



# Strategic Use of Data to Support Recruitment and Retention

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**Quick! Your school board president is calling  
and wants answers to the following questions:**

- 1) Which recruitment strategy has led to the greatest number of applicants for secondary science positions?
- 2) Which hiring criterion has been most indicative of future teacher performance?
- 3) What is the demographic breakdown of teacher applicants in your district or school?

**Do you know the answers?**

Most school and district leaders have a wealth of information available to them before, during, and after the hiring process, but they might not analyze it regularly or use it to inform their recruitment and retention plans. However, using data strategically is key to positively impacting teacher recruitment and retention.

This brief discusses different types of recruitment and retention data, potential uses of the data, and questions to help guide data analysis. District talent managers and principals can use this brief to inform their own action planning around recruitment and retention.

Teacher and leader recruitment is an ongoing process; there is no such thing as a “recruitment season” because the best talent managers are always thinking about teacher and leader recruitment. However, this brief breaks out data questions into three stages: before, during, and after recruitment. This approach helps differentiate which questions are useful before starting to recruit for a specific position, which questions you should ask during active recruitment, and which questions are most helpful to inform continuous improvement.

### Before Recruitment

Reviewing data prior to beginning the recruitment process can help you forecast student and staffing needs, anticipate possible hiring challenges, identify hiring priorities, and redistribute staff as needed to ensure equitable access to educators. Data can also help you identify school and teacher climate issues that need to be addressed to ensure educators want to work in your school or district.

### Using Data from Nimble Software to Attract, Hire & Keep Teachers

In December 2021, all kindergarten–12 (K–12) schools in Indiana had the opportunity to opt in to using the Nimble Applicant Tracking System at no cost to their schools. Data dashboards in Nimble provide easy access to the following data:

- Applicant diversity
- Applicant source
- Applicant volume
- Applications per vacancy
- Conversion rates
- Processing time
- Vacancy fill rates

Key Questions	Potential Data to Use
What are historical trends in terms of recruitment, hiring, and retention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of retirements in the past 3 years</li> <li>• Previous pipelines/pathways that have led to successful new hires</li> </ul>
What are anticipated needs for next year? For the next 3 years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipated number of retirements</li> <li>• Anticipated number of leavers (staff leaving for reasons other than retirement)</li> <li>• Anticipated student enrollment changes</li> <li>• Anticipated changes in demand for services and programming (e.g., special education services, teachers of multilingual learners, dual credit educators, social services, career and technical education [CTE] programming)</li> </ul>
Which students have access to highly effective teachers within the building/district? What trends do you see?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution of highly effective/effective teachers across and within schools</li> <li>• Distribution of teachers by race, ethnicity, gender across and within schools</li> </ul>

## During Recruitment

Regularly monitoring the recruitment progress helps ensure schools are fully staffed prior to the start of the school year. By reviewing recruitment data regularly, you can use data to identify where to immediately implement targeted recruitment strategies. For example, if you notice you are receiving few applicants for a high school mathematics position via online job sites, you might decide to start doing targeted outreach to local universities to see if they have any recent graduates looking for positions. You can also address bottlenecks or delays in the hiring process. For example, if you notice that many candidates have gone through initial screening but have not yet been interviewed at schools, you can reach out to the school principal and staff to help problem-solve and reduce delays in the hiring process.

Key Questions	Potential Data to Use
What does the applicant pool look like for each posted position?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity of applicants</li> <li>• Applicant source</li> <li>• Applicant volume</li> <li>• Applicants per vacancy (by type and school)</li> </ul>
Where are there bottlenecks in the process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing time</li> <li>• Interview schedules</li> <li>• Vacancy fill rates</li> </ul>

## After Recruitment

Review short-term recruitment and hiring outcomes and long-term outcomes to inform continuous improvement of recruitment processes in the following ways:

- **Reallocation of resources.** Understanding which recruitment methods were most successful can help you prioritize strategies that deliver the greatest value to the school or district.

- **Addressing systemic issues.** While you may have addressed some immediate issues during recruitment, a more detailed review of data after the recruitment and hiring cycle is finished can illuminate to systemic issues that need to be addressed, such as bottlenecks in the process, teacher supports, or school culture issues.
- **Refining the recruitment and hiring process.** Long-term outcome data, such as the persistence of new hires and teacher effectiveness data, can help you refine the application and hiring process to prioritize indicators and measures that are most predictive of teacher effectiveness.

Key Questions	Potential Data to Use
Which recruitment methods were most successful? How do you know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant sources</li> <li>• Conversion rates</li> <li>• Onboarding interview data</li> </ul>
Where were there bottlenecks in the process and why did they exist?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing time</li> <li>• Vacancy fill rates</li> <li>• Process debriefs with human resources (HR) staff, principals, and new hires</li> </ul>
Are the teachers we hire effective? Which teacher attributes of performance were most indicative of future performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student performance data</li> <li>• Teacher evaluation ratings</li> <li>• Hiring process data (e.g., application, performance measures, interview data, applicant source)</li> </ul>
Do the teachers we hire stay? Why or why not? What trends do we see in the data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher persistence</li> <li>• Demographic information of leavers and stayers</li> <li>• Reasons new hires leave</li> <li>• Where new hires go after they leave (e.g., another district, another profession)</li> <li>• Supports provided to new hires</li> <li>• Which new hires receive support and from whom</li> <li>• Stay interview data (see callout box below)</li> </ul>

## What is a Stay Interview?

A stay interview is a planned and in-depth one-on-one conversation with staff that can improve employee engagement and build trust. The conversation focuses on aspects of the teacher’s experience that make them want to stay and identifies possible triggers that might cause a teacher to leave. District staff or school administrators can then review themes across interviews to identify why teachers stay, which offers possible talking points during recruitment processes, and ensure the district provides the necessary conditions, opportunities, and supports so they want to continue teaching in your school or district.

### **Interested in learning more?**

- See this video clip on stay interviews: <https://video.link/w/qQBod>
- Access this guide, *Planning Teacher Stay Conversations*: <https://tntp.org/teacher-talent-toolbox/view/planning-teacher-stay-conversations>



## Spotlight on Indianapolis Public Schools

As Alex Moseman at Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) notes, the strategy of “go everywhere and be everywhere” is inefficient. Increased access to—and analysis of—data has enabled the district to be more targeted and responsive in its approach to recruitment and retention.

For IPS, data analysis begins with understanding the current district workforce. Moseman said that the district maintains a large spreadsheet with a list of resignations that it uses to help project anticipated vacancies. His team reviews the spreadsheet regularly and looks at changes over time to understand trends in teacher hiring. For example, amid news about The Great Resignation and teacher vacancies, IPS saw a spike in teacher resignations. However, a closer look at the data in conjunction with years prior showed the spike was because teachers submitted notice of their resignations earlier, providing IPS more time to find replacements. Principals were involving teachers in staffing conversations earlier, which allowed the district to start recruiting replacements earlier. In addition, based on historical data, the district can anticipate hiring needs in specific content areas.

As an early adopter of Nimble in the state, IPS has realized the importance of using data to inform recruitment and retention efforts. Nimble is a data-driven software tool designed to improve teacher hiring and recruitment for K–12. Moseman noted Nimble is more friendly than others, which helps makes it easier for principals to work in the system, which in turn provides the district with more data and higher quality data. The data from Nimble allows IPS to adjust their strategies during their recruitment process.

Nimble enables IPS to monitor fluctuations in applications received over time and monitor where applicants are in the process. The district communicates trends with school leaders and adjusts its approach based on the data. For example, if the district notices a bottleneck in the process, the HR team will offer support to individual school leaders, whether it is help screening applications, supporting logistics, or implementing a new recruitment strategy for a specific position. In particular, IPS appreciates Nimble’s dashboard because it shows the number of applicants per vacancy. If the district receives fewer than five applicants for a vacancy, then the HR team targets efforts on increasing applications for that vacancy. The data from Nimble also helps the HR team project where efforts will be needed later. For example, based on where people are in the hiring process, the HR team can anticipate implications for hiring, onboarding, and induction, alerting teams to anticipated future workloads.

According to Moseman, a central question has been, “How do you create an experience that is designed with the candidate in mind but empowers principals to make efficient decisions on a fast timeline?” Over the past 5 years, IPS has invested significant efforts on the prospect and applicant experience, with a focus on increasing conversion rates—that is, the number of applicants who are hired. The team has worked to remove barriers to entry. For example, the district prioritizes getting contact information before a full application. The district also considers candidates for any open position for which they are qualified—not just the position for which they applied. Like all districts, IPS continues to face recruitment and retention challenges. However, use of data has helped IPS be more strategic in how it approaches those challenges.

***Interested in learning more about IPS?*** [Read more](#) about the district’s “Proving What’s Possible” initiative, which includes an apprenticeship program for future teachers and residency for future principals.



## Reflection and Discussion Questions

- How do you already use data to inform your recruitment and retention approach and strategies?
- Which of the questions in the tables above are most pressing for you right now? Why?
- Which of these data sources does your school/district already have? Who has access to the data?
- Which data sources do you lack?

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