

***The Providence School District Proposal for Criterion-Based
Hiring and Transfer and Need-Driven Instructional
Assignments***

Presented to the Rhode Island Commissioner of Education

April 7, 2009

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Introduction

The Providence School District has been ordered to develop a teacher job assignment, hiring and transfer process that is predicated upon the assignment of highly effective teachers to high-need classrooms. This proposal has been built on the following four core beliefs:

- (1) The Providence School District has among the most highly trained and effective teachers in the state of Rhode Island and it is incumbent upon the district to support their continued professional growth in critical areas.
- (2) The needs of students should be the driving force behind all structural, staffing, and instructional decisions.
- (3) Teacher hiring, transfer, and assignment policies must treat all teachers with professional respect.
- (4) Teachers, administrators, and students are all best served by a system that is driven by the principles of mutual consent.

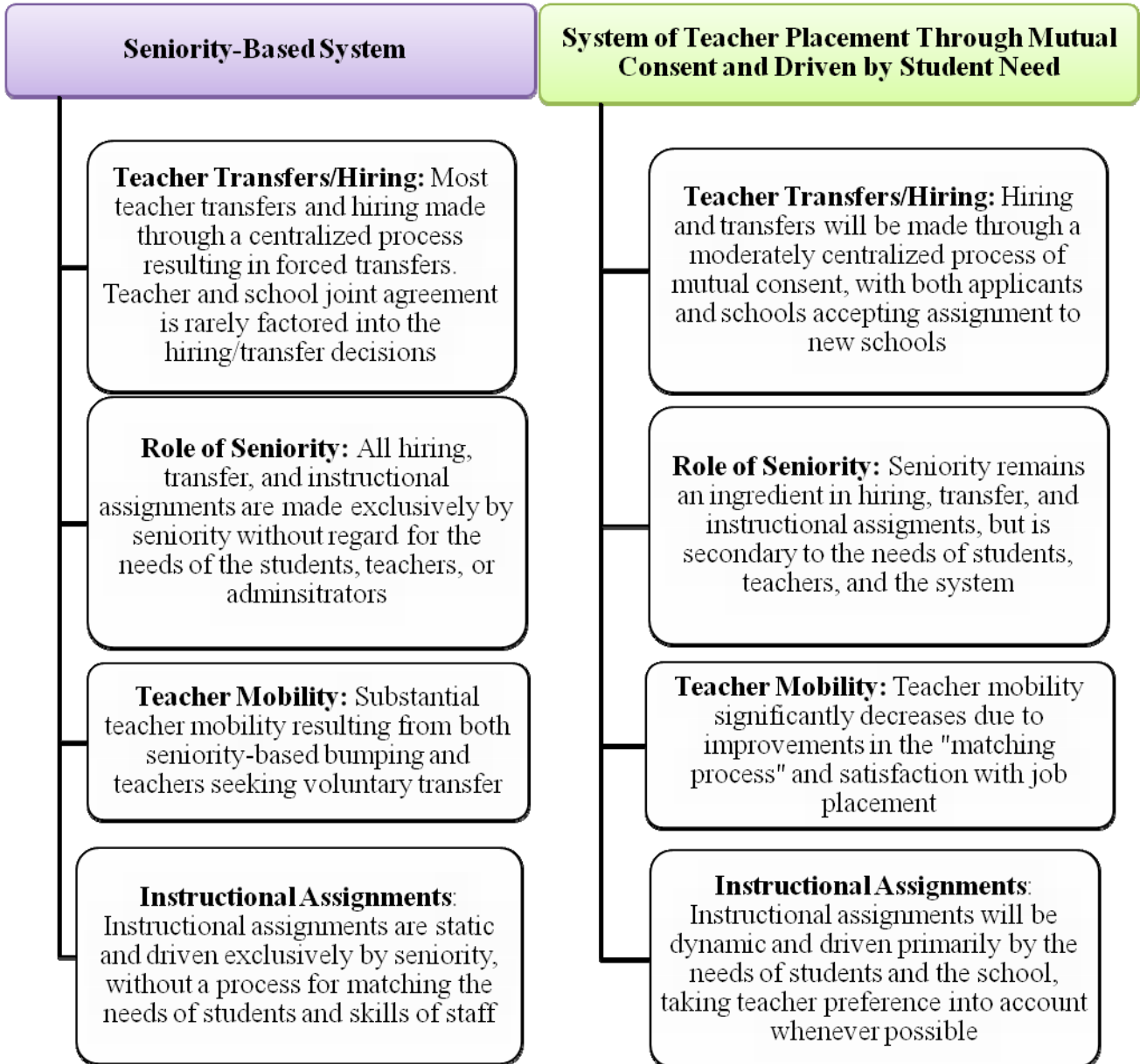
This proposal is the culmination of a planning process that has included extensive research into best practice approaches from urban school districts throughout the county, as well as consultation with technical assistance organizations, the Rhode Island Department of Education, and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform. Despite the concerted efforts to develop a comprehensive, research-based, appropriately tailored plan, this plan will require continuous consideration and revision to accommodate developments that are currently unforeseeable. Consequently, Providence views this proposal to be the first step in an 18-month planning process and the initiation of a teacher hiring, transfer, and assignment system that will require continuous revision throughout implementation.

This proposal has the potential to dramatically improve the quality of Providence's teaching and learning culture and in so doing, affect the day-to-day business of teachers, building and district administrators, and human resources staff. The details of this proposal have been carefully reviewed for feasibility by both district staff and technical assistance organizations; all agree that implementing a new teacher job assignment, hiring and transfer process is at once challenging and utterly within our grasp. Providence embraces this challenge and the many dividends that successful implementation will yield for the students of Providence.

The Commissioner's February 23, 2009 letter orders the Providence School District to develop a criterion-based hiring, assignment, and transfer process for all district staff. Due to the limited time frame, current stage in the hiring cycle, and percentage of district staff represented by teachers, Providence has chosen to focus first on the processes that govern *teacher* hiring, transfer, and instructional assignment. This proposal will be followed by additional submissions that expand the system scope and instruments to ensure that they are appropriate for all district staff.

In the event that any portion of this plan directly or indirectly contradicts any portion of collective bargaining agreement, the terms of this plan shall be implemented and the conflicting portions of the collective bargaining agreement shall be revised or waived.

Comparison of System Characteristics



Communication Plan

Strategies and Related Objectives

1. Ensure that all target audiences are aware of and understand the Commissioner's Order to develop a protocol for the assignment of highly effective staff to high-need schools and classrooms.
2. Ensure that all internal and external stakeholders are aware of the principles underlying the district's new hiring, transfer and assignment system.
3. Ensure that all internal stakeholders, particularly principals and teachers, are aware of and fully understand all components of the new hiring and assignment and how it will be implemented.

Target Audiences

1. RI Department of Education
2. PPSD administrators, teachers and staff
3. Labor union's leadership
4. Elected officials, including the Mayor, City Council, Governor, General Assembly leadership, key staff members for all of the aforementioned
5. PPSD parents and families
6. Media outlets – print, radio, Web and television

Message(s) to be Communicated

1. The Commissioner's Order is a legal document that that the school district is legally bound to execute.
2. The proposed hiring, transfer and instructional assignment system is better suited to meeting student need than the former system which was based on seniority only. The proposed system will result in better matches between teacher and position, and will result in a better teaching and learning environment driven by student need.
3. This proposal is the culmination of a planning process that has included extensive research into best practice approaches from urban school districts throughout the country, consultation with technical assistance organizations, the Rhode Island Department of Education, and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform.
4. Hiring and transfers will be made through a moderately centralized process of mutual consent, with both applicants and schools accepting assignment to vacant positions.
5. Seniority remains an ingredient in hiring, transfer and instructional assignments, but is secondary to the needs of students.
6. Teacher mobility will significantly decrease due to improvements in the matching process and satisfaction with job placement.
7. Instructional assignments will be dynamic and driven primarily by the needs of students and the school, taking teacher preferences into account whenever possible.

Communications Timeline and Tactics/Action Steps

Date	Tactics / Action Steps	Responsibility
Week of March 23	Meet with PTU to discuss components of proposal and solicit their feedback, support of process.	Superintendent
Week of March 23	Informally brief the School Board and Mayor about the proposed new hiring, transfer and instructional assignment plan.	Superintendent
Week of March 30	Present draft to RIDE	Superintendent
Weeks of March 30 – April 10	Send an internal communication to all PPSD staff, detailing the proposed hiring, transfer and instructional systems and processes. Communication vehicles to include a fact sheet, FAQ, forum for questions.	T&L Communications
	Post new hiring, transfer and instructional assignment plan on PPSD website, along with fact sheet, FAQ.	Communications
	Utilize media outlets to announce new hiring, transfer and instructional assignment plan to external stakeholders.	Superintendent Communications
	Meet with Cohort 1 principals and teachers to further explain the tenets and logistics of the new hiring and transfer plan.	T&L Human Resources
	Send a communication to City Council and Providence Delegation of the General Assembly to ensure that they understand the factual basis of the changes to the hiring, transfer and assignment processes, including the benefits to student learning.	Supt/COS Communications
April 6 –30	Following Commissioner’s approval, present new hiring, transfer and instructional assignment plan at the School Board meeting.	Superintendent
	Advertise vacancies for Cohort 1 schools via written correspondence and e-mail to all teachers and posting on Web site.	Human Resources, Communications
	Notify all teachers of interview dates, logistics via written correspondence and e-mail to all teachers and posting on Web site.	Human Resources, Communications
	Meet with all principals to reiterate hiring and transfer system and needs-driven instructional assignments.	T&L
	Send weekly update emails to teachers, PTU, and principals on the status of the hiring, transfer and instructional assignments, informing them of what has been implemented and accomplished and issues arising.	T&L, Human Resources, Communications

Need-Driven Instructional Assignment Process

Context

Providence has been ordered to revise the process used to make instructional assignments of teachers to classrooms within each school. In response, Providence proposes a new process for staffing assignments that is driven, first and foremost, by student and school need. This new process, called “need-driven instructional assignments” will be implemented district-wide during the 2009-2010 academic year. The need-driven instructional assignment processes described in detail on the following pages will be used only for intra-building assignments and will not be used to reassign teachers to different schools.

Empowering district and building administrators to make appropriate, need-driven instructional assignments within their building is a vital step to ensure that students are being educated by highly effective and appropriately matched teachers. With the move toward multi-tiered instruction and the implementation of intensive interventions in core content areas, the importance of this staffing authority has become yet more acute.

While it is critical that all students are served by the best possible teacher, Providence places particular emphasis on the importance of matching highly-skilled teachers with high-need classrooms. Providing the highest quality support to students at greatest risk of academic failure is one of the most important obligations of the Providence School District, and one that can only be fully met through the ability to assign staff on the basis of student need.

Within the context of these proposed staffing procedures, the term “highly effective” is used to designate a teacher that has both experience and empirical success.

Parameters

Need-driven instructional assignments shall rely upon the professional judgment of the district and building administrators and shall not require conference or agreement by the affected teachers. Though building administrators will be empowered to exercise professional judgment making instructional assignments; they are responsible for demonstrating that all decisions meet one or more of the following criteria, in prioritized order:

Priority Areas of the Need-Driven Instructional Assignments

Priority Area, in Order of Importance	Elements of the Priority Area
<i>1. Prioritizing the staffing of high-need and/or specialty classrooms with highly effective and appropriately trained teachers</i>	Assignment practices that match: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly effective teachers to intervention classes • Teachers with specialized and relevant training to high need and specialty classrooms • Teachers with successful experience working with high need or specialty classrooms
<i>2. Matching of teacher skills, professional experience, and training to instructional assignments</i>	Assignment practices that match: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers with specialized and relevant training to high need and specialty classrooms
<i>3. Maintaining the staffing and overall integrity of established student cohorts or teams, should they pre-exist within a school</i>	Assignment practices that match: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers to classrooms that maintain adult/student relationships • Teachers within student cohorts to create or extend stability of long-term adult/student relationships
<i>4. Ensuring an appropriate, manageable, and equitable balance of course assignment between and amongst instructional staff</i>	Creation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher schedules that don't unreasonably assign large numbers of either intervention or advanced student groups to a single teacher • Teacher schedules that distribute the number and timing of administrative and preparatory periods on the basis of student and school need
<i>5. Consideration of teachers' programmatic preferences, as communicated through their preference sheets.</i>	Assignment practices that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take seriously the consideration teachers' programmatic preference expressed through preference sheets; • Honor preference sheets on the basis of seniority whenever such assignments are instructionally sound and coincide with student need

These priority areas shall be the driving force behind instructional assignments. In no case shall principals make staffing decisions that are arbitrary, capricious, or driven by forces that are not clearly and demonstrably associated with these five priority areas in their stated order. To that end, all tools and processes developed to support need-driven instructional assignments will require transparency, objectivity, and professionalism on the part of all participants.

Jurisdiction

While the need-driven instructional assignment process shall be a management responsibility held by building and district administrators, Providence recognizes the importance of protections to ensure that this authority is not abused, misconstrued, or overused.

Teachers shall have the right to request an explanation of the rationale resulting in their instructional assignment. Correspondingly, building administrators will be responsible for providing an adequate explanation that clearly associates their decision with one or more of the priority areas. In the event of an unclear or unsatisfactory response, teachers will have the opportunity to appeal their assignment through a fair, timely, and reasonable appeals process.

Participants in the appeals process may include:

- (1) The Superintendent or his/her designee,
- (2) Appropriate district administrators, and
- (3) Human Resource personnel.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will make final decisions on the appeal of instructional assignments. Teachers will be required to assume or retain their contested assignment until the conclusion of the appeals process.

This proposal removes the formal role of the school improvement team in reviewing, advising upon, influencing or overturning administrative decisions that pertain to staff assignment. These core management responsibilities are ceded to the administrators. The removal of the role of the school improvement team from this management duty is driven in part by Rhode Island General Law, which specifically states that the school improvement team serves in an advisory capacity to the building administrator.

The Joint Providence Teacher's Union/Providence School Department Teacher Program Committee may continue to play an active role in the management and resolution of issues regarding this process. However, the Joint Committee meeting shall not unduly delay school-based efforts to resolve the dispute or the placement of the teacher in the contested instructional assignment pending resolution through the process.

In the event that a teacher is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal process, she or he may appeal the decision to the Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of the Commissioner. The decision rendered by the Commissioner is non-arbitable.

The above-described process will be used to make routine assignments of teachers to classrooms within their building and as such, will become part of standard operating procedure. However, the Superintendent shall retain the authority described in section 12-3.3 of the collective bargaining agreement, which reads, "No teacher shall be involuntarily transferred except at the discretion of the Superintendent."

Role of Teacher Preference Sheets

Teacher preference sheets will remain an active part of the process used to make instructional assignments, and principals will honor them whenever the needs of students and the school coincide with the staff requests. If the terms of the priority areas (p. 6) have been fully met,

teacher preference sheets will be honored based upon seniority through the terms described in Article 13 of the Providence Teachers' contract, specifically:

...each teacher's first program preference shall be honored on the basis of system wide area of certification seniority and if the number of years of teaching service in the areas of certification are equal, the date of employment shall be the determining factor. Where the number of years of teaching service in the same area of certification is equal and the dates of employment are the same, qualifications, experience and credentials will be the determining factors in the evaluative judgment to be made by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Secondary Teacher Preference Sheets and Assignment System

At the secondary level, teacher preference sheets will be used to express teacher programmatic preferences by content area. The use of preference sheets shall not be construed as a means for either building administrators or teachers to circumvent the criterion-based hiring process in the event of building vacancy.

These preference sheets will be honored after the demands of need-driven instructional assignment priority areas one through four have been demonstrably addressed.

PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT TEACHER PREFERENCE SHEET - HIGH SCHOOLS AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

This preference sheet is provided to all high school and middle school teachers for the purpose of informing class assignments as part of the need-driven instructional assignment process. Teachers who desire to register a preference should list the preferred subjects/levels in order of priority and submit this form to the Principal on or before April 15th.

NAME: _____

SCHOOL: _____

Present Program by Subject and Level: _____

Subject(s) and Level(s) Preferred:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

In accordance with Article 8, Section 4-6, teachers shall indicate on their programming preference sheets whether they wish to teach during their unassigned period during the subsequent school year. Please indicate your preference:

YES _____ NO _____

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

This form is to be filled out in duplicate and returned to your Principal.

Elementary Teacher Preference Sheets and Assignment System

At the elementary level, teacher preference sheets will be used to express teacher programmatic preferences by grade level and classroom type. The use of preference sheets shall not be construed as a means for either building administrators or teachers to circumvent the criterion-based hiring process in the event of staffing vacancy.

These preference sheets will be honored after the demands of need-driven instructional assignment priority areas one through four have been demonstrably addressed.

**PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT TEACHER PREFERENCE SHEET -
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

This preference sheet is provided to all elementary school teachers for the purpose of informing class assignments as part of the need-driven instructional assignment process. Teachers who desire to register a preference should list the preferred grade levels and/or class types, in order of priority and submit this form to the Principal on or before April 15th.

NAME: _____

SCHOOL: _____

Present Assignment - Grade Level: _____

Grade Span and Type of Class Preferred:

1. Grades Pre-K-K

Class Type: _____

2. Grades 1-2

Class Type: _____

2. Grades 3-4

Class Type: _____

3. Grades 5-6

Class Type: _____

DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

This form is to be filled out in duplicate and returned to your Principal.

Midyear Assignment Changes

With the implementation of intensive intervention programs, increasingly accurate and responsive diagnostic and progress-monitoring assessment instruments, and highly trained instructional staff, the Providence School District is facing ever-increasing complexity in the management of student placement in instructional groups. Across the system, staffing demands are increasingly linked to student movement between and amongst instructional groups, especially within intervention programs. Beyond intervention programs, Providence routinely faces substantial fluctuation in student enrollment. These conditions, both separately and taken

together, can merit changes to teacher schedules and instructional assignment throughout the year.

This proposal provides a mechanism for building and district administrators to make justifiable changes to teacher instructional assignments and/or schedules whenever there is a clear and demonstrable change in student educational needs and/or instructional groups, enrollment, or justifiable programmatic change. Though administrators will be granted authority to change teacher schedules at any point during the year, they will be required to:

1. Provide all affected teachers with no less than two weeks notice prior to implementing the schedule change, unless otherwise mandated by laws or regulations, such as those governing special education and other special populations;
2. Provide a rationale for the schedule change; and
3. Be able to demonstrate that the change in instructional assignment or schedule is the result of fluctuations in student need and could not have been reasonably predicted and addressed through early and proactive planning.

The district will engage in an annual process of rebalancing of classrooms to ensure that staffing is commensurate with student enrollment and educational need. The enrollment analysis associated with rebalancing and any associated changes in staffing will be done no later than 20 instructional days after the first day of school. In some cases, teachers may be displaced from classrooms that were consolidated; in this event, displaced teachers will become the building-based substitute. In the event that the building-based substitute position is already filled, the displaced teacher will be placed in the excess pool and provided the opportunity to interview for new assignments through the criterion-based process.

Need-driven instructional assignment processes are not intended to take the place of high-quality, thoughtful, data-driven, and proactive planning on the part of building administrators. To that end, building administrators will continue to be held accountable for the creation of well-designed building schedules in the spring of each academic year. The provisions for fluid changes to instructional assignments shall not be remedy for poor planning and may only be enacted in the event of clear and reasonably unforeseeable fluctuations in student enrollment or academic need.

Timeline

The current timeline for the establishment of course offerings and associated teacher schedules has outlived its useful life and is no longer appropriate to meet the demands of a dynamic, multi-tiered instructional environment that aggressively utilizes diagnostic assessments to determine student placement in intervention programs. Consequently, the need-driven instructional assignment process proposes reasonable adjustments to the contractually described timeline.

The use of preference sheets or the processes associated with need-driven instructional assignments shall not be misunderstood as a means for either building administrators or teachers to circumvent the criterion-based hiring process in the event of building vacancy. Mid-year vacancies resulting from mid-year program changes, resignations or retirements will be filled on a regular basis through the criterion-based process described on pages 13-26 of this document. The filling of positions will be managed to maximize the flexibility and minimize disruptions to instruction.

Timeline for Establishment of Courses of Study and Teacher Instructional Assignments

Date	Item
April 1st	Provide teachers with a list of course offerings/program of study
April 15th	Teachers return Preference Sheets to the Principal
No later than ten days prior to the end of the school year	Principals provide teachers with the names of the courses or grade level that the teacher will teach the following school year
No later than fifteen days prior to the beginning of the school year	Principals will provide teachers with the names of the courses or grade level that the teacher will teach including periods, advisory and/or homeroom.
No later than fifteen days prior to the beginning of the school year	Principals will provide teachers with their room assignment.

Criterion-Based Hiring and Transfer

Teacher hiring and transfer practices in the Providence School District have been and continue to be driven almost exclusively by seniority-based hiring and transfer processes. The seniority-based practice is predicated upon a placement process known as “forced transfers”, which does not routinely provide for teacher or building administrator input prior to job placement. In addition to the well-established harms created by forced transfer systems, Providence’s current hiring and transfer practices have a number of additional damaging effects, including:

- The annual distribution of large numbers of lay-off letters when compared against actual projections of reductions in workforce;
- Widespread uncertainty at both the building and teacher level about the stability of instructional assignments;
- Large-scale bumping triggered by a handful of vacancies and reduction or reorganization in workforce; and
- Late finalization of instructional assignments, resulting in missed professional development and other critical training and orientation events.

Providence proposes a teacher hiring and assignment plan that is predicated on mutual consent. In sharp contrast to forced transfer systems, mutual consent systems have the potential to dramatically improve the educational climate for both students and teachers in urban settings. Within urban districts, the research is conclusive: an overwhelming majority of both teachers and administrators report high levels of satisfaction with job placement, systems post dramatic reductions in teacher mobility, and human resources departments report a sharp decline in teacher requests for voluntary transfer.

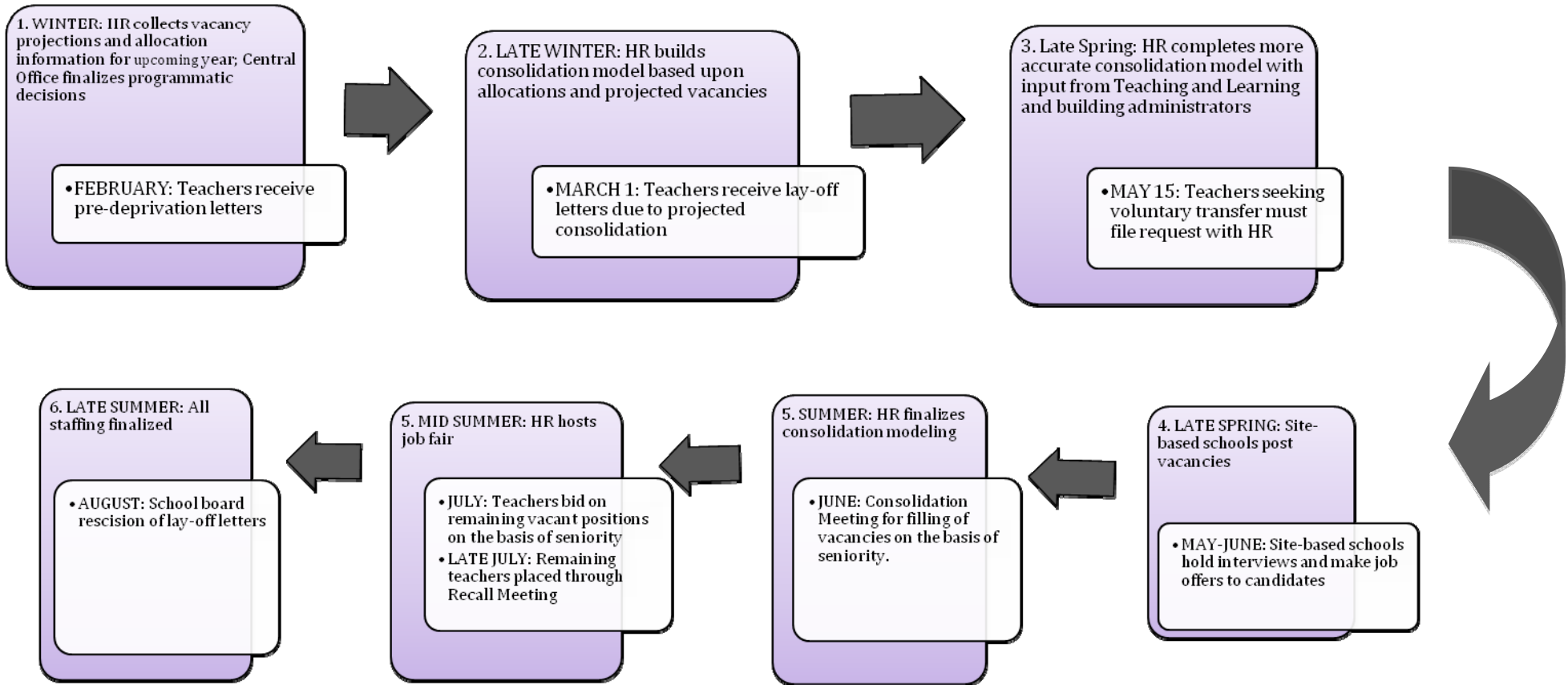
This transition will be complex for both teachers and district and building administrators and Providence expects to face logistical, administrative, and organizational challenges. This system will be implemented in two stages. During the 2009-2010 year, criterion-based hiring will be in effect for the following Cohort 1 schools:

1. Veazie Street Elementary School
2. Carl Lauro Elementary School
3. Nathan Bishop Middle School
4. Oliver Hazard Perry Middle School
5. Hope High School
6. Providence Career and Technical Academy

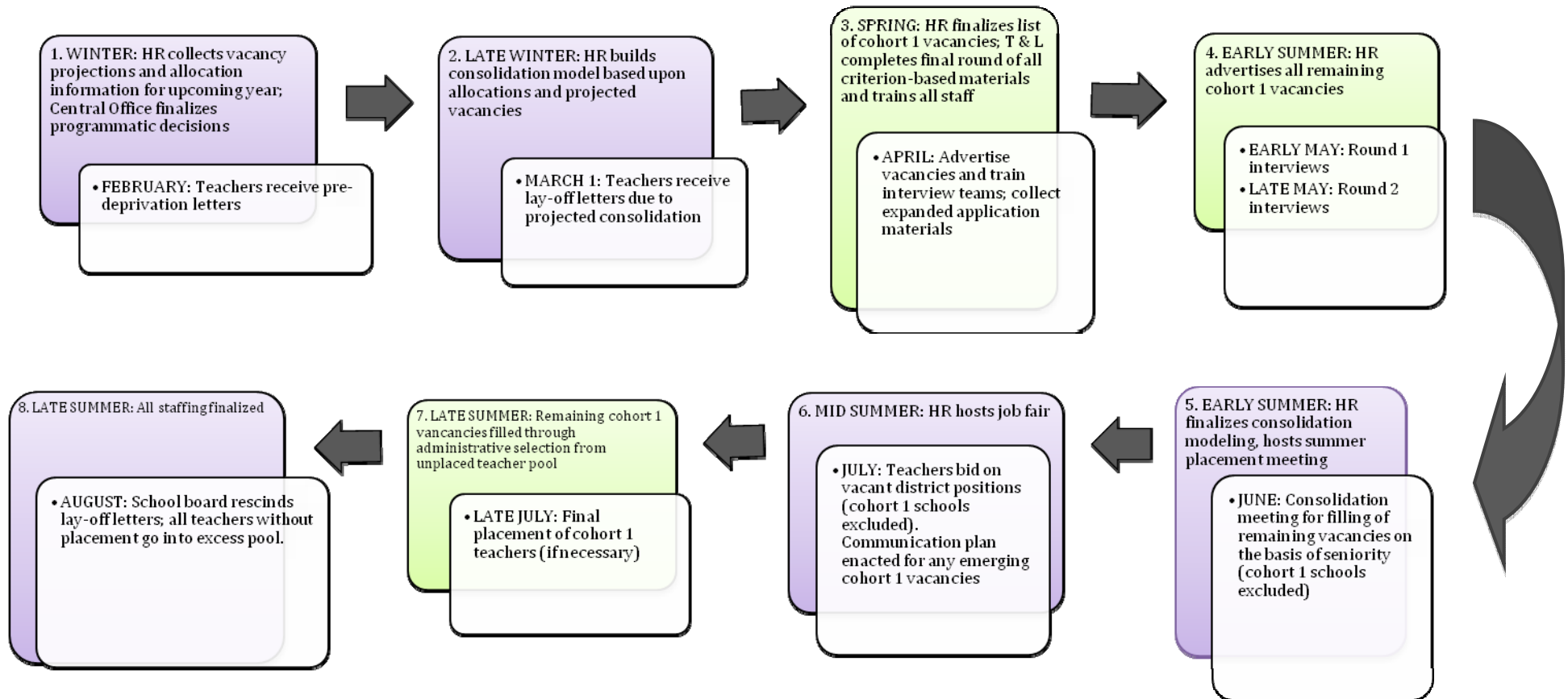
Over the course of implementation, the Providence School District anticipates that revisions, modifications, and system improvements will be necessary. These will be made on a continuous basis in anticipation of bringing criterion-based hiring to scale during the 2010-2011 academic year. The 2010-2011 year will have the benefit of both the improvements resulting from the experience of 2009-2010 and the use of a Web-based applicant tracking and processing tool that is currently being procured.

The following pages provide detail on the two-year roll-out plan.

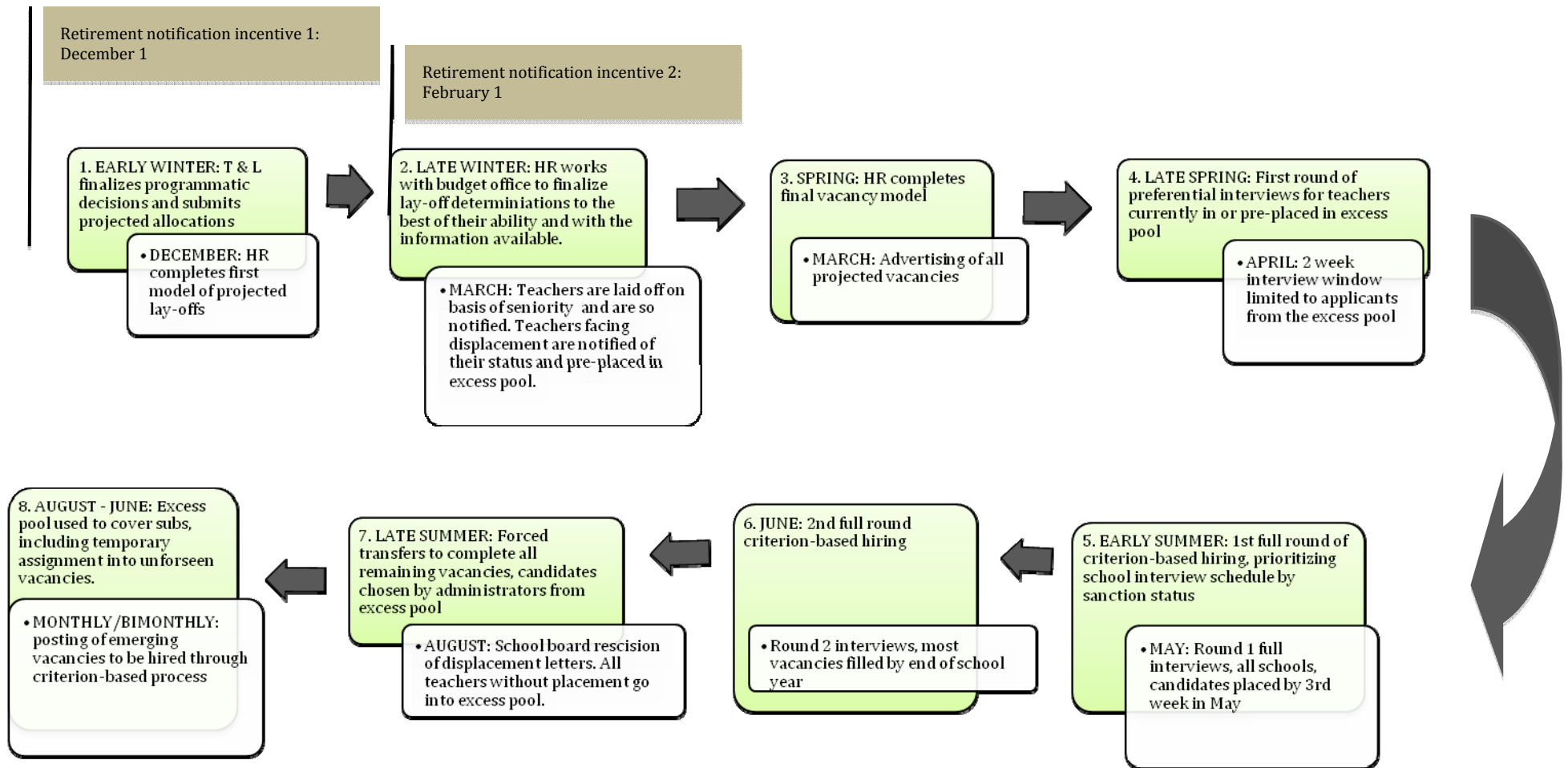
Current Seniority-Based Process



**2009-2010 Bridge Year: Hybrid Criterion-Based Hiring/Seniority Based System
(Preliminary Design Subject to Revision)**



**2010-2011 Year: Pure Criterion-Based Hiring
(Preliminary Design Subject to Revision)**



Required Application Materials

From the Applicant:

Application materials provided by the applicant must include, but are not limited to, the following items:

- (1) Cover letter that responds to a series of common and general prompts organized to reflect the criterion domains that will be used to consider and rank applicants;
- (2) Two current letters of reference: one from a colleague and one from a reference of the candidate's choosing;
- (3) Résumé;
- (4) For classroom teachers:
 - a. Three one-page pieces of student work from a range of student proficiency levels, each annotated with a response to a set of common prompts about the lesson, student performance, and evaluation process,
- (5) For non-instructional PTU members:
 - a. A set of professional artifacts that are materially comparable to those required of instructional applicants,
- (6) A professional development portfolio, including MLP data and any relevant additional documentation such as the teacher I-Plan;
- (7) A copy of a parent communication transmitted by the applicant within the last twelve months; and
- (8) For external candidates, a completed application.

From the Human Resources Department

Human Resources will provide supplementary information to the applicant-submitted materials, which may include:

- (1) Certification and credentialing information; and
- (2) Information about absenteeism over period of employment at PPSD, to be made available only to the principal chairing the hiring committee.

Human Resources will maintain full confidentiality of all sensitive personnel information.

Applicants who fail to submit a complete application in a timely manner will be deemed ineligible and will not be granted an interview.

Human Resources staff will be responsible for timely notification to all applicants who have submitted incomplete applications.

Interview Process

Proposal for the 2009-2010 Year: A Moderately Centralized Hiring System

This proposal recommends a moderately centralized, criterion-based hiring process for the 2009-2010 year and a largely decentralized process for the 2010-2011 academic year. Over a two-year period, this will transition Providence from a largely centralized system whose staffing is run primarily by Human Resources staff to a decentralized process that empowers building-level hiring committees to make the staffing decisions in the best interest of their schools and students.

Application Process: For the 2009-2010 year, Providence will not have a fully operational and comprehensive, Web-based application collection and tracking system. To ensure that the first year of implementation of criterion-based hiring for the six cohort 1 schools is feasible, Human Resources will need to maintain some centralization including:

1. External applicant vetting;
2. Review of internal and external applications for completion and communication with applicants regarding their status;
3. Transmittal of application packages to appropriate building administrators in preparation for the interview process;
4. Applicant notification about their employment status subsequent to interview.

Interview Committee: A standing interview committee consisting of no fewer than three individuals and no more than six individuals shall drive the criterion-based hiring system. The interview committee will be appointed from a pool of volunteers for the duration of the school year and chaired by the building principal. The members of the committee will serve in an advisory capacity and the building administrator must take the committee's recommendation into account when making final hiring decisions. A teacher leader (secondary) or designated teacher at the elementary level must be invited to serve on the interview team.

Interview Process: At the conclusion of the vacancy advertising window, Providence will host a one-day interview fair, which will provide time, structure, and space for all eligible applicants to be interviewed by trained interview committees. All interviews will have the following common characteristics:

1. Standard length and format;
2. Use of a common, standard process and criterion-based instrument to gauge the appropriateness and "fit" of applicants;
3. Utilization of interview questions from a common, secure, district-approved "bank" of interview questions. The question bank will focus primarily upon the use of concrete scenarios, short model lessons, and other similarly designed "real-life simulations" designed to elicit observable behavior within the domains of the criterion-based system. Each interview protocol will provide for school-specific questions that are not part of the district question bank.

This proposal does **not** provide for "on-the-spot" hiring, a common practice in large, wholly decentralized systems. Rather, this process will run for a full day or days and will conclude with

an organized “check-out” system. All interviewed candidates will be required to complete a check-out process that includes:

1. All schools with whom they interviewed, including a rank ordering of the schools from which they would accept job offers; and
2. Evaluation instrument surveying their experience.

All interview committees will be required to complete a check-out process that includes:

1. Turning in all completed criterion-based instruments and associated notes;
2. Submission of a rank-ordered list of all interviewed applicants (by vacancy) to whom they would be willing to extend job offers; and
3. Evaluation instrument surveying their experience.

Participation of District Charter Schools: Teaching staff in the district charter schools are members of the Providence Teachers’ Union; consequently, district charter schools will participate in the need-driven instructional assignment and criterion-based hiring process described in this document. Providence district administrators will collaborate with the leadership of the charter schools to ensure that the process is useful, fair, and effective within the charter schools and will make appropriate and reasonable accommodations if so requested.

Job Assignment Process

The job matching process is designed to honor rank-ordered job preferences of both building administrators and interviewed candidates through a transparent system. Like all other elements of the system, the needs of students and the school will be the driving force behind the job assignment process. However, all job assignments will honor the four guiding beliefs that undergird this proposal:

- (1) The Providence School District has among the most highly trained and effective teachers in state of Rhode Island and it is incumbent upon the district to support their continued professional growth in critical areas.
- (2) The needs of students should be the driving force behind all structural, staffing, and instructional decisions.
- (3) Teacher hiring, transfer, and assignment policies must treat all teachers with professional respect.
- (4) Teachers, administrators, and students are all best served by a system that is driven by the principles of mutual consent.

In most instances, no instructional assignments will be made without the consent of both the applicant and the building administrator. This consent will be collected and considered through the following process:

Step 1At the conclusion of each round of hiring interviews, Human Resources personnel will collect all “check-out sheets” from applicants and committee chairs.

Step 2Committee chairs, Human Resources personnel, union representatives, and district administrators will gather to begin the process of assigning candidates to jobs based upon their check-out form. The process will assign willing applicants to willing schools through rounds that begin with the lowest performing schools and conclude with the highest performing schools.

Step 3:.....Continuing in rounds, all possible job assignments will be made. No applicants will be assigned to schools that they have indicated to be unacceptable; conversely, no schools will be assigned applicants that they have indicated to be unacceptable.

Step 4:.....Human resources will notify all applicants of their employment status as soon as possible and unplaced applicants and new or continued vacancies will be incorporated into the next scheduled round of interviews.

Associated Commitments: Teachers accepting transfer must commit to working in their new position for no less than the remainder of the academic year. The filling of positions will be managed to maximize the flexibility and minimize disruptions to instruction.

In the event that a teacher has received an unsatisfactory evaluation he or she will not be allowed to request voluntary transfer.

This process has been designed to ensure complete transparency and include multiple stakeholders (including union representatives and RIDE-assigned monitor) to assure applicants and schools that all hiring decisions were handled with seriousness and professionalism and adhered to established protocols designed to govern the process.

Training for Interview Committees

The criterion-based hiring and teacher transfer process has been designed as a transparent, fair, equitable, and standards-driven hiring system. In order to ensure that these characteristics are deeply embedded throughout the hiring process, all participants must be thoroughly trained prior to the onset of interviews. This training process will be extensive and informed by research, technical assistance providers, and include support and assistance from the Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Teacher Certification.

The training process will be a 4-6 hour training that will include the following elements:

Introduction

1. Overall goals of the process and the research that undergirds criterion-based job assignment through an interview process;
2. Proposed roll-out plan and flow of the system; and
3. Importance of staff selection and its impact on student achievement.

Training on Professional Standards and Legal Responsibilities as a Member of a Hiring Committee

1. Legal responsibilities and EEO standards;
2. Professionalism and confidentiality;
3. The role and purview of the committee; and
4. Conflicts of interest and expectations around recusal from service.

Domains, Strands, and Criterion

1. Training on the domains, strands, and criterion and associated instruments;
2. Practice using the instruments; and
3. Exposure to sample questions from the interview bank, organized by domain.

Limited Simulation

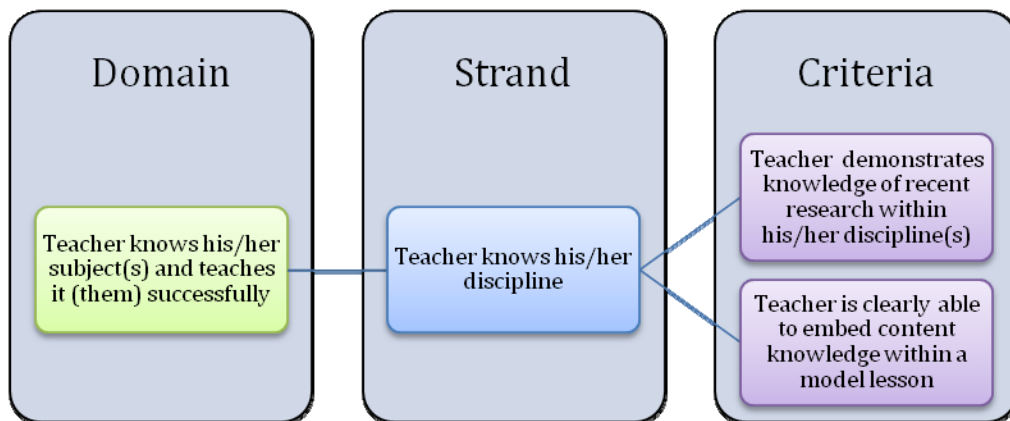
1. Shortened mock interviews to practice skills; and
2. Mini-calibration session to ensure consistency of instrument use by committee members.

No one will be allowed to serve on a committee unless they have completed the training. Interview training will not be paid, as service on an interview team will be considered voluntary.

Proposed Criterion

Providence’s criterion-based hiring system design is derived from research-based and nationally benchmarked criterion sets that have been demonstrated to have predictive value in appropriately matching teachers and schools through the process of mutual consent. These criterion sets are organized under a series of broad domains that are also grounded in best practice across Providence’s urban peers.

The proposed criterion-based system is designed to be simple, clear, and intuitive for all participants of the interview-based process. The overarching design utilizes a three-level taxonomic structure that flows from largest to smallest: *domain, strand, criteria*.



Domains

This proposal recommends five broad domains that have been synthesized from common elements drawn from the following well-respected state and national sources:

1. Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards
2. Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leadership
3. North Carolina Teacher Quality Standards
4. National Board Standards (AFT Endorsed)
5. Chicago Teacher Standards (AFT District)
6. Wisconsin Teacher Standards (AFT District)

Research indicates that teacher hiring and transfer processes are most successful when coupled with a fully articulated and high quality, teacher evaluation system. Providence is currently in the process of revising its teacher evaluation instruments. Consequently, the criterion-based hiring system is being built upon a series of domains that are research-based, nationally benchmarked, and appropriately descriptive to bear the burden of a teacher selection process. Through the

creation of domains derived from our urban peers, Providence will ensure that the criterion-based hiring system will require only retrofitting – not wholesale revision – at the conclusion of the development of the evaluation system.

Strands

Within each domain, there will be several layers, or *strands* that provide specificity and contour to the larger domain. Like the domains, these strands are synthesized from regional and national teacher quality standards and tailored for appropriateness within an interview-based setting.

Domain	Teachers know their subjects and teach them successfully	Standards Crosswalk
Strands	Teachers know and are committed to staying current in their discipline	RI 1 & 2, NC3, WI 1, IL 1, NB 2
	Teachers create interdisciplinary learning experiences	RI 1, NC4
	Teachers make instruction relevant to students using a variety of learning activities	NC 3, RI 5
	Teachers set clear rules	RI 6

Domain	Teachers create culturally and developmentally-appropriate lessons for a diverse pool of learners	Standards Crosswalk
Strands	Teachers are able to associate learning needs with instructional design that meets the current cognitive, social and personal needs of their students	RI3, NC2, WI 2 & 4, IL2, NB1
	Teachers create age-appropriate lessons and activities	RI 1, NC4
	Teachers demonstrate social and cultural understanding in their teaching	RI 1, NB3
	Teachers encourage culturally competent standards of behavior, positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation	RI 6, IL 5

Domain	Teachers behave professionally as classroom managers, colleagues, and educational leaders	Standards Crosswalk
Strands	Teachers interact with students, colleagues, parents, and others in a professional manner that is fair and equitable	RI 11
	Teachers lead in the classroom, in the school, and in the teaching profession	NC1
	Teachers maintain standards of professional conduct	IL 11
	Teachers seek the advice of others and draw on education research and scholarship to improve their practice	NB4

Domain	Teachers utilize assessment data to guide instruction and plan for the future	Standards Crosswalk
Strands	Teachers use formal and informal assessment strategies to determine the impact of instruction on learning, to provide feedback, and to plan future instruction	RI 9, IL8, WI8 RI 9, IL8, WI8
	Teachers reflect on their practice and assume responsibility for their own professional development	

Domain	Teachers communicate well and are knowledgeable about and committed to the extended school community	Standards Crosswalk
Strands	Teachers communicate well and foster relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community	RI7 & 8, WI 6 & 10, IL9, NB5, NC2
	Teachers work with specialists to develop alternative instructional strategies when needed	RI4
	Teachers are mindful of the principal objectives of their state, district, school and department	NB 3
	Teachers interact with students, colleagues, parents, and others in a professional manner that is fair and equitable	RI 11

Criteria

Each domain and strand will be associated with criteria that will enable trained interview committees to make fair and reliable determinations about applicants seeking employment within their building. These criteria will be designed to focus on observable behaviors and educated inferences associated with the review of application materials.

The Proposed Providence School District Excess Pool

Effective for the 2011-2012 year, the excess pool will be comprised of displaced teachers that fall into any of the following three categories.

1. Teachers that were consolidated out of positions and were not placed in a new position through the interview-based process;
2. Teachers that were in the substitute pool prior to summer of 2010; or
3. Teachers that have been consolidated out of positions mid-year and are awaiting the opportunity to participate in the criterion-based hiring process.

Function of the Excess Pool

The excess pool will provide employment for Providence teachers that have been displaced from their instructional assignment. The Providence School District will transition from the current substitute pool into a formal excess pool incrementally, reaching full implementation in the 2010-2011 academic year. Teachers in the excess pool will be deployed out to schools to meet the day-to-day substitute demands of the district. These assignments will include:

1. Short and long-term substitute assignments for typical teacher absences based upon teacher training and certification; and
2. Temporary assignment to classrooms with unexpected vacancies, pending the filling of the vacancies through the criterion-based process.

In addition, the excess pool will provide displaced teachers with a clear and supported pathway to return permanently to the classroom. Teachers in the excess pool will retain the benefits of full employment and PTU membership.

While the Providence School District is committed to supporting, growing, and meaningfully employing the current teaching staff, the excess pool shall not be used to artificially limit the entry of new teachers into the workforce. To that end, in the 2010-2011 academic year, the size of the excess pool will cease to be calculated as a function of the substitute needs of the prior instructional year. This important change will allow the district to attract highly effective external applicants into the system when appropriate and instructionally justified.

Placement of Teachers in the Excess Pool

Beginning in the 2010-2011 academic year, teachers would be consolidated out of eliminated classrooms based upon seniority both within their content area and within their building. Classroom eliminations in a single school will no longer affect the staffing in any other building or elsewhere in the district. This critical change will stabilize staffing district-wide through the elimination of cyclical, widespread bumping.

Teachers can be displaced into the excess pool through the result of either (1) cyclical, anticipated programmatic changes or (2) mid-year, unanticipated programmatic changes.

Teachers facing displacement caused by *cyclical, anticipated programmatic* changes (e.g. building or classroom closures) will receive a March 1 letter that “pre-places” them in the excess pool. Displaced teachers receiving a March 1 letter will not face loss of employment or

termination, nor will they face immediate removal from their current position. Rather, they will complete the academic year and, at the same time, have the benefit of participating in a preferential hiring window to facilitate their placement in a new and appropriate instructional assignment.

Teachers facing mid-year displacement caused by unanticipated programmatic changes (e.g. changes in student instructional need or fluctuations in enrollment) shall be directly placed in the excess pool with no less than two weeks notice. This direct placement is not a “pre-placement”; affected teachers will not retain their previous instructional assignment or any rights to a comparable position. No less than two weeks after notification of their displacement, affected teachers will be moved directly into the excess pool. These displaced teachers will have the benefit of a preferential hiring window to speed their placement in a new and appropriate instructional assignment.

Management of Staff in the Excess Pool

The Providence School District has a professional commitment to all teachers, regardless of whether they hold a permanent instructional assignment or serve in the excess pool. To that end, Providence will implement a series of measures to ensure that displaced teachers serving in the excess pool are treated as valued members of the district’s teaching and learning team. These measures will include:

1. A preferential early April hiring window during which building administrators with vacancies can begin interviewing candidates drawn exclusively from the excess pool. This preferential hiring window will provide displaced teachers with the first opportunity receive a new permanent instructional assignment; and
2. Professional development for building administrators to ensure that all clearly understand both the nature and function of the excess pool and that placement in the excess pool is unrelated to job performance.

Displaced teachers serving in the excess pool must actively seek employment through the criterion-based hiring process. If displaced teachers serving in the excess pool are not successful obtaining a position during the first twelve-month period, they will be provided support services to improve their chances for obtaining a position in the district. These voluntary support services may include professional development, mentoring, and employment counseling by human resource personnel to speed their return to a permanent instructional assignment.

Teachers can be terminated from the excess pool through one of the following channels:

- (1) A teacher’s background and training no longer serve the needs of the district, no vacancies in that instructional field have become available in the 12 month period following their placement in the excess pool, and the displaced teacher is not aggressively pursuing additional certification in a more relevant instructional area;
- (2) A teacher does not actively seek employment or participate in the criterion-based hiring process during a 24 month period, despite vacancy availability;
- (3) The district employment demands decrease, necessitating a reduction in workforce (see below); or
- (4) Chronic and acute performance deficiency documented and managed through the teacher evaluation system and subject to the administrative requirements of due process.

Reductions in Workforce

If necessary, teacher termination due to overall workforce reduction will follow these guidelines:

1. Reductions to overall workforce will be made starting from the most junior teachers in the excess pool.
2. Teacher termination due to reduction in workforce will not necessarily provide affected teachers with two years of service in the excess pool.
3. Terminations due to reduction in workforce will be handled in a manner that will not reflect negatively on the performance record of the affected teacher unless otherwise indicated through clearly documented teacher evaluation records.
4. The district will carefully manage any workforce reductions to the excess pool to ensure compliance with state labor laws.

Timeline for Submission of Additional Materials

The Providence School District will continue to submit additional documents pertaining to this process as they are developed. The following timeline will guide ongoing submissions.

Date	Item
Early April	Criterion-Based Interview Materials, including interview packets, member instructions, etc
Early April	Training modules for committee members
Early April	Detailed process and protocols governing interview rounds
Early May	Human resource materials and process for collecting and handling applications

Appendices

Appendix 1: Commissioner's Order #1

1. Protocol for the Assignment of Highly Effective Staff to High Need Schools and Classrooms

PPSD will introduce and implement incrementally criterion-based hiring and job assignment processes that are driven by student need rather than by seniority. The criterion-based hiring system will fill all vacant positions with candidates selected through district-managed interview process. A detailed description of the criterion-based hiring process, the district-managed interview process, communication strategies with staff, and the two-year time-frame for incremental phases will be submitted to RIDE for review no later than March 16, 2009. The two-year plan shall identify the schools that are to be included in the incremental phases and provide a time-line for when the criterion-based hiring process will be district-wide. This list shall include six schools at a minimum, with at least two schools from each level of the system (elementary, middle, and high) that are in the furthest level of sanction status, including two new schools (i.e., Nathan Bishop Middle School and the Providence Career and Technical Center) that will open in 2009-2010. These schools were closed because of insufficient student performance over long periods of time and/or the lack of viable career and technical programs that meet state standards. In addition to criterion-based hiring, staffing procedures in all schools in 2009-2010 will adhere to the following: (a) administrators shall make justifiable staffing and schedule changes throughout the academic year in response to changes in student enrollment or instructional need; and (b) instructional assignments, including but not limited to grade level and courses, shall be driven by student needs first rather than by weight of teacher preference sheets. Existing processes that exist in contractual language and/or school operations (e.g. school-based SITs and/or joint PSD/PTU program committee) that impede these practices, or that prevent compliance with applicable law, shall be removed or modified.

Appendix 2: Projected Scope of 2009-2010 Implementation, Cohort 1 Schools

Implementation of the criterion-based hiring system for the cohort 1 schools is projected to include hiring for the following vacancies, by school:

Veazie Street Elementary School:	1 vacancy
Carl Lauro Elementary School:	12 vacancies
Oliver Hazard Perry Elementary School:	19 vacancies
Nathan Bishop Middle School:	All positions
Hope High School:.....	66 vacancies*
Providence Career and Technical Academy:	All positions

* The large number of vacancies at Hope High School are the result of the now-expired Commissioner’s Order. These vacancies will not be incorporated into the criterion-based hiring process for 2009-2010 year, as they affect teachers that were previously hired through an interview-based, building-driven hiring process.

Appendix 3: Contractual Reference to Seniority-Based Transfer & Hiring

Contract reference	Contract Language
Article 12	Transfer Policy: All of Article 12
11.8	All applicants deemed eligible for the position shall be granted an interview by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
11-9	Any teacher presently holding a posted position shall retain the position without the necessity of reapplying based upon the teacher's seniority rights under the collective bargaining agreement.
8-6.3	Whenever there exists a need to hire an LTS or a regular teacher, candidates to be interviewed shall be selected by the Director of Human Resources from a list of teachers serving as LTSP or LTSs as well as candidates from outside the system
8-7.3	Any teacher whose name appears on any recall seniority list prior to September 1, 1995 shall not waive his/her right to recall seniority rights....
Variable	All references to SWACS
8.29.2.1 (A)	Certified teachers on the recall list shall be offered the opportunity job share in their order of recall seniority...
11-9	Any teacher presently holding a posted position shall retain the rights to the position without the necessity of reapplying based on the teacher's seniority
Article 13	Teacher Programs: All of Article 13
11-10 and 11-1	If a posted position is to be filled during the summer and said position should have been posted prior to the deadline for postings, said postings shall be mailed to all teachers 30 days prior to the closing date for filling the position; Teachers who want to be notified of positions to be posted during the summer shall leave a SASE with the superintendent....

Appendix 4: Teacher Hiring and Transfer Glossary

Criterion-based hiring	Hiring decisions made through the use of a transparent, standards-based and criterion-grounded set of interview protocols and review instruments
Displaced Teacher:	Employee of the district without an instructional placement and who is serving in the excess pool as a substitute pending a new instructional placement
Excess Pool	The category (or pool) of displaced teachers who are awaiting appointment to new positions through the criterion-based hiring process. Teachers in the excess pool remain members in active standing and continue to serve within the teaching workforce.
Forced Transfer	Teachers moving between positions without the consent of either the school or the teacher; also known as “involuntary transfer”
Hard-to-Fill Area	Teaching positions that are difficult to fill, typically including teachers with certification/endorsement in math, physics, chemistry, technical educators, special education and English Language Learner instruction.
Incumbent candidate	Employee of the district with an instructional placement seeking a new position (voluntary transfers).
Involuntary transfer	Teachers moving between positions without the consent of either the school or the teacher; also known as “forced transfer”
Lay-Off	Teachers who have (or have been notified that they may have their employment in the district discontinued due to an overall reduction in workforce
Mutual Consent	Interview/criterion-based hiring that requires both teacher and administrator to agree to transfer (site-based hiring privileges)
Need-Driven Instructional Assignments	The process of making instructional assignments within buildings using a process that prioritizes the needs of students and the school and takes teacher assignment requests (made through preference sheets) into consideration whenever possible and appropriate
Outside candidate	Candidate seeking employment in the Providence School District who is not a member of the bargaining unit
Preference Sheet	Form completed by all teachers in the district and submitted to the principal that is used to communicate teacher programming preferences.
Seniority-based hiring	Hiring processes that are driven primarily by removing/placing teachers in jobs on the basis of seniority
Voluntary transfer	Teachers seeking a transfer out of their current school and into another school

Appendix 5: Research Brief One: Mutual Consent Hiring

Context

“Mutual consent” refers to a teacher hiring policy where both the job-seeking teacher and the school-based hiring committee agree to an arrangement before employment is secured. Mutual consent differs from policies where transferring teachers are placed without input from school-based personnel.

Nationwide Policy Shifts and Findings

- In 2005, the NYC Department of Education/UFT agreed to end seniority hiring and enact a policy of mutual consent. In 2008, 90% of teachers report being satisfied with hiring/transfer process.¹
- In Chicago in 2008, 90% of transferring teachers and 92% of principals are satisfied with CPS system of mutual consent.²
- San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) allows for a period of mutual consent hiring, but displaced (“consolidated”) teachers are eventually placed by the district. Nine in ten teachers would prefer a system entirely based on mutual consent.³
- In 1997, the Seattle Public School District was the first urban district to replace seniority-based hiring with school-level hiring teams of teachers and principals.⁴

According to a New Teacher Project study across five large urban districts without policies of mutual consent⁵:

- 2 in 3 principals reported receiving teacher placements that were not a good match with their school;
- 1 in 3 principals reported hiding vacancies from Human Resources, in order to avoid an undesirable placement.

Costs/Challenges of Implementing Mutual Consent Hiring

- The number of tenured teachers will still exceed the number of vacancies;
- School-level interview teams will require training;
- Excess pool can grow costly and become disproportionately populated with teachers without motivation to engage in continuous and aggressive professional growth.

Bottom Line

1. Teachers and principals support mutual consent nationwide.
2. Input from school-based personnel yields a better school match, which in turn, yields fewer transfer requests and greater faculty stability.

¹ Mutual Benefits. (2008). The New Teacher Project (TNTP).

² Hiring, Assignment and Transfer in Chicago Public Schools. (2007). TNTP.

³ Teacher Hiring, Transfer, and Evaluation in San Francisco Unified School District. (2009). TNTP.

⁴ Lilly, Dick. “Teachers Gain Role In Hiring Process.” *Seattle Times*. Sept. 10, 1997.

⁵ Unintended Consequences. (2005). TNTP.

Appendix 6: Research Brief Two: Applying & Interviewing Policies

Context

Teacher hiring reform and the influx of new teacher recruitment programs have forced districts to create or revisit screening and interview procedures. New research indicates how a district might support school-based hiring, to promote the best candidate/ school match.

Applying and Screening

Teacher hiring can be centralized, decentralized or moderately centralized.⁶

1. **Centralized:** HR fills all vacancies from a pool of applicants.
2. **Decentralized:** Applicants apply directly to schools; then paperwork submitted to HR indicating that a position has been filled.
3. **Moderately centralized:** Applicants submit forms to the district HR office, then HR distributes to particular schools. This may fulfill a contractual mandate, or lessen the flood of applications to individual schools.

Building a Hiring Committee

Many CBA urban districts with school-based hiring require a hiring team to make hiring decisions. Often, contracts will specify the constituents that must make up the hiring committee.

Columbus, Ohio:

“The interview/selection panel in a building will consist of the principal, the senior faculty representative and one elected member of the Association Building Council, and two parents/members of the school community, or an alternative panel as agreed at the building between the principal and Association. Only persons who have completed the joint program training on Article 211 and interviewing may participate on an interview/selection panel.”⁷

The Interview

Structured interviews have been shown to be better predictors of job performance than unstructured or informal interviews⁸. But in a recent Florida case study, only two principals in a group of 26 used a structured interview protocol.⁹

Structured interviews come in many forms. Some districts purchase a commercially available interview protocol (TPI, STAR) while others create their own. In any case, a teacher interview should indicate an applicant’s capability in enacting district-wide teacher standards, as well his/her ability to fulfill the unique requirements of the teaching vacancy.

⁶ Liu and Johnson (2006).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ryan & Tippins (2004).

⁹ TQR: Certify, Blink, Hire (2007)