

A Quest for “The Very Best”:

Teacher Recruitment in Six Successful, High-Poverty, Urban Schools

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Abstract

This qualitative analysis of teacher teams is part of a larger, comparative case study, “Developing Human Capital Within Schools,” conducted by the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers. Within one city, we interviewed 142 teachers and administrators in six high-poverty schools (three charter and three district), all of which had achieved the highest ranking in the state’s accountability system. Here, we analyze how each school approached the process of teacher recruitment and how both administrators and teachers experienced that process. Each school described strategies that were far from the “passive and provincial” efforts (DeArmond, Shaw, & Wright, 2009, p. 54) that have long characterized teacher recruitment in public schools. Instead, each actively developed a pool of candidates from which it could hire when teaching positions arose. Schools carefully pursued candidates by cultivating relationships with non-profits, universities, and the school district, and with the personal and professional networks of those working in the school. Often, they depended most on those who shared their mission of educating low-income, minority students and were able to provide the school with candidates who had already been carefully vetted.

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Introduction

The popularity of Teach for America and other selective teacher preparation programs it has inspired provides evidence that schools in long-underserved communities have the potential to attract top talent. This notion contradicts a long-standing belief among researchers and policy makers that “teachers systematically favor higher-achieving, non-minority, non-low income students” (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004, p. 12)—a frequently cited explanation for why teachers transfer from high-poverty, high-minority schools as they gain experience. It counters researchers’ suggestion that “districts possess few policy options” (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004, p. 352) for solving the problem of teacher quality in the schools where students most need strong teachers (Downey, Hippel, & Hughes, 2008). Instead, it bolsters the case that many teachers enter schools serving low-income and minority students precisely because of their “humanistic commitment” to teaching in long-underserved communities (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010, p. 71; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Kraft et al., 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Despite evidence that talented and skilled candidates want to teach in high-poverty schools, most urban districts and schools have made little progress in developing strategies for actively recruiting teachers and their efforts to improve human capital systems have been fragmented. Even as districts have reformed staffing policies by granting increased hiring autonomy to schools and eliminating seniority-based transfers, teacher recruitment has largely remained “passive and provincial” (DeArmond, Shaw, & Wright, 2009, p. 54). Consequently, the pool of desirable candidates—particularly in high-poverty urban schools—remains shallow and weak and low-income and minority students who attend so-called “hard-to-staff schools” are routinely taught by the least experienced, least effective teachers (Borman & Dowling, 2008;

Carroll, Reichardt, Guarino, & Mejia, 2000; Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Wheeler, 2007; Hanushek et al., 2004; R. M. Ingersoll, 2001).

Yet, some high-poverty schools succeed in recruiting, and subsequently hiring, strong teachers. However, little is known about how such schools approach this work, and even less is known about how teachers experience their school’s efforts. In addition, few researchers have explored how a school’s particular policy context influences what they do. In this paper, we investigate these issues by drawing on data from a larger exploratory study by the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, which focuses on how human capital is managed and developed within schools. The sample includes six schools—traditional, turnaround, and charter—located in the same city. When we conducted the study, these schools had all demonstrated success with low-income, minority students, as evidenced by achieving the highest level on the state’s accountability system. However, each school’s process for recruiting and selecting teachers—both those transferring from within the system and those new to the system or profession—was influenced by a different combination of state and local policies. Each of the schools had an explicit mission and unique character, which shaped their approach to identifying and attracting applicants . They actively sought out teachers and deliberately created a school where those in the city and beyond wanted to work. However, their ideas about the attitudes and skills required to succeed in their school had led them to believe that the pool of appropriate candidates was very limited. Consequently, they reported facing significant challenges in recruiting the candidates they needed.

In the following section, we review the literature about teacher recruitment, beginning with a discussion of how districts tend to be passive and generic in their approaches. We explain how the policy context of many urban public schools discourages individual schools from

becoming active and specific about their needs during recruitment. Then, we provide an overview of how some schools and school systems—both district and charter—have introduced deliberate, active approaches to teacher recruitment. After describing our methods, we present and illustrate our findings. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of this study for policy, practice, and research.

Literature Review

Recruitment in urban public schools is markedly different from recruitment in prestigious professions, such as law and finance, where human resources offices support the human capital needs of firms by engaging with them as strategic partners (DeArmond et al., 2009). In such fields, firms proactively recruit candidates by reaching out to potential applicants—sometimes even courting the competition’s talent. They use a range of approaches to boost their visibility among potential candidates such as building relationships with university career offices; sponsoring scholarships and offering summer internships; featuring guest lectures by current employees; and hosting recruitment events. Top firms recruit widely for the candidates they seek (DeArmond et al., 2009). As DeArmond and colleagues write, “[i]n the so-called war for talent, the battlefield is large” (DeArmond et al., 2009, p. 57).

In contrast, public school districts tend to be “passive and provincial” (DeArmond et al., 2009, p. 56) about teacher recruitment. In surveys about districts’ search tactics, most districts report employing what these researchers call “fairly traditional” (p. 56) and “highly localized” (p. 57) search techniques. For example, districts tend to rely on advertisements of openings posted on their own website, in local newspapers and trade publications, and at nearby colleges. Rather than actively pursuing alternative channels, they report attending education job fairs and relying heavily on word-of-mouth to learn about possible candidates. With rare exception, district

recruitment practices have remained passive, even as the national discussion regarding teacher quality has intensified. As DeArmond and others explain, districts continue to “simply post job announcements and then wait to see who applies” (p. 56-57).

In general, individual schools rely upon their district human resources divisions to recruit a pool of candidates (Johnson, Marietta, Higgins, Mapp, & Grossman, 2015; Levin & Quinn, 2003). In part, this is because staffing policies have historically limited whom schools could consider hiring. For example, seniority-based transfer rules in many cities have obligated principals to accept teachers who seek to transfer from other schools. In a study of five representative urban districts, researchers at TNTP found that, on average, voluntary and involuntary transfers or excessed teachers filled 40% of vacancies. In many cases, schools had no choice at all regarding such placements. In other cases, principals were granted “restricted choice” (Levin, Mulhern, & Schunck, 2005, p. 12); that is, they could only hire from a pool of voluntary transfer applicants. In addition, in some districts, voluntary transfers were permitted to bump novice teachers and claim their position.

Such policies often have prompted principals to “hide vacancies” (Levin, Mulhern, & Schunck, 2005, p. 16) from central office until after the district’s transfer process ends. In such instances, principals might resort to recruiting candidates on their own, usually through their personal networks. Often, they would wind up hiring teachers who either had done student teaching or been substitutes in their schools (Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, & Ingle, 2008). This is why teachers in urban districts frequently report taking a substitute position as a deliberate strategy to “get [their] foot in the door” (Cannata, 2011, p. 488) and accumulate more contacts within a district. As Cannata found in her study of 27 prospective elementary school teachers in one geographic region, prospective teachers often depend on their social networks—both

personal and professional—for “good job leads” (p. 488). In other words, since principals are apt to hide their vacancies and recruit covertly through word of mouth—rather than through formal channels—shrewd candidates realize that they need to be connected to those in the know in order to get hired. This informal process depends a great deal on chance and ensures that only some of the candidates who might be interested in teaching at a school will be considered.

Even as staffing regulations have changed dramatically over the last decade and schools have been granted increased autonomy over hiring, principals often have been obligated to hire from within the pre-vetted pool of applicants made available by the district (Daly et al., 2008). For example, in New York and Boston, district human resources offices introduced computer-based systems through which internal and external candidates could apply. Schools are frequently expected to interview and hire from this online pool, and individual, school-based efforts to recruit more actively are often either prohibited or seen as “illegitimate” (DeArmond, Gross, & Goldhaber, 2010, p. 337). Furthermore, even in districts where schools are permitted to actively recruit, the demands on principals in high-poverty schools are extraordinary and budget constraints make it difficult for them to predict whom they can hire (Levin & Quinn, 2003). Thus, even schools that try to recruit frequently struggle to do so.

Nonetheless, some principals work to expand their applicant pool. As DeArmond and others (2010) found in a study of teacher selection in ten elementary schools in “a large, decentralized urban school district” (p. 322), some principals “vigorously market their schools to win over specific candidates” (p. 337). Principals who did this experienced recruitment, in the words of one, as “a constant activity.” They employed strategies including calling teachers whose schools were slated for closing, reaching out to former colleagues, and hosting informational meetings about their school where prospective applicants learned about the

school’s culture, toured classrooms, and met their potential future administrators and colleagues. Interestingly, principals in DeArmond and colleagues’ study did not appear to regard the district human resources office as a strategic partner. Rather, the authors report, savvy principals figured out ways to, in the words of one principal, “circumvent the system” by “pulling strings” at central office to ensure that their applicant of choice made it through the district bureaucracy (p. 339).

Johnson and others (2015) found similar trends in their study of how five well-regarded urban districts managed relationships between the central office and schools. Even in districts where schools had substantial hiring autonomy, such as Charlotte-Mecklenberg, North Carolina and Baltimore City, Maryland, principals saw the district’s recruitment efforts as inadequate. This was particularly true among principals of high-poverty, hard-to-staff schools, which routinely cope with high teacher turnover. In both districts, principals reported that the district’s pool of candidates did not meet their needs and, as one said, this prompted him to “seek out and recruit my own teachers because I know what I’m looking for... I kind of grow my own. I find a relationships with a college or university and I get... students who are in their student teacher placements” (p. 102).

Not all central offices in that study fell short. In three districts—Aldine, Texas; Long Beach, California; and Montgomery County, Maryland—participants described ambitious recruitment programs by the central office. For example, Aldine principals said that, in response to the district’s national recruitment campaign, university students from across the country were relocating there to student teach so that they could network with principals before applying for permanent positions. In contrast, Long Beach strategically hosted students from a local university teacher education program for their school-based practicum. The superintendent

explained that this allowed, prospective teachers could “lear[n] the ‘Long Beach Way’” (p. 102) while enabling the district to vet teachers and encourage strong candidates to apply. In these districts, carefully calculated recruitment strategies were complemented by an online system that allowed principals to search for candidates in the district pool. In Montgomery County and Long Beach, the district pre-vetted applicants in the system—a service that one principal described as “great” (p. 101). Consequently, principals in all three districts reported being satisfied with the pool that the district recruited and appreciating the district’s support in finding teachers.

Charter schools, which typically operate in a substantially different policy context than traditional district schools, have employed similar strategies. Gross and DeArmond (2011) studied how 24 charter schools in three states approached teacher recruitment and, subsequently, teacher hiring and development. They sought to learn about strategies that charter schools use to identify and hire candidates who are well-matched to their school’s mission and model. They found that these schools set a “strong foundation for recruitment and hiring” by articulating the “knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics they are seeking” (p. 3). Then, they proactively set out to find their desired applicants. They did this in four ways: (1) by keeping their hiring radar on at all times and unabashedly trying to convince strong potential candidates to apply; (2) by cultivating relationships with both formal pipeline programs and others with desirable social networks; (3) by building their own pipeline by offering an in-house training program; and (4) by using the recruitment process to convey the school’s culture and what it takes to work at the school. The schools complemented their well-conceived recruitment processes with carefully aligned hiring processes to help ensure that, if offered a position, applicants would accept the position.

In a subsequent study, DeArmond, Gross and colleagues (2012) analyzed data from a

larger study conducted by Mathematica-CPRE of ten charter management organizations (CMOs), which have a relationship to their schools that is similar to that of a district central office. The authors found that CMOs play a significant role in their schools’ staffing endeavors by implementing a centralized strategy aimed at recruiting “mission-driven people they believed would fit their schools and programs” (p. 7). Similar to the charter schools in Gross and DeArmond’s (2011) study, these CMOs built formal partnerships with specific training programs that they believed produced the kind of teachers their schools needed. This allowed them to, as one administrator said, “cherry-pick” promising recruits (DeArmond et al., 2012, p. 9). Importantly, CMOs often used a deliberately-developed, candid recruitment message in a job description for a specific job, helping candidates “self-select” into the application process based on “their commitment to meeting the demands and aspirations” of the CMOs (p. 9). Such efforts allow CMOs to select from a pool of candidates that were likely to meet the needs of the specific schools they serve.

Methods

This paper is based on a qualitative, comparative case study embedded in a larger study conducted by the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers. The larger study, “Developing Human Capital Within Schools,” examined how six high-poverty, urban schools—all of which had received the state’s highest performance rating—attract, develop, and retain teachers.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this analysis are:

1. What policies (state, local, or CMO) shape school-level approaches to recruiting teachers and what opportunities and constraints do administrators report these policies present?
2. How do high-poverty schools that are succeeding with students approach teacher recruitment?

3. How do principals and teachers in these schools describe and assess their experiences with these practices?

Sample of schools

Our sample selection was guided by four principles. First, we sought a sample that included charter and district schools in one city. Second we looked for schools that served high-poverty populations ($\geq 70\%$ of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch) and also primarily served students of color. Third, we sought schools that were considered high-performing, having achieved the highest rating in the state’s accountability system. Fourth, we sought schools that were employing distinctive approaches to human capital development.

To attend to the first three principles, we examined publicly-available demographic and student performance data. We used the state’s accountability ratings as a proxy for academic success with students. At the time of our study, Massachusetts rated schools on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 designating the highest performing schools. The school ratings were based on four years of data that documented both the school’s student performance growth and its success in narrowing proficiency gaps among sub-groups of students on state tests.

To attend to the fourth principle, we researched various schools’ approaches to human capital development by consulting our professional networks and considering information about specific schools and CMOs. Based on this inquiry, we drew up a sample of six schools—all geographically located within one large urban school district in Massachusetts. The sample included three district schools (one traditional, two former turnaround) and three state-authorized charter schools. All schools were elementary and/or middle schools, which facilitated cross-site comparisons. We contacted six school leaders explaining our study and requesting their participation and all agreed to participate (For school descriptive statistics, see Appendix B).

The purposive nature allowed us to conduct an in-depth, exploratory study of a particular context—high-poverty, high-minority schools that have demonstrated success with their students. By design, this sample is not representative of schools in the region.

Data Collection

Interviews. In Spring 2014, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 142 teachers, administrators and other staff (including talent directors, where applicable) in the six schools. Administrator interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes; teacher interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. All research team members were present for most interviews with the principals and CMO directors; every team member conducted some interviews with teachers at each school. This approach facilitated cross-site comparisons, improved inter-rater reliability in coding data, and ensured that each research team member understood each school’s structures and culture.

Our interview sample within schools was purposively constructed. At each school, we first interviewed the principal to learn both what processes they used to select, develop, and retain teachers and how those processes were conceived and implemented. Then, we recruited teachers who varied in personal background, teaching experience, preparation, teaching assignment, and role. We also interviewed additional key staff (e.g. curriculum coaches, discipline deans, family coordinators) when it became apparent that their views would inform our understanding of teachers’ experiences. To build our sample, we relied on staff lists and on recommendations from administrators and teachers. We solicited participation through emails, flyers, and word-of-mouth. Participants were ensured confidentiality—neither the content of their interview nor the fact that they had been interviewed was shared with the principal (although many discussed their participation with their principal).

In each school, the number of teachers we interviewed varied depending on the school’s size, its organizational complexity, and the practices used. We interviewed between 33% and 56% of teachers at each school, plus additional staff. At the three charters schools, we also interviewed full-time Teachers in Training (TTs). (For sample demographics see Appendix B). We used semi-structured interview protocols (Appendix C) to ensure that data would be comparable across sites and interviewers. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The interview protocols included several questions that encouraged participants to discuss the school’s approach to staffing. Specific questions included topics such as where they recruit, what positions they struggle to fill, and how they decide whom to hire. Teachers were asked to describe the process through which they were recruited and hired at the school and to explain whether and how they were involved subsequently with recruiting and selecting new colleagues. With all interviewees, we used follow-up questions to further explore each of these topics and to identify particular issues that warranted deeper inquiry. For example, at every school, interviewees discussed the challenge of recruiting, hiring and retaining Black and Latino teachers; we therefore modified our protocol to explore this topic in greater depth. In our visits to the schools, we also observed a wide range of day-to-day practices, and looked for evidence about the school’s organizational culture.

Document Collection. Although interviews are the main data source for this study, we also gathered a range of documents that describe school policies and programs related to recruiting, developing and retaining their teachers. These documents vary by school and include resources, such as professional development calendars, school handbooks, and results of teacher surveys. When possible, we also collected extensive documentation of recruitment and hiring processes, such as protocols for interviewing teachers and observing demonstration lessons and rubrics for

assessing candidates. We also collected charter school applications, collective bargaining agreements, and applications for contractual waivers, along with other documents that illuminated the state and local policy contexts in which each school operates.

Data Analysis

After each interview, we wrote detailed thematic summaries describing the participant and summarizing his experiences with the school’s practices for recruiting, hiring, developing and retaining teachers. First, we identified themes or *etic* codes drawn from the literature on the elements of developing human capital. Then, we used thematic summaries to analyze each site individually and to conduct cross-site comparisons, identifying common themes and differences. We used this preliminary analysis to supplement the *etic* codes with *emic* codes that emerged from the data. For example, in interviews, pay emerged as a challenge for hiring charter school teachers, although we had not identified that theme in the literature. We used this preliminary code list to review a small subset of the transcripts, individually and together, in order to calibrate our understanding and use of the codes, as well as to refine the list and definitions. We repeated this process to finalize the code list (Appendix D) and to improve inter-rater reliability. We then coded each transcribed interview using Dedoose software.

After coding interviews, we engaged in an iterative analytic process, using data-analytic matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to track findings related to school-based staffing. To understand the policy context in which each school operated, we identified the particular policies that affected each school and influenced what they could do. For example, we determined which components of the district’s collective bargaining agreement remained binding in turnaround schools and how state-issued charters affect each charter school’s operations. We then analyzed the interview data and documents from each school separately. We ultimately completed a data

analytic matrix showing the components of recruitment and hiring at each school and connections among them within schools. We wrote an analytic memo comparing the different staffing strategies across the sample in order to first develop a deep understanding of the process that candidates experienced as they were being recruited to apply, vetted as applicants, and offered positions.

To understand how principals and teachers described and assessed their experiences with these practices, we created school-by-school matrices comparing interviewees’ responses to their school’s recruitment and hiring processes, by component where appropriate. We again wrote an analytic memo presenting initial hypotheses about how teachers experienced and assessed these processes. We also sorted codes by particular interviewee characteristics. For each transcript, we categorized the interviewee according to relevant characteristics, such as years of teaching experience and age (See Appendix D). We then investigated whether teachers’ perceptions of the hiring processes varied, within and across schools. We wrote a third analytic memo about emerging trends and hypotheses. Finally, we addressed risks to validity by returning to the data to review coding and check our emerging conclusions and to seek rival explanations or disconfirming data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). We also shared analytic memos, outlines and drafts with our research team and with other colleagues.

Findings

At the six schools in our study, teacher recruitment processes were far from the “passive and provincial” (DeArmond et al., 2009, p. 56) efforts that are reported to characterize recruitment in most public schools. Instead, each school engaged in active and strategic efforts to develop a pool of teaching candidates from which it could hire when openings arose. As Kincaid Executive Director Kaplan said, the substantial time and resources that schools devoted

to recruitment reflected their belief that the “paradigm of what we are doing”—educating historically underserved students—depended on “finding the very best staff members to lead and teach in the school.”

In this section, we begin by presenting each school and explaining the policy and structural context within which each operated. We then describe how each school deliberately created a foundation for recruitment, and then enacted their recruitment strategy. Although approaches differed across schools, each school collaborated with an array of sources to find and attract applicants. Because they struggled to recruit an adequate supply of teachers who met their preparation standards, we explain how some schools had begun in-house teacher pipeline programs. We then describe the district- and CMO-based supports that schools counted on in their recruitment efforts. Finally, we explain the challenges that schools faced in recruiting the teachers they were seeking.

The Schools

As noted above, all six schools in the study are located within Walker City¹, Massachusetts and primarily serve students who reside in Walker City School District (WCSD). The sample includes one traditional district school, two district schools that had recently emerged from turnaround, one in-district charter school that had restarted a failed district school, and two state-sponsored charter schools that were entirely independent of the local district.

The District Schools

Dickinson Elementary was a century-old, traditional elementary school serving 370 children in grades Pre-K-5. For generations, the school primarily served immigrant children; at the time of our study, 75% of its students were English Language Learners. Teachers belonged

¹ Pseudonyms are used for the district, the schools, and all study participants.

to WCSD’s teachers union and Dickinson was bound by the WCSD collective bargaining agreement and other state and district policies. Monica Davila, the school’s sole administrator, had taught at the school for nearly thirty years before becoming principal. Dickinson had experienced stable leadership for over two decades, although the school had three principals during the years just before Davila was appointed. However, interviewees reported that the culture had remained stable because teacher turnover was rare: several Dickinson teachers had taught at Dickinson since the 1980s. As teachers repeatedly said, “you don’t leave Dickinson—you retire from Dickinson.” In Davila’s four years as principal, she reported that she had only hired four new teachers and more than half of those we interviewed had been at the school for a decade or more.

In 2013-14 when we conducted the study, Dickinson had begun implementing WCSD’s new hiring system, which granted all district schools significant autonomy in selecting candidates. It called for a site-based hiring committee composed of the principal, teachers, and parents, that followed a multi-step process involving interviews and demonstration lessons. Although the principal was required to interview all tenured teachers from within WCSD who applied for the opening, she was not required to select any internal applicant. In fact, after the interviews, she was permitted to hire teachers who were new to the district even if veteran WCSD teachers had applied for the position.

Fitzgerald Elementary was founded in the 1960s and served 390 students in grades K-5. Early in its history, Fitzgerald was lauded as a top WCSD school. But, it severely declined in the 1980s. In 2008—two years before the school was placed in turnaround—Sharon Forte, an experienced WCSD principal, began her tenure as Fitzgerald’s seventh principal in ten years. During turnaround, the state required Forte to replace at least 50% of the teachers; Forte chose to

replace 65%. Tenured teachers who did not receive an offer from Forte had the right to transfer to a different WCSD school. After exiting turnaround, administrators said that Fitzgerald had little annual turnover; one reported that the school had hired roughly 3-5 teachers each year after entering turnaround.

When the school successfully exited turnaround as a Level 1 school at start of the 2013-14 school year, the state granted Fitzgerald special status as a within-district Innovation School, which allowed Forte to maintain some hiring autonomy—namely the right to select teachers without regard to seniority, a provision that was subsequently granted to all district schools. However, the status did not allow Forte to involuntarily transfer teachers; if she wished to dismiss an underperforming teacher, she had to comply with the WCSD evaluation process for doing so.

Hurston K-8 opened in 2003, with 800 students. It was founded by WCSD as an in-district charter school with significant decision-making authority. Hurston was exempt from most union and school committee work rules, and was overseen by a joint district/union committee. Despite its relative autonomy, Hurston had a rough beginning. It had five principals during its first seven years and then was put into turnaround by the state, which required that a new principal be hired. When Daniel Hinds—an experienced district principal—began the turnaround process at Hurston in the spring of 2010, he was supported by an administrative team including an Assistant Principal, a Professional Development Director, an Operations Director, and several others. Although Hinds was required to replace at least 50% of the school’s teachers, he replaced approximately 80%. After that, the school had retained 92% of those hired—a fact that some credited to Principal Hinds’ belief that, as one administrator explained, “if you go through blood, sweat and tears to make [replacing 80% of staff] happen, then you need to choose

the right people [and subsequently] make sure that you’re retaining them.”

At the start of the 2013-14 school year, Hurston exited turnaround as a Level 1 school. The school maintained status as a within-district charter, which continued to allow the principal hiring autonomy and the right to transfer teachers involuntarily. During layoffs, however, the school would still have been affected by the district’s need to assign surplus tenured teachers in WCSD and might be required to accept one. All Hurston teachers were covered by the WCSD teachers contract and paid according to the district’s negotiated pay scale.

The Charter Schools

Kincaid Charter Middle School, an in-district charter school authorized by the state to “restart” a WCSD school. Kincaid served 475 students in Grades 6-8 and opened with all three grades in 2011 as the first of five schools managed by the expanding Kincaid Charter Network. Although no teachers from the prior school were rehired, most students remained. Kincaid’s principal at the time of our study, Louis Kain, succeeded Kincaid’s founder in 2013, after serving as a founding Leader of Instruction (LI) at the school. His administration included three LIs, a Director of Operations, and two Deans of Discipline.

After Kincaid’s charter was approved by the district and then by the state, its board of trustees was required to “negotiate in good faith” a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the WCSD teachers union. Although Kincaid was overseen by the state, teachers continued to be represented by the local teachers union. They achieved tenure in WCSD under state law and were paid and accrued seniority in keeping with the district’s contract. In compliance with the charter’s MOU with the district, Kincaid had hiring autonomy for all school-based positions, and the school was permitted to dismiss non-tenured teachers and involuntarily transfer tenured teachers out of the school and into the WCSD excess pool. Kincaid Charter Network Executive

Director Kaplan estimated that 78% of teachers had remained at their school from year to year, which was lower than he hoped. However, of that 78%, some who stayed in the building moved out of teaching positions and into other roles. In doing so, they created a teaching vacancy that had to be filled. The school also hired three TTs each year.

Naylor Charter K-8, a state-authorized charter school founded as a new school in 2002, served 500 students. The school was the first of three schools established in the Naylor Charter School Network, which was led by Executive Director Samantha Nelson. Principal Claire North, who had succeeded Executive Director Nelson as principal, was supported by an Assistant Principal, a Director of Operations, and a Dean of Discipline. Naylor operated entirely independent of WCSD. The school was not unionized; teachers could be dismissed at any time. Salaries were determined by the school, and according to Executive Director Samantha Nelson, were comparable to WCSD salaries in 2014.

Naylor had complete hiring autonomy; teachers had to meet the federal government’s requirements for being “highly qualified,” but only ELL teachers had to be licensed by the state. In general, Naylor administrators reported that retention rates within the network were high—roughly 90%. However, as at Kincaid, this number included teachers who switched positions—often moving into a leadership role within the school. It also included teachers who moved to a new school within the network. The school also hired nine TTs each year.

Rodriguez Charter K1-8, also a state-authorized charter school, was founded in 1995 and served 420 students. The school, which did not belong to a network, was divided into a lower and upper school within the same building, which Executive Director, Tamar Rowland, managed. She began her long tenure at Rodriguez as a teacher and succeeded the school’s founder as Executive Director. Rodriguez’s two divisions were led by Principals Sam Ryan (upper school)

and Julia Rega (lower school). Like Naylor, Rodriguez received funding from the state and operated independently of the district. Rodriguez teachers were not unionized and their salaries were substantially lower than those of WCSD teachers. Like Naylor, Rodriguez had complete hiring autonomy; teachers had to be “highly qualified,” by federal standards, and only ELL teachers required licensure. Retention rates at Rodriguez were high; Principal Rega reported hiring “between zero and two” teachers annually.

In summary, each of the six schools had a unique history. Although Dickinson and Rodriguez each had relatively new leaders, both schools benefited from many years of a stable administration and teaching faculty, and both Principal Davila and Executive Director Rowland had worked at their respective schools for many years before taking the helm. Similarly, Naylor’s Principal North had taught at the school before succeeding Executive Director Nelson as principal. In contrast, both principals at Fitzgerald and Hurston were appointed by the district to turn around schools that were seriously hampered by instability in leadership. Kincaid’s Principal Kain was appointed to be the school’s second principal in three years, during the restart phase of a formerly failing school. In addition, at Fitzgerald, Hurston and Kincaid, most current teachers had been hired during the turnaround phase.

Each school also operated within a particular policy context, which influenced their approach to staffing. Dickinson did not have special status and was therefore bound by all WCSD contract obligations and other state and district policies. By contrast, Fitzgerald and Hurston benefited from substantial hiring autonomy as a result of both turnaround regulations and their special status within the district after turnaround. However, they were required to hire teachers who were licensed to work in WCSD and each had to comply with some provisions related to layoffs and involuntary transfers. Kincaid’s status as an in-district charter granted

Principal Kain substantial hiring autonomy, but, like Fitzgerald and Hurston, he was required to hire licensed teachers. Finally, because Naylor and Rodriguez were not formally part of the district, both schools had complete autonomy to hire teachers and were only bound by licensing rules for a small number of specialized positions.

All three charter schools devoted substantial resources to recruitment and hiring. Both Naylor and Kincaid relied on their CMOs and talent directors to identify and court teachers who would be a good fit for their school, while Rodriguez employed a full-time talent director. In contrast, although the district schools were supported by WCSD’s recruitment office, they did not receive individualized support in targeting the specific profile of teachers that they sought.

Creating a Foundation for Recruitment

All six schools in our study had a strong organizational identity; across interviews within a school, administrators, teachers, and staff articulated consistent accounts of their school’s mission and vision and similarly listed the characteristics of educators who succeeded in their school. Like the schools in Gross and DeArmond’s (2011) study, those described here used their school’s organizational identity to lay the foundation for a targeted recruitment process—first defining the types of candidates they sought and then framing what one talent director called their recruitment “pitch,” which explained why candidates should consider teaching at their school.

At some schools, the process of articulating an organizational identity and complementary recruitment materials was formal. For example, at Rodriguez Charter, the school community engaged in a lengthy process of redefining their mission statement and defining the characteristics of the teachers they sought. They subsequently drafted recruitment language for job postings; one explained that Rodriguez “combines rigorous and engaging academics with

extensive social/emotional programming to help all children succeed. We strive to develop scholars who embrace effort, seek knowledge, act thoughtfully, and commit to the common good.” The job postings also provided candid language about the challenges of working at Rodriguez and the expectations for teachers: “Many children come to us with significant challenges. We don’t give up on them. Our goal is that all of our students thrive at Rodriguez, graduate from high school, and pursue post-secondary education on the path to life success.” Therefore, postings were explicit in saying that Rodriguez “hire[s] teachers who reflect these values” and “welcome[s] those who mirror the diversity of our student body.”

Similarly, Naylor’s mission, as articulated by its talent director Gold, was to “close the achievement gap by providing excellent teachers to our students.” Gold explained that what they sought was “nothing novel, and... really not super technical.” Excellent teachers—which she referred to as the school’s “special sauce”—possessed a set of “core competencies” that Naylor sought in candidates. Administrators had defined these competencies on rubrics used to assess potential candidates and subsequently to determine whom to hire. They included: “fit” for the school and its mission, an internal locus of control, a collaborative nature, a “growth mindset,” and a “reflective spirit.” To Naylor administrators, these competencies signaled a commitment to ongoing improvement in teaching.

Not all schools relied on carefully crafted mission statements or recruitment rubrics in explaining the types of candidates they hoped to attract. Nonetheless, within schools teachers and administrators widely agreed about the kind of teachers they hoped to recruit. For example, at Dickinson, most interviewees described their faculty as a “family” and Principal Davila called the school “a home away from home for both the students and staff.” Almost everyone we interviewed there had grown up in the greater Walker City area, which Principal Davila—a self-

described “Walker City girl”—explained was an important contributor to Dickinson’s feeling of community. Davila further noted that, because faculty members saw themselves as members of the Dickinson family, it was easy for everyone to “realize that we are here for our students and that’s what needs to be the bigger picture.” For Dickinson teachers, Davila believed, “it’s always about the students: this is what we live by.” New colleagues needed to believe that individualized attention was, in Davila’s words, “the way to make a difference for [Dickinson] children”—and they had to be willing to “give 110%” towards the school’s goal of “mak[ing] sure that our children are successful when they leave us.” Giving “110%” included collaborating with other teachers, with parents, and with the school’s robust School Support Team—all in an effort to ensure that every child’s academic and socioemotional needs were met.

Enacting a Recruitment Strategy

Once schools were confident about what they sought, they set out in search of a pool of candidates from which they could hire when openings arose. To do this, they cultivated relationships with both formal and informal channels.

Formal Channels

Formal channels for recruitment included non-profits, universities, and the school district’s central office, all of which had the purpose of creating a human capital pipeline into schools.

Non-Profits

At every school except Dickinson, principals said that they worked with non-profit organizations whose explicit mission was to support high-poverty schools with staffing. These organizations served as conduits into schools for three different groups of teachers: (1) experienced teachers who had taught in high-poverty schools; (2) novice teachers who were

selected and trained through a selective teaching residency or alternate certification pathway; and (3) novice teachers who had experience working in high-poverty schools through competitive service corps organizations.

Experienced teachers who had taught in high-poverty schools. Across schools, principals said that a chief criterion used to identify promising candidates was for them to have had experience working at a school serving similar students. Principal Rega expressed a common sentiment: “two [years] is really good because they’re still sort of young and excited and hardworking and have a lot of ‘I want to take this on’ mentality. They aren’t set in their ways yet.” In contrast, she thought, “the brand new ones,” were “too new.” To her and others, “the two-year ones are perfect—they’ve got some classroom management... some experience dealing with kids, they know to look around the room the whole time. They know those basic things.”

At four schools—Hurston, Kincaid, Naylor, and Rodriguez—principals said that the most promising recruits were alumni of Teach for America (TFA) who had completed at least two years teaching in a high-poverty school. As one Rodriguez interviewee said, “We love Teach for America... When we see [a TFA alumnus]... we pounce right on ‘em.” As Principal Ryan explained, they “had really hard, ground-level experience in challenging situations.” In addition, “they’ve also got some pretty good training—albeit short, and it could be much better.” When candidates for TFA initially applied to the corps, they were vetted through a lengthy process involving a written application, a phone interview, a brief demonstration lesson, more interviews, tests, and monitored group discussions. Thus, Ryan said, when these teachers applied to Rodriguez after completing at least their two-year TFA requirement, they had “already shown strong... skills, and they had some success with [low-income] kids.” Furthermore, Ryan

believed that “if they survive... teaching in rural Arizona for two years and want to still teach urban kids back in Walker City” it was a sign of “resilience.” Otherwise, “they would have just run out of the room, screaming and crying, and not returned, which is what happens to a whole bunch of them.” In addition, he said, completing TFA also “shows a commitment to the right ideology.... the sort of civil rights movement of education. They're not in it for the summer breaks.”

The schools worked with TFA in a variety of ways. At the Kincaid and Naylor networks, talent directors explained that their schools had formal relationships with the local TFA alumni office. Both belonged to a recruiters network that included other no-excuses charter school talent staff, which TFA convened. They met bi-monthly to share resources and discuss challenges, plan events, and strategize about “getting more [teaching candidates] in Walker City.” TFA often featured their schools on its website and in its alumni newsletter, and they invited recruiters to lead events for current corps members. In addition, when TFA alumni moved to Walker City, one talent director explained that TFA staff suggested applicants to specific charter schools in the area. Naylor Talent Director Gold received a résumé “every couple of weeks” and several teachers reported learning about the school through the TFA alumni office, which they contacted when relocating. For example, one explained that she saw a Kincaid posting on TFA’s job board while teaching in the South. She wasn’t intending to move to Walker City, but said she was “really intrigued because it was an in-district charter, which is special.” Inspired by the possibility of being a founding teacher at a school that she expected would become “a proof point for what’s possible,” she applied. Convinced she might be a good catch, Kincaid recruiters traveled to her school to meet her in person.

At Kincaid and Naylor, both talent directors were, themselves, TFA alumni, which

explained their close relationship with the head of the local alumni office. One said that her relationship with the TFA staff allowed her to “email them every once in a while and say, “hey, we’re looking for this job. Do you know anybody who would be interested?” In response, TFA staff would not only send résumés, but they also give candidates the school’s pitch. Talent directors also had relationships with TFA staff at sites nationwide. They cultivated these relationships by “cold calling” alumni directors and asking them to connect their school with alumni who planned to move to Walker City. When the alumni office did so, Kincaid Talent Director Kelly said, “We just bomb them. We e-mail them. We go see them.” Both Naylor and Kincaid also cultivated similar relationships with TNTP, which had Teaching Fellows programs across the country that were similar to TFA’s. Naylor’s Talent Director Gold said that TNTP site directors, like TFA staff, knew to send résumés of their alumni to Naylor.

In contrast to Kincaid and Naylor, Rodriguez had no formally cultivated relationship with TFA or similar programs. Interestingly, although several faculty members—including Executive Director Rowland—were TFA alumni, Talent Director Evans said that the school relied primarily on TFA’s website to advertise specific positions. However, some alumni teaching at Rodriguez reported that, after learning about Rodriguez through some other channel, they contacted TFA to see whether current alumni were working there and then contacted them to get their advice.

Hurston and Fitzgerald partnered with Teach Plus, a national non-profit that supported high-poverty schools in turnaround by recruiting and selecting experienced teachers to serve as school-based teacher leaders. While their school was in turnaround, these teachers held formal leadership positions for which they earned \$6000 stipends. They also received leadership training from Teach Plus staff—some of whom were school-based. A Hurston administrator

explained that Teach Plus was a “key part of the turnaround” because they helped realize the administration’s “distributive leadership vision of the school, where teachers are empowered within a very clear mission and annual goals to make decisions that are in the best interest of the school.” The partnership was also critical in recruiting teachers who cared about there being what he described as, “a lot of saying yes to good ideas that teacher teams” formulate. One teacher who was recruited through Teach Plus explained that she left her charter school to work at Hurston because she was drawn to the opportunity to “lead outside the classroom,” while remaining a teacher. At her prior school, holding a leadership role had meant “having two jobs with a slight stipend, which presumes that your career is the only thing important in your life.”

Novice teachers who were selected and trained through a selective teaching residency or alternate certification pathway. Fitzgerald, Hurston, Kincaid, Naylor, and Rodriguez recruited novices through two types of programs that used a highly competitive application process to select participants who wanted to work in high-poverty urban schools. The first was a residency program, such as the Preparatory Teacher Residency (PTR) or the Walker City Teacher Residency Program (WCTRP), which engaged participants in a yearlong classroom-based apprenticeship coupled with graduate coursework, for which they received a master’s degree and became a state teaching license. The second was the alternative certification programs, namely TFA, which provided a five-week summer training experience for participants for which the state granted a provisional teaching license.

Interviewees explained how their schools recruited from these programs. For example, a current Kincaid teacher and PTR alumnus explained how the partnership between Kincaid and PTR worked. He was recruited through what PTR called a “Show Day”— PTR invited charter school recruiters to scout PTR residents while they were teaching. Representatives from Kincaid

had observed him teaching his own students, and subsequently, they had followed up.

Competition for PTR alumni was fierce. For example, Rodriguez’s Talent Director Evans reported that they were intrigued by the PTR, so they sent a teacher ambassador to an event. She “gathered [résumés from] a few people,” but when Evans called those residents later that day, they had already been “snapped up” by other schools.

Principals were less positive about the local teacher residency program. At Hurston, some teachers served as mentors to WCTRP residents and therefore functioned, in the words of one, as “a kind of farm team.” Although a Hurston administrator explained that they appreciated how WCTRP “attract[ed] somewhat non-traditional candidates,” he said the program had not “become a huge pipeline” because the quality of resident teachers Hurston had subsequently hired proved to be “uneven.” Fitzgerald’s Principal Forte agreed and explained why she thought this was the case. She thought that although WCTRP residents had “the right mindset,” they were often “too idealistic for people who have never taught in hard schools. They think they are just going to create this amazing community and they’re not going to need any management system. That’s not going to work.”

Although all of the schools reported that they strongly preferred teachers with experience in urban schools, both Hurston and Kincaid reported that they had hired first-year TFA corps members when they fulfilled a particular need. At Hurston, for example, Principal Hinds reported that he had hired five or six corps members in preparation for the first year of turnaround, when he was charged with replacing 50% of the teaching staff—80 teachers—for the following year. He said he felt “comfortable having such a big cohort of new TFA folks” because he also had recruited 11 TFA alumni who could “work with [the novices] through the process” and help them understand that “‘yeah.... This is hard.’” Although Hinds said that new

TFA corps members were “the most energetic people around and are willing to do anything,” he explained that he no longer recruited them because he no longer needed to. His applicant pool had changed considerably: in 2014, he received 102 applications, including many experienced teachers, for an open kindergarten position. He marveled at this number, saying “four years ago, I’d have four.”

Kincaid, which reportedly received 4100 applications before opening, still hired a few new TFA corps members annually. Generally, Executive Director Kaplan said, TFA corps members—like most of the other new teachers at the school—were people of color. Because of their formal partnership with TFA, Kincaid was able to bring hire for the following year in December from TFA’s pool of incoming corps members. TFA required corps members to accept the first offer that was extended to them, and therefore, a partnership with TFA all but guaranteed Kincaid that, when they hired new corps members early enough, those teachers were bound to be people of color.

Novice teachers with experience working in high-poverty urban schools through other, competitive service organizations. Schools also partnered with competitive AmeriCorps service programs, including City Year and Citizen Schools, to recruit teachers. These organizations, which ran afterschool programming at Rodriguez, Fitzgerald and Hurston, primarily hired recent college graduates who committed to a year of service working in a high-poverty school. As one alumnus explained, Citizen Schools provided a “sideways entry point” through which she was able to determine “do I really want to work in a school?... it’s a low stakes way to try it.” Others offered similar accounts, saying that their experiences had prompted them to apply for a regular teaching position at their placement school. For example, one current teacher explained that, while working for Citizen Schools at Hurston, she realized, “I

really liked working here, and I really liked the teachers and had a good sense about the people who worked on the... grade team.” Other current teachers said that they initially had not been placed in the school where they ultimately wound up teaching, but had learned about it through an AmeriCorps colleague. Similarly, although Naylor was not a City Year site, the school had a formal partnership with the organization, which featured an “employer spotlight” about Naylor in their newsletter. In exchange, Naylor granted City Year alumni an automatic interview for a teaching position, if they applied. Because City Year’s focus was, as Talent Director Gold explained, to have a “City Year-to-teacher” pipeline, schools like those in our study were a “good partnership[s] for them.”

Universities

Every school recruited some teachers through universities. At all schools—but particularly at district schools where teachers were required to have a teaching license, recruitment efforts focused on students in traditional teacher education programs. However, because charter schools teachers were permitted to hire uncertified teachers, talent staff broadened their search beyond the education departments and teacher certification programs at universities.

Students in traditional teacher education programs. Schools recruited teacher education students in various ways. They posted advertisements on university career websites and they also trained student teachers. Occasionally, some hosted student groups of visitors to the school. However, with the exception of Dickinson, principals said that recent graduates of traditional teacher education programs were rarely their first-choice hires. Fitzgerald Principal Forte elaborated, “teacher ed schools are really not preparing” candidates who know how to “analyz[e] running records...how to do guided reading, how to really teach using the Writer’s

Workshop model”—skills that she believed were necessary for teaching students who were academically behind. To improve pre-service training and to develop an in-house pipeline of teachers, Forte had partnered with an elementary education program that transported faculty and students to Fitzgerald, where they held selected courses. However, she had not yet hired any graduates of the program because, she believed, there was a “very huge cultural disconnect” between the university students and the community that Fitzgerald served. In a similar initiative, a local public university—which Talent Director Kelly explained was “much more diverse” than surrounding universities—was placing student teachers at a different school in the Kincaid Network. This saved the network money because, as Kelly said, “we don’t have to pay them, and they’ll get to learn. That, hopefully will be building a pipeline there... we can interview them all and hire them.”

Students with potential interest in teaching. Because charters could hire uncertified teachers, they also recruited non-education majors at prestigious universities. Part of Kincaid’s strategy involved convincing college students that they wanted to become teachers—and that their ultimate goal was to teach at Kincaid. At colleges, Talent Director Kelly and her team therefore went through “channels that are not normal”—systematically guest lecturing in classes, meeting with professors, and making themselves known among student leaders on campus. This work involved first determining “Where are the Posse scholars at each of the schools?... Where are the sorority presidents?... Fraternities?... Spanish Club?... Majors who really cannot do anything with their lives with a bachelor's degree?” Then, she said, they “persistent[ly] buil[t] relationships” with these students by taking them to lunch, if possible, with a Kincaid teacher who had attended the college, and by asking students to publicize the opportunities at Kincaid to their peers. For example, students organized tours of Kincaid so that they could, as Kelly said,

“See what we’re doing.” In her view, “the best recruiting I can do is bring somebody into a school. I don’t even need to say anything. They’re, like, ‘Look at these five-year-olds!’” In addition, at both Kincaid and Naylor, recruiters often brought current teachers who were alumni of the college where they were recruiting.

The Walker City School District Human Resources Office

Although the district schools in our study deviated from the norm in public schools by actively recruiting from other sources, all three made strategic use of district channels, as did Kincaid Charter, which belonged to the district as an in-district charter and therefore had access to the district’s human resources services. Naylor, which did not have access to the district human resources services, rarely advertised positions to current district teachers because, as one said, they were “wary” that they might lack “just a bit of alignment... this is horrible to say, but work ethic a little bit.”

District principals reported that WCSD was beginning to improve its historically ineffective recruitment systems. In Fall 2013—a few months before we began this study—WCSD had reorganized its human resources division and introduced what Principal Davila called an “amazing website”—a platform through which applicants could apply for positions at particular schools. Each school managed applicants through its individualized portal. Veteran district teachers seeking to transfer and teachers hoping to join the district used the same system to apply. Consequently, schools reported that, as a Hurston administrator said, there was finally “a really large pool of people that apply... a lot of great candidates.” Further, Principal Forte explained that a major benefit of the new system was that she could “look at all of the candidates who applied to the system... for example... I need a sixth grade math teacher. Only 13 people

applied to *my* sixth grade job, but 168 applied to the district.” The website enabled her to “just open up every one of those résumés” and actively recruit intriguing candidates.

Ironically, several principals worried that, as Kincaid Principal Kain said, the fact that “the district [was] becoming much more active in recruiting pools” was making it harder for them to recruit because the competition had increased, while the number of strong teaching applicants in WCSD had not. In addition, Principal Davila expressed concern that the new system might limit her ability to spot candidates who persevered despite of the district’s human resources poor systems—those “willing to go the extra mile.” For example, one current teacher at her school explained how he had been recruited. After being laid off from one WCSD school, he had tried to use the district’s earlier “really, really terrible” online system: “They ha[d] a lot of listings but—for example, when I got hired at Dickinson, [Davila] goes, ‘Ok, so you’re hired, I just need to post it online and then... once it appears online, you apply for it.’” Thus, when she posted the job online, the teacher explained, “it was for everyone to see. Everybody [saw] it as an open job, where it really [was] not.” Davila herself explained that principals had to “post all the jobs anyway, even if someone at the same building was taking [the position].” This was why it had been so difficult for this teacher to use the online system to determine who had openings: he said, “75% of the [posted] jobs—they [were] already full... [the schools] already kn[ew] exactly who they [were] going to hire.” Beginning in June, he had “probably put in 10, 15 applications a day” through the online system. Finally, he said, “I just printed out a lot of copies of my résumé... went around with [them] to schools to drop them off, to see if I could talk to the principal.” In August, after he had visited more than twenty schools, Principal Davila—excited that he was a “Walker City kid,” impressed by his résumé, and amazed at his assertiveness in 90

degree heat—interviewed him on the spot, even though she didn’t have an opening. She saved his résumé, and when a position opened, she called him.

Recruiting through personal networks

At all six schools, principals engaged what one referred to as “connectors” (Gladwell, 2000)—members of their personal networks who “know everyone” (p. 38). In recruitment, schools relied on connectors to—in Gladwell’s words—“gain access” to “worlds to which [they] don’t belong” (p. 54).

Current Teachers

Several principals explained that their most promising connectors were current teachers. Kincaid Talent Director Kelly said that from the school’s perspective candidates “automatically ge[t] a major bump” when referred by current teachers because they “know what it takes to work here” and “would never refer a friend who doesn’t.” Similarly, a Hurston administrator explained, “Our teachers know a ton of teachers. They’ll refer people they know are good.” One current teacher said that Hurston teachers are so trusted that Principal Hinds hired her based entirely on “testimonial” from another Hurston teacher and from a Teach Plus staff member. Similarly, a Fitzgerald teacher described being recruited by a friend who had consulted there. The friend told him that Fitzgerald “doesn’t use the district mandated curriculum,” and was doing “intriguing” things, pedagogically. At Hurston and Dickinson, teachers said that they learned about the school from current teachers whom they met at district workshops, and one said that she learned about Dickinson from her husband, who had substituted there thirty years earlier and remained friends with teachers who were still there when she was looking for a job.

Although teachers were often engaged in informal recruitment—and, at Naylor and Kincaid, received a bonus if they referred someone who was hired—other schools engaged

teachers more formally. For example, at Rodriguez, teachers of color had prompted what one described as a “proactive” effort to develop the school’s reputation as a “shining star” in the neighborhood and as a great place to teach as a person of color. With administrators, they designed a plan for engaging current teachers of color to be what one called “teacher ambassador[s],” both at formal job fairs frequented by strong candidates of color and in their own personal networks. For example, one teacher said he planned to invite leaders from an interfaith, multi-racial group of clergy to tour Rodriguez. He had also written a letter to Black male students and alumni at his alma mater and a recruitment letter template for others to adapt and send to their own college alumni associations and fraternities or sororities. Although teachers acknowledged, as one explained, that “it’s not going to happen overnight to make ourselves more diverse,” most were hopeful that their carefully orchestrated involvement would yield the results they sought.

Teachers Connected to Philosophically-Aligned Contacts

Some schools used their membership in formal professional networks to recruit teachers who they expected would be philosophically aligned with their school. For example, a Hurston administrator who said, “We love [the guided reading method of] Fountas and Pinnell” recruited teachers through those experts’ national Literacy Collaborative. Likewise, Naylor and Kincaid administrators explained that, in the words of one, their “most promising applicants come from other high-performing [no-excuses] charters.” Although a formal non-compete relationship with most local charters prevented poaching candidates from those schools, they prized referrals from no-excuses schools in other cities. As one principal explained, “You know that they’re already mission-aligned if they’re working at a charter organization that we highly respect.” A Kincaid teacher who had been teaching in New York explained how he was referred through the no-

excuses network: “My CEO [in New York] told me about [Executive Director] Kaplan. He said ‘he’s doing something no one’s ever done before...’—it was incredible how things just happened... My CEO sent him an email on a Monday morning and we spoke that night, at 9:30...” Kaplan asked, “‘Are you planning on coming to Walker City this weekend?’ I said, ‘I’m really not sure of my schedule.’ He said, ‘Well, if you can’t, I’ll come to meet you.’”

Even at Hurston and Rodriguez—which were decidedly not no-excuses schools—administrators explained that they sometimes used their networks to recruit from charters that were. In the words of one Hurston administrator: “specific charters... do an amazing job of training teachers and of instilling a really data-driven approach in their teachers.” She explained, “There’s a mindset that we look for from there. Not so rigid that they’re not going to be able to hang in the more fluid, a little bit less predictable world of a huge public school, which is... a different reality.” Rather, Hurston wanted “somebody who’s got the structure and the mindset but also has the personality to take a lot of initiative.” Such teachers, she said, were “willing to constantly reassess, reinvent and really be creative.” Sometimes, charter school teachers were eager to transfer to district schools, because for many the salary, benefits, hours, and job protections were substantially better.

Teachers Connected to Other District Contacts

District principals relied heavily on other district principals to identify candidates. For example, Principals Davila and Forte frequently emailed other principals they trusted to ask whether they knew individuals who would fit at their school. Occasionally, they also received unprompted recommendations. For example, one Fitzgerald teacher whose position at a “failing [WCSD] school was cut after two years” explained that she was “in limbo for months, waiting to hear if I was going to have a position.” In July, her principal “called and said ‘I don’t have

anything for you. Someone else with seniority has your job.” The principal then recommended her to Forte, who hired her.

Experienced WCSD principals said that they had recruited former colleagues to teach at their new school. For example, one Hurston administrator described how Principal Hinds had approached him while he was working part-time at Hinds’ former school. Hinds asked, “Hey, you want to basically do a cool job like this that’s full-time at my new school?” Similarly, a teacher who had left the district for a suburban school after working for Hinds recalled learning that Hinds was taking over Hurston: “I sent him a quick congratulations,” and Hinds responded, “Hey, if you’re ever thinking of coming back to the city, let me know...” They met and the teacher said that Hinds “kind of put the full-court press on me” to join him at Hurston.

Teachers Connected to Parents

Some schools were beginning to engage parents as connectors to teachers within the community that the school served. At Rodriguez, for example, administrators informed parents that Rodriguez was always seeking applicants, and asked them to spread the word, as Principal Ryan said, “through your churches, your own networks, your own social ties.”

Building an in house human capital pipeline

All principals reported struggling to recruit enough teachers who met their standards for preparation. Therefore some had developed strategies for growing their own teachers—an initiative most advanced at Naylor, where an assistant principal oversaw the program. Each year, the school hired nine Teachers in Training (TTs) who, at the time of our study, earned \$32,000—roughly \$17,000 below the starting WCSD teacher salary. Most TTs were recent college graduates with no prior teaching experience, although several had a master’s degree in teaching or school-based work experience. TTs were assigned a mentor teacher and belonged to their

mentor’s grade-level team. Throughout their training year, TTs engaged in a structured cycle of observation and feedback, seeking to master specific elements of good teaching.

TTs were carefully recruited through similar channels as novice teachers. For example, Talent Director Gold explained that TFA provided her with a list of those who competed in the final round of TFA’s selection process but were not ultimately accepted as corps members. This allowed Gold to recruit individuals who TFA believed held promise. As one current TT explained, very shortly after being rejected from TFA, “a lot of schools reached out to me... and said, ‘we saw that you applied [to TFA]. Here’s a program that’s similar. Learn more about us.’” Naylor also often recruited City Year alumni to be TTs.

Principal North explained that almost all TTs were promoted to become a classroom teacher in network school after their year of training. In fact, she noted that she began her own career as a Naylor TT, as had many of the teachers we interviewed. Each year, almost every TT who was offered a position accepted it. One teacher explained that she had not considered other schools after her TT year because she had visited several with the TT program and felt Naylor was “the best fit because of the support and the team work... The expectations that we set for our kids, I haven’t seen anything that matches it. Just the quality of instruction... is a lot more rigorous here.” Interestingly, a number of teachers said they were promoted well before completing their training year; the TT pool was an important source of teachers for Naylor when midyear turnover occurred, which teachers reported happened in a few cases each year.

Both Kincaid and Rodriguez also offered TT programs, but neither was as structured as Naylor’s. In fact, some described applying to multiple programs and choosing Naylor for precisely that reason, even though Kincaid’s TTs were paid as WCSD first-year teachers—\$49,000 in 2014. Kincaid TTs reported primarily functioning as substitutes throughout the

school, which enabled the school to quickly replace teachers who quit midyear. This was true at Naylor as well. One interviewee explained that Kincaid had recently filled two positions with TTs at midyear. One replaced a teacher who transferred to a district school in September, and the other took the assignment of teacher who “got fired” after he was “put on a Performance Improvement Plan and didn’t meet the goals.” The school then “moved an ESL teacher to the English job,” filled ESL “with a part-time history teacher so she could have a full-time job” and then “had the part-time history job open” until administrators asked a TT to teach part-time history. Kincaid then replaced the TT, because that was easier than replacing an English teacher midyear.

Despite the fact that they received little formal training or mentorship, most Kincaid TTs were offered classroom teaching positions after their training year; they usually accepted. In contrast, Rodriguez TTs—most of whom were City Year alumni—were not currently being cultivated as participants in a teacher pipeline, although some veteran teachers reported having begun their career at Rodriguez as a TT or afterschool assistant. Instead, most current TTs planned to pursue a career elsewhere following two years as TT at Rodriguez, and several planned to pursue a teaching degree.

Two district schools partnered with outside organizations, such as the WCTRP or a local college to train future teachers. However, none offered an in-house program that enabled them to carefully recruit and vet TTs and employ them on the school payroll. Nonetheless, the district schools each created a pool of potential teachers using existing district structures. However, because these solutions depended upon partners or district policies, principals were limited in whom they could select and dismiss and how they could assign and compensate individuals.

Principals also reported that making these strategies work often took significant time and ongoing negotiation with WCSD and with teachers, themselves.

At Dickinson and Hurston, multiple teachers reported having initially been hired as a long-term substitute. Some explained that they took those positions shortly after earning their teaching credential. Because getting a teaching position in the district was notoriously difficult, accepting a position as a substitute was, in the words of one, “a good way to start.” Others described resorting to taking a substitute position upon moving to Walker City after teaching elsewhere. At Dickinson—where openings were rare—several teachers explained that they took substitute positions because, as one said, they “loved [the school] from the moment [they] walked in” and knew it was where they wanted to teach. For example, one reported leaving a full-time private school teaching job for a part-time position at Dickinson. She’d grown up near the school, and “really wanted to give back to the community.” Though her family questioned her decision—“You’re going to leave full-time to go part time? That’s crazy!”—her willingness to do so “got [her] foot in the door.” Because the position was only a few days a week, she substituted “every other day... even days I wasn’t working, I would come in just to help out, learn the school, or help my partner teacher. . . .” When a teacher retired the following year, she was hired to fill her job. Almost a decade later, she reported, “I’m so grateful that I took that chance and it all worked out.” Although teachers often reflected fondly on their experiences as substitutes, one observed that it was a “very frustrating [career] move” to have to make.

At both schools, teachers explained that their principals had invested in them, even as substitutes. One said Principal Hinds saw this as an opportunity for him to “prepar[e] for the future.” This was clear to him during the interview phase, when Hinds asked him to explain his

career goals. Hinds, he said, “understood that being a permanent sub isn’t exactly a career in and of itself.” Therefore, the principal talked with him “about the possibility of me becoming a full-time teacher in the future if that opening was there. Then we talked about how that year wasn’t just going to be being a substitute... there were going to be professional development opportunities” because Hurston had a “wealth of experienced and exemplary teachers” and Hinds “wanted me to use that as a resource.” Throughout the year, Hinds observed the teacher and gave him feedback, and when a teaching position opened, he offered it to him.

Recruitment support from central office: What did schools and teachers count on?

Although all of the schools in our study employed active recruitment strategies rarely used by public schools, their reports about the supports that they could count on in doing this differed dramatically. Although administrators at district schools reported being largely ill-supported and even hampered by the district human resources office in their recruitment efforts, charter schools saw their CMOs and talent offices as indispensable partners who handled most of their recruitment work, freeing them to spend more time in teachers’ classes.

The District. District principals largely expressed frustration that central office administrators did not do more to attract candidates to WCSD or pitch their school to recruits. As one said, “they have a whole department and they’re not helpful.” In this principal’s view, the district did not “really try” to recruit experienced teachers—a problem because students at the school were “very far behind” and “really need[ed] expert teachers.” Similarly, at Kincaid, which was entitled to district services, the talent director explained that, although there were “pockets of excellent [teachers]” in district schools, they did not depend on the district for support in finding them. The job of recruitment, she believed, should be to “get people jobs...

[to] make people very happy when they get a job or very sad when they don't.” It was not “to bug them about licensures... [or to] get them on payroll—that's HR's job.”

None of the district schools employed a full-time talent director, despite the fact that both Hurston and Fitzgerald had hired dozens of teachers when they entered into turnaround. Instead, principals managed recruitment personally, sometimes with support from teachers or other administrators who, like principals, had many other duties.

Teachers concurred that district systems historically were problematic. Multiple charter teachers who had worked in other districts told of experiences similar to this teacher's: “I really wanted to get into the Walker City public school system, which was really, really hard to get into if you're not already a teacher.” Another said that, on top of navigating district bureaucracy, he could not figure out the state's licensing website, which he described as a “terrible, awful, labyrinthine Kafkaesque nightmare” that he needed to survive in order to apply for a district job. Ultimately, he applied to Naylor because “I was in desperate need of a job”—and they didn't require a teaching license.

The Charter Schools. In contrast to the district schools, principals at all three charter schools worked closely with their talent director, whose recruitment efforts were carefully aligned with their school's needs. At Naylor and Kincaid, principals benefitted from the network's enormous resources for recruitment. Naylor's CMO employed a full-time talent director, Sophie Gold. Gold was paid on par with teachers and managed a \$60,000 recruitment budget, which funded her recruitment-related travel, airfare for candidates' visits to Naylor, job advertisements, and the purchase Naylor “swag.” At Kincaid, Executive Director Kaplan said the CMO employed 10 talent staff members—“five times as many recruiters as Walker City Schools.” This “very big team” was “all over the country on a given day” managing “the

sourcing, outreach, and process of recruitment” for the network’s five schools and central office. The team was well compensated; salaries were on par with those of Kincaid teachers and school-based administrators. Finally, Rodriguez—which did not belong to a CMO and hired substantially fewer staff annually than did Naylor and Kincaid—employed one full-time talent director, Virginia Evans, who managed recruitment, hiring and other human resources functions.

At all schools, principals paid careful attention to the school’s reputation and understood its ongoing role in recruitment. However, in contrast with district school principals, charter principals depended on talent staff to manage what several called “branding.” For example, Kincaid hosted an annual Educators of Color Symposium for teachers throughout Walker City. Executive Director Kaplan explained that the symposium was not “explicitly a recruitment vehicle—we actually fairly shy away from that.” Yet, he said, the event had “helped a little bit of our reputation... as Kincaid... trying to be thoughtful and innovative in its approach to broadening the diversity of its team.” Events like these—even those that Talent Director Kelly called “unbranded”—were intended to pique curiosity about the school.

At Rodriguez, teachers described similar events—the Father/Son Day and the Women’s Brunch—during which, as one said, “all the women of the school community come together—grandmothers, teachers, our principal—everyone” to hear “a speaker of color who’s doing something phenomenal.” Talent Director Evans, who co-planned these events with the teachers who had started them, said that they allowed local community members to see the school in action—a powerful recruitment strategy.

Recruitment Challenges and Solutions

Despite a tremendous investment of effort and money, at all schools reported that they continued to face significant challenges in finding the candidates they wanted. In addition,

although the schools had sought different criteria for recruits, the pool was so limited that, as one talent director said, “we’re all competing for the same candidates.”

All of the schools struggled to find both experienced teachers and novices who had been trained in ways that the schools sought. Schools therefore had to recruit teachers who showed promise of being what several principals called “coachable;” subsequently, schools had to devote resources to providing that coaching.

Schools faced additional challenges. All reported that recruiting Black and Latino teachers was extremely difficult. For example, a Rodriguez administrator explained that, the school “look[s] very hard,” for candidates of color, but “of the hundreds and hundreds” of inquiries they received regarding employment, “very few [were from] Black teachers or people of color. . .” Similarly, at Kincaid and Naylor, recruiters flew to historically Black Morehouse College and Howard University to recruit candidates, and the school invited those who applied for a carefully orchestrated, all-expenses paid visit during which they met teachers of color already on faculty. Although some schools experienced greater success in recruiting teachers of color than others did (See Appendix D), all reported efforts to diversify their mostly white, female faculty were enormously time-consuming, expensive, and required what one called “aggressive” work.

Schools also reported having difficulty recruiting teachers with knowledge and expertise in particular subjects—namely special education and middle school math and science. At Rodriguez, Principal Ryan explained why: “What you really need is somebody who has the knowledge base of high school math or science, but yet wants to get down, rolling on the ground, with the kids in middle school.” This combination of characteristics was “really hard to find.” Sometimes, he said, candidates “did nature camp for a million years, and... love to get down and

dirty with kids,” but lacked the knowledge to “field all [those] crazy questions” that arise in science classes. Ryan said that the problem was similar in math: “If you're teaching pre-algebra, you need to know where they're going... How does this relate to algebra and trig and geometry later?” It was difficult to solve that problem by simply giving teachers a curriculum because, as he explained, “if you just follow the curriculum, you can't actually adapt to [students'] learning and what they're thinking.”

Discussion and Conclusion

Across the six schools in this study, administrators, talent directors, and teachers were dedicated to, as Executive Director Kaplan said, “finding the very best staff members to lead and teach.” This, they believed, was crucial to, as one administrator said, “altering the course of [their] kids' lives.” At each school, those we interviewed described recruitment strategies that were far from the “passive and provincial” efforts that have long characterized teacher recruitment in public schools (DeArmond et al., 2009, p. 56). Instead, each school engaged in an active strategy for developing a pool of candidates from which it could hire new teachers when positions opened. All laid the foundation for recruitment by first determining whom they hoped to attract and then creating a plan for how to market their school to likely prospective teachers.

Like those whom DeArmond and colleagues (2010) studied, the principals we interviewed approached recruitment as a “constant activity” (p. 337). They carefully pursued candidates by developing relationships with formal organizations—non-profits, universities, and the school district—whose purpose was to provide a human capital pipeline for schools. They also cultivated informal channels—the personal and professional networks of those already working in the school. Often, they depended most on individuals who shared their explicit mission of educating low-income, minority students and had carefully vetted candidates.

However, their recruitment efforts did not reliably yield the supply of teachers that they sought, and thus each school had developed a strategy for growing its own teachers. Despite these highly focused, costly, and time-consuming efforts to recruit and train strong teachers, principals routinely expressed frustration that the pool of teachers they sought remained shallow.

Implications for Policy and Practice

These findings provide a very different picture of teacher recruitment than is typically reported in public schools. Despite longstanding beliefs that teachers do not want to work with students who grow up in poverty, substantial evidence suggests that long-underserved communities have the potential to attract top talent. The schools in our study provide another set of proof points—along with many specific ideas for how districts and schools might approach this work. This is especially important given recent policy shifts in districts across the country that have granted substantial hiring autonomy to schools but have not yet provided the means to improve recruitment (S. M. Johnson et al., 2015).

The district schools in our study reported having a concerted focus on recruitment and a sense of optimism that WCSD’s new online platform would eventually streamline their work. Yet, in contrast with the charter schools, who relied heavily on their CMOs and talent teams to identify and court teachers who would be a good fit for their specific school, none of the district schools reported counting on the central office as a partner in their efforts. Principals themselves therefore spent countless hours on recruitment, often explaining how they gamed the system to develop a pool of teachers from which they could hire. In turn, many district teachers described going to great lengths to get their “foot in the door” at district schools—as if making an enormous personal sacrifice were a necessary rite of passage to get a job in a high-poverty district school. Several teachers in our study confided that they had taken jobs in charter

schools—where they worked longer hours for less pay—because they had failed to navigate the district bureaucracy or because they could not make the sacrifices involved in earning a district job, such as taking a position as a long-term substitute.

To improve the support that they provide to schools, districts might learn from how the charter networks supported individual schools in their recruitment efforts. At all three charters, talent staff believed that their job was to serve the schools, and their efforts to recruit the candidates that principals sought reflected those beliefs. In turn, principals who worked at charters within a network never described spending time complying with a bureaucratic requirement for recruitment imposed by their CMO, nor did they discuss tactics for “gaming” their network’s systems. Likewise, because talent staff viewed their work as “selling” the advantages of working in their school to potential candidates, charter recruits were often quick to apply for positions—even, when the promise of earning a union-negotiated wage and possibly tenure at a district school was far more appealing. To begin shifting the culture of the relationship between district offices and schools, district officials might meet with principals to ask about their needs and about where and how the district might recruit on their behalf. Large districts might arrange for recruitment specialists to know and support sub-groups of schools. Districts might also support schools in articulating their organizational identity and in developing recruitment materials based on the unique needs and characteristics of specific schools. District personnel might also work to identify promising pipelines by surveying recent, successful hires about where they were trained and how they were recruited. Districts might also offer stipends to strong teachers who are willing to serve as district ambassadors in future recruitment efforts. In many districts, this work would require a shift in mindset and formal responsibility, because

the purpose of these efforts is to transfer aspects of the recruiting work to personnel at central office so that principals and teachers can focus more squarely on hiring.

The principals in our study offer an important caution to districts that are trying to improve their recruitment strategy: desirable teachers are already scarce, and as districts become, as one said, “more active in recruiting pools,” they will need to substantially increase the number of candidates in the pipeline. Otherwise, they risk undoing the success of those schools that have long recruited teachers on their own—in spite of the district’s passive approach. To do this, districts would be wise to learn from Naylor’s highly structured Teachers in Training program, which carefully vetted TTs and trained them through a paid yearlong, well-managed apprenticeship. Through this program, Naylor developed a strong pool of novice teachers and when they hired them to be teachers of record, they did so with confidence that they would succeed with students. In addition, both schools of education and residency-based training programs might reflect on some of the findings presented here. These institutions and organizations might partner with districts and together strategize about how to attract more strong candidates into the profession. For example, local colleges might offer free summer courses to district high school students, in which they could explore the teaching profession. Schools might provide paid or credit-bearing summer or school-year internships for college students who are alumni of the district and in search of meaningful employment. Local teacher residency programs might allow outstanding college seniors to begin their training during their last year of college. Cities might offer college scholarships to district students or to parents who are pursuing a degree in teaching, on the condition that they return home to teach.

It is worth considering whether the pool of potential teachers might seem smaller to the schools than it actually is. At most schools, principals expressed certainty about the profile of a

teacher who was likely to succeed at their school, although that profile might have been narrower than it needed to be. Perhaps schools might consider expanding this profile and rethink how the organization itself could shift to accommodate the talents and approaches of experienced teachers who might not perfectly align with the profile that the school seeks. This was especially true at Naylor and Kincaid, where many participants were said to be so wary of district teachers’ work ethic and lack of mission alignment that they often did not actively recruit within the district.

Implications for Research

This paper makes an important contribution to what is known about how successful high-poverty schools conceive of and enact teacher recruitment. However, more information is needed in order to really understand how the different strategies work. As CMOs and districts develop more active approaches to recruitment, researchers should collect both qualitative and quantitative data about the methods that they use and about the teachers who respond to them. For example, creating longitudinal data sets that track candidates from their first point of contact with a school, CMO, or district until they are successfully hired or turn down an offer would contribute to our understanding of how teachers approach and make career decisions. In addition, it would be worthwhile to learn whether teachers are more likely to stay in a school that actively recruited them. In considering how best to use scarce resources, schools would benefit from knowing whether more complex recruitment processes improve not only recruitment, but also hiring and retention.

Studies might also focus on particular populations of teachers, such as TFA alumni, who remain in teaching or those who complete traditional teacher training, in order to better understand what such individuals seek in a school and to determine the types of recruitment

strategies to which they respond. In this way, schools could test out their assumptions about the promise of particular groups of teachers. Researchers might also survey alumni of top universities who did not major in education but were recruited into teaching after visiting a school or hearing from a panel of teachers. In addition, given the rising importance of non-profit organizations whose mission is to create a human capital pipeline into schools, researchers might also study how leaders of these organizations conceive of their work and devise their strategy for recruiting, selecting and placing novice and experienced teachers. Given the dearth of research about teacher recruitment, any one of these studies would be well worth doing.

In conclusion, the schools in this study collectively illustrate how schools and school systems might reverse the long-standing practice of “passive and provincial” teacher recruitment . Through strategies grounded in their organizational identity, each school actively cultivated a pool of promising teachers from which they could subsequently hire. Although their recruitment successes provide evidence that many teachers desire to work in historically underserved communities, the pipeline of recruits who have the characteristics that schools seek is often inadequate. Learning from the work of these schools and overcoming the challenges that they face will be integral to ensuring that all students have excellent teachers—especially those who need them most.

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Appendix A: Sample Descriptive StatisticsTable 1. *Selected Characteristics of Six Sample Schools**

School Name	School Type	Grades	Estimated Enrollment	% Low-income students	% African American or Black Students	% Hispanic or Latino Students	% Other Non-white students	% White Students
Dickinson Elementary	Traditional District	PK-5	370	76	4	85	2	9
Fitzgerald Elementary	District - Former Turnaround	PK-5	390	85	70	25	3	2
Hurston K-8	District - Former Turnaround	PK-8	800	75	41	54	4	1
Kincaid Charter Middle	In-District Charter	6-8	475	88	50	30	10	10
Naylor Charter K-8	Charter	K-8	500	82	70	24	5	1
Rodriguez Charter K1-8	Charter	PK-8	420	72	55	20	7	18

*Percentages are approximated for confidentiality purposes

Table 2. *Number of Interviewees at Each School*

School Name	Administrators*	Non-Teaching Staff **	Teachers in Training	Teachers	% of Total Teachers in the School Interviewed
Dickinson Elementary	1	2	n/a	15	56
Fitzgerald Elementary	2	2	n/a	14	47
Hurston K-8	4	5	n/a	21	31
Kincaid Charter Middle	5	4	2	16	38
Naylor Charter K-8	2	3	2	17	46
Rodriguez Charter K1-8	3	3	3	16	36

* Administrators include directors of CMOs and school based administrators who directly supervise teachers.

** Non-teaching Staff includes instructional coaches, parent coordinators, data leaders, recruitment officers, deans of discipline and other administrators who do not teach students and do not supervise teachers

Table 3. *Total Teachers Interviewed at Each School & Years of Experience*

School	Novice* (1- 3 years)	2nd Stage (4 - 10 years)	Veteran (11+ years)
Dickinson Elementary	3	5	7
Fitzgerald Elementary	1	11	2
Hurston K-8	6	11	4
Kincaid Charter Middle	4	11	1
Naylor Charter K-8	8	7	2
Rodriguez Charter K1-8	1	9	6
Totals	23	54	22

*Does not include Teachers in Training

Table 4. *Race/Ethnicity of Teachers Interviewed*

School Name	Black (Includes Cape Verdean and West Indian)	Latino	Black & Latino	Asian	White
Dickinson Elementary	1 teacher	1 teacher 1 staff	1 teacher	1 teacher	1 administrator 11 teachers 1 staff
Fitzgerald Elementary	5 teachers	2 staff		1 teacher	4 administrators 2 staff 16 teachers
Hurston K-8	1 administrator 5 teachers			1 teacher	1 administrator 1 staff 8 teachers
Rodriguez Charter K1-8	1 teacher 1 TT	2 staff		2 teachers 1 staff	2 admin 13 teachers 2 TTs
Naylor Charter K-8	2 teachers		2 teachers	1 TT	3 admin 13 teachers 2 TTs
Kincaid Charter Middle	3 teachers 1 staff 1 TT	3 teachers		1 teacher	6 admin 2 staff 1 TT 12 teachers
Totals	21	9	3	8	101

Table 5. Race / Ethnicity of FTEs At Each School*

School	Total Number Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)	African American	Hispanic	Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	Asian	White
Dickinson Elementary	34	3 FTEs (8% of total)	6 FTEs (17%)	0 FTEs	1 FTEs (2%)	24 FTEs (73%)
Fitzgerald Elementary	44	20 FTEs (45%)	.5 FTEs (2%)	0 FTEs	2 FTE (4%)	21.5 FTEs (50%)
Hurston K-8	97	25 FTEs (26%)	15 FTEs (15%)	0 FTEs	3 FTEs (3%)	54 FTEs (56%)
Kincaid Charter Middle	51	10 FTEs (20%)	0 FTEs	3 FTEs (6%)	3 FTEs (6%)	35 FTEs (69%)
Naylor Charter K-8	61	3 FTEs (5%)	3 FTEs (5%)	0 FTEs	2 FTEs (3%)	53 FTEs (88%)
Rodriguez Charter K1-8	57	8 FTEs (13%)	5 FTEs (8%)	2 FTEs (4%)	2 FTEs (4%)	40 FTEs (71%)

These data were drawn from the Massachusetts DESE School and District Profiles and include information from staff during the 2013-14 school year. Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

Appendix B: Interview Protocols

Teacher Interview Protocol

Intro: Study Explanation emphasizing that we really want to learn about your experience at this school.

1. Background:
 - a. How did you come to be in your current position at this school?
 - b. Starting with college, can you tell us what you’ve done?
 - i. Probe for: training and employment
2. Current Teaching Assignment:
 - a. What do you teach here?
 - b. How did you wind up in this position?
3. Overall view of school:
 - a. If another teacher would ask you, “What’s it like to teach at _____?” How might you respond?
 - b. What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a teacher here?
4. Hiring:
 - a. How were you hired at this school? Step-by-step.
 - b. Do teachers play a role in hiring other teachers? If so, how?
 - c. Has the hiring process changed at this school? If so, how and why?
5. Induction:
 - a. Did you have some kind of induction as a new teacher at this school? What worked and what didn’t?
 - b. How are new teachers inducted now? How have things changed since you got here?
6. Support:
 - a. What kinds of supports are available here for teachers to improve their instruction?
 - b. What works well for you? What doesn’t? (Probe: PD, Coaching, Collaboration, Evaluation)
7. Evaluation:
 - a. How is your teaching evaluated? Describe the process.
 - b. Was it helpful? How?
8. Administration:
 - a. Who do you go to for support? For what?
9. Social & Psychological Supports:
 - a. What sorts of social and psychological supports does your school offer for students?
 - b. What support do you get for interacting with parents and families?
10. Career goals:
 - a. How long do you expect to stay at this school? In what roles?
 - i. If yes: What keeps you at this school?
 - ii. If no: Why do you think you might leave?
11. Union:
 - a. What role does the union or the contract play in this school?
12. More: Do you have any additional comments?

Principal Interview Protocol

Overview of Study: 6 Schools, All high-poverty, high-minority. All Level 1.

1. Background:
 - a. How long have you been at this school? Prior experience in education? Anything else we should know about how you got here?
2. School Overview:
 - a. Could you first provide an overview of its structure and programs?
 - b. (Where applicable) What does it mean for your school to be a pilot/turnaround/charter school?
 - c. (Where applicable) How did you go about selecting teachers when ---- was placed in turnaround?
 - d. How would you describe it to a teacher or parent who might be interested in it—both its strengths and weaknesses?
3. Teachers: We’d like to get a sense of who your teachers are.
 - a. Where do they come from?
 - b. What formal or informal preparation do they have?
 - c. What attracts them to the school?
 - d. Approximately, what proportion has fewer than 10 years of experience? 5 years of experience? 0-5 years of experience? (Has that changed or remained steady?)
4. Recruitment and Hiring:
 - a. Could you describe the process you use to recruit and hire teachers? (Applicants per position? Teaching demonstration? Who decides?)
 - b. What challenges do you face in recruiting teachers?
 - c. Are there specific demographics or subject areas that you have trouble finding/attracting? If so, how have you addressed those challenges?
5. Assignment:
 - a. How do you assign teachers to a particular grade or subject?
 - b. Could you describe the teachers’ responsibilities, both during school hours and outside of school hours? Scheduled and unscheduled time?
6. Compensation:
 - a. Please tell us about the pay scale for teachers. Are there additional stipends? If so, can you describe these opportunities?
7. Collaboration:
 - a. Are the teachers organized by teams, grade-levels, subjects? If so, what does that mean for how they do their work? What is the work of those teams?
8. Supports:
 - a. What supports can a new teacher count on in getting started? And for more experienced teachers?
9. Role:
 - a. Are there specialized roles for some teachers? (Teach Plus, team leaders, etc.) If so, please describe these roles.
10. Curriculum:
 - a. Does the school provide a curriculum for the teachers? If so, please tell us about it.
11. Professional Learning:
 - a. Do you have formal professional development? Instructional coaches? If so, please tell us about them.

12. Supervision and Evaluation:
 - a. How do you supervise teachers? How do you evaluate teachers? Are these separate processes? Do students’ test scores play a role in evaluating teachers?
13. Dismissal:
 - a. How frequently do you dismiss or decide not to rehire a teacher? Reasons?
14. Retention:
 - a. How long do teachers stay? Why do they stay? Why do they leave? Is there a type of teacher who stays or leaves? Is turnover a challenge?
15. Policy Context:
 - a. Does state or local policy play a role in how you approach building your teaching capacity?
16. Union:
 - a. What role if any does a teachers’ union play at your school?
17. Have we missed anything?

Recruitment Director Interview Protocol

Overview of Study: 6 Schools, All high-poverty, high-minority. All Level 1

2. Background:
 - a. How did you come to be in your current position at this school?
 - b. Starting with college, can you tell us what you’ve done?
 - i. Probe for: training and employment
3. Current Role:
 - a. Please describe your role at this school / in this CMO.
 - b. How did you wind up in this position?
4. Overall View of School:
 - a. How do you describe the school to potential candidates?
5. Recruitment and Hiring Process Overview:
 - a. Please describe the process through which you recruit and hire candidates.
 - i. Probe Recruitment: How do you identify candidates? What pools of candidates do you rely on? What are your best sources for teachers?
 - ii. Probe Hiring: Once a candidate has decided to apply, what are the steps he / she must go through?
 1. How is the school principal involved in recruitment / hiring? How do you interact about the process?
 2. How are other teachers involved in recruitment / hiring?
6. Challenges:
 - a. Are there particular positions that are especially difficult to fill? How do you address these challenges?
 - b. (If it doesn’t come up): Have you faced challenges related to staff diversity? If yes, please describe the challenges.
 - i. What have you done to address those challenges?
7. Determining Fit:
 - a. What do you look for in a candidate?
8. The Offer:
 - a. How do you approach making an offer?
 - b. Once you’ve made an offer, how do you ensure that the candidate accepts the position?
 - c. If you lose candidates, where do they go and why?
9. Midyear Hires:
 - a. How often do you replace a teacher mid-year? Does the process differ, and if so, how?
10. More:
 - a. Do you have any additional comments?

Appendix C: List of Codes and Descriptors

Codes	Description
Assignment	Teacher Assignment: What do you teach/ your job at the school, views of your assignment
Background	Background: Past work history, education
WhyTeach	Why teach? Personal sense of purpose can include changes in views over time.
SchoolOverview	Facts about the school (the facts but not mission or culture), might include specific school goals
HistorySchool	History of School
FacultyComposition	Descriptions of the composition of the faculty
Equity	Interactions, policies or dynamics described in relation to race, ethnicity, social class
Hiring	Related to teacher recruitment, hiring, including teacher’s experience of being recruited / hired. –timing, demo lessons, debriefs, meetings with current teachers, written applications, Who the school seeks and how they find candidates
WhySchool	Why chose school - why teach at this particular school? May reflect changes over time
Mission	Descriptions of what the school aspires to accomplish (if explicitly talking about mission do not double code with culture)
AdminAdmin	Interactions / relationships among administrators (including non-teaching positions such as coaches and guidance, deans and other non-teaching roles)
AdminLeadership	Descriptions of administrators’ style, vision, agenda, priorities, purposes, etc. (includes self-descriptions)
AdminRole	Specific responsibilities and job descriptions of non-teaching faculty
AdminStudent	Relationship between administrators and students (include coaches, guidance, deans and other non-teaching roles)
AdminTeach	Interactions between administrators and teachers (include coaches, guidance, deans and other non-teaching roles in this code)
Demands	Teachers professional responsibilities and expectations, work hours, teachers views on demands
Resources	Material and human resources (money, buildings, positions, --if it is about admin roles will be double coded in Adminroles) - Facilities
Accountability	Related to external accountability (state accountability status and state testing, turnaround status) - what the state does and then what is done as a result
DistrictNetworkState	Formal relationships / governance from State, District or CMO, includes school boards and trustees
Testing	References to standardized tests, state tests, network tests and interim assessments and how used in the school
MonitoringStudents	Teachers’ use of assessments and instructional strategies to monitor achievement
Student	Student Characteristics: Descriptions of students and their community
Neighborhood	Descriptions of the local surroundings of the school

Family	Ways of connecting families and community to school, Perceptions of parents/ families + Teacher and admin connections to parents / families
CurriculumPedagogy	What and how you teach - including instructional planning
SpEdELL	Descriptions of programs or approaches for educating students with special needs and /or ELLs
SpecialSubj	Referring to non-core academic classes (art, music, library, dance, etc) and extra-curricular or co-curricular programs or activities
SchoolCulture	Expressions of school-wide norms & values including kids, teachers and parents (not explicit statements of mission), big picture that everyone from school would understand
Colleagues	Commentary on colleagues and their characteristics (what I think about the people I work with) - big picture impressions of colleagues
ProfCulture	Professional Culture- the norms of being a teacher or admin in this school. Big picture expectations for how we work together as professionals
Eval	Related to teacher supervision and evaluation: observations, feedback, meetings between supervisors and teachers, how work with teachers on instruction
Coaching	Formal instructional coaches, but NOT induction mentoring
Induction	Programs and supports (formal and informal) for new teachers: prior to day 1 and after day 1
FormalCollab	Deliberate, structured groups working together-organized by the school- including whole school sessions – including approach to lesson planning and who is included and who is not - JUST TEACHERS
InformalCollab	Specific work with colleagues that is not organized by the school, informal collegial interactions -JUST TEACHERS
RolesTeach	Formal roles and opportunities for career advancement (LeadTeach etc.) may have double coding when example of influence through a formal role including leadership teams, Teachers in Training, etc.
InfluenceTeach	Teacher opportunities as brokers of influence (teachers generally in their work having influence), including committees where you can voice concerns - Admin change view because of a teacher
CareerGrowth	Individual professional growth for career progression
OrderDiscipline	Safety, systems, expectations and rules for students, and enforcement
StudentSupports	Social and emotional and academic supports for students and behavioral - outside of classroom structure
StudentTeach	Interactions among teachers and students inside and outside the classroom.
Turnover	Why other people stay or leave; both causes and frequencies, personal plans to stay or leave, also about satisfaction and dissatisfaction, might be stuck in job
Pay	Payscale, stipends and other things related to compensation
Partners	Partners including City Year, LeadTeach, Ed Schools, etc.
Union	Related to the union and the contract
Gem Quote	This is a great quote.

Descriptor Categories for Characterizing Interviewees

Descriptor	Definition	Response options
School	School Name	
Grade Level	Grade Level Presently Taught	Non-teacher, pre-k, k,1, 2, 2 or more grades, all grades, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Gender	Gender	Male, female
Position	Position in the school or system	Recruitment officer, CMO administrator, principal, non-teaching faculty or administrator, teacher, assistant teacher / resident teacher, split role: teacher and other non teaching job
# years at this school	# of years working at this school counting this year	
# years at charter	# of years working at charter schools in total	
# years at district schools	# of years working at district schools in total	
# years at private schools	# of years working at private schools in total	
# years teaching	total of charter, district, private years	
Race / Ethnicity	Self-identified race / ethnicity	Black, White, Caribbean, Cape Verdean, Latino/a, multi-racial, other, Asian
Classroom type	Type of classroom in which interviewee teaches	Self-contained elementary multi subjects, departmentalized core subject, specific subject non-core, ELL/ Special Ed only