

The **Strategic Management of Human Capital (SMHC)** was launched in early 2008. Its goal is to improve student achievement by getting more powerful instructional practices into all classrooms through reform and restructuring of state and district human resource management systems. SMHC is a 5 year program intended to design, advocate, and achieve widespread understanding and implementation of SMHC reforms, focusing initially on the nation's largest, mostly urban districts.

Improving student achievement in these districts requires stronger and more effective instructional practices, which require strategic talent management for recruiting, screening, selecting, placing, developing, motivating, evaluating, rewarding and retaining talented teachers, teacher leaders and principals. The project recognizes that putting SMHC reforms into place is not easy, requires significant modernization and change in the management of outmoded and arcane organizational systems of big school districts, as well as courageous leadership and political support by mayors, governors and legislators.

In 2008, the SMHC project:

- Defined Strategic Management of Human Capital in Public Education (see the Allan Odden and James Kelly paper, and Ed Lawler paper on the SMHC Web site).
- Organized and activated a nationally prestigious Task Force of 33 individuals chaired by Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty.
- Planned and conducted its first National Conference.
- Completed case studies of SMHC reforms in six urban districts and three education reform organizations, and began studying other effective SMHC reforms.
- Launched its interactive Web 2.0 site, www.smhc-cpre.org, which is becoming the “go-to” Web site for improving urban school districts through SMHC reforms.

During 2009, the SMHC project intends to establish Strategic Management of Human Capital as a critically important strategy for the nation's educational reform agenda.

The two primary questions addressed have been:

1. How can urban districts acquire top teacher, principal and central office talent so that all schools and classrooms are staffed by highly effective individuals?
2. How can that talent be managed so they deliver the instructional practice that is successful in getting all children, especially children from low-income backgrounds and of color, to achieve to high- and rigorous-performance levels?

Case studies in Boston, Chicago, Fairfax County (VA), Long Beach (CA), Minneapolis (MN), New York City, the Minnesota Q Comp program, and of the talent recruiting organizations The New Teacher Project (TNTP), Teach For America (TFA) and New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) have shown how these issues can be successfully addressed.

The findings show that districts can solve teacher and principal shortage problems with a range of recruitment initiatives that include:

- Actively recruiting more teachers and principals from top colleges and universities;
- Partnering with talent recruitment organizations such as TNTP, TFA and NLNS;

- Growing their own teachers and principals;
- Forging new relationships with local and high quality colleges and universities;
- Restructuring and automating the application, screening and selection systems;
- moving the hiring calendar up to early spring;
- Revising seniority transfers and eliminating seniority bumping; and
- Devolving selection decisions to school sites.

All case study districts have 5-10 quality applicants for every position and open school each fall with fully staffed classrooms and schools.

The findings also show that districts are making progress towards strategically managing this talent by aligning the key human resource management programs around a rigorous, content-rich curriculum and visions of effective instructional practice, but have significantly more progress to make on this front. Case study districts are looking for better ways to:

- Identify effective teachers and principals during the hiring process;
- Bolster teacher and principal development;
- Ensure that tenure is granted only to highly effective teachers;
- Find a way to measure teachers' instructional performance in ways that are linked to their effectiveness in producing student learning gains; and
- Identify the key skills principals and teachers need in school sites to implement recruitment, selection, induction, mentoring and professional development initiatives to produce schools that are successful in showing large gains in student academic achievement.

During 2009, SMHC will continue its research and analytic work, conduct Task Force meetings in August and November, and convene a second National Conference. In addition, several action initiatives will be launched that are designed to stimulate important reforms in urban districts and place SMHC on the nation's education reform agenda:

1. Create a district SMHC Reform Network with districts addressing the full range of human capital management issues.
2. Create a State SMHC Reform Network that will identify key state policies and practices that can support local implementation of district SMHC reforms, and get several states to begin enacting laws and policies to implement them.
3. Develop and pilot one or more systems that measure teachers' instructional practice at various performance levels, and help urban districts use the results to bolster teacher development programs and improve decision making about promotion, pay and tenure.
4. Identify the key practices principals use in recruitment, screening, selection, induction and mentoring programs that result in effective teaching and increased student learning.
5. Develop HR alignment audits so that urban districts can identify the extent to which HR functions are – or are not – aligned with effective instructional programs.

The goal is to place SMHC reforms on the nation's education reform agenda so that all districts have the teacher and leadership talent needed to boost student achievement to high levels.

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