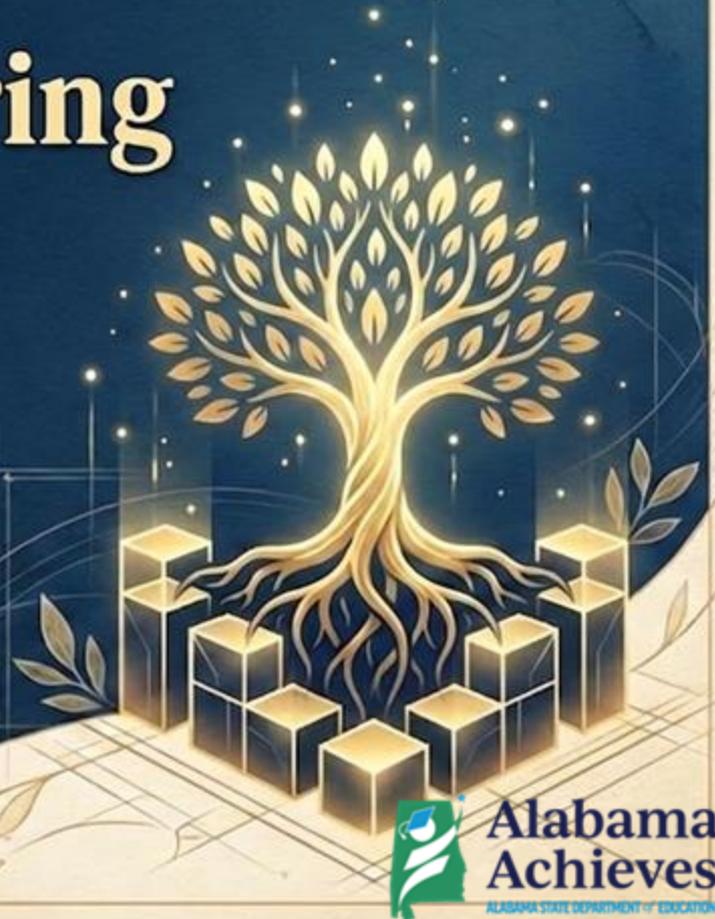


Recruiting & Hiring Highly Effective Educators

Leadership Strategies That
Strengthen Schools

Presenters: Mona Coan and Kim Mitchell

Education Specialists
Alabama State Department of Education



**Alabama
Achieves**
ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Session Outcomes



Understand the leadership role in recruitment and hiring

Recognize how board governance and superintendent decisions shape district staffing quality, stability, and outcomes.



Identify best practices for recruiting teachers and administrators

Explore proactive strategies including grow-your-own pipelines, leadership development, and employer branding.



Apply effective hiring practices that promote quality and fit

Learn how structured interviews, clear expectations, and equity-focused processes lead to stronger hiring decisions.



Connect recruitment decisions to retention and district sustainability

Understand how intentional recruitment reduces turnover and strengthens long-term workforce capacity.



Commit to actionable leadership steps

Leave with at least one concrete action to improve recruitment or hiring practices within their district.

Understanding Today's Staffing Landscape

The Current Reality in Alabama



Persistent teacher and leader shortages



Increased competition between districts



Retirements + early-career attrition



Changing expectations of the workforce



Leadership Lens:

Recruitment and hiring are **systems-level leadership decisions** that directly impact **student outcomes, school stability, and public trust.**

The Leadership Role in Staffing

Board Members & Superintendents Influence:



Strategic Leadership

Vision and values embedded in hiring



Policies that either attract or repel talent



Budget priorities that reflect staffing commitments



District reputation as an employer of choice



Key Shift:



From filling vacancies



building a strong talent pipeline

A proactive, continuous investment in cultivating a diverse, high-quality workforce, not just filling immediate gaps.

Defining “Highly Effective Staff”



Strong instructional or leadership skills

Mastery of subject matter and effective leadership techniques.



Builds relationships and positive school culture

Fosters trust and collaboration within the educational community.



Committed to continuous growth

Engages in ongoing professional development and learning.



Aligns with district mission and community values

Shares and contributes to the shared vision and goals.



Reflection: Are we hiring for long-term impact or short-term survival?

Best Practices in Teacher Recruitment

1. Proactive, Year-Round Recruitment



Proactive, Year-Round Recruitment

- Maintain active candidate pools
- Early intent-to-return conversations
- Strategic use of job fairs and virtual outreach

2. Grow-Your-Own Strategies



Grow-Your-Own Strategies

- Partnerships with local colleges and universities
- Paraprofessional-to-teacher pathways
- Support for alternative certification candidates

3. Strong Employer Branding



Strong Employer Branding

- Clear messaging: "Why work here?"
- Highlight mentorship, leadership development, and support
- Use current teachers as ambassadors

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY RECRUITMENT



Forecasting Staffing Needs

Early recruitment allows systems to anticipate staffing requirements from enrollment and retirements, ensuring adequate teacher supply.



Building Candidate Pipeline

Initiating recruitment months before school starts helps create a strong pool of qualified teacher candidates through thorough interviews and vetting.



Supporting Retention

Early recruitment supports retention through building and cultivating meaningful relationships.

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY RECRUITMENT

College and University Partnerships



Early engagement with teacher preparation programs helps districts attract new graduates.



Host annual job fairs and coordinate on-campus info sessions.



Track candidate placement and retention rates.



Provide feedback to partner institutions to ensure success of EPP.





CREATING A **TEACHER PIPELINE**

CREATE FUTURE EDUCATOR PROGRAMS

Establish clubs or elective courses for High School students as well as Elementary Students to help students envision teaching as a rewarding career.

Building a local pipeline reduces reliance on external recruitment, addresses rural challenges, and fosters long-term retention by engaging students early in their career journey.



BUILD A STRONG SCHOOL SYSTEM BRAND



Communicate School System Values

A strong employer brand highlights the district's values, achievements, and commitment to teacher growth and community involvement.



Showcasing Unique Features

Highlight innovative teaching, supportive leadership, and success stories to attract ambitious candidates.



Promoting via Media

Use social media, district websites, and local media to share visual campaigns and positive stories.



Reflecting Local Strengths

Tailor branding for rural and urban districts, emphasizing community closeness or advanced resources, respectively.



Practical Branding Framework for Leaders

1. Define It

Clarify identify, commitments, and expectations.

2. Deliver It

Ensure staff experience matches messaging.

3. Demonstrate It

Communicate consistently and showcase impact.



TO CREATE EFFECTIVE BRANDING



**1. Evoke
emotional
connections**



**2. Reinforce
professional
identity**



**3. Foster
community
engagement**

Best Practices in Administrator Recruitment

Leadership Pipeline Development

- Identify internal leadership talent early
- Aspiring leader programs and shadowing opportunities
- Succession planning—not emergency hiring



Key Leadership Move:

Stop waiting for vacancies to think about leadership readiness. Build leaders before vacancies occur.

Effective Hiring Practices



Structured & Strategic Hiring



Clear, non-generic
job descriptions



Consistent
interview protocols



Performance-based
interview questions



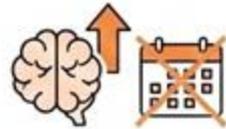
Diverse interview
panels



Hire for:



Skill AND
cultural fit



Growth mindset—not
just years of experience



Alignment with
district priorities

HIRETRUE RESOURCES

School Systems can create:

- Job Descriptions
- Custom Screening Questionnaires
- Behavior Assessments
- Skills Assessments
- Customize Onboarding Process and Procedures

Jobs are automatically posted to:

- Indeed
- LinkedIn



Effective Hiring Practices (continued)

 Ensure fair and consistent hiring processes

 Remove unnecessary barriers to entry

 Expand candidate pools intentionally

 Monitor representation across roles



Reflection Question:
Who is missing from our applicant pool—and why?



Reflection Question:

Who isn't applying—and what might be preventing them?



The Cost of Poor Hiring Decisions

When Hiring Is Misaligned

- Increased turnover
- Loss of instructional continuity
- Low staff morale
- Higher long-term costs

Leadership Reminder:

Every hiring decision sends a message to staff and the community.

It costs less to hire well than to rehire repeatedly.



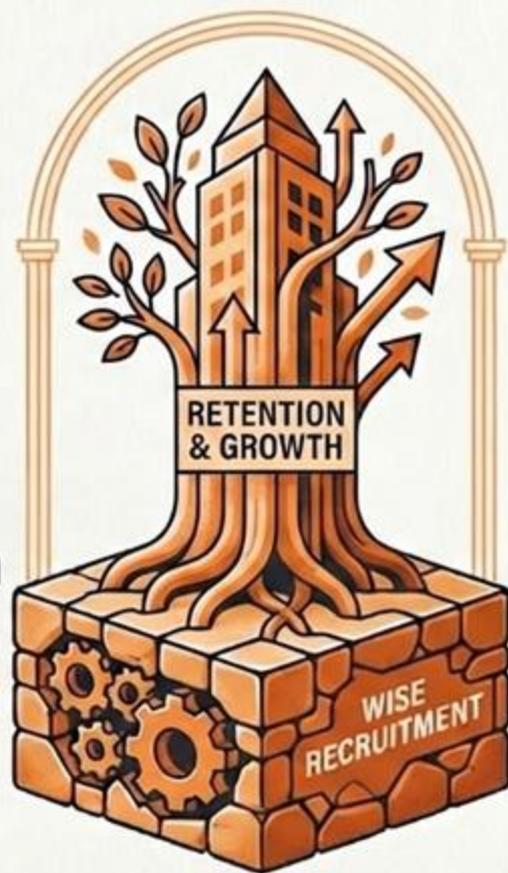
RETENTION STARTS AT RECRUITMENT

What Keeps People:

-  Clear expectations from day one
-  Strong onboarding and mentoring
-  Instructional and leadership support
-  Opportunities for advancement/growth

Key Insight:

You don't retain people later—you recruit them
WISELY upfront.



School Board and Superintendent Action Steps



Governance-Level Moves

-  Review and align hiring policies
-  Invest in recruitment and mentoring programs
-  Ask better questions about staffing data
-  Support leadership development pipelines



[Teacher Leadership Is More Than an Add-On: It's the Engine That Drives Student Outcomes | NETC | National Institute for Excellence in Teaching](#)

Questions Leaders Should Be Asking:

-  Where are our hardest-to-fill roles?
-  What patterns do we see in turnover?
-  How are we preparing future leaders?

LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

is the deliberate practice of examining your actions, decisions, and impact



to enhance self-awareness, improve decision-making,



and strengthen your leadership effectiveness.

REFLECTION

Leadership Reflection

- What is one hiring practice we need to strengthen?
- Where can we be more proactive instead of reactive?
- How does our hiring reflect our values?

our values;

How does our hiring reflect

Closing Message

Developing highly effective staff begins with



From Strategy to Action

Leadership Commitments:

-  Identify one recruitment practice to strengthen this year
-  Review one policy or process that may be creating barriers
-  Invest in at least one grow-your-own or leadership pipeline
-  Commit to asking better staffing questions at board meetings

Take-Home Reflection



What one action will you take in the next 60 days to strengthen your staffing system?

Resource

Superintendent Staffing Planning Worksheet

Click me!



Section 1: Staffing Snapshot

- Hard-to-fill positions: _____
- Schools with highest turnover: _____
- Leadership positions projected to open (next 2–3 years): _____
- Early-career teacher retention rate: _____



Section 2: Recruitment Strategy Audit

- Active candidate pool maintained
- Grow-your-own pathways in place
- University partnerships established
- Clear district employer value proposition
- Standardized interview protocols used
- Leadership pipeline identified



Section 3: 60-Day Action Plan

- Immediate Action #1: _____
- Immediate Action #2: _____
- Policy Review Needed: _____
- Budget Implications: _____
- Leadership Commitment Statement: _____

Resource

Board Discussion Protocol Worksheet

Click me!

Board Discussion Protocol

Purpose: To guide board members in strategic discussion around recruitment, hiring, and workforce development aligned to district vision and student success.



Part I: Framing the Conversation

- What is our district's current staffing reality?
- Where are we experiencing the greatest strain?
- Are we reacting to vacancies—or building a system?



Part II: Strategic Discussion Questions

- How does our hiring reflect our district's mission and priorities?
- Do we recruit year-round or only when positions open?
- What pipelines are we actively developing (grow-your-own, leadership pipeline, university partnerships)?
- Are our hiring processes structured, consistent, and equitable?
- What trends are we seeing in turnover data?



Governance Commitments

One policy to review this year: _____

One staffing metric to monitor regularly: _____

One strategic investment to consider: _____

CONTACT US

Alabama State
Department of
Education



Mona Coan
Education Specialist

✉ mona.coan@alsde.edu

☎ 334.694.4597



Kim Mitchell
Education Specialist

✉ kimberly.mitchell@alsde.edu

☎ 334.694.4601

