Teachers' perceptions of working conditions in K-8 schools vs. middle school

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The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there were statistically significant differences in teachers' perceptions of working conditions between public K-8 and middle school teachers in North Carolina. Teacher working conditions subscale scores were calculated for the five, teacher working conditions domains (time; facilities and resources; leadership; teacher empowerment; and professional development) within the 2006 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS) secondary data set for questions that teachers were provided with the same Likert scale responses. The researcher hypothesized that public K-8 school teachers would report greater satisfaction with working conditions in K-8 schools than public middle school teachers in middle schools in the state of North Carolina as measured by the 2006 NCTWCS. The results indicated significant differences in teachers' perceptions of working conditions by school type for all teacher working conditions domains except professional development. K-8 teachers reported more positive perceptions of all working conditions domains except time when compared to 6-8 middle school teachers. K-8 teachers reported more positive perceptions of all working conditions domains except time and professional development when compared to AMS teachers.

Objectives

The major research hypothesis tested in this research project was: *Public, K-8 school teachers will report greater satisfaction with working conditions in K-8 schools than public middle school teachers in middle schools in the state of North Carolina as measured by the 2006 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey***.** Other hypotheses tested in this research study included:

1- Teacher demographics (race, gender, education level, and years of experience) will not have an effect on teachers' perceptions of working conditions.

2- School characteristics concerning the student body (race, socio-economic status as determined by free and reduced lunch, and academic achievement) will have an effect on teachers' perceptions of working conditions.

Perspective or theoretical framework

Herzberg's identification of working conditions as one of several factors potentially affecting worker dissatisfaction, along with the presence of the accessible, secondary data set from the 2006 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, led this researcher to focus on the hygiene factor, working conditions, as the dependent variable for more extensive research in this study. This researcher analyzed the hygiene factor, working conditions, through the lens of Herzberg's motivational-hygiene theory of worker satisfaction, specifically focusing on the worker dissatisfaction component, or hygiene lens, as well as through the conceptual framework of the teacher working conditions survey, as described by the identification of the five domains or co-dependent variables of working conditions measured in the 2006 NCTWCS. Whereas Herzberg looked at both the motivational and hygiene factors affecting worker satisfaction and dissatisfaction, this study specifically focused on the hygiene factor, working conditions, which

are measured by looking at public K-8 and middle school teachers' responses to the 2006 NCTWCS.

Methods or Techniques

The researcher used SPSS 15.0 for Windows to calculate subscale scores for each of the five teacher working conditions domains which represented the dependent variable for analysis in this study. Subscale scores were calculated to combine multiple survey questions in the same Likert-scale format for each teacher working conditions domain. Means and standard deviations for the subscale scores were calculated, analyzed, and compared by school type first for Group 1, which consisted of 6-8 middle and K-8 teachers, and then, for Group 2, which consisted of AMS and K-8 school teachers. Descriptive statistics from the subscale scores of Group 1 and Group 2 were then compared to determine if there were significant differences in subscale means and standard deviations between the two groups.

Next, the researcher analyzed independent sample t-tests to compare means for all teacher working conditions domain subscale scores by school type (K-8, 6-8 middle, and AMS). Correlations were then calculated to determine: the relationships among teacher working conditions domain subscale means, between teacher working conditions domain subscale means and school type, between teacher working conditions domain subscale means and teacher demographic variables, and between teacher working conditions domain subscale means and student/school characteristics. Teacher demographic and student/school characteristics variables that were significantly correlated to a teacher working conditions domain subscale means were run as covariates via one-way ANCOVA tests. Grade configuration served as the independent variable, or fixed factor, for each ANCOVA. Teacher demographic and student/school characteristics variables were run as co-variates for each ANCOVA. ANCOVAs estimate the variance in teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains caused by covariates. Otherwise, the variance in teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains might be attributed to the primary independent variable examined in this study, grade configuration. ANCOVA results could yield potential rival alternative hypotheses if variance in the dependent variable, teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains, was caused by covariates.

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Data analysis for this study began by sorting the 2006 NCTWCS data set into a file that contained only survey data for the K-8 and middle school teachers that completed the 2006 NCTWCS. Only K-8 and middle school teachers in which their schools met the 40% response rate guideline were included in the 2006 NCTWCS data set. This study's sample consisted of 13,433 teachers which included 10,520 6-8 middle school teachers, 1,813 K-8 teachers, and 1,100 AMS (6-8, 3-8, 4-8, 5-8) teachers.

This study marked the first time data from any administration of the NCTWCS had been analyzed by school type comparing K-8 to 6-8 middle, and K-8 to AMS teachers' data. Data analyzed by school type from all prior administrations of the NCTWCS in 2002, 2004, and 2006 compared elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high school (9-12) teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains. Even though the percentage of total teachers in the sample responding from K-8 (13.5%) and middle school configurations other than 6-8 (8.2%) was quite small when compared to the 6-8 middle school group (78.3%), it was still important to include

and analyze the valuable data from these experts on their perceptions of teacher working conditions in their schools. Such an analysis could highlight any emerging trends or patterns as many large, urban districts around the country have either converted or have begun to consider the possibility of converting middle schools to K-8 schools (Abella, 2005; Anfara & Buehler, 2005; George, 2005; Look, 2001; Mizell, 2005).

Data Source

The pre-existing 2006 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey and its corresponding secondary data set were analyzed by this researcher. There were several reasons this survey and its secondary data set were chosen. The fact that this survey has been administered and revised on three different occasions (2002, 2004, and 2006) by the Center for Teaching Quality for the Office of the Governor of the State of North Carolina was a deciding factor in selecting the 2006 NCTWCS and its secondary data set for inclusion in this research project. Another reason for the selection of the 2006 NCTWCS and its secondary data set for this research project was the sample for the 2006 NCTWCS survey from its prior administrations by the Center for Teaching Quality for the Office of the Governor for the State of North Carolina included all public school teachers in the state of North Carolina.

Results and Conclusions

A Comparison of Teacher Working Conditions Domain Subscale Means by School Type

The data reported indicated that for the teacher working conditions domains of: facilities and resources, teacher empowerment, leadership, and professional development, K-8 teachers' perceptions of working conditions were more positive than 6-8 middle school teachers' perceptions of working conditions. Only for the time domain did 6-8 middle school teachers report greater satisfaction with working conditions than K-8 teachers. T-tests for independent samples indicated that the differences in means for teacher working conditions domain subscale means were statistically significant at $p \leq .000$, two-tailed, for all teacher working conditions domains except professional development. However, when teachers' perceptions of working conditions were compared by school type including other middle grade configuration (3-8, 4-8, and 5-8) teacher data with the 6-8 middle school teacher data in comparison to K-8 teachers, the number of teacher working conditions domains in which K-8 teachers' perceptions of working conditions were more positive decreased to three (facilities and resources, teacher empowerment, and leadership). Once again, the only teacher working conditions domain subscale mean for which t-tests indicated differences in means were not statistically significant was the differences in means for the professional development domain. Therefore, K-8 teachers' perceptions of working conditions were more positive than 6-8 middle school teachers' perceptions for each of the teacher working conditions domains except the time domain. Likewise, K-8 teachers' perceptions of working conditions were more positive than AMS teachers' perceptions for the facilities and resources, teacher empowerment, and leadership teacher working conditions domains. Therefore, differences in teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domain subscale means were in part due to school type for K-8 and middle school teachers.
K-8 teachers, as indicated by teacher working conditions subscale means, reported the greatest satisfaction with leadership (3.92) of the five teacher working conditions domains (1=strongly

disagree, 5=strongly agree). The leadership domain subscale mean was also the highest domain subscale mean of all teacher working conditions subscale means by school type. The K-8 leadership subscale mean for this study was higher than the elementary school leadership subscale mean (3.68) and middle school leadership subscale mean (3.47) found by Hirsch and Emerick with Church and Fuller (2007b) in their analysis of data from the 2006 NCTWCS by school type.

The next highest teacher working conditions domain subscale mean was also reported by K-8 teachers for the facilities and resources domain (3.76). The facilities and resources domain subscale mean for elementary schools was 3.71, and 3.64 for middle schools, according to the findings of Hirsch and Emerick with Church and Fuller (2007b). The highest teacher working conditions domain subscale mean for 6-8 middle and AMS teachers was the mean for facilities and resources (3.68). The facilities and resources domain subscale mean was also the highest domain subscale mean for middle schools in the prior analysis of the 2006 NCTWCS by Hirsch et al. The difference between highest domain subscale means by school type for this study was .24 for scores ranging from one to five on a Likert scale, compared to a .07 difference in highest domain subscale means by school type for elementary and middle schools as found by Hirsch et al. in their prior analysis of the 2006 NCTWCS. Even though K-8 teachers' perceptions of working conditions were higher for all teacher working conditions domains except for time, the differences in domain subscale means was small. Therefore, the variation in teachers' perceptions of working conditions attributed to school type and whether or not teachers worked at K-8 or middle schools was similarly small.

The teacher working conditions domain that teachers reported the least satisfaction with for all school types was time. In fact, the time domain mean subscale score (3.03) for K-8 teachers was the lowest teacher working conditions subscale mean for all school types. The time domain subscale means for 6-8 middle (3.11) and AMS (3.12) were also the lowest subscale means for each of these school types. Hirsch and Emerick with Church and Fuller (2007b) also found that teachers' perceptions of time were the lowest for any teacher working conditions domain for elementary (3.09) and middle school teachers (3.19). According to Hirsch et al., teachers' perceptions of time were also the least positive of all teacher working conditions domains for the 2002 and 2004 NCTWCS. However, the difference between time subscale means in this study were quite small by school type (.08 and .09 between K-8 and 6-8 middle school teachers, and between K-8 and AMS teachers). There was only a difference of .10 for elementary and middle school teachers in the analysis of teachers' perceptions of the use of time by Hirsch et al. in the 2006 NCTWCS.

The second lowest teacher working conditions domain subscale mean by school type for this study and the 2006 NCTWCS according to the findings of Hirsch and Emerick with Church and Fuller (2007b) was for teachers' perceptions of the time domain. In this study, the time domain subscale mean for 6-8 middle school teachers was (3.11) compared to the time domain subscale mean of (3.19) for middle school teachers from the 2006 NCTWCS. The second lowest teacher working conditions domain subscale mean for K-8 teachers in this study was in the professional development domain (3.37).

Correlations

Correlations were calculated among teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains, and between teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains and school type, teacher demographics, and student/school characteristics. Significant correlations were found among all teacher working condition domains. Correlation results also indicated that there were significant relationships between school type for K-8 and AMS teachers and each of the teacher working conditions domain subscale means except professional development. Teacher ethnicity was the only teacher demographic characteristic that yielded significant correlations for all working condition domains. Significant correlations were also found between the 2005-06 ABC School Recognitions (as determined by North Carolina's ABC's of Public Education) and all teacher working conditions domains. Significant correlations were also found between the percentage of students' proficient on the 2005-06 Reading End-of-Grade test, a school characteristic, and all teacher working conditions domains.

Correlations among Teacher Working Conditions Domains

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Correlation results indicated the multicolinearity of all teacher working conditions domain subscale means. Multicolinearity means there were multiple significant relationships among teacher working conditions domain subscale means. An examination of the significant relationships among teacher working conditions domain subscale means is important because the multicolinearity of teacher working conditions domain subscale means could represent an alternative rival hypothesis that influenced teachers' perceptions of working conditions that might otherwise be attributed to school type.

Hirsch (2005a; 2005b) also discovered the multicolinearity among teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains in his analyses of the 2004 SCTWCS and the 2004 NCTWCS. Hirsch found significant correlations among all teacher working conditions domains at $p<.01$, two-tailed in his analyses of the 2004 SCTWCS and 2004 NCTWCS data for all survey respondents. Hirsch explained that the "interconnectedness" among teacher working conditions domains could lead to a "ripple effect", causing changes in teachers' perceptions of multiple teacher working conditions domains when efforts are made to improve teachers' perceptions of one working conditions domain (p. 14). Hence, efforts by school administrators to improve teachers' perceptions of one teacher working conditions domain could result in more positive teachers' perceptions of additional teacher working conditions domains as well due to the "interconnectedness" among teacher working conditions domains. Failure to estimate the variance caused by the "interconnectedness" of teacher working conditions domains could result in the variance of teachers' perceptions of working conditions being mistakenly attributed to independent variables such as school type in this study.

Results from this study indicated the strongest significant correlation (.780) among teacher working conditions domain subscale means was between leadership and teacher empowerment. Strong significant correlations between teacher working conditions domain subscale means implies that when teachers' perceptions of one teacher working conditions domain change, teachers' perceptions of the other domain with which it has a significant relationship will likely change in the same direction. Hirsch (2005a; 2005b) also found a strong,

significant correlation between leadership and teacher empowerment in his analyses of the 2004 NCTWCS data (.803) and 2004 SCTWCS (.788) for all survey respondents. Hirsch offered one explanation for the strong correlation and subsequent relationship between teachers' perceptions of the leadership and teacher empowerment domains by stating "teachers who felt empowered to make decisions about their classroom and school work have positive views of their school leader" (p.14).

The weakest correlation (.497) among teacher working conditions domain subscale means for this study was between time and professional development. The fact that results indicated teachers were least positive with the use of time in their schools could have led to a stronger correlation between teachers' perceptions of the use of time and professional development since professional development activities often reduce available teacher planning time. However, this was not the case according to the results from this analysis. The weakest correlations found by Hirsch (2005a; 2005b) in his analyses of the 2004 SCTWCS and the 2004 NCTWCS were between the time and teacher empowerment domains (.360 and .458 respectively). Hence, the weakest correlation among teacher working conditions domains for K-8, 6-8 middle, and AMS teachers was stronger than the weakest correlations for the administrations of the 2004 SCTWCS and 2004 NCTWCS. Again, this difference could be attributed to school type since only K-8, 6-8 middle, and AMS teachers were included in the sample for this study.

In summary, all correlations among teacher working conditions domain subscale means were positive and ranged from .497 to .780. Strong significant correlations between teacher working conditions domain subscale means indicated that when teachers' perceptions of one teacher working conditions domain changed, teachers' perceptions for the other domain with which it had a significant relationship likely changed in the same direction. The closer correlation coefficients were to -1 or 1, the stronger the relationship was between variables.

The relationship between teacher demographic variables and teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains

Results indicated that teacher demographics did have an effect on teachers' perceptions of working conditions in many cases. This is contrary to the findings of Hirsch (2005a; 2005b) when he found that:

> Race, gender, highest degree earned, means of preparation (lateral entry versus traditionally preparation), and National Board Certification status do not appear to affect teachers' perceptions of any working conditions domain. (p. 12-13)

In this study, there were multiple, statistically significant relationships between teacher demographic variables and teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains. Significant relationships between teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains and teacher demographic variables likely influenced teachers' perceptions of these teacher working conditions domains. The direction in which teachers' perceptions of working conditions domains changed was determined by the negative or positive correlations found when correlations were calculated. Ethnicity was the only teacher demographic variable that results indicated statistically significant relationships with all teacher working conditions domains at

$p \leq .000$, two-tailed. All correlations between ethnicity and teacher working condition domains were negative, indicating that when one variable increased, the other decreased. Thus, when the percentage of teachers from a particular ethnic group increased or decreased, teachers' perceptions of working conditions were likely to change in the opposite direction of the change in the percentage of teachers from a particular ethnic group. The strongest correlation (-.084) between all teacher demographic variables and teacher working conditions domains was between ethnicity and professional development. The correlation between ethnicity and professional development indicated that there was a strong relationship between teachers' ethnicity and teachers' perceptions of professional development offered at their school. The negative correlation indicated that as the percentage of teachers from an ethnic group increased or decreased for this study's sample, teachers' perceptions of professional development at their school changed in the opposite direction.

There were seven additional significant relationships between teacher demographic variables and teacher working conditions domains (gender and time; gender and facilities and resources; educational training prior to beginning teaching and time; highest degree earned and teacher empowerment; highest degree earned and professional development; years as an educator and leadership; years at a school and time). All significant correlations between teacher demographic variables and teacher working conditions domains ranged from -.084 (ethnicity and professional development) to .064 (gender and time). Results indicated the variable of time had the most statistically significant relationships (four) with teacher demographic variables. The leadership variable had the fewest number (one) of statistically significant relationships with teacher demographic variables. The only teacher demographic variable that did not have at least one statistically significant relationship with a teacher working condition domain was National Board Certification status of teachers.

One potential alternative rival hypothesis to this study's finding that teacher demographic variables often have significant relationships with teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains may be school type. Hirsch referred to this variable as school level (2005a; 2005b). Hirsch explained in his analyses of data from the 2004 SCTWCS and 2004 NCTWCS that "while background does not appear to influence teacher's perceptions of their working conditions, the school level at which they teach does" (p.14; p.13). Hirsch found that elementary teachers reported greater satisfaction with teacher working conditions than secondary (high school) teachers. However, no references were made in the final reports for the 2004 SCTWCS and 2004 NCTWCS regarding significant differences between elementary and middle school teachers' perceptions of working conditions domains. Hence, in this study, the variable of school type (K-8, 6-8 middle, and AMS) may be the reason for differences in teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains and not teacher demographic variables since previous studies revealed no differences in teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains based on teacher demographic variables.

All teacher demographic variables which showed significant relationships with teacher working conditions domains were entered as covariates via one-way ANCOVAs. Significant differences were still found in teacher working conditions domain subscale means by school type when controlling for teacher demographics as covariates. However, the estimated variance in teacher working conditions subscale means explained by selected teacher demographic variables

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was quite small as indicated by η^2 (.001 to .007). The conclusion that the estimated variance in teacher working conditions subscale means explained by selected teacher demographic variables was quite small was based on the definition of η^2 by Green and Salkind (2005). Green and Salkind define small, medium, and large effect sizes as .01, .06, and .14 respectfully. Hence, very little variance in teachers' perceptions of working conditions by school type can be attributed to teacher demographic variables even though there were significant relationships between some teacher demographic variables and teacher working conditions domain subscale means.

The results of correlations calculated between the percentage of students' eligible for free and reduced lunch at a school and teacher working conditions domain subscale means indicated significant relationships between the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch and three teacher working conditions domains (facilities and resources, teacher empowerment, and leadership) at $p \leq .000$, two-tailed. All correlations were positive ranging from .057 to .126. Since the correlation coefficients were so low (closer to 0 on a scale of -1 to 1) for each significant relationship between the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch and teacher working conditions domains, it is not likely large differences in teachers' perceptions of working conditions domains by school type were prompted by the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch.

The Relationship between Student/School Characteristics Variables and Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Working Conditions Domains

The results of correlations run between teacher working conditions domain subscale means and student/school characteristic variables indicated that student/school characteristic variables affected teachers' perceptions of working conditions in most cases. The relationships between student/school characteristic variables measuring socio-economic status of students and student/school academic achievement, and teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains were examined in this study. The socio-economic status of students was measured by the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch. Student/school academic achievement was measured by 2005-06 ABC School Recognition and percentage of students' proficient on the 2005-06 Reading End-of-Grade test.

Results also indicated significant relationships between the student/school characteristics variables: (a) 2005-06 ABC School Recognition, and (b) percentage of students proficient on the 2005-06 Reading End-of-Grade test, and the teacher working conditions domain subscale means. Results indicated negative correlations for all significant relationships between 2005-06 ABC School Recognition and teacher working conditions domains. However, correlations were weak ranging from -.174 to -.045. Since the correlation coefficients were so low (closer to 0 on a scale of -1 to 1) for each significant relationship between 2005-06 ABC School Recognition and teacher working conditions domain subscale means, it was not likely large differences in teachers' perceptions of working conditions domains by school type were prompted by 2005-06 ABC School Recognition. Likewise weak correlations should result in very little variance in teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains as indicated by the results from this study.

However, significant correlations between teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains and student/school characteristic variables such as 2005-06 ABC School Recognition should be closely examined as evidenced by the results of the 2004 NCTWCS revealed by Hirsch (2005a). Hirsch noted that:

> Teachers in poorer performing schools (as indicated by the three measures of achievement: AYP status, ABC status, and ABC growth) have more negative perceptions of their working conditions. More positive perceptions of working conditions in higher performing schools were found in all domains, except time. (p.5)

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Results from this study indicated positive, significant correlations between percentage of students' proficient on the 2005-06 Reading End-of-Grade test and the teacher working conditions domains. Again, correlations were weak ranging from .038 to .175. Since the correlation coefficients were so low between the percentage of students proficient on the 2006 Reading End-of-Grade test and the teacher working conditions domain subscale means, it is not likely large differences in teachers' perceptions of working conditions domains by school type can be attributed to the percentage of students proficient on the 2006 Reading End-of-Grade test at a school.

All student/school characteristics variables which showed significant relationships with teacher working conditions domains were run as covariates via one-way ANCOVAs. Significant differences were still found in teacher working conditions domain subscale means by school type when controlling for student/school characteristics as covariates. The estimated variance in teacher working conditions domain subscale means explained by select student/school characteristics variables (as indicated by η^2) ranged from (.001 to .030). The estimated variance explained for teacher working conditions domain subscale means was quite small except for the significant relationships between 2005-06 ABC School Recognition and facilities and resources, and percentage of students proficient on the 2005-06 Reading End-of-Grade test and facilities and resources, where η^2=.030. Hence, three percent of the variance in teachers' perceptions of the facilities and resources domain subscale mean can be attributed to 2005-06 ABC School Recognition and the percentage of students proficient on the 2005-06 Reading-End-of-Grade test at a school. However, for all other significant relationships between student/school characteristic variables run as covariates and teacher working conditions domain subscale means, less than three percent, and in most cases, less than one percent, of estimated variance in teachers' perceptions of working conditions was explained by student/school characteristics variables.

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Only a small portion of the variance in teachers' perceptions of working conditions domains could be attributed to student/school characteristics even when there were significant relationships according to the results from this study. Instead, differences in teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains might be due to other factors. Other factors that may have affected teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains as suggested in past teacher working conditions studies (Hirsch & Emerick with Church & Fuller, 2006c; Berry & Fuller with Williams & Lobacz, 2007, Fall; Hirsch & Emerick with Church & Fuller, 2007b) include: grade level (referred to as school type in this study), school size, student ethnicity, and type of district (urban, suburban, rural).

Analysis of teacher respondent data for future administrations of the NCTWCS should be taken a step further, beyond the analysis of teacher respondent data by grade configuration for K-8 and middle school teachers, and include an examination of the relationship between the grade taught by teachers and teachers' perceptions of working conditions. It could be that teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions domains vary by the specific grade level taught by teachers. The results from previous teacher working conditions studies (Hirsch, 2005a, 2005b) indicated that grade level (defined as elementary, middle, and high school; referred to as school type in this study) has influenced teachers' perceptions of working conditions. However, these studies have not looked at the potential relationships between the specific grade level taught by teachers and teachers' perceptions of teacher working conditions.

An ANCOVA could be run to estimate the explained variance in teachers' perceptions of all teacher working conditions domains for grade level taught by teachers. Consequences for future studies with similar research designs to this study could be that K-5 elementary teachers' responses could be compared to teachers' responses from kindergarten through fifth grade at K-8 schools. This analysis could partially explain why K-8 teachers' perceptions were more positive than 6-8 middle school teachers' perceptions for four teacher working conditions domains, and why K-8 teachers' perceptions were more positive than AMS teachers for three teacher working conditions domains. The SECTQ also found in its analysis of the 2006 NCTWCS that "elementary teachers had more positive perceptions of working conditions than secondary teachers" (p. 4). In the three previous administrations of the NCTWCS, teachers have not been asked a teacher demographic question for the purpose of gathering data on the grade level taught by teachers in order to protect the confidentiality of survey respondents. Hence, the CTQ (which conducts statistical analyses of NCTWCS data) has yet to test for correlations between teachers' perceptions of working conditions and the grade level at which a teacher currently teaches as this researcher defines the term grade level.

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