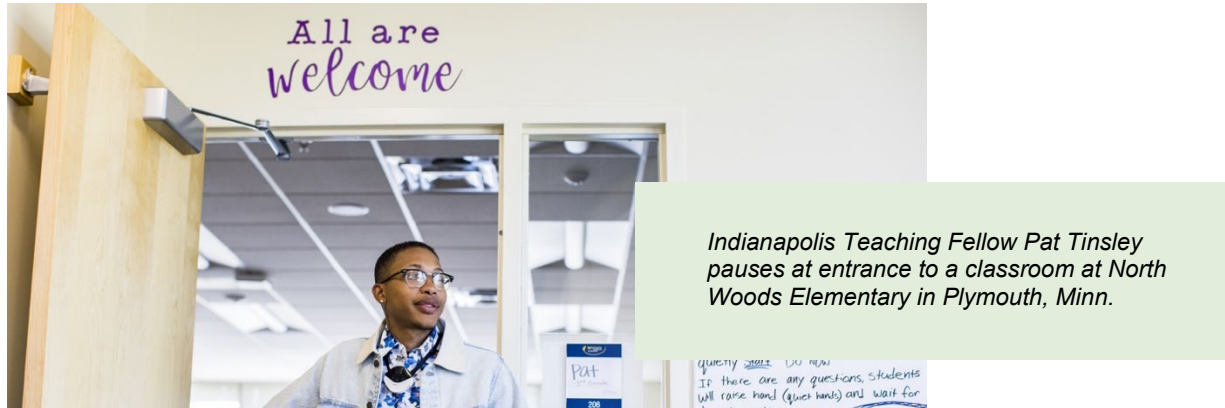


Suggestions for Streamlining Teacher Selection



Selection models that efficiently yield a reliably strong and racially diverse pool of new teachers are important in any year but are especially key now as school systems aim to fill an increased number of vacancies while facing slim teacher pipelines. Selection should not create another barrier to bringing teachers to the classroom, and it should ensure that systems feel confident in the hires they're making. Given the positive correlations between teacher strength and early hiring¹, we encourage systems to move as quickly as possible in their teacher hiring (see [this guide to help identify a target timeline](#)). We also suggest that systems monitor conversion rates throughout their selection models to ensure each step contributes to an efficient, informative process. For instance, if nearly all candidates pass through a certain step, systems may consider strengthening it to make it more meaningful or removing it altogether. Below are recommendations for designing efficient and effective selection models.

1. Lay the ground for an equitable, consistent selection process

Anyone who participates in the selection model – from panel interviewers, to application screeners, to hiring managers – should engage in training to minimize bias and norm on the selection model. These steps help school systems ensure their processes are fair, and equitable, and can increase the number of candidates of color who are hired². This should happen at the outset of selection and recur throughout the season. [Here is a short training on minimizing bias](#). Finally, systems should consider the diversity of their selection teams and hiring managers to ensure that the group represents a range of identities and perspectives.

¹ Keo, C., West, K., et al. (2020). Do early offers equal better teachers? Journal of Applied Educational Policy Research. Retrieved from: <https://journals.charlotte.edu/jaepr/article/view/995>

² Motamedi, J. (2019). 9 strategies for recruiting and retaining diverse teachers. Portland, OR: Education Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. Retrieved from: <https://bit.ly/3kQf54y>



2. Use the application to gather critical candidate information

Identify the criteria that determine eligibility for teaching and ensure that the teacher application collects all this information. These application fields should all require an entry and, where possible, standardize responses (for instance instead of a text box for “date” require that candidates select an actual calendar date or use the MM/DD/YY format). You may ask candidates to enter critical information typically found on their resumes, like post-graduate degree, GPA, and graduation years.

Gather as much information as you can regarding the candidates’ licensure; for instance, ask for their certification number, expiration date, any other names their certification may be under, and specific endorsements. You may also consider listing any licensure flexibilities or waivers and ask candidates if they believe any of these policies are applicable to them and if so, would they be willing to teach under them.

Instead of asking for a cover letter, consider providing candidates with a general question that asks them to articulate their interest in the role. We recommend a word limit of about 400 to ensure that candidates have an opportunity to describe their interest and qualifications without burdening application screeners. Screeners should have clear guidance for reviewing these responses; we suggest reviewing for no major usage errors and that the candidate articulates at least one specific, relevant reason for their interest.

If candidates apply to postings specific to schools (e.g., elementary teacher at XX school), include a question to ask if they are willing to be considered for similar openings. If you use pooled postings and your school system covers a large geographic area, ask candidates for their location preferences like certain neighborhoods or regions.

Application screeners should use a clear, concise rubric or checklist for reviewing applications to ensure candidates are eligible for teaching roles and meet baseline criteria. Set a goal for turnaround time (once an application is submitted how long should it take to screen that application and share next steps with the candidate?) and ensure that screeners know how to prioritize their time (which vacancies, by subject area and school, are most critical and should be screened first?).

3. Conduct phone interviews to share key information and learn more about candidates

We recommend that systems implement a brief phone screen following application review to gather general

information on the candidates’ interest and qualifications and share key details about the position. Screeners can also use these conversations to clarify any questions on the candidates’ applications too. Where capacity allows, we recommend that central office talent team members conduct these brief interviews but, in some circumstances, it may make more sense for school leaders to lead them.

Systems should choose a 2-3 key candidate competencies to assess at the phone screen and choose aligned interview questions to ask candidates (see [our guide to competency-based interview questions](#) here). Then, it’s helpful to share important information about the role, like estimated salary (including any opportunities to earn additional compensation), the benefits package, start dates, new hire onboarding, and next steps in the selection process. If the candidate voices any concerns, note these and follow up to confirm the candidate is still interested. Provide the candidates time to ask questions and be sure that selectors are well-versed in the teacher value proposition and have a



“cheat sheet” of answers to common applicant questions. A standard script can help these interviews run efficiently.

Following phone screens, screeners should use a simple rubric to rate candidates (do not advance, recommend, and highly recommend) and funnel candidates towards appropriate vacancies. Highlights and notes from phone screens should be saved so that they are easily accessible to school-based hiring teams who can use them to quickly learn more about candidates and avoid asking duplicate questions.

4. Provide school leaders with resources and guidance to run efficient, equitable school-based hiring processes

We recommend that the last step in the selection process is a school-based interview that consists of a sample teach, a one-on-one interview with the school leader, and potentially a panel interview or a simple hiring exercise (e.g., look at student data and suggest some instructional next steps). To ensure these steps are efficient and meaningful, provide school leaders a general hiring model and guidance on where and how they may customize. This may look like including school leaders in the [norming](#) and [bias](#) trainings described above, [providing a question bank](#), a rubric for evaluating the sample teach, and [guidance for selling candidates on their schools](#) (remember, candidates are also “interviewing” you during selection!). School leaders should also be encouraged to consider who else on their teams can participate in hiring and help make decisions, such as other members of the leadership team, teachers, students, and family or community members.

When candidates reach the final stages of the selection process, it may be helpful to share an overview of the materials they will need to submit after they accept their offer (e.g., transcripts, health records, identification, forms, etc.) so that they can begin to gather this documentation. A simple one-pager can help expedite this often-lengthy process. Ensure that school leaders and district HR team members agree to a consistent, efficient process and timeline for sharing updates about candidates, extending formal offer letters, and following up with candidates as needed.

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