

Promising Practices and Implementation Tools

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3. District(s) Where Implemented: Attleboro Public Schools

4. Lever Addressed and Title of Promising Practice: Recruiting, Hiring and Supporting New Teachers

5. How This Practice Reflects District's Mission & Core Values:

Attleboro Public Schools is committed to excellence for all students and this hinges largely on providing the highest quality teachers in every school and classroom. A core value, embedded in the district's philosophy and goals, is that "all children will learn". Implementing this vision and mission, one student at a time, begins with the hiring process, and securing the best possible teachers.

6. Goals of This Practice:

a) Demographically, Attleboro is a diverse community. At the present time, teachers and staff in the district do not mirror this diversity and one of the priorities is to change this to achieve greater racial, cultural and ethnic match correlations among students, faculty and staff. Leaders are concerned that the majority of teachers currently employed come from similar socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. They believe that understanding, addressing and meeting the diverse needs of the student population would be more effective if the demographic profile among its teachers was more diversified. The fastest growing population in the district is ELL students, and hiring strong teachers for these students is a district priority.

b) A second goal is to hire the most qualified candidates for positions in the district - diversity in the candidate pool is one among several other criteria.

c) The district has developed a system/protocol for hiring, which is used by all schools and all leaders. The goal in developing this detailed protocol (attached) was to have a cross-district process that is more streamlined and consistent than has been in place in the past. Implementing a recruitment and hiring protocol that is formalized and procedural reflects the district's commitment to a process that is as rigorous, objective, and as reliable as possible.

7. Description of This Practice:

1) Interviewing and hiring is a site-based process. Principals are accountable for their hiring decisions because they know their buildings and their students' needs best. The Assistant Superintendent oversees the process to ensure that a comprehensive and streamlined process is

followed and that the overarching values and vision of the district is duly reflected in the candidates recommended for hire. He also meets with candidates in the final stages of the hiring process to ask his own questions, make his own assessment of the candidate, and discuss salary.

2) The district casts a wide net in its hiring strategy. Open positions are advertised nationally. However, district leaders also seek a balance in considering internal and external candidates for these positions. District leaders meet with current targeted employees to explore and discuss their potential for leadership. Searches also extend beyond the community and state.

One of the challenges in the district has been the high drop-out rate at the high school level. The district has in place three different programs to support at-risk students and staffing of these programs is a priority. These are: an Evening Diploma Program, a Credit Recovery Program, and a grant funded program entitled “School-within-a-School” which serves at-risk ninth and tenth graders. The teaching staff received Category 1 ELL Training, with a significant focus on Cultural Proficiency.

3) The PROTOCOL developed by leaders in the district includes the following practices: (a) Carefully selected teams that include relevant stakeholders drawn from the Attleboro Schools and community are involved in hiring, and a collaborative process is integral to making hiring decisions. These teams are called Advisory Committees. Advisory Committees forward their best candidates based on reaching consensus through the interview process. (b) Venues used for recruitment are numerous and diverse. For example, the district joined the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education (MPDE) and the co-chairs of this group are members of the Attleboro Public Schools. The district also posts vacancies on the MASS and DESE websites.

8. Applicable Grade Levels:

Pre K- 12

9. How This Practice Was Implemented So It Was More Successful Than Others Used:

District leaders believe that codification of the hiring process so that all schools use a consistent approach has engendered and sustained high expectations and standards for hiring across the district. Using the protocol has better ensured that the district’s vision and goals drive the process, interviewing is more thoughtful and intensive, and the whole process is less rushed and more reliable.

Candidates are generally asked to provide a prepared written response/writing sample, teach a demonstration lesson where appropriate, and meet and interact with other staff and/or community members. Thorough reference checking is done.

The district has in place a New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Committee. This consists of three teacher leaders – one at each school level, elementary, middle and high school. These leaders oversee the Mentoring Program, including running Mentor Training, offering PD for mentors in the course of the year, and meeting once monthly with mentors. These leaders also oversee the New Teacher Induction Program, which includes monthly meetings with new teachers at each school level. The curriculum for New Teacher induction includes topics such as the New Teacher Evaluation System, “Nuts and Bolts” needs such as how to set up and use the district’s electronic grading system, and classroom management. The curriculum varies from level to level

but all three levels include a blend of philosophy in education, pedagogy and instruction, and all needs relating to technology. New hires are assigned mentors who work with them throughout their first year, and they are required to attend New Teacher Induction sessions. All these pieces contribute to an improving hiring and retention record in the district.

10. Criteria For This Particular Lever Most Exemplified In This Practice:

The district provides a climate of supportive, collegial and growth-oriented working conditions to attract quality candidates committed to student learning and achievement.

The district taps into state and regional organizations and higher education institutions to assist with the recruitment efforts.

The district includes teacher and other stakeholder input (including administrators, students and parents), as appropriate, in the hiring process.

The district ensures that beginning teachers are provided with adequate resources that allow them to succeed.

District recruiting, hiring and placement identify and plan for candidates with potential to advance within the system to leadership positions.

The Common Core of Professional Knowledge and Skills informs the recruitment, hiring and placement practices.

Placement of new teachers and administrators takes into account preparation and readiness.

A district plan for new teacher and administrator professional development is in place.

11. How This Practice Changed The District or School:

1) The district is looking closely at its retention rate as a measure of the success of the hiring protocol. More time is needed to assess this reliably but leaders believe retention of new and highly qualified hires is increasing.

2) Where previously there may have been more internal networking and informal referrals to pitch prospective internal or external candidates, the more formal approach now in place, which includes a screening committee and several required steps, has improved the quality and process of the district's hiring practices. An additional benefit is that the district is protected if questions do arise about the reasonableness of steps and strategies used to secure new hires. Nothing has been questioned to date, but the protection is there.

3) The district tracks data on people who leave. Leaders review exit data to understand and assess why employees leave. This is a work in progress and leaders are working to develop better questions to ask those who leave so the data gathered is more useful to the district than it currently is.

4) Surveys of new teachers and mentors are done annually to get feedback on how the programs and services offered to new teachers and data collected through this process is used to inform future planning for these services and programs. (See attached).

12. Resources (time, money, materials etc.) Required For Successful Implementation:

Significant time and resources are invested in the hiring and teacher retention work done in the district. For example, new teachers attend 20 hours of New Teacher Induction Programming and those who lead these programs spend far more than 20 hours on this program.

\$16,000 is allotted for Mentoring Stipends and \$13,500 is divided among the three teacher leaders who run the Mentoring and induction Programs. Money is also allotted to pay substitutes so mentors can observe their mentees, and vice versa.

Tools Used to Implement or Advance This Practice (surveys, needs assessments, technology tools, rubrics, feedback Forms etc.)

- 1) Hiring Protocol
- 2) Surveys for evaluating Mentoring and Induction Programs