

STEP 2

Creating a Blueprint for Hiring

“The teacher hiring process has always been pressure-filled.”

(Tooms & Crowe, 2004, p. 50)

The often-cited phrase, “Failing to plan is planning to fail,” hits the mark regarding hiring new faculty. Liu and Johnson (2006) called typical hiring practices “late, rushed, and information-poor” (p. 324). The research of Rose, English, and Finney (2014) indicated that “as many as 62 percent of teachers are hired within a month of the start date” (p. 3). To improve hiring, it must be prioritized as a year-round job, with many people involved at different levels of the process.

If you are new to a position, or striving to improve hiring, first gather whatever is written about your district’s practices. Ask the appropriate people for their input regarding “institutional memory,” or what has been done in the past. Consider, if time permits, a short survey to recent hires about their hiring experience. As with any survey, some of the comments and data may not be relevant, but possible trends may emerge for improvement. (See sample, Appendix 1.) New hires who indicate satisfaction with the hiring process, and who feel that they were well-informed about the position, begin their new jobs with a positive outlook.

A HIRING PHILOSOPHY

Just what is your philosophy of hiring new teachers? Does your philosophy match that of the district administration? Is there a written statement of the expectations or philosophy of hiring? Putting a philosophy or statement on paper is a good first step in hiring. Consider the following when writing this statement:

1. Is our goal to fill classrooms with highly qualified teachers to meet national and state mandates, or to do so *and* to commit to having the best teachers possible for all students?
2. How will our hiring process help us to hire diverse candidates for our faculties?
3. How can we make the entire hiring process both thorough and user-friendly?
4. How will we make our hiring based on objective criteria?
5. Will we commit to an interview process that is welcoming to candidates while still maintaining the highest selection standards?

Sample Hiring Philosophy:

Our school system commits to hiring the best, most highly qualified candidates for our students, exceeding the national and state mandates for teacher qualifications. The hiring process is thorough and user-friendly, recruiting a wide and diverse pool of candidates. Candidates will be interviewed and selected according to an established process that is welcoming and information-rich.

A CALENDAR FOR THE HIRING PROCESS

While calendars start in January, let's look at a school calendar for the steps of the hiring process (see also Clement, 2000).

September/October

- Some late hires may still be made.
- Survey new hires about their hiring experience.

- Review hiring data with human resources, central administration.
- Review the hiring budget and plan a budget for next year.
- Review any changes in state certification requirements for teachers.

November/December

- Plan and implement training in the hiring process for new principals/administrators.
- Plan training for teachers who will be involved in the hiring process.
- Solicit teacher volunteers for the hiring process.
- Work with the teachers' union/professional associations with regard to hiring practices and the use of teacher volunteers in hiring.
- Order books and resources for training.

January/ February

- Complete training for administrators who hire.
- Complete training for teachers involved in hiring.
- Complete training or review protocol with administrative staff who sort paperwork or come in contact with candidates.
- Send trained representatives to job fairs to gather resumes and complete preliminary interviews.
- Organize an on-site district job fair.
- Begin assessing the need for new hires, by school, grade, and discipline.
- Advertise for openings as needed.
- Early interviews and hirings may take place, selecting outstanding candidates.

MARCH/APRIL

- Continue assessment of numbers of new hires.
- Review current teaching assignments to determine new hire assignments (re-envisioning positions, repositioning current people before advertising).
- Advertise widely for new positions.
- Continue sending representatives to campus job fairs, multi-district fairs, or your district's fair.
- On-site, final interviews take place, with contracts issued.

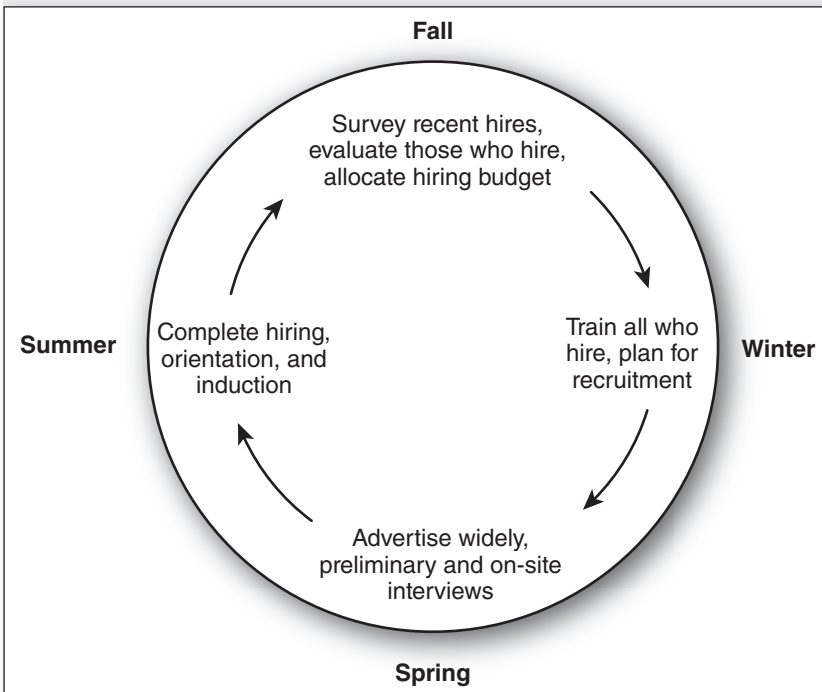
May/June

- Continue on-site job interviews.
- Continue to advertise positions.
- Contracts are issued.
- Send back-to-school letters to new hires.
- Provide new hires with information about housing, welcome events, and community events.

July/August

- Continue hiring process for all job openings.
- Provide orientation for new hires; induction and mentoring programs explained.
- Contracts are still issued.
- Ask administrators and teachers involved with hiring to evaluate the hiring process and to make suggestions for improvement.
- Discuss the hiring process with human resources and central administration to further evaluate the process.

Figure 2.1 The Yearlong Hiring Calendar



EMPHASIZING THE HIGH-NEEDS SUBJECT AREAS

Using the yearlong plan for staffing schools can alleviate issues with finding the right teachers in the high-needs subject areas of math, sciences, special education, and some foreign languages. The oldest and still one of the most effective ways to attract new teachers for these areas is to invite nearby colleges and universities to partner with the school district to accept student teachers. A student teacher who has a positive experience in a school is much easier to recruit to a position than is an outsider.

Long-term solutions may be needed to attract and keep teachers in the high-needs subject areas. Research on the staffing of rural schools is quite insightful in this area. Barley (2009) discussed programs for rural recruitment that have worked, including bringing students out to school well before student teaching for practicum experiences, and delivering online courses to practicum or student teachers so that they do not need to return to campuses for courses during this time.

Shuls and Maranto (2013) wrote that “high poverty schools most in need of talented teachers are typically those most likely to face teacher shortages” (p. 240). Their work suggests appealing to candidates’ sense of altruism rather than to the more commonly used incentives of salary, benefits, or bonuses. Keeping this in mind, a school district might consider sending speakers to college campuses throughout the school year and having current teachers talk about the sense of accomplishment from working with students.

When hiring is made a priority throughout the year, personnel can be available for campus talks, working with practicum students, and building the collaborations needed to recruit new teachers to geographic areas where they are needed, as well as to subject-specific jobs. The keys listed in the next chapter apply to recruiting teachers to all schools, including those in high-poverty, rural areas, and in high-needs fields.

I (Clement) have many friends, and former students, who have taught in impoverished schools abroad. Some accepted jobs making less than half of what they would have earned in the United States. They took the jobs because they felt that they could make a difference in Asia or Latin America. Their sense of urgency to “give back” and to represent Americans in a “good light” drove their decisions to teach abroad. If we can emulate this type of selflessness for teaching in high-needs US schools, recruiting and retaining teachers in those schools could certainly improve.