

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL - CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS -

The goal of SMHC is to dramatically improve student achievement in large, urban public school districts by restructuring their human capital management systems. SMHC reforms aim to recruit top teacher, principal and central office talent and to performance-manage those individuals to improve the effectiveness of instruction in all classrooms. As part of this effort, SMHC is conducting case studies of effective SMHC practices in leading-edge districts and organizations. The case studies focus on the three major elements of all human capital management practices: talent acquisition, talent development and motivation and talent retention, as discussed in the foundational paper defining SMHC by Odden and Kelly (2008).

SMHC case studies that are analyzed in this cross-case analysis:

1. Boston
2. Chicago
3. Fairfax County
4. Long Beach
5. New York City

This paper is available in the Resources section of <http://www.smhc-cpre.org>.

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STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL: A CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF FIVE DISTRICTS

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This document is a cross-case analysis of five case studies of urban school districts prepared for the Strategic Management of Human Capital (SMHC) Project. The project represents a comprehensive examination of human capital management in five selected districts—Boston, New York City, Chicago, Long Beach, and Fairfax County. The case studies examine the multiple aspects of human capital management, including teacher and principal recruitment, selection, and placement; induction and mentoring; professional development; performance management (evaluation); and, compensation. In addition, SMHC has produced case studies of The New Teacher Project, Teach for America and New Leaders for New Schools, talent recruitment and development organizations that appear in several of these district cases. Finally, SMHC developed a case of Minnesota’s QComp program, which is an example of a statewide program designed to systemically improve teacher quality and effectiveness.¹ All are available in the Resources section of the SMHC web site: www.smhc-cpre.org.

The five districts for which SMHC developed case studies were selected for several reasons. All had experienced significant teacher and principal shortage and quality problems. Reputationally, several of them (among them Boston, Chicago, and New York City) had developed and initiated a variety of efforts to ameliorate these problems. Additionally, at least two of the districts (Long Beach and Fairfax County) were purported to have made significant strides in aligning teacher and principal development around a core vision of effective instruction.

¹ SMHC case studies have also been conducted of Teach For America, The New Teacher Project, New Leaders for New Schools, and Minnesota’s QComp Program. They are not part of this paper as it focuses only on school districts, not on state or national programs.

The five districts represent a range of urban circumstances. The smallest is Boston with 56,000 students, of which 41% are African American, 35% Hispanic, 14% White, and 9% Asian/Pacific Islander and other. The largest of the five is New York City, which also happens to be the largest school district in the United States, with 79,000 teachers and more than one million students, more than 60% of whom are minority and many of whom are from poverty households. Four districts out of the five— Boston, Chicago, Long Beach, and New York City—have heavy concentrations of poor and minority students and large numbers of students for whom English is not their first language.

These are districts that in many ways define the urban experience. Yet they also are districts that belie conventional wisdom. Three of the five districts—Long Beach, New York City, and Boston—have gained a measure of public recognition as a result of being recipients of the prestigious Broad Prize for Urban Education. Chicago has produced impressive gains in student performance and Fairfax has consistently maintained high levels of student achievement.

For most of these districts, implementing the components of strategic management of human capital is still very much a work in progress. Their efforts involve overhauling longstanding, often entrenched bureaucracies. This work often has been made more complicated by periodic budget shortfalls and uncertainties. Most importantly, despite challenges and obstacles, all five of these districts have displayed steady growth in measured student achievement.

Collecting the Data

SMHC researchers collected case study data in spring 2008. Data were organized around a common protocol and a common set of questions. Information was divided into four broad categories: 1) introduction and context designed to paint a descriptive picture of the district; 2)

talent acquisition describing recruitment, selection, and placement procedures for teachers and principals; 3) human resources transactional improvements targeted to streamlining and enhancing the effectiveness of the procedures integral to human capital management; and, 4) talent management, including induction and mentoring, professional development, performance management, and compensation.

Principal Findings

This paper reflects a cross-case analysis of the data collected. In other words, it brings together what we have learned by examining all five of the district case studies. While it is not possible to generalize from just five cases, the common threads that we find across these districts point to important trends useful to districts that look to reshape their strategic management of human capital.

Five principal findings emerge from the cross-case analysis:

- 1. Urban districts can recruit top quality teachers and principals by deploying a multi-faceted human resources strategy.**
- 2. Urban districts that have developed systems to recruit and retain high quality teachers and principals and improve student performance have restructured many of the human resources transactional processes.**
- 3. Even in urban districts that have solved their core staffing problems, processes for strategic management of teacher and principal talent have barely begun to address the need to develop valid and practical measures of teaching performance and student achievement, and use them to manage all HR decision making.**
- 4. Stable leadership from the school district, often buttressed by strong support from city officials, is necessary to build and sustain an effective system for strategic management of human capital.**
- 5. Union-management collaboration is requisite to many SMHC advances.**

The remainder of this paper explores in more detail each of these five findings. Readers who are interested in more information about any of the five districts are referred to the case studies themselves.

1. URBAN DISTRICTS CAN RECRUIT TOP QUALITY TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS BY DEPLOYING A MULTI-FACETED HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

The research is clear: Teachers are the most important determinant of student achievement. Having excellent teachers offers students the best guarantee that they will succeed academically.

Conventional wisdom has it that insufficient numbers of highly qualified teachers and principals choose to work in challenging urban environments. The five cases that are the subject of this study show clearly that conventional wisdom need not be controlling. Through the use of new pipelines, “grow your own” programs, and strategic relationships with university-based teacher preparation programs, and other strategies, urban districts can ensure they have a deep pool of teacher and principal talent.

Teacher Recruitment and Selection

Two of the districts that are the subject of this study—New York City and Chicago—make specific efforts to increase their teacher supply by partnering with new organizations with a mission to recruit teacher talent into urban districts. New York City hires 7,500 teachers a year, or nearly 10% of its teaching staff. In New York City, 30% of new teacher hires come through alternative routes, notably the Teaching Fellows Program, supported in part through a contract with The New Teacher Project, and Teach For America. By 2005, nearly 40% of the new teachers in New York City’s poorest schools were Teaching Fellows or Teach For America

Corps members. Working with these new teacher pipeline organizations is intended, in part, to narrow the gap in teacher qualifications between high poverty and low poverty schools.²

In an additional effort to improve teacher quality in the City's most challenging schools, New York City eliminated all "emergency certified" teachers and initiated the Housing Support Program which offers up to \$15,000 to experienced math, science, and special education teachers who are employed outside New York City and agree to teach for at least 3 years in New York City's high needs schools. Teachers of Tomorrow, a state initiative, offers newly hired teachers the chance to earn a tax-free grant of \$3,400 for each year of satisfactory service up to 4 years for teaching in a high needs school.

New York City also works with local universities to promote teaching among undergraduate and graduate students. The district provides tuition reimbursement at the City University of New York rate for teachers certified in non-shortage areas who are willing to become certified in shortage areas. As part of a general effort to attract a large pool of qualified teacher candidates, the New York City school system and the United Federation of Teachers (the local teachers' union) negotiated a 43% salary increase for teacher salaries from 2002 to 2008.

As New York City works to increase its pool of teacher talent, the system continues to seek factors that predict teacher effectiveness so that only teachers who are likely to succeed are hired and then tenured. New York City currently is collecting data on observed characteristics of teacher applicants and will track changes over time as a way of informing the selection process.

Chicago works with a handful of alternative certification programs to increase the pool of qualified candidates for teaching positions in that district. Among these are the Chicago Teaching Fellows (another offshoot of The New Teacher Project) and the Academy for Urban

² Research in urban districts consistently shows that the least experienced, often the least well qualified teachers, are assigned in disproportionate numbers to high poverty, low-performing schools.

School Leadership, a program for mid-career professionals interested in becoming teachers, as well as Teach For America. By cooperating with these programs, the district has reduced the teaching vacancy rates in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) from 40% to a little more than 3%.

To improve its pool of potential teachers, Chicago also has developed new marketing strategies, partnerships with local universities, and training to help principals be more systematic in the selection of teachers. It actively recruits teachers from top quality schools of education within a 500 mile radius of the district, thus insuring that all individuals who take a job in the district are within a 1 day drive from home. One of the district's special foci has been on hiring more minority candidates.

In an effort to entice potential teacher candidates to consider a teaching career in Chicago, the district sponsors the CPS Summer Fellows Program. This program invites undergraduate and graduate students from top tier universities who are within a year of earning their teaching certification to spend the summer in Chicago and get to know the city.

Boston has chosen the route of offering its own pre-service preparation program. The Boston Teacher Residency trains teachers specifically for the Boston Public Schools. Begun because the district was unsuccessful persuading local colleges and universities to cooperate with it, the residency program provides the opportunity for pre-service teachers to work with mentors as they take courses designed to prepare them to teach in Boston schools. The program has had the salutary effect not only of recruiting more high quality teachers, but recruiting more highly qualified minority candidates as well. In addition, Boston also supports Emerging Teachers, a program for mid-career professionals who are seeking to make the transition to teaching.

The Long Beach Unified School District in Southern California takes a somewhat different tack as part of its efforts to recruit qualified teacher candidates. Early in its school

improvement efforts, Long Beach developed a close partnership with California State University at Long Beach and with the Long Beach Community College. Initially this three-way partnership was designed to develop strategies to improve student achievement. As the partnership matured, it became a vehicle to attract Long Beach residents to teach in the city's schools.

Long Beach also makes considerable use of the "grow your own" concept. Over the course of several years, the district has assumed leadership of California State University (CSU) Long Beach's teacher and administrator preparation programs. The vast majority of teachers and principals in Long Beach are graduates of these programs, which now are geared specifically to preparing teachers and administrators to serving in the Long Beach schools. Long Beach staff serve as "supervising instructors" for most of the student teachers who earn their teaching license through CSU Long Beach.

Fairfax County conducts year-round recruiting at 85 regional colleges. In order to attract potential candidates, the district offers a variety of incentives, including interest-free loans to defray moving expenses, discounts on health club memberships, and discounts on rent.

All five of the case study districts use the traditional means of seeking potential teacher and principal candidates through local and regional job fairs. As has been noted, however, they also aggressively seek candidates through alternative certification programs, partnerships with colleges and universities, and creative use of "grow your own" programs. Nevertheless, designing a fail safe method for teacher selection remains a vexing issue. Districts continue to try to find just the right blend of qualities and competencies that gives them greater assurance that their new teacher hires will serve the district and its students well.

Early Hiring/No Bumping

One of the challenges urban districts often face is being able to make job offers to well qualified candidates in a timely manner. A combination of budget delays and contract requirements often results in initial hiring being postponed until late summer, by which time many prime candidates already have been snapped up by other districts. A number of the case study districts have developed means to offer early hiring so they do not lose their best applicants to calendar and budget considerations.

Long Beach offers employment contracts in December for the following September to individuals who can fill positions in high needs areas. These teachers are not given specific assignments at the time of hiring, but are provided with the promise of a job. Long Beach also brings applicants in high needs areas on board as substitutes the year before they will be hired, giving them an advance opportunity to get the feel of the district and prepare for their jobs.

Chicago also makes early offers to candidates it is eager to employ in the district. In an effort to know more precisely how many openings will exist and where they will be, the district offers financial incentives as well as pension credit for unused sick leave to teachers who make it known early that they plan to retire or resign.

New York City offers “central commitments” to qualified teachers in shortage areas who are seeking teaching positions in the district. Not unlike the situation in Long Beach, these candidates are offered a job but not a specific assignment. Teaching Fellows and Teach For America Corps members who have trained in New York City also are guaranteed jobs in the district. In order to facilitate timely hiring, school budgets in New York City are determined in early spring and voluntary transfers take place in April through early August, giving schools ample opportunity to make their staffing plans.

Boston also modified its budget calendar, moved forward the process of having senior teachers apply for new vacancies in schools, and moved up the calendar for schools selecting teaching staff to fill vacancies.

Staffing schools with qualified teachers who are appropriate “fits” with the school’s program and needs is a complicated process. In addition to new hires being selected and placed, teachers currently in the district are offered the opportunity to transfer to available teaching openings in other schools. This process is governed, in jurisdictions with collective bargaining,³ by the transfer and assignment provisions of the contract between the school district and the local teachers’ union. In many of the case districts, senior teachers are allowed to apply for school vacancies early in the process, but in most cases, schools make the final selection and seniority does not trump school choice.

One of the dilemmas that many urban districts have faced is the practice of “bumping” which allows a teacher, based on seniority, to “bump” another less senior teacher from his or her position. Bumping can result in considerable uncertainty for schools and programs.

Four of the case study districts that previously allowed bumping have eliminated it. Boston, Chicago and New York City have abolished bumping entirely. Long Beach only allows it in cases in which the position in question is held by a temporary teacher.

Chicago has one of the most progressive hiring, transfer and assignment policies. Chicago does not have seniority bumping. Principals have discretion over new teacher hires and can hire once they have their budgets. Teachers who are re-assigned (and the numbers are small, about 1%), must look for new positions along with other candidates, but schools make all final selection decisions.

³ Four of the five districts that are the subjects of these case studies—New York, Boston, Chicago, and Long Beach—are in states that authorize collective bargaining.

Finding Qualified Principals

Many urban districts face the challenge, and recurring problem, of securing adequate numbers of well-qualified principals. Chicago, for example, has an annual principal turnover rate of 10%. Half the principals in Long Beach will retire within the next 5 years. Fairfax has lost 60% of its principals in the last 5 years. So what do the case study districts do about this problem?

Chicago employs the Fellowship in Urban School Leadership, a program which allows experienced leaders from top universities to explore urban issues as a way of helping them to consider big city school district leadership opportunities. Chicago's Pathways to School Leadership prepares district teachers as potential school administrators. Chicago principals also are drawn from the University of Illinois-Chicago's education doctoral program, from the New Leaders for New Schools Program, and from the Leadership Academy for the Urban Network for Chicago (LAUNCH). Finally, the district works with TFA/Harvard, a program that pairs Teach For America with the Harvard Graduate School of Education to create a new principal pipeline.

Long Beach, which recruits nearly all of its principals from inside the district, runs specialized workshops for individuals who are interested in becoming school administrators. The district offers a multi-day workshop for assistant principals seeking to move to principal positions. This includes 5 days of "shadowing" a working principal. The district also offers a 3 day workshop for teachers interested in becoming assistant principals as well as a fast track program for teacher leaders who want to earn their administrative credentials. Much of this work is offered in cooperation with CSU Long Beach. As is the case with the teacher credential

program, the district plays a significant role in operating the program leading to administrative certification.

Fairfax selects most of its principals from inside the district. LEAD, the Wallace Foundation-funded Leadership for Educational Achievement in Districts, helps to prepare assistant principals to become principals and teachers to become assistant principals.

Many New York City principals are prepared through the New York City Leadership Academy, a nonprofit organization with three tracks to recruit, train, and support principals in New York City public schools. In addition, New Leaders for New Schools, which trains 8 to 10 New York City principals a year, offers a year-long paid residency for individuals to work with mentor principals. The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, New York City's administrators' union, offers an advanced leadership program for assistant principals who want to become principals. And to make the job more appealing, New York City has raised principals' salaries substantially, up 33% since 2000.

Boston, as part of its effort to recruit and prepare well qualified principals, operates the Boston Principal Fellows Program, based on the New York City Leadership academy model. In addition, Boston's version of "grow your own" for principals offers a year-long residency for principals-in-training in the Boston Public Schools.

Five case districts target hiring toward principals who participate in district provided training programs or a program provided by another organization that is partnering with the district to select and train principal candidates. This is true also of Chicago, where local school councils actually hire principals. Virtually no principal is hired in this district with just preparation in a university-based principal training program. They must also pass a rigorous eligibility process.

All of the case study districts, then, make specific efforts to recruit, place, and support well qualified teachers and principals. As testament to their efforts, New York City, Chicago, and Boston opened this school year with virtually no teacher vacancies. The stories of these five districts reveal that a strategic plan and district commitment can bring top teacher and principal talent to even the most challenging district environments.

2. URBAN DISTRICTS THAT HAVE DEVELOPED SYSTEMS TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS AND IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE HAVE RESTRUCTURED MANY OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES TRANSACTIONAL PROCESSES

Urban districts are replete with “war stories” about dysfunctional human resources management systems, systems that cannot keep accurate track of where their employees work, or manage to get their employees paid on time, or ensure that health and retirement benefits are correctly calculated. The districts that are the subjects of these five case studies have made enormous leaps forward in terms of transactional HR improvements.

A Service Orientation

One of the most significant HR shifts is the cultural move toward a service orientation. Whereas HR departments in urban districts often are impersonal and bureaucratic, these districts have made concerted efforts to reshape human resources so that its primary function is to serve the districts’ employees.

Long Beach, Chicago, New York City, Fairfax, and Boston all have gone to considerable lengths to ensure that their human resources operations are customer-focused, dedicated to smoothing the way for those who are new to the system. New teachers can easily become lost in a bureaucracy they neither understand nor control. They can become frustrated, and this frustration can cause them to question their willingness to make the kind of professional commitment the district needs.

The HR departments in the five case study districts, however, make it their business to assure that new teachers are well taken care of—that they are paid on time, paid the right amount, and are signed up for benefits. Some of these districts have taken the service orientation a step further. Boston, for example, has established three business service centers to provide localized support services and appoints a new teacher support team, composed of three people from the human resources department, whose sole job is to tend to the human resources needs of new teachers.

Fairfax has a welcome center established at district headquarters. New York City has established a Talent Office that works with the HR division specifically to smooth the recruitment and retention of teachers and principals and help principals to support talent management in their schools. The system also offers a one-stop call center where district employees, including new teachers, are able to secure timely and accurate answers to their questions regarding matters such as certification, payroll, and benefits.

As part of this new customer orientation, at least two of these districts—Chicago and Long Beach—have also made concerted efforts to end the typical district job “silos” that too often characterizes bureaucracies replacing it with cross-functional teams that are able comprehensively to tackle and resolve HR-related problems.

Greater Use of Technology

The five case study districts have also made significant use of technology to improve the efficiency and accuracy of their recruitment and screening procedures. In most of these districts, nearly all aspects of recruitment and screening are conducted online and electronically.

In Fairfax, recruitment is done electronically via the district’s website and prescreening is conducted electronically. Fairfax, along with New York City and Boston, uses TeacherInsight,

an online assessment developed by the Gallup organization. This tool measures teachers' values and behaviors as a way of gauging individuals' suitability for teaching.

Teachers find out about job openings in Long Beach through the district's website as well as through teacher-specific websites such as teachers-teachers.com and enjoin.org. These latter two resources, in particular, assist the district to advertise for positions in high needs schools and subjects. Potential Long Beach teachers apply for positions online.

Technology also plays a significant role in screening and interviewing Long Beach job applicants as well. Principals are trained to use the Haberman STAR teacher interview tool, a combination of online screener and follow-up face-to-face interview. Using a scenario-based interview protocol, the Haberman system assesses attributes and skills of individual applicants, including persistence, ability to translate theory to practice, and building relationships with students. Long Beach uses a similar tool to screen potential district administrators.

Chicago has undertaken a wholesale reorganization of its human resources functions. Employing the STARS (Start-up, TurnAround, Realign, Sustain success) model of business evolution, the district reduced the time from application to contact from 61 days to 2 days. The American Productivity and Quality Center in 2006 recognized Chicago as a model for its recruitment and hiring practices.

New York City, too, offers online applications for teachers and principals. Like Fairfax, New York City uses Gallup's TeacherInsight interview tool. In New York City, the New Teacher Finder Tool, an online search system, facilitates matching teachers with available school openings. The New Teacher Finder Tool also enables principals to review applications and Insight interview results electronically.

New York City has taken specific steps to ensure that new teachers, once hired, do not miss a paycheck. Through Teach NYC.net, applications are linked directly to the school district's payroll system. In 3 years, New York City increased the number of new teachers who were paid on time from 50% to nearly 100%.

As with the other four case study districts, all new teacher candidates in Boston apply for jobs online. In addition to using Gallup's TeacherInsight, the district also maintains an electronic applicant tracking system.

Urban districts, then, can boost the effectiveness of their HR systems by shifting to a service-orientation and employing technology to make the screening and hiring process faster and more efficient. We should also note that both The New Teacher Project and Teach For American make extensive use of computer technologies and online application tools in their recruitment strategies; further, TNTP has worked with many districts, including both New York City and Chicago, to create and use online application and screening tools.

3. EVEN IN URBAN DISTRICTS THAT HAVE SOLVED THEIR CORE STAFFING PROBLEMS, PROCESSES FOR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL TALENT HAVE BARELY BEGUN TO ADDRESS THE NEED TO DEVELOP VALID AND PRACTICAL MEASURES OF TEACHING PERFORMANCE AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, AND USE THEM TO MANAGE ALL HR DECISION MAKING

Induction and mentoring programs for new teachers (and sometimes for new principals) are intensive and well developed in most of the case study sites. Other aspects of strategic management of human capital—professional development, performance evaluation, and new forms of compensation—have more room for growth.

Induction and Mentoring

Research is clear about the importance of induction and mentoring for new teachers. Studies have shown that novice teachers who receive support in their initial year or two are more

likely to be able more quickly to move beyond classroom management issues and get to the actual work of teaching and learning.

Each of the five case study districts provides support and assistance to teachers who are just beginning their careers. Chicago's primary induction and mentoring program carries the acronym GOLDEN (Guidance, Orientation, Leadership, Development, and Empowering New teachers). This program supports new teachers in their first 2 years of practice with mentors who provide support, do classroom observations and model lessons, help to engage the novices in professional learning communities at their schools, and make school-based professional development opportunities available. The program is structured around Illinois' Professional Teaching Standards.

The district also has two pilot programs for new teacher mentoring. The first is the Chicago New Teacher Center. Patterned on the pioneering mentoring work of the New Teacher Center at the University of California at Santa Cruz, this program provides fulltime mentors who observe new teachers in their classrooms and offer regular feedback using a set of formative evaluation tools. The second is the result of a partnership with the Chicago Teachers Union (which is an AFT affiliate) to support new teachers in 10 "Fresh Start" schools that employs a peer assistance and review model.

Long Beach makes extensive use of its own comprehensive version of California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program. Structured around the California Standards for the Teaching Profession, the 2 year program, which assigns a mentor to each new teacher, is the result of district research and judgment about the knowledge and skills teachers ought to master in their initial years of teaching.

Fairfax's Great Beginnings provides an on site mentor and once-a-month seminars during the school year for all new teachers, with supplemental seminars for teachers in low-performing schools.

After an initial mentoring pilot aligned with the UC Santa Cruz mentoring model, Boston launched the Teacher Developer program. A cooperative effort of the school district and the Boston Teachers Union, the program is targeted to teachers new to teaching (as opposed to just new to teaching in Boston). Working with one of 16 full-time Teacher Developers, new teachers are provided support around Boston's eight dimensions of effective teaching. In addition to the full-time Teacher Developers who work district-wide, 75 part-time Teacher Developers work exclusively with new teachers in their own schools. Finally, the district offers a voluntary online support course (TEAMS) for second and third year teachers. This course makes use of both retired teachers as well as currently practicing teachers.

In 2008, New York City shifted responsibility for mentoring from the system to individual schools, after a successful pilot of the new teacher induction program from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Principals tailor mentoring to meet schools' needs. Under an agreement between the school system and the United Federation of Teachers, each school establishes a New Teacher Induction Committee. The committee, on which teachers hold the majority, develops and submits to the Office of New Teacher Induction a plan for in-school support of novice teachers. School plans and mentor capacity are supported through Lead Instructional Mentors (LIMs). Typically individuals who have served as full-time mentors for 2 to 3 years, LIMs are trained in the New Teacher Center (UC Santa Cruz) model.

In addition, the district maintains an online tracking system for mentor interactions (the New Teacher Induction Mentoring System). New York City continues to focus on developing a

system that will both provide support for new teachers and ensure that only well qualified teachers earn tenure in the system.

However, none of the case study districts maintain the same teaching standards and performance rubrics that are used for their new teacher induction program to serve as an anchor for ongoing professional development, tenure review, evaluation, or career progression.

While induction and mentoring for new teachers receives a good deal of attention in the case study sites, mentoring for new principals is often somewhat less well developed, or at least less intense. Fairfax appoints a “principal in residence,” a successful principal who is assigned to the district’s central office to be available to work with new principals. Long Beach has a set of administrative coaches and holds monthly workshops for principals who are new to their jobs.

Chicago also maintains a coaching program that pairs experienced retired principals to coach new principals. New York City’s Leadership Academy provides tailored support specifically for new principals including those who open small schools. In Boston, each first year principal is assigned a mentor. The district also provides “just-in-time” workshops for novice principals to help them as problems crop up.

For districts that partner with New Leaders for New Schools, one of the hallmarks of the principal development portion of that program is a year-long residency for each new principal candidate, paired with both a mentor principal and a coach from the New Leaders organization.

Professional Development

When it comes to teacher professional development, the research is clear. Effective professional development is standards- and (largely) subject-matter based, is continuous (“one shot” workshops do not work), and is closely related to the work teachers do in their schools and classrooms (such as teaching standards-based curriculum units). In short, professional

development is about capacity building—strategically developing teacher talent and instructional skills so that teachers can positively impact student learning. Each of the five case study districts devotes considerable attention and resources to attempting to provide useful teacher professional development.

In Long Beach, teacher professional development has concentrated in recent years on issues such as enhancing teachers' content knowledge, developing teachers' skills in differentiating instruction, and using data to shape instructional practices. The district conducts an annual needs assessment of teachers, prepares a set of selections for the coming year, and publishes an online catalog of offerings. Long Beach consistently has a waiting list for its professional development programs.

Teacher professional development in Chicago might best be described as “fragmented.” Schools often select their own professional development programs. District-led professional development concentrates on literacy, mathematics, and science centered largely on district textbook adoptions. The district professional development also draws on school and regional instructional coaching support. The Chicago Teachers Union's QuEST (Quality Educational Standards in Teaching) Center also provides ongoing professional development offerings for teachers.

A work-in-progress in Fairfax, the district is endeavoring to align its still emerging vision of instruction with its professional development program. As part of developing this new system, Fairfax is establishing an electronic system for managing professional development for teachers (and administrators). The new system will allow individuals to find course offerings and register for courses online.

Boston employs a collaborative coaching and learning model, focusing particularly on literacy and mathematics, in terms of teacher professional development. It has worked with the Boston Plan for Excellence on this model for several years; the model includes placing instructional coaches in all schools. Today, most professional development is at the school's discretion.

New York City decentralized its professional development this year. The district provides a “marketplace” of professional development services delivered through school support organizations selected by schools. Some professional development, such as that provided around the district's core curriculum, is offered centrally.

It is unclear the degree to which any of the districts' professional development programs is linked to the teaching standards that undergird their teacher induction programs, or their teacher evaluation systems. Thus, issues of professional development program structure and delivery, as well as the alignment of professional development to other core HR programs, remain unresolved.

Professional Development for Principals

Long Beach, working with the Ukleja Center for Ethical Management at CSU Long Beach, has focused recently on helping principals to have “honest conversations” with teachers about the teachers' practice. Principal professional development in Chicago, like that for teachers, is best described as “fragmented.” Several offices within the district structure offer professional development programs, focused on specific school reform models or supporting instruction in key content areas. In addition, Chicago principals can access professional development from their former higher education preparation institutions.

In Fairfax, professional development for principals centers currently on assisting principals to build professional learning communities in their schools. New York City has established the Principal Portal, an online web-based compilation of tools and resources that also will have the capacity to deliver professional development electronically.

In sum, though assessing its effectiveness in terms of improving teaching or administrative practice is beyond the scope of this study, professional development for teachers as well as for principals in the five urban districts seems to be searching for clear focus, clear linkage to other HR programs and alignment with the core curriculum programs of the district. Further, it is not clear that principal professional development is clearly linked to the skills they need to help teachers become better at teaching. Thus, another issue is the lack of strong connections between principal professional development and teacher development.

Performance Management

Effective performance management, or evaluation, is a continuation of effective professional development. In other words, evaluating performance is part of the continuous process of helping professionals do their jobs more effectively. As part of this process, good evaluation systems also ensure that those individuals who should not be teaching or managing schools are not doing so.

Performance management is an area that lags in the case study sites. Most of the districts rely primarily on a conventional evaluation system for teachers that consists of a limited number of administrator classroom observations and written reviews which sometimes, though not always, are based on a common set of standards and expectations that hold district-wide. Even when a common set of standards might be used, few if any documents define what the standard is intended to connote, and there are no performance rubrics for any of the standards. Thus,

evaluation results can be idiosyncratic across teachers and evaluators. This kind of system, used in many school districts across the United States, often is criticized as not effectively measuring teacher quality or student learning or providing useful assistance to improve teaching practice.

Long Beach adheres to the type of evaluation system described above, using a 20-year old protocol. While the district and the local teachers' union, the Teachers Association of Long Beach which is an NEA affiliate, have been working on designing new evaluation procedures, that work has proceeded for several years without much result.

Long Beach also maintains a peer assistance and review (PAR) program for underperforming experienced teachers.⁴ Under this program, successful experienced teachers provide intensive support to struggling teachers and then, at the end of a designated period of time (usually a year), evaluate these teachers' practice. A joint union-management board determines if the teachers who have undergone PAR support are sufficiently improved to be released from the program and resume their usual classroom duties, or if the district should consider pursuing dismissal action.

Chicago, too, maintains a traditional teacher evaluation system. Teachers are evaluated by school administrators (every other year if they have had satisfactory reviews, every year if they have not). Evaluations are based on performance standards and indicators that are largely compliance-based (i.e., "maintains lesson plans and a seating chart") rather than linked to improving teaching and learning.

Like Long Beach, Chicago is working with its local teachers' union (the Chicago Teachers Union) in piloting a revised evaluation process. Chicago's new pilot teacher evaluation system, based on the Charlotte Danielson framework, is designed to include multiple classroom

⁴ Long Beach initiated this program as a result of state law requiring peer review for experienced teachers who receive unsatisfactory evaluations.

observations, a teaching portfolio, and student work samples. The program will be piloted in 50 schools, and then expanded.

As referenced above, with the cooperation of the CTU, Chicago has launched the Fresh Start program in 10 schools. This program includes an intensive mentoring and peer evaluation system. Thus, not only is Chicago developing two different teacher evaluation systems, but both of these evaluation systems have different teaching standards and performance rubrics than the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which is strongly supported in Chicago, as well as those for the Teacher Advancement Program, which is a new teacher quality-teacher compensation program the district is piloting. In short, Chicago might have several different teacher evaluation systems operating within the district at some point; although these systems are not absolutely in conflict with each other, it will take some effort to align them more strongly.

Fairfax uses a system focused on 22 “domains” to conduct formative and summative teacher evaluations of teachers every 3 years. The evaluation system is meant to identify areas for improvement as well as professional development goals. However, Fairfax’s evaluation system makes no explicit connection between performance standards and the district’s vision of instruction.

In New York City, tenured teachers with satisfactory ratings can be evaluated using a goal setting system and methods for demonstrating professional growth. Those who do not choose this method, new and probationary teachers, or tenured teachers, who have received unsatisfactory ratings, are evaluated using a traditional evaluation system. Through the Peer Intervention Plus Program (PIP+), an agreement between the school system and the UFT, underperforming tenured teachers are assigned mentors to work intensively with them. The district is searching for a more robust approach to teacher evaluation, and a system that could

serve as an instruction anchor for multiple HR programs, from new teacher induction, to mentoring, professional development, evaluation and perhaps even to compensation.

Boston, too, maintains a largely traditional teacher evaluation system. The district is working to incorporate its dimensions of effective teaching into performance evaluations, but has not yet accomplished this. In a recent agreement between the district and the Boston Teachers Union, a new peer assistance program was begun.⁵ Four full-time teachers are available to work with struggling teachers who receive unsatisfactory reviews.

Like professional development for principals, evaluation for principals is less systematic than it is for teachers. Long Beach uses 10 “power standards” as the appraisal system for administrators. Assistant superintendents evaluate principals for their first 3 years on the job and every other year thereafter.

Chicago’s old principal evaluation system, loosely based in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards, is being replaced by a new system. The new system will have two principal components: goal setting, carried out largely by the principal, and an instructional leadership evaluation focused on school performance. Fairfax’s principal evaluations are conducted by cluster assistant superintendents who evaluate on 20 performance standards grouped into five domains, including planning and assessment and instructional leadership. Student achievement goals or results do not figure prominently in principal ratings.

In New York City, principals are evaluated against individual performance agreements. Evaluations are aligned with district measures of student performance.

The case studies stop short of declaring the extent to which the district evaluation systems currently in place are “successful;” in other words, how effectively they build the

⁵ This is just peer assistance, not peer assistance and review. The union rejected incorporating the review aspect in the program.

capacity of teachers and principals to do their jobs well and how efficiently they remove from schools and classrooms those individuals who should not be there. What is clear, however, is that most of these systems of performance management, or evaluation, require systematic time, attention, and resources to render them useful to improving teaching (or school management) and thereby improve student learning. It would not be an overstatement to say that both teacher and principal evaluation systems in these districts – and probably in most districts across the country – need substantial restructuring and enhancement, and stronger connections to all of the key HR programs in order to make them substantively stronger and more strategic.

Compensation

Developing and implementing new ways to structure teacher compensation currently is high on many local, state, and even the national policy agenda. Teachers in most school districts in the United States are paid on the basis of the single salary schedule. This pay construct awards teachers higher salaries for longevity and post-baccalaureate units earned. The system, begun just after World War I to bring equity to teacher pay and then popularized after World War II to reduce a serious shortage of teachers, had the ameliorative effect of equalizing salaries between men and women (men were paid more), between black teachers and white (white teachers were paid more) and between elementary and secondary teachers (secondary teachers were paid more).

However, with the advent of standards-based education, the single salary schedule came under considerable fire, accused of inadequately measuring teacher quality, failing to take into account measured levels of student learning and not strongly supporting the strategic thrusts of

standard-based education reform. Thus, a number of states and school districts began to design and implement alternatives to the traditional pay construct.⁶

The five case study sites have, by and large, not ventured deeply into teacher alternative compensation territory. Although the districts all are attuned to ensuring that teachers' salaries are competitive with surrounding jurisdictions so that teachers are less tempted to seek jobs elsewhere, teacher compensation remains largely tied to the single salary schedule.

Beyond pay for experience and units, these districts' salary systems provide financial incentives that reward specific kinds of teacher achievements (typically earning advanced certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) and extra pay for extra work.

Chicago, which otherwise maintains the single salary schedule for teachers, offers a \$3,000 annual stipend for the 10 year life of the National Board certificate. Alone among the five case study districts, Chicago is a recipient of a federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant. Under an agreement between the Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Teachers Union, this is money is being utilized to establish the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) model at 18 Chicago schools and will eventually reach 40 schools.⁷

Boston offers an incentive worth 4% above base pay for teachers who earn National Board Certification. Teacher Developers are eligible for an incentive equivalent to 5% above base pay.

⁶ The federal government even weighed in with the \$99 million Teacher Incentive Fund, providing competitive grants to states and school districts to develop new forms of teacher compensation. See also the series of new compensation papers developed by the SMHC project in the Resources section of the project's web site: www.smhc-cpre.org.

⁷ The Teacher Advancement Program, developed by the Milken Foundation and designed to enhance teacher quality and capacity, includes four principal components: 1) ongoing applied professional growth; 2) instructionally focused accountability; 3) performance-based compensation; and, 4) multiple career paths for teachers.

Long Beach specially awards credit on the salary schedule to teachers new to the district who have analogs to fulltime teaching experience, such as private or overseas teaching. The district also provides salary “bumps” for speech and language specialists and financial incentives to teachers who serve as mentors and coaches. As in the other districts, teachers who earn Board Certification also are eligible for financial boosts, in Long Beach up to 10% above base pay.

Fairfax⁸ offers teachers a financial incentive for earning National Board Certification. In addition, Fairfax offers extended day and year contracts (additional money for more hours and days worked) for teachers in selected high poverty, hard-to-staff schools. Fairfax’s Teacher Leadership Program affords these teachers the opportunity to develop and display their leadership skills by helping to build professional learning communities in their schools and serving as mentors.

Of the five districts, New York City has taken the largest steps in terms of rethinking teacher compensation. Under an agreement between the New York City Public Schools and the UFT, 205 New York City high need schools this year (200 next year) are eligible for financial group performance awards based on improvements in student achievement scores. In New York City as well, lead teachers earn \$10,000 annual bonuses.

The structure of principals’ salaries has received less attention. Principals typically are paid on the basis of established salary schedules, providing higher pay for more years of experience, but not typically related to student achievement. In Long Beach and Chicago, principals’ salaries are also graduated according to the size of their schools. New York City principals are eligible for \$25,000 bonus on the basis of improved student performance.

⁸ Fairfax is the home of the original, and largely unsuccessful, merit pay plan of the 1980s. This program awarded teachers bonus money on the basis of principal evaluations. The system foundered because evaluations were not typically based on a common set of standards and the amount of money was capped, resulting in only some teachers who otherwise would have qualified for the bonus actually receiving checks.

Despite the publicly displayed policy interest altering the construct of teacher salaries, the five urban districts that are the subjects of these case studies have made only quite modest efforts at change in this arena.

A Word About Value-Added

Value added measurement (VAM)—using student test scores calculated on a growth trajectory to appraise the “value” teachers add to students’ learning—is being used by ever larger numbers of school districts as one component of comprehensive evaluation and compensation systems. VAM has its proponents and critics. Proponents argue that VAM is an accurate measure of teacher quality as it is based on hard student achievement data. Critics assert that the problem with VAM is precisely that it is based only on student achievement scores, an imperfect measure at best.

Among the five case study districts, two have relatively cautious engagement with value-added, one is considering it, and two do not use it at all.

Chicago is designing a system that will be able to show value-added for both teachers and schools; the district intends to use school value added as part of the Chicago TAP program and principal evaluation. New York City’s group performance award compensation system, described in the previous subsection, uses value added scores as the basis of teacher bonuses. New York City also is engaged in a pilot study of 2,500 teachers in 140 schools to develop a statistically sound value added method of determining teachers’ impact on student achievement and determining reliable uses for these data.

Boston is considering the use of value-added, but has not yet designed or implemented a program. Neither Long Beach nor Fairfax uses VAM.

4. STABLE LEADERSHIP FROM THE SCHOOL DISTRICT, OFTEN BUTTRESSED BY STRONG SUPPORT FROM CITY OFFICIALS, IS NECESSARY TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM FOR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL

It is an open secret in education that urban school district superintendents have notoriously short tenures, averaging about 3 years in a district. The constant turnover of leadership at the top can create instability and uncertainty as a new leader comes in and, in an effort to make his or her mark, upends programs and systems the predecessor has put in place. Sometimes churn is good. Not all systems or all reforms are educationally sound. Some amount of reexamination and revision is useful. But the revolving door of leadership can make it difficult to establish programs that have a long enough shelf life to determine whether or not they are successful.

The five districts that are the subjects of these case studies have had stable leadership at the top for a number of years—Carl Cohn and Chris Steinhauser in Long Beach (Steinhauser largely continued Cohn’s policies and structures) since 1992; Joel Klein in New York City since 2002; Arne Duncan in Chicago since 2001; Tom Payzant in Boston for 11 years until his retirement in 2006 (with Carol Johnson seeming to be continuing his basic thrusts); and Jack Dale in Fairfax since 2004. The stability of this leadership, whether one agrees or not with the specific programs and policies, has provided time for reforms to be put in place and work a while before judgment is pronounced.

In addition, a number of these district chief executive officers have strong ties to their local, often very powerful, mayors. Arne Duncan reports directly to the mayor in Chicago. Joel Klein was appointed by, and is responsible to, New York City’s mayor Michael Bloomberg. Tom Payzant had a close working relationship with Boston’s mayor, and each of those mayors

has been in office for several years. Thus those three districts have had stability of both superintendent and mayoral leadership.

The extent to which the stability at the top has made a substantive difference in the types of programs in each district is not yet a settled question. But what can be said with assurance is that stable leadership in the superintendent’s office, coupled with strong endorsement from city hall, has created a “zone of tolerance” for districts to audition and, in some cases, implement more fundamentally, a range of reform programs.

5. UNION-MANAGEMENT COLLABORATION IS REQUISITE TO MANY SMHC ADVANCES

In the 37 states that authorize collective bargaining, teachers in individual school districts elect a single organization to represent them and negotiate with the district a legally binding contract⁹ that covers wages, hours and terms and conditions of employment. Issues that commonly are negotiated include transfer and assignment procedures, compensation levels and arrangements, evaluation procedures, professional development, and, in some cases, mentoring and induction.

Collective bargaining is designed to engage teachers (through their unions) in making significant decisions related to their professional lives. Some districts and their unions maintain cooperative working relationships; in others, the relationship tends to be more contentious, even adversarial in some places. More commonly, labor-management relationships are mixed, sometimes collaborative and sometimes tense depending on the issue.

Four of the five case study sites are in states with collective bargaining—New York City, Chicago, Long Beach, and Boston.¹⁰ Teachers in New York City, Chicago, and Boston are

⁹ Though often called the “teachers’ contract,” the agreement is actually a bilateral one and must include the signatures of the school board (or the superintendent acting on the board’s behalf) and the union.

¹⁰ Virginia does not have a collective bargaining law so Fairfax does not negotiate a contract with its teachers.

represented by affiliates of the American Federation of Teachers; teachers in Long Beach are represented by a National Education Association affiliate.

In our case study districts, collectively bargained agreements have impacted a number of SMHC elements. Just drawing from the written case studies (a more complete list would require a thorough review of each contract), several arise.

Chicago and the CTU negotiated peer review for teachers at selected schools and is collaboratively developing a comprehensive new teacher evaluation system; the latter is being facilitated by the executive director of the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC). For several years the union has operated the QuEST to provide targeted professional development for the district's teachers. The district and union are also jointly involved in the Teacher Incentive Fund project.

In New York City, contracts between the district and the UFT in 2002, 2005, and 2006 raised beginning teacher salaries by 43% and gave principals the authority to make hiring decisions. Contract amendments also ended the practice of bumping and the involuntary placement of teachers in schools. A New Teacher Induction Committee was established at each school by contract to oversee new teacher mentoring and a peer review program, targeted to underperforming experienced teachers, was begun.

Boston changed its contract with the Boston Teachers Union to offer early contracts for new teachers in areas of need, compressed the hiring and assignment timeline, altered the seniority transfer system, added Teacher Developers to mentor new teachers, and initiated a peer assistance program.

The union-management agreements described above are reflective of the kinds of bilateral accords that often are requisite to developing and implementing SMHC reforms. They

reflect the reality in urban school districts that union-management collaboration often is essential to moving forward.

CONCLUSION

The five district cases that comprise this study are illustrative of urban districts and the SMHC challenges they face. Underlying whatever changes these districts have made to their strategic management of human capital practices, they all maintain high expectations for student achievement as well as for the professionals in the schools. They place considerable emphasis on building teacher and principal capacity and, importantly, all demonstrate a steady trajectory of improving achievement.

While these districts have made a number of strides in the area of strategic management of human capital, they also demonstrate that substantial SMHC challenges remain. These include:

1. Sustaining the recruitment and placement of high quality teachers and principals;
2. Developing systems that are able to predict, with greater accuracy and effectiveness, the quality of new hires and their prospects for success in the system;
3. Developing and implementing more effective teacher and principal performance management (evaluation) systems and incorporating tenure into this professional set of processes; and,
4. Thinking more comprehensively about new forms of teacher compensation.

Despite challenges, the records of these five districts display the promise of urban districts.

These districts have figured out how to open school in the fall with virtually no teacher and principal vacancies, something that conventional wisdom suggests is not possible. Having

“cracked” these recruitment problems, the case study districts all are working to strengthen their

motivation, development, incentive and retention policies to insure that the most effective teachers and principals are retained and rewarded for good performance; and they all have much work to do on these fronts. These districts differ in resource availability and approach. But what they display most clearly is that demographics need not be determinative. Effective strategic management of human capital can make urban districts good places to teach and to learn.