

A Playbook for School & District Leaders

Teacher Recruitment & Retention

Attract and Keep Your Most Effective Educators

by Jill Nyhus with Jason Culbertson

Excerpts

- *Introduction*
- *Chapter 1: 16 Truths about Recruitment & Retention*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to the Playbook: Why Teacher Recruitment Needs to Change	1
16 Truths about the State of Teacher Recruitment & Retention	9
Opportunity for New Learning & Reflection: The 16 Truths.....	10
The 16 Truths Quiz.....	11
I. Teachers Matter	12
II. Building a Year-Round Recruitment System	18
III. The Reality of Attracting Today's Candidates	26
IV. The Right Fit	35
V. Building a Retention Mindset with Recruitment	39
How to Build an Effective Recruitment & Retention System	42
The Five Characteristics a Successful Recruitment and Retention System.....	43
I. The Case for A Year-Round Teacher Recruitment System	46
II. The What: Components of Each System	52
III. The Who: Stakeholders in the System.....	58
IV. Keeping the Candidate's Journey in Mind	64
V. The Recruitment System Calendar	65
VI. Launch & Run Your Executive Working Group (EWG)	66
VII. Using Data to Unpack Trends and Lessons Learned	75
VIII. Onboarding Teams: Building Connection & Belonging	75
IX. Creating a Pipeline: Short- And Long-Term Strategies	77
Attract the Candidates You Need: How to Build a Successful Recruitment Campaign.....	79
How to Build a Successful Recruitment Campaign	80
Step 1: Define Your Ideal Candidates.....	82
Step 2: Define a Campaign Theme and Hashtags.....	86
Step 3: Gather Testimonials From Your Teachers	86
Step 4: Take or Gather Beautiful, High-Quality Photography of Your District.....	88
Step 5: Create/Refresh and Launch Website.....	89
Step 6: Create Print Brochures	93
Step 7: Produce Compelling Recruitment Videos	96
Step 8: Tune Up Your Applicant Management System	99
Step 9: Create and Post Job Postings.....	100
Step 10: Attend & Host Events	105
Step 11: Digital & Online Advertising	111
Step 12: Spread the Word in Your Local Community.....	113
Step 13: Review Campaign Data Regularly	115



From Screening to Hiring: Tools & Best Practices	119
I. Checklist for Selection, Screening & Onboarding	120
II. Calibrating on Screening Rubric & Process.....	121
III. Screening Options	122
IV. Interviews	127
V. Use of Predictor Assessments	137
VI. Demonstration Lessons	137
VII. Reference Checks	141
VIII. Welcoming New Hires.....	144
Retention Success: What Makes Effective Teachers Stay	145
Planning for Retention	146
I. Benefits of Teacher Retention.....	146
II. Levers for Retention	147
III. How Principals Can Be Proactive About Retention	153
Appendices.....	163
Appendix A: Teacher Recruitment Self-Assessment.....	164
Appendix B: Teacher Retention Self-Assessment.....	167
Appendix C: Data Collection Form for Teacher Recruitment & Retention	169
Appendix D: Teacher Feedback Survey.....	172
Appendix E: New Teacher Hire Entrance Survey.....	176
Appendix F: Teacher Exit Survey	180
Appendix G: Executive Working Group 5-Star Meeting Template.....	185
Appendix H: Year-Round Recruitment & Retention Plan	188
Appendix I-A: Onboarding Team Training: Agenda	195
Appendix I-B: Onboarding Team Training: Presentation Slides.....	196
Appendix I-C: Onboarding Team Training: Tapping Activity	202
Appendix J: District/School Stock Photography Library Specifications	203
Appendix K: Recruitment Video: Planning Template.....	205
Appendix L: Recruitment Video: Sample Statement of Work/Request for Quote Recruitment	212
Appendix M: Recruitment Video: Video Rating Sheet.....	213
Appendix N: Recruitment Video: Adult Media Release.....	214
Bibliography	215



INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAYBOOK: WHY TEACHER RECRUITMENT NEEDS TO CHANGE

The Recruitment & Retention Challenge at Hand

Research shows that teachers have the largest in-school impact on student achievement (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Teacher quality has a greater impact on student outcomes than any other factor, including race, socioeconomic status, and prior academic record (Schmidt, Young, Cassidy, Haiwen, & Laguarda, 2017). In fact, “having three years of good teachers (85th percentile) in a row would overcome the average achievement deficit between low-income kids on free or reduced-price lunch and others” (Hanushek & Rivken, 2012).

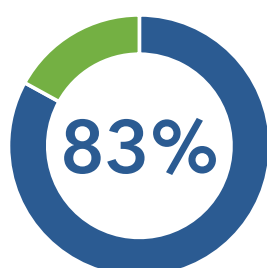
Yet many districts are struggling—really struggling in some cases—to find enough effective teachers to fill their vacancies each year. According to an October 2018 jobs report from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), there are 389,000 fewer teachers in the K-12 workforce than are needed to keep up with a growing student population (Jacobson, 2018a).

Recently, nearly every state in the U.S. has decried teacher shortages. In South Carolina, for example, there were simply not enough qualified teachers to fill positions during the 2017–2018 school year: 6,700 South Carolina teachers left their positions after the 2016–2017 school year, with 4,900 leaving teaching altogether (CERRA, 2018). Recently, the Hawaii Department of Education announced it was facing critical teacher employment challenges, citing that the state’s five-year retention rate is only 51%

and that they are having a difficult time filling positions: even after the start of the 2018–2019 school year, there were still more than 500 teacher vacancies (Harper, 2018a). In Utah, Governor Gary Herbert addressed his state’s teacher shortage recently [with the following plea to his fellow residents](#): “Consider becoming a teacher; it is a noble profession.” (Egan, 2018).

Results from [Gallup’s 2018 Survey of K-12 School District Superintendents](#) showed that “finding and keeping highly-qualified educators rounds out the top two challenges superintendents face today,” with 65% of rural superintendents strongly agreeing that this is a huge challenge (Ascione, 2018a).

District leaders across the country, whether in large, small, or rural districts, are struggling to find and retain the teachers they need.



*of superintendents surveyed
struggle to find and retain
talented teachers.*

[Gallup’s 2018 Survey of K-12 School District Superintendents](#)



The 'Why' Behind the Teacher Shortage

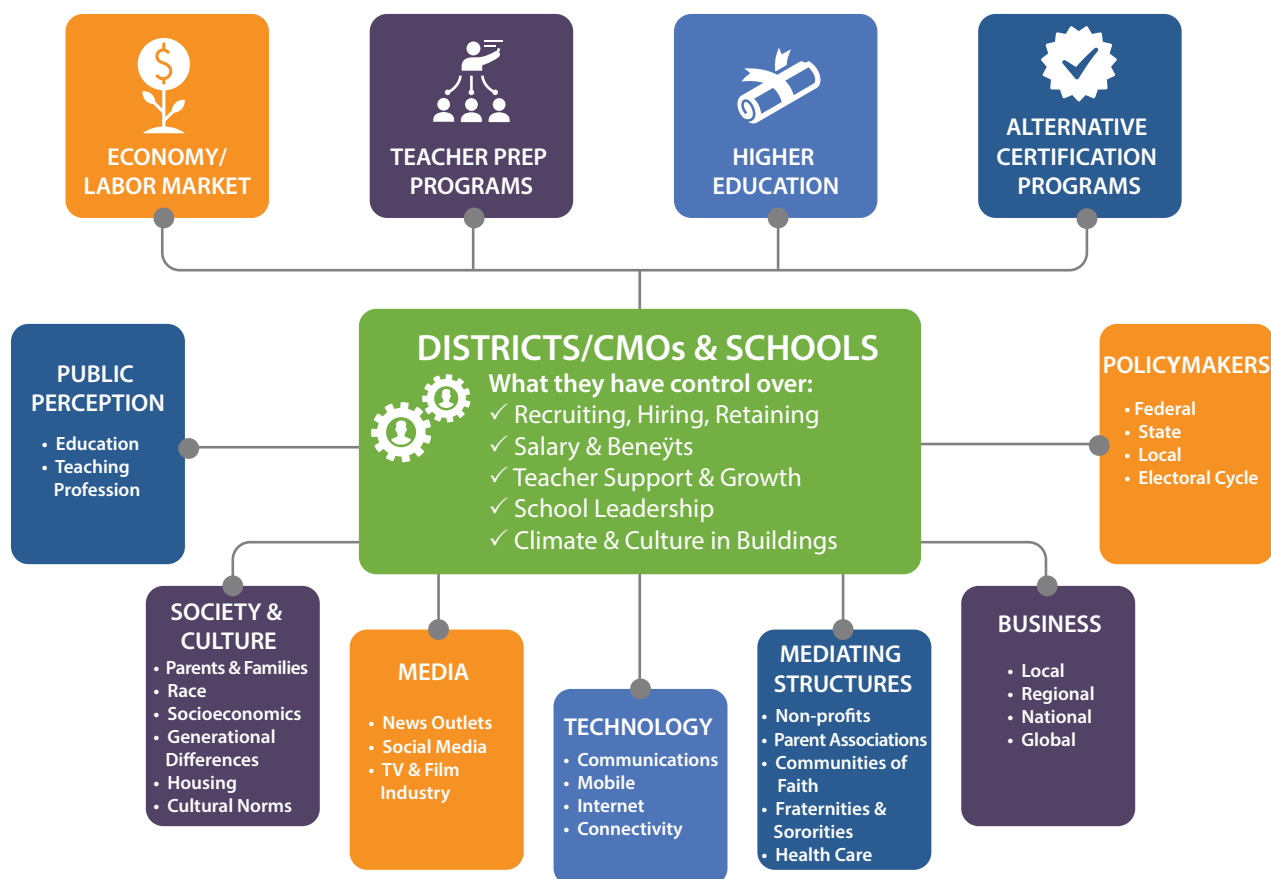
There are a number of reasons why school districts are finding teacher recruitment and retention to be a challenge in recent years.

First, although teaching has historically been (and remains) a female-dominated field, women today have greater options in employment than ever before. While the 1970s marked the height of women in the teaching profession (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018), most women during that decade had a limited choice of career types, including "secretarial jobs, bookkeepers, administrative assistants, cashiers, and teachers." The 1970s also marked a period when more women entered the workforce as primary wage earners

(Anitha & Pearson, 2013). In 1980, for the first time in history, more women than men earned bachelor's degrees (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, Table 310, as cited by Maatz & Hedgepeth, n.d.). Today, while the teaching corps in the U.S. is still comprised of at least 75% women, women in general have more varied employment options, including those in many once-male dominated fields.

Second, as unemployment rates decline, high-skilled individuals have more occupational choice. With teacher salaries flat or falling since 2010, many people are not entering teaching, while teachers are leaving education altogether for fields in which there are more career ladder opportunities and earning potential (Sykes, 2018).¹

INFLUENCES ON TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION



¹ For data on the change in teacher salary 2010-16, see <http://bit.ly/teachersalary2010-16>



As of December 2019, the U.S. jobless rate rests at 3.5%—the lowest it has been since 1969 (Trading Economics, 2020). While the job market is booming, it doesn't help that there are "389,000 fewer teachers in the K-12 workforce than are needed to keep up with a growing student population" (Economic Policy Institute, 2018).

Third, the perception of teaching by the American public and teachers themselves is declining. According to a recent poll conducted by EdChoice, only 27% of parents believe that K-12 education is headed in the right direction (Mahnken,

And the trend continues with educators, too. According to a national poll on education, teachers are overall unlikely to recommend teaching as a profession, less so than state legislators or active-duty military personnel (Mahnken, 2018b). Even more surprisingly, few teachers said they placed much trust in key education players, such as local school boards, state and federal authorities, and even parents (Mahnken, 2018b)—a clear indicator of teachers' negative perceptions of their field.

Fourth, the pipeline of new teacher candidates is dwindling. Only half the



2017). Furthermore, a recent Gallup survey concluded that, for the first time ever, a majority of parents in the United States do not want their kids to become public school teachers (Stringer, 2018).²

² See data chart "Would you like your child to become a teacher?" on The 74 Million." <https://www.the74million.org/new-poll-for-first-time-ever-a-majority-of-american-parents-do-not-want-their-children-to-become-public-school-teachers/>

people who graduate from teacher prep programs actually take jobs as new teachers in any given year (Putman, 2018). Universities are also seeing drops in their enrollment in their schools of education. According to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, "between the 2007-08 and 2015-16 academic years, there was a 23 percent decline in the number of people completing teacher-



preparation programs” (Will, 2018a). For example, at the University of Wyoming, enrollment has fallen by 25% over the past several years and since 2010, the University of North Carolina (UNC system) has decreased by 41 percent. (Klanmann, 2018 and Williams, 2018).

Fifth, the way job seekers look for jobs has radically changed in the last five years, including an increased focus on digital communication and marketing efforts. According to Glassdoor for Employers, 86% of younger job seekers (in any field) who are in the first 10 years of their careers use social media in their job search (Economy, 2015). In addition, 45% of job seekers use their mobile devices every day in their job search.

However, due to a myriad of reasons—including outdated policies, budgets, and training—school districts have lagged in keeping pace with current recruiting marketing practices. Even today, the typical school district’s recruitment strategies include—at most—posting the job description on their website (in an often difficult place to find and in bureaucratic language), posting it in their local print newspapers, attending recruitment fairs, and word of mouth.

A New Day in Recruitment & Retention

While many of these challenges are beyond the control of districts, **there is hope**. By prioritizing recruitment and retention in a new, systemic way, districts and schools are experiencing increased success in finding and retaining those teachers their students desperately need.

Here are **five ways** successful districts are changing how they think about and do this work.

1. They’re building a year-round, multi-stakeholder recruitment system.

They recognize that “recruitment and selection is a **year-round job** that requires creativity and entrepreneurship to make sure that the best candidates are hired” (Gross & DeArmond, 2011). Realizing this work can’t be done by HR alone, they’re building systems that are multi-stakeholder and cross-departmental, too.

2. They’re starting with a deep dive on retention.

They know that they can’t have success in recruiting effective teachers without first taking a deep look at retention. **Recruitment and retention are inextricably linked**, and must be continually improved and aligned simultaneously. Without a strong retention system to attract effective teaching candidates, they know that recruitment will be a never-ending, frustrating cycle of trying to find and recruit teachers into a system.

They’re paying closer attention to why certain groups of teachers are leaving their schools—such as **teachers of color** who are more likely to leave than their white counterparts—and being intentional about building stronger systems of support (Mahnken, 2018a).

3. They are asking: Are we attracting or discouraging?

They are keeping in mind that everything they do is either **attracting**



or **discouraging** prospective and current teachers.

They know that prospective teachers are observing districts—listening to the word of mouth, observing social media presences, and doing searches online. At the same time, they're aware that their current teachers are sharing their experiences with friends and neighbors as well as through their networks on social media.

They seek ways to encourage **connection and belonging**, major keys to retention, such as launching onboarding teams led by teachers at each school to welcome and connect new hires.

4. They are building multi-channel recruitment campaigns.

They know recruiting in today's world requires compelling recruitment campaigns that are guided by who specifically they're trying to attract, the use of the latest in digital marketing tools and tactics, and practicing relationship-building recruiting activities.

In a recent Pew Research Center study, 79% of Americans who have looked for employment in the past two years used online resources—and this number is only growing (Smith, A., 2015).

The most successful districts—especially smaller and/or more rural districts—are now leveraging the power of social media ([example](#)

[1, example 2](#)), video ([example 1, example 2, example 3](#)), webinars ([example](#)), and other digital platforms to ensure they are reaching and attracting new candidates that may not know about their districts.

5. They are implementing key levers for school improvement.

They know that to both recruit and retain great educators along with raising student achievement, they need to implement a variety of [key levers for school improvement](#) including:

- instructional leadership teams;
- asset-based professional learning communities;
- instructional coaching; and
- teacher leadership opportunities.

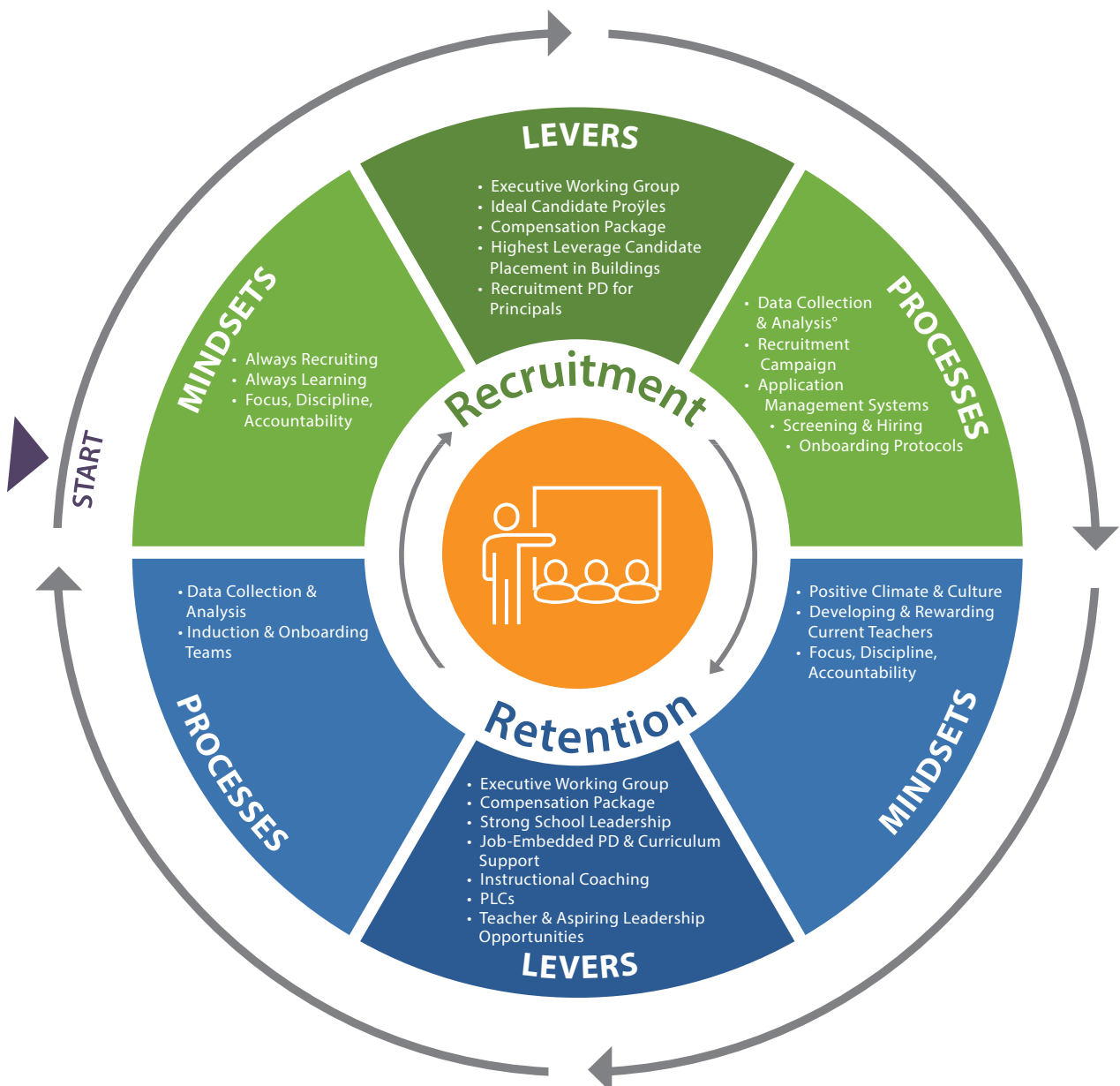
EXAMPLES
SOCIAL MEDIA
Ex. 1: https://www.instagram.com/p/BtdqvQuH9N7
Ex. 2: https://twitter.com/MarionCountySch/status/1088776716292685824
VIDEO
Examples: http://www.insighteducationgroup.com/teacher-recruitment-videos-and-supports
WEBINAR
Ex. 1: https://youtu.be/w8q_qjL0yqk
Ex. 2: https://youtu.be/WdmuZfhOT9Y
Ex. 3: https://youtu.be/AbXCGA_ukYA



Moving Forward

The bottom line is that successful employee recruitment across industries confirms that organizations “that attract and develop strong employees by **prioritizing** recruiting, **investing** in professional growth opportunities, and **building** positive workplace cultures tend to have **greater** efficacy and **better** outcomes” (Konoske-Graf, Partelow, & Benner, 2016).

The work of teacher recruitment and retention is hard, multi-faceted, and ever-changing. But if we’re going to see real traction in student achievement, especially in our highest need schools, we must move forward. We must rethink what we’ve always been doing, take on a learner mindset, and innovate—together. In the end, every one of our students deserves the most effective teachers we can find and retain.





About the Playbook

This Playbook is collection of some of the most effective strategies and tactics that are working to attract, screen, hire, and retain the teachers districts need most.

It offers school and district leaders a first step toward improving educator recruitment and retention, including:

- ✓ opportunities to learn, assess, and reflect on current practices that work and gaps to address;
- ✓ concrete, proven next steps for building a year-round, multi-stakeholder recruitment system that will attract more effective teachers; and
- ✓ a variety of proven levers for improving support, growth, and leadership opportunities for retaining teachers.

The Playbook is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1: 16 Truths About the State of Recruitment & Retention

Chapter 2: How to Build an Effective Recruitment & Retention System

Chapter 3: Attract the Candidates You Need: How to Build A Successful Recruitment Campaign

Chapter 4: From Screening to Hiring: Tools & Best Practices

Chapter 5: Retention Success: What District Can Do to Make Effective Teachers Stay

You'll also find comprehensive appendices (including templates, examples, and more) and a bibliography.

The time that you spend thinking, planning, and trying new ideas for recruitment and retention is not time wasted. At the end of the day, your students will be the biggest benefactors of this work. **Let's go!**





About Insight Education Group

Insight Education Group is an international educational organization comprised of practitioners (leaders at the national, state, district, and school levels) working shoulder to shoulder with education leaders to develop strategies and support the implementation of various initiatives including:

- ✓ successfully turning around chronically underperforming schools;
- ✓ fostering school cultures around mentoring, coaching, collaboration, and shared knowledge and skills;
- ✓ developing guidance for programmatic development and sustainability of initiatives;
- ✓ supporting teachers and educational leaders with innovative tools to continue professional learning;
- ✓ training aspiring and current educational leaders to be strategic and establish priorities for positive change; and
- ✓ helping to change the culture of teacher growth to one of trust.

Through our partnerships with states, districts, and schools around the globe, Insight has brought thousands of educators' practices to the next level. We have developed effective processes and protocols that are used in schools and districts in the United States and abroad, but it is our commitment to a partner-driven implementation process that sets us apart from others and gets the right results.

The efficacy of our work has been documented in prominent studies like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching Project and The Best Foot Forward Project from Harvard's Center for Education Policy Research.

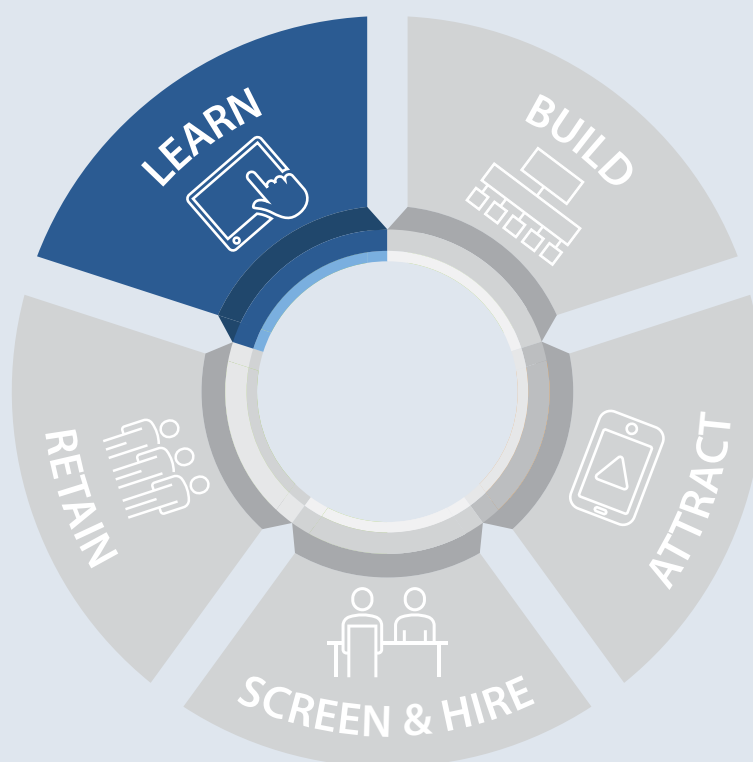
Furthermore, we regularly collaborate with foundations and organizations including the US Department of Education, The Aspen Institute, and The Broad Foundation on issues related to school leadership, academic strategy, standards-based instruction, professional learning, and educator effectiveness.

In 2017, Insight was one of 14 organizations nationally to be awarded a multi-year Teacher and School Leader (TSI) grant from the US Department of Education to implement a networked improvement community known as the "Empowering Educators to Excel" project. E3 is an exciting partnership bringing support and growth opportunities to teachers and school leaders in 47 relatively small and/or rural schools in Delaware, Indiana, South Carolina, and Texas by creating a networked improvement community.

Learn more about Insight's impact at InsightEducationGroup.com/impact.



16 TRUTHS ABOUT THE STATE OF TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION





Opportunity for New Learning & Reflection: The 16 Truths

As mentioned in the Introduction to this Playbook, district and state education leaders nationwide are frustrated with the current state of teacher recruitment and retention—and for good reason. The challenges are real.

This section provides 16 truths, along with supporting research and best practices from the field of teacher recruitment and retention to help you:

- understand the current teacher labor market;
- unpack the root causes of the challenges you may be facing; and
- give you opportunities to reflect on gaps and opportunities in your own district.

How to Use This Chapter

Here are a few ways you can use this chapter as new learning with your district or school instruction leadership team or your Executive Recruitment & Retention Working Group (EWG).

- Take the True/False quiz individually and then discuss it as a team.
- Take a truth or two at a time and go through the set of Reflection Questions for Leaders.





The 16 Truths Quiz

Before diving into the 16 truths, take a moment to see how much you know about the state of teacher recruitment and retention.

True or false:

1. Teachers have the largest in-school impact on student achievement.
2. The turnover rate for low-income students and/or students of color is about the same as other student populations.
3. In K12 schools in the US today, there are three generations of teachers.
4. The human resources department and principals are solely responsible for teacher recruitment.
5. Top districts never stop recruiting throughout the year.
6. Successful districts have 75% of their vacancies filled by July 1.
7. Top districts recruit primarily based on degrees and experience.
8. Effective interviews should be performance-based to reflect on-the-job skills related to student learning.
9. The best districts onboard quickly so that teachers are ready to be independent immediately.
10. Within the last decade, effective educators have had more employment options within education and in other fields than ever before.
11. In 2020, job fairs remain the primary method for effectively recruiting teachers.
12. Money is the top incentive for recruiting and retaining teachers—superseding all other factors.
13. Teacher candidates rarely notice what districts put out in the community, on the web, and on social media.
14. It is best practice for effective hiring managers to simply rely on their guts to determine candidates who will be good fits.
15. There are promising advantages for student achievement when the racial demographics of a district's teaching force resembles more closely those of their students' demographics.
16. Smart districts are thinking about retention during the recruitment process to ensure that the large long-term financial commitment of hiring a teacher is being protected.

(The correct responses can be found at the end of this chapter.)



I. Teachers Matter

Truth
#1

Teachers have the largest in-school impact on student achievement.

The single largest school-based impact on student achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

Literature clearly emphasizes the direct impact of teacher effectiveness on student learning and achievement (Rice, 2010; Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2016). Recent research indicates that a 1 standard deviation increase in teacher effectiveness raises student achievement by 0.10 to 0.25 standard deviations, or 4 to 8 percentiles in a year (Goldhaber, Grout, & Huntington-Klein, 2014). Furthermore, research illustrates that teachers can have long-term effects on student outcomes, such as college-going behavior and labor market earnings (Goldhaber, Grout, & Huntington-Klein, 2014).

Teacher quality **really** matters.

According to the New Teacher Center, teacher quality has a greater impact on student outcomes than other factors, including race, socioeconomic status, and prior academic record (Schmidt, Young, Cassidy, Haiwen, & Laguarda, 2017).

Sanders and Rivers (1996) estimate that students with highly effective teachers¹ make learning gains that are four times greater than students of ineffective teachers.² Using this Value-Added scale, Marzano (2003) clarifies that there is actually a 54-percentile point difference in achievement gains between students with the least effective teachers and those with the most effective teachers.

Additionally, teacher quality garners other positive results for students, including reduced dropout rates and fewer missed classes; greater academic achievement in math, science, history, and reading; and smaller achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds (Hord, 1997).

Three subsequent years of effective teaching would close the achievement gap between low-income students and their counterparts (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2002).

Students with highly effective teachers make learning gains 4x greater than students of ineffective teachers.

—Sanders and Rivers (1996)

According to researchers, “low-income students benefit most when taught by skilled teachers” (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016). In fact, students taught by a succession of highly qualified teachers experienced a positive impact in both short- and long-term educational success, particularly in math, according to a recent study of 6,000 students and their teachers (Lee, 2018, as cited by Ascione in *eSchool News*, 2018b).



This indicates that the effects of high-performing and qualified teachers are cumulative.

Hiring highly qualified teachers with expertise in subject matter has a big impact on students' post-secondary success (Lee, 2018).

Since “teacher quality is the most influential factor that determines student success” (Lee, 2018), it is logical that highly qualified teachers are more likely to expand students’ desires to learn and succeed, whereas underperforming or underqualified teachers limit students’ academic potential. Teachers with expertise in core subject areas may be better prepared to motivate and engage students in topics in which they are passionate and knowledgeable, since their training and expertise can yield more authentic learning experiences.

In fact, “high school students who are taught by teachers who majored or minored in a specific teaching subject, instead of a general teaching degree, are more likely to graduate from college” (Ascione, 2018b).

For example, a study cited in *Education Week* (2018) indicates that educators with science degrees are more likely to incorporate “hands-on investigations in pursuit of scientific questions” rather than requiring memorization and utilizing ready-made scientific experiences to teach curriculum (Iasevoli, 2018).

REFLECTION

- How do your district’s priorities align with this truth?
- How is this truth evident in your district’s priorities in terms of teacher support, growth opportunities, and recruitment?
- When was the last time key district stakeholders and community members were reminded of this truth?

Truth #2

Economically disadvantaged students are disproportionately served by higher percentages of ineffective and/or first year teachers.

Low-income students and/or students of color are being disproportionally taught by the least experienced teachers in schools with the highest rates of teacher turnover (Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

The least experienced teachers are disproportionately concentrated in low-income, high minority schools and schools serving a large population of English language learners; in fact, students attending high-poverty schools are 50% more likely to have a teacher with fewer than four years of experience compared to students in low-poverty schools (National Center for Education Statistics, SASS, 2012, as cited in Kini & Podolsky, 2016).



“Black, Latino, American Indian, and Native-Alaskan students are three to four times more likely to attend schools with higher concentrations of first-year teachers than White students... [and] English language learners also attend such schools at higher rates than native English speakers” (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, as cited by Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

Additionally, in these same schools, students are not being exposed to teachers with advanced levels of education. High-poverty and high-minority schools have a smaller percentage of teachers with master’s degrees than low-poverty schools (Tennessee Department of Education, 2007).

These statistics contribute to an equity gap between economically disadvantaged students and/or students of color and their white, middle-class counterparts, as inexperienced teachers tend to be highly concentrated in underserved schools where quality teachers are needed most (Betts, Reube, & Danenberg, 2000; Goldhaber, Lavery, & Theobald, 2015; Boyd et al.; Sass et al., 2012 as cited by Kini & Podolsky for the Learning Policy Institute, 2016).

Inexperienced teachers tend to be highly concentrated in underserved schools where quality teachers are needed most.

—Several studies from 2000-2016

Teachers switch schools at a higher rate from low-income schools to higher-income schools with lower poverty rates and higher achievement rates (Barnum, 2016).

According to the U.S. Department of Education, effective novice teachers frequently switch from lower-achieving, high-poverty schools to higher-achieving, lower-poverty schools (Goldring, Tale, & Riddles, 2014, as cited by Barnum, 2016). This switch can be attributed to teachers wishing to work “closer to home” in schools where many of the students have similar backgrounds (Goe, 2010). Or it could be linked to the higher attrition rates of low-income schools.

A higher percentage of teachers of color start their careers in low-income schools, which leads to a disturbing trend: teachers of color tend to leave the profession or transfer schools at higher rates than white teachers (Barshay, 2018). In fact, national data indicates that there is a turnover disparity of approximately 7 percentage points between black and white teachers (22% versus 15%, respectively) (Barnum, 2018). This statistic is particularly concerning given the strong evidence that black students, in particular, benefit heavily from having a teacher who looks like them (Barnum, 2016).

Millions of students in rural and urban schools are being held back from the opportunities of advanced coursework because of the lack of qualified teachers.

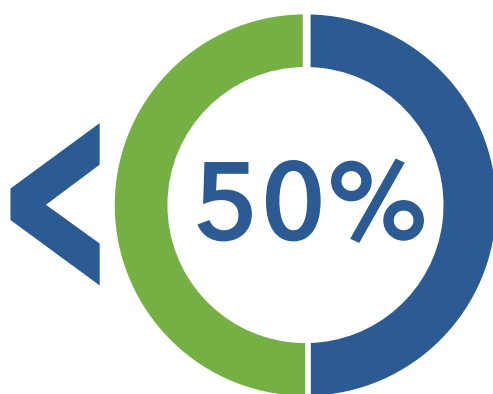


Consider this: 95% of suburban schools offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses, compared to less than 50% of their rural and urban counterparts, where economically disadvantaged students are typically located.

In fact, in 2011–2012, only 57% of black students had access to a full range of math and science courses, including a variety of AP course options, as opposed to 81% of Asian and 71% of white students (UNCF, n.d.). Schools in rural and urban settings are struggling to meet the demands for AP classes, particularly in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), because they cannot find qualified teachers to fill those positions. This means that these students are not being adequately prepared for college through access to the same rigor, enhanced admission prospects, and, in many cases, reduced costs from earning college credit prior to college enrollment (Jossell & Urry, 2018).

REFLECTION

- How recently have you compared individual schools' teacher effectiveness data with the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch?
- How do you think about the placement of new teachers (with no prior teaching experience or effectiveness level) in your district?
- How do you think about the placement of new hires in schools with high percentages of students receiving free and reduced lunch?
- What does the data say about the number of teachers who switched schools last year?



of rural & urban
schools offer
AP courses

**Truth
#3**

In K12 schools today, there are four generations of teachers –with Generation Zs having just entered the teacher labor force in 2019.

Understanding employees' motivations is important to productivity and building strong climates and cultures in schools.

Below are the four generations in U.S. schools today as well as some common characteristics that impact the workplace.

GEN Z 1997-2010
GEN Y/MILLENNIALS 1980-1996
GEN X 1965-1979
BABY BOOMERS 1946-1964

Generation Z (Born 1997-2010)

- Gen Zs do not know a world before mobile technology (Business Insider, 2018).
- As a generation of self-learners, they have incredible amounts of information at their disposal and tend to be more pragmatic and analytical about their decisions than previous generations (McKinsey, 2018).
- This generation is looking for two main factors in a career: stability and development (Business News Daily, 2019).
- 52% of Gen Zs spend at least an hour a day on YouTube (Meltwater, 2019).
- Gen Zs tend to be more social justice-oriented than Millennials (Business Insider, 2018).
- This generation tends to be more financially conservative (Carter, 2018).

Generation Y / Millennials (Born 1980-1996)

- Gen Ys are the largest living generation in the United States (National Population Projections, US Census, 2017).
- They seek flexibility in their work schedules while also seeking to learn new skills and regularly look for ways to grow and advance in their careers (Career Profiles, 2018; Entrepreneur.com, 2018).



- They desire regular feedback to ensure they are on the right track (2019, LinkedIn Talent Blog).
- They prefer a collaborative environment versus a competitive one (Engstrom, 2015).
- 60% of millennials are thinking about their next job (Gallup, 2016).

Generation X (Born 1965-1979)

- Gen Xers have experienced the shift from paper to online and say they are digitally savvy (US News & World Report, 2019).
- Gen Xers tend to be independent employees who value freedom and responsibility at work (Indeed, 2019; The Balance Careers, 2019).
- They are loyal employees, especially as leaders, and play an important role in preserving organizational knowledge (Harvard Business Review, 2019).
- “Work hard, play hard” is a common characteristic of Gen X employees (Rise People, 2019).

Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964)

- This generation values relationships and communicating face-to-face (Psychology Today, 2016; 4 Corner Resources, 2019).
- 31% of teachers in the United States are aged 50 and above (OECD, 2018).
- This generation prides itself on a strong work ethic and commitment to the workplace (Kane, 2019).
- Having lived through periods of competitive job markets in the past, they have learned to compete for resources and success (Kane, 2019).
- They tend to have less of a commitment to authority and workplace hierarchy than previous generations (Bell and Narz, 2007; Huggins, 2011 as quoted in Boston College’s Global Workforce Roundtable, 2013).

REFLECTION

- Do you know the percentages of teachers in each generation in your school or district?
- How do generational differences among teachers play out in your school or district?
- How do your recruitment messaging and activities take into account the general characteristics generations you’re seeking to attract?
- How do your retention strategies and systems of support take into account the characteristics of the generations of teachers in your school or district?
- If you have baby boomers in your school or district, have you considered vacancy needs when they retire?



II. Building a Year-Round Recruitment System

**Truth
#4** Recruitment isn't just HR's job.

Top districts create effective recruitment systems that develop the “why,” or purpose, for active collective recruitment, which spreads the importance of hiring effective teachers across the district.

Since teacher quality clearly plays a pivotal role in students' success, it is essential that districts appeal to the top candidates. Additionally, since the current distribution of effective teachers is not equitable, districts in economically disadvantaged urban and rural districts need to be increasingly strategic about how they locate potential candidates, promote their strengths, and attract the best candidates possible.

One way that effective recruitment groups prioritize teacher recruitment is by building a year-round, multi-stakeholder recruitment system (See Chapter 2). A system helps districts execute a multi-prong strategy and reach the candidates they desperately need.

As this system continues to grow and strengthen, it will begin to permeate into the culture of the buildings across the district and in neighboring communities, thus creating a sense of shared purpose, responsibility, and urgency in the process

Successful districts leverage expertise and connections from around the district to engage a wide variety of their stakeholders in recruitment, including district leaders across focus areas, principals, and current teachers.

Oftentimes in districts, recruitment is left to the HR department and principals, and there are few systems in place that facilitate collaboration across departments to recruit teachers.

An average school district (with a student population of 3,721) has just 1.8 employees assigned to recruitment (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016). But the most effective way to find high-quality candidates is to utilize recruitment teams whose members can offer multiple perspectives, skills, connections, and resources to locate prospective candidates.

For example, the participating districts in the Empowering Educators to Excel (E3) project have formed executive working groups for recruitment and retention, including a cross-section of district leaders and staff, principals, and teacher leaders. The groups meet several times per year to engage in new learning, evaluate data, make connections across initiatives and priorities, and create and execute recruitment campaigns ([See Chapter 2](#)).

In addition, E3 districts have created onboarding teams at each school to welcome new hires before the school year starts. Made up primarily of teachers, onboarding teams reach out to new hires, provide an immediate connection point, and fill in gaps that induction and orientation activities may miss ([See Chapter 2](#)).



E3 districts are also actively engaging other stakeholders, including community organizations, faith communities, and local government agencies to get the word out about teaching opportunities in their schools.

REFLECTION

- What is your current teacher recruitment strategy?
- How do your recruitment planning efforts extend beyond the HR director and principals? Where are the opportunities for growth?
- How might you engage other vested stakeholders in your recruitment efforts? Consider school board members, internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders such as local elected officials, non-profits, or communities of faith.

Truth #5

The best districts are always recruiting—in other words, they have a year-round teacher recruitment system.

Successful districts set monthly recruitment goals to create a year-round system (i.e. a reflect-plan-go plan wherein districts educate on new practices in July, plan recruitment strategies in September, etc.).

According to researchers Gross and DeArmond, the “most effective districts/schools realize that recruitment and selection is a year-round job that requires creativity and entrepreneurship to make sure that the best candidates are hired” (Gross & DeArmond, 2011, as cited in Mattson, Taylor, Eisenhart, & Evan, 2016).

According to researchers, the first step to ensure that a high-quality teacher is in every classroom is recruitment (Dozier & Bertotti, 2000). Employing recruitment systems that follow a strategic and cohesive plan, “increases overall teacher quality, reduces shortages and turnover, and minimizes the need for additional training” (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

Top districts are always recruiting. They keep recruitment at the forefront throughout the year to avoid a hiring panic in the spring.

Recruitment should become a top focus for districts and should stay a priority throughout the year. Dr. Pete Leida, Assistant Superintendent for Colonial School District, Delaware, explains in a recent *eSchool News* article: “Teacher turnover is a continual challenge. Whether we lose them to other districts, other professions, or personal reasons, teachers are going to depart for reasons outside the best administrator’s control. Our solution is simple: Always be recruiting” (Leida, 2018).

Teacher turnover is constant—particularly in rural schools, hard-to-staff schools, and schools with low-income and high minority rates—and accounts for roughly six of every 10 new hires where teachers are replacing colleagues who left the classroom before retirement (Learning Policy Institute, 2017).



When considering ways to attract potential candidates, top districts create a narrative that differentiates them from competitors and helps applicants understand the benefits of working and living there.

Remember this: not all of the top candidates will be local and/or know the area. As schools work to appeal to areas around the globe using social media and outreach initiatives, they may want to consider ways to attract candidates to their areas by showing what the location has to offer. For example, compelling, well-shot videos with a cross-section of voices and community highlights as well as professionally-shot photos are powerful recruitment tools to help potential candidates visualize the district and its surroundings.

Researchers agree that “Employers must adapt to new landscapes: shifts in the labor market, new technologies, and advancing communication methods all require employers to reexamine the way they approach recruiting, developing, and retaining their employees” (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

REFLECTION

- Does your district have a year-round recruitment system in place?
- What would it look like for your district to be “always recruiting”?
- How does your district attract candidates via multiple channels?
- Are there any recruitment mediums that you have not yet tried but would be interested in pursuing?

**Truth
#6**

Successful districts hire early—and start recruiting no later than December for the next school year.

The most highly sought-after and successful candidates are hired before May (Levin & Quinn, 2003).

An obstacle for many districts is that hiring delays require them to wait until the summer to make offers. This delay causes them to subsequently lose out on candidates who are the most promising and/or can teach in high-demand shortage areas to suburban districts, who typically hire earlier (Levin & Quinn, 2003).

A recent study examined the effect of urban districts’ hiring practices on applicant attrition and teacher quality. In the study, researchers analyzed data from “hard-to-staff” urban districts and found that, despite strategic recruitment efforts, 31–58% of applicants withdrew their applications, and 50–70% of those withdrawers cited late hiring timelines as the reason that they accepted other jobs (Levin & Quinn, 2003). Additionally, withdrawers had significantly higher GPAs and were 40% more likely to have a degree in their teaching field than those who were ultimately hired for the jobs.



Teachers hired after May are more likely to leave.

Each year, roughly 15% of teachers leave their schools to transfer buildings, retire, or leave the profession entirely (Barnum, 2017). According to a statewide study of teachers in Michigan, “teachers hired after the start of the school year are twice as likely to leave their schools—or the profession altogether—within a year, leading to higher staffing costs for districts that delay their hiring” (Sparks, 2011).

The cost of these turnovers can vary depending on multiple factors, such as school location, district size, and initiative training, but can be anywhere from \$5,000-\$21,000 per teacher (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). The average turnover cost in a rural district is around \$9,000; for an urban school, it falls around \$21,000.



of those who withdrew their applications from "hard to staff" urban districts cited late hiring timelines as the reason that they accepted other jobs.

REFLECTION

- When have you traditionally started recruiting? When are your competing districts starting their recruitment process?
- How does this truth perhaps change your mind about when to begin recruitment?
- Review hiring data from the last school year. By what point did you have 75% of your vacancies filled?
- What are your new goals for filling vacancies this year?

Truth #7

To increase the number of effective teachers they hire, successful districts take more into account than degrees and experience.

Schools and districts should not only base their hiring decisions on degrees, age, or experience, as these alone are weakly correlated with teacher effectiveness.

Smart districts make the recruitment process personal, ask the right questions, and provide candidates with multiple in-person opportunities to meet (Barnes, Crowe, & Shaefer, 2007). While credentials are important, to hire based solely on degrees, experience, or “fit” may be a mistake, as “credentials that are generally used to determine employment eligibility and reward in-service teachers tend to be only weakly correlated with teacher effectiveness, meaning that required state employment screens and in-service financial rewards are unlikely to lead to productive labor market sorting” (Goldhaber et al., 2014).



Reference checks and letters of recommendation matter.

According to Priscilla Claman, the president of Career Strategies, a Boston-based consulting firm, “You can’t rely on your hunch. Even though you’re right 90% of the time, the 10% that you’re wrong.” A candidate who has vastly overstated his qualifications or has other professional skeletons in his closet can be very damaging (Knight, 2016).

There is also promising research to indicate that recommendations of candidates by previous principals is a better indicator of success than many other predictive measures (Goldhaber, Grout, & Wolff, 2018). Researchers from the University of Washington have found that “professional reference ratings of teacher applicants is predictive of future effectiveness.” In the case of this study, they were predictive of both teachers’ evaluation and math value-added scores.

Hiring incentives do not generally produce long-term results, and may have unintended consequences.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, there is a weak correlation between performance pay and teacher performance (Chiang, Speroni, Herrmann, Hallgren, Burkander, & Wellington, 2017).

While incentives can be helpful in the short-term to attract candidates, they can have the unintended consequence of reducing retention because teachers move from district to district seeking incentives. Also, depending on when the incentive is paid out, teachers may or may not have the patience to stick around.

REFLECTION

- Review your current teacher application form. Besides degrees and experience, what do you ask on the application to identify future effectiveness?
- How is everyone involved in the hiring of teachers normed on identifying future effectiveness?
- How can you use the interview and demo lesson processes to identify future effectiveness?
- Who are your most successful principals when it comes to hiring? What “bright spots” do they exhibit that could be replicated across the district?



Truth #8

Interviews should indicate how candidates will perform on the job to directly affect student learning.

The hiring process should be more than a series of hypothetical questions. Schools need to consider how teachers can demonstrate their knowledge and experience.

While a teaching applicant's certification, education, and experience provide some insight into his or her qualifications, research is unclear whether these qualifications correlate with a teacher's performance when working with students.

According to research, "A structured interview process is a decent predictor of teachers' likelihood of remaining in the classroom and their ability to improve student test scores...though no single trait was strongly predictive of teacher quality, a combination of measures was" (Barnum, 2017).

A structured interview process is a decent predictor of teachers' likelihood of remaining in the classroom.

—Barnum, 2017

Most successful companies assess candidates' skills in tasks and situations that they are expected to encounter in the role for which they are applying. But as many as one-third of interviewing districts do not even include an interview with the hiring principal as part of the hiring process, which means they cannot accurately assess teaching candidates' full competencies and future effectiveness (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

Schools should consider how teachers can demonstrate what they know and are capable of.

Most schools do not require any kind of demonstration of skills during the interview process. In fact, 90% of districts require a written or online application, a resume, certification proof, and a reference, but only 13% of districts require a demonstration or a sample performance lesson with students (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). Furthermore, only 6% of districts require a portfolio or a demonstration/sample performance lesson with adults.

Incorporating some sort of performance-based task during the hiring process (such as asking candidates to teach a sample lesson or provide a video of a previous lesson) can help the hiring team to assess a candidate's teaching style, management techniques, and cultural fit within the school. This can help districts to create a pool of vetted candidates with completed applications, interviews, and videos of demo lessons.



REFLECTION

- Have you considered creating a pool of vetted candidates, who have completed applications, interviews, and videos of demo lessons?
- Describe your interview process. How are your interview questions created? What questions do your district's hiring teams and principals use?
- Have you considered using video for demo lessons? Either having candidates submit video of classroom lessons or filming the demo lessons in order to attach to their application for future reference?

Truth
#9

Support makes a difference. The best districts provide strong onboarding support right from the beginning, including teacher orientation, mentoring, and connection.

Support for teachers matters.

Organizations that prioritize creating and sustaining systems that support employees' professional growth consistently outperform organizations that do not (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

Teachers, just like all professionals, require feedback and opportunities to develop and refine their practice in order to grow and develop. As teachers' expertise increases, they will be more motivated and will have more opportunities to assume additional responsibilities and transition into leadership roles within their buildings. Unfortunately, the majority of educators do not currently receive these kinds of learning and growth prospects.

Onboarding for new teachers helps them to get acclimated and assimilated into the school culture, which can help shape the culture of learning that schools want to build.

The Center for American Progress recommends that districts provide specialized support, mentoring, and a gradual release of responsibility to new teachers as well as establishing "professional learning systems that support [all] teachers' continuous growth" (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

However, almost 20% of districts currently do not provide any formal induction program for beginning teachers (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016). And districts that do provide induction support do not generally go beyond introductory "fact-finding" sessions, such as "scavenger hunts" of their playbooks or district induction overviews with a review of protocols and procedures.

Mentoring and support provide new teachers with a networked community focused on student achievement and growth.

Collaboration in schools affords productive planning and reflection, and promotes a growth mindset among all stakeholders. A recent analysis of teacher candidates'



outcomes indicated that when new teachers are supported by collaboration with colleagues, they make significant gains, not only in their skillset but also in their commitment to helping all students reach mastery (Rigelman & Ruben, 2012).

A collective focus on student results significantly increases teachers' knowledge and skills; conversely, limited social support hinders the sharing of knowledge with others. Yet more than 40% of districts do not provide teachers the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers when applying new learning (Prenger, Poortman, Handelzalts, 2017).

A coaching system targeted at instructional growth can help support sustained teacher improvement.

Student achievement is higher in classrooms in which teachers receive coaching (Ross, 1992). "On average, coaching improves the quality of teachers' instruction and its effects on student achievement by 0.49 standard deviations and 0.18 standard deviations, respectively, which is comparable to the difference in effectiveness between a novice and an experienced veteran teacher with five to ten years of experience" (Kraft et al., 2016).

Student achievement is higher in classrooms in which teachers receive coaching.

—Ross, 1992

Additionally, a study measuring changes in instructional practice found that teachers who received consistent performance feedback had higher levels of experimentation and implementation of changes over time than teachers who received less feedback (Reinke, Herman, Stormont, & Newcomer, 2013).

Among districts that do provide new teachers with instructional coaching, only 7% of districts provide it weekly, and 18% provide it twice a month due to time constraints (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016). However, research indicates that, in order to create an improvement in practice that will develop into lasting, second-order change, coaching needs to occur on a regular basis (Nuefeld & Roper, 2003).

Well-organized professional development translates into increased teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Vesico, Ross, & Adams, 2007).

It is well-documented that quality professional development and professional learning communities (PLCs) can garner positive results. Millennials, specifically, seek professional support through the use of PLCs or something similar (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

Research shows that "Professional learning communities produce positive outcomes for both staff and students...for staff, being part of a PLC reduces teacher isolation, increases commitment to the mission and goals of the school, creates shared responsibility for the total development of students, creates powerful learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice and enhances teacher roles" (Hord, 1997).



However, when PLCs are implemented ineffectively, teachers are not able to take learning back to their classrooms, and the result is little to no positive change in teacher growth or school performance (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016). Therefore, it is essential that PLCs are implemented in a way that empowers teachers to take ownership of their learning and supports them when they take the new learning back to their classrooms.

REFLECTION

- Map out your district's onboarding process. Where are there opportunities to provide more support to new hires? Do you invite teacher candidates or new teacher hires to PD experiences or building tours before the new school year starts? How can you enlist support from teacher leaders in the onboarding process?
- Describe what teacher support looks like in your district. Get specific. How would you describe it to potential candidates in the recruitment process?
- How can you capture the professional development needs of your new hires during the screening process?

III. The Reality of Attracting Today's Candidates

**Truth
#10**

Great educators have more choice than ever about where they can work.

As of December 2019, unemployment rates are at a record low.

According to *Trading Economics*, as of December 19, the U.S. jobless rate rests at 3.5%—the lowest it has been since 1969 (Trading Economics, 2020). Unemployment among adult women decreased from 8.1 percent in 2009 to 3.2 percent in January 2020 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010 and 2020).

This figure is telling, since women still make up the majority of professionals in the education field; in 2011–2012, 76% of public school teachers were female (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

Teachers are leaving the profession.

According to a recent report issued by Gould of the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), “there are 389,000 fewer teachers in the K–12 workforce than are needed to keep up with a growing student population” (as cited by Jacobson, 2018).

Each year, close to 200,000 teachers leave the profession, and another 200,000 transfer schools (Goe, 2010). For example, in South Carolina before the 2017–2018 school year, about 6,700 teachers left their schools, according to the state education department (Smith, 2018). Of the 6,700, many teachers retired or went to other school districts, but 4,900 teachers left the field altogether, and that number is on the rise (Smith, 2018).



South Carolina isn't alone. These massive teacher turnover rates are costing our public school system upwards of \$2.2 billion annually (Phillips, 2015).

This means that districts must look for alternative ways to fill teaching positions

Thanks to alternative certification options, career changers are coming into education in higher numbers than ever before. Approximately 20% of new hires are entering the field through alternative certification programs (Woods, 2016).

Interestingly, research indicates that these alternative track programs attract more male and minority teachers, who may be more inclined to work in urban or hard-to-staff high needs schools (Evans, 2011, as cited by Woods, 2016).

Additionally, these alternatively certified teachers often have degrees and experience in the subjects they teach, which may, as previously mentioned, help them to create authentic learning experiences and relevant learning situations

for students. Furthermore, their degrees are often in difficult-to-hire subject areas, such as science, where districts may need the most support.

Alternative tracks to teaching attract more males and teachers of color.

In addition to alternatively certified teachers, international teachers are in increasingly high demand as school systems look to fill positions in new ways. In a recent *New York Times* article, a head human resources manager in Arizona is quoted as saying, "In these times, you have to be innovative and creative in recruiting," because they, along with the other school districts who recruit international teachers, can't find enough educators willing to work for the pay that's offered (Dent, 2018). In one elementary school district in Phoenix, 10% of the recent hires (since 2015) have been international teachers (Craft, 2018).

REFLECTION

- Review data from teacher exit interviews in your district. Do you know where your teachers go next? Why are teachers leaving? How has the leadership team addressed this issue?
- How are you filling hard-to-fill positions, such as those in math, science, and ELL? What's working, and what do you need to try differently?
- What other new strategies are you willing to try to increase the number of newly hired effective teachers?

**Truth
#11**

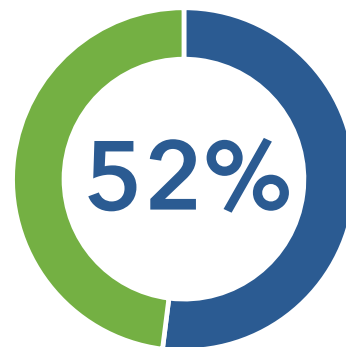
There is more information available on districts and schools than ever before.

In a digital world, it is easier than ever before to access information on districts and their competitors.

According to research cited by the Pew Research Center, 79% of Americans who have looked for employment in the past two years used online resources (Smith, 2015). Of those surveyed, roughly one-third of participants (34%) say these online resources were the *most* important resource available, taking precedence over personal connections (20%), professional contacts (17%) or outside resources, such as acquaintances or friends-of-friends (7%), employment agencies, (5%) events such as job fairs (5%), and ads in print publications (4%) (Smith, 2015).

The survey also indicates that “African-Americans are more likely than whites to engage in online job-seeking behaviors; urban and suburban residents are more likely to do so than those living in rural areas; and Americans with higher levels of income and educational attainment are more likely to do so than those with lower income and education levels.” (Smith, 2015). Therefore, when posting and advertising positions, it is important to consider the demographics that you are seeking to reach.

Candidates are using more ways than ever to find teaching opportunities: Google, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and word of mouth.



**of job seekers
use more than
four different resources
during a job search.**

In their hunt for employment, job seekers today are utilizing multiple new resources that were nonexistent just a few years ago. In fact, 52% of people indicate that they utilize four or more different resources during a job search, as opposed to 11% of people who only use one (Smith, 2015 as cited by Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

Considering that the majority of working-age Americans today use at least one social media platform, social media could play a pivotal role in finding viable candidates. Potential employees can utilize social media networks to locate work, alert friends of job availabilities, or publicly promote their own skills to potential employers (Smith, 2015).

In other sectors, 96% of job recruiters nationwide report using social media for recruitment purposes, but only 30% of schools post positions on social media networks (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).



In a changing job market, convenience matters.

The hyperlocal, untargeted, and inconvenient recruitment strategies of most school districts make it difficult for many candidates to even locate available positions. In fact, 94% of districts post available positions on their district websites, but fewer than 30% of schools advertise outside of their home state (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

Competitive opportunity: *Post positions on a wide variety of social media channels, including organization's accounts and paid advertising.*

Traditional application processes can hinder accessibility. As home broadband adoption is inconsistent in several areas, smartphones are becoming an increasingly popular means to search for and apply for jobs. In fact, 68% of American adults now own a smartphone, and 41% of those individuals (or 28% of all Americans) have used smartphones in their job searches (Smith, 2015). This trend is especially prevalent among younger potential job seekers (53% of 18- to 29-year-olds), college graduates (35%) and minorities (38% of African-Americans use a smartphone in their job searches).

Competitive opportunity: *Advertise job opportunities outside of your region or state.*

While these devices are not ideal for tasks such as building a resume or cover letter, roughly one-quarter of people who have searched for jobs using their smartphones have used their phone to create a resume or cover letter (Smith, 2015).

REFLECTION

- Based on hiring data and principal interviews, have you identified the competencies of the most effective teachers you've hired previously?
- Have you created profiles of ideal candidates so you know who specifically you're trying attract and through which channels?
- Do you have a compelling landing page on your district or school's website that speaks directly to how your district can meet the challenges and interests of the ideal candidates?
- Do you use compelling, professionally-made video and photography across all your digital channels that would attract candidates and give them a window into your district?
- Have you asked for feedback from teacher candidates on what attracted them to your district and things that perhaps could be improved?
- How many of your leadership team members actively utilize social media for recruitment efforts?

**Truth
#12**

Money matters—but so do a lot of other factors when it comes to recruiting (and retaining) top candidates.

There is “suggestive, if limited, evidence that [incentives] and retention bonuses ... reduce teacher turnover,” which is notable because a reduction in turnover leads to better student outcomes ([Brookings.edu](https://www.brookings.edu), 2019).

However, one must be diligent that such incentives and bonuses not discourage “collaboration, lower morale, or make a school less appealing to effective educators” (IES, 2017).

Historically, the percent of U.S. school districts using teacher incentive systems peaked at 48 percent in 1918, receded to four percent in 1953, and waned dramatically to 12 percent in 1993 (Murnane and Cohen, 1986; Ballou, 2001). With teacher turnover being a salient contemporary issue in education, teacher incentives and merit pay are receiving renewed attention. As with any reform program, one must weigh the positives and negatives associated with implementation.

There is evidence that “pay-for-performance” programs affect educators’ attitudes regarding job satisfaction, which in turn has an affect on “student outcomes” (Institute of Education Sciences, 2017). The creation of pay-for-performance programs has the ability to increase student achievement by motivating educators to improve pedagogical practices and helps schools “attract and retain” such educators (IES, 2017).

More specifically, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) recently completed a study of the 2006 Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF)- a fund established by Congress that provides grants to support performance-based compensation systems for teachers and principals in high-need schools- and reported that the TIF program resulted in teachers feeling “as satisfied, and sometimes more satisfied” as teachers in non-TIF program schools. The report concludes by detailing how, after a third year of TIF implementation, principals and administrators were “more likely to use components of TIF to recruit teachers” than their counterparts in control schools (IES, 2017).

Notably, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district in North Carolina has had success attracting educators to high-needs schools through the use of incentives. Beginning in 2008 as part of a broader Strategic Staffing Initiative (SSI), the district began offering sign-on bonuses in the range of \$1,000 to \$3,000 to teachers choosing to work in high-needs schools (Hanover, 2014). Additionally, a sign-on bonus was also given for highly qualified “master teachers.” After three years of SSI, research has shown that such incentives provided positive education outcomes for students in high-needs schools (Hanover, 2014). Researchers concluded the study by stating that the biggest problem was the ability of the district to recruit principals- there simply were not enough qualified principals to staff high-needs schools. As a whole, incentive programs such as the SSI are most effective when part of a “broader, holistic retention strategy rather



than as standalone initiatives ... [because] money alone is not enough to retain highly effective educators (Hanover, 2014)."

An alternative viewpoint suggests that merit pay for educators is incongruent due to the complicated nature of teaching as a profession.

The work of an educator is often "complex" and "difficult to evaluate," and because of this, any reward of success is often "subjective ... and unworkable" (Goldhaber et al, 2005). Additionally, a pay-for-performance incentive inherently introduces competition. The introduction of competition to a school environment often has a "demoralizing and counterproductive" workplace effect, as teachers are potentially less likely to collaborate with their colleagues (Goldhaber et al, 2005). There are also documented cases of how pay-for-performance incentives have led to a "manipulation of test scores," as teachers have tried to "game the system" resulting in "no long-term achievement gains among students" (Figlio and Kenny, 2007). For such reasons, some have argued that merit pay incentives have negative effects on work environment and student outcomes.

The Round Rock Independent School District in Texas recently experimented with bonus pay for teachers at certain middle schools over the course of two years. The bonuses ranged between \$3,800 and \$5,000 and were given to teams of educators for student standardized test gains. Researchers for The RAND Corporation found no "significant effects on student test scores or teacher practices and attitudes" throughout the duration of the program (2012). Researchers conclude that a "key factor" to establish "buy-in" from teachers for a successful incentive program, is to make sure teachers clearly understand how the program should work (RAND, 2012).

The simple truth is that teachers' decisions to apply for a position, accept an offer, and continue to work in a given school are based on the perceived benefits—financial, social, or otherwise—as compared to other options (Xu, 2017).

The most successful recruitment efforts appeal to teachers through benefits. These include but are not limited to "financial incentives, opportunities for professional growth and career advancement, and a caring work environment" (Xu, 2017).

Since schools can't always compete with other districts on a financial level, there is emerging evidence that job satisfaction may be even more important. As cited by Xu (2017), "some studies have found that small increments of additional salary are not important or as attractive as other job characteristics, such as having a supportive principal, the availability of a quality induction program, and curricular flexibility" (Heneman & Milanowski, 2009).

What matters to teachers is a supportive principal, a quality induction program, and curricular flexibility.

—Heneman & Milanowski, 2009



What keeps teachers at a school once they're hired? The quality of leadership (Amrein-Beardsley, 2012).

As previously noted, leadership plays a significant role in determining whether teachers will stay in or leave a position. In a survey on teacher retention and recruitment conducted by *Education Week*, 18% of teacher participants cited leadership as a key factor for retention, followed by salary considerations and school climate tied at 17%, (Viadero, 2018).

Mancuso and his fellow researchers (2011) indicate that the most important predictor of teacher turnover is the perception that the principal is a supportive head of school who facilitates positive relationships to create a constructive culture. The principal essentially integrates and develops the human capital (i.e., professional knowledge and skills of individual teachers) and social capital (i.e., opportunities for collaboration, developing leadership responsibilities) at a school, which are associated with teachers' perceptions of working conditions and job satisfaction (e.g., Baker-Doyle 2010).

Support makes all the difference, not only for teachers personally, but more importantly, for student learning.

Multiple studies have corroborated the link between professional support and efficacy (Henson, 2001; Rosenholtz, 1989; Hord, 1997). Teachers who feel supported become more self-actualized to plan and teach more than their counterparts, and are therefore more effective (Merton, 1948; Hoy, Sweetland, & Smith, 2002; Shaughnessy, 2004).

As a result, these efficacious teachers are open to new experiences; have an internal locus of control; are able to work with new elements and concepts; and are more likely to implement new classroom behaviors, set high goals, persist, and try new strategies when others are not working in order to overcome obstacles and become more successful. Consequently, they are more likely to stay in the teaching profession and create positive change within the building (Rosenholtz, 1989; Shaughnessy, 2004).

Teachers with a higher sense of efficacy tend to have better planning and organization skills, are more open to new ideas, and implement new methods to meet the needs of their students. They are also more persistent and resilient when things are challenging, are less critical of students when they make errors, and are less inclined to refer difficult students to special education (Rice, 2010).

REFLECTION

- As a district, what potential incentives have you identified that would be appealing to your ideal candidates?
- Which benefits do your current teachers prize most? What factors do they cite as most important to them? In what ways might you highlight these benefits to potential new hires? How can these benefits be shared and celebrated publicly?
- How can you identify teachers with a higher sense of efficacy during the screening process?



Truth #13 Perception is reality. Words and actions are observed within and beyond the community, and they either attract or discourage potential candidates.

The most successful schools attract candidates by creating an intentional, positive, and supportive culture and climate.

Decades of research have linked positive culture and climate to student success, noting that when a school is a positive place to be and students and staff are happy to be there, there is an increased sense of collective efficacy and, subsequently, an increased energy to improve (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004).

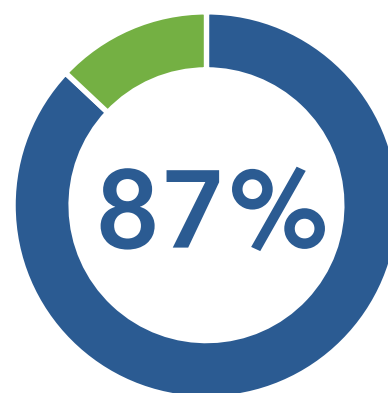
Schools with a strong sense of shared purpose are more likely to initiate improvement efforts, plan collaboratively, make effective data-based decisions, implement innovative and complex teaching strategies, and celebrate successes, both internally and publicly (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Abplanalp, 2008; Fullan, 1998; Louis, 1994). These celebrations, along with consistently positive community interactions, help generate an affirming public culture which helps to, in turn, attract the right candidates to build an even stronger culture and community. It is a cyclical effort that builds on itself in order to generate a lasting culture of growth and efficacy for all stakeholders.

And thanks to social media, districts have an incredible opportunity to showcase many positive facets of their cultures in a concrete, everyday fashion and attract potential candidates to their schools.

Schools should strive to employ an efficacious group of growth-oriented, invested individuals. So how can these candidates be located?

Research repeatedly indicates that a culture of learning with a growth mindset is critical to success in any organization. Millennials, specifically, rate opportunities for learning and growth as extremely important elements when considering which jobs to apply for. In a 2016 Gallup survey, 87% of millennials said that “development” was an important aspect of the job (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

Since districts want growth-minded people and millennials tend to look for growth/development in jobs, it makes sense that districts would want to reach out to a younger talent pool. Millennials and young incoming teachers rely on technology and social media the most heavily to locate and apply for jobs: 43% of 18-29-year-old respondents who said that they use social media reported that they have used social media to locate or research a job (Smith, 2015). Therefore, districts should consider using social media to attract and connect to this younger audience.



of millennials said that "development" was an important aspect of the job.

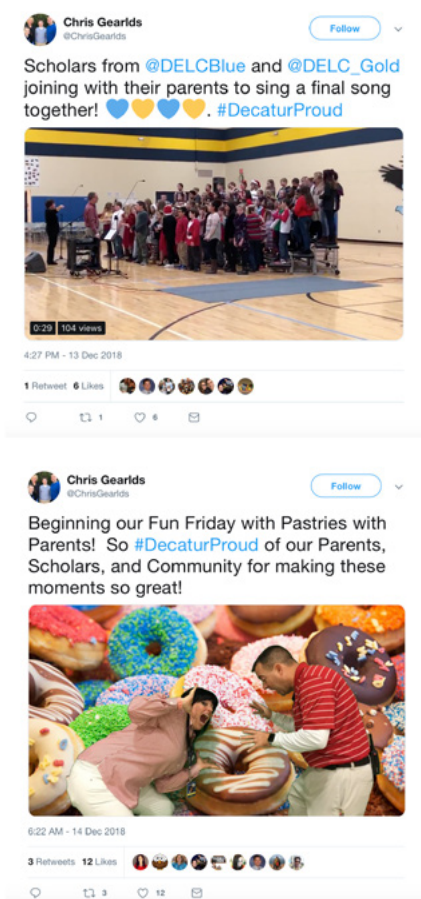


Schools and districts have the power to shape their narratives.

Deal and Peterson (2016) explain that “parents, teachers, principals, and students have always sensed something special, yet undefined, about their schools—something extremely powerful but difficult to describe,” but that “[culture] is the glue, the hope, and the faith that holds people together.” So, if culture is the glue, then schools should work to shape and communicate their cultures and stories in order to attract and retain the right candidates. “Stories are the language of leadership...in spotting and telling tales, principals and staff members actively shape the culture of their schools” (Deal & Petersen, 2016).

[Culture] is the glue, the hope, and the faith that holds people together.

School leaders like those in MSD of Decatur Township, an E3 district, are actively telling their stories through Twitter on a daily basis. For example, Principal Chris Gearlds ([@ChrisGearlds](#)) uses his feed to celebrate and educate his school’s community about the great things happening, from innovative student activities to parental involvement to teacher professional learning. His feed is also easily observable by prospective candidates, providing a means of attracting them to the positive climate and culture Mr. Gerald is building.





REFLECTION

- Have you recently conducted a climate and culture survey among your employees?
- How are you as district leadership actively supporting principals in developing positive climates and cultures in their buildings?
- How are you deliberately cultivating a growth mindset across the district at all levels?
- In what ways are you working to actively encourage buildings to engage with social media to share their bright spots?

IV. The Right Fit

Truth #14 Successful districts pursue the candidates they want in an individual and proactive way. And they know what kind of candidates to pursue.

Schools should pre-determine who the ideal candidate is and how that person can be identified and recruited.

Oftentimes, schools look for candidates who may be a “good fit” in their buildings or districts. However, research indicates that this may be a mistake, since hiring for an immediate fit may not help schools reach their long-term goals and/or create a culture they are hoping for because they are essentially hiring to keep the status quo (Will, 2018c).

Successful districts identify competencies of effective teachers in their districts, including the skills, knowledge, behaviors, and dispositions that exemplify effectiveness (Heneman & Milanowski, 2011 as cited in McKenzie, 2018). Competencies bring coherence to recruitment and can include examples such as “instructional planning, classroom management, instructional leadership, professionalism, cultural competency, and co-teaching approaches.”

Identified competencies include skills, knowledge, behaviors, and dispositions bring coherence to recruitment.

Effective human capital systems identify quality employees by locating and attracting the most talented professionals utilizing strategic recruitment systems, including targeted outreach and technology, and then develop a selection process to determine a potential candidate’s anticipated performance and fit within the organization (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

In fact, many other industries seek out candidates not just actively, but even aggressively to go beyond just-in-time placements and to communicate the value the organization puts on its talent (Herrmann, 2018). Cumulatively, this translates into



increased cultural perceptions of the prestige and desirability of a specific organization and occupation as top talent is attracted to fields that value their skills.

Hermann (2018) explains, “If more school districts aggressively recruited teachers, they would not only increase the prestige and desirability of the education field, but they would also help uncover future teachers who didn’t even know they wanted to be teachers.”

Because we live in a noisy world full of competing sources trying to gain our job seekers’ attention, schools need to find innovative ways to locate and recruit candidates.

There are many ways to reach potential candidates, such as:

- A wide variety of social media channels—both no-cost and paid—such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube;
- Websites that include compelling reasons to attract candidates to apply, displayed through easy-to-navigate, eye-pleasing pages;
- Hosting formal and informal events, such as webinars, meet-and-greets, professional development sessions, and open houses;
- Commercial job sites, such as Indeed, Zip Recruiter, Career Builder, and more;
- College and student-teacher recruitment; and
- Word of mouth via current teachers and community organizations, such as houses of worship and non-profit organizations.

In other fields, organizations have their current employees build a pool of potential candidates by identifying and personally reaching out to people they feel could add value to their company. For example, at FirstMerit Bank, top prospects are sent cards on their birthdays and New Year’s Day, when they may be rethinking their career paths (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

In another example, Deloitte recruits top candidates using a robust employee referral program and social media to reach thousands of talented candidates internationally with targeted messaging and a universal company platform accessible in dozens of languages (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

REFLECTION

- Have you identified your two or three ideal candidate profiles that align to your district’s teacher competencies? (See [Chapter 3](#) for how to create profiles for the ideal candidates).
- How is your leadership team actively recruiting candidates in a personal and proactive way?
- Does the messaging on all your channels align with the ideal candidate profiles?
- How are you continually working to locate and appeal to these ideal candidates through new channels and networks?



Truth #15 The most successful districts are actively recruiting teachers of color who mirror their student populations.

There is a disconnect between the demographics of teachers and the students they serve.

The U.S. DOE's National Center for Education Statistics explains that during the 2015–2016 school year, approximately 77% of all public-school teachers were women, 80% of teachers were non-Hispanic White, 9% were Hispanic, 7% were non-Hispanic Black, 2% were non-Hispanic Asian, 2% were Black males, and 2% were Hispanic males. (Dwyer, 2017; Miller, 2018; Will, 2018b; McClain, 2016). The rate at which black males, specifically, teach preschool and the younger grades is even less than the reported 2% (Jacobson, 2018b).

Meanwhile, America's public school population is essentially evenly split between male/female and has been increasingly diverse since 2014, with students of color now becoming the majority. According to the U.S. DOE, "Of the nation's 50.4 million public school kids, 24.6 million (49%) were white children and 25.9 million (51%) were kids of color" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, as cited by Dwyer, 2017).

Research repeatedly indicates that students—particularly boys of color—learn the best from teachers who look like them (Miller, 2018).

Diversity benefits every workforce, and teaching is no exception: recent studies have shown the promising advantages of a teaching force that more closely resembles the student population.

For example, a large study showed that low-income black male students were 39% less likely to drop out by high school if they were assigned to a black teacher in 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade. Furthermore, black male students taught by black male teachers are more likely to attend a four-year college (Gershenson et al., 2017 as cited by Herrmann, 2018; Jacobson, 2018b).

Additionally, teachers of color may be more likely to hold students of color to higher standards; research shows that students of color score slightly higher on standardized tests when taught by teachers of color, and the impact was the greatest for students who had performed at the lowest level (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016; Partelow et al., 2017).

Black male students taught by black male teachers are more likely to attend a four-year college.

–Gershenson, 2017; Jacobson, 2018

Racial diversity among teachers also helps break down biases across races, thus having a positive effect on all students (Partelow et al., 2017). The reason behind the



correlation may be that teachers with similar backgrounds to their students can relate to them more easily.

Authors Dilworth and Coleman make a critical point: “Teachers of color tend to provide more culturally relevant teaching and better understand the situations that students of color may face” (Dilworth & Coleman, 2014). They explain that teachers of color teach with a greater level of social consciousness, appear to be more committed to teaching students of color, are more inclined to teach in difficult-to-staff urban schools, and are more likely to persist there.

Lee (2018) explains that there is new research indicating that teachers of color benefit minority students in a variety of ways, including increased test scores, lowered school suspensions with more compassion for behavioral disruptions, improved academic attitudes with higher perceptions of students’ academic abilities, increased student attendance, and even reduction in the risk of students dropping out (Gershenson, Hart, Lindsay, & Papageorge, 2017; Lee, 2018; Partelow et al., 2017).

Yet most districts do not actively recruit and retain teachers of color.

In most states, there is a large and growing gap in the proportion of students of color to that of teachers of color. Despite efforts to increase racial diversity, the percentage of teachers of color has only grown 5% (from 12% to 17%) from 1987 to 2012 (Partelow et al., 2017). In 40% of U.S. schools, there is not a single teacher of color on staff, and teachers of color only represent 18% of the overall teaching population (Partelow et al., 2017; Putman & Walsh, 2016).

Konoske-Graf et al., 2016 report that, while school districts describe it as difficult to attract and retain teachers of color, many are not yet implementing strategies to address these challenges. “Forty-three percent of districts responded that teachers of color were ‘very difficult’ to hire, more so than special education teachers, teachers of English Language Learners, and high school science teachers, [yet] only one in three districts actively recruits from institutions and organizations that serve primarily minority populations.” In fact, only 40% of districts even consider a teacher’s contribution to workforce diversity when hiring teachers (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

In 40% of U.S. schools, there is not a single teacher of color on staff, and teachers of color only represent 18% of the overall teaching population.

—Partelow et al., 2017; Putman & Walsh, 2016

“Eighty percent of districts do not provide any specific supports geared toward inducting teachers of color. And among districts that recruit from institutions and organizations that serve primarily minority populations: Fifty-six percent of districts post job openings on websites targeting primarily minority populations [whereas] twenty-four percent of districts advertise job openings in publications targeting primarily minority populations” (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).



REFLECTION

- Pull the demographic data for your teachers and school leaders. How does it compare to that of your student population?
- What are you doing to actively recruit teachers of color? What new networks have you joined recently to connect with candidates of color? How does your messaging (website, social media, videos, brochures, etc.) attract teachers of color to your district?
- How does your district actively support teachers of color? How is your district and building leadership paying attention to this issue of support?
- What does diversity in your educator workforce mean to your district, and what implications does it have for your future?

V. Building a Retention Mindset with Recruitment

Truth
#16 Hire with retention in mind.

When engaging in teacher recruitment, successful districts think with retention in mind.

A district's hiring of high-quality teachers is only as effective as its ability to retain those teachers. According to the Center for American Progress, "to retain highly sought employees, effective organizations foster positive workplace cultures, compensate their employees at competitive levels, and create opportunities for professional growth to ensure that candidates thrive and mature within the organization" (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

Teacher turnover costs can exceed \$20,000 per teacher, particularly in urban areas, where teacher turnover costs approximately \$2.2 billion annually. Additionally, once someone is hired, it can be costly to remove that individual if they are deemed an ineffective teacher, particularly if they are tenured (Learning Policy Institute, 2017; Phillips, 2015; Goe, 2010; Barnes, Crowe, & Shaefer, 2007).

\$20K
turnover cost
per teacher

Therefore, smart districts are thinking about retention during the recruitment process to ensure that the large long-term financial commitment of hiring a teacher is being protected.

When a teacher leaves, it impacts student learning. "Teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement gains throughout a teacher's career." (Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

Based on a review of 30 professional studies published within the past 15 years, there is a positive correlation between teaching experience and student gains, both



academically and on other measures of success such as school attendance (Kini & Podolsky, 2016). Thus, teachers tend to be least effective in their first few years of teaching.³

This is not to say that the mere passage of time will make all teachers better or somehow render incompetent teachers effective; however, through professional development, impactful coaching, and instructional team support, teachers can continue to hone their expertise throughout their careers.

REFLECTION

- How much does it cost to hire one teacher in your district? In other words, how much does it cost to lose one teacher in your district?
- What percentage of your teachers exit your district each year?
- Do you know why they're leaving? How have you addressed those reasons as a leadership team?
- Have you conducted a teacher retention survey and/or focus groups to find out why teachers are staying?

³ For an example, view findings from the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University's findings on a slide entitled, "Teacher impact on student math achievement increases the most in the first few years of teaching" (page 12) at <http://sdp.cepr.harvard.edu/files/cepr-sdp/files/sdp-case-study-dedoe.pdf?m=1432061682>.



Answers to the True/False Quiz

Note: If you would like to dive deeper into why these are true or false, the question numbers correspond to the truth numbers.

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. False
8. True
9. False
10. True
11. False
12. False
13. False
14. False
15. True
16. True

Download Full Playbook

<https://www.insighteducationgroup.com/playbook-teacher-recruitment-retention>