

Promising Practices and Implementation Tools–Final Template

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

**4. Lever Addressed and Title of Promising Practice:
Recruitment, Hiring and Placement**

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

The mission of the Cambridge Public Schools is to provide excellent instruction in every classroom in the district. To this end, a premium is placed on hiring the best teachers, and school and educational leaders possible. A critical component of recruitment and hiring is working to ensure that the demographics of the teachers and other personnel hired in the district reflect the diversity in the student population of this urban district.

Goals of This Practice:

The Office of Human Resources Department is committed to hiring and retaining a diverse staff and faculty that mirrors the proportion of Asian, African American, Latino, and other ethnic and cultural groups represented in the student population in the district as much as possible.

Description of This Practice:

Recruitment: A wide net is cast to attract candidates from outside the district. Recruiting from within the district is highly valued too. Recruitment is done at local and national job fairs, Cambridge hosts its own on-site fair, does online recruiting and networking, encourages staff referrals, and runs print ads in recruiting for all new positions. There are approximately 100 teacher openings each year, and 2,000 applicants for

these positions. The application process is managed entirely online. Cambridge has an Affirmative Action/Recruitment Office – a holdover from its inception in the 1970's, as part of the desegregation movement. While this office still exists, the Human Resources Department does most of the recruiting.

Hiring: The hiring process for teachers is led and managed at each school site, by the principal and his/her team. The Office of Human Resources oversees administrative hiring.

- a) Before the interviewing process for school leaders begins, all pertinent constituencies are surveyed and the data collected informs the interview process – data is used to inform and develop questions that will be used in the interviews. The perspective on questions asked of candidates is broad and far-reaching because the questions emanate from constituencies that include but are not limited to school personnel. Interview teams include teachers, parents, students (only at the high school level), and community members.
- b) Interview committees are prepared for their role ahead of time – the process, accountability and confidentiality (a confidentiality agreement is signed by all participants) are discussed in detail. The orientation is critical to the interview process, and typically takes place on the same day as the interviews, to be respectful of participants' time.
- c) Teacher candidates who make it through the interview process are typically invited back to teach a class. This is not a requirement, but observing prospective candidates teaching is highly valued and implemented whenever possible. The hiring process is begun early in an effort to secure the best candidates.
- d) Hiring for specific positions is customized – for example, when the district recently changed its school structures from a K-8 to a K-5 and 6-8 system, the focus, needs and priorities, in terms of hiring, changed. This was reflected in the interview questions and the entire hiring process, which included having candidates attend a public forum where

they met with parents and other community members, and responded to their questions. The public forum was also streamed online for community members to view at their convenience, with an online survey for community feedback on the candidate presentations.

e) Site visits are done for candidates who are being seriously considered for high-level positions.

f) Candidates for positions in administration are required to do a leadership assessment inventory that provides insight into philosophy, characteristics, style and disposition of prospective candidates. Information and insights gleaned from this inventory are brought to bear in the interview process.

Placement: Placement is controlled at the building level, resulting from targeted interviewing and a systematic, thoughtful interview process. Central Office meets candidates recommended for hire, affirms all hires, and oversees the paper work requirements for assignments in the district. Hiring decisions are essentially made at the building level.

Criteria addressed within this Practice:

Recruitment, Hiring, and Placement:

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

Attention given to hiring and placement timelines allows the district to recruit high-quality candidates in a competitive timeframe.

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. The resources are defined and include technology resources.

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 teachers and administrators professional development is in place. (See district's Continuing Education Curriculum for teachers and administrators)

Induction:

The district has a Comprehensive Induction Plan that includes program elements, roles and responsibilities, implementation processes and timelines, and identifies necessary tools and resources. All members of the district and school community share collective responsibility for contributing to new teacher and administrator growth. Provision for professional growth of new teachers and administrators is an integral part of the school district's professional development plan for all educators. The induction process is informed by the Common Core of the Professional Knowledge and Skills and is focused on instruction. Induction programs provide comprehensive support for all teachers and administrators in their first three years of practice. Professional development for new teachers is specialized and developmentally appropriate. Induction and mentoring programs are provided with the administrative supports and resources necessary. The selection, training, responsibilities and rewards for mentors are informed by research and are part of the district's Induction Plan. Time for mentoring new teachers and administrators is a part of the school day and provide opportunities for observation, consultation, and reflection. The district Induction plan includes a process for collecting program data and conducting ongoing formative evaluation and regular summative evaluation of program effectiveness. This occurs for the Mentor Program in the district.

8. Applicable Grade Levels:

PreK-12

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

Collaboration is threaded through hiring, in-service training, and mentoring of new teachers. Teaming is site-based and occurs across schools. Multiple perspectives are critical in making hiring decisions.

Hiring: Under the current administration, the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent (Personnel) interview every candidate recommended for hire, before anyone is officially hired. This is not a formality but a bona fide interview, to vet each person one last time. The interview is much more than filling in forms and attending to other administrative tasks. The goal/benefit is for district leaders to become acquainted with new hires at their point of entry and pursue any concerns that may arise in the meeting. In seven years, only two candidates who made it this far were not offered jobs. Most of the time, the hiring process is successful and Central Office Personnel become the rubber stamp. However, this last interview is a final checkpoint, to help ensure a strong hiring track record.

Hiring: The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent study candidates' application packets intensively – particularly the transcripts. Every piece of each application tells a story. Graduate and Undergraduate performance scores are one data point among others. Low grades may or may not be significant in the broader context of other information – but they are duly considered.

Mentoring: A strong support structure is in place. There is a district-wide Mentor Coordinator, and building-based coordinators at each school. Meetings are held throughout the year at the district and building level, geared to support mentors and provide professional development. This support system speaks to the district's commitment to the program, and successful mentoring relationships.

Applicable Grade Levels:

All PreK – 12

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

1) Site-based hiring is successful because the leaders at each school site know their schools intimately, and what is best for them. Central Office generally plays a supportive rather than a decision-making role, although all hires are subject to final approval by the Superintendent.

2) Involving parents and students in the hiring process shows trust and respect for the community. Parents feel trusted which, in turn, increases parents' trust of the schools and the district.

3) Involving teachers in the hiring process demonstrates faith and trust in teachers' judgment.

4) Feedback from new hires about the hiring process is positive. Newly hired staff report experiencing a mutually respectful process and appreciate seeing different faces of the community and "who the players are" through the interview and hiring process. This exposure helps candidates make their decisions.

5) The full transparency of the hiring process has changed the landscape in terms of increasing levels of trust and respect among all involved.

6) The district is committed to beginning the hiring process as early as possible to access the best possible candidates. The teacher hiring cycle begins in February for the following September. Teachers planning to leave their jobs are asked to notify the district by February 15. In years past, the HR Office was required to wait until the budget process was settled before moving into hiring. Today, with increased automation, the department is able to make reasonably accurate projections for funding and staffing. Automation has supported a process whereby district leaders can begin the hiring and recruitment process much earlier than they used to, and to good effect. Visionary leadership, and a strong working relationship between HR and the Business Office, has been critical to the successful operation of both departments in their joint work in recruitment and hiring.

7) The commitment to diversifying the faculty has led the district to customize its online job application system so candidates can identify their ethnicity if they so choose. This enables recruiters to look at profiles in the pool, which helps determine if more aggressive, targeted, and different recruitment strategies are needed to ensure diversity in the candidates' pool. Automation is helping the district do more efficient monitoring of the strengths in the applicants' pool, and improve the pace and timeliness of hiring throughout the district.

Criteria addressed within this Practice:

Recruitment, Hiring, and Placement:

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

Attention given to hiring and placement timelines allows the district to recruit high-quality candidates in a competitive timeframe.

The district taps into state and regional organizations to assist with its recruitment efforts.

The district includes teacher and other stakeholder input (including administrators, students and parents), as appropriate, in the hiring process. Careful consideration is given to all stakeholders who should be included in the recruitment and hiring process and systematic, thoughtful, well-planned interviewing processes are in place.

District recruiting, hiring and placement includes identification and planning 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.

The district identifies special qualitative indicators and implements a formal process of evaluating candidates for high level positions (uses a leadership assessment inventory candidates need to respond to which provides data that is included in the decision-making process for hiring).

10. How This Practice Changed The District or School:

These changes over time have enhanced the quality and diversity of teacher and administrator candidate pools and improved the timelines of hiring. Progress towards the district's goals is closely monitored and reported, continuously. One example is the monitoring of teacher performance. Professional Status is granted after three years and the first three years are the critical period for weeding out teachers who do not achieve proficiency. Turnover in the first three years is not necessarily seen as a bad thing – if it means the district does not accept mediocrity in its teaching staff. Success is measured by the rate of retention after the first three years – one of many other measures, but an important one. After the first three years, teachers are evaluated annually. Teachers are retained for an average of 11–13 years beyond tenure, which is considered a measure of stability and success.

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

Personnel Resources: Human Resources Executive Director oversees a full staff. Cambridge is a well-resourced district that has the funds it needs to run a successful Human Resources operation. Cambridge is a Race-to-the-Top district.

12. Tools Used To Implement Or Advance This Practice (surveys, needs assessments, technology tools, rubrics, feedback Forms etc.)

SchoolStream Job Applicant System
Annual Report on Staffing Diversity