

HANCOCK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Building a
Stable Workforce of
Excellent Educators**

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Hancock Central School District

The Wildcat Pledge: We nurture and empower each learner's unlimited capacity to become a responsible citizen with a promising future.

Our Vision: Striving for excellence as an innovative, advanced and reflective school community.

Core Beliefs:

- Our mindset: We do whatever it takes to ensure continuous growth because we believe each of us can learn.
- Collaboration: We work better together, always.
- Innovation: We embrace creativity and advancing technology.
- Integrity: We trust, respect, support and care for one another.
- Learning environment: Our approach is engaging, learner-centered and adaptable to individual needs.
- Student centered: We put students first.

Hancock Central School District

Building a Stable Workforce of Excellent Educators

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Education Policy Brief

July 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic has destabilized the American workforce. While unemployment rates remain higher than pre-pandemic levels, employers are struggling to find workers to fill positions nationwide. Labor shortages are fueled by a confluence of factors. COVID still presents a medical risk to many workers. Lockdowns and school closures throughout the pandemic forced many – especially women – out of the job market and into caregiving roles. Meanwhile, soaring retirement accounts and home prices allowed more people than expected to retire and permanently exit the market.¹

What was initially branded as the Great Resignation is now being dubbed the Great Renegotiation. Data show that workers are not simply quitting their jobs to sit on the sidelines. Rather, they are switching jobs – perhaps even industries – for better pay, benefits, and working conditions, and leaving jobs that impair their physical and mental health and do not pay enough to meet basic needs, build financial security, or save for the future.² Because there are more openings, people can afford to be picky about what they come back to, exercising a newfound power in the market that has led to the highest wage gains of workers in non-management positions in nearly four decades.

Intensified Educator Workforce Challenges

Effective teaching is the greatest factor in student success. The effect of teaching on student learning is greater than student ethnicity, family income, school attributes, or class size.³

¹ [Flowers, A. and A. Van Dam. "The most unusual job market in modern American history, explained." *Washington Post*. December 29, 2021.](#)

² [Schweitzer, J. and R. Khattar. *It's a Good Jobs Shortage: The Real Reason So Many Workers Are Quitting*. Center for American Progress. December 7, 2021.](#) Also [Casselman, B. *More quit jobs than ever before, but most turnover is low-wage work*. *New York Times*. January 4, 2022.](#)

³ [Nye, Konstantopoulos and Hedges. "How Large are Teacher Effects?" *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* \(2004\)](#)

Students with three consecutive years of effective teaching outperform students with ineffective teachers by 52 percentage points.⁴ The critical importance of teachers on students' futures makes the challenge of getting – and keeping – highly effective educators perhaps the greatest that schools and districts currently face.

Longstanding teacher shortages, often most acute in high-need fields and high-need urban and rural schools, have become more severe during the pandemic. Education's aging workforce was reluctant to weather COVID's health risks, especially before vaccines were readily available for adults and children. The past two years have taken a toll on school employees' mental health; teachers readily cite fatigue and burnout as reasons for resignations and retirements.⁵ The teaching profession has lost appeal as wages have stagnated and teachers are consistently asked to do more with less. In many places, the starting salary for a teacher is less than that of an Amazon worker.⁶ As more teachers have exited the field, new state and federal funding has allowed districts to create additional teaching positions in order to provide smaller class sizes, more personalized learning for students, and additional academic support. While intended to help, these additional openings are making the shortages even more pronounced.

This mismatch between supply and demand has left district leaders scrambling to fill teaching, substitute, and a host of other roles. According to an Ed Week poll, nearly half of administrators report struggling to hire teachers; approximately three-quarters struggle to find substitute teachers. In another poll, two-thirds of the districts surveyed reported they have had more teacher vacancies than usual to fill this school year, and a more difficult time finding teachers to hire. As a result, schools have increasingly hired underprepared teachers, relied on long-term subs or paraprofessionals to lead classrooms, asked teachers to teach additional classes, and/or combined classrooms to enable coverage. Failure to recruit and retain well-prepared teachers undermines student achievement, with the most severe impacts on students from low-income families and students of color. It also jeopardizes school reopening because in-

Ed Week Research Center Survey

Percentages of principals and district leaders who say they have struggled to hire a sufficient number of employees for the following positions:

Substitute teachers	77%
Bus drivers	68%
Paraprofessionals/instructional aides	55%
Full-time teachers	48%
Cafeteria workers	42%
Custodians	41%
Nurses	20%
Mental health counselors	19%
Administrative assistants	12%
Other, please specify	5%
Principals/assistant principals	5%
District-level administrators	3%

Source: EdWeek Research Center

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⁴ Sanders & Horn. "Research Findings from the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) Database" (1996)

⁵ [United States Department of Education. Using American Rescue Plan Funds and Other Federal Supports to Address Staff Shortages. N.D.](#)

⁶ H.A. Andrews and W.A. Marzano. *Illinois Teacher Shortage Crisis: Quick Fixes and Long-Range Solutions*. Illinois Association of School Boards November/December 2021.

person learning may require a greater number of teachers to accommodate physical distancing or provide intensive tutoring.

New York's teacher shortage – a pre-pandemic concern – has reached crisis status. Five years ago, the state projected an increase of 69,000 students, mostly in high needs urban and rural districts. Meanwhile, the number of college students enrolling in teacher-education programs had declined by 49 percent. The New York state retirement system then projected that 32 percent of teachers could retire in the next five years and estimated a need for 180,000 new teachers over the next decade. Closing out a second year of the pandemic, those figures are even more alarming. Rural districts, which generally have even fewer potentially eligible teachers in their communities, have been among the hardest hit.⁷ With lower pay rates, on average, and staff being asked to wear multiple hats, 39 percent of remote schools struggle to fill positions in every subject.⁸ High-need schools in urban areas also experience above-average attrition rates and a larger share of younger, less experienced teachers than better-resourced schools. Urban districts also consistently struggle to diversify their teaching workforce to more closely match the demographics of their students.

Urgent Need to Recruit, Select, and Retain Excellent Teachers

All of these factors result in an urgent need for excellent teachers. Creating a stable workforce of great teachers won't be possible within the status quo. This complex challenge requires a multi-faceted solution: Changes and incentives to reenergize the teaching profession, re-attract talent to the role, redesign selection processes, reimagine retention strategies, and recommit to our education system and the people who make it great.

Central to these solutions is a focus on culture. Now more than ever, educators have tremendous agency around whether, where, and why they work. Research has shown that more than any financial incentive, people are driven by a deep-seated desire to direct their own life, to extend and expand their abilities, and to live a life of purpose.⁹ Further, employees want to feel connected to one another and to a larger mission. Strong cultures help accomplish this, creating environments that are welcoming to staff of diverse backgrounds. These intrinsic drivers must be considered in any talent strategy – both in terms of drawing candidates to the role and retaining them in it.

Strengthening Pathways to the Profession

States, school districts, and the federal government all have roles to play in attracting great educators to the profession and specific positions. Though the federal government has no formal responsibility for teacher recruitment, there are policies and practices that it can enact to help draw candidates into pipelines.

⁷ [New York State United Teachers. The Teacher Shortage.](#)

⁸ [K. Latterman and S. Steffes. Tackling Teacher and Principal Shortages in Rural Areas. National Conference of State Legislatures. October 2017.](#)

⁹ Pink, D.H. (2009) *Drive*. Prestonpans, Scotland: Canongate Books.

- **Federal policies can extend the financial capacity of teachers** by reducing the college debt they must incur to join the profession – or forgiving it altogether; providing income tax credits; and making housing subsidies more readily available to teachers.
- **Federal programs can reinforce efforts of states and local education agencies to solve the workforce dilemma.** For example, The U.S. Department of Education awards annual Teacher Quality Partnership grants to teacher preparation programs, many for rural teaching residencies. Though none has been adopted yet, previously proposed federal legislation has sought to provide professional development and loan forgiveness for teachers currently serving schools in rural and Native American communities, and creates a scholarship program for teachers committed to serving these areas.

States can play a somewhat more active role in pipeline development, including by:

- **Making licensing more accessible to teachers with credentials from other states or countries, as well as non-credentialed educators for specific programs.** This may include establishing or expanding alternative teacher certification programs for professionals hoping to shift into education or removing (temporarily or more permanently) requirements for teachers to transfer licenses from other states or countries.
- **Providing pathways back to the classroom to former teachers.** Many state retirement systems cap the amount that retirees can make in district roles and/or require districts to pay an added amount for rehiring retired teachers. States can temporarily relax those limitations to allow all qualified educators to be eligible for open positions at a competitive rate, without reducing their retirement payments. New York state, for example, is lifting a \$35,000 income limit that will make it possible for more than 169,000

Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast

Management guru Peter Drucker's famous quote – culture eats strategy for breakfast – is best kept top of mind as districts determine their talent acquisition and retention strategies. No strategy will be successful if it isn't implemented in the context of a strong organizational culture. In school organizations, this means having regular channels for connection, communication, and feedback; opportunities for staff to have agency over their work and to engage with peers and other colleagues to solve problems; an emphasis on innovation, where staff are encouraged to try new things and learn from what does or doesn't work; clear expectations and a nurturing environment for reaching them; patterns and behaviors that are aligned with stated values; and a holistic sense of responsibility. Strong cultures keep staff energized, committed, and engaged, and offer welcoming environments to staff from diverse backgrounds. Without a strong culture, staff – new or existing – will feel less connected and supported, and be less likely to stay long term.

retired teachers to rejoin the workforce.¹⁰

- **Increasing state funding** to enable LEAs to increase base pay for all teachers and provide additional pay increases and incentives for difficult-to-staff roles.
- **Developing an information campaign** to draw potential candidates into the teaching profession and then navigate preparation programs, credentialing requirements, and scholarship or other funding opportunities. Coupling a public campaign with a prospective educator resource hub and career counseling services could link prospective teachers into appropriate pathways – traditional and non-traditional – and make sure they have full access to financial and other resources along the way.
- **Investing in community college to four-year university pathways for aspiring teachers.** Beginning their teacher preparation in community college can significantly reduce new teachers' preparation costs. States could consider investing in "2+2" partnerships that allow candidates to begin coursework at a community college and complete them at a four-year institution. Southern Illinois University, for example, has developed a program that involves six area high schools and two community colleges. The program allows high school students to take to SIU education program core courses through the community college while still in high school, then receive an associate degree in the community college before completing the program at SIU. Pathways such as this can be especially useful in rural communities, which may have easier access to two-year institutions than four. In this same vein, making baccalaureate degrees available at community colleges would make programs more accessible to would-be teachers in all types of communities.
- **Increasing the capacity of higher education to prepare teachers in high-demand fields.** Teacher-preparation programs will need support to increase enrollments of candidates who can teach in high-demand fields and to grow the state's supply of fully prepared teachers. To support this work, states could establish capacity-building grants for teacher-preparation programs.
- **Establishing a scholarship and/or residency program for students in teacher-preparation programs.** For example, California's Golden State Teacher Grant program allows students currently enrolled in a teacher-preparation program to earn a credential and commit to teach at a priority school for four years after completing the program. New York is creating an Empire State Teacher Residency Program that will provide matching funding for local districts to create residency programs that provide reduced or free tuition for graduate-level teacher candidates. The program will prioritize diversity among teacher residents and partnering mentors and will place an emphasis on both high-need

¹⁰ [New York State. Governor Hochul Announces New Investment in New York's Students, Teachers and Schools. January 5, 2022](#)

subject areas and geographic locations with teacher shortages.

- **Contributing to improved teacher working conditions.** States can support data-informed improvement efforts by establishing a teacher working conditions survey that collects information about factors that may influence educators' decisions to stay in or leave the field. States can also play a role in supporting teacher wellness by providing guidance and model policies that inform district investments in employee wellness policies and practices.

While federal and state policies and programs can help to create shorter and more attractive runways to the teaching profession, the tough work of staffing positions and schools falls to local administrators. Following are a number of strategies local education agencies can employ to create a stable base of great educators.

Rethink teacher pay models. With a spotlight on the critical importance of the role, now is a good time to rethink teacher compensation rates and models, both increasing base salaries and considering models that offer more compensation for hard-to-fill positions or ultra-important roles (i.e., third-grade reading teachers, positions in high-poverty schools). In addition to increased wages, increased compensation may come in the form of stipends, bonuses, childcare or other fringe incentives. Some rural districts have also offered to cover relocation expenses for candidates. Increasing compensation can make teaching a more attractive profession, encourage current teachers to stay, and ensure that teaching is no longer underpaid relative to comparable occupations.

Focus on working conditions. Employers across the country are considering how improved working conditions can draw in staff. Education is no different. Many LEAs are staffing up roles to help support students' mental health and mitigate barriers to learning, freeing teachers from a dizzying array of non-instructional issues they deal with on a daily basis.¹¹ Districts have also created additional positions for academic interventions and support to help facilitate students' learning recovery and support teachers.

As schools return to a new normal, they are also thinking about what that normal should look like – opening up opportunities for stronger teacher apprenticeship and/or mentoring programs, new school schedules that allow for more instructional planning, and blended learning models that pull together the best of in-person and online learning. Some districts are surveying existing teachers to understand what changes would help make the role more appealing to them, helping to improve both recruitment and retention. By making these adjustments and rethinking school design in general, districts are appealing to teachers' intrinsic drive to master their craft

¹¹ [D. Lambert. "California school districts improve pay, working conditions to ease teacher shortage. EdSource. January 21, 2022](#) and [D. Carver-Thomas, D. Burns, M. Leung, et al. *Teacher Shortages During the Pandemic: How California Districts are Responding*. Learning Policy Institute. January 26 2022.](#)

and connect to a greater good, setting them and students up for success while setting themselves apart from others. This gives them a competitive advantage for candidates.¹²

Invest in recruitment and hiring capacity. Many districts have stepped up recruitment activities in response to known and anticipated teacher shortages, including by hiring more human-resources staff, hosting and attending virtual and in-person job fairs, trying to get a handle on retirement and resignation numbers through teacher surveys, and otherwise streamlining their recruitment processes. They've also rethought their hiring timelines and offered open teaching contracts that allow them to hire new staff before vacancies are known.¹³ Finally, districts are realizing the important link between communications and recruitment and are investing in social media and promotional materials to help describe their competitive advantage to potential candidates and get their LEA on the map.

Recruit, train, and cover costs of school staff to become teachers as they earn a credential.

Several districts have developed new teaching talent through Grow Your Own (GYO) initiatives and teacher residencies. GYO programs recruit local community members, such as classified school employees or even parents, into teaching. Districts then use state or local funding to help with tuition reimbursement as future teachers complete coursework toward their credentials. New York, for example, is starting a new program with resources for paraprofessionals hoping to transition into teaching while maintaining employment in their current role. Some districts have focused GYO efforts on students, establishing programs such as dual-credit education courses and education-focused career and technical education tracks to encourage and incentivize high school students to enter the profession.¹⁴

Effective Strategies to Ease the Shortage
School districts nationwide are adopting strategies to help address the staffing challenges.



1. Increase pay and benefits
Increase hourly pay. Consolidate part-time roles as appropriate, so that employees have the opportunity to work more hours and are eligible for benefits.



2. Provide flexibility for retirees and licensed staff from other states
Remove barriers so retirees can substitute or serve as paraprofessionals. Allow staff licensed in other states to be hired while working on obtaining in-state credentials.



3. Provide targeted incentives
Offer attractive career pathways and opportunities for career advancement, such as paid apprenticeships, financial support, and specialized training; and provide bonuses for hard-to-fill positions and retention bonuses for long-time staff.



4. Support school staff well-being
Listen to staff concerns; share school district and community health and wellness resources regularly.

¹² Hancock's Integrated Career Readiness Model is one vision for a redesigned school system that could easily be shared with potential educators to pique their interest in teaching in the district.

Pink, D.H. (2009) *Drive*. Prestonpans, Scotland: Canongate Books.

¹³ EdSource

¹⁴ NCSL and Illinois School Board Association

Residencies are one-year intensive apprenticeships that can be similarly funded through a variety of sources. Both GYO programs and residencies have helped districts recruit more teachers of color and have shown higher levels of retention than other pathways into the profession.

Hiring the Best Teachers

While these strategies will boost the supply of teacher candidates, leaders need to be discerning about who they hire into roles. New teachers must have – or be able to quickly develop – competencies and skills necessary to meet the needs of schools and students. Done well, hiring allows leaders to establish a teaching team that can transform learning and life outcomes for students. In today’s context, districts need well-running hiring systems that reliably result in strong educator placements. The following principles can guide selection systems.¹⁵

- 1. It’s worth the effort to hire the best.** Hiring the best possible candidates makes a long-term difference to school and district quality. By increasing student learning, good teachers gradually improve any district, and often help improve fellow teachers, as well.
- 2. Good hiring requires a complicated selection system.** Good teacher hiring should be done in stages, involve various people in separate roles, and rely on multiple information sources. Although track records are the best predictors of future success, most teacher candidates are beginners with limited professional histories; additional criteria, such as interviews, scenario responses, and recommendations, should therefore be thoughtfully considered. Finally, not every place or position is the same. Selection processes must take into account various fit factors specific to the candidate, school, and position.
- 3. Some people hire better than others.** Not everyone who wants to hire teachers is good at it. The best indicator of a good hirer is a solid hiring track record. Districts should not assume that all administrators will excel at this task and should build training – and quality checks – into their hiring systems.
- 4. A fair and lawful selection system is vital.** Federal, state and local laws must be followed at all times, and the biases inherent in critical discernment identified, unpacked, and guarded against.
- 5. Teacher hiring must be tied in with school district planning.** The vision for teacher hiring should extend beyond the immediate vacancy. It should include needs analysis, strategic planning, environmental scans, goal setting, visioning, projections, mission examination, considerations of fit for the student population and school culture, in addition to other facts of the current opening and need.

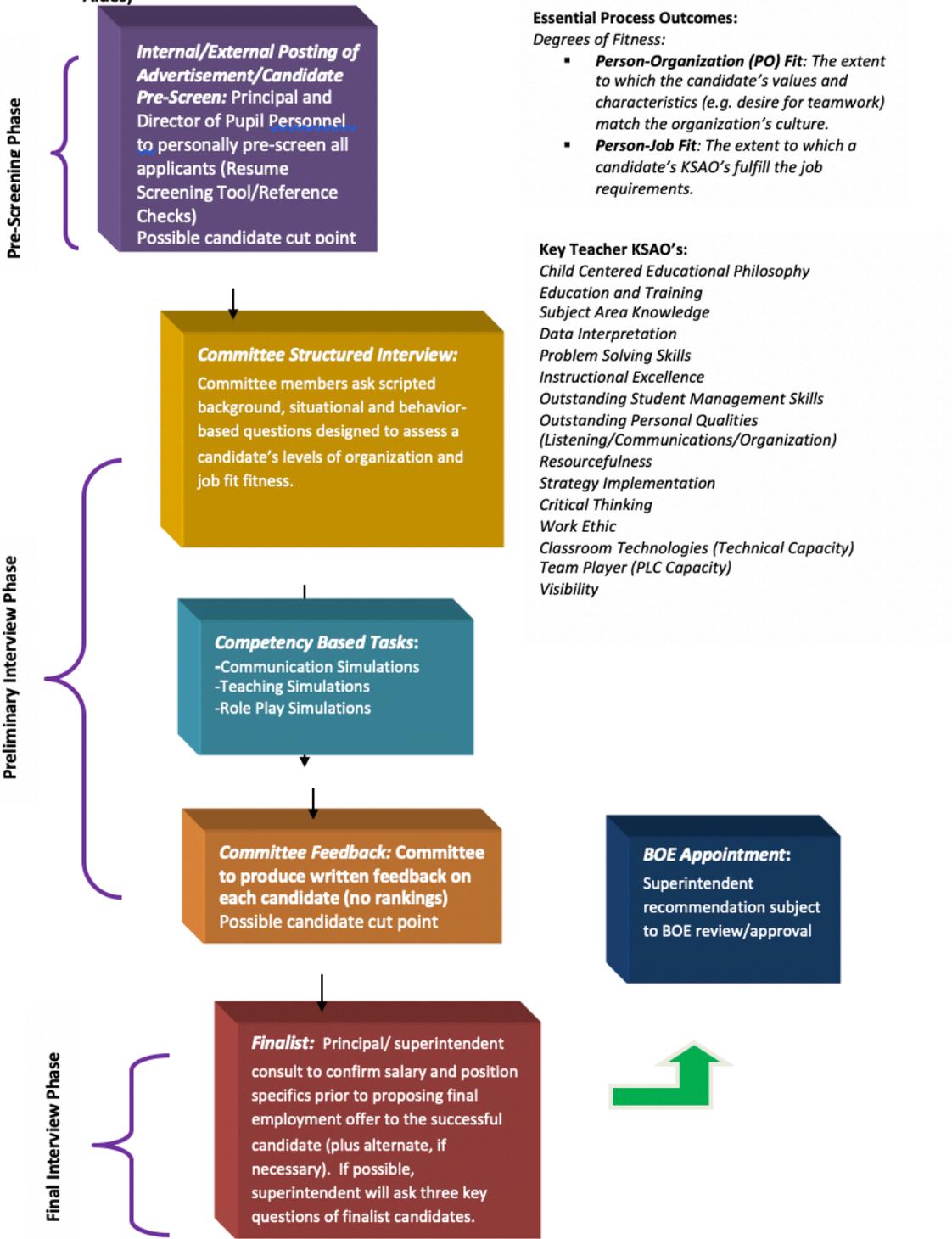
¹⁵ Peterson, K.D. (2002) Effective Teacher Hiring: A Guide to Getting the Best.

- 6. Teacher selectors must sell their districts or schools.** Good hirers must clearly emphasize the most attractive aspects of their schools or districts. The interview process works both ways – candidates are also trying to assess the district’s structure and culture.

Over the past decade, competency-based hiring has emerged as a reliable way to ensure evidence-based decisions, minimize bias, and hire staff who produce the best outcomes for students. Schools should determine the teacher competencies that are most essential to success in their contexts; determine specific, observable ways candidates may demonstrate these competencies; and then map them to the selection model to determine how these competencies will be assessed.¹⁶ Hancock’s hiring process provides a model for a competency-based system that relies on multiple modalities to assess educators’ strengths and school and district fit.

¹⁶ TNTP. Competency-Aligned Teacher Interview Questions and Activities.

Hancock Central School District Combination/Quick List Interview Process Flow: Teacher Candidate (TA's and Aides)



Essential Process Outcomes:

Degrees of Fitness:

- **Person-Organization (PO) Fit:** The extent to which the candidate's values and characteristics (e.g. desire for teamwork) match the organization's culture.
- **Person-Job Fit:** The extent to which a candidate's KSAO's fulfill the job requirements.

Key Teacher KSAO's:

- Child Centered Educational Philosophy
- Education and Training
- Subject Area Knowledge
- Data Interpretation
- Problem Solving Skills
- Instructional Excellence
- Outstanding Student Management Skills
- Outstanding Personal Qualities (Listening/Communications/Organization)
- Resourcefulness
- Strategy Implementation
- Critical Thinking
- Work Ethic
- Classroom Technologies (Technical Capacity)
- Team Player (PLC Capacity)
- Visibility

Keeping Great Teachers

Like pipeline development, teacher retention has become an increasing challenge for schools and districts across the country. Each year, more than 200,000 teachers leave the profession, with nearly 2 out of 3 leaving for reasons other than retirement, citing these instead:¹⁷

- **Inadequate preparation.** Beginning teachers with little or no preparation are 2.5 times more likely to leave the classroom after one year compared to their well-prepared peers.
- **Lack of support.** New teachers who do not receive mentoring and other supports leave at more than two times the rate of those who do.
- **Challenging working conditions.** Teachers often cite working conditions, such as the support of their principals and the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues, as the top reason for leaving.
- **Dissatisfaction with compensation.** Beginning teachers earn about 20% less than individuals with college degrees in other fields, a wage gap that can widen to 30% for mid-career educators.
- **Better career opportunities.** More than 1 in 4 teachers who leave say they do so to pursue other career opportunities.
- **Personal reasons.** More than 1 in 3 teachers who leave cite personal reasons, including pregnancy and childcare, as extremely or very important in their decision.

Districts and states have enacted a number of policies and practices to keep teachers in their roles and the profession.

- **Investing in induction and mentoring supports for new teachers.** Mentoring and induction programs for new teachers have shown to improve teacher effectiveness and retention. Pairing a new teacher with a more experienced teacher assists in orienting the new teacher to the school and community and provides them with ongoing guidance and support. The most effective programs have a rigorous process for selecting mentors, ongoing professional development for new teachers and mentors, time dedicated for mentors and new teachers to meet, and provide multiple years of mentoring and support.¹⁸
- **Improving school leadership.** Studies have shown that school leadership is one of the most important factors in attracting and retaining teachers. Often, teachers point to poor leadership as a major reason for leaving a particular site. Conversely, many teachers point to excellent school leadership as a reason for staying at a high-need school. To

¹⁷ Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

¹⁸ Center on Great Teachers and Leaders. [Mentoring & Induction Toolkit 2.0: Supporting Teachers in High-Need Contexts](#). American Institutes for Research.

ensure a highly effective leader in every building, districts are building a bench of talent from within their system; employing new recruitment strategies; designing selection processes that are based on leadership standards, consistent, and systematically engage stakeholders to ensure a best fit for schools; and providing principals with a comprehensive suite of supports to help them be successful in their role.¹⁹

- **Enabling teacher collaboration.** Teaching can be an isolating profession. Collaborative cultures ensure that teachers feel supported by their colleagues, help to improve instruction, motivate teachers, and can play a large role in retaining them.²⁰ Districts and schools can set aside time for teachers to plan and collaborate throughout the school year. This time can be focused around examining data, collaborative lesson planning, or discussing challenges and providing constructive feedback.²¹
- **Increasing teacher compensation.** Increasing salaries helps draw and keep teachers in the role. Teachers should be paid similarly to their peers in other professions, and be able to afford a middle-class lifestyle. Incentives such as rent and relocation reimbursements and down payment assistance can help to balance out wage gaps and make staying in the profession more enticing.²²
- **Building better career opportunities.** Often the only way for teachers to advance on the pay scale is by leaving the classroom to become an administrator. Some districts have developed career-advancement opportunities for teachers that offer increased compensation without having to leave the classroom. This may include mentoring new teachers, providing staff professional development, leading collaborative work time, or coaching other teachers on campus. School administrators can increase the reach and capacity of effective teachers on their school site and offer them additional compensation for these increased responsibilities. This strategy can also help high-need schools attract and retain highly effective teachers.²³
- **Recognizing effective educators.** Acknowledgement for a job well done helps cultivate professional pride and a culture of support and appreciation. Some districts have developed recognition programs for their most effective educators, providing them with awards or small gifts, giving them time off, honoring them in public forums or published works, etc. Giving your best teachers opportunities to model practices for or mentor others is another strategy for recognizing top talent and their contributions to students and the school.²⁴
- **Providing teachers ample supports.** Educational practices are ever-evolving and all teachers need help getting to the outcomes they want for their students. Educators often clamor for access to professional learning, coaching, and feedback that help them refine

¹⁹ The Wallace Foundation. (February 2013) District Matter: [Cultivating the Principals Urban Schools Need](#).

²⁰ Ronfeldt, M., Farmer, S., McQueen, K., & Grissom, J. (2015) Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 52(3), 475-514.

²¹ Podolsky et al. (*font was Arial; others are Calibri*)

²² Ibid

²³ Teach +Plus. () [The Decade-Plus Teaching Career: How to Retain Effective Teachers Through Leadership](#).

²⁴ TNTP. (2012) *The Irreplaceables: Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America's Urban Schools*.

their craft. Setting up comprehensive systems of support, such as Hancock Central School District’s professional learning system for educators, can give teachers the tools they need to succeed in their classrooms and the motivation they need to remain in their roles.²⁵

- **Considering perks that could help keep teachers in the workforce.** For example, childcare can help districts to attract top talent and keep new parents on the payroll.²⁶ District-run centers can provide teachers with affordable, convenient, flexible, and high-quality childcare. Some districts have made childcare centers part of their teacher-pipeline initiatives, allowing older students to learn and practice child-development skills as part of career-preparation programs.
- **Asking them.** An effective way to encourage teachers to stay in their role is to involve them in identifying and alleviating any pain points they experience. Many LEAs have designed or adopted teacher surveys to understand what’s working – and what’s not – for teachers. They then use survey data to pinpoint solutions to common challenges.²⁷ Others have focused on engaging teachers directly in school improvement planning, giving teachers decision-making authority over how their school will approach improvements in teaching and learning.²⁸

Conclusion

Teacher shortages are a serious and significant issue that must be immediately addressed. The potential solutions presented here are not one-off fixes, but a set of strategies that can be employed in concert to reignite interest in the education field, get great teachers in our country’s classrooms, and fully prepare and reward great educators for the essential roles they play. Critical to this charge, practitioners and policy maker alike must strategically, consciously, and diligently work to foster professional work cultures conducive to attracting and retaining the best possible educators to their organizations. And while it is widely accepted in the field that external drivers such as enriched compensation, flexible work schedules, and other creative workplace incentives have proven to be efficacious in driving short-term behavioral change, success with respect to acquiring and retaining an effective, diverse group of teachers over the long haul turns almost exclusively on a district’s ability to transform its organizational ethos so as to best implement, leverage, and unleash the power of intrinsic motivators – e.g. mastery, autonomy, and purpose.

²⁵ Dougherty, T.P. (April 2021) Professional Learning System for Educators. Hancock Central School District.

²⁶ McClure. R. (March 2021). *Child Care Benefits to Help Teacher Retention*. VeryWell Family.

²⁷ Podolsky et al.

²⁸ Education Elements. (Feb 2022). [Innovative Teacher Retention and Recruitment Strategies Webinar](#).