

POLICY BRIEF

Teacher Recruitment in California

Successful Strategies and Recommendations

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CCSESA

**California County Superintendents Educational
Services Association**

CALIFORNIA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS EDUCATIONAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION



The California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) provides the organizational mechanism for the 58 County Superintendents of Schools to design and implement statewide programs to identify and promote quality cost-effective educational practices and services, and provide support to school districts in the areas of student services, curriculum and instructional services, fiscal accountability and business services, personnel services, and technology and telecommunications.



CCSESA advocates on behalf of K-12 and early childhood education at state and federal levels, and in partnership with state agencies, develops and coordinates statewide training to implement new responsibilities of county superintendents to ensure consistent statewide application and standards.

County Superintendents operate intermediate service agencies providing direct and regional support to school districts, and serve as the primary implementation arm of the California Department of Education (CDE).



POLICY BRIEF

Teacher Recruitment in California – Successful Strategies and Recommendations

The strategies and recommendations contained in this policy brief are derived from research commissioned by the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (hereafter referred to as “CCSESA”) and conducted by James J. Brescia, Ed.D., and James L. Gentilucci, Ph.D., researchers at the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education and Veritas Research and Evaluation Group, respectively. This brief is intended to be read in tandem with CCSESA’s Research Brief entitled “Recruiting Teachers in California – An Analysis of Current Strategies.”

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Teacher Recruitment in California – *Successful Strategies and Recommendations*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Teacher recruitment and retention is not a new challenge for California’s K-12 schools. The teacher supply line has waxed and waned since the 1960s as a result of economic expansion-recession cycles, changes in workforce demographics, and fluctuations in the school-aged population.¹ However, because the current teacher shortage appears to be linked to enduring economic and demographic trends, we believe that today’s shortages portend more fundamental and lasting changes taking place among the state’s teacher workforce.

This report, commissioned by the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), summarizes effective recruitment strategies adopted by a diverse sample of local education agencies (LEAs)ⁱ that have demonstrated success in meeting workforce demands. Although the study recognizes the role of financial incentives in current recruitment practice, CCSESA understands that not all LEAs have the flexibility to adopt such incentives. The nine broad strategies highlighted in this report are low or no-cost and can be adapted, replicated, and scaled in LEAs throughout the state.

1

Utilize Administrators, School Leaders, and Teachers as Effective Recruiters

School leaders and administrators play a crucial role in successful recruitment practices. LEAs that utilize teachers and administrators at recruitment events and job fairs experience greater success connecting with and ultimately recruiting high-quality candidates. When LEAs empower teachers and administrators to act as “school ambassadors,” they gain access to a wider pool of candidates and candidates with greater and more diverse qualifications. Successful recruiters adopt policies that encourage and support staff participation in the recruitment process.

2

Foster Relationships with Local Universities and Credentialing Programs

LEAs that partner with universities and credentialing programs increase their access to high-quality candidates. Student teacher placement programs connect LEAs with a qualified pool of candidates and create opportunities for candidates to hone skills while learning more about a LEA’s culture and community. By hosting credentialing program classes on campus and encouraging experienced teachers to act as adjunct credentialing professors, LEAs can connect with future teachers and encourage strong candidates to apply for a permanent position upon completion of the program.

ⁱ Throughout this report, K-12 districts and county offices of education are collectively referred to as local education agencies or “LEAs.”

③

Engage in Smart and Strategic Marketing and Hiring

Crafting a marketing campaign that conveys a LEA's desirable features and workplace culture is an important part of any teacher recruitment campaign. LEAs with well-defined and culture-focused marketing campaigns attract candidates that are a better "fit" with the school and community. To ensure that marketing reaches the most qualified candidates, successful recruiters attend regional job fairs and subject-matter specific conferences and utilize multiple strategic communication forums including university job boards, social media, and press events.

④

Offer High-Quality Supports for New and Existing Teachers

Successful recruiters provide new and veteran teachers with robust professional, academic, and emotional support. LEAs that offer in-house, cost-free induction experience greater success attracting new teachers and those that provide strong professional development and professional learning communities are more attractive to veteran recruits. Simultaneously, LEAs that invest in low-cost and no-cost community building efforts see increases in employee job satisfaction. Robust professional and personal supports are also highly effective retention strategies which reduce teacher turnover and decrease annual recruitment needs.

⑤

Invest in Local Recruitment Efforts

Local recruitment efforts take many forms and are a smart way to identify, inspire, and attract potential teaching candidates. LEAs that target invested but often overlooked audiences, like substitutes, classified employees, and students' family members, often experience greater success filling hard-to-staff positions. Although local recruitment efforts are generally a long-term, not short-term, recruitment tool that may require interagency agreements and financial investments, they are a highly successful strategy for recruiting dedicated educators with a passion for teaching.

⑥

Respond to Recruiting Roadblocks with Flexibility and Creativity

Even the most desirable LEAs encounter recruiting roadblocks. Successful recruiters face these roadblocks head-on and devise creative responses to mitigate their impact. Urban LEAs frequently encounter recruitment barriers related to cost-of-living, while rural LEAs face significant roadblocks related to geographic isolation, a lack of local credentialing programs, and inflexible credentialing policies. Many rural and urban LEAs have adopted creative stop-gap measures to address these roadblocks, but additional tools and flexibility from the state are needed to help LEAs overcome barriers related to geography and credentialing.

7

**Take a Collaborative,
Rather than Competi-
tive, Approach to
Recruitment**

LEAs that take a collaborative approach to recruitment are more efficient, more effective, and avoid many of the consequences of the teacher shortage. By combining resources, LEAs can streamline the application and screening process, create stronger marketing campaigns that reach a larger audience, and attract more candidates at recruitment events. By sharing information with regional networks, LEAs help each other identify qualified candidates and make better informed hiring decisions. Collaboration with geographically and culturally similar LEAs is a highly effective recruitment tool employed by successful recruiters.

8

**Use Data and
Strategize Early**

Inability to meet recruitment goals is often related to the failure to accurately predict staffing needs. By collecting data on the existing teacher workforce and community demographics, LEAs can project, and develop a plan to meet, their recruitment goals years in advance. Data collection also helps recruiters engage in early strategic planning to ensure that staff is prepared to meet unique or changing student needs. Successful recruiters use data to forecast changing student characteristics, like an increase in identification of students with autism, and respond with strategic financial investments and professional training.

9

**Make Efforts to
Improve the
Recruitment Process
and Experience**

The application and interview process are often a candidate's "first impression" of a LEA. LEAs that focus on creating a positive "customer service experience" for candidates have an advantage when recruiting for hard-to-staff positions. These LEAs approach recruitment from a holistic perspective by including candidates' family in the process, offering help with relocation, and helping employees integrate into new communities and careers. By creating a streamlined and integrated application and onboarding process, successful recruiters reduce confusion and stress for applicants and administrators alike.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEAS

Adopt a “talent acquisition” mindset focused on retention. Hire teachers that are a “good fit” and invest in them.

Collaborate with other LEAs to combine resources and create economies of scale for the purpose of building stronger marketing campaigns, attracting satellite credentialing pathways, and sharing information about strong teacher candidates.



Implement 21st century tools that broaden recruitment reach (e.g. social media) and streamline and simplify the recruitment process.

Develop a strategic personnel plan using data systems to project staffing needs.

Adopt administrative policies that encourage staff participation in the recruitment process and build LEA community.



Revisit credentialing policies that make it unnecessarily difficult to enter the teaching field or transfer credentials from another state.

Invest in LCFF to ensure that LEAs have the resources to provide high-quality professional development and support to new and existing teachers.

Convene a stakeholder group to examine the shortage of critical support staff, such as speech-language pathologists and bus drivers, and reevaluate the competencies and requirements for these positions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE POLICY MAKERS

Continue to invest in the CalEd Grant Initiative for teacher recruitment and school principal support. Ensure that future state investments addressing the teacher shortage are flexible so that LEAs can use funds to tackle unique barriers to recruitment.

Encourage institutions of higher learning to establish satellite campuses in partnership with LEAs in rural and remote regions.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Although a significant amount of research has been recently dedicated to highlighting California's current teacher shortage, nearly all the existing literature is from the perspective of researchers, policymakers, and government officials—those who are external observers of the K-12 educational system.

This policy brief, commissioned by the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), follows an alternative line of investigation. To gather data on the teacher shortage and local recruitment strategies employed throughout the state, researchers elicited the input of the superintendents, human resource directors, and site principals who interact with the teacher shortage directly at the “street level.”² In compiling and analyzing responses, the report seeks to provide recommendations for actionable methods that can be readily implemented by K-12 practitioners within their unique service areas.ⁱⁱ

STUDY SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

Researchers engaged in purposeful sampling to identify 21 survey participants from 10 different counties. Participants were selected based upon two criteria: (1) whether the local education agency (LEA) had filled at least 90

percent of their teaching vacancies for the past two years; and (2) whether, as a whole, the study sample demonstrated diversity in geography, demography, and financial need. Four LEA characteristics were considered to measure diversity: (1) geographic locale typeⁱⁱⁱ; (2) number of students enrolled; (3) participation in the Free and Reduced Priced Meal Program (FRPM)^{iv}; and (4) number of English Language Learners (ELL) enrolled.

To gather data, researchers utilized an ethnographic approach known as open-ended interviewing³ to encourage recruitment personnel to describe in their own words the recruitment strategies they use and how well those strategies are working in their local environments. Data was collected during face-to-face and phone-conference interviews with staff (selected by the LEA participants) who could best provide insight into local recruiting practices. Interviews were conducted in individual or small-group format and most were 30-45 minutes in duration.^v

(ii) Survey data was collected using a “bottom-up” approach rooted in Grounded Theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and refined by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

(iii) The National Center for Education Statistics categorizes regions into four geographic locale types—city, suburban, town, and rural.

(iv) Participation in FRPM was used as the measurement of student financial need within LEAs surveyed.

(v) A complete description of the study sample and methodology can be found in the Veritas Research Brief entitled “Recruiting Teachers in California – An Analysis of Effective Strategies.”

SECTION 2

SURVEY RESULTS

Interviewees in the sample group shared significant information about the tools and strategies they utilized to successfully meet at least 90% of recruitment goals before the beginning of the school year. Although there was considerable variation among survey participants, the strategies described in this report were obtained from a sample of LEAs that represent a broad cross section of California. Thus, there is reason to believe that the majority of strategies can be adapted, replicated, and scaled in LEAs throughout the state.

Two overarching themes were common among survey participants: (1) the teacher shortage is more nuanced than generally understood and is experienced differently by

subject-matter, grade, and geographic location; and (2) financial incentives play an important and often difficult to overcome, role in recruitment.

THE TEACHER SHORTAGE IS NUANCED

Although fewer teaching candidates are entering the field, LEAs did not report shortages in all grades and subjects. Only 38% of survey participants experienced difficulty hiring elementary school teachers (with the exception of special education teachers), while 86% of participants experienced difficulty hiring single subject high school teachers. At the secondary level, the most acute shortages were reported in special education, life and physical sciences, and mathematics. (See Figure 1.) LEAs also reported considerable difficulty hiring drama and music teachers, foreign language teachers, juvenile court school teachers, speech-language pathologists, substitutes, and part-time positions.

TEACHER SHORTAGE IN PARTICIPATING LEAS BY SUBJECT AREA

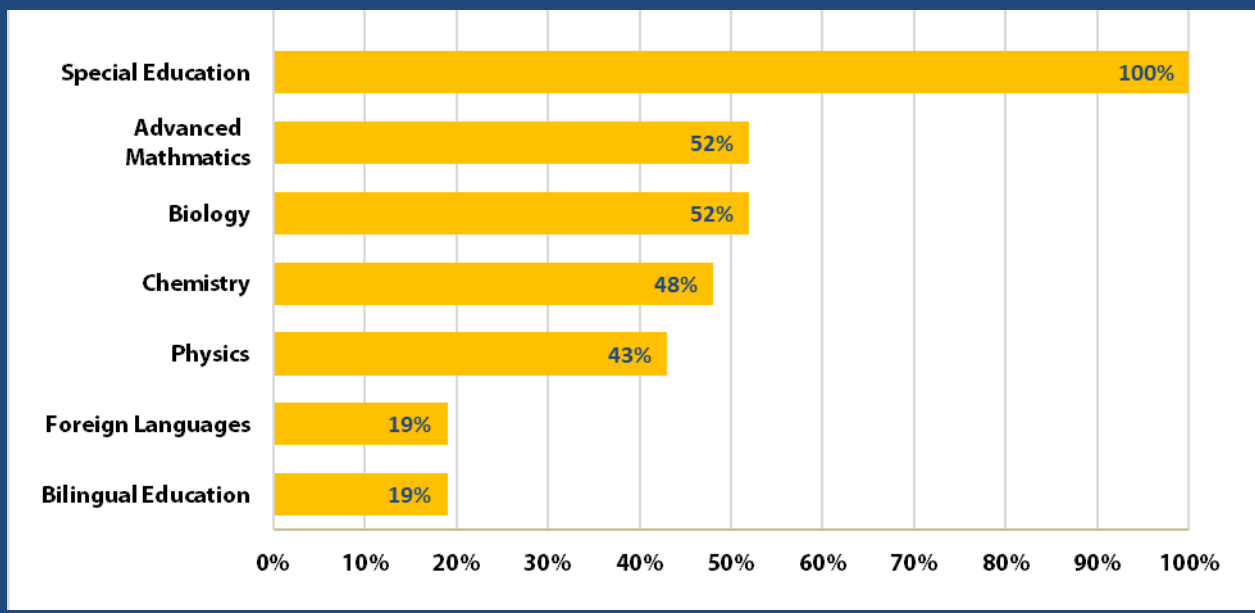


Figure 1. Percent of districts in the study sample (N = 21) that reported recruiting challenges in particular subject areas. Note: In this chart, foreign languages are those other than Spanish.

Interviews also revealed that LEAs had trouble recruiting other specialized staff. Survey participants reported acute shortages in bus drivers, paraprofessionals, bilingual office staff, preschool teachers, instructional aides, speech-language pathologists, and occupational and physical therapists.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES ARE PERSUASIVE, BUT NOT NECESSARILY CONTROLLING

The second overarching theme reported by all LEAs was the role that financial competition plays in recruitment. While larger LEAs and those with more robust budgets were insulated from many effects of the shortage, all LEAs acknowledged that signing bonuses, stipends, and higher salary schedules impacted recruitment. Survey participants that could offer these financial incentives experienced little difficulty filling even hard-to-staff positions, while those that could not afford incentives felt the teacher shortage more acutely.

LEAs that could not implement traditional financial incentives like signing bonuses, nevertheless utilized targeted compensation strategies to help them compete in the current environment. LEAs searching for experienced candidates offered a higher maximum salary, earlier vesting of retirement benefits, and either no-cap or a high-cap on service credits. Those with shortages in a particular subject-matter negotiated with the local union to offer differential compensation for hard-to-staff positions. When recruiting new graduates with preliminary credentials, survey participants recruited candidates by providing a free, in-house induction program. This is discussed in greater detail later.

However, LEAs acknowledged that these financial incentives alone were generally not sufficient to recruit and retain a stable and

high-quality teacher workforce. (Interestingly, data did not appear to indicate any correlation between financial incentives and retention rates, suggesting that while bonuses and higher starting salaries attract candidates, they do not necessarily increase workforce stability.) Furthermore, LEAs participants noted that state laws and budgets and locally negotiated salaries and benefits sometimes limited their ability to offer substantial financial incentives.

EFFECTIVE NO-COST AND LOW-COST RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

The LEAs in this study adopted a number of non-fiscal recruitment strategies which researchers categorized into nine broad categories. For purposes of illustration, Table 1 is a compendium of the effective no-cost and very low-cost recruitment strategies that emerged from this study and which can be modified and scaled as appropriate. To provide additional clarity, each strategy is discussed in detail below.

- **Effective Recruiters Recognize that Administrators And Teachers are Their Most Effective “Salespeople.”**

Nearly all the LEAs surveyed indicated that school leaders and administrators play a crucial role in the recruitment process. Survey participants frequently suggested that superintendents, assistant superintendents, human resource specialists, and principals, are an LEA's best “salespeople.” As one interviewee explained:

I think marketing begins with the right person [in charge]. You have to have a person with passion and conviction for kids, and [he or she] has to be able to sell that quality about the district when potential teachers are recruited. [Your recruiter] has to let them know they're entering one of the best professions in the world, and that they are going to have a huge impact by working in your district.

Though extent of staff involvement differed by LEA, almost all survey participants stated that school leaders and administrators were responsible for successful recruiting efforts at job fairs. More than half of survey participants also spoke to the importance of the informal recruiting that many school leaders and administrators regularly engaged in. This included high profile activities, including sitting on an advisory board at a local university or acting as an adjunct professor for a local credentialing program, and lower profile activities, such as developing relationships with administrators of local credentialing programs, attending university events, and networking in the community. At least one LEA stated that school leaders were such an important resource that it began providing recruitment training for its principals and other administrators.

LEAs who reported having some of the greatest recruiting successes cited the important role that principals played in helping to develop and market a LEA's culture and vision to prospective candidates. These LEAs stated that a principal's ability to articulate a LEA's culture was valuable not just for recruiting candidates, but also for predicting whether a candidate would be "good fit" for a particular school site.

Several LEAs also spoke to the significant value that teachers added to the recruitment process. While only one LEA regularly brought teachers to job fairs, several LEAs scheduled campus tours and invited candidates to speak to teachers, curriculum support providers, and mentor teachers. Other LEAs asked teachers to act as school ambassadors to local universities and credentialing programs or to spread the word about LEA openings to friends and family. One such LEA asserted:

[We] will tell a potential candidate "You can visit the school, meet some of our teachers, spend some time with us, and ask questions"... Our teachers are some of our strongest advocates because they share what is going on in the district. They share the ins and outs.

- **Effective Recruiters Build Partnerships with Local Universities, Credentialing Programs, and Community Organizations.**

Nearly all the participants surveyed cited partnerships with local universities and credentialing programs as one of their most effective recruitment strategies. Most LEAs created unofficial relationships with local universities through the efforts of their administrators and school leaders, as discussed above. In addition, more than half of the LEAs surveyed established official partnerships with

one or more universities, which included activities such as posting available positions on the university's online job portal, conducting interviews and attending recruiting events at the university, enlisting teachers to speak at conferences and credentialing programs, and hosting classes for credential candidates on the LEA's campus. Of all the partnership activities that LEA's pursued, student teacher placements were regularly cited as the most valuable. One administrator described the success his LEA had experienced recruiting student teachers:

[We work] directly with the supervisors at the universities, trying to get as many student teachers placed...as we possibly can. We believe that's a great feeder program and we've had a lot of success with...getting folks placed here, being able to look closely at their abilities and possibly bringing them in. [It's] kind of like a four-month interview. You get a student teacher into an elementary or secondary classroom and you really know what you're getting.

LEAs who experienced the greatest advantages from university partnerships were generally located in urban and suburban areas near multiple institutions of higher learning; however, LEAs in rural regions also cited benefits from partnerships with universities. Of the three LEAs that had not established a partnership with a local university, all were located in remote, rural areas and cited distance as the primary reason for being unable to build a relationship with a local institution. Nevertheless, two of these LEAs managed to

find other ways to collaborate with institutions of higher learning – one LEA established relationships with administrators at several out-of-state universities and received regular candidate referrals, while another developed a language immersion program with an international university.

- **Effective Recruiters Engage in Smart and Strategic Marketing and Hiring.**

Study participants frequently mentioned that limited time and budgets restricted their recruitment reach. To maximize resources, successful LEA recruiters engaged in strategic marketing and hiring.

Most LEAs began this process by developing a strategic vision and crafting a messaging campaign focused on the LEA's desirable features and workplace culture. As a result, every effective recruiter in the study sample was able to easily articulate the characteristics that made it attractive to potential hires. LEAs in urban and southern cities cited coastal weather and proximity to popular tourist attractions; LEAs in towns spoke to the advantage of raising a family in a small, tight-knit community; suburban LEAs highlighted high rates of parent engagement and strong academic performance; rural LEAs mentioned year-round access to state and national parks and a low cost of living. When choosing between two LEAs with similar salary schedules, culture and vision were often important factors to candidates. As one recruiter explained:

We cannot pay like the high school or unified districts, but we do have a great culture. We are located in a small town by a big city, and everyone knows everyone else, and it's a pretty cool place. But there are people who are either from a culture like ours or else have heard about how great it is. They stay and listen when we talk with them at job fairs, and they're the ones we have a chance with.

In addition to promoting an LEA's assets, survey participants stated that a well-defined and culture-focused marketing campaign helped to attract candidates who were more likely to demonstrate "fit" with their organizations. These observations align with research demonstrating the positive impact that organizational culture has on employee

job satisfaction and retention.⁴ Conversely, candidates that were not a good "fit" for the available position or the LEA's culture were better able to self-select out early in the hiring process if they perceived their aptitude or attitude were not a match with the LEA.

Once LEAs had crafted a marketing campaign, they considered how to effectively disseminate their message to candidates. All survey participants utilized generic and broad-channel communication methods (e.g., posting openings on EDJOIN, university bulletin boards, or on district web sites), and all but one LEA regularly attended local job fairs and networking events. (See Figure 2.)

In addition, many LEAs utilized targeted advertising channels. Three innovative LEAs utilized social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) and reported success in attracting new graduates and young

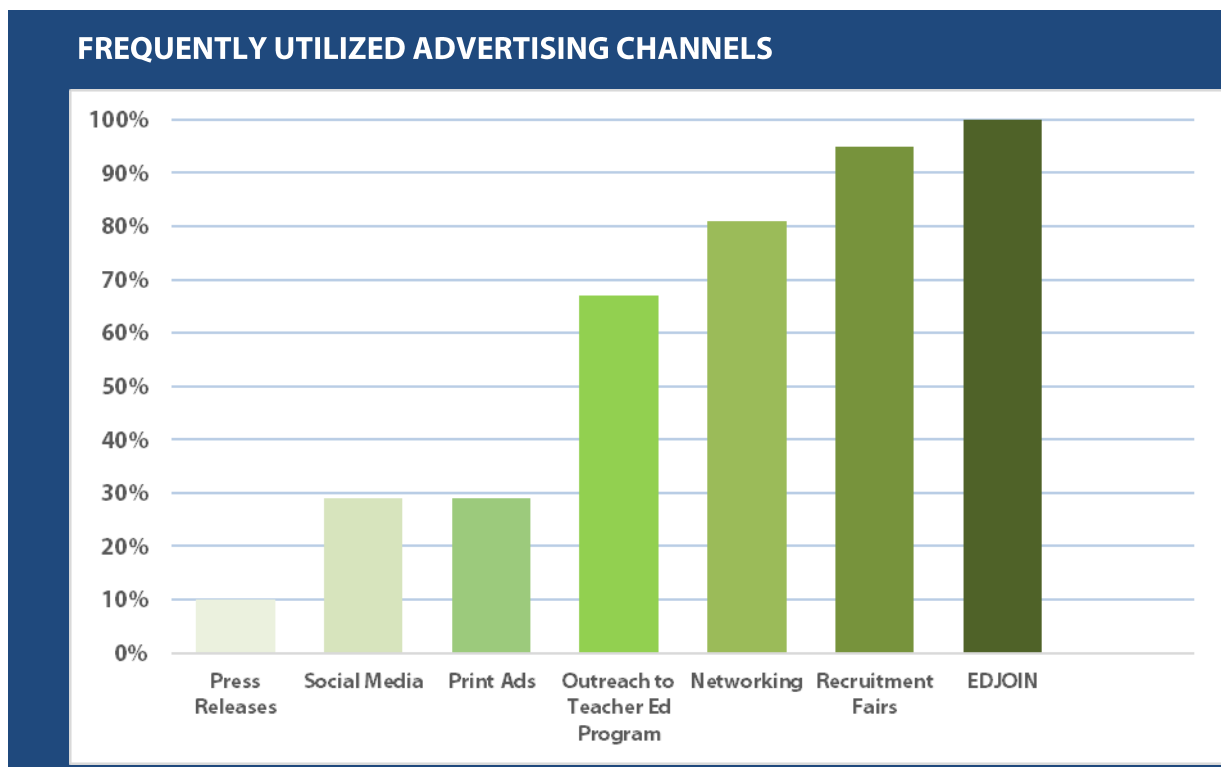


Figure 2. The advertising channels utilized by districts in the study

candidates. Another media savvy LEA conducted a press conference and drummed up publicity by inviting local news stations to campus to cover their annual hiring announcement. When recruiting for hard-to-staff positions, LEAs who seemed to experience the greatest success used narrow-channel communication methods such as personalized texts, phone calls, or letters of invitation to encourage specific individuals to apply for current or anticipated job openings. One superintendent described how he used targeted recruiting to fill hard-to-hire positions in his district:

I decided that I was going to go where the science and math teachers are. So I went to the California Mathematics Council conference, and there was not another superintendent there at all. There were a lot of vendors for gadgets and gizmos... but I was the only one there [looking for teachers]. And so I was able to connect with those who had specific skills that we need. When I said things like, "Hey, we will take all your years of service," or, "Hey, we have a much better location than you have," they were interested.

- **Effective Recruiters Provide High-Quality Support for New and Existing Teachers.**

All of the LEAs surveyed spoke to the importance of providing new and/or existing teachers with professional support. These supports differed by LEA, but often included services such as induction^{vi}, coaching and mentoring, resource specialists for core subjects, high-quality professional development, in-service time to collaborate by subject or grade, access to strong professional learning communities (PLCs), and assistance obtaining a clear credential.

According to the LEAs surveyed, desirable candidates asked about an LEA's professional supports so often that many began incorporating this information into their marketing "pitch." While professional development opportunities and PLCs resonated most with veteran teachers, induction was most important for new graduates and those with preliminary credentials. Two factors in particular mattered to novice candidates: (1) whether the LEA paid for teacher induction, and (2) whether the LEA had an in-house induction program. Several LEAs stated that, even when competitors offered a higher starting salary or a signing bonus, new teachers could be swayed if the LEA offered a free, in-house induction program. Thus, it should come as no surprise that 100% of the successful LEA recruiters in this study sample reported that they covered all or part of teacher induction costs and nearly half had an in-house induction program.

In addition to professional supports, survey participants also shared their efforts to support new and existing teachers by building a positive, team-oriented workplace culture. While nearly all LEAs focused on positive messaging to candidates and employees, a handful of LEAs also made concerted efforts to support employees holistically through initiatives that focused on teachers' mental,

(vi) Induction is the support and guidance provided to novice teachers and school administrators in the early stages of their careers. Induction encompasses orientation to the workplace, socialization, mentoring, and guidance through beginning teacher practice.

physical, and/or emotional wellbeing. Examples of these initiatives included hosting social events, like annual team-building opportunities and staff luncheons, and offering employee “perks” such as gym memberships, discount tickets to local attractions, health-oriented services like mobile screenings and blood drives, on-site fitness classes, and retirement workshops. LEAs reported that these efforts improved workplace culture and were generally low or no-cost. An administrator at small LEA explained how they had created a culture focused on employee wellness:

[We have] Pilates at two different sites and yoga is at one. And it's a minimal cost, it's not a lot, but it's a wellness thing. Wellness is really important. So we do mobile health screenings [for teachers and their families], Pilates, yoga – it gets people thinking healthy... [and] it shows that the district cares about their employees. And we do, we truly care a lot.

While teacher recruitment strategies were the focus of this study, professional and personal supports were also cited as highly effective retention strategies by several LEAs who drew parallels between retention and recruitment efforts. One LEA referred to the relationship between recruitment and retention as the leaky bucket theory– the fewer teachers a LEA retains, the more it has to recruit. Thus, efforts to increase retention were also an effective recruitment strategy. An administrator explained:

I think retention is really important too because...you're going to constantly be recruiting unless you really are there to support your teachers. A lot of times people don't look at [retention] in recruiting but I do. I think it's really, really important to provide those things that aren't the normal thing, the Dodger night, the health screening. Different things that [build community].

- **Effective Recruiters Invest in Local Recruitment Efforts.**

Nearly every LEA in the study sample indicated that the ability to recruit from its local community had contributed to its success; however, each LEA approached local recruitment differently.

A handful of successful LEAs began recruiting community members as early as high school. These LEAs established career pathway programs in teaching and/or student/teacher mentoring programs that created an opportunity for students to realize and explore their passion for teaching and learning. To encourage high school students to pursue a teaching credential after graduation, several LEAs offered incentives including a guaranteed slot at a local university and/or credentialing program, scholarships for promising future teachers, and hiring policies that provided for preferential consideration of former students.

Other LEAs concentrated on growing the teacher pipeline by engaging community members who demonstrated subject matter expertise and/or skill working with children. One LEA hosted workshops that highlighted the intrinsic rewards of teaching and provided attendees with practical information about how to become a teacher. Another LEA, after realizing that students' families were an invested audience, began hosting recruiting events specifically for parents and guardians. Several LEAs also described efforts to recruit candidates from other career fields; however, not all experienced long-term success with this strategy. One administrator described the limitation he had experienced recruiting career-changers:

We haven't actually had a lot of success [in recruiting from other careers]... [I]t's not that they didn't know the subject, because of course they did. [It was] severe classroom management issues... [W]e've hired people who were in their 50s and they were amazing, but they had this passion for teaching kids, and that's all the difference. A lot of the people that we're getting who were moving over from other fields, they don't have that passion for teaching the kids. They're just passionate about their subject or they're passionate because they need a career.

To fill hard-to-staff positions, LEAs often looked inward, focusing on current teachers and support staff. Several of the LEAs surveyed

were chosen to participate in the first round of the Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program ^{vii} and expected to graduate between 4 and 45 new teaching candidates in the next few years. Participants cited a number of benefits to recruiting internally – administrators already knew the employee was a “good fit,” that he/she was committed to the LEA, and that he/she worked well with the age group. A few LEAs that did not receive the classified grant also sought to fill hard-to-staff positions from within; however, without supplementary funding these efforts were generally limited and situational. Two LEAs described recruiting an existing teacher that was willing to earn an additional credential in a hard-to-hire subject area. In exchange, the LEA agreed to help pay-off the cost of the second credential for each additional year that the teacher worked for the LEA.

Some LEAs focused recruitment efforts on non-permanent teachers who had demonstrated aptitude in the classroom. To encourage substitutes to work exclusively for a particular LEA, these LEAs offered loyalty bonuses, an increased compensation schedule, and inclusion in professional development opportunities. To incentivize temporary and substitute teachers to pursue a clear credential, administrators spoke to candidates about the increase in salary and benefits and offered candidates a full-time contract upon completion of a credentialing program.

- **Effective Recruiters are Flexible and Creative When Roadblocks Arise.**

(vii) The Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program was established in the 2016/17 State Budget Act and received a second round of funding in the 2017/18 State Budget Act.

Although all study participants were successful recruiters, LEAs often experienced roadblocks and limitations that required creative problem-solving skills. Interviews revealed that, rather than ignoring or trying to conceal the characteristics that limited their desirability, effective recruiters faced these issues head on. Three specific roadblocks were most commonly highlighted by participants: (1) cost of housing, (2) “brain drain” in rural communities, and (3) credentialing difficulties.

13 of the 21 survey participants were located in regions where housing costs were a recruitment factor. To address this roadblock, LEAs first acknowledged that candidates may overlook their recruitment efforts because of the perception that housing in the region is unaffordable, and then began working with local government agencies on long-term strategies to create housing options for teachers and other public service professionals. LEAs invited local realtors to be part of their recruitment efforts, connected new hires with real estate agents, and shared information on affordable rental options within the LEA’s boundaries. According to a superintendent whose district was located in a high-cost area:

A huge part of recruiting is that I try to connect them with real estate agents, just so the [recruiting pitch] is not all lip service. They can actually hear from people in our area who say, “Yeah, we do have rentals for this amount. We do have homes selling in this price range.”

On the opposite end of the spectrum, about 25 percent of survey participants were

located in rural and small towns that experienced difficulties related to geographic isolation. These LEAs cited two key roadblocks to recruiting in rural California: (1) limited access to credentialing pathways for interested candidates; and (2) the younger generation’s decision not to return home to rural communities after college. To address the former, LEAs collaborated with universities to establish satellite programs, joined with other LEAs in the region to create a cohort large enough to sustain a satellite campus, integrated remote learning into credentialing pathways, and created high-quality internship programs. To address the decline in returning college graduates, LEAs refocused their recruitment efforts on marketing to candidates who appreciated a rural lifestyle. LEAs recruited parents and classified employees already living in the community, as well as out-of-state candidates from geographically similar regions. One superintendent described how he focused on recruiting candidates that were a “good fit”:

[W]e're trying to [recruit from similar regions]. We're an agricultural area, we don't have a lot of concrete, we have a lot of dirt and a low population. It's a rural area and those are the neighborhoods that we try to recruit from – people who enjoy our lifestyle. When they reach us it's like they're home – except it doesn't snow.

Unfortunately, solutions to credentialing difficulties were not as easy to come by. Many LEAs shared their frustrations with various credentialing policies and described feeling hamstrung by laws and regulations that make it

difficult to transition teachers to a clear credential. Specifically, participants expressed the desire for additional flexibility in credentialing reciprocity, administrative requirements for completion of non-traditional pathways, re-hiring of retirees, and requirements for specialists like speech-language pathologists. Credentialing complications were a particular problem for rural LEAs that felt forced to rely on out-of-state candidates to maintain a steady teaching force.

- **Effective Recruiters Make Efforts to Take a Collaborative, Rather than Competitive, Approach to Recruitment.**

Every LEA surveyed spoke to the competitiveness of the current recruiting environment and recalled their attempts to obtain an advantage over other LEAs recruiting for hard-to-staff positions. Nevertheless, most participants collaborated formally or informally with other LEAs at a district or countywide level. Formal collaboration efforts were generally lead by the county office of education and included countywide job fairs, community information sessions, and LEA-wide marketing campaigns. In addition, many LEAs adopted a centralized hiring practice to simplify the process for candidates and eliminate competition between schools in the same region. This process varied by LEA, but commonly included one or more of the following characteristics: (1) a single portal/entry point for applicants, coordinated by the district or the county office of education; (2) a streamlined screening process whereby the

district or county office of education verified credentials, ran background checks, and called references; (3) a single interview team comprised of superintendents and/or principals and teachers from each district or school site; and (4) a centralized decision-making process whereby chosen candidates were assigned to a school site based on the overall needs of the entire district or county.

Many administrators also engaged in informal information and resource sharing through associations, PLCs, and other regional networks. When an LEA interviewed two excellent candidates but only had one position to fill, or when an LEA had to lay-off a high-quality new teacher because of seniority, administrators would utilize these informal networks to notify other LEAs that a qualified candidate was available. One LEA created a districtwide “hotlist” to help facilitate the placement of qualified candidates:

[I]n the springtime we start creating what we call a hotlist... [W]e identify people who we consider to be really good candidates and we collect that information on a common shared document... Let's say you're a principal at one school and you're interviewing for a position, you have one position but you end up with two candidates that are so equally great that you could have chosen either one but maybe that particular one you chose resonated with the grade level team, it was just a better fit, but wow if you had had two openings you would have hired that second teacher. So then that principal reaches out and says I've got one for the hotlist so we put them up on the shared drive.

- **Effective Recruiters Use Data and Strategize Early.**

Most LEAs in the study sample discussed recent efforts to advance or alter traditional hiring timelines. Those that were able to implement early recruiting policies asserted that doing so helped the LEA recruit more overall applicants, more qualified applicants, and applicants that were a better “fit.” A handful of LEAs also reported a positive correlation between early recruitment and high annual reelection rates. These LEAs shared that being a “late hire” (usually just before the school year commenced) was a common attribute among teachers that were ultimately non-elected.

Other LEAs implemented a rolling recruitment process whereby administrators accepted and reviewed applications year-round rather than waiting for “batch hiring” in the

spring. LEAs stated that rolling recruitment helped to fill unforeseen mid-year vacancies and improved recruitment of early and highly-qualified graduates.

One common attribute of the LEAs surveyed was early strategic planning and use of data to predict staffing needs. (See Figure 3.) Many tracked the employment status of their current workforce to estimate future hiring needs by using formal and informal communication channels to glean information about possible retirements, non-reelects, leaves, and other attrition. These data were entered into a tracking matrix, and anticipated needs were then built into budget projections. A human resource specialist from a large urban district described how this process works in her district:

We do a hiring matrix districtwide, specific to each school site, and then even more specific to each credentialed area. It starts with an [employee] inventory of what each site currently has—what our current staffing is at those sites and what we think the openings might be, like teachers out on leaves of absence and teachers who have submitted a retirement notice. We then take into account teachers whose status is temporary, those who have year-to-year contracts. Finally, we add enrollment projections to determine how many positions we may have open at each site..... And in areas that we traditionally know are hard to fill, we try to be proactive. When we interview, we accelerate the [hiring] process because the faster we can offer a contract, the less likely they are to go to another district.

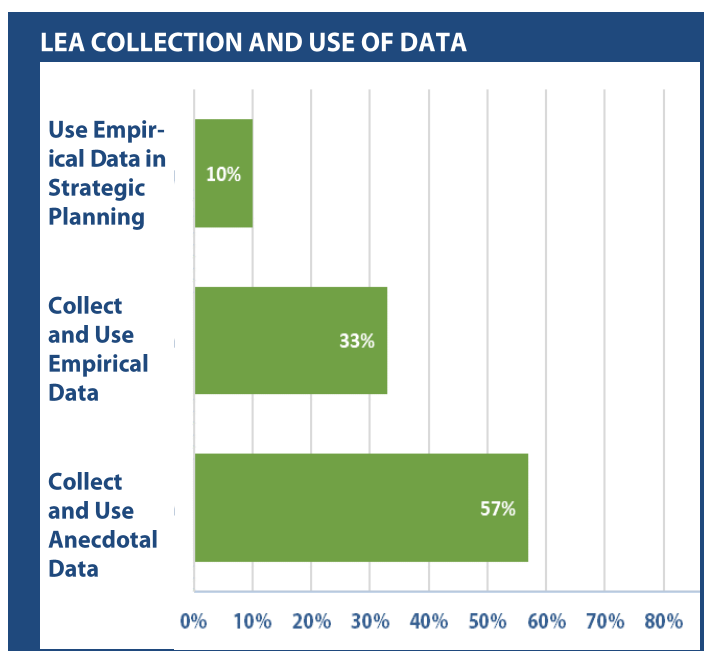


Figure 3. Data used to determine the effectiveness of recruiting strategies are mostly anecdotal among sample districts.

A few LEAs also gathered demographic data to predict enrollment and student need. Using tracking software, these LEAs projected future staffing requirements based on factors such as regional birth rates, kindergarten enrollment, local housing costs and new developments, economic downturns, teacher to student ratios, current teacher age and average retirement age, and identified special education needs of the 0 to 5 population.

Despite successfully using data to predict staffing needs, most participants still acknowledged data deficiencies in their recruitment process. Only three LEAs conducted exit surveys/interviews to assess why teachers chose to leave the LEA, and only one asked candidates to provide feedback on their recruitment experience, including how the LEA had connected with the candidate (e.g. at a job fair or networking event, through collaboration with a university or credential program, etc). This was an area where even successful recruiters expressed the desire to improve. In the words of one county superintendent:

[Data collection] is where we're not doing a good job, in my opinion. We're not tracking the number of individuals who participated in the recruitment fairs. We're not tracking to see how many of those were actually hired, for example. We could also do a better job of tracking the number of individuals who are actually going into teaching and then staying in teaching, you know, being successful in teaching. We're not tracking any of that....We definitely need to improve.

- Effective Recruiters Make Efforts to Improve the Recruitment Process and Experience.**

When discussing the recruitment process, two themes emerged among interviewees: 1) LEAs made efforts to simplify and improve the application and interview process; and 2) LEAs sought to ensure candidates had a positive “customer experience.”

To simplify the application and onboarding process, LEAs created a single district or countywide portal/entry point for applicants, assigned candidates a specific staff contact for questions related to applications and onboarding, and adopted a paperless process that allowed candidates to monitor their status. To improve interviews and candidate screening, LEAs developed interview questions designed to reveal a candidate’s aptitude for teaching and classroom management, included demo lessons as part of the interview process, and assembled interview teams with diverse perspectives including parents, students, union representatives, school leadership, and teachers of the same grade.

Several LEAs also focused on improving candidates’ experience through the interview and hiring process. LEAs allowed administrators to conduct on-site interviews at job fairs and make same-day offers if a candidate was highly-qualified. Administrators at several LEAs emphasized post-interview communication with candidates, even those they did not hire. One rural LEA with a particularly strong “customer service” focus provided training and adopted policies to ensure candidates received a hands-on experience:

We've done more training of all of our employees [so they know] what the process is [and] so steps aren't skipped. And I have a twenty-four-hour policy that phone calls have to be returned within twenty-four hours. I get very upset if I find out that somebody did not have a phone call returned. And I don't let calls roll to voicemail for my employees. Any of them. So we have live people answering our phones. We get people to where they need to go. We don't ever want to leave people that are applying for jobs without information. That's very important to me.

LEAs participants also demonstrated a flexibility and willingness to accommodate highly-qualified candidates filling hard-to-staff positions. In addition to connecting new hires with housing resources, LEAs described how they had gone above and beyond to help attract the best teachers. Staff at one LEA helped match area transplants with health care providers, while another provided a stipend to help a new hire cover moving costs. One LEA even offered a trailing spouse a classified position with the LEA. This focus on candidate experience appeared to be highly valued by candidates and was a trait shared by many of the successful recruiters interviewed for this survey.



Table 1 — Compendium of Successful Recruitment Strategies

Utilize Administrators, School Leaders, and Teachers as Effective Recruiters

- Engage administrators, school leaders, and teachers in the recruitment process. Provide recruitment training if necessary. Bring your best “salespeople” to job fairs.
- Communicate your hiring needs to your internal staff. Most employees are not aware of the recruitment needs of their districts.
- Involve the whole workforce in recruitment—ask everyone to be an ambassador and invite them to help with recruiting.
- Encourage and/or incentivize administrators and school leaders to serve on the board of the local university or credentialing program. This often gives LEAs early access to the best candidates.
- Encourage lead teachers to present at conferences or act as guest lecturers in a preservice teacher program. Use this position for outreach to potential candidates.
- Provide candidates with an opportunity to speak with the LEA’s teachers and administrators. A current teacher’s positive experience with an LEA can be the best recruitment tool.



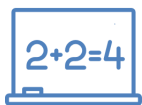
Foster Relationships with Local Universities, Credentialing Programs, and Community Organizations

- Develop relationships with universities that have teacher preparation programs, and reach out to them directly with your hiring needs.
- Encourage student teacher placements at your LEA. Cultivate a relationship with student teachers and, if they are a good fit, encourage them to apply at the end of their program.
- Invite university faculty to teach a course at your district site. Recruit promising students from the class.
- Ask for invitations to meetings of teacher preparation faculty to share information about your district’s staffing needs.
- Visit teacher preparation classes and speak with students.
- To help with hiring diversity, cultivate relationships with community organizations. Speak with organization members and provide information about becoming a teacher and enrolling in a credentialing program.
- If distance is a limitation, work with the nearest university that has a credentialing program to establish a satellite program. Collaborate with other LEAs in the region to create a cohort that is large enough to sustain the satellite program.



Engage in Smart and Strategic Marketing and Hiring

- Develop and articulate your LEA's culture and vision. Create a LEA-wide strategic vision for recruiting.
- Highlight the desirable features of your LEA—market lifestyle, community, location, academic performance, and cultural amenities. Every LEA has something to offer.
- Create a marketing package of community information by partnering with the Chamber of Commerce, local real estate agents, etc. Distribute this online and at job fairs.
- Target specific job fairs based on your district needs. Narrowcast, don't broadcast.
- Set up recruitment booths at professional conferences like the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Science Teachers Association, or the National Association for Music Education. Go where the hard-to-hire teachers are.
- Recruit from similar geographic, economic, and demographic areas within California and out-of-state. This helps with candidate and lifestyle fit.
- Shift to a talent-acquisition mindset. Consider not just a candidate's qualifications, but also whether the candidate is a "good fit" for your LEA and whether he/she is likely to stay with the LEA.
- Consider opening job fairs to those who are not yet credentialed. This helps make contact with those who wish to teach but are not yet credentialed. Try to recruit them into a preparation program.



Take a Collaborative, Rather than Competitive, Approach to Recruitment

- Promote your county and work together rather than as separate, competing districts.
- Partner with another county or district and look for ways to share resources. For example, combine resources to create a strong LEA-wide marketing campaign.
- Improve inter-district communication about recruitment by creating a formal LEA-wide recruitment "hot list" for high-quality candidates that were not ultimately offered a position at one school or who were laid off, but would be a good fit for another school.
- Join or set up a network of human resource (HR) personnel. Meet regularly and pass along information about teachers facing layoffs in one LEA who might be good candidates in another.
- Collaborate with the county office of education to host a countywide job fair.



Offer High-Quality Supports for New and Existing Teachers

- If possible, offer in-house induction, coaching, and/or mentors for new teachers. If your salary is comparable to that of a competing LEA, this will be the deciding factor for many candidates.
- If the LEA pays for all or part of induction costs, advertise this to potential candidates. Induction can cost up to \$5,000 for new teachers, so covering induction costs can make LEAs with lower starting salaries more competitive.
- Commit to helping new graduates through the process of obtaining a clear credential.
- Market the LEA's professional development and teacher support resources to both new and existing teachers.
- Become a destination district for professional development. Put on a conference in-house once a year to showcase the LEA's strengths.
- Create a positive, professional LEA climate with opportunities for teacher leadership.
- Cultivate a LEA community by offering low or no-cost events, services, or discounts for administrators, teachers, and their families.
- The leaky bucket theory- the fewer teachers you retain, the more you have to recruit. Retention is also a recruitment strategy.



Respond to Recruiting Roadblocks with Flexibility and Creativity

- Identify barriers that prevent people from joining your district and focus on those you can change.
- If housing is a barrier, invite real estate agents to attend job fairs with you. They can provide on-the-spot housing information for prospective candidates.
- If the LEA is in a remote or rural region, use a cost of living calculator (e.g., Salary.com) to show potential candidates how their salary would purchase more in a remote or rural location.
- Work with universities to offer satellite programs in rural and remote areas.
- Offer Skype or FaceTime for initial interviews with remote candidates.
- For hard-to-staff positions and/or ideal candidates, make a "twofer" or trailing spouse offer when possible. This makes a significant difference in areas where jobs are hard to find.
- Offer creative staffing options: Mixed assignments, job shares, reemployment of retirees.
- Recruit Occupational Therapist (OT) and Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) positions by offering them full-time employment that includes a half-time roving substitute assignment.



Make Efforts to Improve the Recruitment Process and Experience

- Develop and use interview questions that focus on candidates' aptitude for teaching. Candidates may have knowledge about curriculum and teaching, but if they do not have the aptitude for the grade-level or subject-area they won't be a good fit.
- Consider including a demo lesson as part of the interview process. This can help interviewers ascertain a candidate's pedagogy and lesson planning skills early.
- Communicate regularly with interviewees, even those you do not hire. Provide immediate (24-hour) feedback after the interview process.
- Create a positive experience for candidates. Go overboard on customer service because reputation is critical and candidates talk to each other.
- Make your hiring process paperless. This improves the speed of processing and reduces the burden on applicants. Use an online program like Chalk Schools.
- Make same-day offers and notifications to highly qualified candidates. Do not make candidates wait unnecessarily.



Utilize Data and Strategize Early

- Develop a system to forecast potential hiring needs. Consider factors like: birth rate, housing costs and new housing developments, student/teacher ratios, children 0-5 with an IEP/IFSP^{viii}, teacher retirements and non-reelects, and long-term leaves.
- Move up the dates of your recruitment timeline.
- Make recruitment ongoing instead of waiting for "batch hiring" in the spring.
- Talk to teachers and staff about their plans to stay with the LEA early and often.
- Use a brief questionnaire at the end of interviews to determine how to improve your process. Exit surveys are like looking at game film—you learn from your mistakes.
- Remain flexible and offer a candidate more than one position based on perceived fit.

^{viii} Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) are learning plans that are developed for public school children who qualify for special education services.



Invest in Local Recruitment Efforts

- Conduct prospective teacher workshops for high school and college students, and other community members. Focus on concepts like “Why be a teacher?” and “Why teaching is rewarding.” Ask local partner universities to send their credential program representatives to the workshops to recruit potential teachers.
- Set up career pathway programs to encourage high school students to complete a credential and return to the LEA to teach.
- Incentivize parents to become substitute teachers as a gateway into the teaching profession.
- When hiring non-credentialed staff, look for individuals who could eventually move into a fully-credentialed position.
- Pay substitutes the market rate plus a loyalty bonus if they stay with your district for an entire year or a certain number of days in a year. Offer substitutes training, and compensate them at a higher rate if they complete it.
- Work with human resource departments in local industries to identify displaced workers who might make good teachers (e.g., engineers, chemists, biologists, etc.). Let the HR departments know you are hiring so they can notify employees who might be displaced in the future.
- Identify multiple subject teachers with skills in hard-to-hire subject areas and talk to them about earning a second credential. Help cover credentialing costs either as a reimbursement or by paying off student loans while the teacher is employed by the LEA.

SECTION 3

RECOMMENDATIONS

LEAs face a staff shortage unlike any before, driven by a convergence of economic and demographic trends that threaten to disrupt the teacher pipeline for the indefinite future. The increased cost of earning a credential, stagnant wages, and changes in generational values and communication methods, have all contributed to the current shortage. Any one of these factors alone would impact the teacher pipeline; combined, these factors have created a workforce crisis that has generated universal concern from LEAs, state policy makers, advocates, and thought leaders.

Research findings in this report indicate that there is significant room to improve recruitment and retention policies and practices. By critically analyzing their current practices and adopting some of the strategies outlined in this report, LEAs can implement more efficient and effective recruitment policies that promote workforce stability and regional collaboration. However, LEAs cannot solve the teacher shortage alone. Additional statewide investments, and reconsideration of certain state policies and regulations, are needed to support school leaders as they tackle the staff shortage at a local level.

The following recommendations for state policy makers and LEAs are derived from the research findings in this report and are intended to guide legislative conversations and provide helpful strategies that can be scaled and implemented throughout California.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE POLICY MAKERS

REVISIT CREDENTIALING POLICIES THAT MAKE IT UNNECESSARILY DIFFICULT TO ENTER THE TEACHING FIELD OR TRANSFER CREDENTIALS FROM ANOTHER STATE.

Recent analyses by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and the California Department of Education make it clear that the state is not producing enough highly-qualified teachers to staff California's classrooms. An examination of current and projected enrollment trends in teacher preparation programs indicate that this problem may not be solved via the traditional supply pipeline.

CCSESA encourages state policy makers to revisit policies that create unnecessary hurdles to entering the field or obtaining a clear credential. Repeal of the prohibition on undergraduate teacher preparation programs is a first step in the right direction, but other policies may also warrant re-examination. Among these are employer requirements for the Preliminary Intern Permit and the Short-Term Staff Permit and reciprocity policies and practices for teachers credentialed out-of-state.

**CONVENE A
STAKEHOLDER GROUP
TO EXAMINE THE
SHORTAGE OF CRITICAL
SUPPORT STAFF, SUCH
AS SPEECH-LANGUAGE
PATHOLOGISTS AND BUS
DRIVERS, AND
REEVALUATE THE
COMPETENCIES AND
REQUIREMENTS FOR
THESE POSITIONS.**

Research highlighted an important aspect of the staffing shortage in California- it is not limited to teachers. Shortages in special education support staff, such as instructional aides, occupational and physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists, were common in many regions and were sometimes felt more acutely than teacher shortages in common core subjects. Researchers also identified scarcities in general support staff, such as bus drivers and school nurses.

CCSESA encourages the state to examine the statewide shortage of critical support staff by convening a stakeholder group of county superintendents, credentialing analysts, district administrators, special education experts, and CTC and CDE representatives, to review existing requirements and recommend policy changes to address barriers to recruitment in these fields.

**INVEST IN LCFF TO
ENSURE THAT LEAS HAVE
THE RESOURCES TO
PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND
SUPPORT TO NEW AND
EXISTING TEACHERS.**

Most LEAs subsidize induction costs for new teachers; however, LEAs currently do so with budgets that remain markedly short of their target rate. Research indicates that teachers who receive robust professional development and ongoing support are likely to experience greater job satisfaction and remain in the field; however, high-quality coaching and mentoring programs for all are not possible without adequate funding.

By fully funding LCFF and working toward implementing additional funding targets, state policy makers support teacher recruitment and retention efforts and ensure that LEAs have necessary funding to provide robust support to new and existing teachers.

**ENCOURAGE
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER
LEARNING TO ESTABLISH
SATELLITE CAMPUSES IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH LEAS
IN RURAL AND REMOTE
REGIONS.**

California's robust credentialing process requires that candidates continue to fulfill additional requirements after they enter the classroom, but this can be difficult for teachers in regions that are geographically distant from a university with a credentialing program. Online and remote learning options help candidates in rural regions meet some of these requirements, but others are more difficult to access remotely. For instance, candidate pools shrink substantially when a LEA is not within an hour of a university with a credentialing internship program.

CCSESA urges policy makers to address the geographic barriers that make it difficult for rural and remote LEAs to identify and support qualified candidates through the credentialing process. One solution might be to adopt policies that encourage institutions of higher learning to partner with rural LEAs to establish satellite campuses.

CONTINUE TO INVEST IN THE CALED GRANT INITIATIVE FOR TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SUPPORT. ENSURE THAT FUTURE STATE INVESTMENTS ADDRESSING THE TEACHER SHORTAGE ARE FLEXIBLE SO THAT LEAS CAN USE FUNDS TO TACKLE UNIQUE BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT.

The flexibility inherent in the CalEd Grant Initiative honors the guiding principle of local control and is aligned with research findings that the teacher shortage is not universally experienced and that barriers to recruitment are not necessarily analogous even within similar regions. The Initiative also prioritizes recruitment efforts in the hard-to-staff fields identified by survey participants- special education, mathematics, science, and bilingual education.

One key to addressing the teacher shortage is to increase teacher retention. Research has identified quality school leadership as an important factor in the decisions of teachers to stay in the profession. Investing in the support of school principals both increases the quality of school performance and helps retain quality teachers.

CCSESA applauds the state's initiative in addressing this issue and urges policy makers to continue to invest funds in the CalEd Grant Initiative and other programs that are consistent with the policy of local control. As legislators debate regional solutions to recruitment challenges, we ask members to embrace the Initiative as the statewide vehicle for recruitment efforts and encourage constituents to apply for funding through the grant-making process.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEAS

ADOPT ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES THAT ENCOURAGE STAFF PARTICIPATION IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND BUILD LEA COMMUNITY.

Engaging staff in the recruitment process is a smart and effective way to give candidates a "sneak peek" into a LEA's community and organizational culture. Policies that encourage administrators to include principals and teachers at recruitment events, or bring in potential candidates for site visits, can provide smaller LEAs with a competitive advantage over larger districts that feel more impersonal and removed from students and staff. Encouraging school leaders to act as community ambassadors also helps to build a LEA's "brand" and increase visibility and appeal in the broader world.

Small investments to build an LEA's community can also reap large rewards. LEAs that adopt employee wellness policies and bring in low or no-cost health and fitness programs experience high employee satisfaction and lower attrition rates. Policies that build community and invest in staff will become even more important as younger generations continue to prioritize job satisfaction and workplace culture over other career attributes.

COLLABORATE WITH OTHER LEAS TO COMBINE RESOURCES AND CREATE ECONOMIES OF SCALE FOR THE PURPOSE OF BUILDING STRONGER MARKETING CAMPAIGNS, ATTRACTING SATELLITE CREDENTIALING PATHWAYS, AND SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT STRONG TEACHER CANDIDATES.

LEA collaboration lessens the practice of competitive recruitment, i.e. hiring away talent from local LEAs with less resource capacity, and reduces inequity by allowing LEAs to draw from a diverse pool of qualified candidates.

Though collaboration clearly benefits low-wealth LEAs in a consortium, high-wealth LEAs also benefit from this practice. Even the best funded LEAs cannot afford to independently finance a robust teacher recruitment campaign that inspires new candidates to enter the field and encourages existing teachers to train for hard-to-staff positions. By combining resources, LEAs can create a multi-pronged marketing strategy that is broad in scope and utilizes multiple advertising platforms.

When LEAs in rural regions collaborate, they are better able to overcome barriers to recruitment that might otherwise seem insurmountable. Without nearby universities, rural LEAs are left without feeder schools or access to components that are necessary to obtaining a clear credential. LEAs that combine resources can create their own licensed credentialing program or attract satellite programs by creating economies of scale.

LEA collaboration also supports the goal of teacher retention. When unexpected fluctuations in enrollment or budgets cause lay-offs, or when candidates struggle to adjust to a school's culture, regional human resource consortia can help to relocate high-quality junior teachers that might otherwise leave the field.

DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PERSONNEL PLAN USING DATA SYSTEMS TO PROJECT NEED BASED ON ANTICIPATED RETIREMENTS AND LEAVES, STUDENT ENROLLMENT, COMMUNITY GROWTH, ETC.

Data collection, analysis, and retention are critical components in deciding the “who, what, where, when, how, and why” of recruiting. LEAs that establish regional data hubs to track and report student enrollment and needs, population trends, and economic recessions, are better able to anticipate staffing requirements and maintain a stable workforce. Though implementation of data tracking is not without cost, county offices of education, LEA consortia, or large districts are well positioned to operate these systems and can help subsidize the expense.

With detailed data informing decisions, LEAs are better equipped to engage in ongoing strategic planning and resource allocation. Data that demonstrates an increase in autism informs a LEA that additional professional development is needed; data that predicts declining enrollment helps inform a LEA's decision to build new classrooms or facilities. Without an informed strategic personnel plan, LEAs are more likely to feel market fluctuations and react to workforce vacancies with “crisis” hiring.

ADOPT A “TALENT ACQUISITION” MINDSET FOCUSED ON RETENTION. HIRE TEACHERS THAT ARE A “GOOD FIT” AND INVEST IN THEM.

Organizations that apply a “talent acquisition” mindset make smart and strategic investments in incentives that not only recruit, but also retain, teachers. While traditional one-time signing bonuses may attract qualified candidates, their effects are short-lived. Long-term incentives that address teacher career aspirations, such as free in-house induction and teacher supports like mentoring and coaching, are especially appealing to newly credentialed teachers and invite candidates to invest in a long-term relationship with the LEA. Because each teacher lost to non-election or attrition costs a LEA approximately \$18,000, incentives that increase retention can be one of an LEA’s most effective and prudent recruitment tools.⁵

Once qualified candidates are identified, LEAs that invest time on the front end to ensure that potential employees are a “good fit” and have the appropriate skills for a particular teaching assignment also experience higher retention rates. Incorporating interview questions and demo lessons that highlight candidate temperament, classroom management skills, and aptitude with particular student age groups, helps interview teams make more informed decisions about hiring and “fit.”

While it may not be possible for LEAs to implement these recommendations immediately, they can be gradually integrated into a LEA’s budget and policy as part of a long-term strategic plan to address recruitment and retention.

IMPLEMENT 21ST CENTURY TOOLS THAT BROADEN RECRUITMENT REACH (E.G. SOCIAL MEDIA) AND STREAMLINE AND SIMPLIFY THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS.

While California schools have been at the forefront in adopting technology in the classroom, many LEAs have been slow to modernize their application process and incorporate paperless platforms for uploading and monitoring staff documentation. LEAs that adopt a commercially-available applicant tracking system (ATS) reduce staff time spent on screening and hiring applicants. Those that create a LEA-wide portal where candidates can complete and electronically submit employment documents increase their pool of candidates and improve the applicant experience.

As candidates become more technologically savvy, LEAs should reevaluate how they connect and communicate with potential recruits. Social media platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook, are a free or low-cost way to increase an organization’s marketing reach and build a LEA’s “brand.” These tools give LEAs the power to communicate daily with potential candidates and build a narrative that articulates a LEA’s goals, priorities, and culture.

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