TEACHER EQUITY IN RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Teacher retention plays a critical role in supporting equity.
Presenter

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Background

The Ohio Appalachian Collaborative (OAC) is made up of 27 rural, southeast Ohio school districts. These districts serve over 48,000 students, and employ over 3,000 teachers.
BFK Human Capital Strategy

COMMUNICATIONS

LEADERSHIP

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

- Organizational Development
- Strategic Staffing
- Talent Management & Development

- Performance Improvement
- Sourcing
- HR Branding
- Recruiting
- Selection
- Onboarding

- Customer Focus
- Process Improvement
- Strategic Planning

- Organizational Climate
- Culture & Engagement
- Career Ladders & Succession Planning

- Innovative Rewards
- Employee Commitment
- Comprehensive Evaluation

- Strategic Compensation
- Professional Development
- "Battelle for Kids"

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Outcomes, participants will:

☐ Specific Opportunities and Challenges in Rural Districts
   ▪ Teacher Retention Strategies

☐ Examples of Promising Practices
   ▪ Ohio Appalachian Collaborative
   ▪ Other sites nationally
What is “Rural”?  

- Fewer than 150 people per square mile (Census).
- Counties with 60% or more of population living in communities with less than 5,000 people (Census).
- Areas that are 55 miles or farther from a metropolitan area and with enrollments of 300 or fewer students (GAO).
- In other words – there is much diversity in geography and place when we try to define rural.
- Differences in geography, history, and culture
Let’s put this in perspective…

- 59 million people in our country live in rural areas.
- 56% of school districts
- 10 million students and growing… (20% of student population)
  - 2 in 5 of these rural students live in poverty.
  - 1 in 4 is a student of color
  - 1 in 8 students have changed residents at least once in the past 12 months.
The changing demographics

- Growth in rural school enrollment outpaces non-rural enrollment growth (+136,884 from 2008-09 to 2009-10).

- Rural growth though is very complex in that there’s increasing rates of poverty, diverse populations, and identification of students with special needs.

  - FRPL increase from 41% to 46.6% from 2008-09 to 2009-10 (over 600,000 students)
  - Minority student increase by 5.1% during this time as well.
  - Students identified as needing special education increased from 12.1% to 12.8% (+85,000)
What are the challenges ahead?

The Rural School and Community Trust found that 12 states graduate fewer than 60% of students from their poorest rural districts:

- Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota and South Dakota.
“Expert teachers are perhaps the most fundamental resource for improving student learning...Unfortunately, the United States lacks a systematic approach to recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers.”

—Linda Darling-Hammond (2011)
The Economic Value of Teachers

A recent study from economist Eric Haushek suggests that with a class of 20 students, compared to the average teacher…

- A teacher at the 60th percentile will raise (each year) students’ aggregate earnings by $106,000
- For teachers at the 69th percentile, earnings will shift up to $212,000
- For teachers at the 84th percentile, earnings will shift by more than $400,000

On the flip side…

- A teacher at the 16th percentile (compared to the average teacher) will have a negative impact of $400,000

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The Opportunity Gap

- According to the National Commission on Teaching Excellence, the consequences of a high teacher turnover rate is most critical in our lowest-performing, high poverty schools.

- High turnover districts struggle to close the teaching quality gap because they are constantly rebuilding their staff.

- How do we focus on areas where retention is most difficult?

- What does this constant churn cost us?
Root Cause Analysis: Why do rural districts face challenges in placing more effective teachers?

- People not attracted to work/stay in rural areas
- Once people are hired – tend to stay a long time
- Limited advancement opportunities
- Small districts lack capacity (i.e. money for resources)
- Inconsistent awareness of good practices
Leveraging Rural Strengths - Strategies for Achieving Rural Objectives

☐ Are they evidence-based?

☐ Do they address the root-causes of the equity gaps?

☐ Are they targeted to the local context of the district?

☐ Timelines and feasibility of funding/supporting strategies are needed to implement the plan and make it complete.
Turnover Myths

☐ Our turnover rates are out of our control

☐ The costs can’t be quantified

☐ Turnover actually saves us money

☐ Districts benefit from bringing in “new blood”

☐ Comments about this? Anything to add?
Turnover Truths

- We know, for the most part, why our teachers leave.
  - Working conditions
  - Pay
  - Change in family situation, responsibilities

- Costs can be quantified and have been by many districts.

- High turnover schools and districts incur significant costs associated with their constant recruitment, hiring, training and separation of teachers.

- Districts can benefit from bringing in new teaching talent, but it must be balanced with a district’s ability to retain its existing talent.
What are the opportunities?

- The research is clear, high quality teaching and leadership in our school districts is critical to our children’s future.

- Strategies that many studies have identified to be key are:
  - Improving our teacher preparation programs
  - Strengthening our recruitment pipelines
  - Providing opportunities for professional learning and growth for all our teachers and principals
  - Developing credible and meaning career pathways and leadership opportunities for teachers and principals.
  - We’re addressing the 3rd and 4th strategies on this list today.
What are the Costs/Benefits of Retention?

- Much is spent on recruitment, but what about retention?

- According to a recent study, $2.2 billion per year is spent on teacher turnover, or approximately $15,000 per teacher.

- According to another study, the costs of replacing a teacher can range anywhere between $4,366 in a rural area to over $15,000 in a large urban district.

- Think about your state’s turnover rate, even at the low-end how much are you spending?
Retention: Balancing Strategies to Stem Turnover

- All districts should have a well thought out retention strategy to ensure that teachers are supported, rewarded, and stay.

- Data and questions to support analyses and strategy development:
  - Where does turnover exist at a higher frequency?
  - What data do we collect from our staff?
  - Are we willing to make trade-offs to keep staff engaged?
  - How do we balance investments between retention and recruitment?
Retention Strategies – no shortage of creativity and ideas

- Grow your own programs
- Salary
- Non-compensatory rewards and benefits
- Professional Growth & Support
- Career Ladders
- Leadership opportunities
- Working conditions
- What else can we add to this list?
Grow your own

- Using long-term paraprofessionals to take on teaching positions.
- Long-term strategy
- Building on community strengths and community assets
Salary

- Pay can be adjusted or modified to incentivize, retain, and reward
- Can be used as a bonus, additional base pay, salary differentials, etc.
- For example, in the state of Ohio, state employees can earn a longevity differential (as a percentage of base) that is added onto their salary after a certain number of years of service.
Non-Compensatory Rewards and Benefits

- Additional benefits beyond pay.
  - Housing allowances or supplements
  - Loan Forgiveness
  - Healthcare supplement
Professional Growth & Support

- Evaluations, feedback and coaching play a critical role in this process.

- What can be done to grow and keep our teachers?

- Partnerships with local service centers and institutions of higher education.
Career Ladders

- Many teachers voice the need for professional growth and choice. This doesn’t necessarily mean leaving the classroom.

- Classroom assignment paired with peer coaching, professional training, and other leadership roles and responsibilities.

- Temporary assignments outside of the classroom to support teachers and building effective teams.

- May involve flexibility in the pay structure.
Leadership Opportunities

- Temporary assignment where individual assumes additional roles and responsibilities.

- This may involve payment of stipend through a supplemental contract to account for the additional hours outside of the classroom.

- Examples: building leadership team, district leadership team, department chair, etc.
Working Conditions

Studies have found that in these schools, supportive school leaders and positive working conditions were more important to teachers when deciding whether to stay in their schools.
School District Examples

☐ Eagle County, CO

☐ Morgan Local SD, OH

☐ Georgetown Exempted Village SD, OH
State Policy & Program Examples

- Teacher Residency Programs
- Flexibility in state policies for differentiated pay to retain teachers in high minority, high poverty schools
- Loan forgiveness programs
- Housing assistance for teachers
- Use of school climate and culture surveys to address and support positive work environments
Take a look at other state plans: Ohio’s 2006 Equity Plan

- 68 strategies in nine major categories:
  - Data and reporting systems
  - Teacher preparation
  - Out-of-field teaching
  - Recruitment and retention of experienced teachers
  - Professional development
  - Specialized knowledge and skills
  - Working conditions
  - New compensation systems
  - Policy coherence
Ohio Teacher Incentive Fund: Teacher Leadership Development

- Leadership roles aligned with district needs
- Selection criteria developed for roles
- Application process for prospective leaders
- Formalized roles and responsibilities
- Accountability
- Compensation, Stipends, etc.
Tennessee: Pay Strategy to Address Educator Effectiveness

- In 2013, the state of Tennessee updated its differentiated compensation policies to reflect its goals and ambitions.
- A variety of approaches to ensure that effective educators have an opportunity to earn more money: performance, assuming additional leadership roles and responsibilities, and for serving in hard to staff schools and subject areas.
- Nearly 100 school districts submitted plans that included leadership roles and responsibilities and nearly half of the district statewide included a hard-to-staff pay component.
- One third of districts included a performance at the individual, building, or school district efforts or achievements.
South Central School District, OH

- Refocused recruitment and retention efforts in 2013

- Strategies included branding and multiple data point selection.

- Attracting a broader and higher caliber applicant pool

- Short-term results included attracting students back to the districts
Eagle County, CO

- Historically, Eagle County School District has struggled with attrition due to low pay; hardships associated with long winters/mountain lifestyle; and distance from major metropolitan area/major airport.

- Changes were made in recruitment and retention strategies.

- Focused on the educator profile they were seeking:
  - individuals who wanted to work in a progressive culture organization and were risk takers.
  - More selective up-front and applicants understood the lifestyle change and focus on the individuals who considered education their life calling.

- In terms of retention, refocused on empowering their colleagues.
  - Providing a safe and supportive environment for them to take risks and try new practices.
  - Culture matters and professionals want to be informed, appreciated, and compensated for their work. Developed career pathways to support teachers’ professional growth.
Morgan Local: PAR

- Peer Assisted Review
- Teachers are referred by principals based on OTES results
- Relationships are key
- Classroom time spent – students, styles, instructional needs
- Coaching begins
- Coaching is confidential
- Documentation
- Principals notice improvement
- PAR panel meets
Georgetown Exempted Village Schools/Brown County ESC: Resident Educator Program

- Year 1 – **EXPERIENCE**: Induction to teaching supported by one-to-one instructional mentoring with emotional support.

- Year 2 – **ANALYZE**: Through inquiry practices and differentiated support (Cohort, Co-Teaching, One-to-One), RE shifts thinking from routine processes of examination to deeper concepts of analysis.

- Year 3 – **PERFORM**: Reflection is key to navigating the complexities of teaching and showcasing this practice through the RESA.

- Year 4 – **LEAD**: Professional Learning is seen as reciprocal, collaborative and ongoing; exhibited through teacher leader experiences.
What other examples can we share?
Resources to Support Efforts

How healthy is your district’s human capital system?
Check the pulse of your district’s approach with the BFK Human Capital Assessment

Receive Your FREE BFK Human Capital Assessment in 4 Easy Steps

2. Click “START NOW” to take the Human Capital Assessment
3. Enter your name, organization, and email address
4. Complete the assessment…takes 20 minutes or less

Instantly receive your customized report!

Taking this assessment helps education leaders maximize the effectiveness of their school improvement efforts by placing them in a broader context and identifying ways to strengthen their human capital system as a whole to accelerate student success.
Resources to Support Efforts

Comprehensive Human Capital Online Module—Free for Educators

Three steps to access the free module:
1. Go to www.BattelleforKids.org/How-We-Help/Human-Capital
2. Click the box that tells you to access the free module.
3. Choose the role-based module that applies: Principal, Teacher, or Central Office Staff Member.
QUESTIONS?
Sources

- The Rural School and Community Trust

- Great Teachers and Leaders www.gtlcenter.org

- US Department of Education: www.ed.gov (Excellent Educators for All Initiative)
- http://hechingerreport.org/some-mississippi-districts-have-critical-teacher-needs/
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