



Teacher Shortage Survival Guide

Districts share tips to successfully hire and retain top candidates in challenging times



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Introduction

The Truth about the Teacher Shortage Everyone's Feeling

Ask any K-12 HR professional these days, and they'll tell you finding and retaining educators is one of their toughest challenges. In some regions, meeting staffing goals feels nearly impossible. Our [2022 K-12 Talent Index: Education Research Report](#) revealed teacher recruitment as the highest priority for K-12 HR leaders. Teacher retention essentially tied for second with teacher and staff social and emotional wellbeing. In the previous year's study, recruitment placed outside the top five. This shift over the span of a year indicates the staffing strain schools and districts continue to feel as the teacher shortage worsens.

So how bad is the K-12 teacher shortage?

According to [research published in 2022](#) by Brown University's Annenberg Institute, at least 36,000 teaching jobs remained vacant going into the 2022/23 school year. Additionally, the report found that at least 163,000 teaching positions were held by underqualified teachers. The authors point out that they consider these conservative estimates of the nationwide teacher shortage picture. With an average class size of [24 students in U.S. public schools](#), it's easy to see how the ongoing staffing crisis directly affects millions of students.

What can human resource leaders in K-12 do about the teacher shortage?

In this eBook, you'll learn how finding success means rethinking traditional strategies and making an investment in technology to help scale up your efforts.

Proven Ways to Address the Teacher Shortage

- Appeal to more candidates
- Hire best-fit educators
- Prioritize teacher success

How can federal funding help school districts with teacher shortages?

The U.S. government recently made over \$190 billion available to schools and districts in response to the global pandemic. With the CARES Act, CRRSA Act, and ESSER I, II, and III, resources are available to make major improvements to K-12 recruiting, hiring, and teacher support systems (including technology solutions for professional development, health and wellness, and peer-to-peer collaboration.) This represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put the strategies in this eBook to work in your district.

Inside this guide are four ways in which your school and district can embrace opportunities to expand recruitment, screening, and retention to find and keep quality educators.

#1:

Establish Your Employment Brand



Establishing an employment brand that stands out from other schools and districts in your area is key to attracting applicants and can even help districts overcome significant challenges, such as compensation discrepancies.

"Our starting salary is lower than some of the districts we recruit alongside," said Meg Nigro, former Executive Director for Recruitment and Development for Clark County School District in Las Vegas, Nevada. "So we had to think of something that was a little different to attract candidates. We thought, 'What is something that we could say about everybody that really works for kids, whether indirectly or directly, and what would maybe resonate with people that isn't 800 characters on an ad?' And we came up with the recruiting slogan *Calling All Heroes*."

CCSD used this slogan to launch a superhero-inspired campaign to attract new and existing educators to the district. Meg said they followed four key principals to build the employment brand around this concept.



- 1 **"Our first principle** is, everything we post either has to be funny or has to have heart. Otherwise, no one really reads it, or it sounds like every other district that's hiring. With *Calling All Heroes*, we were really going after that altruistic reason we all go into education."
- 2 **"Our second principle** is show, don't tell. We do a lot as far as showing what our schools look like, what our community looks like, and how, even though we're big, we are very small also. Demonstrate what it means to have 300 sunny days a year in Las Vegas... kids playing soccer year-round. That's how you show people how great it is to be where you are."
- 3 **"Principle number three,** is personalize things. Be fun and engaging with your language and images. Nothing inappropriate, but we use informal language as opposed to the standard, boring, Charlie-Brown-teacher blah, blah that nobody reads."
- 4 **"Principle four** is the website. We have highlighted people throughout our district on our site so potential applicants can read a little bit about them, and know that there are real people connected to those names or those phone numbers when you call. There are real people here trying to help you find a great job."

When designing a brand for your school, capitalize on the things you do best to tell your story, suggests **Steve Lorenz, former Regional Strategic Advisor at PeopleAdmin and former Teacher, Principal, and Head of School at Oak Meadow School in Vermont.**

"With so much competition these days for teachers and educational leaders, effective branding gives your school identity and establishes an external positive impression or perception and internally establishes a level of pride and ownership for the school community that will be attractive for prospective employees," Steve said. "Whether a school is a public, a charter, or an independent/private school, a brand will tell people in and out of your community who you are, what you represent, and why you are the best choice."

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#2:

Hire Smarter



Hiring the right teacher is often a difficult and time-consuming process, but it's also one of the most important factors contributing to student achievement.

Hiring the right teacher is often a difficult and time-consuming process, but it's also one of the most important factors contributing to student achievement. "It can be challenging to identify teacher candidates who will positively impact student achievement, especially early in the hiring process," said **Dave Schuler, Superintendent** of High School District 214 in Arlington Heights, Illinois, and former President of the American School Superintendents Association.

And during a teacher shortage, it only gets more challenging, Nick said. "If you only have one or two applicants applying to a specific job, it's really hard to understand whether or not the individuals are going to be a strong fit within the organization."

With the right tools—such as PowerSchool Unified Talent™ (TalentEd) Candidate Assessment (formerly EPI)—the process of identifying and acquiring quality educators becomes much simpler.

"Candidate Assessment is a research-based screening tool that is designed to help school districts understand, of their available applicants, which of those applicants are most likely to be most effective at delivering the most meaningful academic gains to students," said **Ron Huberman, former Superintendent** of Chicago Public Schools.

"We have found Candidate Assessment to be incredibly insightful and essential to making informed decisions as part of our hiring process," Dave said.





Here's how it works:

After applying for a position, applicants receive an email asking them to complete a 100-question online assessment. Then, Candidate Assessment compares each applicant's answers to thousands of data points—all related to qualifications, teaching skills, cognitive ability, and attitudinal factors—to measure that applicant's likely impact on student growth. The scores are instantly available, sorted, and rank-ordered with other applicants so it's easy to see who is most likely to have the best impact on student outcomes.

Candidate Assessment can also provide schools and districts with a method to improve the effectiveness of newly hired teachers.

"The way that Candidate Assessment helps you do this is through a Professional Development Profile that identifies individual teacher's needs so that, as soon as a teacher is actually in the classroom, you're able to support them with customized professional development," Nick said. He went on to explain that this feature helps school leaders transition from identifying and hiring quality educators to focusing on development and retention.

"We typically see about 20 percent of teachers leave their school each year, which creates challenges for schools to continue building a successful environment for students," he said. "Having tools to help make informed hiring decisions and improve retention can be the difference between placing top educators in classrooms for the long term... or continually recruiting from a tight labor market."



#3: Be Strategic About Onboarding



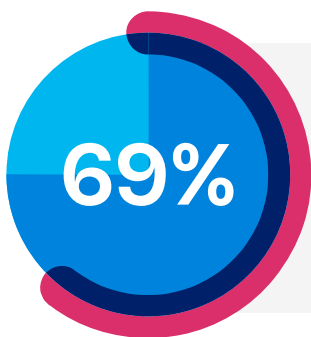
"Research tells us that whether candidates are going to stay inside a district or inside a school is often related to the experience they have from day one," Nick said.

This aligns with research from the Society for Human Resources Management, which found that employees who attend well-structured onboarding programs are 69 percent more likely to remain at their jobs for three years.

Unfortunately, many schools and districts miss this opportunity to make a great first impression during onboarding and often waste time on paperwork instead of preparing educators to succeed in their roles. Leaders at Del Mar Union School District in San Diego,

California, recently transitioned away from cumbersome, paper-based onboarding process with help from Unified Talent™ (TalentEd) Employee Records—PowerSchool's automated record keeping solution.

Since going paperless, "onboarding and orientation have taken on a whole new light," said **Jason E. Romero, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources** at the district. "We spend the initial contact time during orientation getting new hires familiar with the district, their position,



Employees who attend well-structured onboarding programs are **69% more likely to remain at their jobs for three years.**

Source: Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

and our processes—as opposed to just doing the menial task of checking whether forms were signed correctly."

And the streamlined process has noticeably improved new hires' first impressions of the district. "We've gotten so much unsolicited positive feedback about how streamlined the process is and how it's easier to follow," Jason said.

For retention efforts to succeed in helping schools and districts overcome the teacher shortage, however, they must extend well beyond the onboarding process.

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#4:

Offer Personalized Professional Development



Investing in teachers' ongoing education and skill development is a key to long-term retention.

"If you're continuing to help people grow and develop, then that enhances their engagement and interest in what they're doing," said **Lori Parrish, Director of Professional Development and Grants** at Crystal Lake Elementary District in Illinois. Lori added that when you focus on professional development, "ultimately, you are going to retain good people who continue to strengthen their professional practices."

But creating and maintaining an effective professional development plan isn't always easy.

"Determining which teachers are going to benefit most from which professional development offerings is complicated," Ron said.

Fortunately, a tool such as PowerSchool Unified Talent™ (TalentEd) Professional Learning—a professional development management product—can help.

"Professional Learning, from the administrator's perspective, takes all the moving parts of professional development and allows you to manage and track them via one platform," Ron said.

"We know that many districts are offering online learning, in-person learning, and even giving teachers the opportunity to take professional development outside of the school," Nick said.

"With Professional Learning, you can track all of it."





And by combining Professional Learning with PowerSchool Unified Talent™ (TalentEd) Candidate Assessment—a nonevaluative, professional development diagnosis tool—schools and districts can offer teachers comprehensive learning plans for targeted, personalized professional development.

"When teachers take the assessment, they get a profile of where they're stronger and where they have opportunities for improvement, as well as suggestions for ways they can change their practices," Nick said. "Then teachers

and schools can choose the professional development curriculum or training that works best for them."

Together, Professional Learning and Candidate Assessment actually allow schools to receive individualized recommendations for teachers based on the offerings within the district. "Ultimately, this helps build a very tailored system for every teacher, which should connect to their likelihood to stay over time within the district," Nick added.

Learn More

Request a demo to get an in-depth look at how PowerSchool products can help your school or district overcome the teacher shortage by taking advantage of key opportunities during your recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and professional development processes.

To request a demo of
PowerSchool products:

[CLICK HERE](#)





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