

**Using School Performance Data to Drive Personnel Selection**

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### **South Hi Mount Elementary School**

A school can only be as good as its teachers. South Hi Mount (SHM) is a relatively successful Fort Worth ISD Elementary School located in west Fort Worth. While they have areas of success they also have areas for growth. The school's Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) identifies areas for student growth. In an effort to improve student achievement a targeted teacher selection process will be proposed including job performance measures and job predictors to be used in the screening and employment stages.

### **Student & Teacher Demographics**

The school body is composed of 76% Hispanic students, 15% white students 8% African American students and less than 1% Native American and Asian students (TAPR, 8). In contrast, 17 of the schools 33 teachers are white while 16 are Hispanic. It should also be noted that the school overall has low student teacher ratios for example, in third grade the ratio is 13:1 and fifth grade it is 16:1 (TAPR, 9).

### **Areas for Improvement**

The campus achievement data overall is quite good. The campus out performed the state in reading and the district in writing. In order to bring the school inline with the district and state scores in all domains gains are required in third grade reading and fifth grade science. In 2015 the campus' third grade phase-in reading score was 74% ranking the school well above the district's 66%. However, the state average for third grade reading was 77%, which leaves room for improvement in that area. Additionally, white third grade students scored 83% in reading while their Hispanic counterparts scored 71%. Another area of concern for third grade is

retention. Retention is high at SHM in third grade, four points above district average and five points above the state.

The school's fifth grade science scores need improvement as well. In 2015 the campus' fifth grade phase-in science score was 68%. Again above the district average of 59% but under the state average of 72%. White fifth grade students at South Hi Mount scored 100% in science while Hispanic students only scored 64%.

This is a big achievement gap between white and Hispanic suggests that special efforts should be made to select reading and science teachers who will be successful with Hispanic students. "Experimental evidence suggests that teachers, in interacting with students, are more favorably disposed toward those who share their racial or ethnic background"(Dee, 55) Therefore, preference may be given to Hispanic teachers if all other measures of teacher criteria are equal. In addition, Hispanic stake holders will be given the opportunity to participate in the selection process.

### **Job Performance Measures - The Screening Stage**

It is well documented that, "teacher quality is the #1 determinate of student success" (Hall, para 3) One way to improve teacher quality is to hire new teachers. When selecting new teachers for SHM the following goals will serve as guides: to increase student achievement in third grade reading and fifth grade science and to decrease retention in third grade. Attention will also be given to the needs of under achieving Hispanic students. This proposal suggests that SHM hire a third grade reading teacher and a fifth grade science teacher in hopes of improving STAAR performance in those areas.

The first step in the selection process is to determine what is desired in job candidates. Young says, “measures of job performance serve a foundational base for all effective selection systems” (143). The following job performance measures specific were generated to select qualified candidates.

Both subject area candidates should be able to demonstrate a track record of student success. They should possess the ability to inspire and motivate their students. They should show evidence of classroom management practices that aid student learning and behavior. Candidates should be able to communicate their ability to provide differentiated instruction as needed to meet the individual needs of their students. Last but not least, candidates should believe that academic achievement is possible for all students regardless of their circumstances, that such circumstances do not define them, and that ESL and Bilingual students can achieve the same level of academic success as their white peers.

Candidates applying to teach fifth grade science should have experience using inquiry based learning methods. To be successful in the classroom teachers must be able to utilize field experiences and training (Barrow, 56). Candidates should have documented science professional development and field experiences to connect classroom lessons to the natural world.

Candidates applying to teach third grade reading should personally enjoy reading and possess a desire to share that joy with students at SHM. They should also have a firm knowledge of current research in the field of reading education (Latham, G. R., 70) and be able to apply it to classroom instruction.

### **Job Predictors - The Employment Stage**

Following the screening stage candidates will be tested in the employment stage of the selection process (Young, 155). Multiple methods of selection will be used to evaluate candidate qualifications. Teacher's knowledge of content will be assessed through interview questioning, teacher portfolios and model lessons. In order to provide a wider perspective key partners including teachers and parents will be included in the selection process (Hall, Para 13)

Candidates will be required to submit a cover letter and resumé. These documents will be used to determine the teacher's level of experience, formal writing ability and attention to detail. A standardized form will be used to collect "similar information about all job candidates" (Young, 151). "In doing so equitable comparisons among candidates are more likely to be forthcoming than if varied information is provided for each job candidate" (Young, 151).

Next, school administrators will conduct structured interviews with select candidates. If neither the principal or vice principal are Hispanic a Hispanic representative will be asked to attend. Interview questions will be prepared in advance (Young, 156) and answers will be recorded to be compared following all interviews. Interviewers will use this opportunity to get to know the candidate better and assess their communication skills. Questioning will determine soft skills like work ethic, resourcefulness and personality and hard skills like technical expertise, knowledge, and experience (Hall, para 14).

Each prospective teacher will submit a teaching portfolio. Criteria for the portfolio will be given to the applicants in advance in order to better compare the portfolios as they are reviewed. Portfolios will include a teaching philosophy, feedback from students, feedback from peers, and demonstrate professional reflection, and teaching practice and methodology that

reflect teaching philosophy (The Center, para 3). Teacher portfolios will be evaluated by administrators, and select teachers. Evaluators will use a rubric to rank the portfolios.

Lastly, the most promising candidates will be invited to present a model lesson for administrators and teachers and if possible a small group of students. The observers will rate the teacher using a rubric in the domains of motivation, pacing, content knowledge, classroom management, questioning and student feedback.

Using the data collected from this combination of job predictors candidates will be selected to receive an offer of employment.

### **Conclusion**

A targeted teacher selection process has been proposed to improve student achievement at SHM including job performance measures and job predictors to be utilized in the screening and employment stages. The school's Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) was analyzed to select areas for student growth. It was determined that new teachers are needed to meet the needs of third grade reading students and fifth grade science students with special attention given to Hispanic students. With great teachers in place SHM will indeed be a great school!

### References

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