Recruitment & Hiring

How a disciplined hiring process can help schools choose the right team.
The first step is choosing the right team. Recruitment and hiring can bring in strong teachers and set expectations for school culture.
Contents of the Recruitment & Hiring Toolkit

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

• Where can schools find candidates?
• What is the best way to structure a hiring process?
• How can schools determine and build the necessary capacity to support the process?
• How do you know if a candidate is a good fit for your school culture?
• How are expectations set for new hires?
• How can a hiring process be revised based on data?

TOOLS

• “Ideal Teacher” and job descriptions
• Hiring processes and timelines, including resume reviews, phone screens, interviews and demonstration lessons
• Selection criteria and rubrics
• Sample staffing structures
• Systems for analyzing recruitment data to improve practice
School leaders struggle to find enough applicants in select subject areas...

Percent of administrators “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the QUANTITY of teacher applicants in the following subject areas

- Math: 32%
- Technology: 33%
- Science: 39%
- ESL: 45%
- Special Education: 45%
- Middle School (generalist): 67%
- Social Studies: 82%
- English: 84%
- Elementary: 89%

Less than 45 percent of administrators are satisfied with the quantity of applicants in STEM subjects, ESL, and special education.

TNTP Benchmark Survey 2010
...and are dissatisfied with the quality of candidates in many areas.

Less than 50 percent of administrators are satisfied with the quality of applicants in math, science, special education, and ESL.

TNTP Benchmark Survey 2010
TNTP surveys show that schools with strong instructional cultures use a rigorous hiring and orientation process to set teacher expectations.

“MY INTERVIEW PROCESS WAS RIGOROUS.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers at Schools with Strong Cultures</th>
<th>Teachers at Schools with Weak Cultures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“THE HIRING AND ORIENTATION PROCESS SET ACCURATE EXPECTATIONS.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers at Schools with Strong Cultures</th>
<th>Teachers at Schools with Weak Cultures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50+ survey questions on school instructional culture

11,000 teachers surveyed to date

300 schools applying the results to develop and retain great teachers

For more information on definitions of strong vs. weak instructional cultures, see the Methodology page.
Even schools with established hiring processes can be susceptible to pitfalls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Hiring Pitfalls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Late Hiring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting until the end of the school year or summer to recruit and hire limits a school’s ability to compete for top candidates, including the strongest teachers and those who teach high need subject areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of Rigor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not consistently implementing multiple steps in the selection process can lead to poor assessment of a candidate’s “fit” and skill and result in candidates lacking a clear understanding of what is expected of teachers at the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limited Data</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing to track application and hiring data, or not differentiating information for important subgroups of teachers – whether high performing, high need subject areas, or diverse candidates - hinders efforts to revise the process from year to year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Promising Recruitment & Hiring Practices

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Define the ideal teacher</strong>&lt;br&gt;Align this description to your school’s vision, culture and performance expectations based on what type of teacher has been successful in your school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Build a recruitment pipeline</strong>&lt;br&gt;Engage in a variety of traditional and non-traditional recruitment strategies and then prioritize based on where you find your most effective teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Invest in hiring throughout the year</strong>&lt;br&gt;Cultivate candidates early and hire by the spring to bring in the strongest candidates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Establish a hiring process</strong>&lt;br&gt;Specify what the process steps are, who is responsible and what you are looking for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Use the hiring process to set expectations</strong>&lt;br&gt;Communicate what is exciting and challenging about working at your school so that candidates are prepared for the school’s culture and unsuitable candidates self-select out of the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assign dedicated staff to hiring</strong>&lt;br&gt;Centralize hiring tasks to keep a focus on selection while allowing school leaders and teachers to engage strategically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Learn from experience</strong>&lt;br&gt;Use data to track success of your recruitment strategies and revisit the process annually to improve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Promising Practices in Action

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Define the ideal teacher</td>
<td><strong>Chicago Public Schools’</strong> Office of School Improvement (OSI) has “Seven Non-Negotiables” that its teachers must possess and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Build a recruitment pipeline</td>
<td><strong>Brownsburg Community School Corporation (CSC)</strong> actively recruits top candidates from nearby universities they think will be a good fit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Invest in hiring throughout the year</td>
<td><strong>Rocketship Education</strong> starts cultivating candidates in July and August the year before it plans to hire, and gives out offer letters in March and April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Establish a hiring process</td>
<td><strong>Achievement First</strong> diagrams its selection and hiring process, specifying each step, who owns it and anticipated outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Use the hiring process to set expectations</td>
<td><strong>Louisiana Department of Education</strong> uses scenario-based screening interview questions to gauge how candidates will respond to potential challenges as a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Assign dedicated staff to hiring</td>
<td><strong>DeSoto Parish</strong> has an interview committee at each campus comprised of the principal, Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction, Master Teacher(s), core or grade level teacher and district personnel from Curriculum and Instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Learn from experience</td>
<td><strong>Citizens Academy Charter School</strong> tracks the source of every new teacher and uses the information to revise recruitment strategies for the following year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Create an “Ideal Teacher” definition that aligns with the school’s mission and drives selection rubrics and evaluation expectations.

Chicago Public Schools

1. A commitment to OSI values and a belief that our students can BEAT THE ODDS
2. A comfort level with TRANSPARENT & PUBLIC SHARING OF DATA
3. Priority focus is increasing student skills as measured by EPAS test scores
4. Full implementation of the WELL MANAGED SCHOOLS MODEL and active participation as an ADVISOR
5. Willingness to support the BLOCK SCHEDULE
6. Authentic commitment to pre-planned and strategic PROFESSIONAL LEARNING both individually and in groups
7. A commitment to personally doing your part to ensure HEALTHY & HONEST COLLABORATION AMONG ADULTS

YES Prep

DESCRIPTION OF THE IDEAL YES COLLEGE PREP TEACHER

produce a highly refined and polished product. In other words, this teacher epitomizes continual improvement philosophy, always looking for ways to set a higher standard.

Besides having great ambition, self-discipline and high quality in all endeavors, the Ideal Teacher is a life-long learner and is dedicated to the development of teaching skills as a profession. 

- Chicago Public Schools’ OSI publicizes its “Seven Non-Negotiables” it expects teachers in its schools to possess and uphold.
- Candidates are encouraged to reflect on their comfort level with these traits before applying.
- YES Prep’s description connects to their overall mission statement and core values.
- Description drives selection rubrics and aligns with evaluation expectations.
Target marketing strategies to help establish an effective recruitment pipeline.

Effectiveness of recruitment sources varies by market and by school:

Memphis City Schools
- Uses a nationwide search strategy and targets professional associations to find teachers for STEM positions.

Citizens Academy
- Finds best candidates from advertising in the local paper, word of mouth and targeting Teach For America (TFA) teachers and alumni.

Peak to Peak
- Maintains an open door policy to invite in visitors, including education students, in order to cultivate potential candidates early on and establish a good reputation in the community.

Consider:
- Internet sites
- Referrals, potentially with a bonus
- Emails/Letters
- College Campus Recruitment and Alumni Listservs
- Career Fairs
- Publicity
- Radio/TV Ads
- Flyers/Brochures/Postcards
- Community Organization Outreach
- Print Ads
- Billboards
- Transit Ads

Tracking the source of all candidates as they enter the recruitment pipeline allows schools to review that data at the end of the hiring season and revise the process.
Develop a strategic recruitment campaign that centers on the school’s mission.

53%
The number one factor that teachers report attracted them to their school was the “philosophy/mission,” with 53 percent of responses.

Aligns advertisements with mission:
- “The mission of Urban Prep is to provide a comprehensive, high-quality college preparatory education to young men that results in our graduates succeeding in college.”

Urban Prep Academies

Research shows that only 1 in 40 African American boys will complete college. At Urban Prep, we believe all of our graduates will.
Invest in hiring throughout the year to compete for the strongest candidates.

**Example 1: Cultivate candidates early – Rocketship Education**
- July/August – identify and meet with candidates
- September to November – meet with candidates, host on site, build relationships
- January/February – interview days/selection
- March/April – offer letters

**Example 2: Complete hiring by the summer – DSST Public Schools**
- October – start recruitment and hiring season
- February to April – best candidates are hired
- May – finish all hiring

**Example 3: Hire on a rolling basis - Achievement First**
- July/August – build pipeline of candidates
- September/October - identify and cultivate potential candidates
- November to January – begin resume review and initial phone interviews
- February to June – confirm school vacancies, complete selection process
- June – complete 75% of hiring
Implement a disciplined hiring process to ensure consistency and thoroughness in selection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Screen</th>
<th>Fit</th>
<th>Ability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Resume Review</td>
<td>• Interview</td>
<td>• Sample Lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Phone Screen</td>
<td>• School Tour</td>
<td>• Writing Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• References</td>
<td>• Portfolio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Brownsburg CSC**

Brownsburg uses a “speed-dating” interview format for an initial assessment of candidates before inviting selected candidates back for a longer interview.

**Citizens Academy**

Citizens Academy Charter School relies on multiple people – such as teachers in the same subject area as the candidate, instructional coach and administrators – giving input into the interview and sample lesson selection activities before making an offer.

**Brighter Choice for Girls**

Brighter Choice for Girls asks candidates to teach a sample lesson and interviews students after the lesson to see what they think.
This process specifies each step, what competencies are being assessed and what tools are used in the process.

**Achievement First**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Application Resume</th>
<th>Phone Interview</th>
<th>Finalist Interview</th>
<th>Reference Check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mindsets • Strength of Character</td>
<td>• Breakthrough Student Achievement • Classroom Culture • Mindsets • Personal Effectiveness</td>
<td>• Breakthrough Student Achievement • Strength of Character • Mindsets • Personal Effectiveness • Data Driven Instruction • Classroom Culture</td>
<td>• Effective &amp; Strategic lesson planning • Effective Core Instruction • Academic Rigor • Classroom Culture • Intervention and Differentiation</td>
<td>• Classroom Culture • Mindsets • Strength of Character • Personal Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activities**

- Webinars
- PD
- Open House
- Cultivation conversations
- Written Application
- Essay Questions
- Resume
- Phone Interview
- School Tour
- Demo Lesson
- Principal/Recruiter Interview
- Reference Check

**Tools**

- Best Practices
- Documents
- Written Application
- Phone Interview Template
- Effective Follow Up Questions
- Demo Lesson Debrief Template
- Interview Questions
- Candidate Summary Sheet
- Reference Check Questions

**Competencies Measured**

- Mindsets
- Strength of Character
- Breakthrough Student Achievement
- Classroom Culture
- Mindsets
- Personal Effectiveness

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TNTP developed trainings and supplemental resources for principals as part of its effective staffing series.

These tools and more are available for download from the Toolbox:

- Effective staffing training presentations
- Sample candidate evaluation forms
- School marketing templates
Use the hiring process to set expectations about the school’s culture.

“We have a rigorous selection process, and we talk about feedback a lot during the process. After the candidate’s sample lesson, they get feedback on it. Then the candidate observes another class, and we ask what they thought of the lesson and how they would compare the two. At every level, we want to simulate what it looks like to work here.”

-Human Capital Manager, West Denver Prep

“We always give feedback on a candidate’s sample lesson to see how they take it. It’s a culture fit indicator if they’re open to it and excited to try something new.”

-Executive Principal, Peak to Peak
Communicate school expectations during the hiring process through documents, modeling and conversations with current staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key messages</th>
<th>Ways to convey in hiring process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Our core values are…”</td>
<td>Customize your job description language and marketing materials to incorporate your school’s core values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We value teachers’ time.”</td>
<td>Value the candidates’ time by cultivating them early and getting back to them quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Our teachers’ jobs are demanding.”</td>
<td>Conduct a demanding interview and selection process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We require staff to be open to feedback.”</td>
<td>Deliver feedback as part of the interview process and see how candidate reacts and incorporates it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We use student data to drive instruction.”</td>
<td>Have the candidate review a sample student data report as part of the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We value teachers’ input in leadership decisions.”</td>
<td>Include current teachers in the interview process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We integrate parents into our school.”</td>
<td>Schedule a conversation with parents as part of the teacher interview process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Our staff work long hours,” and other cultural expectations.</td>
<td>Connect the candidate with a current teacher outside of the interview process to discuss the realities of the position.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Districts, networks and schools use different approaches to centralize hiring based on their size and needs.

**DeSoto Parish**

District with 13 schools

Centralized Human Resources (HR) strategically supports school-based hiring

- Each school has an interview committee comprised of mostly school-based staff in addition to a district representative.
- Applicants approved by the interview committee must go through a final interview with the Superintendent and Director of HR.

**Chicago Public Schools**

Urban district with 600+ schools

High needs schools have a separate hiring process

- Office of School Improvement (OSI) conducts hiring for turnaround schools.
- OSI Human Capital team conducts hiring sessions during the spring and sets milestones for the number of hires by date and position.

**Peak to Peak**

Independent charter school

School staff members coordinate hiring

- Training on the full hiring process is part of induction for every staff member to prepare everyone to participate in hiring.
- Three staff members have hiring as a formal part of their jobs.
Centralize hiring activities to allow school leaders and teachers to engage more strategically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hiring Process</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Other Admin</th>
<th>HR Director/Department</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit and cultivate candidates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect applications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume screen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone screen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of writing sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of sample lesson</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School tour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check references</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final job offer/decision</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HR Director drives most aspects of the hiring process so Principal and other staff can be involved in selective aspects.
Track data throughout the hiring process to enable schools to learn from experience.

**Data collection:**
- Where did candidates first hear of your school?
- Where did they get their information about your school (website, brochure, etc)?
- What source did each candidate come from (not just new hires)?
- Demographics that you want to consider in hiring, such as certain subject areas, years of experience, or diversity.
- How many candidates advance to each round of the hiring process?

**Factors to consider:**
- How do these data points differ for your most effective teachers?
- How much time and money did each source of candidates cost?
- Are there sources where you get higher quality candidates, even if you recruit fewer in total?
Use data to drive strategic improvement of the hiring process.

**Citizens Academy**

- The HR Director tracks the source of every new teacher and uses this information to revise recruitment strategies for the following year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th># of hires</th>
<th># of great hires</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Try Again?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Best results, best candidates, pursue all angles!</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain Dealer (local newspaper)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>700+</td>
<td>Best local resource, hit or miss, receive hundreds of resumes for a small number of good candidates</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODE Website</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>It’s free, keep using it</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher – Teachers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$750/year</td>
<td>We have paid through April, keep using until then</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBCU Connect Site</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>~$250/post</td>
<td>Expensive, not education focused enough</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealist.org</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>~$60/post</td>
<td>Not commonly used in Midwest, not effective</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Track all methods
- Differentiate by teacher quality
- Track cost
- Use data to revise process in the future
Explore additional tools for this Toolkit on the Full Toolbox page. Also, be sure to access the five other Toolkits of the Teacher Talent Toolbox to craft a complete talent management strategy.

Teacher Talent Toolbox

- Recruitment & Hiring
- Evaluation
- Accountability
- Professional Culture
- Development

A high-performing teaching team

School-tested strategies for growing great teaching teams