

2010 FCPS Working Conditions Survey Individual Item Prompts Facilities and Resources Construct

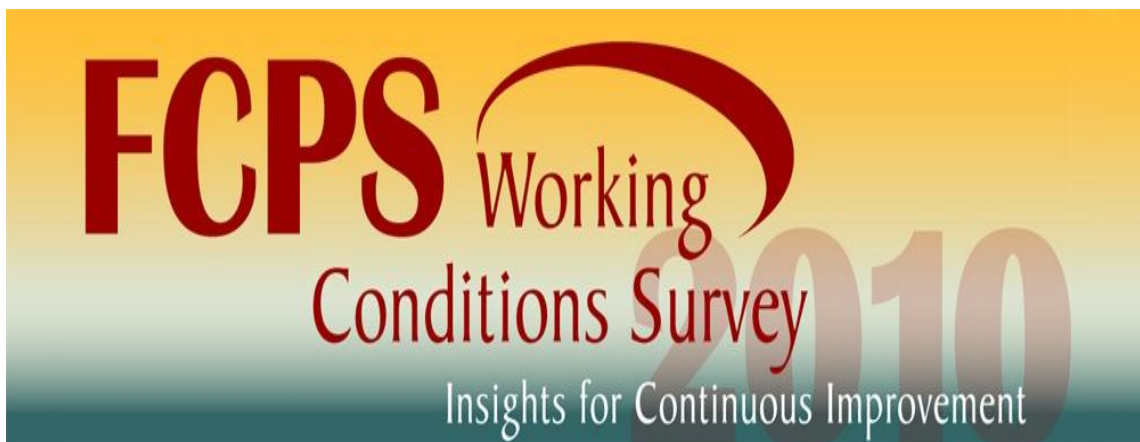


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Facilities and Resources Discussion Guide

For 3.1A-F

When examining specific areas of a school's facilities and resources, challenges may not be in the lack of resources present. They may, instead, lie in the allocation of resources, management and maintenance of existing resources, or perhaps the accessibility to resources. As you reflect on the specific conditions within your school, consider the policies and procedures in place to allocate and maintain your resources. Does the faculty know how to access the materials? Have teachers been trained on the materials and resources? If training has been provided, has there been follow up from the administration on effectively utilizing the resources available? Is there an equitable process for gaining access to facilities and resources?

Perhaps a discussion of the distribution of resources and funds from the district level down to the individual schools could help teachers to frame the quantity and quality of the materials they have access to in the school. Knowing who makes choices and how those decisions are made could improve teacher perception of these areas of the survey. Are there ways teachers can be included in the process?

Table Group Activity

- Where possible, include an administrator in each group to have both perspectives represented.
- Assign a recorder.
- The following pages provide question prompts on the survey item discussed above. Read and discuss the prompts as a group.
 - Try and capture both administrator and teacher perspective on the prompts
- Use the Item Analysis tools to record important points brought up in your discussion.

3.1A-F: Reflections

In your discussion of specific facilities and resource issues, how do you and your staff define the term sufficient in this item's question?

- Is that definition different between the administration and teachers?
- How do the resources at your school compare to similar schools across the district?

What are the policies currently in place to utilize the materials available?

- Are there steps within your control to improve the availability and accessibility of these materials?
- Are all teachers adequately trained on the effective use, policies, and procedures of the available resources? What about new teachers?

Is access to resources equitable across grade level, team, and subject?

3.1A-F: Reflections

Is it a question of the resources functioning properly when teachers need them?

- How are resources maintained throughout the course of the year?
- If something breaks down, what is the procedure in place to get it fixed?
- Is there a way determine when resources are misused.
- What is the staff's commitment to maintaining the existing resources they currently have access to?
- Do new teachers know the policies and procedures that are in place to use resources?

How are decisions made about purchasing new materials and resources?

- Do teachers have any say in the process?
- How are funds appropriated?

3.1G: Teachers have sufficient access to a broad range of professional personnel.

Teachers work with children from many different backgrounds and with a wide variety of needs. Therefore, they must have access to a wide range of professional personnel to support their work in providing a quality education to all of their students. Guidance counselors, law enforcement, social workers, teachers skilled in working with special needs children, staff development specialists, second language learner professionals, and nurses are just some of the professionals that regularly support teachers.

In reflecting on this topic, consider what it means for teachers to have “sufficient” access to these professionals. Are the needs for each teacher’s classroom the same or different? What supports are in place to help beginning teachers and teachers new to the district learn what resources they have available to them? Are the expectations of these professionals the same across the entire faculty?

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3.1G: Reflections

What professionals do teachers have access to at their school?

- Do teachers know they have access to these professionals? How do you know?
- In what ways are these professionals being utilized by teachers?

Are there more efficient ways to utilize these professionals?

- What are the expectations of those professionals to be proactive in supporting the work of teachers?
- What are the expectations of teachers in utilizing these professionals?

What supports are in place to help beginning teachers and teachers new to the school to learn what professionals they have access to at their schools?

- Are these supports effective? How do you know?

How is support personnel staffing determined across the district?

- How are needs assessed?
- Are resources allocated to schools with the greatest needs?
- What input do schools have?
- What input do teachers have?

What do teachers believe is sufficient?

- Are expectations similar across the entire faculty?
- Do all staff members have equal access to support personnel?
- Do teachers have the resource personnel they believe best meet the needs of the school?

3.1H: Teachers have adequate space to work productively.

Different teachers require different amounts of space to work productively. In addition to the number of students in a classroom, the subject being taught can have an impact on space requirements. A science classroom requires more space than other core classes because of the lab component. An instrumental music class requires specific room to accommodate instruments and stands. While some teachers have their own classrooms, others may not. The space needs for a floating teacher are entirely different from a stationary teacher.

This question is not limited to reflections on the classroom setting. Do teachers have adequate space to meet collaboratively and work in teams, by grade level, or as a school? Are there spaces in the school reserved for work rooms, meetings with parents, professional support staff, and administrators? Does the faculty know the policies and procedures for using conference rooms or other community space? Are there sufficient areas for athletics activities and student gatherings (indoor and outdoor)?

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3.1H: Reflections

Is there space available for teachers to meet and work collaboratively?

- Is it available when teachers have time to plan and collaborate?
- Is it conducive to working individually or in a group?
- Is it permanent or temporary space?

What policies are in place for managing community spaces like conference rooms?

- Do all of the faculty know about these policies? How do you know?
- Are all the community spaces being used effectively?
- Are the systems in place equitable across all staff?

Is space around the school being utilized effectively throughout the entire school day?

- Are there spaces that could be repurposed when they are not being used?

Is classroom space sufficient to meet teacher and student needs?

- How does class size impact the use of space throughout the school day?
- What steps can be taken to address imbalances in class size? What are some challenges to addressing class size?

Is there sufficient space, indoor or outdoor, for athletic events and communal gatherings?

- Do you have alternatives to classroom settings for athletic, arts or community events?

3.11: Teachers and staff work in an environment that is clean and well maintained.

When reflecting on this survey item, consider how the staff defines a school that is clean and well maintained. What are staff expectations of their classrooms? What are the expectations of the halls, restrooms, and public areas? What are the expectations of the school grounds? What is the faculty's position on the role that students play in the maintenance of their school and community areas?

Does the staff know who to contact if they have a particular need in this area? Is there a specific procedure to get maintenance issues addressed? If the issues are linked more to community space, are teachers working together throughout the day to consistently monitor the areas?

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3.1I: Reflections

Define what you consider a clean and well maintained to be.

- What does it look like?
- What do the classrooms look like?
- What do the public areas look like?
- What do the outdoor areas look like?

What cleaning and maintenance are currently in place?

- how often is professional cleaning and maintenance taking place in your classroom and what does it include?
- how often is professional cleaning and maintenance taking place in your public areas and what does it include?
- how often is professional cleaning and maintenance taking place in your outdoor areas and what does it include?
- Do trailers and supporting facilities get the same quality of attention as the main building?

If you have a specific need...

- Does the staff know who to speak to in the administration to address specific concerns?
- How fast is the turnaround on specific concerns?
- Can the system be more efficient?

What can I do to contribute to the cleanliness and maintenance of our school?

- What policies do I have in place with my children to promote cleanliness?
- Do I enforce school policies in public and community areas?
- What sorts of relationships do I have with the professional maintenance staff at our school?
- Do I acknowledge their hard work? How?

3.1J: The physical environment of classrooms in this school supports teaching and learning.

Placement of materials, chairs, proximity of students to the teacher and each other, lighting, temperature, and safety all can play a role in creating an environment that is conducive to student learning.

As you reflect on the classroom environments of your school, consider whether or not the physical space provides a secure and pleasurable working environment. Do classrooms and hallways reflect the people who teach in them and the topics that are being taught? Is there space to display the work? Does the layout and organization of the rooms support the work that is intended to be carried out in them? Finally, can teachers organize classrooms to best meet the needs of their students?

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3.1J: Reflections

Do the classrooms in your school reflect the people that teach them and the topics being taught?

- Do walls have student work on them?
- Are there materials around the room that reflect the content being address in the curriculum?
- What resources are present to help students with disabilities?
- What resources are present to support English Language Learners?

Does the layout and organization of the classrooms, the media center, etc. support student learning?

- Do students have enough chairs and desks?
- Are the chairs, desks, and learning areas organized in a way that promotes effective learning?

Is the classroom safe?

- Are fire exits and safety protocol posted?
- Are there clear lanes through the classroom to exits?
- Are hazardous materials properly stored?
- Are sensitive documents and materials locked away?

Are supportive classroom environments consistent across the school?

- Is there equity of resources across all subjects, grades, etc.?

What systems are in place to help beginning teachers with classroom design and organization?

3.1L: Students' learning is affected by students' perceptions of safety at this school.

Schools must be continuously active in developing and maintaining classroom management, gang prevention, identification of students in need of additional support, and internet monitoring which all contribute to a safe school. In addition to more direct actions, the school environment is full of indirect activity which also contributes to perceptions of safety, such as consistency of discipline, teacher presence in the hallways between classes, developing trusting relationships with students, developing relationships with the community and parents, and modeling appropriate behaviors. If efforts to address safety and school culture are not addressed, students' perceptions of safety are affected and the quality of student learning suffers.

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3.1L: Reflections

What steps are being taken to create a welcoming, nurturing school climate?

- What steps are teachers taking to promote positive behavior?
- What systems are in place to support children in crisis?
- What systems are in place to promote equity in the school?
- What staff development is in place to train teachers on creating a positive school climate, equity, or identification and support of students in crisis?
- Are there systems in place to support beginning teachers?

What steps are being taken to help students and their families feel valued and personally invested in keeping their school safe?

- Are teachers developing relationships with students? In what ways? Are those relationships to a point where students could come to teachers with issues of safety or crisis?
- Are teachers developing relationships with parents? In what ways?
- What information is available for parents and students that addresses issues of safety? Do parents and students know where to access this information?

How are parents and the community included in the process of addressing safety issues at the school?

- Are parents included in school improvement planning?
- What sorts of communication occur between parents and the school? How frequent is it?