



Laboratories of Reform?

Human Resource Management Strategies in Illinois Charter Schools



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BACKGROUND

- Charter schools were originally intended to serve as “laboratories of reform” for all schools, and recent literature suggests that they are leveraging their flexibility and are especially innovative around HR management
- Charter schools in Illinois: 65 schools across 157 campuses
 - Located throughout the state, but mostly (90%) in Chicago
 - Can be unionized (around 30 unionized campuses in Illinois)
 - If Illinois charter schools were a single district, they would be the 2nd largest district in the state (~59,000 students)
- Human resource management describes the strategies that schools use to recruit, support, retain, and reward teachers
- Recent efforts at all levels (school, district, state, federal) have sought to improve HR management in schools

Strategic Management of Human Capital		Apsen Institute		American Institutes for Research	Carnegie	TNTP
Acquisition	Recruitment	Pathways into Teaching	Preparation	Preparation	Acquire	Recruitment
	Selection		Certification			Selection
	Placement		Sourcing			Training/certification
Development	Induction	Induction and Tenure	Induction	Hiring	Develop	Hiring/placement
	Mentoring		Training & Development			On-boarding
	Professional Development		Tenure			Professional Development
Retention	Performance management	Performance management, compensation, and rewards	Performance management	Performance Management	Evaluate	Evaluation
			Compensation & Non-Monetary Rewards			Working conditions
			Leadership development			Compensation Retention/dismissal

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

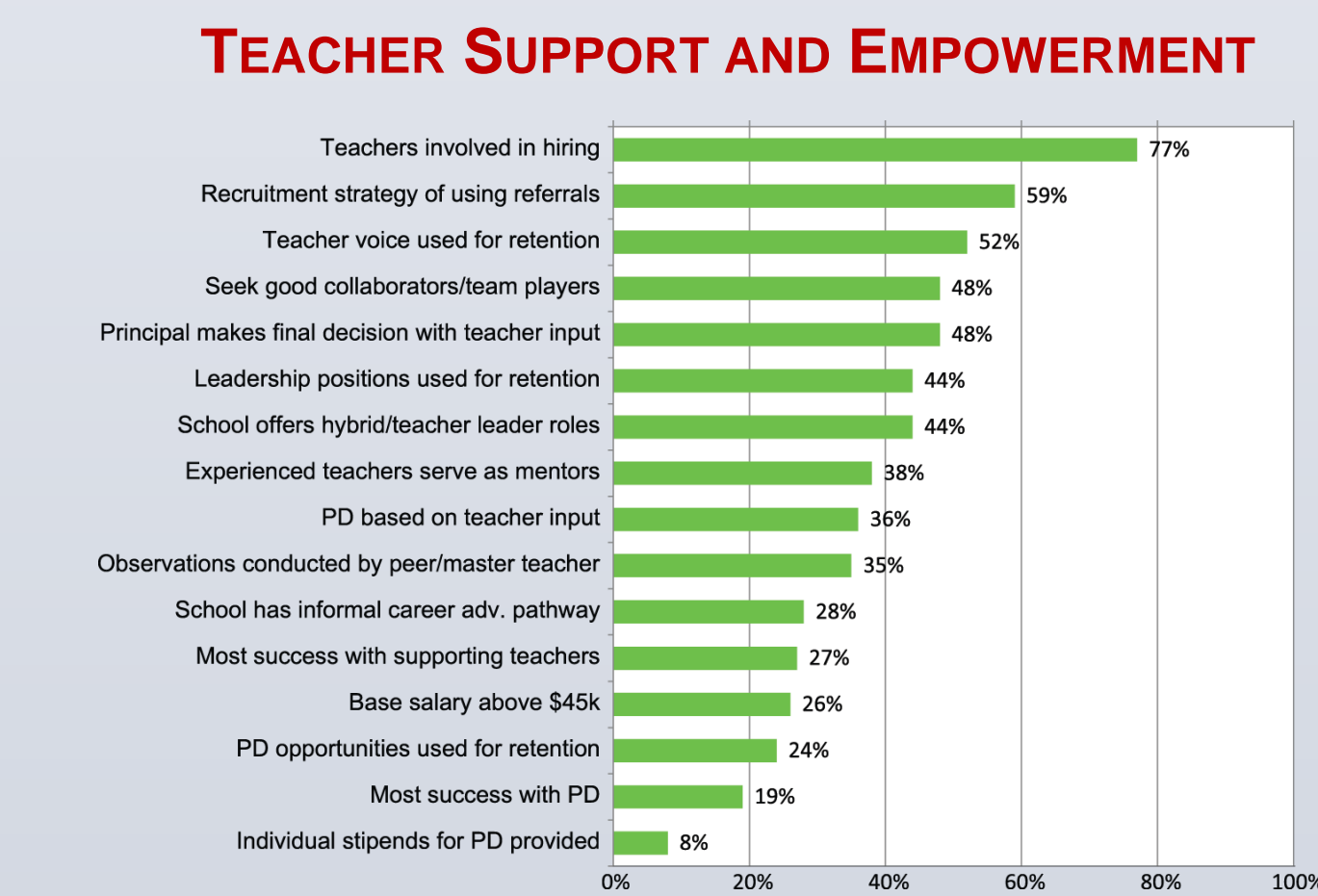
- How do Illinois charter schools practice HR management?
 - Are there any differences in these practices by school characteristics (Chicago vs. non; H5 vs. elementary/mid; network-affiliated vs. standalone; newer schools vs. more mature schools; unionized vs. non) ?
- What are common themes in HR practices across schools and across HR functions? What factors account for the majority of HR practices in charter schools?
 - Are there any differences in these strategies by school characteristics?
- What are the relationships between charter school HR strategies and teacher retention , school learning conditions, and student achievement gains?

DATA

- Participants: 27 of 57 (47%) Illinois charter “schools” representing 60% of the state’s charter school students
 - For the purposes of this study, “schools” = stand-alone schools OR multi-campus networks
 - Representative sample
- Phone interviews and online surveys with Illinois charter school administrators during the 2013-14 school year
- Questions organized around existing HR management frameworks across 7 key functions:
 - Recruitment
 - Selection
 - Orientation and mentoring
 - In-service professional development
 - Evaluation
 - Compensation
 - Retention
- 2013-14 data on teacher retention, learning conditions, and student achievement from ISBE and CPS

ANALYSIS: Typology of HR Management Strategies

- Looking across schools and functions to view HR strategies as a cross-cutting *system* of theoretically and statistically coherent practices, rather than isolated components
- Identified four broad themes that describe HR management strategies in Illinois charter schools:



- Developed composite scores for each school from the coded survey and interview responses to represent the % its practices that were classified into that theme
- All but three of the schools in the study used each of these four strategies, to some degree or another
- Differences in HR strategies by school type:
 - Standalone (single site) schools use significantly fewer incentivist practices and significantly more teacher empowerment practices than network- and CMO-affiliated schools,
 - Newer charter schools (those that had been in operation for less than 5 years) use significantly lower proportions of incentivist practices (3%) than their more mature counterparts (12%)

RESULTS

- HR practices have no consistent, systematic relationship to teacher retention (as measured here) or any of the three “essential” learning conditions used in this study (ambitious instruction, effective leaders, or collaborative teachers)
- Teacher empowerment practices were positively and significantly related to the 5Es teacher influence measure, but negatively associated with the 5Es measure of academic press
- Information-rich decision-making was inversely related with the 5Es school commitment measure
- No statistically significant relationship between individual HR practices and state test scores after controlling for poverty and prior test results
- Statistically significant relationship between incentivist practices and math gains (relative to the state as a whole)
 - Coefficient for % incentivist practices is consistently large and positive in models using state tests, but not on those using NWEA
- Taken together, these results suggest that incentivist practices may have some positive association with math achievement gains, but this is largely dependent on how school achievement is being measured
 - There is little evidence from these analyses that any of the other set of HR practices consistently affects school achievement gains

HR Strategy	3-Year Teacher Retention	5Essentials			5Essentials Sub-Scales					State Tests		NWEA	
		Ambitious Instruction	Effective Leaders	Collaborative Teachers	Teacher Influence	School Commitment	Academic Press	Teacher Socialization	Teacher Collaboration	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
% Mission-Driven	-0.21	0.36	0.14	0.27	0.27	-0.04	-0.01	0.21	0.24	-0.04	0.22	-0.52	-0.44
% Info Rich	0.62	-0.11	-0.46	-0.26	-0.30	-0.06*	0.01	-0.36	-0.09	0.10	-0.27	0.08	0.23
% Empowerment	0.49	0.10	0.36	0.34	0.60*	0.23	-0.63	0.35	0.18	-0.10	-0.11	-0.31	-0.11
% Incentivist	0.35	-10.07	0.16	0.12	0.49	0.09	-0.14	0.21	0.32	0.39	0.52*	-0.43	0.01

DISCUSSION

- HR management in Illinois charter schools is more complex and varied than common perception would suggest.
 - Some charters are utilizing their flexibility
 - Many missions, many definitions of “mission-driven” practices
 - New generation of charter schools moving away from incentivist practices
- The HR typology developed for this study is a viable way of describing charter school practices
 - Useful for conceptualizing organizational strategy
 - Could be applied to future studies of district schools
- Illinois needs better data systems
 - PARCC and LDS should help
 - Will facilitate more and better research on the impact of HR and other organization practices statewide
- Principals need HR management skills
 - Plus time and autonomy to exercise them
- Many HR practices from the charter school sector address perceived weaknesses in the teaching profession, particularly around teacher support, empowerment, and leadership opportunities
 - Driven by strategy or by necessity?
 - We need data on teachers’ perceptions

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