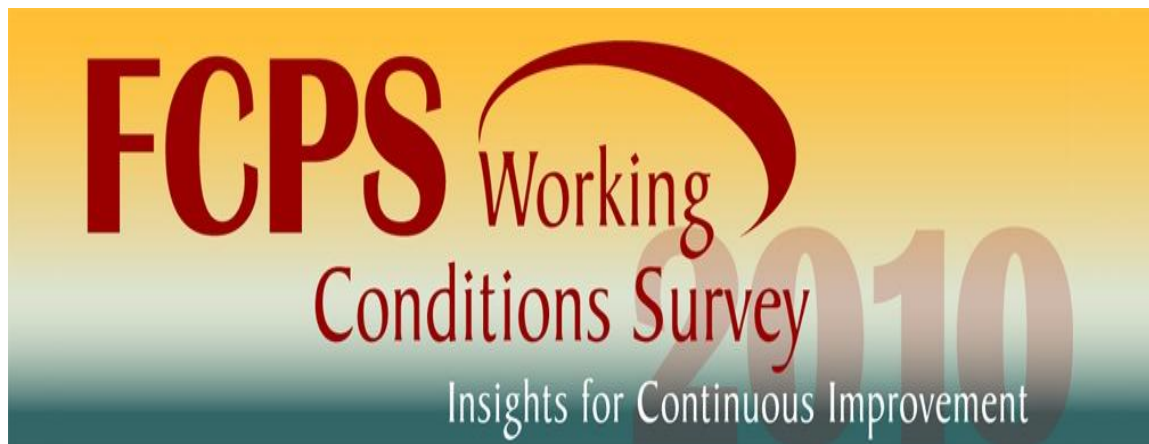


# 2010 FCPS Working Conditions Survey Individual Item Prompts Time Construct

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## ***2.1A: Teachers have reasonable class sizes, affording them time to meet the needs of all students.***

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The challenge to this item is in the size of the classes teachers must prep for and manage throughout the course of the school year. The higher the number of students in a period, the more time that is needed to prepare, develop, and maintain the daily routine.

Time challenges may have nothing to do with class size, but everything to do with the number of preps teachers engage in. For example, in middle school, the social studies teacher teaches four sections of seventh grade social studies covering the topics of Africa, Asia, and Australia. Here the teacher must prep once for their entire day of teaching. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade language arts teacher, however, may find themselves teaching 2 regular language arts periods, a period designed for sheltered English second language learners, and a period of AIG language arts. Their schedule requires three different preparations and obviously a lot more preparation time. High school teachers are often teaching multiple preps. Elementary teachers must plan instruction for language arts, math, science, and social studies curriculum daily.

Class size can be particularly challenging on new and lateral entry teachers who have not yet mastered lesson planning and standardized their daily routine.

### **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
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## 2.1A: Reflections

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Are the kinds of activities I plan for my students creating unnecessary amounts of work for me which limit my time for planning?

- What am I grading and why?
- What can be done during class to reduce my after class work load?
- What maintenance activities do I have set up with my class to keep the room in functional order?
- How do I keep records and are they orderly? How can they be made more efficient?
- Am I keeping lesson plans in a way that I can reference them in future years to lower the amount of prep time I need and improve the quality of my lessons?

How many of your faculty are engaged in multiple planning preparations?

- When considering those preparations, how related are the topics they are planning?
- Can the courses be arranged to protect new teachers from multiple preps?
- Is there a way to reschedule the classes to have less preps for more teachers?
- What sorts of PLCs have you developed to link teachers in similar preparation constraints together to share practice?
- If multiple planning preparations cannot be avoided, how well are you protecting those teachers' planning times?

Are there other teachers in the school teaching the same subject I am?

- What sorts of professional relationships have I built with them that can promote sharing of resources, lesson plans, and teaching strategies?
- Are there ways that teachers who teach the same subjects can share planning?

## 2.1A: Reflections

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In your teacher observations, are teachers effectively utilizing the time they have to prepare for their classes? What about the new teachers?

- Do they know how to plan effectively?
- Do they know the curriculum?
- Are they unknowingly creating more work for themselves in their planning by the kinds of homework they will need to grade or assessments they are building?
- Is the quality of planning across multiple preps the same?
- What sorts of training and instructional leadership can you provide your staff to remedy any of these identified issues?
- Who in the teacher faculty can you empower to provide expertise in lesson planning, lead PLCs, and engage in discussion about effective time management?

How do larger class sizes affect discipline?

- What steps do I have in place with my students?
- What steps do I have in place with my colleagues/team?
- What steps do I have in place with the administration?
- Am I consistent?
- How can my room be arranged to better suit larger class sizes?
- Are there ways to staff instruction that could lower class size?

## ***2.1B: Teachers have time available to collaborate with their colleagues.***

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Collaborative environments contribute greatly to the management of time in a school. That being said, developing collaborative PLCs can be very challenging. Faculty need time to develop trust and confidence among one another. This is especially important for faculty new to the school. Groups need assigned leadership to encourage equity of voice and topic. Teacher groups need regular guidance and support from their administration to provide a clear vision of desired goals and objectives.

The administration may be providing ample amounts of time towards PLCs, but the staff may not know how to properly utilize that time to engage in high quality, meaningful PLCs. Additionally, if relationships are broken between colleagues, PLCs are largely ineffective. Getting together as a group does not equate to productive PLC planning. The staff must be taught how to engage in effective PLC activity. The administration must help to facilitate and encourage the development of these groups.

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## 2.1B: Reflections

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Am I collaborating?

- Do I make time to meet with colleagues, or do I avoid it?
- If I avoid it, why and how can it be changed to make me more participatory?

Do I really understand how to collaborate?

- Is there a prescribed method to collaborative meetings?
- Are my team/colleague meetings efficient?
- What are typical meeting topics and are they the best use of that collaborative time?
- Who am I meeting with and why?
- Who do I want to meet with and what am I doing to make that occur?
- If collaboration is not working well, what can I do to improve it?
- Is the work load balanced, or am I doing too much? too little?
- Is there equity of voice in the group? Is there equity in the topics being discussed?

Has your school/district standardized what is expected in a PLC in terms of process, goals, and expectations?

- If so, are you sure everyone in your staff is following that protocol? How do you know?
- If not, can you work with your staff to develop methods to establish PLC goals and objectives? What would the training look like?

Is my immediate administrator included in the collaboration?

- How can my administrator be included in the collaborative process consistently?
- Is there a way to keep my administrator informed if he/she cannot be present for a meeting?

## 2.1B: Reflections

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Are supporting faculty involved in the collaborative process?

- Are my mentor, subject coach, lead teacher, resource teacher, EC teacher, Elective teachers included in collaborative meetings?
- Are all parties attending?
- Do all parties have equal voice in the process?

How often are teachers meeting in a collaborative setting?

- What sorts of groups are being created?
- What is discussed? How? Why?
- Is there an established agenda and sequence of events?
- Has someone been empowered to lead the PLC?
- Is the work load balanced among the participants? Is there equity among the group?
- Is there equity in topic discussion?
- How long does it take? Can any of it be done electronically?

Are teammates and colleagues working well together or is there dissension in the group?

- What could be working against the PLC?
- What can encourage PLC growth and participation?
- Does the administration acknowledge effective practice?

Is the administration involved in the collaborative process?

- How often?
- What does it include?
- How could they be more involved?

***2.1C: The non-instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.***

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When every meeting has been attended; every parent has been called, students have been tended to; EC services have been met; and grade and subject level meetings have been had; how much time each week do teachers have to address their own work? Is there time each day protected to assure every teacher has an opportunity to get to address their own work?

What is an appropriate amount of non-instructional time for teachers? Is that amount different between administrator and teacher perception? Would a discussion to define what is an appropriate amount of non-instructional time between teachers and administrators help to set expectations and goals?

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## 2.1C: Reflections

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Is it an issue about the quantity of time or the quality of time? While time may be available, if it is not used efficiently and effectively to improve instruction, educators may believe what is available is not enough.

- What time is available currently?
- How am I using the time made available to me?
- What activities am I engaged in during planning time which detract from that time's original intent?
- If I was given more time, how would I use it?

How often is that protected time violated?

- Is it protected at all? If it is protected, are the staff aware of it when it happens?
- What things are interfering the protected time and how do teachers perceive/value that which is taking them away from their work?
- Is there a way to guarantee a portion of time every other day, or every day to the teachers? Is there a way to increase the amount of time protected from the previous year?
- Can you think of ways to rotate the unforeseen responsibilities to equally distribute the burden across the entire faculty?

If it hasn't been stated, do you think announcing specific protected times during the week for each teacher would be helpful in demonstrating your interest in supporting the faculty?

- What does the follow-through look like?
- How will it be implemented?

## 2.1C: Reflections

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In my collaborative settings, is our use of time effective?

- Do we waste time revisiting topics from previous meetings because we did not adequately record them?
- Do we honor a leadership role in collaborative meetings to make them more efficient?

Am I aware of the decision processes behind choices the administration makes that affect my time?

- Am I in communication with the administration about my time needs, violations of my needed time, and acknowledgment of the administration to protect my time?

What activities and teacher obligations are occurring before and after school which affect time?

***2.1D: Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.***

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Teachers are often expected to take on many responsibilities in the school. In addition to classroom responsibilities, there are hallway duties, before and after school activities, bus area supervision, lunch room monitoring, athletic programs, and clubs to oversee. Teachers can be asked to serve as new teacher mentors, cover colleagues' classes, lead subject and grade level meetings, serve as a team leader, sit on school improvement committees, attend district level meetings, and participate in manifestation meetings. With all these different areas of the school in need of support, it is easy for teachers to be spread thin.

Educators must be particularly careful not to over commit to more responsibilities than they can handle and simultaneously maintain the highest quality of classroom instruction. Very successful educators are increasingly at risk as the success in their classrooms draws attention around the school to be asked to lead other programs and functions. New teachers are at risk as they may not have a solid understanding of time commitments in their new roles, or may not feel comfortable saying 'no'. Leadership must be attentive in the equity of responsibility allocation. Teachers engaged in too many roles and responsibilities around their school are not just at risk for lower quality in their instructional practice. Over burdened educators run a higher risk of burning out of the professional over time.

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## 2.1D: Reflections

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Are the responsibilities and duties in your school distributed equitably?

- How do you know? What systems are in place to monitor duties across the school?

In what ways do teachers have say in what duties and responsibilities they take on?

- What duties are non-negotiable?
- What duties are negotiable?

How are new teachers protected from being overburdened?

- What systems are in place?

How are exemplary teachers protected from being overburdened?

***2.1E: Efforts are made to reduce the amount of routine administrative paperwork teachers are required to do.***

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Routine administrative paperwork can sometimes contribute to reduced planning time and stress on the faculty. Consider how much of the paperwork is under direct control of the school. Items like Individual Growth Plans, Newsletters, Progress Reports, work samples for alternative assessment packets, and the frequency of these activities should be examined. What sorts of time commitments are needed for filling out paperwork for benchmarks and end of grade tests? How much notice is given for paperwork before it is due?

Another challenge to paperwork may be linked to the newness of staff. Are new staff members aware of the materials and deadlines on paperwork? Have they been properly trained on how to complete the materials? Are there resources in place to assist staff in the completion of materials? As materials become due, is time blocked out and protected to allow staff to complete the materials?

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## 2.1E: Reflections

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Is adequate notice given to staff to complete paperwork before it is due?

- When paperwork deadlines are approaching, is teacher planning time protected to allow them time to complete the task?

Am I managing my time effectively to meet paperwork deadlines when given ample time to complete them?

Are work samples provided for new staff to model their products after?

- Are new staff trained in paperwork procedures?
- If not, can we initiate procedures to ensure new staff are trained?

Do I know who to speak to or where to seek assistance on paperwork requirements I am unfamiliar with?

If adequate time is not given to complete paperwork requirements, do I communicate this with the administration?

- Is there a vehicle in place to do this safely?