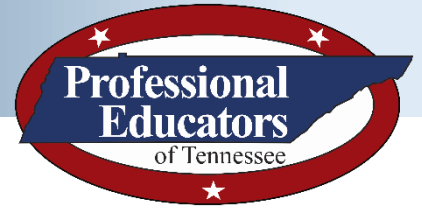


EDITORIAL



August 11, 2017 Online at www.proedtn.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2017 TENNESSEE EDUCATOR SURVEY RESULTS

More than 38,000 Tennessee educators completed the lengthy survey created by the Tennessee Department of Education, in partnership with the Tennessee Education Research Alliance at Vanderbilt University. This number represents 56% of all Tennessee Educators and 60% of all Tennessee Administrators.

SUMMARY

Results of the Tennessee educator survey for 2017

Not surprising to those who work in education, the biggest obstacle to effective teaching is time. Teachers could teach more effectively if they had more instructional time available to them in the classroom. They also could be more effective if they could spend their planning time actually preparing for said instruction. What is prohibiting educators from doing so? One of the biggest time drainers is [Response to Intervention 2 \(RTI²\)](#).

Although nearly every educator believes that they must do something to keep students from “falling through the cracks,” the requirements for RTI² take lots of planning and benchmarking, even where there are full-time RTI² coaches. Also with so much material being open-sourced and available on the internet, teachers and coaches report spending hours each week searching for high quality materials to use with their students.

Another time-drain is dealing with behavior and disciplinary issues. This is especially true for new or first-time teachers. Even 30% of experienced teachers state they spend 10% or more of their time in a day dealing with behavior issues.

Additionally, educators are concerned with “the pressure they feel to juggle multiple programs and directives.” Nearly 60% of teachers say they feel pulled in many different directions in terms of what and how to teach. Schools, states and even the nation are often jumping onto the new bandwagons that come down the instructional highway. Teachers would like to give initiatives time to “take root and grow” before the educational bureaucracy switches to the next new thing. And although educator evaluation is not a favorite topic, 75% reported that it improved their teaching when conducted by a qualified evaluator who provided useful/timely feedback.

For professional learning, Tennessee teachers report spending “too much time engaging with activities that do not achieve their intended effect.” Like the instruction they are required to provide, professional learning for educators should be relevant and meaningful. Teachers are professionals and they should have greater autonomy in choosing the professional development that best meets their needs.

The good news is the that 1) the Tennessee Department of Education actually surveys their educators and 2) they are making adjustments to some of the procedures based on the survey results. Also after each section of the survey, there are recommendations and “next steps” listed for the schools and districts to implement. This is helpful for districts, as well as teachers. The survey is not a miracle-cure, but it is a good foundation. Read [here](#) for the full survey results.

#####

Bethany Bowman is the Director of Professional Learning of Professional Educators of Tennessee, a non-partisan teacher association headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee. Permission to reprint in whole or in part is hereby granted, provided that the author and the association are properly cited. For more information on this subject or any education issue please contact Professional Educators of Tennessee. To schedule an interview please contact [Audrey Shores, Director of Communications](#), at 1-800-471-4867 ext.102.