

Charleston Teacher Alliance 2009-2010 Survey of School Climate And Administrative Leadership

Fast Facts

- This survey was developed and reviewed by CTA Leadership.
- The survey was conducted between April 13th and May 1st.
- 910 teachers participated in this survey.
- This is the fifth survey conducted by the CTA addressing administrative leadership.

Survey Overview

This survey has five separate sections. The first section focused on current issues in the CCSD. The second section addressed school climate and working conditions. The next three sections focused on the administrative leadership of principals, area superintendents, and the district superintendent.

Current Issues

Teacher furloughs have been an area of concern for teachers since last year's pay cuts. At the end of the 2008-2009 school year, 61% of the teachers surveyed said they could support teacher furloughs if all staff and administrators were furloughed as well. This support has dropped significantly over the year to a 35% show of support for teacher furloughs on the current CTA survey. Based on teacher comments, one of the reasons for this decline in support is due to bonuses given to principals, central office staff, and administrators. 66% of teachers surveyed do not believe that the district's budget has been cut to the bare essentials. Based on teacher comments, the best ways for the district to save money includes cutting all non-instructional teaching staff. This includes such positions as teacher coaches (whether they have had their title changed to something else or not), itinerant resource teachers, instructional specialist, curriculum specialist, consultants, and other similar positions. These positions are supposed to be filled by model teachers, so until the budget situation improves these teachers could fill vacancies created by attrition. This is not necessarily to say all such support positions have no value, **but if we are at a financial point where teachers have no cost of living adjustment, no annual raises, increased class sizes, and furloughs, it is time to put a moratorium on all nonessential positions.** If the district cares about teachers, as they claim, it is time to take action to save teachers' salaries.

Other ideas shared by teachers to save money included cutting professional development speakers. The cost to pay for guest speakers, travel expenses, accommodations, and meals cannot be afforded at this time. Reducing non-essential testing (including benchmark testing), freezing all new programs, eliminating free busing for magnet schools, allowing teachers to control the air temperature in their rooms, shortening the school year, and going to an extended hour, four day school week were also suggested several times in the comments section.

In a worst case scenario, teachers are strongly against having workdays furloughed. Only 2% of the 900+ teacher who answered this question supported furloughing workdays. The primary concern was that the work of setting up and breaking down classrooms, report cards, and other paper work still has to be done. Teachers feel the district takes advantage of this fact when they cut workdays without creating another time for this work to get done. **When workdays are cut the district is essentially making teachers work for free.**

School Climate

A majority of teachers felt that their school had a positive climate. 69% of the teachers surveyed believed that their school had a positive climate and a good working environment. Exceptions to this positive view came from Burns, Cario, Clark, Hunley, James B. Edwards, James Island Middle, James Island High, Lincoln, West Ashley High, and CE Williams. At these schools, less than 50% of the teachers surveyed believed their school to have a positive climate and working environment. Schools with 90% or higher positive ratings included Wando High, Stiles Point, Pinckney, Moultrie Middle, Jennie More, Lambs, and Drayton. Academic Magnet, Belle Hall, Harbor View, and Stono Park all received 100% positive ratings for climate.

Planning time remains inconsistent throughout the district with 17% of teachers surveyed having less than one hour of planning time per week while 50% of teachers reported having three or more hours per week. Only 30% of the teachers surveyed believed that the planning time provided was sufficient. This has declined from last year when 39% of the teachers surveyed thought they were given enough planning time.

The amount of hours teachers are working continues to be a major concern. 89% of teachers surveyed reported working 46 or more hours per week. 58% of the teachers reported working over fifty hours per week. 27% of the teachers thought that the hours required were reasonable and only 7% believe that the district could not do more to help reduce these work hours without compromising student achievement.

Recommendations

Teachers' work load is the most common concern sent to the CTA. There are currently no policies in place to protect teachers from excessively long schools days and extra duties. The 35 + 5 policy was eliminated several years ago, and the new policy does not put any definable limits to the work load and duties teachers are expected to carry. With well over half of teachers surveyed now working 50 plus hours a week the district can no longer delay addressing this issue. **If the district values teachers clear, measurable actions must be taken at the district level to protect teachers from unnecessarily large workloads.** Based on teacher feedback the CTA recommends the following:

- Reduce paperwork: Each school and department should analysis what they send to teachers, eliminate what is not essential to student achievement, and consolidate

repetitive paperwork. All schools and departments should report what paperwork will be eliminated. (Overly detailed lesson plans, meeting minutes, communication logs, and being required to write standards on the board and work all came up multiple times.)

- Fewer meetings: Meetings rob teachers of valuable planning time and extend the teachers' school day. The district should limit TCT meetings and after school meetings to monthly instead of weekly events. Teachers have the professional knowledge to meet with their colleagues when needed.
- Protect planning time: Planning times are most teachers only chance to plan, or do simple things such as use the restroom. Let teachers decide how to use this time and minimize meetings during planning time.
- Eliminate PD on early release days and allow teachers to meet with parents or plan lessons during this time. 66% of teachers surveyed believed this PD was not a good use of time.
- Reduce teacher duties: Lunch duty, recess duty, arrival duty, and dismissal duty. This will cost money, but when the economy improves this would not be an unrealistic goal. Teachers are the only professionals that work an eight, nine or ten hour day without a break. It is time that we got one.
- Reduce class size before implementing any new programs. All schools have had an increase in class size, and non-Title I schools have endured multiple increases in class size. If the district does not have enough money to reduce class size, then they should not have enough money to start new programs and initiatives. When the budget situation improves, class size reduction should be the first place money goes.

Principals

Principals received fairly positive scores from teachers on survey questions. The highest marks came in the areas of teacher evaluations (77% positive), protected instruction time (75% positive), conducting productive meetings (80% positive), and addressing teacher concerns (73%) positive. The lowest scores came in areas of principals tolerating ineffective staff and teachers (60% positive), protecting teacher planning time (57% positive), and teachers having time to collaborate productively with colleagues (61% positive).

Individual Results for Schools

In order to protect teacher confidentiality, only schools with ten or more survey respondents are listed below.

Individual School Results 2008-2009 & 2009-2010

	Percentage of teachers reporting a positive climate and work environment.		Percentage of teachers who report effective school based meetings		Percentage of teachers who report their principal as an effective leader.		Percentage of teachers who do not fear retaliation from principal if reporting a concern or disagreement.	
	2008 2009	2009 2010	2008 2009	2009 2010	2008 2009	2009 2010	2008 2009	2009 2010
Academic Magnet	100%	100%	92%	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Angel Oak	100%	85%	47%	43%	100%	85%	88%	92%
Ashley River	81%	77%	75%	82%	100%	92%	88%	83%
Belle Hall	92%	100%	85%	91%	92%	100%	100%	100%
Alice Birney	60%	60%	60%	60%	100%	100%	80%	88%
Buist	60%	82%	50%	82%	60%	80%	67%	90%
Burns	23%	36%	27%	31%	27%	86%	46%	69%
Cario MS	17%	44%	21%	31%	21%	35%	12%	42%
Chicora	***	82%	***	55%	***	91%	***	80%
Clark Academy	***	36%	***	64%	***	27%	***	40%
Corcoran	77%	75%	77%	83%	77%	92%	83%	70%
Drayton ES	100%	95%	95%	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Ft. Johnson MS	69%	57%	62%	71%	69%	100%	69%	83%
Garrett	100%	88%	92%	69%	83%	88%	100%	93%
Goodwin	78%	58%	44%	0%	38%	55%	***	70%
Harborview ES	100%	100%	82%	92%	100%	92%	100%	100%
Hunley	69%	38%	62%	63%	85%	79%	69%	62%
Hursey	67%	***	50%	***	92%	***	50%	***
James B. Edwards	92%	37%	79%	28%	78%	67%	93%	43%
James Island ES	67%	26%	56%	45%	67%	22%	***	29%
James Island MS	75%	44%	44%	33%	81%	44%	81%	100%
James Island Charter	39%	47%	29%	31%	19%	46%	23%	29%
Laing MS	40%	67%	35%	44%	45%	67%	26%	50%
Lambs	30%	90%	23%	90%	46%	100%	46%	100%
Laurel Hill	93%	85%	71%	70%	93%	95%	86%	95%
Lincoln HS	***	9%	***	18%	***	30%	***	20%

Midland Park		59%	88%		41%	63%		71%	88%		25%	75%
Mitchell		84%	75%		79%	78%		95%	89%		89%	89%
Jennie Moore		86%	95%		79%	65%		100%	100%		92%	85%
Moultrie MS		94%	93%		59%	52%		67%	89%		67%	85%
North Charleston ES		44%	80%		22%	50%		61%	87%		33%	71%
North Charleston HS		25%	***		8%	***		33%	***		17%	***
Oakland		89%	72%		67%	78%		83%	93%		88%	75%
Pinckney		89%	92%		78%	92%		78%	100%		***	100%
St. Andrews ES		92%	85%		75%	73%		83%	85%		92%	77%
St. Johns HS		***	50%		***	43%		***	54%		***	38%
SOA		75%	59%		40%	5%		70%	33%		68%	33%
Stall HS		***	71%		***	64%		***	64%		***	31%
Stiles Point		96%	96%		83%	65%		91%	91%		83%	87%
Stono Park		***	100%		***	70%		***	100%		***	75%
Wando		92%	91%		56%	54%		92%	91%		50%	68%
W. Ashley HS		68%	40%		51%	56%		81%	76%		42%	43%
W. Ashley MS		45%	89%		45%	70%		73%	90%		67%	67%
Whitesides		71%	71%		79%	57%		71%	79%		91%	71%
C. E. Williams		30%	38%		60%	54%		40%	58%		30%	17%
CCSD Average		71%	69%		60%	57%		74%	76%		64%	62%

*** Not enough data

Area Superintendents

The Area Superintendents received very low marks in all areas of the CTA Survey. 47% of teachers reported having never seen their Area Superintendent in the school. 30% of the teachers felt that the Area Superintendent shared his/her roles and responsibilities with teachers, and only 29% of teachers surveyed would consult the Area Superintendent on issues that could not be addressed by the principal. Overall, about one third of the teachers believed their Area Superintendent was an effective leader while 40% were not sure.

2010 Area Superintendent Results

		Teri Nichols	Vashti Washington	Patricia Yandle	Lou Martin		2009 Avg.	2010 Avg.
How many times have you seen your Area Superintendent in your school this year?	0	48%	42.9%	35%	47.2%		43.4%	47.4%
	1-3	48%	52.4%	60.5%	47.2%		48.2%	48.5%
	4-6	2%	3.5%	3.2%	4.4%		6.4%	3.2%
	7+	0.5%	1.2%	1.3%	1.1%		2.1%	0.9%
My Area Superintendent makes an effort to communicate his/her role to teachers.	Strongly Agree	10%	9.9%	12.7%	5.6%		8.7%	8.9%
	Somewhat Agree	25.6%	27.3%	19.7%	13.9%		26.8%	21%
	Somewhat Disagree	19.4%	23.7%	29.9%	19.4%		18.3%	21.5%
	Strongly Disagree	20.9%	27.3%	28.7%	40%		28.5%	30.2%
	Not Sure	24.2%	11.9%	8.9%	21.1%		17.6%	18.4%
I would go to my Area Superintendent if I had a concern that my principal could/would not address.	Strongly Agree	19.4%	7.1%	22.3%	5.6%		13.8%	12.4%
	Somewhat Agree	22.3%	14.5%	15.3%	19.4%		19.4%	16.8%
	Somewhat Disagree	16.1%	16.9%	14.6%	14.4%		15.5%	14.9%
	Strongly Disagree	19%	45.1%	32.5%	42.2%		32.5%	36.1%
	Not Sure	23.2%	16.5%	15.3%	18.3%		18%	19.8%
My Area Superintendent is an effective leader.	Strongly Agree	18.5%	11.8%	19.2%	6.1%		14.4%	12.9%
	Somewhat Agree	28%	24%	21.8%	14%		19.1%	21%
	Somewhat Disagree	7.1%	22.4%	19.9%	10.6%		10.6%	14.5%
	Strongly Disagree	4.3%	18.5%	10.9%	20.1%		15.1%	14.4%
	Not Sure	42.2%	23.2%	28.2%	49.2%		40.9%	37.2%

Recommendations for Area Superintendents

Most teachers do not know the duties of this position, and do not feel comfortable going to their Area Superintendent with concerns. Based on current policy, teachers are required to contact their Area Superintendent with concerns that the principal cannot/will not address. **This chain of command is clearly broken and needs to be repaired. Based on teacher feedback, the CTA recommends the following actions be taken even though the exact same suggestions were made last year and nothing was done to resolve the issue of poor Area Superintendent leadership.** Area Superintendents need to reach out more to teachers. This could be done through visible school visits, or with quarterly e-newsletters sharing what is happening in their specific learning community. Another concern is teachers' unwillingness to approach Area Superintendents with issues. The district needs to create a Teacher Advocate position where teachers can report concerns and issues without fear of retaliation. Though most principals would not do this, survey results indicate that retaliation is common in some schools and needs to be addressed.

District Superintendent

Overall, the District Superintendent received mixed ratings. 72% of teachers surveyed ranked the Superintendent as an effective leader, and 72% considered her an effective communicator. Both of these percentages are significantly higher than the previous superintendent. Scores were lower in the area of eliminating non-essential spending (35% positive) and seeking teacher input (46%) positive, but still remained higher than previous leadership.

District Superintendent

(Percentage of respondents who reported positively)

	2009	2010
-Visible and accessible to teacher	68%	64%
-Effectively communicate with teachers	77%	72%
-Seeks teacher input	48%	46%
-Eliminated nonessential spending	45%	35%
-An effective leader	73%	72%