Framework for Supporting Human Resources Systems

Two Aspects of human resources systems in school districts are treated in this framework:

- The enabling environment that defines the context and organizational culture within which everyone works.
- The operating environment of human resources policies, practices and procedures.

Enabling Environment

Leadership works to ensure that the organizational context and environment for human resources within the school district enable high quality teaching and learning for all children.

Leadership can come from many places within the school district and its community. Not all leaders need play all the roles identified; some may play many, others may play only one or none. However, because school districts are public and democratic institutions, the variety of actors represented in our framework do need to provide leadership. For a school district to succeed, a diverse set of leaders must contribute to establishing an appropriate enabling environment. Wherever leadership comes from, successful organizations are characterized by leaders who devote their attention and effort to the kinds of things described below.

WHERE LEADERSHIP CAN COME FROM	WHAT EXCELLENT LEADERSHIP DOES
Official Authorities • School Board • Superintendent • Administrators • Teachers • Unions (members/leadership) Other Sources of Leadership • Parents • Students • Community Organizations • Community Activists • Religious Leaders • Business Leaders	• Works collaboratively to define and communicate the vision, mission and goals of the organization. Is accountable for the theory of action that will be used to achieve those goals. • Establishes trusting relationships among diverse interest groups in support of the core organizational vision, mission, goals and theory of action. • Understands the existing state policy and regulatory environments, as well as existing collective bargaining agreements and works to achieve what is possible within those constraints, or works to change them when necessary. Emphasizes alignment and coherence of policies and practices. • Challenges everyone to be strategic and keeps the organization focused on vision, mission, goals, evidence and specific improvement targets. • Establishes and promotes an organizational culture focused on performance, stressing flexibility in school organization, and promoting equity. • Can articulate a selective staffing philosophy that is focused on attracting and retaining top talent and developing distributed leadership. • Identifies, distinguishes and studies excellent performance. Can define the characteristics and qualities of top performers, and knows who they are. • Creates and participates in programs to develop talent. Gives priority to succession planning, leadership preparation and regular performance reviews. • Is responsible for achieving specific improvement targets and goals and for maintaining high staff morale, especially of top performers. • Focuses resources on advancing the core instructional model, pursuing continuous improvement and avoiding diffuse, scattered improvement efforts. • Monitors and is accountable for students results, as well as employee and community.

Operating Environment

The school system needs to have in place the human resource policies, procedures and practices that embody its organizational culture and that ensure the most efficient and effective means to attract, retain and tap the talents of the best people. The following table identifies some of the best practices to be considered in each of the components of a human resources operating environment: planning, acquiring and assigning, assimilating, developing, retaining, and evaluating personnel.

HIRING EXCELLENT PEOPLE

Components	Best Practice Considerations
Planning	• Human resource goals are clearly linked to organizational goals and staffing philosophy drives the development of plans. • Staffing projections, hiring and succession plans for key positions are in place and up-to-date. • Excellence in teaching and administration are defined, characteristics of top performers are known, sources of talent are identified based on those characteristics. • Hiring success is measured and tracked over time to learn how best to source and secure talented teachers and administrators.
Acquiring and Assigning	• Compensation, working conditions, responsibility, and professional growth opportunities are packaged to compete aggressively for top talent. • Target hiring plans exist for each strategic source of talent. Rigorous selection processes exist and are adhered to. Job offers are made and filled on a timely basis. • Top performers lead recruitment and realistic job previews (job shadowing) are provided. • Top performers are deployed to address the greatest challenges. Emphasis in assignment is placed on flexibility in constructing compatible, high-performance teams in each school. Performance is the ultimate measure of success, not staff composition.
Assimilating	• Formal orientation, induction and assimilation strategies are in place. • Performance and development plans, linked to overall goals, are created for each new hire. • Schools are supported in creating communities of practice that enable educators to focus on quality instruction.

KEEPING, DEVELOPING, AND SUPPORING EXCELLENT PEOPLE

Components	Best Practice Considerations
Developing	• Career plans and specific performance goals for employees exist, are up to date, and are clearly linked to overall goals. • Above average investment in professional development exists and is dedicated to improving teacher and administrator skills defined by a core instructional framework and needs of the children. • Teachers and principals are given control of their professional development and held accountable for translating learning opportunities into classroom results. • Extensive coaching and leadership development programs exist, especially for top performers and high potential candidates. Coaching and development build on staff strengths.
Retaining	• Timely and meaningful rewards and recognitions exist. Successes are regularly celebrated. • Compensation and conditions of work are analyzed and benchmarked, particularly against top competitors, and kept current to retain top talent. Individual and team compensation packages and work conditions are adjusted based on performance results and meeting criteria for advancement. • Employee attitude surveys are regularly conducted. Ratings are tied to management compensation. • Employee feedback is responded to in a timely manner and actions are taken on all critical issues. Culture development teams exist and are responsible for maintaining and nurturing desired culture. • Mentoring programs exist for new teachers, as well as for aspiring and new administrators.
Evaluating	• Leadership is evaluated on hiring successes and low turnover of staff. • Teacher and administrator performance are benchmarked in terms of job fulfillment and student results. Peers are involved in evaluation. Administrators are evaluated based on support to the core instructional objectives. • Exit interviews are conducted, even if candidates are promoted, to continually seek improvements. • Evaluation results are shared, communicated, and used for improvement-strategy development.