



# Redesigned and Early College High Schools

*Since 2002, the Office of the Governor, the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission and the North Carolina State Board of Education have made a sustained commitment to listen to educators and reform schools to create the working conditions necessary for student and teacher success. Data from these respondents were made available in May, 2010, at [www.ncteachingconditions.org](http://www.ncteachingconditions.org).*

Of particular interest is how teachers in North Carolina's Redesigned and Early College High Schools (referred to in this document as Redesigned Schools) view their working conditions compared to high schools across the state. These are schools that were created from 2004-09 under the auspices of the North Carolina New Schools Project (NCNSP) and the Gates Foundation. Currently, 104 Redesigned Schools are in existence in North Carolina. The small size of these schools is meant to facilitate a greater culture of collaboration among faculty, staff, and students while building connections with parents. Past studies suggest that principals in these schools empower teachers, focus on instruction, and provide teachers with the resources and professional

development needed to help their students achieve rigorous 21<sup>st</sup> century learning goals.

As was true in 2006 and 2008, teachers in Redesigned Schools are more likely to report positive working conditions around class assignment, time, resources, professional development, and student conduct (Table 1). This is in line with North Carolina New Schools Project's major design principle of Purposeful Design, which respects the organization of time, space, and the allocation of resources to ensure that these best practices become common practice.

- **Teachers in Redesigned Schools are positive about the classes they are assigned.** They are more likely to agree than all other high school teachers that class sizes are reasonable, that teachers have the time to meet the needs of all students and that teachers are assigned classes that maximize their likelihood of success with students.
- **Teachers in Redesigned Schools are more in agreement that efforts are made to maximize the time available to them.** They report a nine to 24 percentage point higher rate of agreement than other

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high school teachers that key working conditions are in place, such as minimal paperwork, protection from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students, and sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.

- **Teachers at these schools are positive about the resources they have.** At least eight out of 10 teachers in Redesigned Schools agree that they have sufficient resources, including access to office equipment and supplies, access to instructional technology, and for professional development.
- **New Schools Project teachers are in agreement that professional development is valued and supported.** The vast majority agree that an appropriate amount of time is provided for professional development and its reinforcement. Moreover, professional development is differentiated to meet the individual needs of teachers, enhances teachers' ability to implement instructional strategies that meet diverse student learning needs and enhances teachers' abilities to improve student learning. The data suggest that the NCNSP support services, which include a series of intensive professional development that sustains a focus on instruction, are viewed differently than the opportunities in other high schools.
- **Student conduct management is less of a problem in Redesigned Schools.** Faculty in these schools report that teachers consistently enforce rules for student

conduct (79 versus 66 percent) and that students follow rules of conduct (85 versus 72 percent). Smaller class sizes—there is a 24 percentage point gap in agreement between Redesigned Schools and other high schools—may be a contributing factor.

These findings are consistent with the goals of Redesigned Schools and support the contention that these high schools are perceived as good places for educators to teach and for students to learn. For all items, teachers in Redesigned Schools are only more negative than their peers that they have adequate professional space (77 versus 85 percent).

### NCNSP Teachers Request Additional Professional Development

Almost 60 percent of the NCNSP teachers indicate a need for more support in closing the achievement gap and in differentiating instruction, slightly more than other high school teachers in the state (Table 2). More than half (56 percent) of Redesigned Schools teachers report a need for additional support in integrating technology into instruction, slightly less than the state average of 60 percent. Redesigned Schools teachers seem more comfortable with their knowledge and skills than other high school teachers in working with English Language Learners, but four of 10 teachers still asked for further development in this area. These requests for more training may be a result of their Design Principles which stress academic rigor and reflection.

TABLE 1. WORKING CONDITIONS IN REDESIGNED SCHOOLS

NC 2010 TWC	Percent Agreement		
	<i>Redesigned Schools (n=104)</i>	<i>All Other High Schools in NC (n=389)</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.	87.33	63.02	24.31
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.	76.65	58.56	18.09
Sufficient resources are available for professional development in my school.	86.31	70.85	15.46
Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	78.51	65.80	12.71
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	84.98	72.48	12.50
An appropriate amount of time is provided for professional development.	74.70	62.22	12.48
In this school, follow up is provided from professional development.	83.38	70.96	12.41
Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.	76.18	65.81	10.37
Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.	71.14	61.46	9.68
Professional development is differentiated to meet the individual needs of teachers.	86.99	77.76	9.23
Teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc.	79.37	70.15	9.23
Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.	84.78	76.01	8.77
Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.	78.50	70.30	8.20
Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.	79.17	71.40	7.76
Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and internet access.	84.21	76.45	7.76
Professional development enhances teachers' ability to implement instructional strategies that meet diverse student learning needs.	89.20	82.02	7.18
Professional development enhances teachers' abilities to improve student learning.	91.53	84.61	6.91
Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.	86.65	79.81	6.83
The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.	89.72	83.12	6.59
<b>Note:</b> Includes all survey items with at least a six percentage point rate of agreement difference between Redesigned Schools and other high schools.			

TABLE 2. PERCENT TEACHERS IDENTIFY NEEDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Professional Development Area	Percent Agreement		
	<i>Redesigned Schools</i>	<i>All Other High Schools in NC</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Student assessment	41.8	37.5	4.3
Special education (gifted and talented)	49.1	45.7	3.4
Reading strategies	43.9	41.9	2.0
Closing the achievement gap	58.1	56.3	1.8
Differentiating instruction	59.5	58.2	1.3
Methods of teaching	40.8	42.4	- 1.6
Classroom management techniques	34.4	37.7	- 3.3
Your content area	35.9	39.9	- 4.0
Integrating technology into instruction	56.0	60.3	- 4.3
Special education (students with disabilities)	48.5	54.1	- 5.6
English Language Learners	40.9	49.1	- 8.2

### Redesigned Schools Principals Report Greater Comfort in Supporting Teaching and Learning

This is particularly true around creating positive learning environments, teacher evaluation, and teacher remediation/coaching where gaps between principals in Redesigned Schools versus principals in high schools across the state range from nine to 19 percentage points. Only one-third of NCNSP principals report needing more support in coaching/remediating teachers compared to half of principals at other high schools.

Like other principals, school leaders in Redesigned Schools indicate needing additional support in the areas of student assessment (53 percent), data-driven decision making (41 percent), and working with parents and the community (40 percent).

Overall, it appears that teachers in Redesigned Schools are provided greater access to educational resources and materials, higher quality professional development, and more time to engage in critical activities related to teaching. This is consistent with previous findings which showed that the size, culture, and focus of Redesigned Schools provided the opportunities for more collaborative professional learning opportunities. Teachers in these schools may have some professional development needs that are similar to what teachers across the state also report, but overall they are much more in agreement that the professional development that they receive is of high quality. Principals in Redesigned Schools are more comfortable with their abilities and support in areas such as student assessment, school scheduling, and staffing; and teachers have fewer issues with class sizes and student conduct.

As North Carolina's high schools continue to assess and improve teacher working conditions and student performance, these Redesigned Schools offer some potential policies and practices that are worth considering. While it may be difficult to replicate some of

the Redesigned Schools' practices given size and staffing challenges at more traditional sites, at the very least issues of professional support and school and teacher leadership should be further studied.

TABLE 3. PRINCIPALS NEEDS FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Professional Development Area	Percent Agreement		
	<i>Redesigned Schools</i>	<i>All Other High Schools in NC</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Student assessment	53.0	47.0	6.0
School scheduling	31.3	27.3	4.0
Staffing (hiring, etc.)	23.2	19.9	3.3
School improvement planning	34.9	32.9	2.0
Budgeting	35.4	33.6	1.8
Working with parents and the community	39.5	39.2	0.3
Data-driven decision making	40.7	43.6	- 2.9
Instructional leadership	33.3	37.9	- 4.6
Creating positive learning environments	22.0	31.1	- 9.1
Teacher evaluation	26.6	40.7	- 14.1
Teacher remediation/coaching	33.3	52.1	- 18.8

## About the New Teacher Center

The New Teacher Center is a national organization dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders. NTC strengthens school communities through proven mentoring and professional development programs, online learning environments, policy advocacy, and research. Since 1998, the NTC has served over 49,000 teachers, 5,000 mentors, and touched millions of students across America.



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