

Teaching Conditions Survey 2009-10 Handbook for RISE Partner Schools

1. RISE Teaching Conditions Survey (TCS) Overview

A. About the RISE Teaching Conditions Survey

The RISE Teaching Conditions Survey (TCS) is an instrument developed by the [Center for Teaching Quality](#) (CTQ) and administered widely by the [New Teacher Center](#) (NTC). RISE has used the TCS for the past three years to measure working conditions in RISE partner schools, spanning five key domains: Leadership, Empowerment, Facilities and Resources, Professional Development and Use of Time.

Why does RISE use this particular Teaching Conditions Survey?

- *Proven Results*— Research conducted using the TCS has shown verifiable correlations between high scores on the survey and higher rates of teacher retention and student learning.
- *Comparative Data* – The survey has been taken by 250,000 teachers nationwide, and RISE can access compare RISE Partner School results with the national mean.
- *Applicable Information* – Unlike many other school environment surveys, the TCS offers detailed questions that allow schools to understand teacher perceptions of the working environment in greater depth.

B. TCS Requirements for RISE Network Membership

For your school to have a profile on and recruit teachers through the RISE Network, your school must meet the following basic requirements:

- At least a **50% response rate** for schools/networks with **10 or more teachers** on staff
- At least a **75% response rate** for schools/ networks with **less than 10 teachers** on staff
- Scores above the national mean in either the Leadership or Empowerment domains of the TCS

If your school or network does not meet these requirements, it will not be eligible for membership in the RISE network this year. We will cancel your invoice and you will receive a refund of your membership fee.

2. TCS Administration Process

A. TCS Administration Process Overview

	Who?	When?
1. Receive TCS Initiation Package from your RISE contact	School	Upon signing of your RISE contract for the 2010 program year
2. Complete TCS <i>Administration Initiation Form</i> and return to your RISE contact	School	Within one week of receipt of Initiation Package
3. Anonymous Teaching Conditions Survey link e-mailed to your teachers on a date you specify	RISE	On the date you specify
4. Survey closes for your school	RISE	On the date you specify, within 45 days of contract signing
5. Receive results package	School	Within two weeks of survey completion
6. Your school's TCS results go live on the RISE website	RISE	One week after you receive results
7. Share and discuss the TCS results with your staff	School	After you receive the results

B. Completing the TCS Administration Initiation Form

In order to kick-off the survey administration process, we need the information requested in the *TCS Administration Initiation Form*, an excel file which you received with this handbook.

The Initiation form asks for:

- Current count of full-time teaching staff at your school
- Your preferred survey administration date(s)
- E-mail addresses for your teachers (privacy assured – see section 1C for details)

RISE can customize the survey for your school by adding questions. Customizations are subject to a \$50 per hour fee and subject to approval by RISE staff.

C. Administering the Survey to Your Staff

1) *Timeframe & Response Rate*

Upon signing of your RISE contract, we require that schools complete TCS administration within 45 days. Your *TCS Administration Initiation Form* will indicate at the top the final deadline for survey completion at your school or network. Within those 45 days, at least 50% of teachers must complete the survey. (For schools with fewer than 10 teachers, at least 75% of teachers must complete the survey).

We recommend that you encourage 100% of teachers to complete the survey. A high response rate will make the data more meaningful for you and your staff. Also, the results will look more favorable to prospective job seekers viewing your results on the RISE Network school profile.

2) *Survey Participants*

Only full-time classroom teachers should take the RISE Teaching Conditions Survey. Full-time teachers includes Teach for America corps members and other teachers placed at the school through an alternative certification program. All current full-time teachers should take the survey, even those that will not be returning in the upcoming school year. Administrators, guidance counselors, social workers and other non-teaching staff should not take the survey, nor should teaching assistants, student teachers, or part-time teachers. If you have questions about who should take the TCS at your school, contact a RISE staff member before completing the Initiation Form.

3) *Options for Administration*

There are two ways to administer the survey:

- E-mail to staff for independent completion within specified timeframe. RISE will distribute links to the TCS to your staff via e-mail on the date you specify. You may keep the survey open for as short or long a period as you like within a 45 day timeframe from the submission of your RISE contract.
- E-mail to staff for completion during a staff meeting (All staff take the survey together, on their own computers, in one sitting). RISE will distribute links to the TCS to your staff via e-mail immediately in advance of a staff meeting on the date you specify.

You should indicate your preference on the initiation form. The survey will close for your teachers on the date you specify on the form.

4) Privacy

RISE has partnered with a third-party vendor—[Cvent](#)—to administer the TCS electronically this year. Each teacher in your school or network will receive a unique link that will allow them to complete the TCS anonymously. In order to distribute survey links, RISE needs to collect e-mail addresses for all members of your teaching staff. You should provide these e-mail addresses on the *TCS Administration Initiation Form*.

We assure you that:

- RISE will NEVER use these e-mail addresses for any purpose other than Teaching Conditions Survey distribution.
- Survey responses are **completely anonymous**. Once a teacher follows the link to begin the survey, his or her response is severed from his or her e-mail address and is not traceable back to the individual.

5) Messaging to Teachers

It is strongly recommended that you communicate about RISE and the TCS with your teachers before they receive the link to take the survey. Key messages to share:

- RISE is a national nonprofit organization that connects second-stage teachers (those with 2-7 years of low-income teaching experience) with emerging schools in low-income communities where they will be more likely to succeed and remain in teaching.
- Your school is partnering with RISE to recruit experience, quality teachers. In order to be a member of the RISE Network, current teachers at your school must take the RISE Teaching Conditions Survey.
- The RISE Teaching Conditions Survey was developed by the Center for Teaching Quality and is used by the New Teacher Center, so we can compare our results with the results of other schools like us nationwide.
- The survey takes 10-15 minutes to complete.
- The survey is completely anonymous and you will not be able to trace responses back to them.
- Please answer the questions honestly and candidly. The data will be most useful to the school leadership if you speak openly about your concerns.
- The survey is posted in the RISE Network website for teachers applying to jobs at your school. These teachers are looking for honest and candid feedback about your school's teaching environment so that they can make a decision about which schools are the best fit for them.
- The survey will also be used as a reflection tool for your school to improve teacher working conditions.
- RISE will provide school leaders with a summary of the results and suggestions for how to share the results back with the school community. After reviewing the results, the school leaders will get back to the staff regarding next steps.

Most of this information is included on the first page of the survey that teachers receive, but it is important to emphasize this information.

D. RISE TCS Data Package and Resources

Within two weeks of survey completion, you will receive:

- An [Excel data file](#) containing your school's detailed results for this year, as well as historical averages if your school has taken the TCS in previous years. It will also include comparative data with the national data set and other RISE schools and list open-ended responses from teachers.
- A [PowerPoint deck](#) with graphical depiction of your results, details on the TCS to help you interpret the results, as well as some suggested discussion questions
- A [Facilitation Guide](#) for conversations with your staff about the survey results
- Several relevant [articles](#) to inform conversations with your staff

Survey results will be sent directly to the school leadership and will be posted on the RISE network website one week after you receive the results. They will not be sent directly to teachers by RISE.

E. Sharing the TCS Results with Your Staff

It is important share the results of the survey with your staff. It is disempowering for teachers to take the survey and subsequently see no effort to share or address the findings. You will find guiding questions for discussing the data in the RISE facilitation guide. The Power Point you receive from RISE will guide you through interpreting and analyzing results amongst your leadership team and/or with your entire staff.

In the past, schools have:

- Celebrated successes and identified several findings to focus on as an entire staff
- Formed a small team of teachers and administrators to develop a plan to address and improve a few findings
- Focused on areas that were within their control (i.e. teacher empowerment as opposed to facilities)
- If the mean score on the Leadership domain Q3—*There is an atmosphere of trust & mutual respect*—is low, address that immediately (and before anything else). Research has shown that this question correlates most significantly with teacher retention and student learning.

If you have any questions about analyzing and/or sharing the TCS data, do not hesitate to contact your RISE point person.

F. RISE TCS Results on the RISE Network School Profile

Once you review the TCS results, you can begin setting up your school profile. If you do not respond to your RISE contact to let them know that you have reviewed the results, you will receive instructions for setting up your RISE school profile a week after you receive the results. The TCS results, along with other important information, will be posted on that profile, visible to accepted job seekers and other partner schools in the RISE Network.

The TCS section of your profile will show:

- Your mean scores in the five domains of the survey compared with the national mean
- Your mean score for each individual question on the survey
- Your school or network's % response rate

The opened ended responses from teachers will *not* appear on your school profile.

There is also a space on the school profile for you to respond to the TCS results and put the data in context for prospective job seekers. RISE encourages you to respond to the results in writing and discuss strategies you will be employing this year to improve your working environment.

3. FAQs

The information provided in sections 1 and 2 of this guide should allow you to answer most of the frequently asked questions about the survey from your teachers. However, some additional questions may arise. The following are questions and answers that have come up in the past regarding the survey:

Q: Why is this survey only given to classroom teachers? What about guidance counselors, social workers or other members of the school staff?

A: The survey was designed to measure working conditions for full time classroom teachers, so the questions are often geared specifically toward those teachers. While some questions are universal, others will not be applicable to guidance counselors or other members of the staff.

Q: Is the survey really anonymous?

- A:** The results of this data will be shared with your leadership team, but your individual survey responses will be anonymous. Please answer each question honestly so that the data is meaningful to your school.
- Q:** Why should I answer this survey honestly if it is going on our profile for prospective job seekers? Shouldn't I answer in a way that makes the school look favorable?
- A:** While the survey results are part of your school's marketing profile to prospective job teachers, we encourage teachers to be candid. Since the survey will be used to improve teacher working conditions, it is important to be honest. Also, prospective job seekers want to know what the school environment is like so they can figure out whether your school would be the right fit for them.
- Q:** How does RISE pre-screen prospective job seekers?
- A:** To become a member of the RISE Network, teachers must have:
- 2-7 years of teaching experience in a low-income public school
 - 1st and 2nd quartile score on the [Haberman Star Teacher Pre-Screener](#), a screening questionnaire that measures the "core beliefs" of each teacher candidate
 - High scores on a reflective essay
 - One positive senior reference
 - A valid credential in the state that they want to teach in by the start of the upcoming school year
 - High scores on a 15-20 minute phone interview with RISE program staff