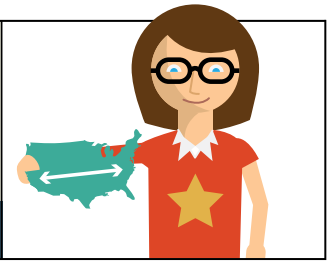


TEACHER-LED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

TO REACH EVERY STUDENT WITH EXCELLENT TEACHERS



SELECTING TEACHER-LEADERS

As schools and districts prepare to fill new Opportunity Culture positions, they will find little empirical research to help in selecting multi-classroom leaders (MCLs)—despite the growing recognition of the vital role teacher-leaders can play in supporting the development of their peers.

A 2010 research review found only 11 studies that included findings on teacher-leader selection—and not one offered practical guidance for school administrators interested in designing an effective selection process.

Lacking better evidence within education, educators and policymakers can look to cross-sector research and experience on determining job selection criteria and processes to help select teachers who are likely to effectively lead their peers.

This screening of candidates is especially important for schools creating an Opportunity Culture: Much of the success of a school’s redesign rests on its MCLs’ ability not only to continue to use their skills as excellent teachers, but also to employ previously little-used abilities or “competencies” to lead a team of teachers to improved student outcomes.

Because of the importance of MCLs, Public Impact developed the **Teacher and Staff Selection Toolkit**, based on the available cross-sector evidence. It focuses on key aspects of selection—such as how to design the selection process, what criteria to use, and who should be involved in selection decisions. It addresses selection criteria and how to implement selection methods most likely to predict who will succeed in these demanding leadership positions. Public Impact will update its recommendations based on what we learn as pilot schools refine their selection processes.

Selection Criteria. Research and practical human resource manuals suggest that three areas should be assessed during the selection process:

1. **Demonstrated Job Skills.** Has the individual demonstrated the skills needed to fulfill the job responsibilities, as indicated in the job description?
2. **Observable Behavioral Competencies.** Has the individual demonstrated that (s)he typically uses behavioral competencies—the habits of behavior that help predict how an individual will perform in a job—at the level needed to be effective in this position?¹
3. **Prior Evidence of Success.** Has the individual proved that (s)he can achieve outcome goals correlated with success in the new role (e.g., high-progress student learning outcomes, improved conditions within the school such as behavior and attendance, contributions to the work of other teachers)?

The selection process in Public Impact’s toolkit includes items needed for these categories:

- * **Job descriptions** that include a summary of the MCL’s role as well as clearly articulated job responsibilities and qualifications, including skills.

¹To learn more about behavioral competencies, see: Spencer, L. M., & Spencer, S. M. (1993). *Competence at work: Models for superior performance*. John Wiley & Sons; or see Public Impact’s selection materials for school turnaround teachers and leaders, available at <http://www.publicimpact.com/teacher-leaders/competencies-of-high-performers>.

- * A list of the **behavioral competencies**—the habits of behavior necessary for a particular role—most critical for the MCL.
- * How to gather **prior evidence of success** that is correlated with the MCL responsibilities—for example, achieving high-progress student outcomes in relevant subjects, or successfully leading and managing a team of adults to accomplish goals.

Selection methods. Schools can find a variety of methods to measure job candidates’ qualities, but a review of the research indicates that even the most promising methods predict eventual job performance imperfectly at best. That said, research suggests that if developed and implemented correctly, behavioral interviews that ask candidates to tell about past events in detail have a high potential to determine if a candidate has the competencies that are predictive of superior performance in a particular job. The past-event interviewing technique asks candidates to offer examples of how they thought, felt, and acted in the context of a specific, real-life, past situation, rather than asking for their opinions or philosophies about work success.

The chart on the following page offers an overview of the three general areas that educators and policymakers should assess in selecting MCLs, as well as methods for assessing candidates in each area. Districts and schools can use this chart as a guide to choose methods for assessing candidates in each area.

Methods are arranged from left to right in order of correlation with eventual job performance.

Research on different selection methods suggests that work sample tests, when closely aligned with job responsibilities, are most predictive of eventual job performance.² However, work sample tests can be costly to obtain when the work is complex and process-oriented, as in teaching. Nonetheless, teaching a sample unit or providing difficult feedback to a “pretend” colleague, for example, might be a valid part of screening MCL candidates when feasible.

²Ryan, A. M., & Tippins, N. T. (2004). Attracting and selecting: What psychological research tells us. *Human Resource Management*, 43(4), 305–318. Retrieved from <http://mba-studygroup.wikispaces.com/file/view/Attracting+and+Selecting+With+Psychological+Research+Tell+Us+Ann+Marie+Ryan+and+Nancy+T+Tippins.pdf>; Spencer, L.M., McClelland, D., & Spencer, S. (1994). *Competency assessment methods: History and state of the art*. Hay/McBer Research Press.

See also:

- * **Teacher and Staff Selection Toolkit:** <http://opportunityculture.org/selection-toolkit>
- * **Redesigning Schools: Models to Reach Every Student with Excellent Teachers—Multi-Classroom Leadership:** http://opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Multi-Classroom_Leadership_School_Model-Public_Impact.pdf
- * **School Turnaround Teachers: Selection Toolkit:** http://publicimpact.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Turn-around_Teacher_Selection_Toolkit.pdf

Assessment Areas and Methods for Selecting Teacher-Leaders

Assessment Areas	Applicable Selection Method					
	Work Sample Tests/Skills Demonstrations	Structured Behavioral Interviews	Cognitive Assessments	Personality Assessments	Biographical Information	Reference Checks
Has the individual demonstrated the skills needed to fulfill the job responsibilities, as indicated in the job description?	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Has the individual demonstrated the ability to use behavioral competencies at the level needed to be effective in this position?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Has the individual proved that (s)he can achieve outcome goals correlated with success in the new role?	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

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