

Introduction

Induction—From Recruitment to Retention

This book is designed to help all of the administrators, teachers and board of education members who will participate in the hiring of more than 2 million new teachers between now and 2015. Representing the replacement of more than 70 percent of the professional staff currently employed, this is the largest replacement effort ever undertaken in American schools. Factors contributing to that high number include

- Class size reduction policies
- Enrollment growth
- Retirements
- Teachers leaving after two to five years
- Diversity issues
- New learning standards, assessments, graduation requirements and student needs, all combining to create new demands for teachers in particular certification areas

If you expect to hire several teachers or more over the next years, this book will help you. The gap between supply of and demand for qualified professional staff can make recruiting and retaining all types of candidates extremely competitive. Perhaps you anticipate fewer new teachers than others. Be aware that the competitive climate can make it difficult to recruit even a small number of teachers and even more difficult to keep those you have already recruited. This book is designed to help you with every aspect of the recruitment and retention process.

Traditional networking, advertising, reassigning existing staff and offering promotions to fill gaps can leave your school unprepared to meet new learning and safety goals typically itemized on today's school report

cards, in mission statements or in local standards. The educators you hire will prepare children to meet rigorous and often changing state standards, to achieve on assessments and to prepare for college or vocational training where the demands change more rapidly than ever. Recruiting educators is not just a matter of filling vacancies. It is a matter of shaping the future one professional, one child, one school community at a time.

Each time you sign a contract with an educator, you are choosing someone responsible for helping children learn well and stay safe. Therefore, recruitment and retention form the foundation for achieving your school community's learning and safety goals. Your student achievement and school safety record are directly related to the instructional skills and practices of your professional staff (See Educational Testing Service [2000] *How Teaching Matters: Bringing the Classroom Back to Discussions of Teacher Quality*). Given the importance of every decision you make to hire or permanently retain an educator, you can benefit from building on a strong foundation of proven practices. That foundation is composed of five interlocking "building blocks" we have been using and refining to meet our evolving staffing goals over the past thirty-five years.

These five Building Blocks are an organizing framework you can use to help one teacher or dozens of teachers in your school or district complete their three-year process from recruitment to tenure or job stability. We devote a chapter to each Building Block because each is an essential element of a comprehensive recruitment and retention program. Decision makers frequently select or adapt different elements from each block to meet their own school community goals.

As you explore the options offered in each Building Block, you can create a custom approach to recruitment and retention that will meet your school's individual learning and safety goals now and for years to come. While we refer to our system as a "BluePrint," we understand that it is a blueprint that should be modified to fit the demographics and special needs of your situation.

BUILDING BLOCK 1: PREPARING

- Recognizing your induction needs
- Developing your mission statement
- Establishing your policy on induction
- Setting your board of education induction goal(s)

BUILDING BLOCK 2: STAFFING

- Recruiting
- Interviewing
- Hiring

BUILDING BLOCK 3: ORIENTING: YEAR ONE

- Starting before the first school year begins
- Conducting professional development
- Mentoring and collaborating
- Supervising, observing and evaluating

BUILDING BLOCK 4: CONNECTING: YEARS TWO AND THREE

- Continuing professional development
- Supervising, observing and evaluating
- Granting tenure/permanence

BUILDING BLOCK 5: RETAINING YOUR STAFF

- Sustaining the connection
- Supervising, observing and evaluating: Developing career-long learners
- Renewing and reorienting

As you will discover in each chapter, we use the example of the “Centerville” school community to illustrate how your district or school can choose and use best practices for attracting and keeping educators. The “Centerville” school community is a composite of the best practices in about twenty schools we’ve worked in and with over the past thirty-five years. The Centerville school culture is dedicated to promoting serious learning and safety in every aspect of schooling. The district approaches induction as a means of achieving its learning and safety goals. In this fashion, the district fulfills its mission.

You will see how the members of the Centerville recruitment staff use each of the five Building Blocks to construct a practical plan to recruit and retain staff. We invite you to join the Centerville team by following along and constructing your own BluePrint. For example, you will see how the Centerville team uses Building Block 1 to begin its induction plan by reviewing their related policies, procedures and staffing needs. Their efforts produce a solid foundation for Building Block 2, where the team completes each phase of induction activities over three years.

During that three-year journey “from recruitment to retention,” the Centerville team uses Building Block 3 to retain their newly recruited staff by connecting with each new recruit through supervision, observation, evaluation and professional development activities. Through Building Blocks 3, 4 and 5, you will discover how the Centerville induction plan balances staffing change and continuity by creating opportunities for new and veteran staff to get to know each other, develop supportive relationships and build new traditions.

Each chapter includes many practical examples illustrating how administrators, teachers, other school community members and the newly hired professionals fulfill their roles in the induction process. Special highlights demonstrate how Centerville uses each of the interlocking Building Blocks to create a professional culture where staff members meet student needs by using best professional practices throughout their careers. You will see many examples of how this professional culture is part of the overall plan to retain the most qualified staff.

In Building Block 4, you will follow Centerville’s culminating activities as the board of education, administration and candidates for tenure/permanence complete their journey from recruitment to the early stages of retention. These activities are opportunities to recognize teachers for meeting or exceeding goals at each benchmark of their journey from recruitment to tenure/permanent employment.

As you complete Building Block 5, you will discover how you can use the principles of orientation and connection to continually renew and energize your entire staff.

■ CHOOSING AND USING SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES

If you are responsible for helping to recruit or retain staff, you know what it feels like to ask yourself, “How will this professional fulfill his or her role in five years? Ten? Twenty years or more?” This book helps you ask the right questions and find the right answers for your individual school community. We have organized this book so your induction plan meets your school community’s goals and needs. Since you know your school community’s unique strengths, challenges and other characteristics, this book allows you to choose from a wide variety of proven practices you can use to attract and retain the best professional staff in this competitive market.

Each chapter ends with two special sections: “Tips” and “BluePrint” for that special Building Block.

BluePrint

You can use the BluePrint (Resource A) to choose and use the best practices for your school or district. You will notice that the BluePrint in Resource A puts all five Building Blocks together in a way that gives you an instant overview of a comprehensive induction program. In addition, you will find that each chapter features the elements of the BluePrint that relate to that Building Block. For example, Chapter 1 closes with the section of the BluePrint dedicated to Building Block 1: Preparing. Chapter 2 closes with the section of the BluePrint dedicated to Building Block 2: Staffing, and so on.

Tips

In the Tips section of each chapter, you will find additional practices and strategies you may use to achieve your induction goals. We have often used these strategies to help districts and schools achieve their goals. These tips are organized into the following six categories that directly impact on induction:

Connections

Connections include

- Leadership practices that promote a strong sense of shared purpose. “Leadership is the exercise of wit and will, principle and passion, time and talent, and purpose and power in a way that allows the group to increase the likelihood that shared goals will be accomplished.”¹

- Strategies and activities that promote communication and understanding between and among stakeholder groups, including parents, community groups, and so forth
- Characteristics of the school community that motivate people to join the district and remain with the district

Data Mining

- Data mining includes strategies and activities for gathering, analyzing, reporting and otherwise using information to make the right decisions.

Finance

- Finances involve variables related to the district budget.

Legal Issues

- Legal issues include variables related to federal, state, local and other laws, statutes and/or policies.

Personnel Issues

- Personnel issues relate to staffing and human resources.

Professional Development

- Professional development encompasses the full range of formal and informal strategies and activities that helps members of the faculty and staff use best practices to advance student achievement and school safety.

As you follow the members of the Centerville school as they use the suggested strategies and activities, consider how their induction practices stabilize their school community and support student performance during periods of significant change in leadership and instructional staff.

SUMMARY ■

Professional journals and popular media are already warning that trends in recruitment, retirement, teachers leaving the system prematurely, and increasing enrollments will produce teacher shortages that will leave our schools unprepared to help all our children meet or exceed new standards and assessments. When we conduct professional development activities, people who share your responsibilities for induction raise such questions as the following:

- “What strategies can we use to find the best teacher candidates for our students?”
- “What will motivate the best teachers to join our staff?”
- “Once teachers join our staff, how can we keep them with us, even when other places may seem equally attractive in some ways?”

- “How can we attract and keep the best teachers for all our students, especially in difficult-to-staff areas over a period of years?”
- “How can we help our staff, our students and our parents maintain connections to each other during the induction process?”

You will discover answers to these and other key questions in each of the five interlocking Building Blocks in this book. As you explore the options offered in each Building Block, you can create a custom approach to induction that will meet your school’s learning and safety goals now and for years to come.

■ NOTE

1. T. Sergiovanni. (1994). *Building community in schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 170.