



Indicator: Establish a system of procedures and protocols for recruiting, evaluating, rewarding, and replacing staff. (5168)

Explanation: Often the schools in need of improvement are also hard to staff, but their students most need the best leaders and teachers. The district intentionally establishes pipelines to recruit leaders and teachers fit for service in these schools, often provides incentives, and gives the special induction training and mentoring.

Questions: What does your district look for in leaders and teachers to serve in schools in need of improvement? What are your recruitment methods to identify and select these personnel? How are new staff for these schools provided with induction training and mentoring? What else does your district do to support their success?

Improving Staff Evaluation Systems

Evaluating staff is a critical component in an effective performance management system and should be connected to other areas of educator talent management and support. In particular, a rigorous approach to evaluation should be clearly connected to a district's system for providing professional development so that growth opportunities are well-aligned with teachers' and school leaders' areas of weakness (Milanowski, Heneman, & Kimball, 2009). Where evaluation systems are tied to compensation or other high stakes outcomes, it is especially important that they be accurate, fair, linked to growth opportunities, and fully transparent.

Implementing an effective evaluation system involves including individuals with significant, recent experience in the classroom as evaluators. Everyone involved in the evaluation process should undergo training in the use of the assessment instruments including the use of classroom observations, portfolio reviews, or whatever other methods are employed. In addition, evaluations should be conducted frequently, using multiple measures, in order to gain a comprehensive and accurate picture of a teacher's competencies. Those responsible for conducting the evaluation should provide immediate formative feedback. At the very minimum, all teachers should be evaluated annually, but more frequent evaluations should take place in cases where teachers are found to be under-performing (Mathers, Oliva, & Laine, 2008).

School leaders must also be evaluated. Their evaluations should be based on clear standards and objective criteria that are a matter of description and not conjecture. They should be honest, helping leaders with a chance to give feedback to the district and to shape the decisions that will improve their effectiveness (Reeves, 2009). For both teachers and school leaders, the evaluation system must be monitored for its perceived usefulness and to guide revisions to the evaluation process.

Action Principles

For District

1. Include multiple people in conducting evaluations. They should have experience in the classroom and should include individuals with expertise in the subject or grade level of the teacher being evaluated.
2. Provide high-quality training for those conducting evaluations.
3. Incorporate teacher self-reflection and personal goal-setting in the evaluation process.
4. Evaluate a variety of teacher skills and knowledge, using a variety of valid and reliable evaluation tools (for example of such tools, see A practical guide to evaluating teacher effectiveness).
5. Require evaluators to provide timely, clear, and constructive feedback.
6. Link the evaluation process with the district's collective and individualized professional development programs.
7. Use the evaluation results to differentiate among educators when granting leadership opportunities and making other decisions.
8. Differentiate among teachers at different stages in their careers, in specialized roles, or working with at-risk students and students with special needs. Consider teaching context when deciding upon which instruments to adopt and when determining how to use the results of the evaluation.
9. Develop a review process and communication plan to gauge teacher and administrator perceptions and concerns about the evaluation system and revise the system as necessary.
10. Standardize and document the evaluation process.
11. Evaluate the performance of school leaders in a similar manner.

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The district is responsible for choosing strong school leaders and high-performing teachers who have the capacity needed for school reform. For hard-to-staff schools this becomes especially important as these schools find it difficult to attract enough effective teachers for their students, especially in rural or urban schools and in certain subject areas such as math or science (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2011). In a study by Imazeki and Goe (2009) they found that “these shortages also contribute to an inequitable distribution of teachers between high- and low-need student populations; research consistently finds that students from poor and minority backgrounds have less access to highly qualified and experienced teachers than do their peers from low-poverty, non-minority backgrounds” (in NCCQT, 2011).

In order to attract effective educators for these schools, districts must

1. actively and strategically market their strengths (e.g., attractive compensation packages or working conditions),
2. develop high and unyielding standards for the identification and selection of candidates, and aggressively reach out to all possible candidate pools when recruiting for difficult-to-staff positions (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Simmons et al., 2007; Spradlin & Prendergast, 2006).
3. address some of the hidden costs of teaching in hard-to-staff areas; for example, cost of living, public transportation. (Liu & Johnson, 2003)

NCCQT (2011) gives the following suggestions for a district:

1. Identify the characteristics of the district and its schools that are attractive to teachers and seek to both market and build upon them to recruit new staff.
2. Identify schools within the district that have challenges in teacher recruitment.
3. Establish recruitment goals in terms of teacher quality and quantity for the district as a whole.
4. Establish recruitment goals in terms of teacher quality and quantity for high poverty and high minority schools to ensure that students in those schools do not have unequal access to high-quality teachers.
5. Develop and sustain partnerships with universities

and community colleges that deliver teacher preparation, particularly for the recruitment of teachers in high-need areas, such as teachers of students with disabilities and English language learners.

6. Create programs to recruit former teachers, including those recently retired, and ensure that policies related to teacher retirement do not prohibit these actions.
7. Establish “grow-your-own” programs to recruit future educators from the pool of current high school students, paraprofessionals, teacher aides, and community members.
8. Provide financial incentives (e.g., salary increases, bonuses, housing assistance, etc.) for educators willing to work in high-need schools or subject areas. This strategy might include incentives for general education teachers to switch to special education, teaching English language learners, or becoming certified in other high-need subjects.
9. Alter hiring procedures and budget timelines to ensure that the appropriate number and types of teachers can be recruited and hired before they seek employment elsewhere.

For English Language Learners

Having sufficient personnel with the experience and expertise in meeting the needs of ELLs is essential to school improvement efforts. The district must ensure that schools in need of improvement have adequate numbers of both English language development specialists and content/grade-level teachers capable of providing content instruction that is sensitive to the needs of ELLs. At the outset of the school improvement process, the district should assess its need for qualified teachers of ELLs to determine staffing needs, e.g. recruitment, retention, and professional development for teachers of ELLs. Rather than a general statement of the district’s recruitment and retention goals, the outcome of the needs assessment should involve the development of a plan to address the identified needs.

The following are issues which districts need to attend to on an ongoing basis:

- English language development teachers hold and maintain certification in ESL.
- Bilingual/dual language teachers hold and maintain certification in bilingual education and in the content area(s) they teach.

- Content/grade-level teachers who serve ELLs hold and maintain certification in the content area (s) / grade(s) they teach.
- Teachers who provide academic content instruction to ELLs have expertise in addressing the academic, linguistic, and cultural needs of ELLs.
- The district employs a sufficient number of teachers in each school qualified to provide English Language development for ELLs.
- The district employs a sufficient number of teachers in each school with the expertise to provide content instruction for ELLs.
- Each school employs adequate staff to meet the requirements of the program design.

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