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Center on
GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS
at American Institutes for Research ■

Talent Management Strategies

District Self-Assessment Checklist

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Recruiting, hiring, placing, and retaining are among the most important functions of a district. Teachers and school leaders, also referred to throughout this document as educators, are the primary leading factors impacting quality of student learning. Ensuring we have the best educators in our schools is perhaps the single most important function of a district. Based on a document developed by the Rhode Island Department of Education, this **Talent Management Self-Assessment Checklist** is a tool that district teams can use to assess the usefulness of their talent management strategies in helping to ensure equitable access to excellent educators and to make changes they think are appropriate. Each of the strategies on the checklist is supported by comprehensive research on how to improve talent management in education and includes a list of promising practices related to that component. District teams can use this checklist to reflect on strategies that are currently being implemented and to brainstorm ways to improve strategies in three areas as shown in the graphic below.

Components of a Talent Management Strategy



RECRUITMENT

- Create an attractive professional environment
- Strategically advertise openings
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with local educator preparation programs



HIRING

- Establish early hiring timelines
- Develop strong hiring practices
- Use stakeholder feedback to review and revise the hiring process



PLACEMENT & RETENTION

- Use performance evaluation data as the primary factor in tenure decisions
- Provide new hires ongoing support through placement and induction
- Establish a healthy and supportive teaching environment
- Solicit feedback from resigning and retiring educators

The Equitable Access Support Network (EASN), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, offers collective and individualized technical assistance (TA) and resources to all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Bureau of Indian Education. EASN assists in the development and implementation of statewide equity plans and provides assistance to States as they put in place strategies to ensure equitable access to excellent educators for all students.

Where to Start

Talent management is an organization's focus on cultivating one of its most important assets – its' people. The primary focus of a talent management approach is attracting and keeping a strong workforce. This focus is especially critical in schools since the effectiveness of educators plays such a critical role in driving student outcomes. Districts that use a talent management strategy are intentional about how they recruit, hire, evaluate, develop, and retain educators. This checklist is designed to help districts examine their talent management policies and practices and reflect on their strategy. Follow the steps below to use this checklist.

1. To begin, review the shaded rows in the checklist and place a checkmark in the box to indicate the talent management policies and practices your district is currently implementing.
2. Scan the list to see where you have your greatest gaps by identifying the strategies, listed in the dark blue shaded rows, without any checkmarks; answer the questions within those sections first. Following this process will allow you to prioritize discussions about strategies your district is not currently implementing and may have the biggest opportunity to improve upon.
3. If none of the boxes have checkmarks, prioritize answering the questions within the *hiring* section first, followed by *recruitment*, and then *placement/retention*.
4. After completing the questions for the strategies your district is not currently implementing, go back through the tool and answer the questions within the strategies that have checkmarks. This will allow you to discuss and reflect on how to improve current talent management policies and practices and brainstorm possible improvements.

As you review the questions, use the evidence sources listed to help inform discussions. Based on the discussions, assess which strategies need additional focus and determine how your district will address those areas of need based on your district's context. The promising practices at the end of each section provide strategies supported by research that districts can choose to adopt. The additional resources listed at the end of the checklist include other tools to support efforts to implement and improve talent management strategies.

Who Should Use This Checklist?

The checklist is designed for use by cross-functional district teams. We recommend including the following team members in your cross-functional team: the director of human resources and other key human resource staff; the director of educator effectiveness and/or educator evaluation or employees in similar positions; administrators, educators, and community members who offer jobs at the district level and/or who hire at the school level; and a representative of the collective bargaining unit, if there is one.

Districts with a smaller staff may not have a team of people who can review this checklist and implement or make adjustments to talent management policies and practices. These districts should include district leaders who are responsible for recruiting, hiring, evaluating, and/or developing educators in the review of the checklist.

When Should District Teams Use This Checklist?

Review of and revision to talent management policies and practices should take place annually, at a minimum. The review process likely should take place in early fall so that the district can make changes to policies and practices before the next hiring cycle.



Recruitment

Many districts struggle to find and recruit effective educators, especially in content areas of high need. Having access to a large pool of qualified applicants for open positions is essential for district hiring success.

Prior to completing the self-assessment below, you may want to gather and review the following evidence sources:

- Current job postings
- Salary scales
- Recruiting metrics, e.g., time to hire, sourcing channel, open vacancies vs. positions filled, candidates per hire, applicant data
- Feedback from prospective and hired educators

STRATEGY 1: Create an attractive professional environment.

Identify and evaluate what your district does to market itself to prospective educators.

- a. What professional development and leadership opportunities does your district provide to educators? Are these opportunities reflected in the job postings?
- b. What is attractive about the schools and communities you serve? Are these qualities reflected in job postings?
- c. How do educator compensation and benefits in your district compare to surrounding districts? How might you improve this to make your district more attractive to educators?
- d. Is your website up-to-date and appealing to potential applicants? How might you enhance your website to make it more useful and appealing to potential applicants?
- e. How does your district market/attract educators to the highest-need schools? How might you improve this to more effectively market/attract educators to these schools?

Who in the district is responsible for identifying and evaluating what your district does to market itself?

BRAINSTORM: How can you make your district more attractive to strong candidates? What can you do to better market the benefits of your district? How will you know if your efforts are successful?

STRATEGY 2: Strategically advertise openings.

Share information on job openings through local news sources, town and district websites, career fairs, educator networks, word of mouth, social media, institutes of higher education, and other outlets for prospective educators.

- a. How does your district currently publish job openings?

- b. Do job postings align with job descriptions and reflect the responsibilities candidates would assume? Does your district target specific media and networks depending on the position?

- c. Does your district recruit out-of-area educators? How might broader or more strategic recruitment strategies help your district fill hard-to-staff positions and certificate areas?

Who in the district is responsible for advertising information on job openings?

BRAINSTORM: How might your district improve your advertising practices to target strong educators? How will you know if your efforts are successful?

Use targeted recruitment strategies to attract a more diverse talent pool.

- a. Who might be underrepresented in your workforce (e.g. educators of color, male educators, etc.)? What are you doing to recruit those groups?

- b. Are you actively recruiting educators who speak the languages of your students?

Who in the district is responsible for using targeted recruitment strategies to attract a more diverse talent pool?

BRAINSTORM: What new strategies can you employ to attract a more diverse talent pool? How will you know if your strategies are successful?

STRATEGY 3: Develop and maintain strong relationships with local educator preparation programs.

Establish high-quality student teaching partnerships.

- a. How does your district target local educator preparation programs to recruit high-potential educators?

- b. How do you share information about anticipated vacancies with educator preparation programs?

- c. How is the district involved in the selection and placement of preservice teachers or leaders in your schools?

- d. How does your district select cooperating/host educators? How do you ensure that cooperating/host educators have the skills needed to support preservice teachers or leaders?

- e. Does your district hire student teachers who are effective in their practice after they graduate? Do you offer early contracts to student teachers who are effective?

- f. How do you share feedback with the preparation program on the quality of the candidates they graduate?

Who in the district is responsible for establishing high-quality student teaching partnerships?

BRAINSTORM: What are some next steps you can take to improve the quality of your partnerships with educator preparation programs? How will you know if your efforts are successful?

Recruitment Next Steps



Promising Practices: Recruitment

- Recruit aggressively from traditional and alternative pathways; include the use of social media.¹ Educators entering the workforce through residency and alternative certification programs are more diverse than their counterparts entering through traditional pre-baccalaureate programs at institutions of higher education.²
- Carefully track student teachers and provide early offers to high performing student teachers in shortage fields.³
- Track number and quality of graduates hired via recruitment pathway from each local educator preparation program.⁴
- Meet semi-annually with educator preparation programs to provide feedback on supply and quality of candidates.
- Use data to forecast specific needs by grade and subject – the results should drive your recruitment strategy.⁵
- Develop specific strategies for hard-to-staff schools and content areas that include appealing incentives.⁶
- Be clear about the benefits (intangible and tangible) the district has to offer educators and market them.⁷

¹The Urban Schools Human Capital Academy. Assess, Breakthrough and Change (ABC): Teacher Quality. Retrieved from <http://ushcademy.org/wp-content/uploads/ABC-Puzzle-Piece-Teacher-Sample-ABC-Tool1.pdf>.

²U.S. Department of Education (2015). Title II Issue Brief: Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs. Retrieved from https://title2.ed.gov/Public/44110_Title_II_Issue_Brief_Alt_n_TPP.pdf.

³The Urban Schools Human Capital Academy. Assess, Breakthrough and Change (ABC): Teacher Quality. Retrieved from <http://ushcademy.org/wp-content/uploads/ABC-Puzzle-Piece-Teacher-Sample-ABC-Tool1.pdf>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵Wurtzel, J & Curtis, R. (July 2008). Human Capital Framework for K-12 Urban Education: Organizing for Success. Retrieved from http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/education/FrameworkCombined_071708.pdf.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.



Hiring

Strong recruitment efforts will fail if weak hiring practices turn applicants away. An effective hiring process is crucial to establishing a workforce of effective educators in your district. Below are some research-driven strategies you may consider implementing to improve your district's hiring practices.

Prior to completing the self-assessment below, you may want to gather and review the following evidence sources:

- Hiring timelines
- Educator contracts
- Interview protocols and materials
- Applicant and hiring data
- Hiring feedback surveys
- Feedback from hired educators

STRATEGY 1: Establish early hiring timelines.

Publish vacancy notices as early as possible.

- a. By when does your district typically know its hiring needs for the following year?
- b. How do you project vacancies? Have the projections been accurate in the past?
- c. Does your district encourage early notification of vacancies through incentives?
- d. Are there barriers to early hiring in your collective bargaining agreement?

Who in the district is responsible for publishing vacancy notices?

BRAINSTORM: What steps can your district take to allow for early hiring? How will you know if your efforts are successful?

STRATEGY 2: Develop strong hiring practices.

Use technology throughout the hiring process.

- a. Has your district transitioned to a paperless applicant tracking system? Does information from online applications automatically enter an easily-accessible database?

Who in the district is responsible for incorporating technology into the hiring practices (e.g. paperless applicant tracking systems)?

Ensure timeliness in the hiring process.

- a. How long does it typically take from the time of posting a position to when an offer is made? Has an elongated hiring process turned educators away in the past?

- b. How can your district make time-to-hire more efficient?

Who in the district is responsible for enforcing timeliness in the hiring process?

Establish clear communication throughout the hiring process.

- a. Does your district maintain clear criteria for job openings through competency-based hiring practices and/or hiring rubrics?

- b. Do job descriptions align with the school or district mission?

- c. Does your district require demonstration of a sample lesson for final-round teaching applicants?

- d. Do applicants meet their future colleagues, students, etc. before deciding whether to take a position?
Are multiple individuals involved in the interview process?

- e. How does your district ensure communication between schools so that all relevant parties are involved and informed in the hiring process?

Who in the district is responsible for establishing clear communication throughout the hiring process?

BRAINSTORM: What improvements will you make to ensure school-level hiring is of the highest quality?
How will you know if your efforts are successful?

STRATEGY 3: Use stakeholder feedback to review and revise the hiring process.

Encourage feedback from stakeholders such as applicants, school leaders, educators, and HR staff.

- a. Does your district have a formal measure in place to solicit suggestions on how to improve the hiring process?

- b. Who is usually involved in the hiring process in your district? Are there additional stakeholders who could add a new perspective to hiring?

Who in the district is responsible for encouraging feedback from stakeholders on the hiring process?

BRAINSTORM: How can your district improve its collection and its utilization of feedback about the hiring process? How will you know if your efforts are successful?

Hiring Next Steps



Promising Practices: Hiring

- Make progress towards completing half of the district's new educator hiring at least a month before the end of the prior school year.⁸
- Provide resigning or retiring educators incentives to notify the district of their intentions early in the year.⁹
- Move up transfer processes to empower schools to consider internal and external candidates equally.¹⁰
- Protect the hardest-to-staff schools from budget fluctuations.¹¹
- Revamp central office practices to empower schools to drive hiring decisions.¹²
- Create efficient systems for receiving, processing, tracking, and placing applicants.¹³
- Evaluate the qualifications of applicants through multiple measures and multiple interviewers.¹⁴
- Develop strategies to expand diversity and track status of new hiring toward a specific improvement goal.¹⁵
- Include performance-based talent and skills assessments aligned to competencies in the hiring process.¹⁶

⁸ Levin, J & Quinn, C. (2003). *Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms*. Retrieved from <http://tntp.org/assets/documents/MissedOpportunities.pdf>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The Urban Schools Human Capital Academy. *Assess, Breakthrough and Change (ABC): Teacher Quality*. Retrieved from <http://ushcademy.org/wp-content/uploads/ABC-Puzzle-Piece-Teacher-Sample-ABC-Tool1.pdf>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Wurtzel, J & Curtis, R. (July 2008). *Human Capital Framework for K-12 Urban Education: Organizing for Success* Retrieved from http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/education/FrameworkCombined_071708.pdf.



Placement & Retention

Once educators are hired, it is important that they are placed in a supportive environment where they are able to thrive. Schools and districts can implement many strategies to retain educators.

Prior to completing the self-assessment below, you may want to gather and review the following evidence sources:

- Educator contracts
- Orientation and induction materials
- Educator effectiveness data of recent hires
- Placement of educators by race and ethnicity of student populations they serve
- Teaching climate survey results
- Feedback from educators who have resigned or retired

STRATEGY 1: Use performance evaluation data as the primary factor in tenure decisions.

Grant tenure to educators who meet performance expectations.

- a. Who decides which educators receive tenure and how is the decision made?
- b. How does educator performance evaluation data inform the tenure decision-making process?
- c. How often do district leaders revisit the decision-making process to ensure educators who meet performance expectations receive tenure?

Who in the district is responsible for granting tenure?

BRAINSTORM: How can your district improve the tenure decision-making process to ensure the district is retaining its strongest educators? How will you know if your efforts are successful?

STRATEGY 2: Provide new hires with ongoing support through placement and induction.

Place new educators within their content area and give them an initial reduced workload.

- a. To what extent are new educators in your district assigned to hard-to-staff schools/classrooms and hard-to-fill areas outside of their content areas?

- b. Are new educators in your district given a reduced workload through smaller class sizes, co-teaching opportunities, or a reduced number of courses?

Who in the district is responsible for placing new educators?

Value principal authority in placement.

- a. Does your district give principals autonomy in placement? How does principal input contribute to proper fit between the educator and their placement?

Use performance data to inform placement.

- a. How does your district use performance data to inform educator placement?

Who in the district is responsible for using performance data to inform educator placement?

Provide high-quality induction opportunities to newly hired educators.

- a. Does your district maintain an induction program for newly hired educators?

- b. How are newly hired educators paired with trained, qualified colleagues who serve as mentors?

Who in the district is responsible for providing high-quality induction opportunities to newly hired educators?

Ensure new hires have opportunities to collaborate with other educators.

- a. Do new hires have structured opportunities to collaborate with other educators?

- b. Are there interest/support groups available to new educators, particularly those in hard-to-staff schools and underrepresented groups (e.g., educators of color, male educators, etc.)?

Who in the district is responsible for ensuring new hires have opportunities to collaborate with other educators?

BRAINSTORM: How can your district further support new hires? How will you know if your efforts are successful?

STRATEGY 3: Establish a healthy and supportive teaching environment within the school and district.

Encourage a growth mindset among educators in the district.

- a. Does your district have policies such as common planning time and incentives for collaboration that encourage educators within departments and schools to work together as a team?

Who in the district is responsible for encouraging a growth mindset among educators such as enforcing common planning time and other incentives for collaboration?

Ensure availability of school resources to support instruction and professionalism.

- a. How often does your district provide quality learning opportunities for educators?

- b. How does your district use data to drive professional learning offerings?

- c. How is professional learning differentiated? Is it aligned to areas identified for improvement?

- d. How accessible are school resources such as technology and office assistance to support instruction?

Who in the district is responsible for ensuring availability of school resources to support instruction and professionalism?

Work with school leadership to create an environment that encourages educator input and rewards exceptional performance.

a. What does your district do to make educators feel valued?

b. Do educators have an opportunity to assume leadership roles? How are they afforded leadership opportunities?

c. How does your district encourage and reward exceptional performance?

Who in the district is responsible for working with school leadership to create an environment that encourages educator input and rewards exceptional performance?

BRAINSTORM: How can you reallocate resources to support educators? How will you know if your efforts are successful?

STRATEGY 4: Solicit feedback from educators who are resigning or retiring.

Ask departing educators to provide feedback on why they are leaving.

a. Does your district currently use tools (such as surveys or exit interviews) to record why departing educators decided to leave?

b. How does your district use data and feedback from departing educators to improve hiring, placement, and retention practices?

Who in the district is responsible for asking departing educators to provide feedback on why they are leaving?

BRAINSTORM: What are some next steps you can take to solicit feedback from educators who are exiting the district? How will you know if your efforts are successful?

Placement & Retention Next Steps



Promising Practices: Placement & Retention

- Provide school-level placements, not just open district-wide contracts.
- Focus on equity and student need: prioritize placing highly effective educators in hard-to-staff schools with intensive support.
- Use data systems to track and flag equitable access issues (e.g., disproportionality in access to effective educators for low-income and minority students).
- Track turnover of new educators in their first three years by key variables such as: educator preparation program, performance, etc.¹⁷
- Ensure mentoring/coaching is guided by teaching standards validated to student results and new educator needs.¹⁸
- Ensure mentoring/coaching is informed by diagnosed strengths and areas for development.¹⁹
- Provide time for observing and collaborating with other educators, lesson planning, and working with a mentor/coach.²⁰
- Offer professional development that is aligned with teaching standards and is guided by diagnosed strengths and areas for development.²¹

¹⁷ The Urban Schools Human Capital Academy. *Assess, Breakthrough and Change (ABC): Teacher Quality*. Retrieved from <http://ushcademy.org/wp-content/uploads/ABC-Puzzle-Piece-Teacher-Sample-ABC-Tool1.pdf>.

¹⁸ Wurtzel, J & Curtis, R. (July 2008). *Human Capital Framework for K-12 Urban Education: Organizing for Success*. Retrieved from http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/education/FrameworkCombined_071708.pdf.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For additional resources on how to improve talent management policies and practices in your district, please consult the following sources which were referenced for this checklist:

- Behrstock-Sherratt, E., Meyer, C., Potemski, A., & Wraight, S. (2013). *Educator talent management framework: A research-based model for district and state policymakers*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.
- Behrstock, E. & Coggshall, J.G. (2009). *Key issue: Teacher hiring, placement, and assignment practices*. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543675.pdf>.
- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders. (2014). *Understanding teaching conditions: Handouts*. Retrieved from http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/TeachingConditions_Handouts.pdf.
- Loeb, S., Kalogrides, D., & Beteille, T. (2011). *Effective schools: Teacher hiring, assignment, development, and retention*. National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17177.pdf>.
- **Shelby County Schools Talent Management Manual**
- The Urban Schools Human Capital Academy. *Assess, Breakthrough and Change (ABC): Teacher Quality*. Retrieved from <http://ushcademy.org/wp-content/uploads/ABC-Puzzle-Piece-Teacher-Sample-ABC-Tool1.pdf>.
- Wurtzel, J & Curtis, R. (2008). *Human Capital Framework for K-12 Urban Education: Organizing for Success*. Retrieved from http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/education/FrameworkCombined_071708.pdf.
- Levin, J & Quinn, C. (2003). *Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms*. Retrieved from <http://tntp.org/assets/documents/MissedOpportunities.pdf>.
- U.S. Department of Education (2015). *Title II Issue Brief: Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs*. Retrieved from https://title2.ed.gov/Public/44110_Title_II_Issue_Brief_Alt_n_TPP.pdf.

Additional Resources

- **Strategic Data Project Human Capital Diagnostic**

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The EASN's LEA Equity Planning work group worked together to build the Talent Management Self-Assessment Checklist for Districts based on a tool provided by the Rhode Island Department of Education. Participants in the work group included SEA leads from Connecticut, Texas, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Indiana, Rhode Island, District of Columbia and South Carolina.