



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
Program on Education & Society

Human Capital Framework for K-12 Urban Education:
Organizing for Success
(*Working Draft, July 2008*)

by
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Thinking and acting strategically about human capital development and management is the lifeblood of most high-performing businesses and organizations. This commitment reflects an understanding that an organization's success is defined in large part by the performance of its employees and the quality of the service or product they produce. In education, the "product" of the organization is the education and future success of children, the future of their communities, the economic and social well being of the country. The evidence shows that principals' and teachers' performance has more effect on student achievement than any other factor and that teachers' effectiveness in increasing student performance varies widely. Given the stakes, there is a moral imperative to act on that knowledge and strengthen the education workforce to better serve students.

Urban school districts have long realized that their people are their most significant resource, with staff salaries and benefits accounting for more than 80% of their budgets. Yet, increasing accountability for student performance coupled with the work of entrepreneurial organizations, such as Teach For America and The New Teacher Project that attract and nurture new sources of talent for urban districts, have sparked more aggressive attempts to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of the education workforce. In most urban districts, however, the approach has been piecemeal, looking only at components of the system (e.g. preparation, sourcing, compensation or professional development) or specific subsets of the employee population, most commonly new teachers.

The efforts to date point to the promise of a strategic approach to human capital development. Some urban districts are increasing the qualifications of those entering teaching and the principalship, retaining a higher percentage of high performers for longer periods of time, eliminating poor performers, and creating the working conditions and performance-oriented culture that motivates and supports high performance. Yet, the limited reach of efforts to date also suggests that significant improvement at scale will require dramatic changes. To execute new approaches to human capital management, school systems will need to be clear about their mission and goals, identify and prioritize the strategies that will help accomplish them, and then align their central office and school support structures, their labor-management partnerships, and their partnerships with outside organizations and higher education.

A systemic approach to building human capital in large urban districts requires an understanding of the components of a robust human capital system and a strategy that ultimately addresses each component and their interrelationships to create a comprehensive system. To support this work, the Aspen Institute has developed a

human capital development and management framework that provides one approach for thinking systematically about these issues, with particular attention to teachers, the largest segment of the education workforce.

Drawing on best practices within education and other sectors, the framework lays out the context in which human capital management takes place and identifies eight essential components:

Components

- Preparation
- Sourcing
- Certification
- Induction
- Tenure
- Training and Development
- Performance Management
- Compensation and Non-Monetary Rewards

While the framework is organized by components, each component should be considered in relation to the others and in relation to the district's mission and goals. For example, creating a performance management system that recognizes high performing teachers requires rethinking teacher evaluation, compensation and non-monetary rewards for performance, the career development opportunities for exemplary teachers, and the creation of a professional culture that celebrates excellence and continuous improvement. Likewise, a preparation and sourcing strategy that brings in a large number of non-traditional and alternatively certified teachers requires significant investments in induction to support new teachers. It also requires new approaches to career ladders both to retain non-traditional teachers who want rapid opportunities for growth and leadership and to provide additional school-based expertise to support untrained new teachers.

Thinking systemically also requires that human capital development and management be considered in the larger context of schools, districts, the labor market and local, state and federal policy that can either support or impede high quality teaching and school leadership. For example, a district could address every component of the framework without realizing significant improvements if it did not address student learning needs, school working conditions, allocation of resources or the development of robust data systems that track and inform improvement efforts. While districts must prioritize and cannot or should not address all of the components and contextual issues simultaneously, they must keep the entire terrain in mind as they identify their highest leverage strategies.

By laying out a picture of the full terrain of human capital development and management for teachers, the framework can provoke fundamentally different conversations about this issue. It is intended as a tool that helps districts, their higher education, philanthropic and community partners, and policymakers organize their thinking about

the full scope of the issue, assess the work they are currently doing, determine where and how to first focus their efforts, and develop a long-term strategy that ultimately addresses all

elements. By outlining current conditions and best practices, the framework provides a clear picture of the current state of affairs, a vision for what is possible and the implications of that vision for districts, their partners and policymakers. At the end of the framework, we have included a simple self-assessment tool that districts and their partners can use to assess their work in any given component of the framework or across the entire framework.

It is impossible to capture the full complexity of the human capital issue in K-12 urban education in a single framework. Outlined below are some of the realities and tensions that exist in the sector which should inform use of this framework and any human capital strategy:

- Teachers work in schools and schools are in school districts. Teachers' experiences and effectiveness depend greatly on the quality of school leadership. In turn, the quality of school leadership depends in large part on the district central office and its capacity to effectively recruit, develop, support and manage great principals. While this framework focuses on teachers and is less applicable to principals and central office staff and management, strengthening human capital requires approaches that address the multi-dimensional nature of the challenge.
- Making the job appealing. Talented professionals want jobs in which they understand their mission, they have the skills and tools to succeed, they feel valued and fairly treated, and they have great leaders and great colleagues. The education sector is no different. Teachers identify school working conditions as the single greatest factor in their job satisfaction and their tenure in the profession. This framework identifies these issues both as context factors and in the sections on non-monetary rewards and training and development. However, the framework does not fully address all that is required to create these conditions. Obviously, principals play a pivotal role in shaping school culture and working conditions. To do this work, principals will need to become human capital managers who are adept at hiring great teachers who fit the schools mission and culture and can think creatively about how to differentiate roles for teachers, encourage collaboration that taps the expertise of individual teachers, and hold all teachers accountable to high standards. This vision has significant implications for the preparation and ongoing training of principals.
- The reality of turnover. The employment patterns of the generation entering the workforce indicate that the trend towards changing jobs every three to five years is one that will continue across sectors, including in education. A robust human capital strategy must recruit the highest quality people, maximize their contributions to improving student achievement quickly and create opportunities to retain them, all while anticipating that no matter how attractive the job and career advancement opportunities, a significant number of new teachers will

leave in the first three to five years. The challenges are to do a better job of organizing schools and classrooms to take advantage of short-termers and increase the likelihood that highly effective teachers will stay and less effective teachers will not continue to teach.

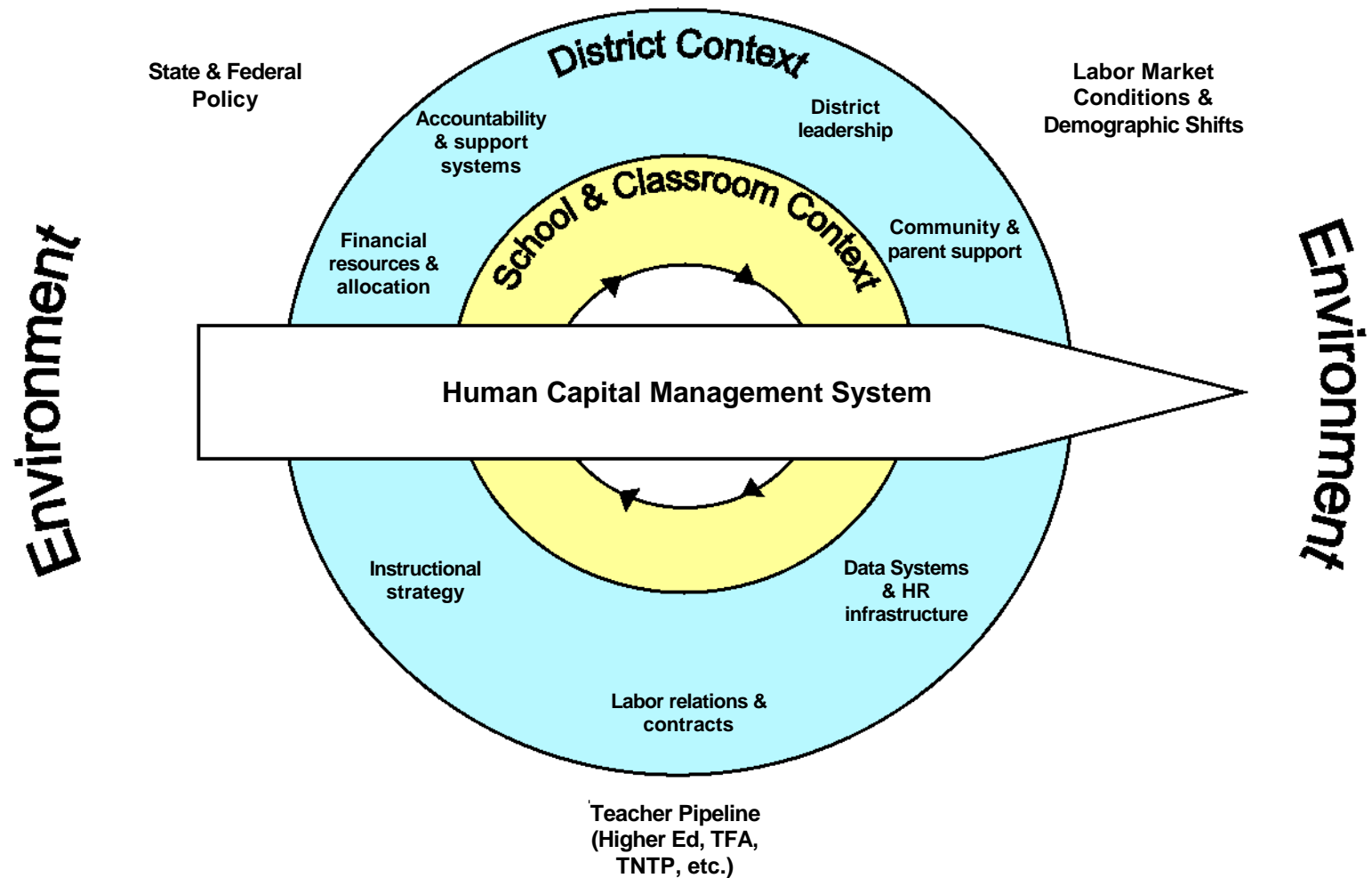
- Challenges in performance measurement. Fundamental to implementing a human capital system is defining good performance and then acting on that knowledge to build aligned support and accountability systems. In education, to the maximum extent technically and practically feasible, evidence of impact on student learning should be the primary criterion of performance. At issue is what measures of student learning should be counted (e.g. value added measures based on standardized test scores, other student performance measures), what in addition to student achievement results should be included in the definition and measure of good performance (e.g. observable teacher behaviors, contributions to school improvement), and what levels of reliability and validity are necessary for making consequential decisions.
- Lack of evidence about the utility of investing in upfront preparation. Research suggests that there are no definitive predictors of who will be an effective teacher before they enter the classroom (e.g., SAT scores, credential). Likewise, there is no evidence that teachers who enter through traditional preparation pathways are, in general, more effective or stay longer than those who enter through alternative routes. As a result, this framework suggests that a high functioning district would pursue a robust “portfolio” of preparation options, provide multiple pathways into the classroom, hold providers accountable for results, and over time hire from and direct resources only to providers that produce results.
- Changing relationships. Long-held arrangements, particularly as they relate to higher education and unions, will need to be renegotiated in order for this work to be comprehensive and brought to scale. Higher education’s monopoly on teacher preparation will be challenged. Its demonstrated inability to meet market demands and ensure the quality of its product raises fundamental questions about the value of higher education preparation and will continue to spawn alternative preparation strategies. Union contracts that honor seniority and the accrual of graduate credits over demonstrated competence and continuous improvement will need to be reconsidered.
- Equity. In many urban districts, more qualified and senior teachers gravitate to schools and classes that are less poor, less racially mixed, and more academically advanced than the district is as a whole. The distribution of resources and the capacity of schools and communities to make effective use of resources often follow these same patterns. For these reasons human capital strategies require a focus on equity as well as excellence.
- Ensuring a diverse workforce. In the design of a human capital system it is critical to consider the impact on recruiting and retaining a talented, diverse workforce. High demand for talented professionals of color makes it challenging

for schools to attract high quality minority candidates. At the same time, strategies intended to improve teacher quality, such as recruiting students from selective colleges and with high SAT scores, may raise barriers to attaining a diverse workforce. Raising entry standards demands a strategy to ensure aspiring teachers of color have access to high-quality preparation. In many urban areas teachers of color are graduates of the very schools that we are trying to improve, schools that undereducated them.

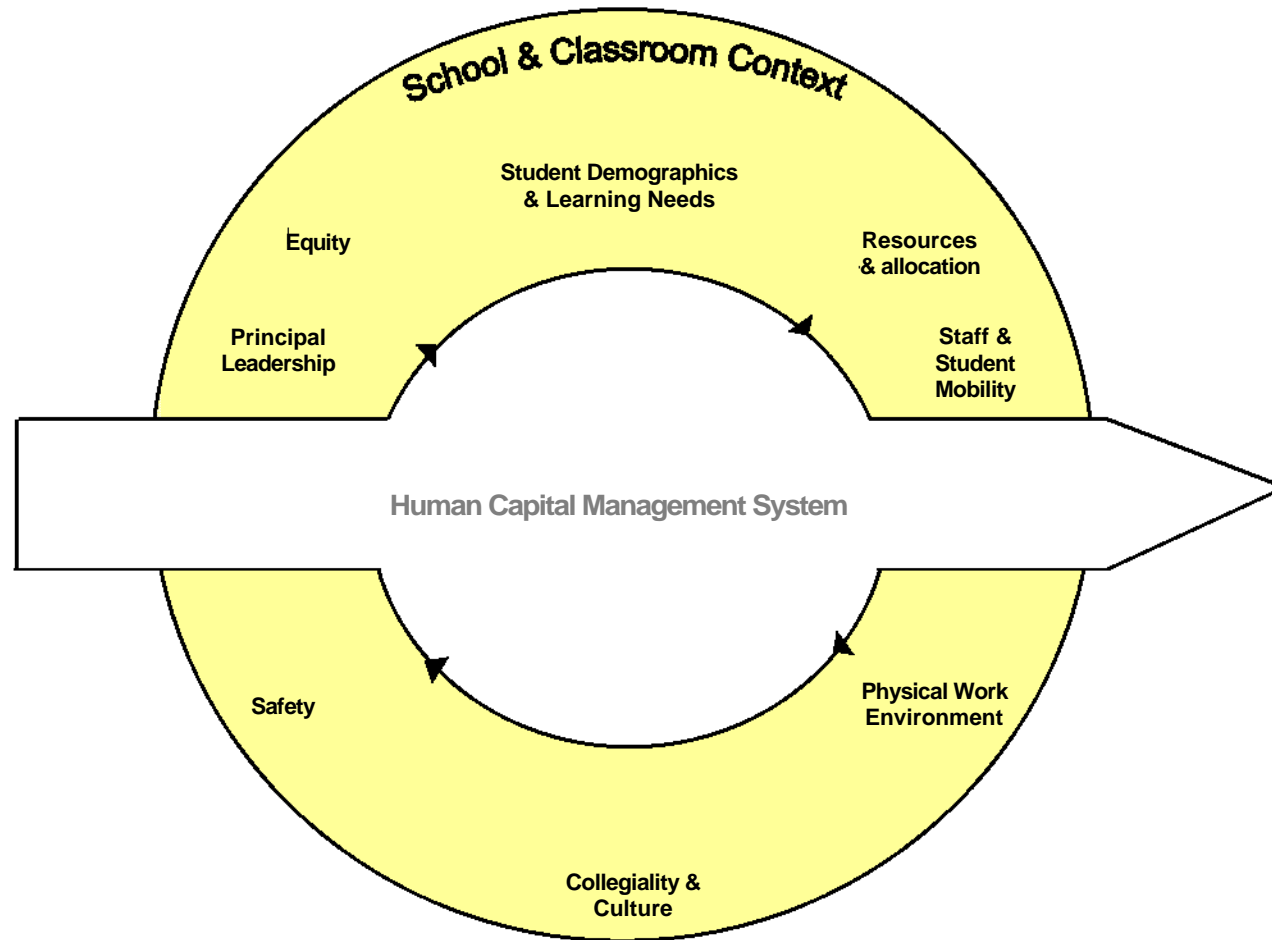
- Fostering individual *and* organizational improvement. Finding talented people and rewarding them for their individual contributions is a critical strategy for improving the caliber of people in any organization. At the same time, effective schools and school improvement are grounded in collaborative work, collective effort, and trust. A human capital system that attracts and rewards teachers who are highly effective behind the closed doors of their classroom but provides no incentives or accountability for collective improvement makes it unlikely that other teachers and students will benefit from their expertise and that the organization will improve overtime. Human capital strategies must seek to balance the focus on individual and organizational improvement. Thus, while this framework focuses primarily on the career trajectories of individual teachers, to substantially improve outcomes for students over time, human capital strategies should focus as well on fostering organizational learning and improvement is critical to ensuring that it leads to improved outcomes for students.
- Human capital is bigger than human resources. School systems traditionally reduce human capital issues to basic human resource functions e.g. hiring, evaluations, compensation. To develop and manage human capital in a systemic way requires the leadership of the teaching and learning side of the house, finance, the people who supervise principals, information technology, and the superintendent, to name a few. Identifying and nurturing talent, allocating resources, providing support to ensure principals are well prepared to serve as human capital managers, holding them accountable for this work, defining the metrics to be used to assess teacher performance and developing an information management system to track it are just a few of the components of an effective human capital system. HR can be a strategic resource for this work but the work must be owned and championed by a cross-functional team of district leaders.

Building a comprehensive human capital development and management system will require a dramatic shift from a system that currently measures its performance by how many people apply for positions and its ability to have an adult in every classroom on the first day of school to one that values demonstrated success and is explicitly organized to recruit, develop and retain such talent. The way this shift is managed will be informed by the district's local context and unique needs as a district facing rapid growth in student enrollment will have different priorities and strategy from a district that is experiencing a decline in student enrollment. The approaches will vary but the fundamental goal of an effective teacher in every classroom is universal.

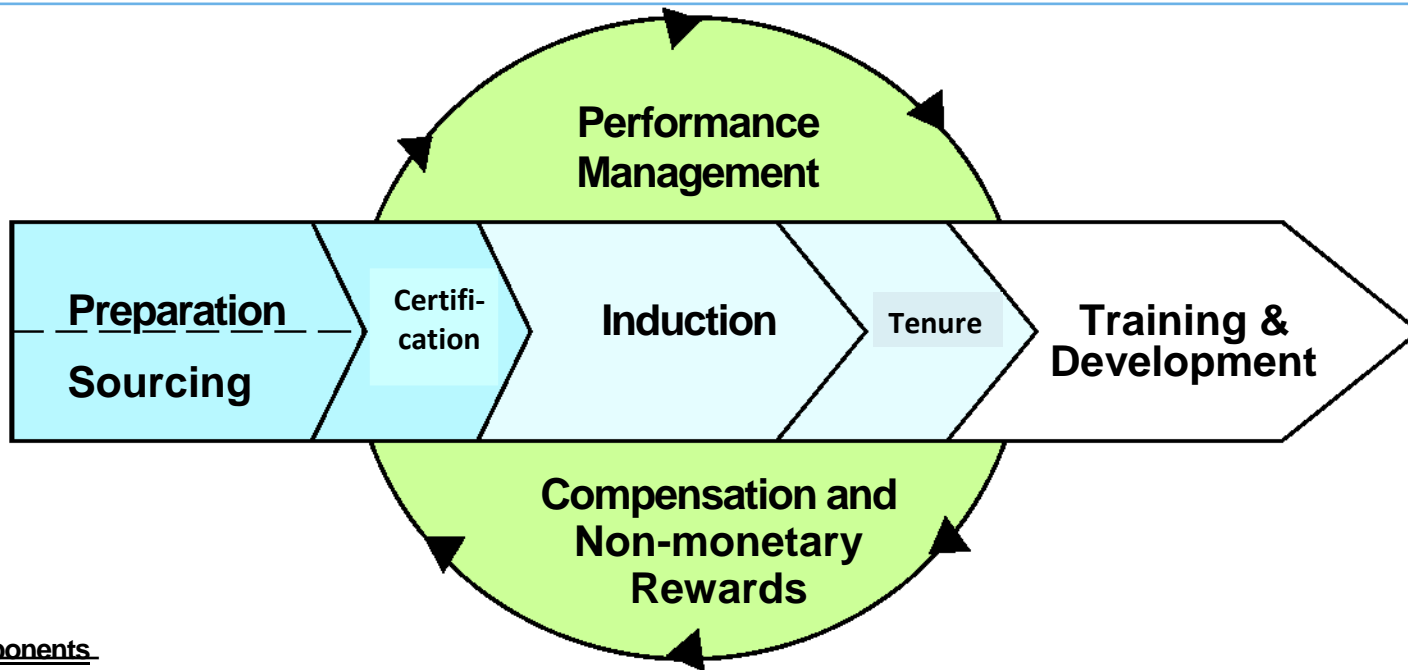
Human Capital Management in K-12 Education



Human Capital Management in K-12 Education



Human Capital Management in K-12 Education



Components

Preparation

- Traditional higher education
- Alternative certification
- District-based preparation

Sourcing

- Marketing
- Recruitment
- Screening
- Hiring
- On-boarding
- Deployment

Induction

- Orientation
- Mentoring
- Reduced Teaching Load
- Differentiated professional development

Certification

- Process managed by state department of education to approve teacher candidates.

Training and Development

- Professional development
- Identification of high-potential employees
- Career management
- Career pathways

Tenure

- Point at which a district commits permanent employment to a teacher

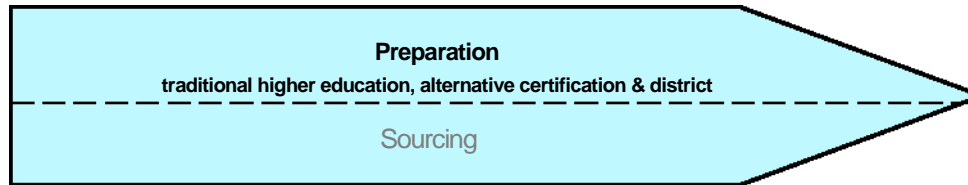
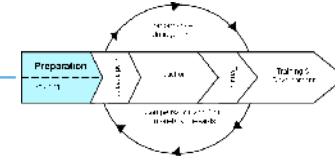
Performance Management

- Expectation setting
- Assessment
- Calibration
- Feedback
- Outcomes

Compensation & non-monetary rewards

- Annual salary and benefits
- Recognition, growth opportunities, and working conditions

Human Capital Management: Preparation



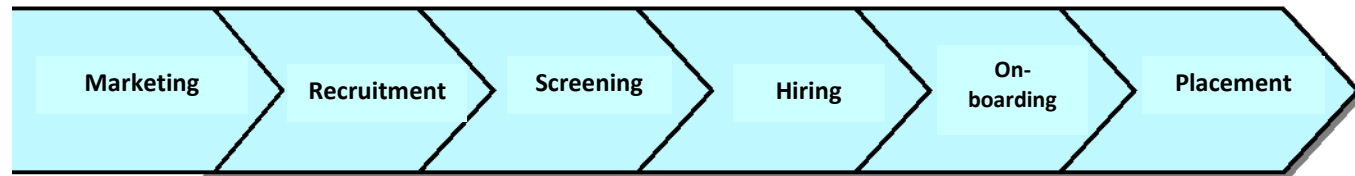
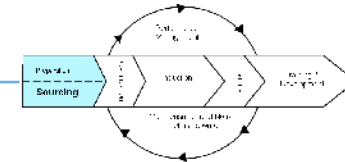
Best HR Practice:

- Portfolio of high-quality traditional and alternative pathways to teaching with clear accountability for results (e.g. ability of graduates to realize student achievement gains)
- Target preparation resources on preparers able to consistently produce successful teachers in hard-to-fill positions who stay in urban districts
- Base training in high-performing K-12 schools with curriculum focused on issues of greatest importance to the high performance of urban students, practical application of theory, and the effective use of technology to accelerate student and teacher learning and practice
- Preparation program designed to build school capacity and offer differentiated teacher roles for experienced teachers.
- Data systems track program graduates and their student results which defines effectiveness and desirability of program.
intensive follow-up in years 1 & 2 including leadership development & career management to support retention

Current Conditions:

- Entry standards into programs not aligned to characteristics of successful teachers (e.g Gallup, Haberman, high academic qualifications)
- No meaningful accountability for higher education to ensure quality of graduates or alignment with district's needs
- Variety of traditional and alternative certification with little deliberate balancing of portfolio or accountability for results.
- In traditional preparation high investment required of applicants (tuition and time) before they gain any real sense of teaching profession and their teaching talent.
- Little weeding out during program based on performance
- Low yield of graduates into teaching
- Course content not well aligned to realities of urban teaching
- Limited time in schools before becoming the teacher of record
- In alternative preparation, 6-8 weeks of prep for fast-trackers with little follow-up support

Human Capital Management: Sourcing



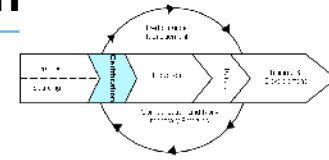
Best HR Practice

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|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Brand teaching as compelling short- or long-term career •Market strategic advantage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data systems forecast need which drives recruitment •Clear sense of characteristics and attributes of high-performing teachers permeates strategy •Specific strategy for hard-to-staff schools and content areas that includes effective incentives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Performance-based talent and skills assessment •Standardized process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Early offers to high performers and students in preparation programs with proven results •Competitive hiring timeline •Principals skilled at selecting best candidates for school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Acculturation to high-performing profession •Personalized service •Technology platform to simplify | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Focused on equity and student need: highest quality teachers to hard to staff (HTS) schools with intensive support. •Scheduled to ensure reduced teaching load •Establish cycle of deployment and redeployment •Data systems track and flag equity issues |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|

Current Conditions

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No clear vision of whom to hire as teachers beyond filling positions •Can't get teachers needed (e.g. hard-to-staff areas) •Don't market strategically and distinguish one district from another | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Focus on quantity over quality •Limited strategies in hard-to-staff schools and content areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Interview •Often don't visit school, meet staff or demo teaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Late hiring leads to loss of strongest candidates •Principals have few skills for selecting best candidates. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Unfriendly, bureaucratic labyrinth •First paycheck/benefits often late | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Seniority first; new teachers get what's left •Long tenure in same position/ same school |
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Human Capital Management in K-12 Education: Certification



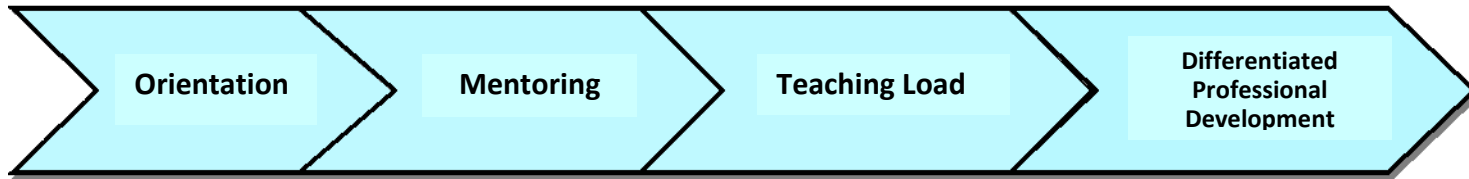
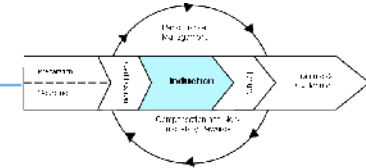
Best HR Practice

- Based on factors demonstrably related to teacher effectiveness
- Different levels of certification distinguished by performance measures rather than years of service and advanced degrees

Current Conditions

- Dictated in each state by its department of education
- Three stages of certification common - initial, preliminary and professional - based on time in classroom and graduate credits earned
- Little or no correlation between certification requirements and teacher effectiveness
- Initial certification conferred based on applicant's test scores and participation in accredited program
- Higher education primary vehicle for initial and advanced certification
- Recertification conferred based on continuing education credits

Human Capital Management: Induction



Best HR Practice

- Acculturation to high-performing, respected profession
- Diagnose strengths & areas for development
- Network building
- Focused on ensuring early success
- Instructional “boot camp”
- Career trajectory presented

- Guided by teaching standards validated to student results & new teacher needs
- Informed by diagnosed strengths & areas for development
- In-classroom support by expert teacher in the content/grade

- Time for observing & collaborating w/other teachers, lesson planning & work with mentor

- Guided by teaching standards
- Participation guided by diagnosed strengths & areas for development
- Builds collaboration
- Mix of “new teacher” focused & integrated with experienced teachers
- Uses new technologies to maximize impact
- Participation a requirement for tenure review

Current Conditions

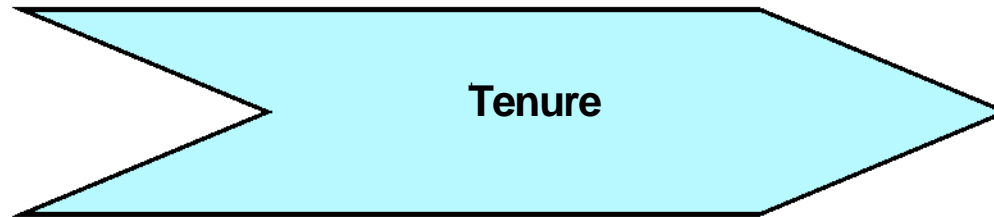
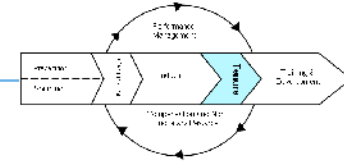
- Large-scale with little differentiation
- Focus broad and shallow
- Lots of attention on benefits and payroll

- Not guided by teaching standards
- Often provided by experienced teachers on top of full teaching load
- Hard to match mentor in same content area
- Limited training for mentors
- Little oversight

- New teachers often teach most challenging classes and have the greatest number of course preps

- Not aligned to teaching standards
- “Sit and git” training
- No accountability for teacher participation or performance

Human Capital Management: Tenure



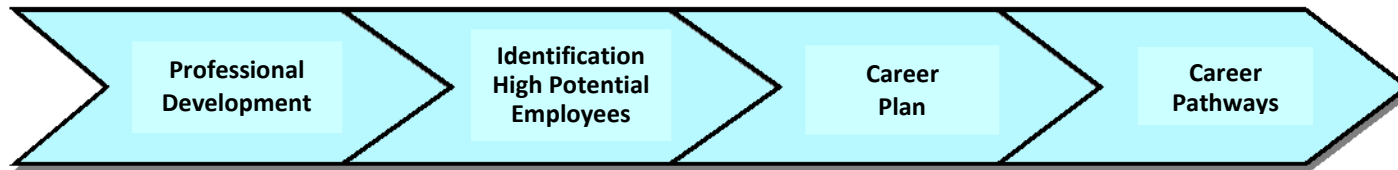
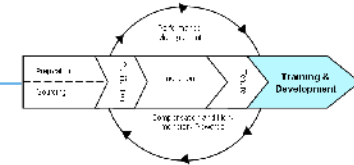
Best HR Practice:

- Based primarily on student performance and also considers assessment of teaching skills, ability to collaborate and demonstrated growth
- Signals early and often whether on track for tenure or not and indicates what behavior required to get back on track towards tenure.
- High bar: not everyone gets it; significant professional rite of passage: celebration of excellence with financial reward
- Comes with new responsibilities
- Conferred later than three years into career: may be differentiated timeline based on performance
- Multiple people e.g. supervisor, colleagues, students involved in decision with calibration
- Once tenured, performance still evaluated regularly. Those whose performance drop post-tenure can be terminated

Current Conditions:

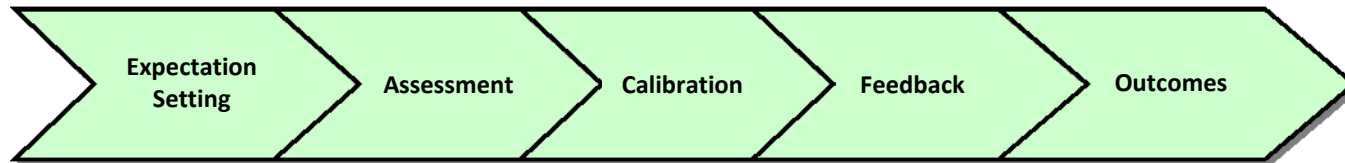
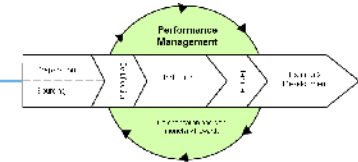
- Conferred to virtually all teacher at the end of third year of teaching: based on years of teaching more so than performance

Human Capital Management: Training & Development



	Professional Development	Identification High Potential Employees	Career Plan	Career Pathways
Best HR Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Aligned to teaching standards and instructional goals •Informed by diagnosed strengths & areas for development, performance and career trajectory •Primarily job-embedded •Incentivized based on its value to the district e.g dual certification •Heavy emphasis on building collaboration & adult learning •Data systems map training participation with teachers' student performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Career trajectory guides development and acceleration for high-potential employees •District and school leaders identify & target high-potential and employees for high-investment/high return career growth opportunities. •Different roles for different talent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •All teachers develop and work off 3-year career and individual development plans driven by standards, career trajectory and performance • Focus on skill building and increased opportunities and job responsibilities with associated increases in compensation •Supervisors support this work and are held accountable for it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Compelling opportunities for high performers in lowest performing schools •Strategic use of high performers to push school & district improvement •Leadership opportunities that allow teachers to continue teaching with differentiated work and pay •Stretch assignments with appropriate support •Compensation incentives based on performance and roles
Current Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Workshops distanced from actual work in classrooms •Limited oversight of quality or impact on practice and student learning •Participation in continuing education counts towards salary increases regardless of content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Done informally & inconsistently by some 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Done by few; driven by individual not by expectations of supervisor or district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Administration primary career pathway •Differentiated roles for teachers limited and often require leaving classroom •Stretch assignments given with no support

Human Capital Management: Performance Management



Best HR Practice

- Based on teaching standards: primarily student performance results as well as instructional strategies and professional behaviors that have been validated
- Includes personal and professional growth goals set by educator in concert with supervisor
- Data systems in place to track student growth, compare teacher/school performance, etc.

- Self assessment
- 360°feedback from colleagues, students, supervisor & parents
- Includes student performance data review
- Uses technology platform

- System in place centrally to ensure evaluation is fair, predictable, consistent, and actually done

- Discussion of student performance results, strengths & areas for development
- Refine individual development plan based on feedback
- Standardized practice for addressing low performance

- Career management and opportunities based on performance
- Recognition & rewards for high performers
- Targeted support for under-performers
- Strategy and procedure for dismissal of incompetent educators

Current Conditions

- Pass out evaluation document

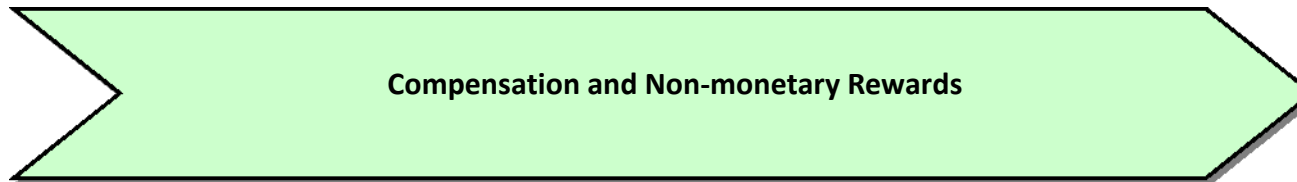
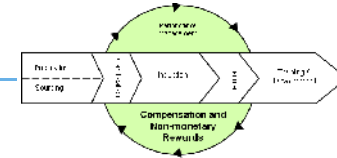
- Inconsistently done
- By supervisor
- Cumbersome process to release poor performers takes time away from supporting mediocre teachers to improve

- HR requests that evaluations be submitted centrally

- Completed evaluation document
- Sometimes conversation

- No differentiated pay
- No strategy for mediocre performers
- Pass on incompetence rather than pursuing dismissal
- Dismiss less than 1% of teaching force/year

Human Capital Management: Compensation and Non-monetary Rewards



Best HR Practice

Monetary

- Align financial incentives to district priorities
- Competency and responsibility based; allows for acceleration for high performers
- Differentiate pay for student achievement and other recognized metrics of teacher quality
- Differentiate pay for hard-to-staff schools and high needs areas
- Align salary growth in to workforce data (e.g. emphasize salary growth first 10 years in the profession to support recruitment and retention)
- Make career portable and create similar incentives for short- and long-term teachers by creating 403B retirement benefit
- Offer cafeteria style benefits that offers fixed amount for benefits and choice about how dollars are spent.

Non-monetary

- Recognition
- Freedom from mandates & opportunity to shape own work
- Career opportunities
- Great boss and colleagues
- Excellent working conditions (e.g. student support services, common planning time, reasonable student load)

Current Conditions

- Formula based on education and experience
- Financial rewards for participation in continuing education regardless of alignment to district priorities through step and lane structure
- Salary structure and pension reward longevity
- Only differentiation is for additional work

Human Capital System: SELF-ASSESSMENT

Review the eight elements of the human capital system. Rank order them to indicate which ones the district has addressed extensively and which ones have received little attention. Choose which components you want to explore further. You might do a *Quick Pick* and look at one you gave high marks to and one you gave low marks to. If you are undertaking a comprehensive strategy review, you will want to explore all of the elements.

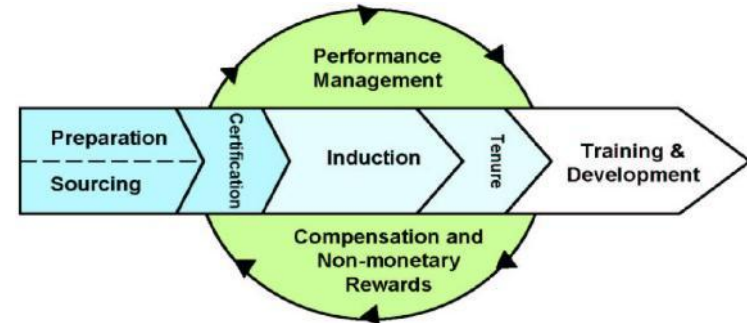
For each component you are considering, review the current conditions and best practices this framework identifies. Reflect on the work of your district in relation to these and answer the questions:

- To what extent does the district's work reflect best practices?
- What is the evidence that demonstrates this?
- What are the priorities moving forward and who needs to be involved?
- What additional evidence will be needed to judge whether these priority strategies are being executed and are leading to the desired outcomes?

Once you have completed your analysis of the specific components you have chosen, use that work to answer the following questions:

- What are the most pressing issues that surfaced from your analysis that have implications across components?
- What are the priorities moving forward and who needs to be involved?
- What additional evidence will be needed to judge whether these priority strategies are being executed and are leading to the desired outcomes?

See slides 13-4 for an example of how to complete the self assessment.



SELF-ASSESSMENT: Close Review of Components - EXAMPLE

Training and Development

1. Evidence that reflects “best practices”

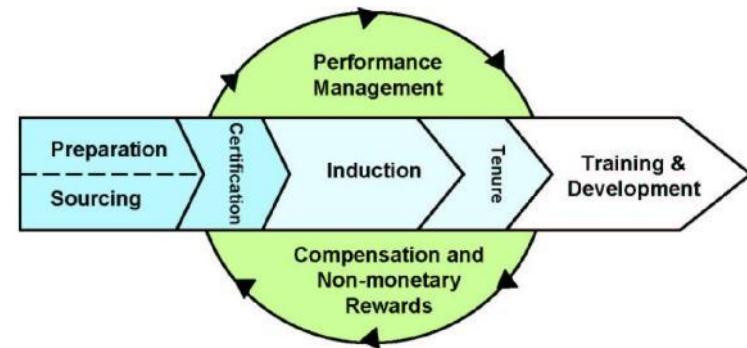
- Literacy coaches working in classrooms with teachers
- All teachers have common planning time which is used for collaborative planning, curriculum development and review of student work.
- Initiative to pay high-performing teachers bonus for working in low performing schools and mentoring new teachers in these schools.

2. Evidence that reflects improvement required to meet “best practices”

- Do not have clearly defined teaching standards
- No explicit, systematic strategy to identify high-potential employee some inconsistent efforts in this area.
- Teachers are not asked to identify their strengths and areas for development and to align their PD accordingly.
- Teachers earn salary increases for participation in PD regardless of its relevance to district priorities or demonstration of applying the learning to their classroom practice.

3. Priorities moving forward

- Establish teaching standards and a teacher self-assessment and PD planning process aligned to the competencies.
- Identify district PD priorities and make those and teacher self-identified areas for growth the only PD topics eligible for salary increases.



SELF-ASSESSMENT: Cross-Cutting Issues - EXAMPLE

What are the most pressing issues that surfaced from your analysis that have implications across elements?

- Compensation is not aligned to what matters most to student achievement e.g. quality of teaching and professional development in high-priority areas.
- There are no standards for teaching that guide preparation, sourcing, induction, training and development or performance management which makes the system incoherent.
- High-potential employees need to be identified early in their careers (as early as preparation stage) and then intentionally nurtured and groomed for critical roles. Training and development and compensation need to be aligned to this priority.

What are the priorities moving forward and who needs to be involved?

- Negotiate with the union priority area PD eligible for stipends and salary increases.
- Develop teaching standard and metrics to assess teaching quality, drawing on the expertise of best teachers in the district. Align teacher evaluation instrument to them.
- Identify top 10% of new teacher talent as part of induction program, partnering with principals and induction program staff. Counsel this group on leadership opportunities and provide leadership development support.

What evidence will we need to gather to assess if priorities are being addressed successfully and leading to desired outcomes?

- Classroom observations to assess teacher implementation of PD learning.
- Alignment of teacher evaluations to quality teaching metrics.
- Talent pool and hires for critical role.

