Teacher Voice Data Report

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The Role of Voice & Aspirations in Today's Schools

The Quaglia Institute is committed to making a difference globally—putting into practice conditions that foster everyone's voice and aspirations in learning communities around the world. One of the many ways the Quaglia Institute encourages schools to listen to the voices of school staff members is through the use of surveys. School staff members want to be successful, whether their goal is to be a better classroom teacher, to become a department head or supervisor, or simply to do their job to the best of their ability. Too often, however, school staff can't reach their future goals and dreams because their schools' conditions are not supportive. The key to understanding whether supportive conditions exist is to ask the staff themselves. The full Quaglia Institute data set for K-12 teachers includes 56,593 surveys between 2010-2023 in urban, rural, and suburban schools. This report includes data from the 2018-2023 academic years. During that time, the Quaglia Teacher Voice survey was taken by 5,911 K-12 teachers in 141 schools across 17 states. This data may be utilized to better understand staff voice and aspirations in schools.

Voice is about much more than simply speaking up; it is about engaging in school and making a difference—not only for yourself, but for others. The Quaglia Institute defines voice as *sharing thoughts and ideas in an environment underpinned by trust and respect, offering realistic suggestions for the good of the whole, and accepting responsibility for not only what is said but also what needs to be done*. In order for staff to flourish, their voices must be heard—and when they are heard, staff more readily embrace the conditions in school that will help them reach their aspirations.

We want to take a moment to recognize the challenges school staff members faced during the COVID-19 global pandemic and recognize their resiliency as they experienced extended remote teaching and challenging transitions back to in-person learning. The impact felt by teachers during this time should be considered along with the data in this report. Remote and hybrid learning was very difficult for many staff, while others thrived. Similarly, the transition back to school campus was welcomed by some, while others struggled greatly. Educators have been diligently addressing significant learning loss, behavior challenges, and increased mental health needs of students. There is no denying that COVID-19 has left a significant mark on schools and the teachers' experiences. We will continue to use this data to drive conversations with educators about how to improve school experiences in partnership with one another.

8 Conditions That Make a Difference

The data presented in this report is organized by the *8 Conditions That Make a Difference* as identified and defined by Dr. Russell Quaglia, an internationally known leader in the study of voice and aspirations. The 8 Conditions are:

Belonging

Heroes

Sense of Accomplishment

Fun & Excitement

Curiosity & Creativity

Spirit of Adventure

Leadership & Responsibility

Confidence to Take Action

The 8 Conditions have positive effects on the development of student and staff aspirations in schools. We define aspirations as the ability to dream and set goals for the future while being inspired in the present to reach those dreams. The descriptions of the 8 Conditions outline an approach that frames how schools can recognize and nurture the development of student and staff aspirations alike. The 8 Conditions represent a core belief in education: There is nothing more important than motivating students to learn. The identified 8 Conditions do not represent an exhaustive list, but each is important if we are to have self-assured, inspired, and goal-directed students and staff. All schools can benefit by creating and cultivating these Conditions in the lives of their students and staff. The 8 Conditions make a difference because they help schools put into practice the three Guiding Principles that facilitate Voice & Aspirations: *Self-Worth, Engagement,* and *Purpose.*

Developing Self-Worth:
Belonging, Heroes, and *Sense of Accomplishment*

Self-Worth begins when staff experience a sense of Belonging. They feel like they are part of the school community while being recognized and appreciated for their uniqueness. Staff also experience *Self-Worth* when someone in their lives believes in them. They need Heroes, people they can look up to, respect, and learn from. To develop *Self-Worth*, staff also need a Sense of Accomplishment. They should be recognized for their effort, perseverance, and citizenship. When staff have a sense of *Self-Worth*, they are more likely to persevere through difficult tasks and be inspired to take the steps needed to reach their professional goals.

Fostering Engagement in Learning:
Fun & Excitement, Curiosity & Creativity, and *Spirit of Adventure*

Engagement means that staff experience Fun & Excitement in their learning. They become so involved that they almost lose track of time. At the end of the day, they wonder, "Where did that time go?" Actively engaged staff are not afraid to ask "Why?" or "Why not?" about the world around them and the possibilities in their school. Curiosity & Creativity are alive in the way they learn and teach, fostering inquisitiveness and a desire to satisfy their minds with new discoveries. Engaged staff also have a Spirit of Adventure. They are not afraid to try new things or to take on healthy challenges, regardless of whether they might succeed or fail. With *Engagement*, learning becomes important in and of itself.

Encouraging a Sense of Purpose:
Leadership & Responsibility and *Confidence to Take Action*

Schools must challenge staff to think about their *Purpose*—who they want to become as well as what they want to be. To reach this goal, staff need to explore what it means to have, and create, a successful and rewarding professional life. *Purpose* is about being responsible, accountable, and confident. To develop *Purpose*, staff need opportunities to assume Leadership & Responsibility in their school. They must be allowed to make decisions and understand the consequences of their choices. When staff have *Purpose*, they have the Confidence to Take Action toward a meaningful, productive, and rewarding career. They believe in themselves and are motivated to reach their professional dreams.

Staff aspirations, and staff perceptions of student aspirations, are important. All members of the school community can foster the 8 Conditions and make a positive difference in the lives of their colleagues and today's students by supporting the goals each person sets and strives to reach.

Teacher Voice is more than a mere vocalization of ideas; it is the use of voice for the benefit of others and the school as a whole.

-Dr. Russell Quaglia

Demographics

The demographic data are presented both as counts and percentages.[1]

Total number of respondents: 5911

Gender of Staff		
Gender	Count	Percent
Male	1194	21.5%
Female	4307	77.4%
Other	61	1.1%

Years Working in Schools		
Years	Count	Percent
First Year	302	5.2%
2-5	993	16.9%
6-10	1043	17.8%
11-20	1956	33.4%
Over 20	1566	26.7%

Years in Current School		
Years	Count	Percent
First Year	819	14.0%
2-5	1909	32.6%
6-10	1084	18.5%
11-20	1414	24.2%
Over 20	624	10.7%

Current Position		
Position	Count	Percent
Classroom Teacher	4149	71.1%
Certified Support Staff (Guidance, Nurse, Ed. Tech., etc.)	955	16.4%
Support Staff (Custodian, Cafeteria, Secretary, etc.)	730	12.5%

Current Grade Level[2]		
Level	Count	Percent
Pre K-2	1948	33.8%
3-5	2006	34.8%
6-8	1508	26.2%
9-12	2215	38.5%

Highest Level of Education		
Level	Count	Percent
High School/G.E.D.	332	5.7%
Associate's	267	4.6%
Bachelor's	2213	37.8%
Master's	1453	24.8%
Master's+	1544	26.4%
Doctorate	47	0.8%

[1] Count totals for specific demographics may not equal the total survey count, as not all respondents report demographic information. Total percentages may not equal one hundred due to rounding.

[2] In this table, the percentages may total more than 100% since respondents were instructed to select all that apply.

Belonging

The Condition of Belonging means that a person is a valued member of a community while still maintaining their uniqueness. Belonging entails establishing a sense of community and collegiality—believing that all participants in the educational environment are valued for who they are. Collegiality depends upon all staff being fully active participants in the life of the school and responsible, contributing citizens of the school community. The pertinent questions are: Are standards and expectations for responsibility and success set in a context of peer and administrative acceptance and support? Does each person on the staff feel like a contributing member of the school's educational mission? Schools may be organized hierarchically, but their democratic roots should extend to and nourish the entire staff as full partners in the overall educational process.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement
1. I feel valued for my unique skills and talents.	75.7%
2. School is a welcoming and friendly place.	82.2%
3. I am proud of my school.	82.2%
4. I think bullying is a problem at my school.	33.8%
5. I feel comfortable in the staff room.	73.4%
6. Building administration makes an effort to get to know me.	67.4%
7. I feel accepted for who I am at school.	82.2%
8. I am a valued member of my school community.	82.2%

Heroes

Heroes are the everyday people—mentors, friends, family members—in our lives who inspire us to excel and to make positive changes in attitude and lifestyle. Heroes are our cheerleaders and trusted guides. School staff who form meaningful relationships with others in the school can become highly motivated to perform at their best. Mutual respect and commitment to one another are the hallmarks of a staff dedicated to building-wide school improvement. Too often in today's schools, adults become isolated from one another. The Condition of Heroes reminds us that what happens in schools should never be a solitary enterprise.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement
9. Students care if I am absent from school.	85.6%
10. I have a colleague at school who is a positive role model for me.	93.0%
11. If I have a problem, I have a colleague with whom I can talk.	93.3%
12. I know my students' hopes and dreams.	80.0%
13. Staff respect each other.	70.6%
14. Students respect me.	91.2%
15. I respect students.	99.4%
16. Students care about me as an individual.	85.4%

Sense of Accomplishment

Sense of Accomplishment is about recognizing and appreciating effort, perseverance, and citizenship. Meeting performance goals is only one indicator of success. A highly dedicated staff makes contributions "beyond the call of duty." In schools that foster a Sense of Accomplishment, reward systems encourage effort as well as end product, and perseverance as much as results. Opportunities for colleagues to reward and celebrate one another are as important as recognition that comes from administrators and supervisors.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement
17. I have never been recognized for something positive at school.	17.9%
18. I actively encourage students to practice good citizenship.	98.4%
19. I receive constructive feedback from colleagues.	71.9%
20. Our school celebrates the accomplishments of the staff.	65.1%
21. I am recognized when I try my best.	59.2%
22. Professional development is an important part of my educational growth.	83.6%

Fun & Excitement

The Condition of Fun & Excitement is characterized by staff being inspired by their shared passion for being educators. Fun & Excitement is about being interested in and engaged by one's work. Such enjoyment and satisfaction improves one's effectiveness. When staff are excited, they are eagerly and actively involved, and they tend to contribute more. If all staff are expected to be enthusiastic about coming to school, then they should be provided diverse, interesting, challenging, and enjoyable work experiences.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement
23. I enjoy working here.	84.8%
24. I make learning relevant to my students.	95.8%
25. Students enjoy working with teachers.	84.3%
26. Students have fun at school.	82.6%
27. Students make school an exciting place to work.	90.2%
28. I have fun at school.	85.3%
29. Learning can be fun.	99.4%

Curiosity & Creativity

The Condition of Curiosity & Creativity is characterized by inquisitiveness, a strong desire to learn new or interesting things, and an eagerness to satisfy the mind with new discoveries. Allowing and encouraging all participants in the school to question and explore fosters this Condition. Staff should be encouraged to trust and nurture their own curiosity and creativity. One of the greatest obstacles to learning in schools is the routine that can set in day after day, term after term, year after year. All staff members in an educational institution should be open to the same growth and change we expect of students. A genuine learning organization is one in which everyone is inquisitive and innovative.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement
30. At school I am encouraged to be creative.	71.8%
31. Building administration is open to new ideas.	68.1%
32. I enjoy learning new things.	98.9%
33. School inspires me to learn.	83.4%
34. Our school is a dynamic and creative learning environment.	73.7%
35. Staff work in a collaborative manner.	74.4%
36. Meaningful professional development opportunities exist in my district.	53.3%
37. I feel comfortable asking questions in staff meetings.	67.5%

Spirit of Adventure

The Spirit of Adventure is characterized by a person's ability to take on positive, meaningful challenges at school. This Condition is about being supported so that one can take healthy risks, trusting that it is all right to make mistakes and knowing that there is something to be learned from all consequences—positive and negative. Any new idea, strategy, or tactic can pose a risk; for some, it might be making a career change, and for others, simply trying out a new way of doing something. Creativity and innovation spring from the sense of security and support that allows and encourages employees to take healthy chances.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement
38. Setting yearly goals with my supervisor is important for my work.	65.3%
39. I challenge myself to do my job better every day.	96.0%
40. Staff are supportive of each other.	76.8%
41. I am afraid to try something if I think I might fail.	11.7%
42. My colleagues help me learn from my mistakes.	73.0%
43. I am concerned my colleagues will resent me if I am too successful.	13.6%
44. I am excited to tell my colleagues when I do something well.	62.5%

Leadership & Responsibility

The Condition of Leadership & Responsibility allows all members of the staff to have a voice in the school—letting them know they matter and are trusted to make decisions. If all personnel are expected to be responsible members of the school community, they should be trusted enough to have a voice in their departments and in the building as a whole. A school that encourages Leadership & Responsibility embraces and promotes mutual trust and acceptance of individual rights, responsibilities, opinions, and beliefs. All of its members are allowed to practice leadership skills, to understand and accept consequences, and to learn from their mistakes and move forward with greater knowledge and understanding.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement
45. I see myself as a leader.	78.6%
46. My colleagues see me as a leader.	58.4%
47. I have a voice in decision making at school.	52.6%
48. I know the goals my school is working on this year.	69.8%
49. I actively seek out student opinions and ideas.	85.8%
50. I encourage students to make decisions.	97.8%
51. Building administration is willing to learn from staff.	61.5%

Confidence to Take Action

Confidence to Take Action is the extent to which a person believes in themself. This is the Condition for which we should all strive. Schools that foster this Condition encourage all staff members to believe in themselves, trusting that they can be successful and are making a difference. Though society's expectations of schools are high, the confidence needed to meet those expectations must be internal to each member of the staff. Awards, accolades, and other external recognitions for success are welcome, but the intrinsic desire to provide service to the best of one's capabilities must drive effectiveness. Schools that value, respect, and celebrate the opinions and ideas of all staff members foster positive development of everyone's self-worth and confidence.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement
52. I believe I can be successful.	96.8%
53. I believe I can make a difference in this world.	93.9%
54. I feel confident voicing my honest opinions and concerns.	59.6%
55. I work hard to reach my goals.	97.3%
56. I am excited about my future career in education.	71.2%
57. Continuing my education is important for my future.	79.7%
58. I think it is important to set high goals.	95.8%

Administration and Communication

The presence or absence of the 8 Conditions in a school can depend largely on how authority and power are exercised and distributed in the school and district. Effective leadership shares decision-making. Additionally, effective leadership at all levels requires effective communication.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement
59. Central office understands the unique culture of our school.	51.2%
60. We communicate effectively in our building.	49.9%
61. Building administration is visible in our school.	77.7%
62. Building administration knows my professional goals.	56.0%
63. Building administration is accessible to me.	80.3%
64. I communicate effectively with parents.	83.9%

For more information, please contact the Quaglia Institute at support@quagliainstitute.org.