

Improving Hiring Practices



Problem Overview

The Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program provides a significant opportunity for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to address their current staffing challenges while strengthening their long-term teacher pipeline. LEAs can use the available funds to create high-retention pathways to address staffing challenges at the district level or develop equitable access strategies aimed at specific district schools.

Improving hiring practices as they pertain to teachers is one way that LEAs effectively achieve these objectives. Research shows that the strategy of providing incentives can address some staffing challenges facing LEAs in recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers (Smith et al., 2019). The strategies are based on best practices, research, and experiences from successful programs nationwide. Implementing these strategies can enable LEAs to create sustainable solutions that not only tackle their immediate staffing challenges but also support their long-term teacher pipeline.

Strategy Summary

Improving hiring practices for teachers is a critical component of addressing staffing challenges and building a strong teacher pipeline. Effective hiring and screening practices are essential for schools and districts to attract top candidates. Outdated and ineffective hiring processes can lead to losing good candidates to competing schools and districts.

Districts can improve the quality of their hiring process by adopting new screening processes that include a standardized analysis of multiple components, including:

Professional references

Undergraduate GPA

Subject matter licensure scores

Professional background

(Johnson and Brown, 2020)

This strategy involves adopting evidence-based approaches to attract and select high-quality teachers while ensuring fairness and equity in the hiring process (Johnson and Brown, 2020).

However, it is important to use multiple measures, as noted in by [IES Regional Educational Laboratory Program, Northwest](#) – including performance-based tasks – to evaluate the qualifications of applicants. Teachers' test scores, education, and experience are not always the best predictors of their performance in the classroom and may function as barriers for teachers of color.



Research has identified several key elements of effective hiring practices:

- Establishing clear job requirements and selection criteria helps to attract candidates who possess the necessary qualifications and skills (Smith et al., 2019).
- Implementing a rigorous and comprehensive selection process, including multiple rounds of interviews and performance assessments, can help identify candidates who demonstrate instructional expertise and a strong commitment to student success (Johnson and Brown, 2020).
- Involving multiple stakeholders, such as teachers, administrators, and community members, in the hiring process can enhance the alignment between the selected candidate and the school's values and culture.

Implementation of effective hiring practices can enable LEAs to identify and hire teachers who are well-suited to their school communities, leading to increased job satisfaction and improved student outcomes.

Examples

One notable example is the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) in Washington, D.C. The district implemented a rigorous and evidence-based selection process to enhance its hiring process and attract high-quality teachers. It incorporated multiple rounds of interviews, including demonstration lessons and performance tasks, to assess candidates' instructional abilities and their alignment with the district's goals and values.

DCPS observed positive outcomes as a result of these revamped hiring practices. The district reported an increase in the quality of newly hired teachers, as evidenced by improved evaluation ratings and student achievement outcomes (Jacob et al., 2017). It also experienced a decrease in teacher turnover rates, indicating increased job satisfaction and retention among its teaching staff.

The Los Angeles Unified School District developed a new screening process that produced scores for all candidates, which were shared with principals to enhance their hiring options (Bruno & Strunk, 2018). This new process is highly predictive of teacher outcomes, including student achievement.

Early hiring practices can also impact outcomes. For example, Shelby County Schools in Tennessee reformed its budget process to provide earlier notice to principals regarding personnel needs and capacity. The district offered financial incentives to teachers to submit their retirement notices earlier. This allowed schools to hire replacements sooner, streamlining the process of notifying principals of teacher intent to leave and ensuring immediate backfilling (Tomes, 2014).

Other Considerations and Next Steps

Improving hiring practices can be beneficial, but there are additional considerations to keep in mind:

- Ensuring that the hiring process is fair and equitable is essential. Implementing strategies such as blind resume screening and standardized interview protocols can help mitigate bias and promote equal opportunities for all candidates (Johnson and Brown, 2020).
- Ongoing evaluation and refinement of hiring practices based on feedback and data analysis are crucial to continuously improve the effectiveness of the process.
- LEAs should invest in professional development and training for hiring personnel to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to implement evidence-based practices (Smith et al., 2019).
- Establishing partnerships with universities and alternative certification programs can help attract a diverse pool of candidates and provide additional support for new teachers during their early years in the profession.

Sources

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