

LEA: Pencil County

DATE: April 20, 2007

Equity Plan Sample C

In addition to requiring that all teachers of core academic subjects be highly qualified, NCLB requires that states and school systems ensure that low-wealth, minority, learning disabled and/or English language learners are taught by experienced and highly qualified teachers to the same extent as are students who do not fall into these categories. To this end, LEAs are expected to have a plan to ensure the equitable distribution of teachers. The plan is to include the following components:

- A. A description and analysis of the distribution of teachers in the LEA. Any inequities should be clearly identified.

Pencil County makes every effort to distribute highly qualified and experienced teachers equitably to the entire student population. Data for each school is analyzed by grade and/or subject; teacher data is analyzed for experienced and HQ teacher designations; the two sets of data are compared. Teachers are assigned to schools and within schools such that at-risk populations are taught by HQ and experienced teachers at the same rate as all other students.

In each school at the end of the school year, the principal reviews changes in equity within the school as faculty relocate or exit the profession, or as classes experience shifts in demographics. These changes are reported to the LEA's personnel director who then works with the principal to hire highly qualified, experienced teachers to fill faculty vacancies.

Due to a 34% teacher turnover rate and despite heroic recruitment efforts to hire and retain experienced, highly qualified teachers, there is an overwhelming number of beginning teachers currently employed. Although beginning teachers are abundant here, the distribution of inexperienced teachers to all student populations is equitable.

While 100% of beginning teachers are highly qualified in one area, the LEA's broad course offerings often require some of these teachers to teach special subject areas for which they are not immediately HQ. The areas of greatest inequity in terms of HQ teachers are exceptional children and science. There are 5 teachers not designated HQ in their current teaching assignments: 2 in middle school science for exceptional children, 2 in high school science (chemistry and physics) and 1 in an elementary ESL classroom. These teachers are HQ in other areas and are currently working to earn HQ designation in their new assignments.

- B. Strategies to be implemented that address the inequities/needs as identified in the description of teacher distribution above. For each strategy, provide evidence for the probable success of the strategy.

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| <p>Strategy 1</p> | <p>Distribute teachers across the district so that students who are low wealth, minority, English language learners, or learning disabled are as likely to be taught by HQ and experienced teachers as students who are not in these categories.</p> |
| <p>Evidence of Probable Success</p> | <p>Schools in Hamilton County, Tennessee, as part of the Benwood Initiative, improved in 5 years from ranking in the lowest 25% in student achievement in the state to the top 10% ranking when schools were reorganized to move highly effective teachers to low performing schools. www.ed.gov/admins/tchrqual/learn/nclbsummit/murrah.html</p> |
| <p>Evaluation</p> | <p>The LEA will monitor after the first 10 days of school to see that HQ and experienced teachers are equitably distributed to all student populations.</p> |

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| <p>Strategy 2</p> | <p>The HR director will meet as soon as possible with all non-HQ teachers to form a plan for each teacher to become highly qualified. Individual records, including a plan for becoming HQ will be kept on each candidate. Quarterly, HR will monitor each teacher’s progress toward attaining HQ. Pencil County will offer intensive “mentor-like” support to all teachers working on initiatives to become HQ.</p> |
| <p>Evidence of Probable Success</p> | <p>In 2005-06, the HR director and BT coordinator worked in tandem to create a support/mentoring system linking non-HQ teachers with teachers already HQ in their areas. Based on survey data, 42 of 56 teachers who responded to the survey rated the support program as “superior” (highest rating). In anecdotal notes, 4 respondents indicated the “mentoring” aspect of the program was invaluable.</p> |
| <p>Evaluation</p> | <p>The LEA will continue to collect data for this unique mentoring program through teacher surveys. Surveys will be designed for both HQ and non-HQ teachers.</p> |

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| Strategy 3 | The LEA will support teachers who seek advanced degrees, NBPTS certification, or additional areas of certification to earn HQ designation with tuition payments, tuition reimbursement, Praxis II fees, and/or release time for NBPTS candidates to work on their portfolios. |
| Evidence of Probable Success | In 2005-06 Pencil County made tuition payments for 36 classes, paid tuition reimbursement for 39 classes, and paid for 62 Praxis II tests. The LEA also provided 1 day of release time for each of 7 teachers to complete NBPTS portfolios. As a result of these measures, 91 teachers are now HQ in the core content areas they are currently assigned. |
| Evaluation | The personnel director will team with the staff development coordinator to collect data on the numbers of teachers earning HQ designation through Praxis II testing, NBPTS certification, and coursework for which the LEA pays the associated fees. This data will be reported to the Title II Needs Assessment Committee to be disaggregated and used as part of the Needs Assessment for next year. |

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| Strategy 4 | Pencil County will access the NC Teaching Fellows program through recruitment events for teaching fellows at the local colleges and universities. The LEA will also host Teaching Fellows Discovery trips and summer experiences to promote Pencil County Schools. |
| Evidence of Probable Success | This LEA has sponsored summer experiences and discovery trips for teaching fellows for the past 3 summers. As of August 2005, Pencil County employed 39 NC Teaching Fellows, all of whom are fully licensed and highly qualified. This represents a higher percentage of our teaching staff than that of our neighboring counties. |
| Evaluation | The recruitment and retention coordinator will collect and disaggregate data in October and compare it to previous data regarding total hires to see if this method of recruitment has been productive. The recruitment and retention coordinator will continue the longitudinal study to regarding the retention rate of Teaching Fellows. |

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| Strategy 5 | As hiring needs occur, the LEA will hire only teachers who are already HQ in the areas to which they will be assigned. HR staff will attend job fairs and utilize on-line recruitment tools to find highly-qualified teachers. |
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| Evidence of Probable Success | In 2005-06, Pencil County held a local job fair through which 29 HQ teachers were hired, and attended 3 out-of-state job fairs through which 19 HQ teachers were hired. The LEA utilized www.teachers-teachers.com to locate and eventually hire 6 HQ teachers. |
| Evaluation | The LEA will continue to collect data on the success of hiring HQ teachers through attending job fairs, hosting job fairs, and on-line recruitment sites. |

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| Strategy 6 | To stem the tide of high teacher turnover and improve teacher satisfaction in the workplace, the staff development coordinator will plan and/or deliver to all principals in the LEA training on improving school climate. |
| Evidence of Probable Success | <p>In a report by SECTQ on the 2004 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, <i>Teacher Working Conditions are Student Learning Conditions</i>, a collegial atmosphere and an instruction-oriented administrator were the primary reasons teachers decided whether or not to remain in their schools. www.teachingquality.org/pdfs/TWC_FullReport.pdf</p> <p>A report by SECTQ on the South Carolina teacher working conditions survey 2004 verifies that quality professional development opportunities, facilities/resources, high quality administrative leadership are among the 6 issues that affect teacher retention and student performance. www.teachingquality.org/pdfs/TWC_SCFinalReport.pdf</p> |
| Evaluation | Pencil County will continue to monitor the Teacher Working Conditions Survey results and compare them to results from previous years, focusing especially on teacher satisfaction in the workplace and the role of the school administrator in creating a collegial atmosphere. |

C. A description of how the LEA will evaluate the impact of the strategies.

See charts above.