Indicator: The LEA has a plan and process in place to establish a pipeline of potential turnaround leaders. (5166)

Explanation: The evidence review indicates that high performing LEAs utilize a thoughtful plan and process to attract the most qualified teachers and principals. A well designed and executed hiring pipeline includes establishing clear, articulated recruitment expectations and processes. In addition, the most successful pipeline programs are aggressive in their search, are needs based, and communicate those needs in seeking the "just right" individuals with competencies that match the LEAs expectations.

Questions: What will the LEA do to build a systems approach to recruitment? How will the LEA create consensus around what personal and professional competencies are most needed in the teachers and principals they seek to hire? How will the LEA target the most qualified candidates?

Evidence Review:
Expanding the Pipeline of Teachers and Principals
　　Strong school principals and highly effective teachers are critical elements of successful schools. Among all school-related factors that affect student learning, teachers, and principals rank at the very top. A highly-effective teacher has a greater impact upon students' learning than any other factor, including student ethnicity or family income, class size or the school that a student attends. For poor and minority students, and excellent teacher can have an even larger effect – one study found the achievement gains from having a highly effective teacher were almost three times as large for African American students as for their white peers, even when the students start with similar levels of achievement.
　　Principals are second only to teachers in their effect upon student learning – indeed, the quality of a school principal accounts for about a quarter of all the effects upon a student's academic achievement. And, like teachers, principals have a greater effect in schools that face more difficult circumstances: virtually no low-performing school has turned around without the work of a highly-effective principal.
　　These findings about the importance of teachers and principals in improving student achievement are not new. But it is becoming increasingly clear that traditional approaches to human capital are inadequate to meet the demands of a 21st century education, particularly for our country's most disadvantaged students. District, foundation and local leaders across the country are recognizing the need to rapidly improve the quality of public school teachers and principals, using new and innovative approaches to recruitment, selection, training and support.
　　As these leaders seek to expand the pipeline of outstanding teachers and principals who are prepared for work in disadvantaged schools, they will be fortunate to draw on several lessons learned from human capital programs in operation across the country. In our review of these programs, we found several common design principles with regard to the recruitment, selection, training and retention of highly-effective teachers and principals. These are outlined in the detail below.

Recruitment

The majority of the nation's most promising pipeline programs take an aggressive to recruitment that includes defining a compelling mission based on need, setting clear targets for recruitment, communicating an attractive value proposition, and engaging in vigorous outreach.

Compelling Mission Based On Need. This process begins with an objective evaluation of the program's "value-add" to the schools – its mission, design and unique role in fueling the pipeline of teachers or principals. The organizations we profiled have been developed around the need and designed specifically to help meet it, whether that need is to fill specific kinds of teaching positions or to attract candidates to specific groups of schools.

Clear Targets. These programs have also designed their programs to attract very specific kinds of people into teaching and the school principalship. Different approaches include drawing higher-caliber candidates into the profession, developing local talent to serve a specific community, or preparing experienced professionals specifically for service in urban schools.

Attractive Value Proposition. Their designs also take into account the reality of the candidates they seek to attract. For example, programs that seek to recruit mid-career professionals into the education field must especially consider the details of time and money: if the training program is full-time, will candidates be reasonable able to support their current lifestyle without secondary employment? The answers to these questions help shape the initial design of the program, making it feasible for and attractive to the type of candidate each organization seeks.

The officials we spoke with have a clear sense of the elements of their program that are most attractive to potential candidates. They know, for example, that many of the nation's top college graduates are attracted to rigorous programs that are highly selective and mimic the medical residency model. They know that principal candidates who seek our alternative preparation programs are likely to appreciate non-traditional training based on principles form business management. This clarity helps direct their recruitment efforts.

Vigorous Outreach. Even with a clear mission, target and "brand," these organizations have found that creating a high-quality pool of potential candidates requires active outreach to talented applicants. Most employ a full-time recruiter on staff. While they engage in a variety of recruitment methods, three general strategies stand out across all of these organizations.

- **Target candidates who possess qualities that align with the organization's values**. Many of the organizations we profiled believe that the majority of the skills that are necessary in the school or classroom can be taught – such as classroom management, instructional leadership or organizational skills. But there are other personal characteristics that many organizations believe must be present in a successful candidate before they begin; for example:
    - *Values and beliefs, such as a commitment to social justice and a belief that all children can learn.*
    - *Behavioral competencies, such as achievement orientation, a strong sense of self-awareness, and a commitment to continuous learning.*

    Several organizations target their recruitment strategies toward individuals who are likely to possess these characteristics, using recommendations from principals or contacts at other organizations to focus their efforts.

- **Meet local needs.** While both national and local organizations report using high-profile advertisements in national publications, the majority have found that their greatest return comes from more local outreach efforts. The New Teacher Project (TNTP), for example, helps districts develop recruitment campaigns. As part of its work across the country, TNTP has found that if a district has a shortage of minority candidates or local talent, it is most useful to print ads in Spanish or place them in local church bulletins, rather than cover the town in advertisements and hope for the best. Other common recruitment methods include:
    - *Nominations and personal recommendations from alumni and other contacts.*
    - *Outreach to community-based organizations.*
    - *Relationships with local colleges and universities.*

    These tailored approaches require more thought and investigation up-front than national ads or blanket emails, but reportedly have a much higher rate of return.

- **Employ high-quality design.** No matter the placement of an ad, a sparse page with lines of test is less than a flashy poster that rivals the "Got Milk?" campaign.

(Kowal & Hassel, 2009, pp. 4–5)

In its 2015 *Turnaround Leaders Development Program Participant RFP*, the Colorado Department of Education (2015) provides funds (approximately $1.2 million for fiscal year 2014–2015) to support training and development of school turnaround leaders for Colorado's public schools. The program is designed to grant funds to LEAs and charter schools throughout the state "to use in partnering with identified Program Providers to develop outstanding school leaders with the skills and competencies required to turn around low-performing public schools in the state…. School districts, on behalf of their schools with Priority Improvement or Turnaround (PI/T) plan types, are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity…. Applicants may apply to provide training to school turnaround leaders – principals, teacher leaders, or district-level or Institute administrators or employees that support schools with Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan types. Available grant funding will be distributed to eligible applicants that demonstrate a clear need for the recruitment, training, and retention of leaders with expertise to turn around persistently low performing schools within their districts or Institute" (Colorado Department of Education, 2015, p. 4).

According to the RFP, "Grantees are required to use funding from this grant to:
- Identify, train, and support: teacher and aspiring school leaders; current school leaders; district, charter organization, or Institute level staff who support identified Priority Improvement or Turnaround school(s);
- Subsidize the cost of school turnaround leaders and other support staff to participate in turnaround leadership development programs; and
- Reimburse school turnaround leaders for the costs they incur in completing turnaround leadership development programs offered by identified providers" (Colorado Department of Education, 2015, p. 5).

The RFP includes an application format, required elements, a cover page to be completed and attached as the first page of the application, recipient school information and signature page,

and assurances – for example, the third assurance is: "The grantee will track the effectiveness of persons who complete a turnaround leadership development program and report the effectiveness to the department on or before July 1 of the year following the training. The report will use department rubrics to measure the effectiveness of persons who complete the turnaround leadership development program. Each grant recipient must report on the following:

- Number of people who participated and in which programs;
- Schools served;
- Impact on student achievement;
- Change in principal or aspiring leader's actions/behavior, and;
- Other required data points provided by CDE upon notification of award" (Colorado Department of Education, 2015, p. 5).

The RFP also includes selection criteria and evaluation rubric. The criteria are broken up into five sections: Needs Assessment, Turnaround Leadership Provider, Proposed Project Description, Program Evaluation, and Budget Narrative & Electronic Budget. Most of the sections are broken up into subsections; for example, under Needs Assessment, the three subsections are:

"(1) List the Priority Improvement Plans or Turnaround Plan (PI/T) schools in the school district or Charter School Institute that will be served by the school turnaround leaders (principals and teacher leaders) supported through this grant program.

(2) Identify the number and names of individuals to participate in leadership programs, including: aspiring leaders, existing leaders, teacher leaders, district managers or support staff.

(3) Describe the skills and expertise of proposed participants and the gap that exists between current skills and expertise necessary to be successful in a turnaround environment. Description here does not have to be specific to each individual but rather specific to each type of participant (i.e.: aspiring leaders, existing leaders, teacher leaders, district managers or support staff)" (Colorado Department of Education, 2015, p. 13).

The three attachments to the RFP are: (A) List of Identified Providers of the Turnaround Leadership Development Program (with a note that "More Providers may be identified in April/May 2015 and in Fall 2015"), (B) Progress Report Requirements, and (C) Letter of Intent.

References and Resources

Colorado Department of Education. (2015). *Turnaround Leaders Development Program Participant RFP*. Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved from http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/turnaroundleadersparticipantrfp

Kowal, J. & Hassel, B. J. (2009). *Expanding the Pipeline of Teachers and Principals in Urban Public Schools: Design Principles and Conditions for Success*. Chapel Hill, NC: Public Impact. Retrieved from http://www.publicimpact.com/publications/Human_Capital_Report.pdf

Public Impact. (2008). *School Turnaround Leaders: Selection Toolkit*. Chapel Hill, NC: Author. (This resource includes Candidate Comparison and Decision Tools, which provide a template and systematic means of comparing candidates on key characteristics of turnaround leadership.) Retrieved from http://www.publicimpact.com/publications/Turnaround_Leader_Selection_Toolkit.pdf