

Finding and Keeping High-Quality Teachers

Large numbers of retiring teachers, low retention of new teachers, and the need for more teachers to reduce class size have made the teacher shortage immediate in many school districts. This shortage is particularly critical in many large urban schools and isolated rural areas (Futrell 1999). In all kinds of communities, districts are finding it increasingly difficult to fill the demand for math, science, foreign language, ESOL, and special education teachers (American Association for Employment in Education 2000). And nationwide, education policy makers are recognizing the urgent need to increase the number of minority teachers to reflect the diversity of the student population

This *Informed Educator* outlines the roles that central-office administrators, principals, and others can play in finding the best possible teachers to staff our public schools. Traditional recruitment methods are still effective as part of the overall recruitment program—but they must be supplemented with innovative approaches that involve partnerships with universities and others outside the school district.

In addition, this publication discusses the other vital part of the task—keeping teachers on board and helping them find satisfaction and growth in their profession. Again, a combination of traditional and new approaches to teacher retention may work best.

Finding the Best Teachers

Hiring new teachers has become a time-consuming job, with year-round responsibili-

ties for school district administrators and school principals (Clement, D'Amico, and Protheroe 2000). In order to open the school doors each fall with a well-qualified teaching force, districts need to create a strategic plan for recruiting and hiring teachers, and to designate sufficient funding and personnel to these tasks. Since time and budgets are generally limited, networks and collaborative efforts with other school districts, universities, businesses, and community entities are needed. In the next few pages, we look at ways that school leaders can expand and enhance the effectiveness of recruitment efforts.

Create the District Context for Effective Teacher Recruitment

In the midst of the increasingly competitive environment for recruiting new teachers, the first step is to make sure the school district personnel system helps, rather than hinders, efforts to hire well-qualified teachers. Smith and Knab (1996) identified the components of a system that would make teacher selection efficient, reliable, and valid. Their research found that the best hiring systems:

- identify those attitudes, behaviors, and skills that characterize the kind of teachers most wanted in classrooms;
- screen for these characteristics at every stage of data collection and candidate evaluation;
- validate the selection process to ensure that it predicts excellence in classroom and professional performance;
- ensure that the hiring process complies with federal, state, and local laws;
- eliminate unproductive paperwork so that the best candidates have confidence in the speed and skill of the system recruiting them;

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Recruitment and Retention: Questions to Consider

In speaking about the “teacher recruitment and retention challenge,” Segun Eubanks of the National Education Association suggests that districts wanting to improve their practices in these areas ask themselves questions such as these:

Recruitment—

- How much does it cost to recruit a new teacher to your district?
- Does your district have clearly defined criteria for what a new teacher should know and be able to do? If so, how are these criteria implemented when recruiting new teachers and when providing induction to new teachers?

Retention—

- Why do teachers leave your district?
- What type support and assistance do your new teachers want?
- How are new teachers assigned to schools and/or classrooms?
- How are new teachers evaluated?

Source: Eubanks 2000.

- automate the process whenever possible to reduce staff time spent on clerical tasks;
- reserve labor-intensive personal evaluative techniques only for the most promising candidates;
- provide prompt, accessible, and accurate information to candidates at all stages of the hiring process; and
- give decision makers accurate and timely information about the overall process and its results.

The hiring process is the candidate’s first impression of the school or school district. In a job market where fully certified teachers in high-need areas can pick their position, candidates will be using interviews not only to be hired, but also to make their decision about where they want to work.

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Job advertisements should be written with “truth in advertising.” For example, “When New York City needed to find teachers for its toughest city schools, recruiters decided they wouldn’t sugarcoat the challenge. They made it their selling point. And it worked” (Dean 2001, 1).

Candidates will be impressed with a district if their inquiries to job advertisements receive quick responses. Guidelines include:

1. Send a form letter to any candidate who submits a cover letter and resumé to the appropriate office.
2. Send a checklist of other items that the candidate needs to submit to be considered for a position and a deadline for completion of application and all other supporting paperwork (such as letters of recommendation, transcripts, criminal background checks).
3. Inform the candidate how to keep in touch with the district throughout the initial stages of the application process, and provide a contact person and phone number or email address for further questions.
4. Inform the candidate about any special procedures, such as a preliminary telephone interview.
5. If you decide to interview the candidate, make the invitation to interview very detailed and professional. Schedule the interview as quickly as possible and include complete directions to the school or interview site.
6. If a position has already been filled, inform the candidate in writing. If the candidate’s resumé indicates other areas of certification that match another opening, ask the candidate about his or her interest for the different opening.

Expand Traditional Recruiting

Traditional recruiting has usually meant that a personnel director, assistant superintendent, and/or team of principals attended local teacher placement fairs at colleges in the spring. After meeting with potential candidates and carrying resumés back to their district, the administrators probably had a large enough pool of candidates to fill their vacancies. These days, however, you need to look at these traditional methods and consider how they can yield a greater return.

Making the most of job fairs. Job fairs remain a good way to meet with many candidates in a short time, but successful recruiters may need to revise the approaches they use at these events. Traditional teacher placement fairs have changed and are now looking more like true recruitment fairs. You need to create a booth that advertises your district and your community—a booth that is packable and moveable.

Take advantage of your city's chamber of commerce for material about the community. In fact, try taking a chamber of commerce representative with you to the job fair to "sell" the community. New teachers want to know about the availability of housing and recreation in the community. In short, is this a good place to live? The chamber of commerce and local real estate agents will help to answer this question for prospective new hires, so include these people or their publications in your recruitment effort.

The business community will want to be involved in recruiting these new teachers, because their salaries will create more buying power that will be returned to the community. Everyone in a community is a stakeholder for the creation of good, well-staffed schools.

Small colleges often join each other for job fairs so that employers can meet with more candidates in a one- or two-day period. Take advantage of combined job fairs; they will save you valuable travel time.

Collaborating with the career center. In today's market, administrators charged with staffing must work much more closely with both the career centers and the colleges of teacher education at the university to build their teaching faculties. Developing a working relationship with the career center at a university can be the first link in recruitment. Career centers publish job vacancy bulletins and newsletters for their

students year round. District vacancies should be posted in all of the college career centers in the state, as well as those in each neighboring state. Don't forget that some midwestern states are still producing more teachers than needed, and those states have graduates who can be recruited to warm sunbelt states.

Once you have established phone contacts with career centers and they know who you are, your follow-up conversations may all be done via email. Every time you have a vacancy, email the specifications of the position to as many college career centers as possible.

College career centers not only post your openings online, but may have websites with information on their current candidates in teacher education. Their site may list numbers of graduates by field, or may have candidates' resumés available for you online. A quick phone call and follow-up reading of the center's webpage will help you determine whether a visit to this campus is worth your time and effort. Career centers can arrange a day for you to interview their teacher education candidates with or without your participation in a traditional job fair.

High-Quality School Districts Attract High-Quality Teachers

The quality of the school as a workplace is the best possible recruitment tool. Teachers share the reputation of their school with the community, the university, and even the media. Positive school morale and a supportive environment can be created at any school. Dynamic administrators who support teachers and use teachers' expertise in decision-making will create a school where teachers want to work. Recruitment of new teachers for such schools will occur naturally.

The directors of college career centers participate in their own organizations, specifically the American Association for Employment in Education (formerly ASCUS; email AAEE@osu.edu for more information). By attending a national, state, or regional conference with the director of a nearby college career center, you can build your own network with a group of professionals who can help you with all of your staffing needs.

Collaborating with colleges of education. School districts have always relied on the local universities' teacher education programs to prepare the best possible teacher candidates. Now, teacher education programs are not based solely on campuses, but are often field-based programs where candidates complete hundreds of hours in public schools before graduating.

If your district links with the office of field experiences and student teaching at a university, you can host practicum students and student teachers in your schools. More intense collaborations can lead to becoming a Professional Development School (PDS) site, where you will not only be creating a pool of potential new hires, but your practicing teachers will have opportunities to train tomorrow's teachers. Practicum students and student teachers who are on-site can be observed while teaching, giving you more insight into their teaching potential.

If your school is too far away from a campus to host practicum students and student teachers, consider bringing a team of teachers and administrators to the school of education once or twice a year to speak with student teachers or methods classes. College professors seek guest speakers, and students want to hear from experienced teachers. Your guest appearances in classes are a recruitment tool, but are also fulfilling a need of the college to provide realistic and current information to students of teacher education.

"Casting a wider net." In efforts to recruit qualified new teachers, administrators are traveling to more job fairs, and traveling to fairs farther from their districts. In addition, districts are creating their own recruitment days, often on Saturdays, and are combining with other districts to offer a job fair. A large district or multi-district fair will attract job seekers if advertised well in advance, and if candidates know of the specific openings that are available.

Out-of-state recruitment is certainly an option, but be prepared for some challenges. Since each state has its own certification process, recruiting from other states must include complete orientation to the new hire about how to become certified in your state. Some out-of-state hires will need to take certification tests, and others will need to take additional coursework. Be clear to new hires about your district's time limits for getting certification in the new state and provide all the necessary contact information that the new hire will need to process the paperwork. Assign one person from your personnel office to handle this

paperwork so that is completed efficiently. Additional orientation for new out-of-state hires may be needed, because each state has its own guidelines for standardized testing and curriculum.

Some large school districts are recruiting from foreign countries with good results (Ferrechio 2001; Lord 2001). Teacher salaries are attractive to foreign professionals, who are also attracted to the opportunity to live in the United States. The disadvantages of foreign recruitment may be language barriers, immigration paperwork, and culture shock. Foreign recruits need very specific orientation to the American school system, methods of positive classroom management, and the state's curriculum mandates. However, the advantage of the informal cultural exchange between teacher and students, coupled with the potential to diversify the teaching force, make foreign recruitment a serious consideration for some districts.

Grow Your Own New Teachers— Recruit Internally

Before the current teacher shortage, many substitute teachers and paraprofessionals were actually certified teachers who were trying to get their foot in the door for full-time positions. In today's market, many paraprofessionals and substitute teachers have limited degree work, but may still be very interested in becoming certified teachers.

The idea of growing your own teachers is a long-term solution to the teacher shortage, but one that you should not overlook.

If possible, encourage these staff members to continue their education. Create a pipeline for paraprofessionals and substitutes to complete general education requirements at a community college that will feed into a university teacher education program. Some universities may be able to give credit for field experiences completed while working as a paraprofessional or substitute, if properly supervised. Again, the district's ties to the community colleges and universities may enable the creation of innovative programs. Tuition funding, even if only partial, may enable some school staff members to become certified teachers.

Jorgenson calls local junior and community colleges “untapped resources” (2001, 66) for the recruitment of prospective teachers, especially minority candidates. School districts can collaborate with four-year institutions to recruit community college students into teacher education programs. Options include recruiting at career days at community colleges and also hosting community college students into your schools to be mentored by practicing teachers.

The idea of growing your own teachers is a long-term solution to the teacher shortage, but one that you should not overlook. When middle schools and high schools have career days, the job of teacher is often left out because teachers are all around. However, teachers should always be speaking at career days in the school systems.

High schools can offer a teacher cadet class, where juniors and seniors read about the teaching profession and then participate in teaching experiences at the elementary or middle schools. High school students can volunteer to work in elementary schools to fulfill their service learning requirement and may discover that teaching is indeed the career for them. The local teacher organization/union may want to sponsor a student club for future teachers.

Some elementary principals discover parents of children in their school who are actually certified teachers, but who have opted to “stop-out” of the profession during their children’s early years of school. By becoming acquainted with these parents and by watching for other gifted parent volunteers, some principals can recruit from the pool of parents. Offering supervised before- and after-school day care would be a real incentive to recruit these parents of very young children back into the teaching pool.

Use Alternative Routes to Certification

Alternative routes to teacher certification are being developed in many states. If you must fill some positions with teachers who are not traditionally certified, take advantage of alternative certification programs that are the most selective of their entrants, have participants who are enrolled in programs at universities while teaching, and

who receive much supervision from the college or regional office of education.

Additional mentoring, coaching, and supervision will be required for non-certified teachers, but the support of the college, regional office of education, or state board of education can ease the supervision burden on the local school and help you to “grow” a certified teacher within one to two years. When hiring non-certified teachers, look for those with highly successful experiences from previous careers (Philadelphia, 2001).

Network with Teacher Organizations and the State Board of Education

State boards of education search for ways to reduce teacher shortages, and can be a source of help in district recruitment efforts. The board can maintain a website listing all openings in the state, with a link on how out-of-state candidates can get certification. State governments are generally supportive of initiatives such as Teach for America and Troops to Teachers. By taking advantage of these established programs, some additional support and supervision for the new hire may be provided without additional cost to the district.

Adopt Recruitment Strategies from the Business World

The business world teaches us that high salaries, good benefits, retirement packages, and bonuses are recruitment incentives. This is true, and in recruiting new teachers we should “sell” the length of summer and holiday breaks, early retirement, and the “family friendliness” of the teaching profession. Teachers

The Changing World of Teacher Hiring

“In Dekalb County School System in Georgia, the current teacher shortage has led to major changes in how we do business. The era of taking two months to hire a teacher is history. In today’s business world, those who can move the data the fastest will be successful. Those who cannot move the data rapidly will be “gone with the wind.” Teachers today must be hired within approximately two weeks, and teachers in critical fields must be hired within two days. If personnel administrators do not meet this “fast track” hiring strategy, then someone else will hire the teacher before the slow movers have time to act...For those who haven’t noticed, employment initiatives, practices, and clever approaches for hiring teacher are changing at a rapid pace.”

Source: Grant 2000.

who are parents themselves have the same schedule as their own children and have more compatible work hours than those in some sectors of the business world.

Some districts are using signing bonuses to recruit new teachers. Historically schools have not done this, so care must be taken to work with the teachers' unions when implementing new bonus packages. If a new teacher receives a \$1,000 signing bonus, will veteran teachers feel cheated by not getting a similar bonus for longevity? Can signing bonuses be used for new teachers with continuing contract bonuses for veterans? Explanations and careful implementation are needed when using bonuses for recruitment.

The advantage is that bonuses make newly hired teachers feel treated like professionals in the business world. The bonus and starting salary will probably be the decision makers for new teachers considering more than one job offer. Teaching salaries, combined with the benefits and vacation time, do make teaching more competitive than in the past (Kantrowitz and Wingert 2000).

In addition to signing bonuses, what else can the district offer teachers? Teachers always need "stuff" for their classrooms, and a personal fund for purchasing school supplies and equipment is greatly valued by teachers. Providing both new and veteran teachers with this individual classroom budget alleviates the tension that may be caused by signing bonuses.

Teachers also appreciate funds for travel to conferences and tuition reimbursements for graduate courses. By funding conferences and college courses, the district is investing in the teachers' continued success. Again, try linking with community businesses for coupon books or the creation of a school foundation fund for additional monies for these projects.

Use Interviews that Work

The interview has two purposes—to determine whether the candidate is capable of succeeding in the job, and to sell the teaching position to the candidate. The candidate's first impression of the people with whom they will work comes from their interaction with school office and central-office staffs, so providing office personnel with training and guidelines regarding candidate contact is important.

Office staff should be reminded to be cordial and businesslike, but not to engage in personal conversa-

tions with candidates about family and current jobs. The rules about not asking illegal questions in an interview include the conversations candidates have with office staff. Called "red flag" questions by Shoop and Dunklee (2001), these questions include ones about health, income, marital status, lifestyle, race, religion, politics, age, children, and child-care.

The traditional interview takes place with one principal or personnel director, but today's schools may develop interviews delivered by teams of teachers or administrators. In any case, the interviewer(s) need to create a specific list of questions that are used consistently and that can be evaluated objectively. An interview "game plan" should include questions in the following categories:

1. Introduction and icebreaker questions (Tell me one thing about yourself that isn't on your resumé.)
2. Curriculum (Describe a social studies unit you have taught and its importance.)
3. Planning (How do you divide large amounts of material to be covered?)
4. Classroom organization and management (How do you establish rules at the beginning of the year?)
5. Homework and grading (Explain your grading system to me, assuming I am your student.)
6. Meeting individual student needs (Tell me about a time you worked with students who were not speakers of English as a native language.)
7. Communication with parents, colleagues, and administrators (Describe parent conferences you have conducted in the past.)
8. Professional growth (What do you read to stay current in your field?) (Clement, D'Amico, and Protheroe 2000)

Asking questions about previous teaching behavior gives the interviewer a way to predict future performance on the new job. Called behavior-based interviewing (BBI), this type of interviewing has been successful in businesses for some time and is now being used by districts to hire the best new teachers. Teachers who can articulate positive experiences about all aspects of teaching, and what they learned from their experience, should be better equipped to actually do the things needed to teach the curriculum and manage a classroom.

Retaining High-Quality Teachers

With a large proportion of beginning teachers quitting during their first three years (Stansbury and Zimmerman 2000), the issue of retention becomes critical if districts are to meet staffing needs. Linda Darling-Hammond writes:

In countless newspaper articles, teachers cite poor working conditions, lack of support, bureaucracy, weak financial incentives, and growing job demands as reasons for leaving the classroom. Among new teachers, those who enter with little teacher education and those who receive little mentoring leave the most quickly, overwhelmed by complexities that they are poorly armed to meet (2001, 12).

Retention of new teachers starts before they are hired—during the job interview itself. The principal's or central-office recruiter's interview with the candidate can end with a description of support offered new teachers and how the district will keep in touch with new hires from the time of hiring through the first day of school. Make sure that you follow up on these promises.

While it is generally a fact of life that new teachers will struggle somewhat, school leaders can do their part to minimize the time and energy they spend struggling. Teachers who participate in planned, effective induction, support, and mentoring programs will feel less stress and alienation in the initial phases of their job, and probably will have more energy to put into their classroom teaching.

Installing a solid induction program that enables new teachers to ride out rough times has several benefits. New teachers will become more effective more rapidly. Veteran teachers will spend less time hand-holding and supporting new teachers. By reducing the potential for early burnout of the new teachers, you may have to hire fewer teachers in the spring.

Induction can include orientation, support groups, seminars, and mentoring. Each district needs to evaluate its current practices for inducting and supporting new teachers, then customize a program to ensure that newly hired teachers feel supported during the critical first years in the district. The following are some ideas that can enhance your school's or district's induction and support efforts.

Provide Earlier and Effective Back-to-School Orientation

Every school has back-to-school orientation for teachers, varying from one day to one week of faculty meetings and time to work in classrooms. Since new teachers need to be in the regularly scheduled workshops for all teachers, their new teacher orientations must be scheduled earlier.

Invite the new teachers to orientation during the interview and remind them in mailings after hiring. The only way to ensure that new hires participate is to require their attendance. Extra pay for the extra days is appreciated by all involved, and payment for attending this orientation can be advertised in lieu of a signing bonus or in addition to one.

Components of successful new teacher orientation include:

1. Create a comfortable environment for the meetings, including beverages, snacks, meals, and appropriate breaks.
2. Introduce district personnel so that new teachers know who can help them with specific concerns.
3. Hold get-acquainted activities among the new teachers themselves so that they can call upon others with similar concerns.
4. Provide free materials and supplies for making the classrooms of new teachers personalized.
5. Provide information about school policies, calendar, routines, and schedules. Give each new teacher a notebook with information and don't attempt to cover everything in the orientation.
6. Have a workshop on classroom management that includes the creation of a poster by each new teacher for their room with rules, positives, and consequences.
7. Include specific information about district policy for violence prevention, crisis intervention, and emergency evacuation.
8. Introduce the mentors to their new teachers, and provide time for working together.

One bonus of new teacher orientation is that, when new hires attend the regular faculty meetings at the beginning of school, they will feel less intimidated by the veteran teachers and more confident that they will be ready for the first day of school.

SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS: A CHECKLIST

- ✓ Stress practicality in the information you supply to beginning teachers. Although these questions may be addressed in procedural guides, the beginning teacher may not have the time to read them. Address these concerns verbally and in concise written form for easy reference.
- ✓ Get district curriculum goals, objectives, and time requirements to new teachers as soon as possible after they are hired, to help them in planning.
- ✓ Designate a central person in the school to whom the beginning teacher can turn with questions about equipment, supplies, and school procedures.
- ✓ Prevent the beginning teacher's isolation by stressing that colleagues need to give him/her support, time, and encouragement.
- ✓ Recognize the beginning teacher's apprehensions. Share "war stories" with beginning teachers to let them know that mistakes happen to everyone and the important point is learning from them.
- ✓ Give the beginner an idea of how he/she is doing by providing feedback on his/her progress after a few weeks in the classroom, and then providing very practical suggestions as to what is and what is not working. Be sure to provide encouragement and reinforcement often.
- ✓ Faculty meetings can be confusing for new teachers—for instance, when the discussion uses acronyms or abbreviations for the names of programs and series. Provide a handout with an explanation of these terms, current projects, and other pertinent information.
- ✓ Remember how vulnerable new teachers can feel and how hard it can be for them to ask questions. Do everything that you can to assure them that questions are not a sign of incompetence or weakness.
- ✓ Recognize the extra work that new teachers must do and the extra stress that they experience. Give new teachers every break possible with their workload, while still making sure that they participate in the larger community of the school.
- ✓ Encourage new teachers to express their opinions in faculty meetings and in discussions with you and other colleagues.
- ✓ Assign a mentor—and do it as early as possible in the school year.

Source: Clement, D'Amico, and Protheroe 2000.

Hold Support Seminars for Newly Hired Teachers

The best orientation in the world is still just the beginning. Some new teachers will be so overwhelmed by the amount of new information they receive in orientation that they cannot possibly absorb all of it. Orientation is one part of staff development, and staff development provides the best results when it is given in a timely manner, provided in a continual, ongoing framework. Orientation should set

the stage for planned, systematic seminars that are provided throughout the school year.

New teachers are extremely busy, and few will take the time to attend optional after-school seminars. Saturday sessions are a possibility, especially if a bonus is offered for attendance. A better way to ensure participation is to provide release time for new teachers to attend these sessions. You should also guarantee that the sessions are active, interesting, and meaningful to the participants. Making seminars for new

teachers a choice during scheduled inservice days is another option.

Veteran teachers and second- or third-year teachers may be valuable leaders for special topics. Nearby colleges and universities may be willing to provide seminars for new teachers for the district, as universities need to provide support to their graduates for national accreditation. Some universities receive grant money for helping new teachers in their service area and will link with school districts to provide that help, while others will provide seminars as part of Professional Development School partnerships (Clement 2000).

Seminars should be taught with a planned curriculum, but much time should be allowed for discussion of the teachers' concerns and their "hot topics."

General guidelines for seminar topics should be developed by the needs of the teachers at certain times throughout the school year.

1. Early in the year, teachers need continued help with organizing their classrooms. Provide tips from veteran teachers about classroom organization and about "surviving" as a new teacher.
2. Before the first parent open house, a seminar on communicating with parents, colleagues, and administrators is timely. Have new teachers role-play parent conferences and how to deal with challenging parents.
3. At the end of the first nine weeks, many new teachers are ready to update their classroom management plans and need help with discipline. A seminar that offers approaches to classroom management and reminders of school-wide discipline procedures is very valuable. Allow time for teachers to discuss scenarios that have happened to them and provide suggestions for dealing with behavior problems. A second seminar can be devoted to dealing with students' social and emotional problems, as this is closely related to management and discipline.
4. Gifted, special education, and inclusion are important topics for a seminar. Have the teachers who direct these programs work with the new teachers about expectations and paperwork issues.
5. By the gray days of February and March, teachers are ready for seminars that provide new teaching ideas and strategies. At this point in their careers, they want practical, hands-on tips

Seminars for new teachers will achieve success when the director and seminar presenters are chosen carefully for their staff development skills and understanding of new teachers' needs.

that will work for them. Be as specific as possible, having teachers grouped by subject and grade areas to work with other teachers who have suggestions.

6. Stress management can be offered at any time of the school year—and repeated! End-of-school problems create additional stress, and a seminar on how to wrap up a school year combines well with stress management.

Seminars for new teachers will achieve success when the director and seminar presenters are chosen carefully for their staff development skills and understanding of new teachers' needs. A practical curriculum will help new teachers with organizational strategies, communication, and management skills. Seminars should allow new teachers to get counsel for their concerns and to celebrate their successes.

Provide Mentoring, a Popular and Effective Approach

Mentoring is a "tried and true" method of teacher support that pairs the new teacher with a veteran teacher who can serve as a guide. Mentors help to increase the new teacher's competence and self-confidence by being available to answer questions and listen to ideas. Specifically, mentors can do the following to help new teachers:

1. Help the new teacher to find materials and supplies.
2. Make resource books and magazines available.
3. Share workable ideas for communicating with parents.
4. Provide samples of realistic classroom management plans.
5. Share strategies for teaching diverse students.

6. Inform the new teacher about district programs and mandated curriculum.
7. Let the new teacher know it's OK to ask questions.
8. Model positive coping and stress relief strategies.
9. Invite the new teacher into professional organizations and to attend conferences.
10. Observe the new teacher as a colleague, and offer suggestions in a non-evaluative format.

Creating the mentor program and selecting mentors. A school principal or district administrator can take the lead in creating a mentoring program. Roles of the mentors need to be clearly defined as a program is developed: Are mentors to guide and help, with confidentiality guaranteed, or will they have a role in the new teacher's evaluation? Will mentors be volunteers or paid for this assigned extra duty? Many models for mentoring exist. Guidelines for success include:

1. The program must have leadership. Creation of a mentor program director position and clearly defined roles for that director to implement the program are essential. This can be part of a principal's position, if district funding and time are supportive. In larger districts this may be a job of a curriculum or personnel director.
2. Teacher organization/union involvement in the creation of the program, mentor selection, and payment of mentors will prevent many implementation problems.
3. New mentors should be thoroughly prepared and trained in their roles and in the expectations of the program. This training should involve orientation and follow-up workshops.
4. Mentors and new teachers should be paired based on similar grade and subject levels, as well as proximity in the building. (It's just easier for a new teacher to run down the hall and ask another teacher who teaches the same thing.)
5. Making time available for mentoring is a key factor in the success of the program. Allowing the mentor and new teacher to have the same preparation period can alleviate the time constraint, as can providing release time for both.

Planning for a new mentoring program should begin one year before implementation so that budget and personnel issues are decided. Train more mentors

than needed, so that there is a working pool of mentors from which to pull veteran teachers. Offer training every second or third year as needed to increase the pool of teachers. Develop evaluation surveys to be used by the new teachers and the mentors to study the effectiveness of the program and to improve on it.

The principal as a mentor. Even with an effective teacher mentor program in place, the building principal still has responsibility for the retention of new hires, and his or her active support of mentoring efforts will maximize program results. The principal will need to have a role in mentor/new teacher pairings, informing parents and students about mentoring, and facilitating the time element when teachers need to work together (Ganser 2001).

In most schools, the principal remains the evaluator of newly hired teachers. By emphasizing that observations and evaluations are developmental and designed to help the new teacher become established and succeed, evaluation can be a positive tool rather than a terrifying experience.

Address the Need for Long-term Teacher Retention

While 22 percent of all new teachers leave the profession in the first three years (U.S. Department of Education 2000), others will continue, but not teach as a lifetime career. For years some teachers have complained that there was simply "no ladder to climb" in teaching, unlike the business world.

The education profession is creating some "ladders" for those seeking long-term careers, such as enhanced salary schedules for teachers who earn master's, specialist, and doctoral degrees. Teachers who earn National Board Certification are not only eligible for significant raises in many districts and states, but also become recognized in their districts and communities as master teachers.

Teachers who mentor new teachers often feel rewarded and rejuvenated by doing so. Some teachers who accept student teachers from the university feel that their work is a way to "give back" to the profession and feel renewed by helping a student become a teacher. Many curriculum directors and assistant principals feel that they have "moved up" to new challenges without leaving day-to-day work with students for full-time administrative duties.

Just as the need to "grow your own" new teachers exists, so too does the need to grow new principals



and superintendents. For some teachers the move to administration is the step that they need to stay in education, but leave the classroom. Encourage teachers to consider these options as a long-term solution to staffing needs, and as a way to help keep qualified, competent professionals in education.

Conclusion

Since the quality of education provided to children directly depends on the dedication and skill of the people teaching them, no task of the school leader may be more important or difficult than finding and keeping high-quality teachers. As Clement, D'Amico, and Protheroe write, "Because you want only the best, hiring and keeping excellent teachers can be a daunting, stressful, and challenging task" (2000, 62).

Now more than ever, school and school district leaders must look to a combination of traditional recruitment methods and innovative approaches to find and retain high-quality teachers. Collaborative networks comprising public schools, colleges and universities, businesses, and other community stakeholders can be a vital part of the recruitment and retention effort. Ultimately, high student achievement depends on bringing excellent teachers into the profession and keeping them there.

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