



SUMMARY OF THE REPORT:
Building a Human Resource System in the Boston Public Schools
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Abstract

In this paper, researchers Susan Moore Johnson and Morgaen L. Donaldson of the Harvard Graduate School of Education examine the efforts of the Boston Public Schools (BPS) to recruit, develop and retain high-quality teachers for all students. They document the considerable progress that has been made in practices such as recruitment and hiring, and identify areas, such as teacher assignment and induction, which still require focused attention and improvement. This paper concludes with recommendations for how BPS' approach to human resources could be further strengthened in order to attract and retain the best possible teachers for Boston's public schools.

A Decade of Progress

Researchers Johnson and Donaldson highlight the progress that the BPS has made with its initiative to "build a 21st century human resource organization". BPS' efforts have resulted in a more coherent, streamlined and responsive approach that includes:

- Timely recruitment of and support for candidates,
- A promising in-district initiative to prepare its own teachers (the Boston Teacher Residency),
- Streamlined and expedited procedures for hiring and assigning new recruits that can lead to better matches between teachers and schools,
- A centralized induction program to support novices through their first year,
- New roles for staff developers designed to support new teachers and to make a long-term teaching career in BPS more attractive and productive.

Ongoing Challenges

Though progress in these areas is evident, Boston's high attrition rate during the first three years of teaching reveals there are many challenges to address before the district can reach its goal of attracting, supporting and retaining a high-quality, diverse teaching force. Some of the major challenges highlighted in this report are:

- BPS continues to lose teachers of color and Black teachers in particular at a higher rate than White teachers.
- The district has little data about why teachers leave or where teachers go after the BPS.
- Induction programs, including the provision of mentors for all new teachers, are not being fully implemented.
- Teacher evaluation by principals is not occurring on a regular basis and is not consistent across schools. Thus, many teachers who are in need of assistance are not receiving it and teachers who are not effective are being granted tenure.

Recommendations for the Next Superintendent

- Build and maintain a complete and current database to monitor staffing changes at district and school levels.
- Initiate school-based induction district-wide.
- Provide the training and support for principals to ensure that they can effectively hire, support, and evaluate new teachers.
- Address the problems of hard-to-staff schools.
- Develop diverse, classroom-based roles that teachers may assume as they build a career in teaching.