

Step 1. Review Current Data and Conduct a Root Cause Analysis

Purpose

This tool is designed to help district leaders strategically plan for the current talent plan by revisiting their existing plan to determine its efficacy and reviewing current district data.

District leaders will begin this process by reviewing their previous plan; determining the success of specific, existing strategies; and referring to current district data. Types of district data will include all data that pertain to effective instruction including, but not limited to student achievement data, teacher experience, and certification for out-of-field teachers. Then, district leaders will engage in conducting a root cause analysis (RCA) described here in Step 1.

The RCA process centers on data review to identify possible root causes of disproportionate access to ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. The protocol guides teams through a process of identifying the root causes for disparities in access to effective teachers. This is a data-driven activity that involves reviewing and interpreting the data. For example, are student populations that are not meeting expected student growth targets doing so because they are more frequently taught by inexperienced or out-of-field teachers? If so, what changes to hiring, teaching assignments, or master scheduling can the district make to rectify that difference?

Step 1 is separated into four tasks:

- Task 1: Review the current district talent plan to see which strategies have been successful in reducing disparities that result in low-income and minority students being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers.
 - Determine which strategies to continue implementing and include in the new plan (Step 2: Select Strategies and Plan Implementation) and which strategies to discontinue.
- Task 2: Analyze your data to determine the connection between student growth and teacher effectiveness. Determine if out-of-field or inexperienced teachers are teaching minority students or low-income students at higher rates than other students.
 - Districts also may choose to examine this data at the campus level, by grade level, or by subject area. This analysis will require district staff to link individual student data to individual teacher data. Campus, grade-level, and subject area analyses would allow districts to examine whether these disparities are more common in certain grades or subjects versus other grades or subjects.
- Task 3: Conduct a data dive and the Understanding Your Problems of Practice activity.
 - This simple and straightforward activity often unearths useful new insights for informing policy and helps participants learn from others' perspectives. By the end of the process, facilitators will gather the groups' identified root causes and general comments to share with the district team, developing the strategies for the district talent plan.
- Task 4: Collect feedback and complete closing.

This tool is intended to be used by facilitators and stakeholders at in-person meetings, and it may require a series of meetings with additional data gathering between engagements. TEA strongly encourages the following:

- District staff spend time going through this process, digging deep and using evidence and data to address disparities that result in low-income students and minority students being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers.
- Districts select staff who are thinking deeply about teacher support and talent management issues across the career continuum (e.g., teachers, principals, parents, principal supervisors, district leaders, students).

Task 1: Review the current district talent plan to see which strategies have been successful in reducing disparities that result in low-income and minority students being taught at higher rated than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers.

- Reflect on the data and the aligned strategy implemented:
 - Did the aligned strategy accomplish the desired goal based on the performance measure target?
 - Would you implement a new strategy, or would you enhance elements of the existing strategy?
 - What were the lessons learned, and how will they inform refinements for this year's plan?
- Record reflections on Step 1 of the Talent Plan Template.

Task 2: Analyze your data to determine access to effective instruction.

- Examine the distribution of campuses in terms of:
 - percentages of students who are low income (i.e., eligible for free or reduced- price lunch);
 - percentages of minority students; and,
 - if desired, other student subgroups.
- Review pertinent data to inform the RCA process. Be sure both the data analysis and RCA process reflect the district, campus, and teacher levels.
 - Example types of data: teacher workplace survey, coaching models, compensation structures, hiring practices, teacher feedback on administrator support, teacher experience and certification, etc.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states and districts to focus on measurable criteria and definitions when developing definitions of effective teaching.

In response to stakeholder feedback, TEA used the “% meets or exceeds student progress for all tests” as an indicator for “effective” teaching to identify which districts need to continue to create and submit talent plans.

Calculating Student Growth Rate Disparity

Step 1: Pull the STAAR Progress Measure Percent at Expected or Accelerated Growth by Grade and Subject (All Grades Both Subjects At Expected or Accelerated level) and fall enrollment data for African American (AA), White (W), Hispanic (H), Economically disadvantaged (E), and Non-economically disadvantaged (N) for the previous three school years. (n size = 20 or greater)

Enrollment data for non-economically disadvantaged was derived from subtracting the total enrollment and the number of Economically disadvantaged.

Step 2: Calculate the percentage gaps for the “% meets or exceeds student progress for all tests” for the 2022 and 2024 STAAR for the following student group comparisons:

- *African American and White*
- *Hispanic and White*
- *Economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged*

For the 2023 STAAR, the "performance level growth for all tests" was used because of the Accountability reset for the new STAAR.

Step 3: Districts with gaps greater than 10% between any two of the same student groups in two of the last three years were flagged and will be notified. These districts are required to submit a Talent Plan to the agency in the current year.

Task 3. Conduct a data dive and the Understanding Your Problems of Practice activity.

Overview

The district facilitator shares an overview of the purpose of the talent plan and goals for stakeholder involvement in the process. The facilitator shares key messages from the district team in charge of developing the plan and previews the three steps for RCA to be completed during the day.

- Root Cause Definition: Root causes are the perceived underlying key reasons or causes of a given problem of practice—in this context, the root causes will be the perceived causes or reasons that a district has disparities that result in low-income students and minority students being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers.

Conduct a “Data Dive” With Group Data Review

The facilitator presents the data for the district developed through Task 1 and Task 2. Depending on the number of participants, participants stay in one group or form several small groups. The facilitator will guide the group(s) through the following review process:

- Review the data presentation materials (e.g., slide deck, handouts): The facilitator walks the participants through the results of the data analyses and shares definitions, metrics, and any other necessary details.
- Provide time for clarification: What questions does the group have about the results of the data analysis?
- Analyze closely: Each participant independently takes a closer look at the data findings and reviews the focus questions listed in Step 1 Resources and the Talent Plan template.
 - Districts could analyze the following types of data in their data dive:
 - Inexperienced teachers: TEA defines inexperienced teachers as teachers in their first two years of teaching
 - Out-of-field teachers: TEA defines out-of-field teachers as those who do not possess certification in the subject they have been assigned to teach
 - Workplace satisfaction surveys
 - Coaching models
 - Compensation structures
 - Hiring practices
 - Assigning Effective Teachers
 - Teacher feedback on administrator support
- Provide root causes that are aligned to the problem statements as they relate to attracting, assigning, supporting, and retaining effective teachers.
- Review the results of Task 1 as the team analyzes the additional data and make connections between the two.

Process note: Record the group’s discussion and answers to the focus questions in the Step 1 Resources and in the Talent Plan template. Display the template on-screen for the group as you record responses or transcribe these questions on chart paper in front of the room.

- Respond: As a group, answer the focus questions while the facilitator charts the responses. The facilitators will aid in tracking patterns in the answers to support prioritization in the next step.

- Prioritize: What are the primary concerns for the district related to the data? Ask participants to reflect first and then discuss as a group.

Identify and Discuss the Root Causes

After completing the data dive exercise, the group will now focus the conversation on uncovering the root causes for the disparities that result in low-income students and minority students being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. Start by asking participants to identify two to three problem statements. Frame your problem statements around the challenge of attracting, assigning, supporting, or retaining effective, experienced, and in-field teachers. Using the categories of “attracting,” “assigning,” “supporting,” and “retaining” such teachers will allow you to frame your district’s challenges and problems of practice through a few different lenses. This should result in uncovering a variety of root causes that the district can then prioritize when selecting strategies.

Process note: The problem statements may be drafted in advance by the district team and discussed and, potentially, revised during the stakeholder meeting.

Next, the group brainstorms explanations for each problem statement, considering factors in four categories—challenges in ATTRACTING effective teachers, ASSIGNING effective teachers, SUPPORTING effective teachers, and RETAINING effective teachers. For each problem statement, facilitators ask, “Why is this the case?” and then describe the data and evidence they have available to support their thinking. Keep in mind, this is a data-driven activity. After having identified an initial set of root causes of the problem, participants continue to probe “Why is that the case?” and “How do I know?” to better ensure that the true root cause(s) have been identified. The group continues through this cycle until all factors have been considered. This is a lengthy process and may require the group(s) to ask “Why?” and “How do I know?” as many as 10 or more times. Data and evidence must be included when responding to the “How do I know?” parts of the activity. Because using data/evidence is a critical component of the RCA, participants are not only brainstorming ideas, but they are also getting to a deeper and more precise understanding that can uncover the root causes of the problem statements.

By the end of this section of the RCA process, the group will have a long list of possible root causes of the problem statements as they relate to attracting, assigning, supporting, and retaining effective teachers. Using the Conducting a Root Cause Analysis planning template group(s) will list their problem statements and associated root causes in the Talent Plan.

You also might consider documenting this process on chart paper as group members work through their thinking.

Task 4: Collect feedback and complete closing.

Feedback Form Completion

Review the root causes determined by the group. All participants should complete a feedback form to ensure they can share their perspectives. The facilitator will walk through the feedback form to resolve participant questions. Information on developing a feedback form is provided in the sidebar.

Closing

The facilitator shares the timeline for use of feedback and next steps for plan development. Stakeholders will be invited to attend future sessions if possible.

Next Steps for District Talent Planning Group

Now that your team has engaged in reviewing the talent plan for the previous year (Task 1) and reviewed current data to conduct a root cause analysis (Tasks 2–4), you're ready to move forward to Step 2--Select Strategies and Plan for Implementation.