DISTRICT SUPPORT SERIES

Spotlighting Superintendent Leadership: Leveraging SC TEACHER Data for Planning and Reflection

Districts thrive when superintendents and school boards work from a clear understanding of educators' day-to-day experiences. The SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey (SCTWCS) and SC Teacher Exit Survey offer noteworthy views of the conditions that influence teacher practice, retention, school climate, and, ultimately, student success. Used collaboratively by superintendents and school boards, these data can serve as shared evidence to support the superintendent evaluation process.

Superintendents and boards can use these data to consistently inform...

- Leadership goal setting
- Strategic planning, progress monitoring, and reporting
- Budgeting and resource allocation
- Human capital strategies
- Principal support and accountability
- Communication with stakeholders
- End-of-year reflection and evaluation

Findings from the surveys provide essential information to bolster superintendent leadership. When boards are familiar with the major takeaways, they gain access to high-quality evidence, helping them understand district health and progress.

This guide illustrates meaningful connections among survey constructs and leadership responsibilities, with steps toward evidence-based decision-making. Read on to unpack how specific data points can assist superintendents and school boards in strategic planning and assessments.

SC TEACHER | DISTRICT SUPPORT RESOURCES

What the Data Reveal: Leadership Intelligence for Superintendents and School Boards

SC TEACHER surveys elevate educator voice in ways leaders cannot capture from the central office alone. Together, results provide actionable insight across the areas most relevant to superintendent effectiveness and board support.

CONDITIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

To help superintendents reinforce instructional coherence and boards better monitor key drivers of learning, the SCTWCS assists in revealing whether teachers have...

- Necessary instructional materials
- Adequate planning time
- Relevant and effective professional learning
- Strong support from principals and district office staff

HUMAN CAPITAL: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

With insights that allow superintendents to strategically target supports and boards to see systemwide trends over anecdotes, SC Teacher Exit Survey findings clarify...

- Why teachers have chosen to leave the district
- Whether leadership or working conditions influence mobility
- Vulnerabilities among early-career teachers

CULTURE, CLIMATE, AND SAFETY

Superintendents can proactively address climate issues, and boards can ground understanding in district patterns, as the SCTWCS captures teacher perceptions of...

- Communication, trust, and morale
- Student engagement and behavior
- Workplace safety
- Consistency of expectations

BALANCE AND COHERENCE ACROSS SCHOOLS

Data from both surveys can inform the complex decisions of superintendents regarding balanced school supports. Variation among schools often reveals inequities in...

- Access to resources
- Leader capacity
- Teacher experiences
- Student needs

Acting on Data for Planning and Evaluation

These surveys provide evidence that strengthens both superintendent leadership and school board governance when applied to decision-making and ongoing assessments.

1. Use Survey Data to Set Strategic Priorities

To create a shared roadmap for the year's work, superintendents and boards can use the data to...

- Identify two to four systemwide priorities
- Refine strategic plan benchmarks
- Focus superintendent goals
- Establish expectations for district improvement

2. Use Trend Data to Monitor Progress

Careful steps can support continuous improvement without turning survey findings into compliance tools. Survey trends help leaders...

- Detect improvement or decline
- Track shifts in climate and culture
- Identify principal support needs
- Evaluate whether initiatives are having the intended impact

3. Strengthen Principal Support and Accountability

School boards can note, and superintendents can demonstrate the ways in which they're building leadership capacity across the district with survey findings that...

- Target coaching and professional learning
- Inform principal goal development
- Identify schools requiring additional resources

5. Support Year-End Superintendent Evaluation

Employing data in this ongoing practice leads to a more informed and equitable evaluation process. Even when survey data are not formal indicators, they provide...

- Evidence of progress toward goals
- Insight into superintendent responsiveness
- A data-informed narrative of leadership actions
- Documentation for next year's planning

4. Inform Budgeting and Resource Allocation

Demonstrating how educator voice has shaped decisions builds trust and transparency across school boards, school leaders, and educators. Leaders can connect survey findings to decisions related to...

- Staffing, including compensation or incentives
- Retention strategies
- Professional learning
- Safety and behavioral supports
- Instructional materials

Sample Indicators for Superintendent Reflection and Planning

While there is no single instrument for superintendent planning and evaluations in South Carolina, many superintendents and school boards follow guidance from the South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA), along with national best practices.

This section details examples (not formal evaluation metrics) of indicators superintendents often consider in their reflection and planning. **Both the SCTWCS and the SC Teacher Exit Survey offer powerful, validated data sources that map directly onto these indicators,** equipping superintendents to plan and show progress with clearer, defensible evidence.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Improved teacher perceptions of instructional support
- Alignment among professional development and teacher-identified needs
- Stronger, more consistent access to instructional resources

HUMAN CAPITAL: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

- Reduced preventable turnover aligned with SC Teacher Exit Survey findings
- Stronger early-career support structures for novice teachers
- Greater alignment between teacher needs and district supports

CULTURE, CLIMATE, AND SAFETY

- More consistent climate indicators across schools
- Strengthened perceptions of trust and communication
- Targeted responses to behavior and safety challenges

EQUITY AND COHERENCE ACROSS SCHOOLS

- Decreased variation in working conditions across schools
- Strategic support for schools with persistent challenges
- Prioritized investment in areas of highest need

SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

- Regular use of survey data in cabinet and leadership meetings
- Transparent communication about research findings and related actions
- Evidence of district initiatives reflecting educator voice

A Note From the Field

Insights From Dr. Rashaad Fitzpatrick, Superintendent of Cherokee County School District (formerly of Lancaster County School District)

“My 2024–25 superintendent evaluation reflects a thoughtful and intentional use of SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey and SC Teacher Exit Survey data to better understand how district leadership decisions affected educators’ daily experiences. Rather than treating survey results as simple measures of satisfaction, I examined SC TEACHER data alongside teacher retention trends, internal district surveys, and state climate indicators to develop a more complete picture of district strengths and areas for improvement.

Educator feedback was directly connected to leadership actions, including professional development redesign, strengthened principal support, and organizational improvements, demonstrating how teacher voice can inform district priorities and practice. This same data-informed approach supported a fair, balanced, and growth-focused evaluation process by telling a broader story about the state of the district rather than relying on isolated measures. Areas of strength, such as collaboration, instructional autonomy, and trust, were acknowledged alongside areas requiring continued attention, including workload demands and shared decision-making. This transparent use of data strengthened trust among educators, the school board, and my role as superintendent, while reinforcing continuous improvement as the central goal.”

—DR. RASHAAD FITZPATRICK

Leadership Fueled by Data

By grounding decisions in evidence and educator voice, districts move toward...

- Improving working conditions
- Strengthening instructional quality
- Increasing teacher retention
- Building trust and transparency
- Ensuring more strategic and effective decisions
- Supporting better outcomes for students

SCTWCS and SC Teacher Exit Survey data can guide superintendent governance, school board decision-making, strategic planning, and reflective evaluation.

These surveys aren’t compliance tools. Providing superintendents with district-specific data, they serve as resources for leadership, helping to reinforce collaboration with school boards, working in the direction of stronger, healthier districts.

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