



Teacher Workplace Survey

Information Pack

Introducing a new tool to help schools better understand their most important resource

Ever wondered what teachers at your school really think of the place? Would you like more information about the particular aspects of your school's culture and working conditions that teachers are positive about and any aspects that could be strengthened?

There is increasing evidence that the way schools are organised and run is directly linked to teacher retention and to student learning. Students tend to have higher academic achievement in schools with particular workplace conditions. Those include factors such as safety, an atmosphere of trust, staff who share high expectations for all students and effective leadership from the principal. For these reasons NZCER has developed a new tool to allow school leaders to understand what teachers think about their work and their working environment, such surveys are commonplace in other workplaces.

How can the workplace survey benefit schools?

The teacher workplace survey can provide schools with important information on how well the school is functioning and any areas of improvement. This is crucial for strategic planning. It also gives teachers a forum for expressing their views with absolute confidentiality.

Teachers who are positive and engaged with their work are more likely to stay in their jobs and teach more effectively. Studies suggest that workplace conditions may be the key to retaining teachers.

Having more satisfied teachers is linked to reduced absenteeism, lower turnover and higher levels of teacher motivation, engagement and commitment.

What causes teachers to feel more satisfied? Research indicates teacher satisfaction is positively associated with a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice and having meaningful and valued work.

Survey areas

The survey asks teachers to rate items in five areas. These items have been shown in national and international research to link to teachers' satisfaction with their schools as places to work.

- 1. Physical Working Environment and Resources*** — The physical working environment and the availability of resources to support their teaching are platforms for teachers' work. Teachers are more able to be successful when they have the resources to support their teaching and when they work in safe and well-maintained facilities (Johnson 2006).
- 2. Satisfaction with School*** — Some aspects of teachers' work have been linked with stress, burnout and teacher attrition (Leithwood 2007). Schools with workplace conditions that protect teachers from unnecessary stress are more likely to retain them. NZCER has found that a key factor in whether new teachers move schools is their satisfaction with their individual workplaces (Cameron, Baker et al. 2006).

Australian research (Lokan 2003) has shown that teachers are most sustained by seeing their students grow both academically and in self-confidence as a result of their efforts. The degree to which teachers are able to feel successful with their students is strongly dependent on their workplaces. Teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of communication between teachers, the principal and other professionals also impact significantly on how positively they regard their workplaces (Cameron, Baker et al. 2006). The quality of working relationships among colleagues is an important indicator of an effective school workplace (Johnson 2006).

- 3. School Leadership** — Principals are fundamentally important to a teacher's working conditions and to how successful teachers are able to be in their work. The Best Evidence Synthesis by Viviane Robinson (Robinson 2007) and an Australian Education Review (Mulford 2008) have identified some important things that good leaders do and these items are reflected in the survey

- 4. Professional Development** — Teachers' views of the availability and value of professional learning activities also contribute to their satisfaction as teachers. In a recent NZCER study (Cameron, Berger et al. 2007) teachers in schools with conditions and cultures that encouraged their learning generally reported greater satisfaction with teaching at the end of their third and fourth years of teaching and were unlikely to have changed schools.

- 5. School Organisation** — The way that schools are organised can support the achievement of their mission and goals or undermine them. How teachers experience their work is more important than policy documents. Teachers' responses to the items in this section will provide information on how they think the school organisation supports them to do their work.

Who is the survey for?

The survey is designed for all teaching staff but is probably most appropriate for teachers who spend at least 0.5 of their time teaching in a classroom. Schools can decide whether senior management are included in the survey.

How it works

The Teacher Workplace Survey is administered using NZCER's online survey platform. Schools who take part will be provided with a password-protected survey administration account. This can be used to control who can answer the survey, when it will be available and to generate reporting as, and after, data is collected.

The person with responsibility for the administration of the survey will be able to add additional customised questions that are specific to the needs of their school.

The administrator will initiate the survey by emailing a web link to teachers. Teachers will select this link to generate their own unique survey entry point. This does not require them to provide their own name and they can choose to do the survey at this time or complete it later.

Teachers will be able to complete the survey anywhere they have access to the internet, for example, from home. They will submit the survey for data collection only when they are satisfied with their responses. Teachers will be able to review their answers before submitting the survey and if necessary "log out" part way through the survey and complete it at a later time. When a teacher has submitted their final responses they will not be able to re-enter the survey site.

Once the survey is in progress, the survey administrator will be able to view how many teachers have completed a survey and generate a graphical report to show the proportion of teachers choosing the different responses to each question. At the end of the time period set aside for the survey NZCER will augment the reporting by providing national statistics which can be used to compare the school's results with other schools nationally.

Demo School Teacher Workplace Survey

Demo School Complete 100%

► School leadership Complete later

	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree
15 I am clear about what this school expects of me as a teacher.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16 Our school ensures that initiatives are working well before beginning new ones.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17 The principal shares his/her ideas with teachers about the curriculum and wider educational issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18 The school leaders protect the time we have for teaching and learning by reducing additional demands and interruptions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19 Our school maintains good relationships with our students' families and caregivers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20 School leaders and teachers have a shared view of the school's mission and goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21 There is effective two-way communication between school management and teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Above is an example of what the computer screen will look like when a teacher takes the survey.

Confidentiality

Teacher confidentiality is ensured with this online process as the school receives reporting at a group level rather than an individual level. Therefore, individual teachers' responses to the survey remain confidential.

Reporting options

The online survey platform produces a range of graphical results from each section. Initially, reporting will be available at the individual school level. However, once enough schools complete the survey to enable meaningful comparisons reporting will be made available at the national level.

The person with responsibility for the survey can track the numbers of responses received as reporting is continuously updated on the online platform.

Pricing

Schools will pay a survey subscription fee depending upon the size of the school. The bands and pricing are available in the table below.

Band	No. of students	Cost
Band A	1000+	\$500
Band B	250 – 1000	\$350
Band C	Less than 250	\$250

Invoicing for this survey service will be generated and dispatched separately.

How to participate

Registration is quick and easy. Simply follow the links on NZCER's website <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/tests/teacher-workplace-survey> to register. NZCER will respond by providing the administrator account details for the school.

Still not sure if this is for you?

Contact us on teacherworkplace@nzcer.org.nz. We have consulted extensively with the schools sector and can help you work through the decision-making process.

References

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- Lokan, J. (2003). *Factors that sustain today's teachers*, Australian College of Educators.
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