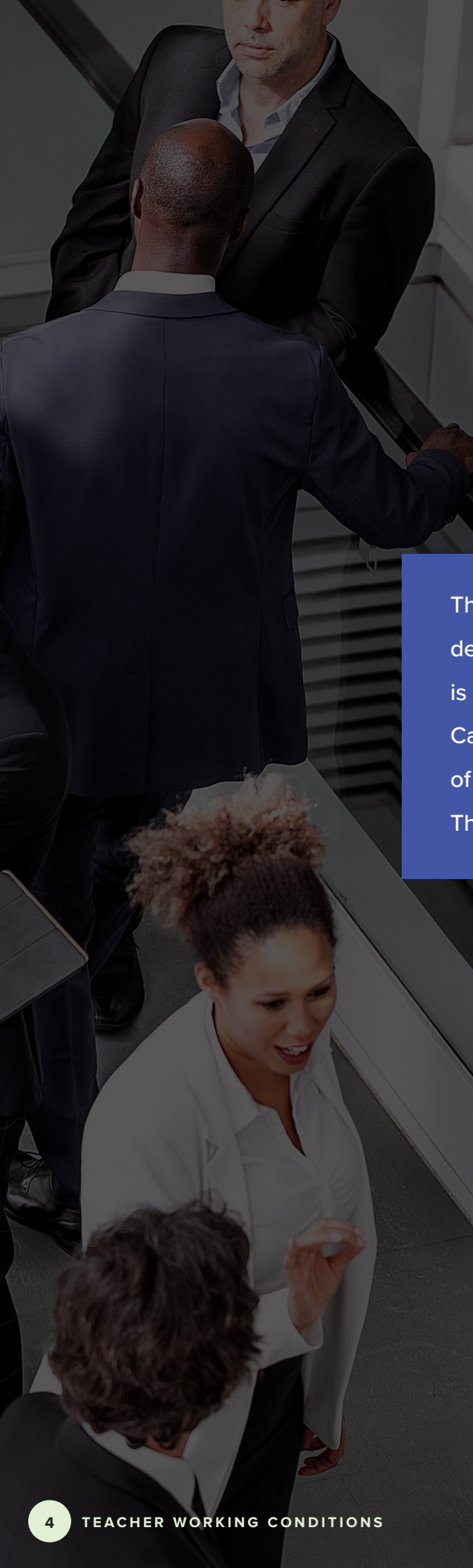
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey (SCTWCS), developed and administered by SC TEACHER, is designed to provide stakeholders across South Carolina with a clearer, more nuanced understanding of the working conditions for SC classroom teachers. The SCTWCS consists of the following areas:

- **Teacher Working Conditions:** A total of 11 teacher working conditions were examined, including seven areas of Resources for teachers and four areas of Demands on teachers.
- **Mentor Support:** A total of three areas of mentor support for new teachers were investigated, including support for teaching, support outside of teaching, and proximity.
- **Outcomes:** Teachers' overall job satisfaction and their intentions to remain in the classroom were included in the survey. SC TEACHER researchers examined the relationship between the 11 teacher working conditions and these two outcome areas.

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

SCTWCS was offered to all districts in the state. A total of 44 out of 83 districts elected to participate, representing 53% of districts and nearly 68% of teachers statewide. SCTWCS was distributed to 36,873 teachers across 855 schools in those 44 districts. A total of 17,954 teachers in 849 schools participated, representing 49% of those to whom the survey was distributed. The map shows the participation rates by school district, where darker colors represent a higher percentage of participating teachers.
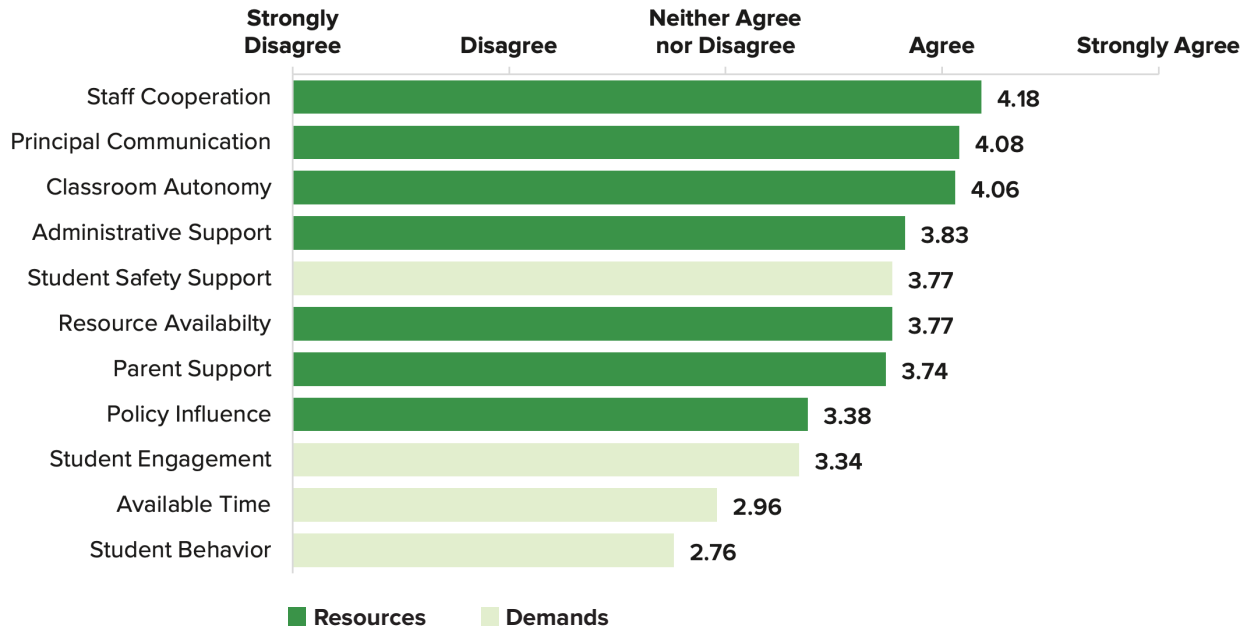

HIGHER PARTICIPATION

LOWER PARTICIPATION
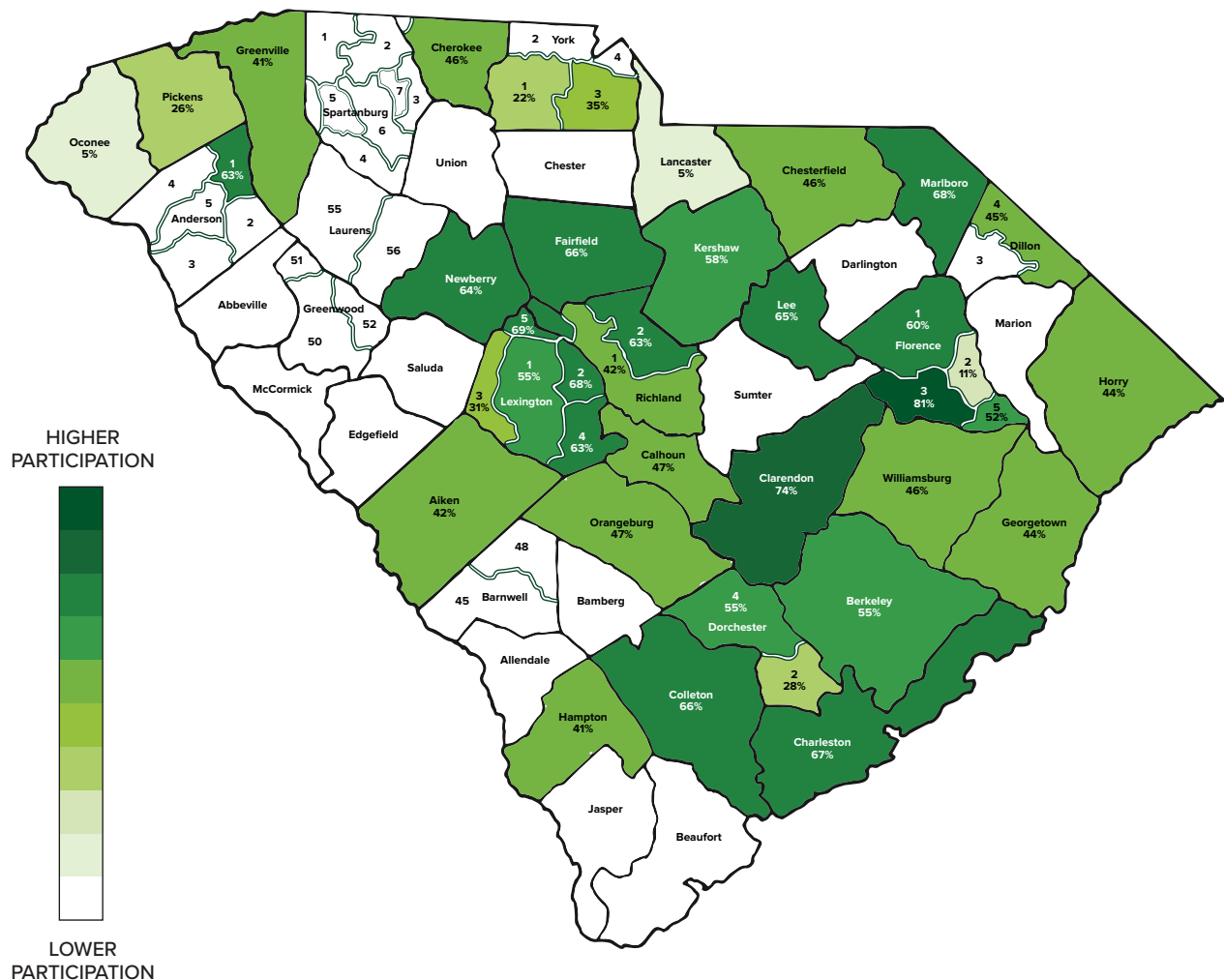
+SUMMARY OF RESULTS

TEACHER WORKING CONDITIONS

- The working conditions that teachers rated the highest were staff cooperation, principal communication, and classroom autonomy.

- Student behavior was the lowest rated working condition.

Averages for Working Conditions Areas

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Staff Cooperation	4.18
Principal Communication	4.08
Classroom Autonomy	4.06
Administrative Support	3.83
Student Safety Support	3.77
Resource Availabilty	3.77
Parent Support	3.74
Policy Influence	3.38
Student Engagement	3.34
Available Time	2.96
Student Behavior	2.76

■ Resources   ▢ Demands

JOB SATISFACTION AND INTENT TO REMAIN IN THE PROFESSION

- Teachers across SC mostly agreed that they intend to remain in the profession and that they make a difference in their students' lives.
- Their perspectives on whether they would choose teaching again were more mixed.

Averages for Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Intent to Stay in the Profession

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Intend to Stay in the Profession				3.71	
Make a Difference in Students' Lives					4.10
Enjoy Present Job				3.72	
Choose Teaching Again			3.21		
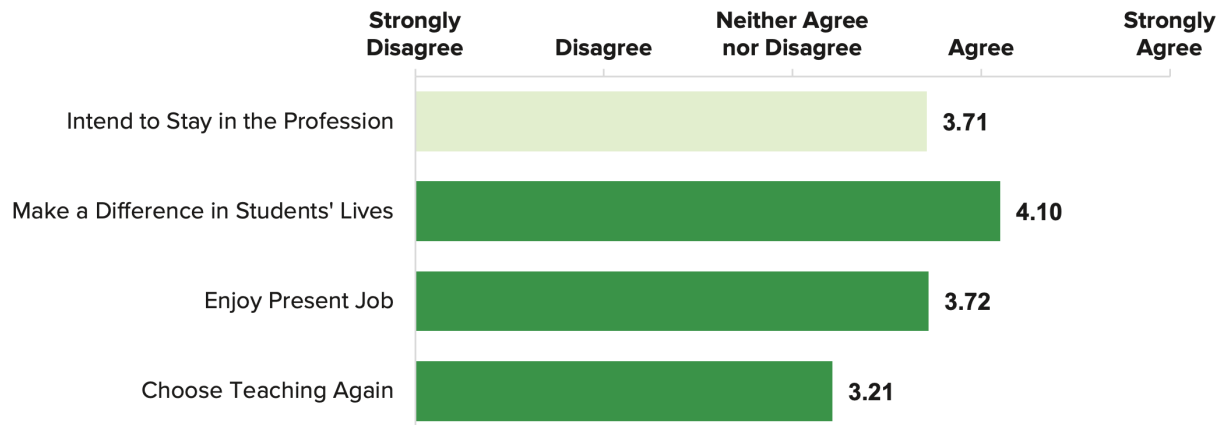
WORKING CONDITIONS BY SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

- Teachers at higher school levels (middle and high school) perceived themselves to have more time available to complete their duties and felt a greater sense of autonomy than elementary teachers.
- Conversely, teachers at the elementary level noted greater parent support and student engagement compared to their middle and high school peers.

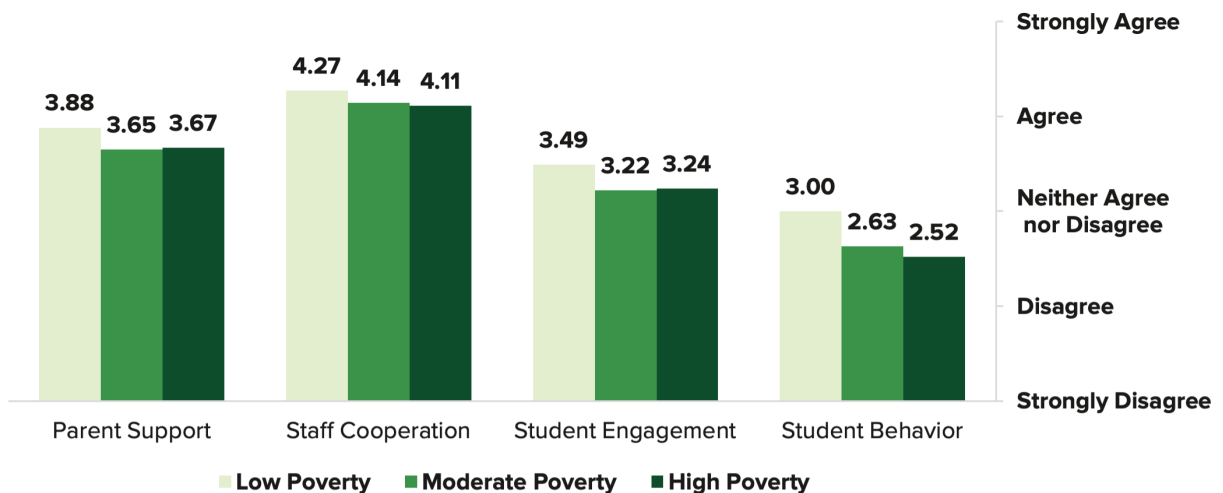**Averages for Working Conditions with Meaningful Differences Among School Levels**

Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, High Schools

	Available Time	Classroom Autonomy	Parent Support	Student Engagement
Elementary Schools	2.74	3.90	3.84	3.57
Middle Schools	3.04	4.12	3.60	3.00
High Schools	3.21	4.25	3.64	3.14
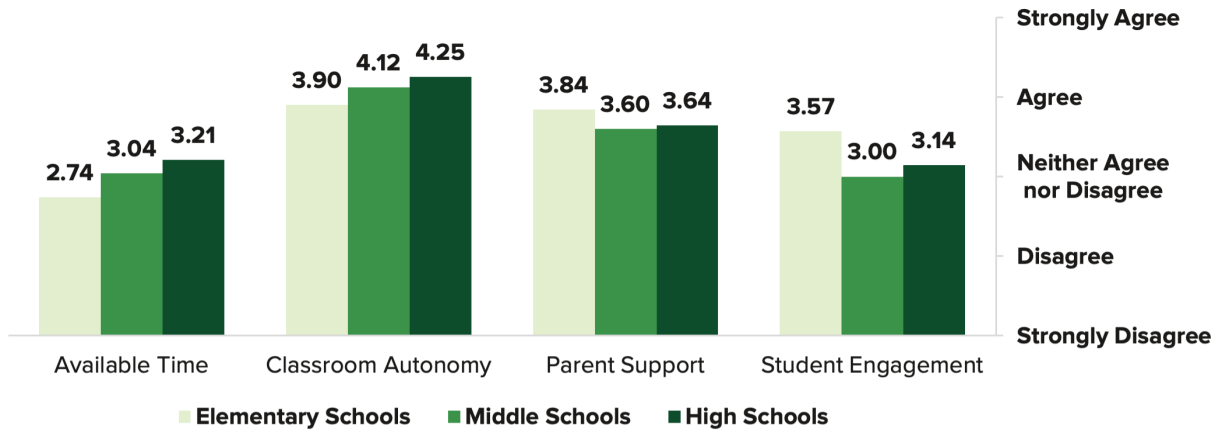
WORKING CONDITIONS BY SCHOOL POVERTY LEVEL

- Teachers in the lowest poverty schools viewed parent support, staff cooperation, and student engagement more favorably than teachers in moderate and high poverty schools.
- Perceptions of student behavior differed significantly among all three poverty categories, with the highest poverty schools rating student behavior the lowest.
- The remaining seven working conditions did not differ meaningfully by school poverty levels.

Averages for Working Conditions with Meaningful Differences Among Poverty Levels

Low Poverty, Moderate Poverty, High Poverty

	Parent Support	Staff Cooperation	Student Engagement	Student Behavior
Low Poverty	3.88	4.27	3.49	3.00
Moderate Poverty	3.65	4.14	3.22	2.63
High Poverty	3.67	4.11	3.24	2.52

WORKING CONDITIONS BY SCHOOL GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

- Teachers at town schools rated their available time and sense of classroom autonomy higher than teachers at other school locations.

- Those teaching at suburban and rural schools rated student engagement significantly higher than those teaching at city or town schools.

- City or suburban teachers perceived their available time and sense of classroom autonomy as significantly lower than teachers in rural or town settings.

Averages for Working Conditions With Meaningful Differences Among School Locations

	Available Time	Classroom Autonomy	Student Engagement
City Schools	2.88	3.89	3.25
Suburban Schools	2.88	4.06	3.35
Town Schools	3.18	4.17	3.14
Rural Schools	3.04	4.12	3.34

Scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Legend: City Schools, Suburban Schools, Town Schools, Rural Schools
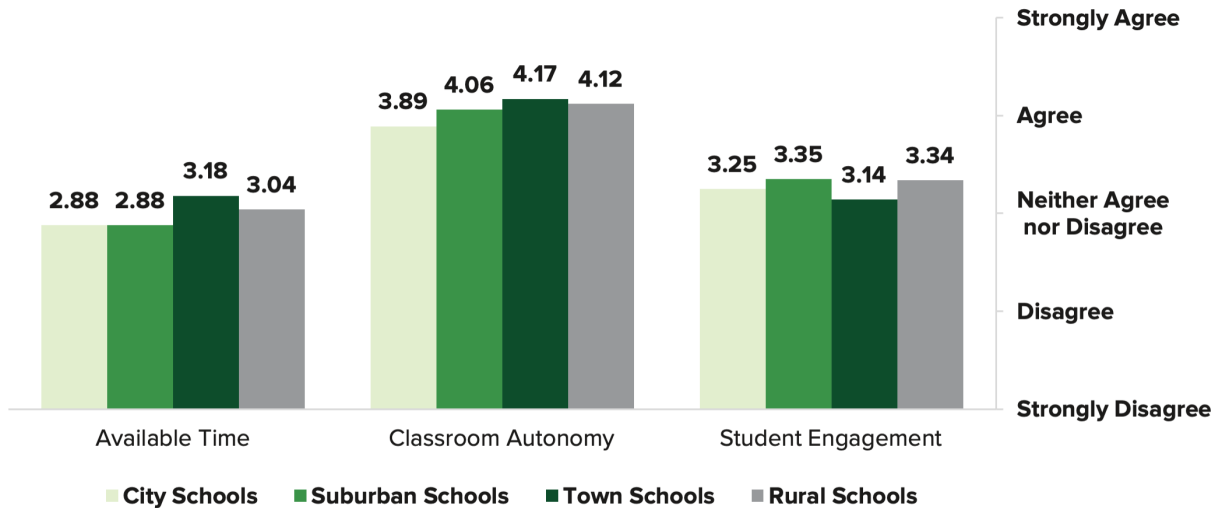
WORKING CONDITIONS AND JOB SATISFACTION

- Most areas of working conditions consistently demonstrated significant relationships with teachers' job satisfaction.

- The areas of administrative support, influence over school policy, and available time to carry out job duties correlated most strongly with whether teachers would choose teaching again.

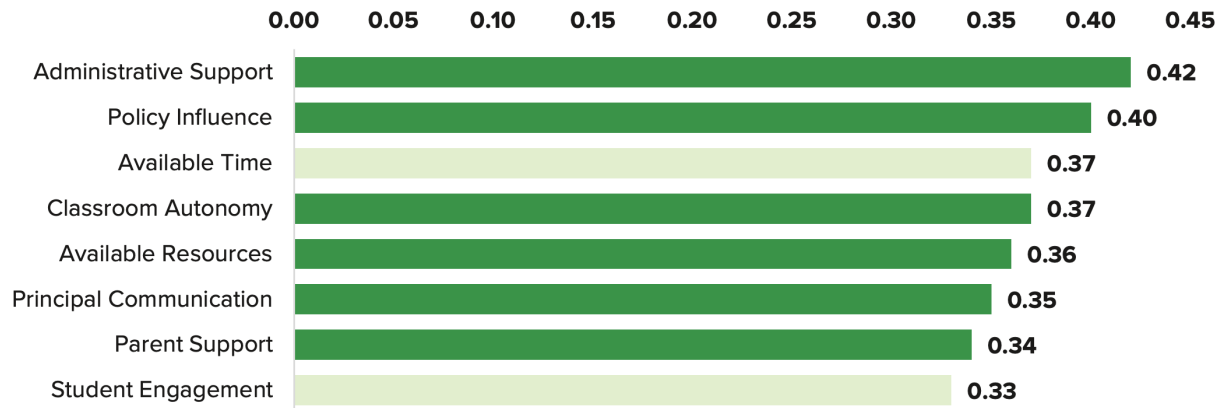**Meaningful Correlations between Current Working Conditions and Teachers' Interest in Choosing Teaching Again** (Note: Higher correlation indicates stronger relationship)

	Correlation
Administrative Support	0.36
Policy Influence	0.36
Available Time	0.35
Parent Support	0.33
Available Resources	0.33
Classroom Autonomy	0.32
Student Engagement	0.31

WORKING CONDITIONS AND INTENT TO REMAIN IN PROFESSION

- The two working conditions most strongly related to teachers' intent to remain in the profession were administrative support and influence over school policies.

- Of the demands on teachers, available time had the strongest relationship with intent to remain in the profession.
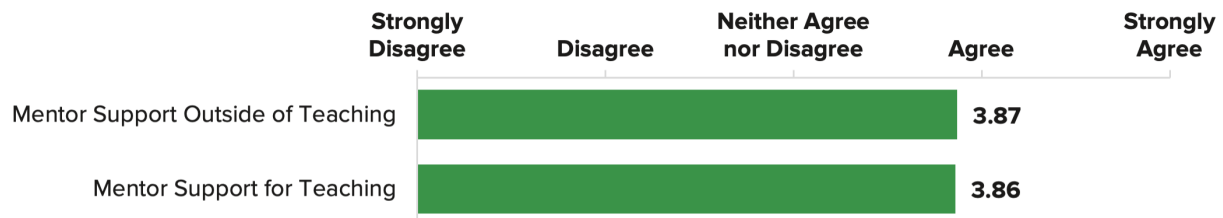
Meaningful Correlations Between Current Working Conditions and Teachers' Intention to Remain in the Profession (Note: Higher correlation indicates stronger relationship)

Administrative Support	0.42
Policy Influence	0.40
Available Time	0.37
Classroom Autonomy	0.37
Available Resources	0.36
Principal Communication	0.35
Parent Support	0.34
Student Engagement	0.33

Scale: 0.00 0.05 0.10 0.15 0.20 0.25 0.30 0.35 0.40 0.45

MENTORING SUPPORT FOR NEW TEACHERS

- New teachers largely agreed that their assigned mentor supported them well both in their everyday classroom teaching and in their duties outside of the classroom.

Average Score for Perceived Mentor Support by New Teachers

Mentor Support Outside of Teaching	3.87
Mentor Support for Teaching	3.86

Scale: Strongly Disagree — Disagree — Neither Agree nor Disagree — Agree — Strongly Agree

- While nearly all new teachers reported that their mentor worked in their building, only a slight majority had a mentor who taught in the same content area or grade level as them.

Proximity of Mentors for New Teachers (% of new teachers who selected "Yes")

Mentor Teaches in the Same Content Area	56.4%
Mentor Teaches in Same Grade Level	59.5%
Mentor Teaches in Same Building	91.7%

TEACHER WORKING CONDITIONS