Developing human capital in schools and districts: Linking human resource strategies to educational improvement

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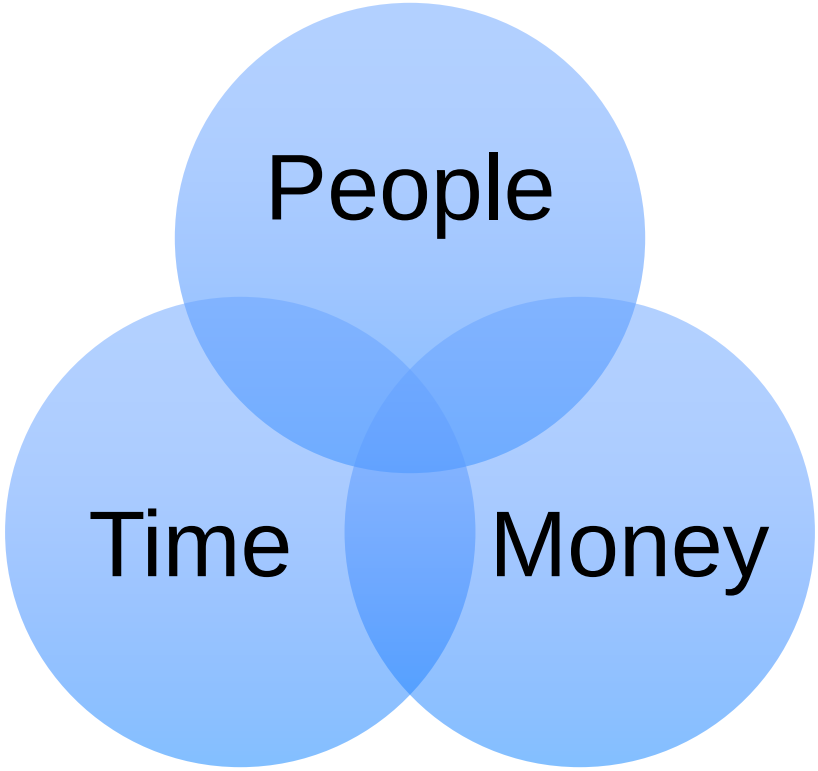
Why focus on human capital?

- People represent 80% of expenditures
- Teachers are the clearest and closest link to improved student learning
- The quality of leadership makes a difference
- Relationships matter in creating a productive school culture

Primary resources



All three resources, in strategic combination, are needed to improve practice in every classroom

What do we know about the teacher workforce in Washington state?

- After 5 years, more than 75% of novice teachers (0-4 yrs) are still working in WA schools.
- Mobility of teachers *within* a district is greater than movement *out* of district, even in urban districts.
- 25% of beginning teachers are located in high poverty schools. When beginning teachers move, the most common move is to a school of a similar poverty level.
- After 5 years, about 20 percent of teachers exit from the WA system, half of whom are probably retirees.
- The yearly rate of teacher retention increased in the past year, likely influenced by the economic downturn.

A multi-faceted set of challenges

1. Recruiting and retaining the next generation of teachers

1. Fully supporting current teachers in meeting increasing curricular and instructional demands

1. Reducing inequities in the distribution of teaching talent across districts and schools

1. Coping with acute economic pressures

1. Supporting leaders in responding to new demands

1. Recruiting and retaining the next generation of teachers

- Use data to help inform decisions about the focus, content, and delivery of teacher preparation
- Intensify efforts to recruit a more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse workforce
- Improve our knowledge of the factors that attract and retain talented teachers

2. Fully supporting current teachers in meeting increasing demands

- The bulk of improvement activity needs to be focused on supporting the existing workforce
- Policy choices have direct implications for ongoing workforce development
- Develop an instructional leadership cadre that can deliver necessary pedagogical and content-specific learning that is differentiated according to student and teacher needs

3. Reducing inequities in the distribution of teaching talent across districts and schools

- Targeting achievement gaps at state, district, school, and classroom levels
- Organizing schools and classroom assignments that address identified gaps
- Rethinking human resource practices that create barriers to optimal resource allocation

4. Coping with acute economic pressures

- Tough economic times present opportunities to fundamentally reconsider resource strategies.
- A primary strategy is to re-allocate staffing resources in more productive ways.
- Re-allocation decisions will vary, depending on district/school contexts, and student/teacher learning needs.

5. Supporting leaders in responding to new demands

- No longer sufficient to distribute dollars equitably and balance budgets
- Leaders must consider how resources, particularly human resources, are linked to building high-performance systems that work for all students
- Leaders need support to learn this new work

Targets of Investment in Human Capital

- Ensuring *supply* of appropriately prepared staff
- Repurposing and redirecting existing *staff roles* and *practices*
- Strengthening staff *capacity* and *performance*.

How can we improve human resource decisions?

- Allocate funds & FTE in proportion to need
- Invest the most in capacity building for targeted staff
- Maximize match between staff skills and student needs
- Re-allocate instructional and professional learning time
- Increase local decision-making discretion

What can be done at the school level?

- Configure staff assignments in ways that maximize student learning, using a transparent rationale
- Fully utilize teacher leadership capacities to enhance student and professional learning
- Restructure time to provide for ongoing collaboration and collegial relationships

What can be done at the district level?

- Connect all human resource decisions to learning outcomes and to a theory of improvement
- Establish ongoing relationships with higher education institutions for preparation and support
- Focus on both short and long term talent development
- Provide for increased authority and flexibility at the school level over human resource decisions such as hiring and retaining staff
- Develop assistance-based relationships with school leaders

What can be done at the state level?

- Foster coherence and joint accountability across the variety of state agencies
- Balance accountability and support functions
- Consider incentives for partnerships between teacher preparation programs and districts
- Reconsider teacher compensation and evaluation systems
- Continue to improve state data capacity
- Adopt a flexible approach to the use of resources
- Engage in high profile efforts to encourage entry into the teaching profession and clarify pathways into teaching

Selected Resources

1. *Allocating Resources and Creating Incentives to Improve Teaching and Learning*

   UW and the Wallace Foundation: depts.washington.edu/ctpmail

2. *Rethinking Resources for Student Success*

   Education Resource Strategies: www.educationresourcestrategies.org

3. *Strategic Management of Human Capital*

   University of Wisconsin-Madison: www.smhc-cpre.org

4. *Resourceful Leadership: Tradeoffs and Tough Decisions on the Road to School Improvement*

   Elizabeth City, Harvard Education Press: www.hepg.org

5. *Taking Stock of Washington's Teacher Workforce: An Assessment of Conditions Prior to the Economic Downturn*

   UW and CSTP: www.cstp-wa.org

Questions and Discussion

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