

Using Exit Survey Data Effectively:

Recommendations from Teach Plus Policy Fellows on Improving Recruitment, Retention, and Diversification of Clark County's Teaching Force

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Highly effective teachers have a significant, positive effect on student growth and achievement. When these teachers leave the classroom all students, and especially students from vulnerable communities and students of color, suffer. In its ESSA plan, Nevada has committed to identifying, recruiting, and retaining effective educators but the state continues to report [higher](#) than average teacher turnover rate.¹ As Teach Plus Nevada Policy Fellows, current classroom teachers in Nevada, and teacher leaders, we endeavored to understand why teacher turnover happens and how to mitigate it.

As result, in February of 2020, we recommended that Clark County put in place a comprehensive exit survey to collect and analyze data behind its teacher turnover.² We believed the survey to be particularly important since the increased teacher turnover rates have a greater impact on the district's and state's most vulnerable communities that are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Clark County School District (CCSD), adopted its exit survey on January 4, 2021 and began administering it this school year.

The data from this inaugural exit survey is certain to help shed light on Clark County's ongoing and costly teacher turnover, giving stakeholders, including district administration, policymakers, and state leaders, the necessary information to address what's needed to build a robust, highly effective, and diverse teaching workforce. Below, we present our recommendations on administering the survey and analyzing the data to help inform CCSD's policy decisions that stem from the survey's findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Maintain CCSD commission's commitment to third party administration of exit survey.

The CCSD Superintendent's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Commission has put forth the recommendation of employing a third party facilitator for the administration of the recently adopted exit survey. [Best practices include using a third party in order to gain trust amongst responders of the exit survey](#) and ensuring that respondents are confident that their individual responses will remain confidential.³ We researched [third party facilitation](#) of exit surveys in other states² and recommend the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, the Guinn Center, and Data Insight Partners as third party vendors that can lend their leadership in administering the exit survey in Clark County.

2. Disaggregate data according to race and ethnicity to further diversify the district teaching workforce.

Diversity in the teaching force benefits all students and especially students of color. Research has shown that teachers of color positively impact the learning outcomes and success of students of color, specifically improving reading and math assessment performance, graduation rates, and college aspirations. We recommend that the analysis of the district's [newly adopted exit survey](#) include the disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity in order to inform increased diversification of the teaching workforce,^{4,5} as well as gender and age. As the exit survey seeks to capture teachers' experiences and trends regarding teacher attrition, the district must also engage in data analysis of teachers of color attrition and use the data to [guide policy development, improve school teaching conditions, and further improve recruitment and retention strategies](#).⁶ Diversification of the district teaching workforce will not happen by chance, it must be orchestrated by design.

3. Use the exit survey data to inform policy on recruitment, retention, and support of effective, diverse teachers.

Nevada has a [culturally diverse and multi-lingual student community](#), nearly 70 percent of whom live and learn in Clark County and speak over 154 languages.⁷ It is imperative that educator diversity is prioritized in an effort to ensure that student needs are addressed in the most appropriate and impactful manner. As the [CCSD Teacher Recruitment and Retention Commission Report](#) noted, "A genuinely diverse teaching force will mirror our school community in race, ethnicity, socioeconomics, gender, and sexual orientation. To ensure that efforts are directed in ways that most benefit students, all recruitment and retention recommendations...aim to find and nurture an effective and diverse teaching force."³ The exit survey data should inform the hiring and induction strategies that include comprehensive, innovative, and multidimensional supports to retain effective, diverse teachers. The data from exit surveys must emphasize aspects of climate and culture that [affect issues of fairness, equity, leadership, professional development and organizational ideology](#).⁸ It is imperative to address the specific issues that influence and impact the choices of effective, diverse teachers to stay or leave the school district.

CONCLUSION

The importance of leveraging the district's newly adopted exit survey to recruit, retain, and diversify the district's teaching workforce to improve student outcomes is critical. The exit survey data should be employed to mitigate teacher turnover, improve climate and culture, diversify the teaching workforce, and inform policy and practice supporting the recommendations as outlined in the [CCSD Teacher Recruitment and Retention Commission Report](#).³ As Teach Plus Nevada teacher leaders and members of the Clark County School District Superintendent's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Commission, in collaboration with a community of diverse stakeholders, we urge CCSD to consider our recommendations when it comes to administering and analyzing the survey, and making decisions based upon its data. We look forward to continuing to work with district, state, and community leaders to improve teacher recruitment and retention in order to address teacher turnover, teacher diversity, and help ensure that every student in Nevada has an effective teacher.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Clark County Education Association (2019). Nevada's Teacher Turnover Problem. Retrieved from <https://new.ccea-nv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Nevadas-teacher-Turnover.pdf>, p.5.

² Brunskill, S., Edwards, T., Higgins, V., Kaplan, N., Levrant, C., Paterson, R., & McCudden, J. (2020, February 27). Understanding why Nevada teachers choose to stay in and leave schools: Recommendations from teach plus Nevada policy fellows. Retrieved February 11, 2021, from <https://teachplus.org/news-events/publications/understanding-why-nevada-teachers-choose-stay-and-leave-schools>

³ Newsroom.ccsd.net. (2021, January). Retrieved February 11, 2021, from https://newsroom.ccsd.net/wp-content/uploads/CCSD-Teacher-Recruitment-and-Retention-Commission-Report_12021.pdf

⁴ Teachers of color: In high demand and short supply. (n.d.). Retrieved February 22, 2021, from <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/press-release/teachers-color-high-demand-and-short-supply#:~:text=The%20Benefits%20of%20Diversity%20in,in%20aspirations%20to%20attend%20college.&text=Teachers%20of%20color%20are%20resources,hard%2Dto%2Dstaff%20schools>

⁵ Nash, R., & Drummond, C. (2021, January 22). CCSD report Details plan to increase TEACHER recruitment, retention. Retrieved February 11, 2021, from <https://www.8newsnow.com/news/local-news/ccsd-discusses-framework-to-address-teacher-shortage/>

⁶ If you listen, we will stay: Why teachers of color leave and how to disrupt teacher turnover. (2019, September 25). Retrieved February 11, 2021, from <https://teachplus.org/DisruptTeacherTurnover>

⁷ Gillard, M., Penrod, L. J., Weathers, S., Whitt, D., Yasso, K., & Belknap, K. (2020, July 27). Restorative justice legislation in Nevada: Recommendations from Teach PLUS NEVADA Teaching Policy Fellows. Retrieved February 12, 2021, from <https://teachplus.org/news-events/publications/restorative-justice-legislation-nevada-recommendations-teach-plus-nevada>

⁸ Daniel, C. (2016, September 08). Why do teachers quit? How exit interviews and exit surveys can help. Retrieved February 12, 2021, from <http://www.k12hrsolutions.com/2013/10/09/why-do-teachers-quit-how-exit-interviews-and-surveys-can-help-retain-good-teachers/#:~:text=At%20their%20core%2C%20exit%20surveys,regarding%20why%20teachers%20are%20quitting.>