

## Getting the Best People into the Toughest Jobs: Changes in Talent Management in Education

Teachers and principals have the greatest impact on student learning. Unfortunately, our public education system, until recently, selected and tenured thousands of ineffective teachers and principals particularly in high-poverty urban school and rural schools. But the landscape of how teachers and principals—the education talent—are managed is dramatically changing. A comprehensive and holistic view of strategic talent management in education is developing, supported by new and ambitious federal and state policies and rapidly changing local practices.

**Strategic talent management** is an approach that manages all human resource programs—recruitment, selection, placement, development, evaluation, tenure, promotion, dismissal, and compensation—around a set of effectiveness metrics that capture instructional practice and student-learning growth. **This brief is derived from [Getting the Best People into the Toughest Jobs: Changes in Talent Management in Education](#) written by Allan Odden (published by the Center for American Progress),** which examined the evolving landscape of talent management in education.

### How strategic talent management came to “top” the education policy agenda:



#### **HISTORICAL LOOK**

Talent management, or lack thereof, in education at the close of the 20th century was limited to “personnel administration” and did not distinguish between effective and ineffective teachers or principals, emphasize recruitment or rarely made use of dismissal practices since the process was costly and rarely successful.



#### **COMPREHENSIVE CHANGE**

An impetus for change in schools’ approach to talent came from private sector which propelled the concept that “talent mattered.” In response, new federal and state human-capital management policies and local practices emerged.



#### **FOUNDATION OF CHANGE**

The reform rumblings and collaboration among the national foundations, progressive superintendents and other reform groups and organizations—Teach For America, The New Teacher Project, New Leaders, and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)—began coalescing into a wave of change over talent and its management, which more leaders were conceding was critical to the successful implementation of all other education reforms. These talent reformers across the country, had the financial backing of many of the largest foundations, and were addressing what was becoming recognized as a core education reform issue: educator talent and its strategic management.



#### **ROLE IN CURRENT EDUCATION POLICY**

The transitional shift to a new world of talent management in education has led to new channels for recruiting better talent into U.S. schools, and new methods for evaluating teachers. States and districts are using these new methods to determine tenure promotion, pay, and dismissal—instead of seniority.

"It takes the **most talented individuals in the country** to succeed in school environments, working relentlessly every day. Yes, these individuals need instructional expertise, but as a raw foundation **they need the intellectual power to figure out how best to organize their classrooms** and teach the curriculum effectively to all students."

Alan Odden, *Getting the Best People into the Toughest Jobs*

## Implications for policymakers and practitioners

To continue the transitional shift to a new world of strategic talent management in education, policymakers and practitioners must continue to craft policies and practices that:

- 1** Make entry to the profession difficult at every point to ensure that only the top talent meets the entry standards—based on rigorous assessments of content knowledge and should assess both instructional expertise and impact on student learning—for the full professional license to be required of every novice teacher at some point after three to five years of teaching;
- 2** Make the new evaluation systems affordable;
- 3** Ensure that the scores that teachers receive on their evaluations derive from "cut" scores that are set at rigorous levels in order to accurately identify the most effective and most ineffective teachers;
- 4** Decide where to put the toughest requirements for entering the teaching professions so the talent that flows from the new recruitment sources are not shut off; and,
- 5** Embed all this in an effective school improvement strategy that is linked to the new Common Core State Standards initiative.

## Questions? Find more info & connect with one of our experts:



Contact the report author, [CPRE co-director Allan Odden](#) at [arodden@wisc.edu](mailto:arodden@wisc.edu).  
For general questions, email [cpre@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:cpre@gse.upenn.edu).



Read the full report at <http://cpre.org/getting-best-people-toughest-jobs>.

Learn more about strategic management of human capital at <http://www.smhc-cpre.org/about/>.



Connect with us on Twitter at [@CPREresearch](https://twitter.com/CPREresearch).