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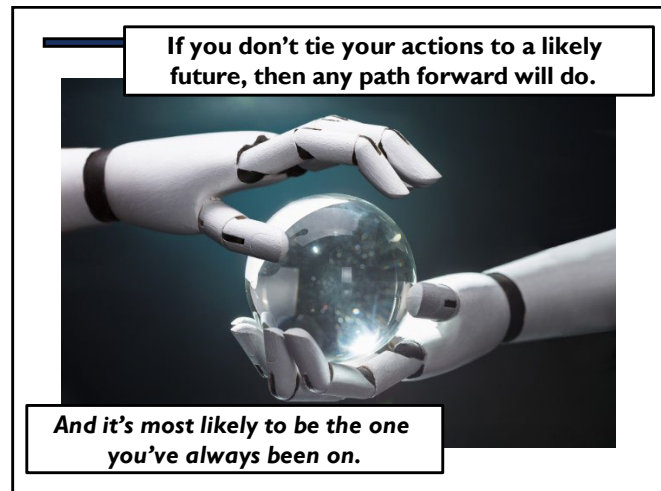
This adapted version of the TFS 2022-2023 staffing plan offers several ideas for schools and districts who are considering changes to how they recruit and retain teachers.

The degree to which the pandemic has negatively impacted teacher recruitment and retention is still unclear. However, we already know that the workforce is changing significantly, and that the traditional employee value proposition is being challenged in ways that will impact teacher tenure and compensation.

As schools and districts think about staffing issues that were made more acute this last year, they should do so with those workforce changes in mind. More to the point, they should invest in recruitment and retention strategies based not on the workforce of the last 30 years, but on the characteristics of the workforce that is likely to exist in the next twenty years.

The effectiveness or return on investment of the strategies a district uses is dependent upon local variables and, more importantly, on the changing nature of the workforce. Take for example strategies to retain “veteran teachers.” The typical salary schedule provides greater rewards for teachers who stay in the profession longer and who have chosen to make a career of teaching. But what if the average tenure of teacher declines, driven by the penchant of millennials to change jobs (and careers) more frequently? If that trend holds, then it makes more sense to shift the system’s emphasis from years of experience to one that rewards teacher effectiveness.

And if teacher tenure is decreasing significantly, then investments in strengthening the traditional career ladder may be misplaced.



Of course, it is difficult to definitively describe trends as they are happening. One has to put some stakes in the ground as to what the future holds even though that picture may not be fully developed. Alternatively, traditional schools could (and most likely will) rely on past practices and strategies, forever struggling to hire the workforce needed to get improved academic and performance outcomes.

One likely picture of the changing teacher workforce

The education workforce is changing quickly. It is likely that teacher tenure (and thus experience) will decrease, and schools will struggle with filling all their positions and retaining

teachers. Substitute teachers will be in high demand, but the quality of their instructional ability will continue to be low. There is also likely to be an increase in the number of teachers leaving a school or the profession mid-year, especially if wages remain low relative to other careers or financially equivalent employment opportunities.

These challenges may be made more acute because the traditional employee value proposition in education is impacted by larger workforce trends, including the penchant for today's workers to shift jobs and careers often and to place a premium on work-life balance. As with many other employees in middle-income careers, teachers will demand higher wages and will not be satisfied with the modest salary increases provided by the traditional "step and lane" compensation plan. More and more teachers will dismiss a "career ladder" that takes 15 to 20 years to earn a modest, professional wage. Many will enter the profession not with a career in mind, but for some experience and an adequate salary while they wait to find their "real" job or career.



We suspect, too, that financial compensation and benefits will far outweigh the "ability to make a difference" when it comes to the employee value proposition. A smaller proportion of the teaching workforce will be willing to work in a low income or a demanding school without relatively higher compensation.

Finally, (and this is just a reasonable hypothesis), the "one's work is your family" culture seems to be on the decline. The rise of social media and other cultural shifts have enabled employees to have strong connections and relationships outside of work, degrading ties and the centrality of the workplace to a teacher's life.

All of the above is not to say that the changes are not justified or that there will not be a large percentage of dedicated individuals working in schools. Rather it means leaders have to adjust their thinking and strategies for staffing schools well.

These staffing challenges are all coming to a head when the profession is at a loss to narrow enduring achievement gaps and is finally realizing that the system is immovable and unable to change.

Seven ideas for staffing schools in the

The problem we are trying to solve is not just convincing more people to join the teacher workforce or increasing the retention rate. The real question is how to change the employee value proposition in order to employ teachers who are willing and able to get the achievement and performance outcomes *students need*. One overarching theme for us is to differentiate the "teacher" responsibilities, isolating the core and most valuable classroom teacher skills and

shifting less complex tasks to other employees. Thus, the teacher will deliver instruction in a manner that maximizes student engagement, time on task, and student learning. Others will copy assignments and classroom materials, grade papers, keep the classroom supplied, and handle disciplinary issues. Soon teacher “duties” will be a thing of the past. [At the moment, our teachers have either before-school or after-school duty just four days a month.

In order to take into account the changing nature of the teaching workforce and to ensure adequate staffing to continue to perform at high levels, schools and districts should consider shifting the traditional staffing paradigms.

1. Differentiate compensation.

Staffing is inextricably linked to compensation. If we are going to adequately staff schools *and* get achievement and performance outcomes, then we have to raise salaries significantly. But just raising salaries indiscriminately, without taking into account workforce changes or the need to raise student achievement, is unwise and ineffective.

Additionally, no organization can maximize its effectiveness if what it values is disconnected from how it compensates its employees. Consider, then, differentiating salaries and incentives based on the employee’s skills, ability to achieve outcomes, and the quality of their instruction. At Third Future Schools we use a combination of the “hospital model” for base salaries and incentives for annual outcomes. That means our base salaries are differentiated by position. So, for example, our third- and sixth-grade reading positions have the highest salary range and begin at \$7,000 higher than social studies. Fourth grade Art of Thinking teachers make at least \$4,000 more than our fourth-grade math teachers. Teachers also receive different incentives based on achievement outcomes and a rigorous assessment of their quality of instruction.

No organization can maximize its effectiveness if what it values is disconnected from how it compensates its employees.

Our average teacher salary is at least \$10,000 above the average teacher salary in the surrounding districts, allowing us to attract and retain teachers. These teachers may not be “veteran,” but they are getting achievement outcomes. [For more information about our compensation plan, see the Third Future Schools Evaluation and Compensation System.]

And for those already concluding that this is impossible to do in a District with a strong union or teacher association, I invite you to look at Dallas ISD’s pay-for-performance plan or Washington, D.C.’s incentive-based plan.

2. Hire specialists in lesson planning.

While this is not a new idea in the profession, it is time to be purposeful about finding ways to help teachers with work-life balance, narrow the set of skills that are required for a teacher to achieve, and to capitalize on teachers who are great at planning, but not as much on implementation.

Here's how we're doing this. Third Future Schools, a network of five schools in Colorado and Texas, employs approximately 325 teachers. Our teachers work hard, and our instructional model (called LSAE) requires even more time to develop daily lessons. This generation's penchant for finding a better work-life balance will make it harder for Third Future Schools to retain high-quality teachers if we do not relieve teachers of some of the work that occurs after school hours. Thus, the Network will hire twelve curriculum developers (LCDs) to create LSAE lesson plans and assignments in ELA and Math that can be used by teachers throughout the Network.

LCDs will be paid approximately \$50,000 annually and can work from home. In some cases, if they develop the lessons for two grade levels, they may receive \$75,000. LCDs must be experienced in the TFS LSAE model and have demonstrated strong achievement results. They are required to spend at least four hours a week in a TFS school. This is a two-year position and can be done from home. Each school will share in the expense on a per-pupil basis.

In some cases, LCDs may teach class for two periods (90 minutes each) and still develop the LSAE lessons for a grade level course. In these cases, the LCD will earn approximately \$75,000 annually.

3. Replace elective teachers with community consultants.

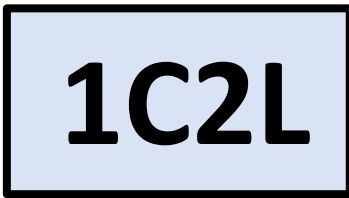
At Third Future Schools, students attend a one-hour elective class every day, and twice a week for 90-minutes each time they also attend classes to broaden their experience such as karate, piano, photography, filmmaking, graphic design, dance, cycling, fitness, and others. We call these courses "Dyad classes." In order to afford this, we hire consultants from the community to teach the Dyad classes. We pay them \$28 an hour as a consultant (on a 1099). We have had great results using these members of the community – students have fun and are taught by experts in the specific field or course, and we forge closer relationships with the community. These Dyad classes have been so successful, we are slowly replacing the traditional elective teachers with Dyad consultants as the elective teachers retire or are not invited back.

Equally important, we achieve the same (or better) outcomes and experiences for students at a much-reduced cost. Then we put the savings into higher teacher salaries.



4. Expand the reach of the best and brightest.

We now have the technology to expand the reach of the most effective teachers (and not necessarily the most experienced teachers). At Third Future Schools we are expanding the number of “one-classroom-two-locations” (1C2L) teachers, who teach two classrooms at one time (one group physically with the teacher and at the same time another group via Zoom). The two classrooms can be in the same school or at different schools. These teachers will receive a \$12,000 stipend for this. They will be assisted by a Teacher Apprentice who will be with the class learning synchronously via Zoom. The Teacher Apprentice salary starts at \$60,000. The average of the two salaries approximates our average salary overall, so having an Apprentice Teacher does not significantly add to our salary line item.



Where the situation allows and there is a large enough classroom, the 1C2L teacher may actually have two groups of students in the same classroom. Approximately half the Art of Thinking and Science positions should be 1C2L teachers.

5. Hire additional Apprentice Teachers.

We anticipate a few mid-year resignations as a “normal” phenomenon going forward. Schools should consider hiring more “Apprentice Teachers” who can support the 1C2L teachers or simply work with another core content teacher to grow as an effective teacher.

At TFS, apprentice teachers are hired to become teachers in Math, ELA, Science, or Art of Thinking. Their salary starts at approximately \$60,000. They should not have more than three years of experience. They are guaranteed at least one quarter of apprenticeship. After that, and once a relevant full-time position opens, they are expected to assume the main teacher role. Their salary will be adjusted at that time to that of a regular teacher according to the TFS compensation plan. However, TFS may determine that the Apprentice Teacher is not ready and keep them in their apprenticeship. Of course, any teacher, including an Apprentice Teacher, may be removed from their position if they are not meeting expectations.

6. Create the Learning Coach position.

We believe it will continue to be very difficult to find substitutes who can deliver effective instruction. Indeed, TFS stopped trying to find high-quality substitutes years ago. We also stopped hiring “paraeducators” who are generally low-skilled and are unable to help raise student achievement. Instead, we hire “learning coaches” who have Bachelor’s degrees and have to be proficient at working with small groups of students and monitoring study centers (in line with our instructional model), and who can actively substitute for an absent teacher. As a result, we have never had to take a teacher’s planning period away or combine classes because of a vacancy or teacher absence. Learning coaches earn an average of \$52,000.

Learning Coaches also support the teacher and assume some traditional teacher tasks such as making copies and grading papers. The number of learning coaches varies depending on the size of the school. At our largest school, with 1400 students, we have 18 learning coaches; at our school with 420 students, we have six learning coaches.



7. Create a more mobile teaching corps.

Recruiting teachers in some areas of the state presents even greater challenges. For example, the Permian Basin in west Texas has always had a teacher shortage, and districts have had a hard time attracting teachers to that part of the State.

We have created our first TFS Teacher Corps to incentivize teachers to relocate to Odessa or Midland. Teachers who get hired for the Corps receive a minimum of \$75,000 base salary and a \$10,000 bonus to work at our schools in either Odessa or Midland. They must be willing to work for at least one year, after which time and if they are proficient, they may continue to work at the school or may move to another school in the Network where there is a suitable vacancy.

7. Create the TFS Teaching Corps

- **Recruit for shortage areas**
- **One year of experience preferred**
- **\$75,000 minimum**
- **\$10,000 bonus**
- **One year commitment**



OUR TEACHERS ARE
LEADING THE WAY.

As a final note: most leaders will no doubt wonder how they would be able to afford higher salaries and additional positions such as learning coaches and apprentice teachers. An analysis of our budgets will reveal that all of these staffing strategies can be done with existing budgets – one just has to prioritize staffing and high-quality instruction. Keep in mind too that higher salaries and additional positions are not the ultimate goal; the ultimate goal is improved student academic outcomes.

Tweaking the existing system or making changes to the traditional salary schedule, but preserving its underlying principles such as rewarding longevity and providing incentives or salary increases indiscriminately, will not solve the staffing problem over the next several years. The key will be to work systemically, starting with identifying the characteristics of the modern teacher workforce and investing in those initiatives that will recruit and retain the teachers that can best get the outcomes your system values.

Teacher

Description

Third Future Schools' teachers help students improve academic proficiency and build habits of success. They create a safe and orderly learning environment for students who are assigned to their class and for all the students in the school. They deliver high-quality instruction and work with colleagues to accomplish the school's mission and vision. They are supervised by the principal and assistant principal.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree
- Experience working with or teaching children (preferred)
- Three years of demonstrated results improving student academic achievement in a core content area (preferred)
- Demonstrated leadership abilities
- Experience leading a team of adults or working on a high-performance team
- Willingness to work in and contribute to a high-performance culture
- Good work ethic

Responsibilities

- Deliver instructional lessons and activities in a way that maximizes time on task, student engagement, and student learning
- Create a safe and positive educational climate in which students may learn
- Manage student behavior in the classroom by invoking approved disciplinary procedures
- Follow the Third Future Schools' instructional model (known as LSAE)
- Maintain a focus on student academic and performance outcomes
- Use both direct instruction and differentiated learning strategies
- Support students in the development of habits of success
- Work with colleagues and the administration to accomplish the school's goals as outlined in the School Action Plan
- Participate in professional learning communities and function well as part of a team
- Observe and evaluate student's performance
- Communicate with and engage parents and families to support student learning and habits of success
- Perform other duties as assigned

Teacher Apprentice

Description

Teacher Apprentices work with distinguished teachers to grow their craft and become classroom teachers. Teacher Apprentices teach students in collaboration with the distinguished teachers. They do not plan lessons or assignments, but will familiarize themselves with the lessons and the instructional materials in order to teach effectively. Once the school leadership team and the distinguished teacher believes the Apprentice is ready to provide direct instruction without any support, they will be elevated to the teacher position and receive the commensurate salary increase.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree
- Experience working with or teaching children
- Demonstrated leadership abilities
- Experience leading a team of adults or working on a high-performance team
- Willingness to work in and contribute to a high-performance culture
- Good work ethic

Responsibilities

- Work under the guidance of a distinguished teacher to grow your craft and prepare to be a classroom teacher
- Deliver instructional lessons and activities in collaboration with a distinguished teacher
- Create a safe and positive educational climate in which students may learn
- Manage student behavior in the classroom by invoking approved disciplinary procedures
- Follow the Third Future Schools' instructional model (known as LSAE)
- Maintain a focus on student academic and performance outcomes
- Substitute for the distinguished teacher in that teacher's absence
- Deliver instruction in a way that maximizes time on task, student engagement, and student learning
- Support students in the development of habits of success
- Work with colleagues and the administration to accomplish the school's goals as outlined in the School Action Plan
- Participate in professional learning communities and function well as part of a team
- Communicate with and engage parents and families to support student learning and habits of success
- Perform other duties as assigned

Learning Coach

Description

The Academy's Learning Coaches work with small groups of students and provide support for the classroom teachers. Their main responsibility is to coach and guide students in the "team centers" where proficient and accelerated students work independently on assignments after direct instruction with the teacher. Learning Coaches also support the teachers with copying, grading papers, and general classroom support. Learning Coaches do not plan nor create lessons or assignments. Learning Coaches sometimes teach a group of students directly when a teacher is absent. They create a safe and orderly learning environment for students who are assigned to their group and for all the students in the school. They work with colleagues to accomplish the school's mission and vision. Learning Coaches are supervised by the Principal, Assistant Principal, or Lead Teachers.

Qualifications

- Associate's degree (Bachelor's preferred)
- Experience working with or teaching children
- Experience working on a team
- Willingness to work in and contribute to a high-performance culture
- Good work ethic

Responsibilities

- Tutor individual students or small groups of students in the classroom or team center
- Support classroom teachers
 - Make copies of assignments and other materials for classroom instruction
 - Grade one assignment each week at the direction of the classroom teachers (answer key provided)
 - Provide general classroom support for teachers
- Teach students in the teacher's absence
- Manage student behavior and create a safe and positive educational climate in which students may learn
- Monitor students as directed by the Assistant Principal or Principal
- Support students in the development of habits of success
- Work with colleagues and the administration to accomplish the school's goals as outlined in the School Action Plan
- Participate in professional learning communities and function well as part of a team
- Perform other duties as assigned