

Data Trends

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WCPSS Teacher Working Conditions Survey Results: 2011-12

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Introduction

Over the past decade, researchers have been looking closely at teacher turnover and why it is occurring. In particular, Thomas Smith and Richard Ingersoll have been using data from the national Schools and Staffing Survey to focus on teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 1999, 2001, 2002; Smith & Ingersoll, 2003). Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found that a “large proportion” of teachers identified that their working conditions were factors in their decision to transfer out of a particular school or leave teaching completely. To that end, monitoring teacher perceptions regarding working conditions is critical to retaining effective teachers. North Carolina Public School’s monitoring tool for this purpose is the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey.

North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions (TWC) Survey

During the spring of 2012, over 100,000 educators across the state took the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions (TWC) survey. The 2012 version of the TWC consists of 85 statements covering various characteristics of the school environment. Teachers rated the extent to which those things were true in their school. The survey items cover eight domains related to work environment: Time, Facilities and Resources; Community Support/Involvement; Managing Student Conduct; Teacher Leadership; School Leadership; Professional Development; and Instructional Practices and Support. Of the 85 items on the 2012 survey,

Abstract

During the spring of 2012, over 100,000 educators across the state took the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions (TWC) survey. WCPSS teachers responded more positively to 46 of the 85 survey items in 2012 than did teachers statewide. On 14 items, WCPSS teachers’ responses were less favorable than those of teachers statewide, and on the remaining 25, there was no statistically significant difference. Results from this survey are discussed.

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most were also included on the 2010 version of the survey, allowing for analysis of change over that two-year span. Copies of the survey, as well as results for schools and districts throughout the state, can be found at <http://www.ncteachingconditions.org/>.

2012 vs. 2010 Results

In 2012, 86% of teachers and principals in WCPSS responded to the survey. This is down from the 2010 administration, when 91% responded. There were some statistically significant increases and decreases in teacher agreement with a number of items over that two year span. Those specific differences are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Results for every survey item are detailed in Appendix A.

Table 1
WCPSS Teachers – statistically significant* increases from 2010 to 2012

	Percent of WCPSS Teachers who Agree	
	2010 (N=9,690; 91% response rate)	2012 (N=9,251; 86% response rate)
Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.	51.0%	59.5%
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.	49.8%	51.6%
Teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc.	81.0%	85.0%
Teachers have sufficient access to a broad range of professional support personnel.	85.3%	86.9%
Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school.	80.0%	82.4%
This school maintains clear, two-way communication with the community.	90.9%	92.3%
This school does a good job of encouraging parent/guardian involvement.	91.4%	92.2%
Teachers provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning.	97.0%	97.5%
Parents/guardians know what is going on in this school.	89.7%	90.9%
Community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	85.6%	87.0%
The community we serve is supportive of this school.	88.9%	90.3%
The faculty work in a school environment that is safe.	93.1%	94.1%
Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.	92.3%	94.4%
Teachers are effective leaders in this school.	87.1%	88.9%
Teachers have an appropriate level of influence on decision making in this school.	70.4%	72.0%
The faculty and staff have a shared vision.	82.5%	83.7%
Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.	93.5%	94.3%
The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.	94.9%	95.6%

*significant is used here to denote differences that are larger than the margin of error that typically affects survey results.

Table 1 (continued)

	Percent of WCPSS Teachers who Agree	
	2010 <i>(N=9,690; 91% response rate)</i>	2012 <i>(N=9,251; 86% response rate)</i>
The school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school.	84.9%	86.5%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about teacher leadership.	86.4%	87.5%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about community support and involvement.	87.6%	89.3%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about new teacher support.	83.8%	85.6%
Sufficient resources are available for professional development in my school.	76.8%	81.6%
An appropriate amount of time is provided for professional development.	76.0%	81.5%
Professional development offerings are data driven.	86.1%	87.5%
Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice.	91.3%	93.1%
Teachers are assigned classes that maximize their likelihood of success with students.	67.4%	69.1%

Table 2
WCPSS Teachers - statistically significant* decreases from 2010 to 2012

	Percent of WCPSS Teachers who Agree	
	2010 (N=9,690; 91% response rate)	2012 (N=9,251; 86% response rate)
Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.	83.6%	79.3%
The non-instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.	64.5%	60.6%
Teachers have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials.	85.1%	83.4%
Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and internet access.	84.4%	77.5%
Teachers have access to reliable communication technology, including phones, faxes and email.	92.3%	91.3%
The school environment is clean and well maintained.	88.5%	76.5%
The reliability and speed of Internet connections in this school are sufficient to support instructional practices.	92.2%	82.6%
Teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction.	85.4%	83.8%
Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.	83.9%	82.8%
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.	73.6%	71.8%
Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.	71.5%	70.1%
Teacher performance is assessed objectively.	90.3%	86.9%
Teachers receive feedback that can help them improve teaching.	86.9%	85.4%
The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.	87.7%	82.9%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about the use of time in my school.	79.2%	77.8%
Professional development is differentiated to meet the individual needs of teachers.	65.0%	63.5%
Teachers have sufficient training to fully utilize instructional technology.	72.3%	70.9%
State assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices.	73.9%	72.6%
Local assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices.	87.8%	82.3%

*significant is used here to denote differences that are larger than the margin of error that typically affects survey results.

Wake County Public Schools vs. North Carolina

Wake County Public Schools had the same response rate as the state on the 2012 TWC survey (86%). In addition to the aforementioned changes since 2010, there were also some statistically significant differences in teacher agreement with specific items when comparing WCPSS teachers to teachers statewide. These differences are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3
2012 TWC items on which WCPSS teacher agreement was significantly higher than NC

	2012 WCPSS <i>(N=9,251; 86% response rate)</i>	2012 North Carolina <i>(N=100,042; 86% response rate)</i>
Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.	79.3%	71.6%
Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.	71.4%	69.6%
The non-instructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.	60.6%	59.3%
Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.	71.8%	69.7%
Teachers have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials.	83.4%	78.6%
Teachers have access to reliable communication technology, including phones, faxes and email.	91.3%	89.8%
Teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc.	85.0%	81.1%
Teachers have sufficient access to a broad range of professional support personnel.	86.9%	83.2%
The reliability and speed of Internet connections in this school are sufficient to support instructional practices.	82.6%	78.1%
Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school.	82.4%	73.3%
This school maintains clear, two-way communication with the community.	92.3%	89.7%
This school does a good job of encouraging parent/guardian involvement.	92.2%	90.1%
Teachers provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning.	97.5%	96.3%
Parents/guardians know what is going on in this school.	90.9%	86.7%
Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	82.2%	73.8%
Community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	87.0%	83.5%
The community we serve is supportive of this school.	90.3%	85.1%
Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.	86.5%	85.1%
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	74.1%	70.9%
The faculty work in a school environment that is safe.	94.1%	93.0%
Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.	94.4%	91.9%
In this school we take steps to solve problems.	83.7%	82.6%
Teachers are effective leaders in this school.	88.9%	87.5%

Table 3 (continued)

	2012 WCPSS <i>(N=9,251; 86% response rate)</i>	2012 North Carolina <i>(N=100,042; 86% response rate)</i>
Teachers have an appropriate level of influence on decision making in this school.	72.0%	68.8%
The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.	95.6%	94.5%
The school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school.	86.5%	83.2%
The faculty are recognized for accomplishments.	86.7%	84.4%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about leadership issues.	81.4%	80.1%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about professional development.	84.8%	82.6%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about teacher leadership.	87.5%	85.6%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about community support and involvement.	89.3%	87.7%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about instructional practices and support.	89.5%	88.2%
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about new teacher support.	85.6%	82.7%
Sufficient resources are available for professional development in my school.	81.6%	79.9%
An appropriate amount of time is provided for professional development.	81.5%	79.5%
Professional development offerings are data driven.	87.5%	84.4%
Professional learning opportunities are aligned with the school's improvement plan.	93.3%	91.1%
Professional development is differentiated to meet the individual needs of teachers.	63.5%	62.4%
Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to work with colleagues to refine teaching practices.	80.3%	79.2%
Professional development is evaluated and results are communicated to teachers.	66.8%	65.0%
Teachers work in professional learning communities to develop and align instructional practices.	95.2%	90.0%
Provided supports (i.e. instructional coaching, professional learning communities, etc.) translate to improvements in instructional practices by teachers.	89.5%	86.9%
Teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction.	93.8%	93.2%
State assessments provide schools with data that can help improve teaching	74.8%	73.0%
State assessments accurately gauge students' understanding of standards.	57.5%	55.4%
Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.	86.3%	84.6%
At this school, we utilize the results from the 2010 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey as a tool for school improvement.	82.5%	78.2%

Table 4
2012 TWC items on which WCPSS teacher agreement was significantly lower than NC

	2012 WCPSS <i>(N=9,251; 86% response rate)</i>	2012 North Carolina <i>(N=100,042; 86% response rate)</i>
Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.	59.5%	61.5%
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.	51.6%	54.6%
Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.	67.4%	69.9%
The school environment is clean and well maintained.	76.5%	84.8%
Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.	83.5%	84.3%
School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	68.2%	70.6%
Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	78.8%	79.9%
The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.	82.9%	85.2%
Professional development deepens teachers' content knowledge.	75.1%	77.2%
Teachers have sufficient training to fully utilize instructional technology.	70.9%	73.7%
State assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices.	72.6%	74.9%
Local assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices.	82.3%	86.5%
Teachers have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery (i.e. pacing, materials and pedagogy).	74.8%	79.5%

Summary and Recommendations

WCPSS 2012 vs. WCPSS 2010

Overall, WCPSS teachers responded more positively to 28 of the 81 survey items in 2012 compared to 2010. On 18 items, responses were less favorable in 2010, and on the remaining 35, there were no statistically significant differences.

In looking at the domains of the survey where patterns of change were evident, all of the items in the Community Support/Involvement and School Leadership domains showed predominantly positive changes between 2010 and 2012. In contrast, the items within the Facilities and Resources domain showed predominantly negative changes.

WCPSS 2012 vs. NC 2012

Overall, WCPSS teachers responded more positively to 46 of the 85 survey items in 2012 than did teachers statewide. On 14 items, WCPSS teachers' responses were less favorable than those of teachers statewide, and on the remaining 25, there was no statistically significant difference.

Within specific survey domains, the items to which WCPSS teachers' responses were consistently more favorable than those statewide were in the areas of Teacher Leadership, School Leadership and Community Support/Involvement. Within the other survey domains, the comparisons between WCPSS and NC were more mixed. With respect to the overall statement "My school is a good place to work and learn," WCPSS teachers also responded more favorably than did teachers statewide.

While the differences highlighted in this analysis were statistically significant, the question remains as to whether those differences are practically meaningful (Kirk, 1996) such that they may require action and attention. Surveys with large numbers of respondents will often demonstrate statistically significant differences between groups which, in terms of actual magnitude, can be quite small (e.g., 1-2 percentage points, etc.). In these situations, benchmarking the results to both internal and external reference points can help illuminate the areas where intervention is most needed. For example, the fact that WCPSS teachers reported a 4 percentage point drop in satisfaction with the amount of time available to collaborate with colleagues may not seem like a large change, but when coupled with the fact that WCPSS teachers are also 8 percentage points behind the state on that metric, it gains additional importance. As another example, WCPSS teachers reported significantly more satisfaction with class sizes in 2012 compared to 2010 (an 8.5 percentage point increase), but WCPSS still lags slightly behind the state on that measure, suggesting that there is even more room for progress in that area.

Looking specifically at the domains where response patterns are more and less favorable for WCPSS as well as the individual factors that are driving that satisfaction (or lack thereof) provides critical targets for recruitment and retention efforts that will keep teachers from leaving schools and the district. The individual school reports available at the TWC website also provide important evaluative information for building-level administrators to help drive their human capital strategies. At the district level, monitoring trends over time as well as benchmarking against the state will allow WCPSS to better evaluate its overall efforts in building and maintaining a top-flight teaching workforce that can equip students with the knowledge and expertise they need to become successful, productive citizens.

References

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- Kirk, R. (1996). Practical significance: A concept whose time has come. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 56, 746-759.
- Smith, T. M., & Ingersoll, R. M. (2003). *Does teacher mentoring matter?* Unpublished manuscript.

Appendix

Figure 1
Percent of teachers and principals indicating agreement with various statements related to time.

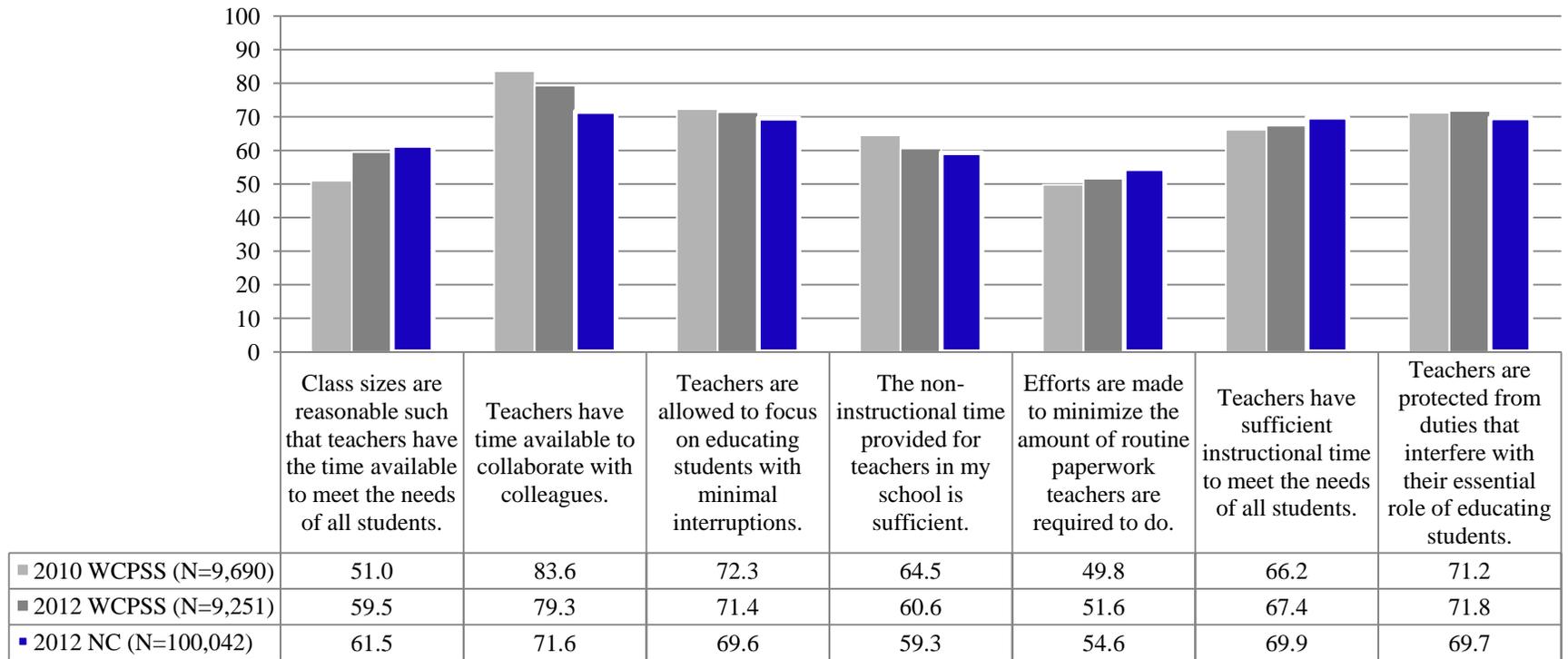


Figure 2
Percent of teachers and principals indicating agreement with various statements related to facilities and resources.

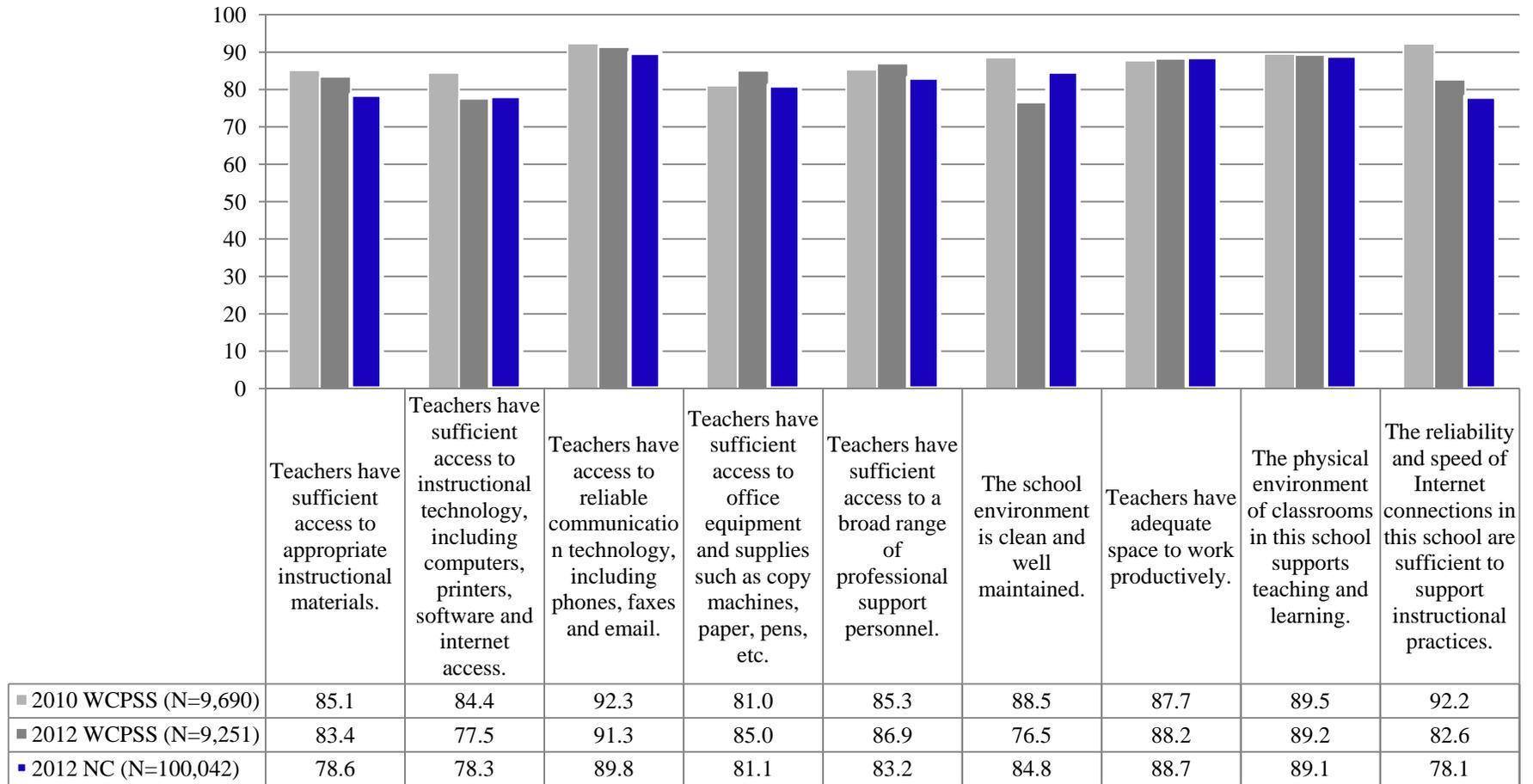


Figure 3

Percent of teachers and principals indicating agreement with various statements related to community support and involvement.

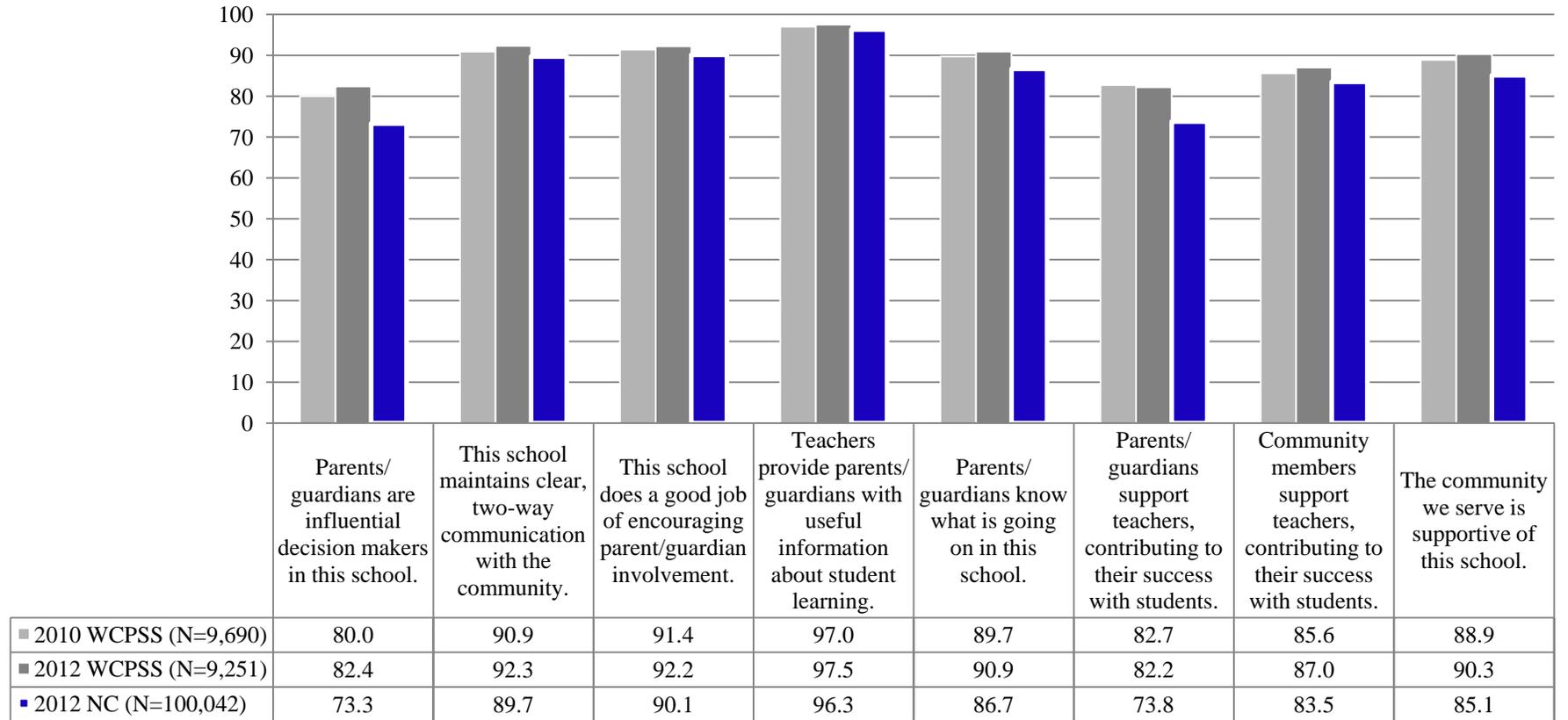


Figure 4
Percent of teachers and principals indicating agreement with various statements related to managing student conduct.

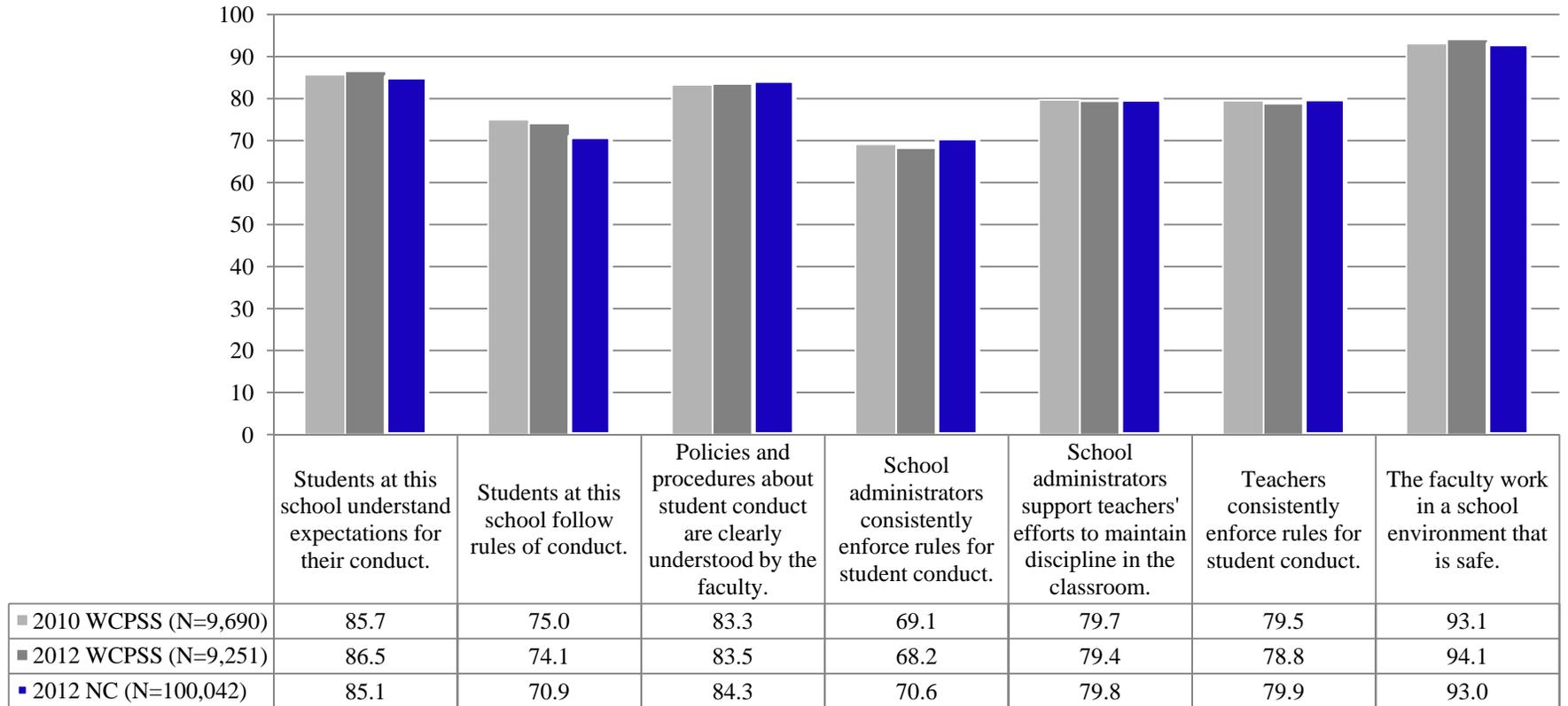


Figure 5
Percent of teachers and principals indicating agreement with various statements related to teacher leadership.

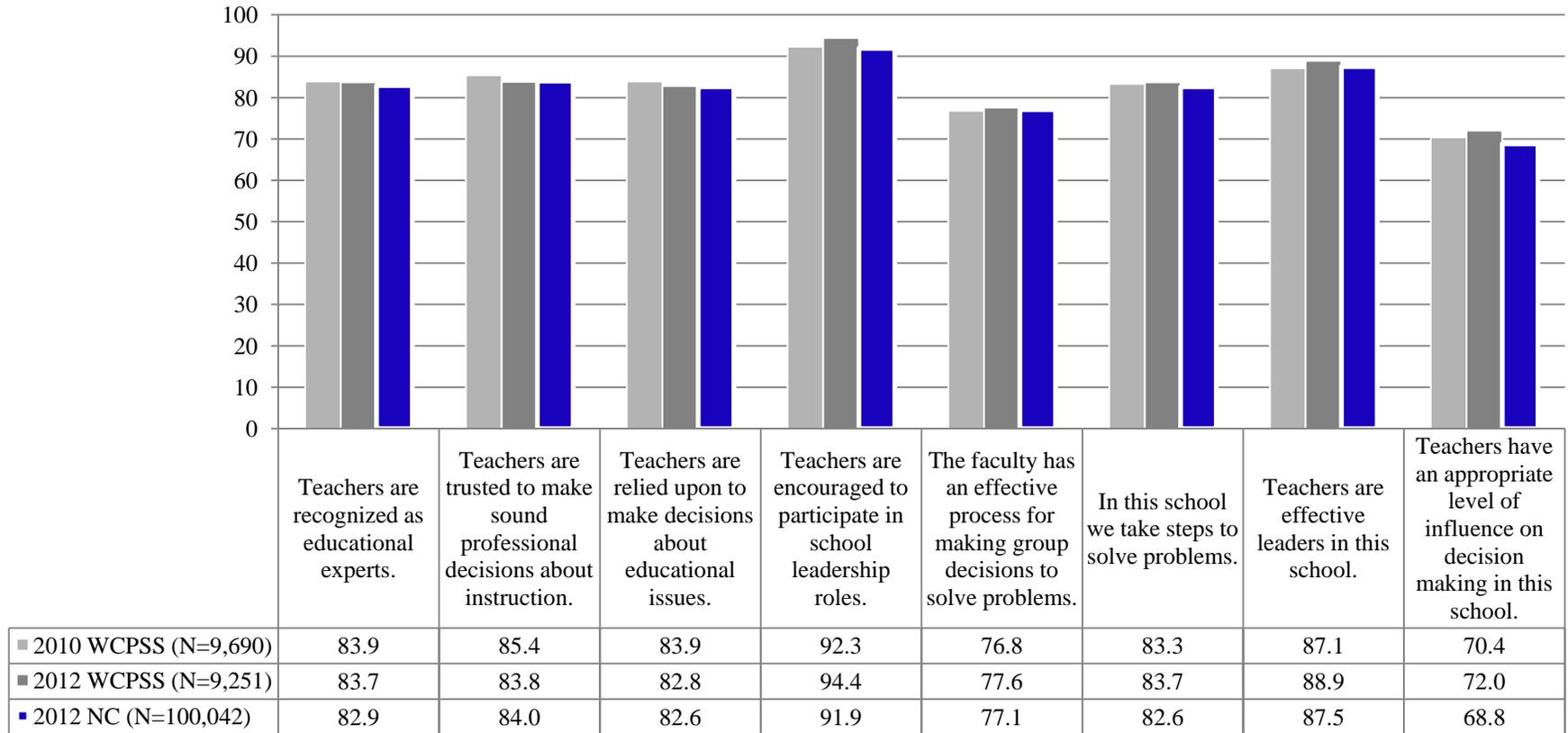


Figure 6
Percent of teachers and principals indicating agreement with various statements related to school leadership.

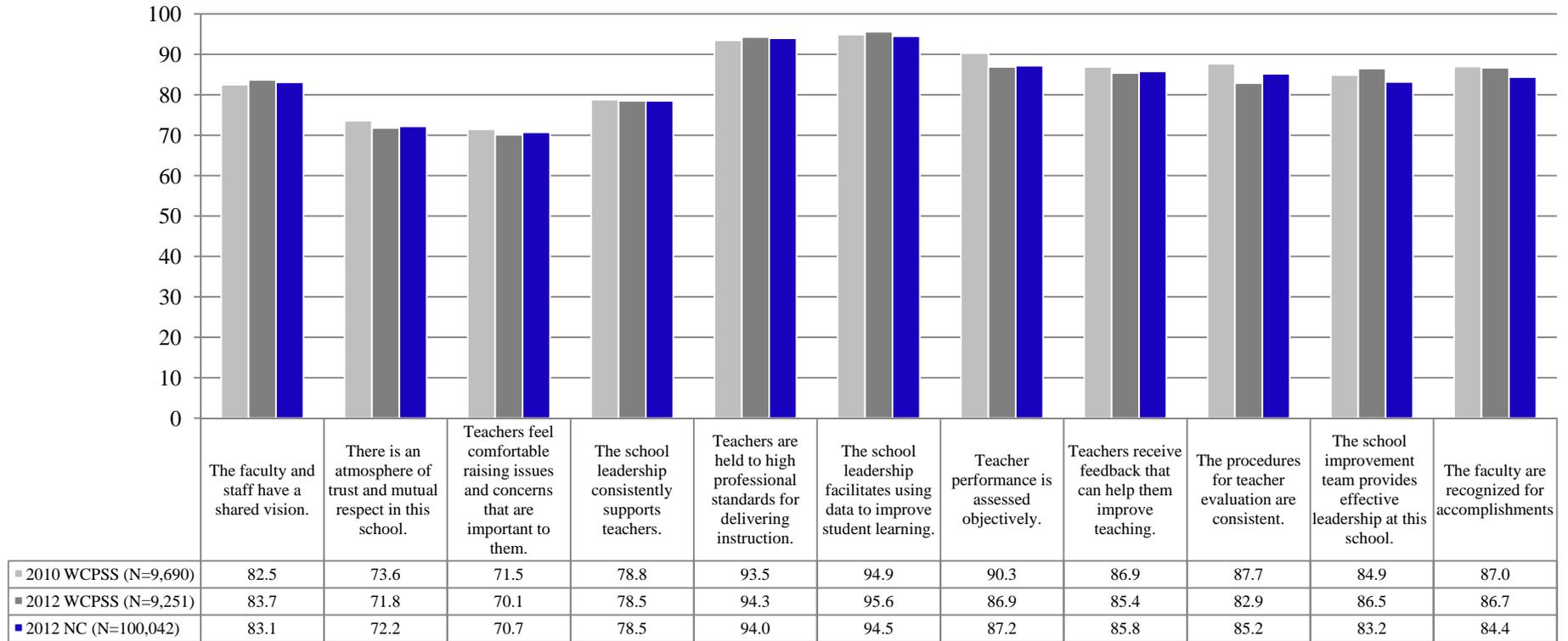


Figure 7
Percent of teachers and principals indicating agreement with various statements related to school leadership and if they make a sustained effort to address teacher concerns.

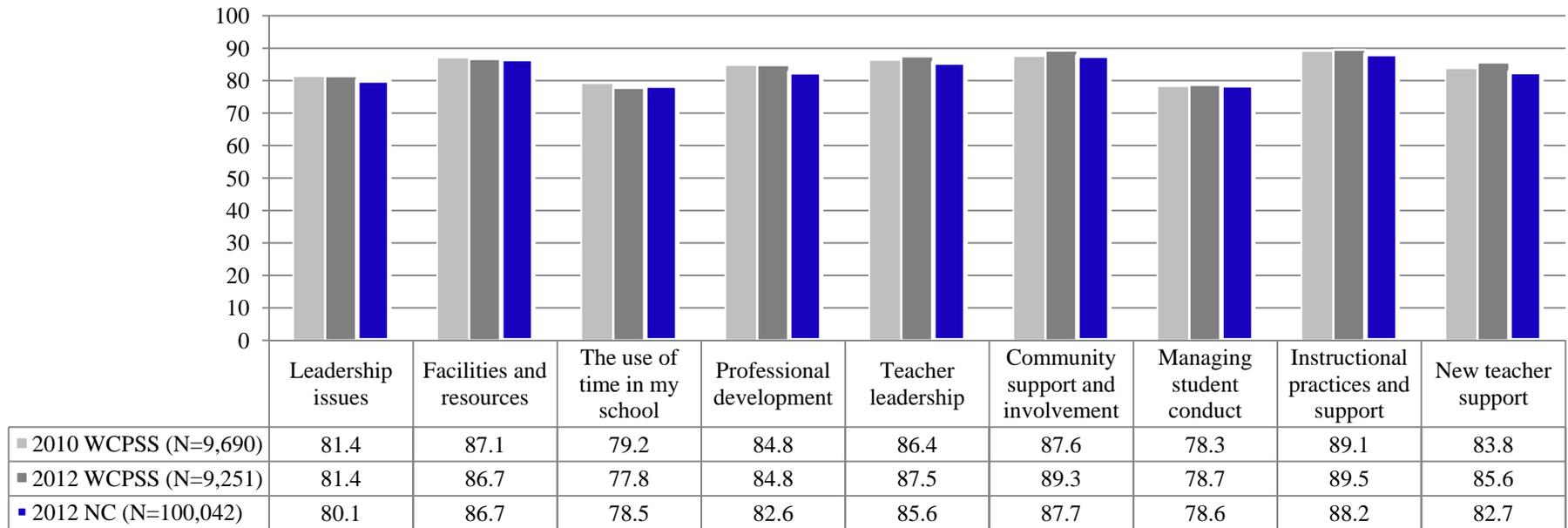


Figure 8
Percent of teachers and principals indicating agreement with various statements related to professional development.

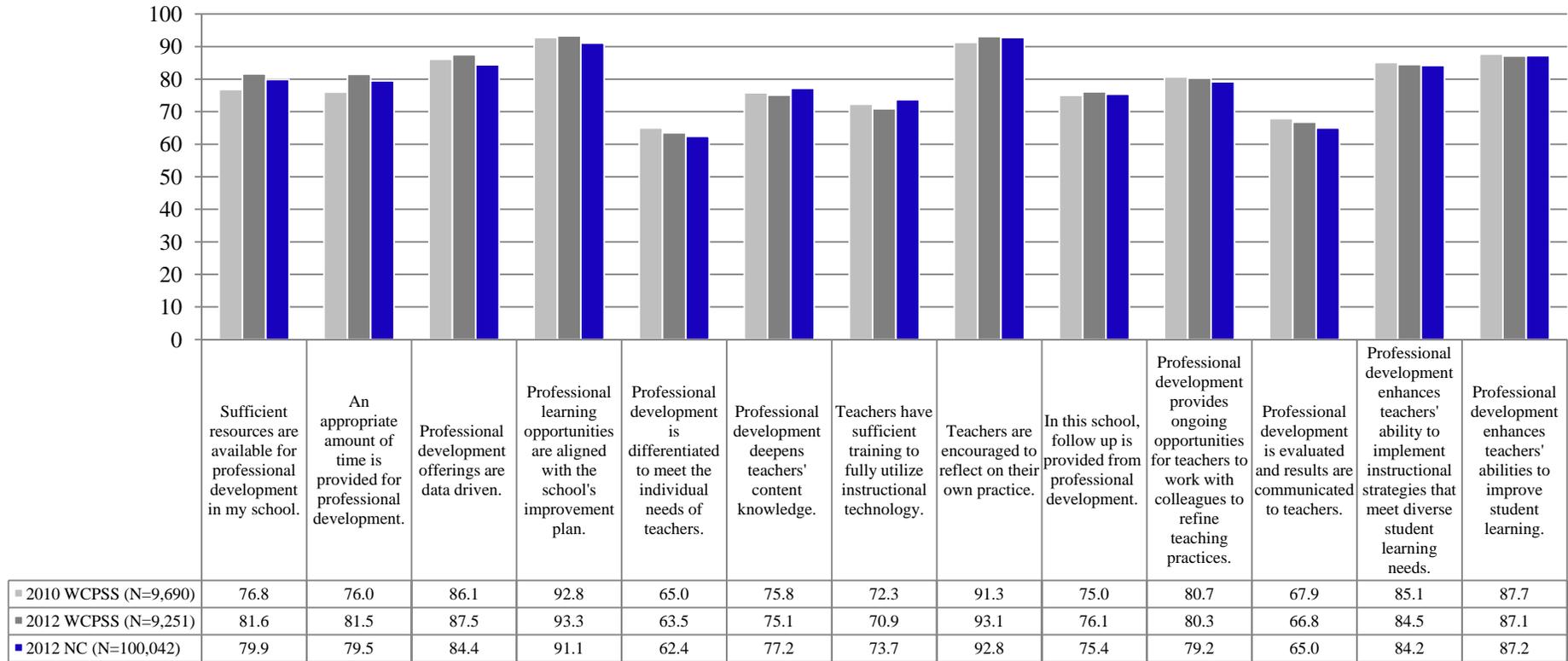
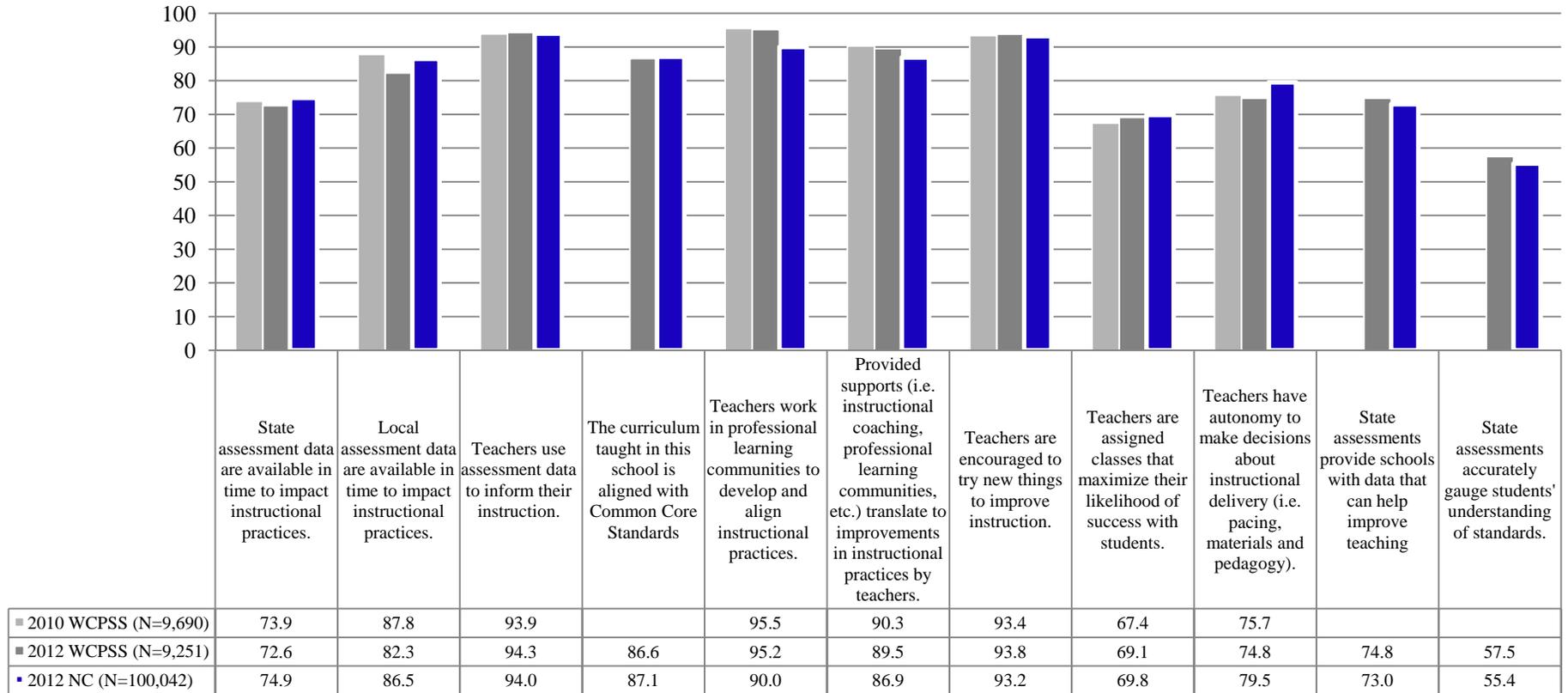
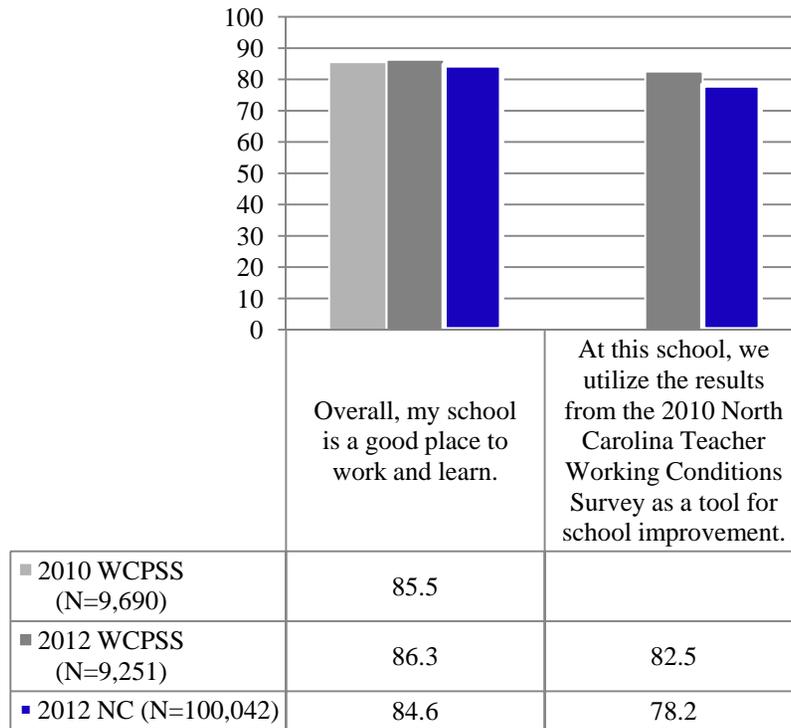


Figure 9
Percent of teachers and principals indicating agreement with various statements related to instructional practices and support.



*Note: Some items only have data for 2012 because they were not included in the survey in 2010

Figure 10
Percent of teachers and principals indicating agreement with various statements related to their school overall.



**Note:* Some items only have data for 2012 because they were not included in the survey in 2010

