



RESULTS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP SURVEY JULY 20, 2022

Below is a summary of the results of this year's CTA Leadership Survey. The survey was completed by 718 teachers in the Charleston County School District. The complete results can be found on the Charleston Teacher Alliance website.

I. FEEDBACK TO DISTRICT LEADERS

Teachers provided feedback to principals and the school board. Leaders were rated based on the following scale:

- 4: Highly Effective
- 3: Effective
- 2: Minimally Effective
- 1: Ineffective

Principals

Principals were given feedback on 16 different leadership criteria. Overall, 31 schools were rated Effective (down from 40 in 2021), 30 were rated Minimally Effective (up from 14 in 2021), and 5 were rated Ineffective (up from 2 in 2021).

The top schools received an overall rating of 3.5 or higher and have been designated as "Leadership Honor Roll Schools":

Angel Oak
Charles Pinckney
Dunston
East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies
Harbor View
Lambs
Lucy Beckham
Mary Ford
Oakland
Springfield
Stiles Point
West Ashley Center for Advanced Studies

The bottom schools received an overall rating of 1.99 or lower and have been designated as “Leadership At-Risk Schools”:

Chicora
Frierson
Hunley Park
Northwoods
Pepperhill

In order to receive a rating, schools had to have a minimum of three teachers participate in the survey. Some schools did not meet this criterion.

School Board

The CCSD School Board was given feedback on five different leadership criteria and received an overall rating of Ineffective from teachers (1.80). This is a decrease from 2021’s Minimally Effective score (2.05) but an increase from 2019 (1.76) and 2018 (1.68).

Here are individual scores for the School Board (previous year’s scores in parentheses):

- Communicates effectively with teachers: 1.96
(2021: 2.11) (2019: 1.78) (2018: 1.69) (2017: 1.52)
- Seeks teachers' input before making important decisions: 1.61
(2021: 1.86) (2019: 1.67) (2018: 1.61) (2017: 1.38)
- Makes sound educational decisions that give students the best chance to succeed: 1.85
(2021: 2.11) (2019: 1.78) (2018: 1.74) (2017: 1.52)
- Values teachers: 1.83
(2021: 2.08) (2019: 1.79) (2018: 1.69) (2017: 1.46)
- Demonstrates effective leadership: 1.77
(2021: 2.07) (2019: 1.76) (2018: 1.68) (2017: 1.48)

Superintendent

Due to the changeover during the 2021-2022 school year, teachers did not give feedback to the superintendent.

II. FEEDBACK ON OTHER ISSUES

In addition to feedback on district leadership, teachers provided input in a number of other critical areas.

Teacher Employment Concerns

The survey asked teachers what they thought would be the most important issue facing CCSD in 2022-2023. Specific responses to this open-ended question varied, but the following issues appeared most frequently:

- *Compensation*
- *Class size*
- *Discipline*
- *Teacher retention*
- *Frequent and scripted curricular changes*

In light of the board's recent decision to provide teachers with only a minimal, state-requested \$2000 increase, the issue of **compensation** must be at the forefront.

The minimal increases spur questions about how CCSD values its teachers. The board received an *Ineffective* [1.83] rating on this point, which was taken even before the board initially approved the minimal increases on May 23. In the CTA's Winter Survey from December 2021, only 21% of teachers felt that CCSD valued its teachers, and only 13% felt supported by the school board. Minimal salary increases help solidify this negative perception.

The Winter Survey also detailed many of the substandard educational and employment conditions under which teachers labor. While the board and district administration made positive attempts to improve conditions, the minimal raises may have set back those efforts, particularly in the context of an educational milieu where **teacher retention** has become a widespread challenge and an economy where rising inflation will have virtually wiped out next year's raises before they have even been issued.

Additionally, it was reported by the *Post and Courier* that some administrative officials received raises at 10 to 20 times the rate of teachers. These raises were undoubtedly well-earned and commensurate with the high-level responsibilities required to steer our district through one of its most challenging years; the CTA does not begrudge them in any way. However, teachers also have high-level responsibilities, and it is our efforts that most directly affect student learning. Given this, as well as the reality that teachers continually struggle under the weight of large class sizes and poor compensation, it is unclear why raises were not offered to teachers at a similar rate as these well-deserved administrative officials.

One exceptionally positive development in compensation is the district's decision to increase the teacher salary schedule to Step 30. This demonstrates a growing understanding of the positive impacts experience, dedication, and wisdom have on student learning. The CTA encourages CCSD to extend steps beyond 30 in the future, as other districts have already done.

The CTA supports the superintendent's plan for a commission consisting of experienced teachers, parents, and community members, to critically examine the issue of teacher compensation and make informed recommendations based on their review.

The CTA also encourages CCSD leaders to critically evaluate its tendency for administrative-heavy resource investment and send appropriate funding directly to students and teachers. Doing so would mean not only increased teacher compensation but also more appropriate **class sizes**, permitting teachers to give attention to students when and where it is needed; better **teacher retention** so open jobs can be filled and all students can have a trained teacher; and a reduction in **frequent and scripted curricular changes**, that often come as a result of too many mid-level administrators.

Discipline

Teachers cannot teach in undisciplined conditions. When all of a teacher's attention is given to one or more misbehaving students, the education of all students suffers. Poor school discipline was cited as a top concern for teachers, and many teachers leaving the profession mentioned it as one of the chief reasons for their departure.

Given the disciplinary concerns revealed by the CTA's Winter Survey, more data was obtained from our Leadership Survey to determine more specifically what and where the issues are. The survey revealed a number of important findings:

Districtwide:

52% of teachers disagree that students are generally unwilling to treat teachers disrespectfully because they know administrators will handle it with serious consequences.

54% of teachers disagree that students who are referred for misbehavior are consistently given appropriate consequences.

49% of teachers disagree that students are generally unwilling to bully or treat classmates disrespectfully because they know administrators will handle it with serious consequences.

41% agree that when teachers refer a student for misbehavior, administrators sometimes alter the referral to make the offense seem lighter.

Middle schools:

71% of middle school teachers disagree that students are generally unwilling to treat teachers disrespectfully because they know administrators will handle it with serious consequences.

62% disagree that students who are referred for misbehavior are consistently given appropriate consequences.

71% disagree that students are generally unwilling to bully or treat classmates disrespectfully because they know administrators will handle it with serious consequences.

57% disagree that students are generally unwilling to smoke, drink, or use drugs on campus because they know they will be caught.

53% agree that when teachers refer a student for misbehavior, administrators sometimes alter the referral to make the offense seem lighter.

51% agree that fighting and other aggressive behavior is a significant problem.

High Schools:

Half of high school teachers disagree that students are generally unwilling to smoke, drink, or use drugs on campus because they know they will be caught.

Elementary Schools:

52% of elementary school teachers disagree that students who are referred for misbehavior are consistently given appropriate consequences.

59% disagree that students are generally unwilling to treat teachers disrespectfully because they know administrators will handle it with serious consequences.

Conclusion

CCSD should take measures to ensure that students behave in school. Students cannot learn when they are engaging in off-task behavior or distracted by those so engaged. District leaders should work closely with teachers at each school where significant discipline problems were revealed to form a plan for dealing with the problem.

Curricular Issues

Based on requests from teachers, the CTA survey requested feedback on the district's new middle school math curriculum, Illustrative. The survey revealed that:

76% of middle school math teachers disagree that it is an effective program to meet the needs of their students. 71% do not believe CCSD should use it.

The survey identified other curricular concerns – including the piloted EL curriculum – that are highlighted in the *Comments* section below. The CTA makes four recommendations:

1. Give new curricula time to work before replacing them.
2. Avoid highly scripted curricula that preclude teachers' ability to adapt them to the needs of their students.
3. Properly evaluate new curricula by regularly surveying the teachers who are implementing them.
5. Allow schools the autonomy to adopt any state-approved curricula that suit the needs of their students.

III. APPENDIX: SAMPLE COMMENTS FROM TEACHERS

Some comments have been edited for brevity. Full comments can be accessed [here](#).

“If you have an example of a significant problem with school discipline this year, please provide it here.”

A huge issue this and every year is that constituent boards have the final say once discipline goes past the school level. They have the ability to make arbitrary decisions and do not have a PDP to follow or disregard it. This year, the district 9 constituent board made the following decisions regarding a student:

- 1st OSP referral – Knife in school – School level probation
- 2nd OSP referral – Possession of and selling drugs in school – “Strict” school level probation
- 3rd OSP referral – (Offense occurred on the same day he came back from the 2nd OSP hearing) Possession of and selling drugs – Probation again

Due to his hearing being canceled and rescheduled, during the 3 week time between his 10-day suspension being done and when his constituent board meeting was held, he was back in school selling drugs again.

The student is still at our school causing massive issues getting referrals and showing other students that selling drugs in school is not a serious enough offense to get removed for. A different student was caught one time with a marijuana vape pen. This student had way less referrals overall than the previous student. This student was sent to Daniel Jenkins. How are these two examples of arbitrarily made decisions equitable?

The constituent board does not schedule/hold student hearings in a timely fashion. Often they cancel meetings or postpone them. This is particularly important because while they do not have a defined timeline, schools do. Students can only be temporarily suspended for 10 days. After this, they must return to school.

A particularly egregious example of this is occurring right now (5/2/2022). A student at [name of school removed] was caught on video, in school, committing a criminally unlawful, Level 3, code 610, Forced Sexual Offense. Because the constituent board has not held the hearing for this student, after 10 days, the student is back in school. The victim of this crime has to face her assailant on a daily basis and relive the trauma of this life-altering event while looking over her shoulder constantly and fearing that it will happen again.

How are unqualified non-CCSD people being tasked with making such extremely important unchecked decisions such as these? They do not understand the effect that allowing students such as this to remain in school has on the other students and the atmosphere of the school. The students openly brag about "getting off," and it only emboldens them to act worse and influence other students to follow suit and exhibit more negative behaviors themselves.

A student destroyed my instructional space, and I had to evacuate students to another classroom. It took 7 minutes and 3 separate calls for administrative assistance. Afterwards, the student sat on the floor and picked up three crayons while the guidance counselor cleaned everything up (tables, chairs, scissors, pencils, glue, supplies for 25 students, etc.). The student

was allowed to attend related arts 20 minutes later, where that teacher continued to have disciplinary issues.

Bringing weed to school (4th grade), a student yelling and pushing a teacher (5th grade)

Fighting, cutting class, profanity, gratuitous use of the "N" word & etc.

I feel the discipline for special education students is different from the discipline administered to General Ed. students. Many of the special education students are allowed to behave in ways which at worst- threaten other students' safety, and at best- disrupt other students' ability to learn. The consequences for these inappropriate behaviors either do not exist or are minimal.

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I was threatened by a student and I asked that he not carry a backpack because I feel that his threat was legitimate and he said no, because we cannot search student's backpacks without a definite reason. Even though there is a sign on the building that says that CCSD has the right to search your belongings for any reason and at any time. He basically told me that he doesn't care about my well-being or safety.

Nowhere to send disruptive students.

One of the APs takes weeks to process referrals. If a teacher does not actually make contact with a parent but does try several times, two of the APs will delete referrals.

One of the problems I see at my school is our most poorly behaved students seem to get the most rewards whether it be food, extra recess, or just missing class time. They also get more adult attention than any other kids in our school. Even when we have a PBIS function, the bad kids always seem to be allowed to participate. There also seems to be no consistency in following the progressive discipline plan at our school. It can also take weeks, sometimes months, for referrals to be processed.

Our administration has repeatedly presented high offenses to the board for consideration of expulsion or alternative school. The board continues to return these students to the classroom. Parents are not held accountable for their students. Teachers are uncomfortable with the chronic behavior that you willingly and knowingly return to our schools. You are increasing the probability of a national news event. With the way students create and edit social media content,

it will only take 1 video to reach 1 news outlet on a slow day that could jeopardize the view of the already dismal perspective teachers have of the board.

Some administrators delete referrals, thus skewing the data of actual disciplinary issues. The problem is never discussed after-the-fact with the teacher who wrote the referral, nor is any consequence communicated to the employee. Student's aren't afraid to use electronic pens, or have marijuana because they know they may only get ISS or a few days of suspension. Even students who bring weapons do not have effective consequences. Racial discrimination and sexualization are rampant. Students know they will have no consequence, so continue the behavior.

Students at our school have been caught drinking alcohol at lunches, vaping, doing drugs, etc.... there is no sense of urgency for students to follow rules because they know that consequences aren't enforced. Lack of disciplinary enforcement is a MAJOR problem at our school.

Students have shared with me that they do not use the restroom at school because there are always students in there doing drugs and they yell at other kids for going in there. Restrooms are also where fights occur. Students will just hold it all day out of fear.

Students punching teachers, only getting a few days out and returning to a classroom. This is assault. Students who show this type of behavior should NOT be returning to a classroom.

Teachers do not receive communication about the actions being taken by admin when a student is referred. Student offenses are never marked as seriously as they should be. For example, students that are threatening to get guns from home and kill other students have been marked for a milder consequence to avoid sending them to counseling. The phrase "it's not that serious" is said a lot.

We had a 5th grade student literally physically assault our assistant principal and send her to the hospital. He was allowed to come back to school the next week and we were told that according to the districts behavior plan, a student has to assault someone 4 times before an expulsion. Does the district have any idea how that made us feel when we heard that. They obviously don't care about our safety at all. I understand he is a child, but he knew what he was doing and had no remorse. If I was his classroom teacher I would have been scared to have him back in the classroom. A student should NOT be able to assault 4 adults before a real punishment is given. I am extremely upset with the district about this policy.

“What can CCSD do to improve discipline at your school?”

1. Make it mandatory that there is a teacher present when 504's are modified.
2. Require that an administrator who modifies a discipline referral discuss it with the teacher who wrote it.

3. Encourage principals and AP's to say no to parents if it is not in the best interest of the school. They seem intimidated and jump to whatever the parents demands are if the they threaten to call anyone else.

4. Set a time allowance for referrals to be processed.

Allow teachers to enforce the school rules and dress code that are on the books so that we can restore some order and re-establish high expectations and return our focus on the learning.

Figure out an alternative learning option for kids that have been physically aggressive towards students and or staff.

Follow the Progressive Discipline Plan for all students. That means suspend, reassign, and expel students when they reach those levels on the Progressive Discipline Plan. Do not allow months to go by before a DAP hearing is scheduled. Do not assume that every student who is horribly rude, aggressive, disruptive, and failing all of their classes needs an IEP. Do not excuse students who repeatedly exhibit behaviors that put students and staff in danger because they have an IEP or a 504.

Grades need to actually matter. Students are not held accountable for their grades (all students are promoted regardless of their pass/fail status). Without being able to hold students accountable for their grades, discipline problems increase as well as a sense of apathy with the students. Ultimately, teacher morale suffers as our mission becomes more meaningless as essentially it really doesn't matter and the students know it.

How many times does a student have to be written up in 360 to get a more formal consequence? How are we as teachers supposed to handle bad behavior like screaming, kicking, hitting, spitting, name-calling towards the teachers and students, and throwing objects such as chairs, especially if the student is putting the other students in danger? There is no "training" on how to handle these circumstances, but it is unfortunately happening more and more frequently, as I have experienced first hand this year.

I am not a fan of reteach expectations as a consequence. By the time that I am writing a referral for the student, I have MORE than retaught the expectations -- MULTIPLE times.

If a student can only be suspended for 10 days but their board hearing is after those 10 days, there needs to be another policy for the student so that they do not return to school until after the hearing.

Stop allowing disruptive and aggressive students to remain in the general education classroom where they prevent other students from learning and the teacher from teaching in a safe, respectful environment.

We need more SCS and an admin team that is on the same page. Students wear what they want to school because they know they won't get in trouble. Students walk the halls all day because they no nothing will happen. (the same students walk the halls all day)

While I agree with the Progressive Discipline Plan, there need to be some adjustments. There are some behaviors that warrant direct escalation, such as physical aggression against an adult. These behaviors should warrant an automatic hearing before the board, instead of being allowed to happen an additional three times before any serious action is taken.

“If you are leaving the profession or CCSD this year, please provide any insight that could help our district retain teachers.”

Nothing is consistent. Every department is understaffed and overworked. There is no equitable division of the workload in school amongst teachers. I took an \$8000 pay cut coming from Ga. The cost of living is higher than where I moved from. How do you quantify the salaries during this time of inflation? The behaviors we are forced to tolerate for the amount of money is not worth the salary. This is becoming a Walmart-level career with Walmart-level employees and Dollar Tree-level behavior from students mixed with Black Friday behaviors from parents.

The class sizes are too large.

The requirements beyond the classroom are too great.

The pay is too low.

The demand is too high.

The testing is too frequent.

I work 12-hour days most days and I still don't think I do a great job. I have little to no life beyond my job. I fear if DRASTIC measures are not taken, no young people will enter this profession, and, to be honest, though I have always loved teaching, with the cost of living in CHS being so high and the pay for teachers on top of the unreasonable demands, I just would not be able to recommend that anyone go into this field.

“You may use this section to note your opinion of the curriculum programs or teaching tools you used this school year. Make sure to identify the content area in your response.”

Bridges does not work at my school. The kids are bored and it is way too easy for them. It is not rigorous enough at all and doesn't challenge them. It works great for my lowest students but that is it. It is hard to follow and very wordy! I love open court and feel like it works great for my kids. The teachers in the grades above can notice a difference in their reading and spelling.

District is forcing too many scripted curriculums in all content areas.

EL is not appropriate for students at my school. It is boring, too scripted, and does not encourage teacher freedom. It does not appropriately teach writing.

Bridges has slowed down my children's growth and progress. The spiral does not work for children with a limited foundation.

I dislike Bridges and dislike how they change our curriculum every few years. Nothing sticks and they waste money and time.

I do not think the EL curriculum has been appropriate for Kindergarten and first grade learners. Students in these grades need to be focusing on the foundational skills they need to succeed in later years. They have the rest of their lives to learn comprehension skills, however these early years are crucial for letter sounds, writing and reading. Our students are not doing that enough in this EL curriculum. There are many days where my students are not picking up a pencil and writing at all, or even picking up a book and practicing reading. I feel as though my students could have made substantial growth if it were not for this curriculum. I have not been able to consistently pull small groups because EL requires a lot of instructional time.

I think making teachers teach scripted programs (Bridges) is a huge problem. Children are not robots and need authentic learning. Bridges starts 4th graders learning multiplication when they don't even know place value or how to add sometimes. Teachers need to do what is best for their students. These programs should be used as a guide or for new teachers but not be mandated in my opinion.

I think there is a real danger of coopting our classrooms to corporate America. Scripted curricula have a small place in the classroom but CCSD has made it so that teachers have to use strict and out of touch teaching guides that put even more pressure on exhausted teachers. Treating schools with the 'one size all' approach does not work! When will CCSD actually listen to their most valuable resource - TEACHERS! We are well-educated, talented and hardworking people. Involve us in the decision making. Take these surveys seriously. Action speaks louder than words.

Illustrative math is terrible. It is very hard to teach. The district tells us it is easy because there are videos and we shouldn't do things that are not in the curriculum. If they wanted robots to teach the class then that's what they should do. It would be nice if math teachers were given autonomy to teach in a way that we have found effective. The students hate the illustrative books.

The new science standards are horribly written and the content shift will leave major gaps in students' learning. In addition to the gaps, 6th graders will be given content that is too abstract for them to comprehend. At one time, abstract concepts were saved to the 8th grade due to the nature of the adolescent mind. I guess that doesn't matter anymore.

The textbook selection for middle school science was a farce. They knew they were buying Pearson all along and still made us go through the hope of getting something that meets

the needs of all learners and is a highly rated program. The lack of transparency and preparedness is going to cause more teachers to leave the profession.