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State Strategic Staffing: Recruitment Incentive for Lowest-Performing Schools

Race to the Top Formative Evaluation Report

Nathan Barrett, Cassandra Davis, and Ludmila Janda
Carolina Institute for Public Policy, The University of North
Carolina at Chapel Hill

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STATE STRATEGIC STAFFING: RECRUITMENT INCENTIVE FOR LOWEST-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Executive Summary

The North Carolina Race to the Top program funds a State Strategic Staffing Initiative (SSSI), which is intended to provide students in lower-performing schools with greater access to highly effective teachers. This initiative makes it possible for Local Education Agencies (LEAs—North Carolina’s term for traditional school districts and charter schools) to provide a voucher to teachers as a recruitment incentive for them to transfer to an eligible school. The annual amount of the voucher is \$5,360 and can be used for tuition towards one of several Master’s degrees related to education, student loan payments, housing, or any combination thereof.

The Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation–North Carolina (CERENC) is evaluating the SSSI as a part of the evaluation of NC Race to the Top (RttT) funded projects and programs. The goal of the Consortium’s evaluation is to examine the implementation and intermediate outcomes associated with the recruitment incentive. Implementation activities to date have been observed and the experiences and opinions of recruited teachers, their principals, and representatives from their LEAs recorded and described in this report.

Initiative Background: Structure of the Recruitment Incentive and Implementation

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) allocated approximately \$3 million total for the 2011-12 school year through the 2013-14 school year to fund recruitment vouchers for teachers transferring into low-performing schools. Transferring teachers receive the voucher each year, for the period of the RttT grant, as long as they remain in their new school. The annual amount of the voucher is \$5,360 and can be used for tuition towards one of several Master’s degrees related to education, student loan payments, housing, or any combination thereof. The design of the recruitment incentive is such that only eligible teachers receive the vouchers and only certain LEAs are able to offer the voucher.

Teachers eligible for the SSSI voucher must be career-status teachers who have ratings at or above “Proficient” in each area of the Educator Evaluation System for teachers and have not taught in an eligible school in the same LEA in the prior year.¹

NCDPI determined eligible schools by first selecting from the population of the lowest achieving schools, which are defined as schools with graduation rates below 60%, or the lowest-performing 5% of conventional schools. All schools were then grouped into their respective LEAs to avoid competition between schools within an LEA. The resulting list contained 36 LEAs from which 10 were selected based on their 3-year average turnover rate and their geographic location. Specifically, the LEA with the highest turnover in each education region and LEAs with a 3-year

¹ Through the 2012-13 school year, to be career-status, teachers needed four consecutive years of service and a designation of career status by a local Board of Education. Recent legislative changes (SL 2013-360, Section 9.6) have eliminated the career status designation.

average turnover rate greater than 20% were selected.² (See Appendix B for a list of LEAs and schools eligible and Appendix C for a map of the education regions and eligible LEAs)

To date, few of the vouchers have been provided to teachers and none as a recruitment incentive. According to participation and budget estimates, the recruitment incentive was expected to be provided to approximately 181 teachers. Six teachers qualified for the voucher in 2011-12 and an additional six teachers qualified for the voucher in 2012-13. However, it appeared that only ten of the twelve teachers remained eligible in the 2012-13 school year.³

Purpose of the Evaluation and Report

The Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation–North Carolina (CERE–NC)⁴ is conducting an independent external evaluation of North Carolina’s RttT initiatives. The roles of the RttT Evaluation Team are to (1) document the activities of the RttT initiatives; (2) provide timely formative data, analyses, and recommendations to help the initiative teams improve their ongoing work; and (3) provide summative evaluation results toward the end of the grant period to determine whether the RttT initiatives met their goals and to inform future policy and program decisions to sustain, modify, or discontinue initiatives after the grant-funded period.

Research Questions

This report provides formative evaluation of the SSSI, which was proposed to increase the access of pupils in the lowest-performing schools to higher-quality teachers. Accordingly, this report focuses on the following research questions⁵:

1. Was SSSI implemented as intended?
2. Did SSI meet critical needs for teachers and principals to improve equitable access to higher-quality teachers and leaders in targeted geographic areas? Why or why not? What factors limited implementation of this program, if any?
3. How does SSSI change the climate in eligible and participating schools?
4. What is the nature and quality of the experience for teachers who receive the SSSI vouchers?

Data obtained to address these questions were collected primarily through interviews of participating teachers, principals, and LEA administrators, as well as the team implementing SSSI at NCDPI.

Summary of Key Findings

1. The SSSI vouchers were not used as a recruitment incentive. All teachers that received the voucher were informed of the incentive after they had transferred to their new school.

² Region 8 has no schools that are in the list of lowest achieving. Also, no large urban districts met the selection criteria.

³ This figure was determined by the Evaluation Team when scheduling interviews of eligible teachers.

⁴ CERE–NC is a partnership of the Carolina Institute for Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University, and the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

⁵ See Appendix B for a full list of the evaluation questions to be addressed in the final report.

2. Overall, LEA representatives were satisfied with the level of communication about the SSSI. However, they also indicated that at times the amount of information about all of the NCDPI and RttT initiatives was overwhelming, particularly if the information flowed through one individual in the LEA. Some LEAs limited communication about SSSI vouchers to principals. Some LEA officials indicated that they were not sure that they had accurate and complete information, and others indicated that the incentive did not fit with local staffing strategies.
3. Respondents offered several insights about the limited implementation of the recruitment incentive. Teachers reported that their choices to move had to do with their personal lives, and principals reported that they had limited information and lacked confidence in using the incentive as a recruitment tool. LEA representatives felt limited in their ability to recruit beyond their LEAs using the incentive and were skeptical of potential net benefits of the redistribution of teachers within their LEAs.
4. Concerns were raised in eligible schools that teachers transferring from other, perhaps less challenging schools would need professional development to be successful. One principal stated that some teachers may be highly effective in a less challenging environment, but may have difficulties translating that effectiveness into a different environment.
5. Voucher recipients also raised concerns that the vouchers alone would not provide sufficient incentives for teachers who received them to remain in eligible schools. Also, respondents recommended that induction strategies should be added along with the vouchers for a more comprehensive staffing strategy, and that the vouchers also should be available to effective teachers already in the schools.
6. In general, teachers felt that the overall impact of their transfer to their new school was positive. Teachers cited improvements in their students' test results and behavior, enhanced collaborative efforts among their colleagues, and their movement into leadership roles as examples of their positive experiences. Some teachers did experience a lack of collaboration among their peers that they felt was, in part, due to their receipt of the voucher. Most principals also believed that the eligible teachers had a positive impact on school climate, though some expressed concerns that the vouchers caused resentment among highly-effective teachers already in the schools that negatively affected school climate.

Recommendations

1. *Expand communication about the initiative:* Clear and accessible communication at all levels is essential to the successful implementation of any policy initiative. Responses indicate the communication from the state level to the LEA level was satisfactory, but diminished from the LEA level to the school level and from the principals to the teachers. The initiative should consider more focused follow-up on the flow of information to all levels.
2. *Integrate state- and local-level recruitment and retention policies and strategies:* Respondents indicated that retention strategies for lower-performing, harder-to-staff schools and LEAs are equally, if not more, important than recruitment incentives, as these schools and LEAs face significant teacher turnover. In already-tight labor markets, an enhanced focus on retaining effective teachers likely will provide an additional avenue for providing equitable access to highly-effective educators for students in low-performing schools. Possible strategies for supporting retention along with recruitment:

- a. *Provide new faculty orientation:* Getting teachers to relocate is only part of the problem; as important is getting them to stay. Feedback from participating teachers and principals suggests that incorporation into the initiative of a formal orientation to the school, LEA, and even surrounding community may help to break down some of the barriers that otherwise would hinder new teacher integration into the target schools.
- b. *Provide context-sensitive professional development:* Responses from interviews revealed that one area of concern for teachers, principals, and LEA administrators was that transferring teachers, though effective, may have difficulty maintaining that effectiveness in their new environments. These teachers may have little to no experience in educating students in the kinds of environments the initiative targets. Administrators indicated that an incentive with accompanying professional development that helps incoming teachers understand their students and their needs may improve not only teacher willingness to transfer but also the performance of their students.⁶
- c. *Consider repurposing some of the funding for retention incentives:* Both principals and teachers were concerned about teacher retention at their schools. Several voucher recipients suggested adding a retention incentive to the recruitment voucher for teachers already at the school who otherwise meet the requirements of the voucher. They indicated that such an approach would improve the fairness of the incentive, since both existing effective teachers and incoming recruited teachers would receive an incentive to stay in the school. This approach also would mitigate the negative impact on school culture associated with only rewarding incoming teachers.

Next Steps

1. *Revise the scope of work:* The Evaluation Team will revise its scope of work to account for low participation and to provide more insight into the difficulties of implementing and opportunities for improving a recruitment incentive. These revisions will include: (a) an expanded interview pool that includes teachers and principals from eligible schools who did not participate in the recruitment incentive; (b) more teacher focus groups regarding recruitment policies; and, if the number of teachers receiving the SSSI vouchers increases significantly, (c) analysis of participation effects on student outcomes, as well as teacher evaluation measures.
2. *Combine the evaluation of NC RttT strategic staffing initiatives:* In the final year of the evaluation, combined rather than stand-alone evaluations of all RttT strategic staffing initiatives will be conducted. The Evaluation Teams will combine their efforts to provide a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which all RttT staffing programs improve equitable distribution of effective teaching and subsequent student achievement.
3. *Include case studies:* Part of the integration of the incentives evaluations will include a more in-depth analysis through case studies to determine the extent to which recruitment strategies function within the broader context of LEA strategic staffing plans.

⁶ For example, context-sensitive professional development is being provided for some school administrators in low-performing schools by the NCDPI District and School Transformation (DST) division. This professional development focuses not only on recruitment and retention of effective teachers, but also on how administrators can improve teacher development through better leadership practices.

Introduction

The strategies set forth by North Carolina’s Race to the Top (RttT) proposal are focused on one prevailing goal: to prepare college-and-career ready students. This mission now has been incorporated into the State’s “READY” strategy. To achieve this goal, the various RttT initiatives were developed around four pillars of school reform: Great Teachers and Leaders, Quality Standards and Assessments, Turnaround of Lowest-Achieving Schools, and Data Systems to Improve Instruction (Appendix A).

With respect to Great Teachers and Leaders, research provides substantial evidence that effective teachers are the most crucial resource for student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain, 2005; Rowan, Correnti, and Miller, 2002; Sanders and Rivers, 1996). However, in relation to the Turnaround of Lowest-Achieving Schools, research also shows that there are substantial inequities in students’ access to effective teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, and Wheeler, 2007; Guarino, Brown, and Wyse, 2011). Specifically, students in high-minority, low-income, and low-performing schools typically have less access to highly-effective teachers. Those drafting the RttT proposal understood the importance of effective teachers and the disparity in access, and therefore included an Educator Incentive Plan comprised of:

- *Teacher incentives for improving student performance in the lowest-performing schools*—Initially, these incentives were school-wide awards to teachers in the state’s lowest-achieving schools that outperformed growth expectations. They were identified with the same formula used to award the ABCs bonuses that were discontinued in 2008 due to the budget crisis. In 2012-13, the program transitioned to teacher-specific performance incentives. Teacher-specific growth estimates will be determined by EVAAS.
- *State Strategic Staffing Initiative (SSSI) to relocate teachers to the lowest-performing schools*—The initiative’s goal is to enhance equality of educational opportunity for students in hard-to-staff areas, and to increase the performance of students in these areas.
- *Local Education Agency (LEA)⁷-Level Strategic Staffing Initiatives*—The initiative’s goal is to encourage local development of context-sensitive strategies to achieve optimal or improved educator “sorting” (either across schools or within schools, or both), with a goal of optimizing the use of existing human capital in a school, community, or region—that is, of strategically deploying locally-available human capital to places where it is most needed.

Appendix B provides a logic map of the Educator Incentive Plan and how these strategies are expected to lead to improved access to effective teachers for students in low-performing schools, and ultimately improved student outcomes. This report provides an evaluation of the implementation of the recurring SSSI relocation voucher and of its effects on addressing the disparity in students’ access to highly-effective teachers.

⁷ “Local Education Agency” is North Carolina’s term for traditional school districts and charter schools.

Structure of the Recruitment Incentive and Implementation

The State allocated approximately \$3 million for the 2011-12 through the 2013-14 school years to fund recruitment vouchers for teachers transferring into low-performing schools. Transferring teachers receive the voucher yearly, for the period of the RttT grant, so long as they remain in their new school. The annual amount of the voucher is \$5,360 and can be used for tuition towards one of several Master's degrees related to education, student loan payments, housing, or any combination thereof. The design of the recruitment incentive is such that only eligible teachers receive the vouchers and only certain LEAs are able to offer the voucher.

An eligible teacher is defined as: (a) a Career-status⁸ teacher who has ratings at or above "Proficient" in each area of the Educator Evaluation System for teachers; and (b) a teacher who did not teach in an eligible school in the same LEA in the prior year.

Eligible schools were first selected from the population of the lowest-achieving schools, which are defined as schools with graduation rates below 60%, or the lowest-performing 5% of conventional schools. All schools in the same LEA were then grouped to avoid competition between schools within an LEA. The resulting list contained 36 LEAs, of which ten were selected based on their 3-year average turnover rate and their geographic location. Specifically, the LEA with the highest turnover in each Regional Education Service Alliance (RESA) and LEAs with a 3-year average turnover rate greater than 20% were selected.⁹ (See Appendix B for a list of LEAs and schools eligible and Appendix C for a map of the RESAs and eligible LEAs)

The implementation of the recruitment voucher has been limited. According to North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) estimates, the recruitment incentive was expected to reach approximately 181 teachers. To date, six teachers qualified for the voucher in 2011-12, and an additional six teachers qualified for the voucher in 2012-13, for a total of twelve teachers. However, further examination suggests that it is possible only ten teachers remained eligible for the voucher in the 2012-13 school year.¹⁰

Purpose of the Evaluation and Report

The Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation–North Carolina (CERE–NC)¹¹ is conducting an independent external evaluation of North Carolina's RttT initiatives. The roles of the RttT Evaluation Team are to (1) document the activities of the RttT initiatives; (2) provide timely formative data, analyses, and recommendations to help the initiative teams improve their ongoing work; and (3) provide summative evaluation results toward the end of the grant period to determine whether the RttT initiatives met their goals and to inform future policy and program decisions to sustain, modify, or discontinue initiatives after the grant-funded period.

⁸ The career status designation was available through the 2012-13 school year; recent legislative changes (SL 2013-360, Section 9.6) have eliminated the career status designation.

⁹ Region 8 has no schools that are in the list of lowest-achieving. Also, no large urban districts met the selection criteria.

¹⁰ This figure was determined by the Evaluation Team while scheduling interviews of eligible teachers.

¹¹ CERE–NC is a partnership of the Carolina Institute for Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University, and the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

While each RttT initiative may address only one or two of the pillars of reform on their own, taken together the initiatives provide a comprehensive approach to school reform. Still, before the effects of RttT can be measured as a sum of its parts, it is important that each initiative is provided the opportunity for formative assessment during its implementation. Through this assessment, RttT Implementation Teams can gain a deeper understanding of their initiative's role in building their respective pillars of reform. Formative evaluations such as this one provide information on implementation of the initiatives and can provide information useful for modifying or improving the initiatives when needed.

Research Questions

This report provides a formative evaluation of the SSSI, which was targeted to improve access to highly-effective teachers in a selected subset of the state's lowest-achieving schools. The initiative is one of three parts of the RttT Educator Incentive Initiative. Accordingly, this report focuses on the following research questions:¹²

1. Was SSSI implemented as intended?
2. Did SSSI meet critical needs for teachers and principals to improve equitable access to higher-quality teachers and leaders in targeted geographic areas? Why or why not? What factors limited implementation of this program, if any?
3. How does SSSI change the climate in eligible and participating schools?
4. What is the nature and quality of the experience for teachers who receive the SSSI vouchers?

Responses to these questions were informed primarily by interviews with participating teachers, principals, and LEA administrators, as well as with the Implementation Team.

¹² See Appendix B for a full list of the evaluation questions to be addressed in the final report.

Data Sources and Analysis

Due to the small number of voucher recipients, all data compiled for this report were collected through interviews. Using protocols developed to reflect the initiative's formal scope of work, the interviews were conducted with eligible teachers who received the recruitment voucher, their principals, officials in their LEA, and a NCDPI staff member involved with the implementation of SSSI.¹³ Interviews were conducted primarily in-person in February and March of 2013. In total, twelve teachers were originally identified as receiving or eligible to receive the recruitment voucher.¹⁴ At the time of the interviews, it was determined that two of the twelve teachers had left the qualifying school to which they had transferred and were no longer eligible, and one teacher was not able to participate in the interview process. Therefore, the resulting interview sample is comprised of nine teachers. The nine teachers taught at eight schools in five LEAs. The Evaluation Team interviewed the eight principals and representatives from the five LEAs.

Once all interviews were conducted and notes were completed, the three interviewers met to discuss common themes and important insights, which were then used to inform coding of interview notes according to the research questions. Interviewers coded notes, reviewed them for themes, and wrote summaries for each group of participants. Several meetings were held to ensure reliable interpretation of notes across interviewers, and further communication allowed for necessary clarifications.

¹³ Protocols for the interviews can be found in Appendices D through G.

¹⁴ Six teachers were eligible in the 2011-12 school year and an additional six teachers were eligible in the 2012-13 school year.

Findings

This section addresses the five research questions listed above. Overall, due to the low participation in the SSSI, the evaluation cannot address all of the questions in the original scope of work. The report does provide insights into the challenges and possible opportunities associated with implementation of a recruitment voucher.

Was the Initiative Implemented as Intended?

Successful implementation of the recruitment initiative can be defined by its adherence to the eligibility standards, its ability to reach the intended group of eligible teachers, and its use as a recruiting tool by the leaders of schools that were targeted. As outlined above, eligibility for the recruitment voucher is based on several key factors. All teachers receiving the recruitment voucher satisfied these requirements. However, the initiative has reached only 12 of the estimated possible pool of 181 teachers eligible for the recruitment incentive, and likely only ten of those remain eligible in the second year.¹⁵ Furthermore, the voucher was not used as a recruitment tool.

None of the teachers who received the voucher were aware of the recruitment voucher prior to moving to their new schools. These teachers had a variety of reasons for transferring to their current schools, but none mentioned the voucher. Two voucher recipients indicated that they wanted to be closer to their family, two were interested in decreasing their commute time, and two returned to a school in which they taught previously.

After deciding to move to the targeted schools that made them eligible for the voucher, the teachers were made aware of the voucher. Five voucher recipients indicated that their principals made them aware of the initiative. Two stated that they received notice from their LEA offices about the incentive after they started working in their new schools. One participant stated, “A person from the district office asked me to apply to the voucher after I already moved.” These findings suggest that the SSSI has not been implemented as intended and that the voucher has not served as an incentive for recruitment.

What Factors Challenge or Inhibit Implementation of this Program?

The limited implementation of the SSSI was examined in greater detail to identify the barriers to the use of the vouchers as recruitment tools. The Evaluation Team identified several key themes cited by teachers, principals, and LEA officials as to why the recruitment had limited participation, as well as opportunities for improvement of a recruitment incentive in general.

Communication

To be effective, recruitment incentives must be clearly communicated to those who could use them and those who may be eligible to receive them. The quality of communication of the recruitment incentives is a key to effective implementation. LEA officials reported that the primary sources of communication about the program were from NCDPI meetings, webinars,

¹⁵ See Appendix A for the voucher participation estimates by school and LEA.

and District and School Transformation (DST) meetings and personnel. Overall, they were satisfied with the communication pertaining to the recruitment incentive. However, several officials did express concern about the lines of communication and the vast amounts of information received related to the implementation of RttT initiatives. Specifically, one official indicated that in some instances, most information comes to one person in the LEA—typically the DST coach—who may have difficulty prioritizing or funneling information to the proper people—in this case, the eligible schools’ principals:

Oftentimes, a lot of information about programs, not just those associated with Race to the Top, come to one person. This person has to go through all of it and then say, “OK, I think so-and-so needs to know about this and so-and-so needs to know about that.” . . . I just think that there is a lot of information overload.

In some cases, LEA officials acted as gate-keepers of information regarding the recruitment incentive. This was mainly done in an effort to ensure accurate and comprehensive knowledge before dissemination to principals and integration into the overall local recruitment strategies. However, administrators in one LEA suggested that, while they were aware of the SSSI voucher, their LEA recruitment policies were structured in such a way that they were unlikely to use such strategies widely:

Our Board has been wary of things that bring in teachers temporarily. We haven’t used TFA [Teach for America] like other districts . . . I think they are worried about the culture of our schools and what turnover does . . . I mean, we have focused a lot on turnover.

Most principals of eligible schools interviewed for this evaluation learned about the incentive in fall 2011, although some did not learn about it until fall 2012. Those principals that learned about the incentive in 2012 were themselves new to their schools. Principals typically heard it mentioned at an LEA-level meeting and then had to do further research. In other cases, principals learned about it from NCDPI officials or DST team members. Although all principals were aware of the incentive, they were uncertain about many of its details. For example, one principal indicated that she or he was unsure of her or his level of responsibility for actively recruiting teachers using the incentive:

I didn’t know I could offer it till this year . . . I thought that the central office was responsible, you know, for using the incentive to recruit teachers from outside the district. . . .

Overall, principals stated that they felt the information was not shared openly or provided early enough. However, once principals were fully informed about the incentive, they generally found that the application process was smooth, and they did not experience frustration with supporting their teachers, nor did they hear of teachers being frustrated with the process. However, representatives in one LEA did suggest that the application process was problematic for determining eligibility of out-of-state teachers who were new to the LEA. This was attributable to the difficulty in determining if these teachers had met the “above proficient” criteria in their prior evaluations. When asked for suggestions regarding communication about the incentive, one principal offered:

Please communicate more about the incentive. It needs to be more public. I even have a couple community members thinking that local money is going to these state strategic staffing teacher supplements, and they are wondering why we are allocating funds like that, so I almost wish that the incentives program was even more public, because I've gotten negative feedback from community members, and it is challenging to explain to them what our actual funding is.

A few principals also stated that there may not be enough information communicated back to NCDPI about how challenging it is to staff a high-needs school and that even large supplements may not attract many high-quality teachers from different areas.

As mentioned previously, no teachers who qualified for the recruitment voucher knew about the voucher prior to entering her or his new school. These teachers also had varying levels of understanding about the incentive when they were first made aware of it. Four eligible teachers indicated that the process for receiving the voucher was clear only after they received support from their school administrators. However, two voucher recipients stated that the process was confusing and left them feeling overwhelmed. One participant stated:

[There was] zero communication, a few of us were told that around October, we may qualify for this [incentive]. I was the only one to qualify because my evaluation was high enough.

With the limited communications, eligible teachers indicated having difficulty in locating information about the initiative. Six voucher recipients agreed that the recruitment voucher needed additional advertisement to help promote the incentive. One participant stated:

I didn't know anything about it until I came here. I tried to research it online but didn't see any information about it. Instead, I found information from other states. I didn't know if it was a secret [so I] just kept it quiet.

Taken together, these responses indicate that, although LEA-level administrators and principals had information about the existence of the recruitment incentive, the information was limited for many, which may have contributed to the difficulty in integrating the recruitment incentive with other LEA- and school-level recruitment strategies.

Limited Net LEA Gain

The geographical preferences of teachers are often overlooked in research that evaluates how teachers choose where they will work (Reininger, 2012). These preferences often create disadvantages for rural LEAs that are located in areas that offer fewer amenities. Of the ten LEAs able to offer the recruitment incentive, eight are designated as rural.¹⁶ Overall, LEAs felt limited in their ability to reach out beyond their LEA borders to try to attract effective teachers and considered the voucher as a tool to redistribute teachers within their LEA. Several LEA officials stated that they were skeptical that the redistribution of effective teachers within their

¹⁶ Anson (Rural: Fringe), Edgecombe (Rural: Distant), Halifax (Rural: Distant), Hertford (Town: Remote), Hoke (Town: Fringe), Lenoir (Rural: Fringe), Rowan-Salisbury (Rural: Fringe), Thomasville (City: Small), Vance (Rural: Fringe), Weldon City (Rural: Fringe).

LEAs would create net gains in LEA-level student achievement. This skepticism was a barrier to participation:

We really didn't want to take a lot of teachers out of their schools. . . . I mean, there's an obvious gap that they're leaving behind . . . so how do we tell the principal at that school, "Sorry, we need these teachers over here instead"? I'm just not sure that really benefits us or the students.

A principal in that same LEA shared a similar viewpoint. The administrator was uncomfortable with the notion of "poaching" another school's teachers within the LEA: "We're a really small district, you know. I know everyone, we're all pretty close, I see them all the time. It wouldn't be right to poach their teachers."

One LEA did have success with recruiting teachers from a fairly affluent neighboring LEA. However, the LEA representatives suggested that this recruitment occurred prior to the availability of the SSSI voucher. Several principals and LEA representatives suggested that it would be beneficial to the recruitment incentives initiative if they could work more closely with NCDPI to identify and actively recruit effective teachers from LEAs across the State.

Retention: Newly employed teacher orientation and Professional Development

According to interview responses, an additional challenge to the local implementation of the recruitment incentive is lack of an incentive to retain effective teachers who already are working in the eligible schools. One principal suggested that she or he didn't feel as though the recruitment incentive could do anything to affect long-term staffing changes, since the eligible teacher at his/her school had stated that she or he was only planning to stay so long as she or he received the voucher. Most administrators felt that, while important, recruitment is only part of the solution to creating access to effective teachers for students in lower-performing schools. Particularly, they felt as though recruitment incentives do not address the retention of recruited teachers or, more importantly, the retention of effective teachers already in their schools. One LEA representative stated:

Recruitment is certainly a challenge, but we do get some good teachers. Sure, many of them are inexperienced, but they get better. The problem is that is about the time many of them leave. We need to figure out how to keep them.

Teachers also felt that it was hard to address the recruitment incentive without considering retention, suggesting that new teachers use the lower-performing schools to build up their resumes and then leave to higher-performing schools. In this case, they felt that a recruitment incentive would not keep teachers from transitioning to a new school. One teacher described a drastic reduction in teachers after returning from a break:

To get [teachers] here, I think it would be effective. But to keep them here, I'm not sure. When I came back . . . there were three teachers [gone], and no amount of money changes that.

Overall, principals and LEA representatives suggested that a recruitment incentive alone may not be enough to create long-term staffing changes, further stating that if it could be combined with

induction programs and professional development, effective teachers, not just the ones recruited through the incentive, may be less likely to leave. Representatives of one LEA suggested that funds should be used to retain teachers rather than for a recruitment incentive, particularly since they were unable to offer supplements that could compete with other LEAs to which teachers could transfer.

Some LEA representatives indicated that they have concentrated on reducing turnover through new employee orientation strategies. While these LEAs have experienced some success with these strategies, officials conceded that this success has reduced their likelihood to promote the recruitment incentive:

I don't want to be ungrateful, but why would we want to use something that isn't going to last? We just felt like, "Hey, here is something we can do that we have control over that we think will work."

One of the recruitment strategies implemented by one LEA was the development of an apartment complex for teachers, which they felt provided an opportunity for teachers to develop relationships and become a part of the community. LEA representatives felt that this was an important strategy and suggested that the recruitment incentive could be improved if it included an induction component. Representatives from another LEA suggested that induction strategies may need to be specifically adapted for those teachers recruited from farther away. Besides induction into the school, these strategies also should consider the social needs of both unmarried and married recruited teachers.

Interview responses indicated that professional development also was an important strategy that respondents felt should be included in the recruitment incentives program. One principal spoke to the challenges of teaching in a high-need school, and said that most people do not understand the depth of this challenge. The principal expressed a desire for the incentive to include some professional development specifically aimed at supporting teachers coming into a challenging environment. Several LEA representatives suggested that they were apprehensive that previously effective teachers would maintain that effectiveness in their new, more challenging environments:

I think we all were a little hesitant to roll this out on a large scale without any support for these teachers. These are great kids, but these schools present different challenges that they may need specific PD for.

Many LEA representatives understood their responsibility in addressing this professional development need. However, they felt limited in their ability to address this need because of the amount of professional development associated with other state-wide initiatives, such as the rollout of Common Core and Essential Standards.

Several teachers also echoed the importance of induction and professional development for retention once teachers are recruited. Three teachers indicated that their schools should provide them with year-round professional development trainings. In addition, two teachers stated that schools should create school-led community activities. One participant agreed that this would allow new teachers to get acclimated to the area, community, and school. Overall, participants

indicated that, without professional development trainings and community-wide activities, teachers are at-risk of faster “burnout” and are more likely to leave a school regardless of how they were recruited.

How Does the Voucher Recruitment Incentive Impact Changes in School Climate?

Positive Impacts on School Climate

Principals generally felt that the incoming teachers had a positive effect on the rest of the staff, and were able to lead by example. One principal specifically cited how the incoming teacher has improved school culture, and another talked about how the new teacher supported other teachers by helping them meet the needs of their special education population. This principal also stated that the recipient had reinforced the work of an effective teacher who was already in the school, since they had been working as a team. Another principal stated that the incentive had improved the quality of the school’s Professional Learning Communities, indicating that the teacher who received the voucher is sharing her or his skills with other teachers.

Although the voucher did not incentivize teachers to move into the communities that are home to the targeted high-need schools, participating teachers did discuss how they thought their presence affected not only their students, fellow teachers, and schools, but also the surrounding communities. Overall, each teacher agreed that the effects of bringing in an effective teacher produced positive benefits. Five teachers addressed how they believed they impacted colleagues in their new school environments by taking on leadership roles, improving collaboration, and enhancing a sense of trust among their peers. Besides supporting their students and teachers, voucher recipients also indicated that they thought they impacted their schools’ cultures. Several voucher recipients used techniques that they learned in their previous school environments to assist teachers and administrators. One individual stated that she had many years of experience with exceptional children and was able to leverage and share that knowledge. Finally, in addition to sharing strategies and skills with fellow educators, teachers also spoke about sharing information with members from the community. For example, one voucher recipient recalled discussions with parents that addressed future possibilities for their children, indicating that she or he believed that it was likely the first time someone had reached out to them in this way.

Negative Impacts on School Climate

Some principals were concerned about the fairness of the incentive, since high-quality teachers already teaching at their schools were not eligible for the incentive. These principals considered the potential negative effect of the voucher on school culture. However, other principals were not concerned about this potential issue, and stated that the teachers understood the situation. One new principal expressed a desire for a similar principal incentive, as she had strong results at her previous school and wished she could also be rewarded for coming to a more challenging environment.

Two teachers noted a cultural of individualism and lack of collaboration within their school environments. Both argued that the receipt of the voucher resulted in them being isolated by their peers and limited opportunities for collaboration. Both voucher recipients indicated that they

encouraged and tried to engage in collaborative efforts, but many of the other teachers were not receptive to their efforts.

What is the Nature and Quality of the Experience for Participating Teachers?

All voucher recipients indicated that they witnessed improvement in their students' academic success and/or behavior. Since joining their new classrooms, teachers stated that their students improved on various formative and summative assessments. One participant voiced, "By the end of the year, I had massive growth in E[nd] O[f] G[rade] [test scores]. One of my girls went from a low one to a solid three."

Another participant indicated that she had added to her own teaching repertoire as a result of her exposure to new colleagues in a challenging school setting. She decided to speak to her students softly instead of communicating with them at a high volume, a practice frequently utilized by her peers. The teacher stated that this change increased productivity and decreased poor behavior from students.

Five voucher recipients addressed how they believed they had impacted teachers in their new school environment by taking on leadership roles, improving collaboration, and enhancing a sense of trust among their peers. One participant addressed how the staff transitioned from viewing her as a colleague to thinking of her as a leader. She stated:

The staff has completely changed . . . they see me as being a leader and I don't have to receive a lot of help. I can diagnose certain areas of weakness. I am the team leader . . . and on the leadership team. There are only a select few who are on the leadership team. They trust my strengths as far as getting the students where they need to be.

Another participant spoke about how other teachers took note of the success she had within her classroom. From there, she brought together a group of teachers who frequently met to collaborate on instructional practices and behavior management.

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Next Steps

Summary of Key Findings

The SSSI voucher has not been available to many teachers. Furthermore, those who received it were not actually recruited with it. The lack of implementation of the voucher program as a recruitment tool limited the ability to provide formative feedback for this evaluation. The report identifies barriers and challenges noted by LEA officials and the voucher recipients themselves related to the implementation of the recruitment incentive initiative, which are summarized below. This summary is followed by possible options for improving implementation and gaining LEA cooperation.

1. The SSSI vouchers were not used as a recruitment incentive. All teachers that received the voucher were informed of the incentive after they had transferred to their new school.
2. Overall, LEA representatives were satisfied with the level of communication about SSSI. However, they also indicated that at times the amount of information about all of the NCDPI and RttT initiatives was overwhelming, particularly if the information flowed through one individual in the LEA. Some LEAs limited communication about SSSI vouchers to principals. Some LEA officials indicated that they were not sure that they had accurate and complete information, and others indicated that the incentive did not fit with local staffing strategies.
3. Respondents offered several insights about the limited implementation of the recruitment incentive. Teachers reported that their choices to move had to do with their personal lives, and principals reported that they had limited information and lacked confidence in using the incentive as a recruitment tool. LEA representatives felt limited in their ability to recruit beyond their LEAs using the incentive and were skeptical of potential net benefits of the redistribution of teachers within their LEAs.
4. Concerns were raised in eligible schools that teachers transferring from other, perhaps less challenging schools would need professional development to be successful. One principal stated that some teachers may be highly effective in a less challenging environment, but may have difficulties translating that effectiveness into a different environment.
5. Voucher recipients also raised concerns that the vouchers alone would not provide sufficient incentives for teachers who received them to remain in eligible schools. Also, respondents recommended that induction strategies should be added along with the vouchers for a more comprehensive staffing strategy, and that the vouchers also should be available to effective teachers already in the schools.
6. In general, teachers felt that the overall impact of their transfer to their new school was positive. Teachers cited improvements in students' test results and behavior, enhanced collaborative efforts among their colleagues, and their movement into leadership roles as examples of their positive experiences. Some teachers did experience a lack of collaboration among their peers that they felt was, in part, due to their receipt of the voucher. Most principals also believed that the eligible teachers had a positive impact on school climate, though some expressed concerns that the vouchers caused resentment among highly-effective teachers already in the schools that negatively affected school climate.

Recommendations

1. *Expand communication about the initiative:* Clear and accessible communication at all levels is essential to the successful implementation of any policy initiative. Responses indicate the communication from the state level to the LEA level was satisfactory, but diminished from the LEA level to the school level and from the principals to the teachers. The initiative should consider more focused follow-up on the flow of information to all levels.
2. *Integrate state- and local-level recruitment and retention policies and strategies:* Respondents indicated that retention strategies for lower-performing, harder-to-staff schools and LEAs are equally, if not more, important than recruitment incentives, as these schools and LEAs face significant teacher turnover. In already-tight labor markets, an enhanced focus on retaining effective teachers likely will provide an additional avenue for providing equitable access to highly-effective educators for students in low-performing schools. Possible strategies for supporting retention along with recruitment:
 - a. *Provide new faculty orientation:* Getting teachers to relocate is only part of the problem; as important is getting them to stay. Feedback from participating teachers and principals suggests that incorporation into the initiative of a formal orientation to the school, LEA, and even surrounding community may help to break down some of the barriers that otherwise would hinder new teacher integration into the target schools.
 - b. *Provide context-sensitive professional development:* Responses from interviews revealed that one area of concern for teachers, principals, and LEA administrators was that transferring teachers, though effective, may have difficulty maintaining that effectiveness in their new environments. These teachers may have little to no experience in educating students in the kinds of environments the initiative targets. Administrators indicated that an incentive with accompanying professional development that helps incoming teachers understand their students and their needs may improve not only teacher willingness to transfer but also the performance of their students.¹⁷
 - c. *Consider repurposing some of the funding for retention incentives:* Both principals and teachers were concerned with teacher retention at their schools. Several voucher recipients suggested adding a retention incentive to the recruitment voucher for teachers already at the school who otherwise meet the requirements of the voucher. They indicated that such an approach would improve the fairness of the incentive, since both existing effective teachers and incoming recruited teachers would receive an incentive to stay in the school. This approach also would mitigate the negative impact on school culture associated with only rewarding incoming teachers.

Next Steps

1. *Revise the scope of work:* The Evaluation Team will revise its scope of work to account for low participation and to provide more insight into the difficulties of implementing and opportunities for improving a recruitment incentive. These revisions will include: (a) an

¹⁷ For example, context-sensitive professional development is being provided for some school administrators in low-performing schools by the NCDPI District and School Transformation (DST) division. This professional development focuses not only on recruitment and retention of effective teachers, but also on how administrators can improve teacher development through better leadership practices.

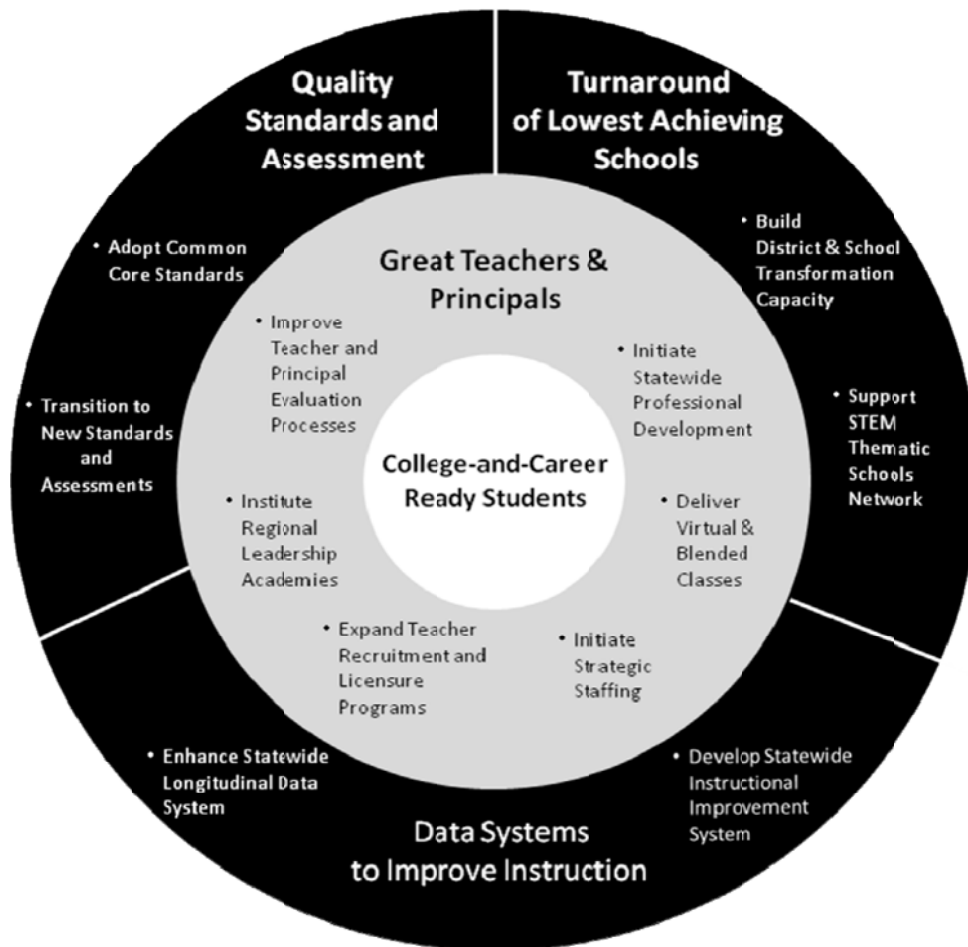
expanded interview pool that includes teachers and principals from eligible schools who did not participate in the recruitment incentive; (b) more teacher focus groups regarding recruitment policies; and, if the numbers of teachers receiving the SSSI vouchers increase significantly, (c) analysis of participation effects on student outcomes, as well as teacher evaluation measures.

2. *Combine the evaluation of NC RttT strategic staffing initiatives:* In the final year of the evaluation, combined rather than stand-alone evaluations of all RttT strategic staffing initiatives will be conducted. The Evaluation Teams will combine their efforts to provide a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which all RttT staffing programs improve equitable distribution of effective teaching and subsequent student achievement.
3. *Include case studies:* Part of the integration of the incentives evaluations will include a more in-depth analysis through case studies to determine the extent to which recruitment strategies function within the broader context of LEA strategic staffing plans.

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Appendix A: North Carolina’s Action Plan for Race to the Top



Appendix B: Scope of Work

Recruitment Incentive Program for Lowest-Performing Schools

Overview

The evaluation of *RttT* educator incentive initiatives will examine three separate but related initiatives—a performance incentives program for the state’s lowest-achieving schools, a state-level recruitment program to encourage teacher movement to those schools, and LEA-level strategic staffing efforts to strengthen those schools.

The performance and recruitment incentives evaluation will seek to detect changes in student achievement, teacher turnover rates, and teacher quality in eligible schools that are attributable to the availability of the incentives. The local-level strategic staffing evaluation will examine the relative successes of localized strategic staffing plans that include differentiation of educator quality as an element, with an eye toward their potential for and ability to be replicated elsewhere.

The incentives strands of the evaluation will rely on both quantitative and qualitative methodology. Because of the variable nature of these plans (which will hinder the ability to aggregate data), the evaluation approach for these strands will rely heavily on qualitative analyses (such as literature-based individual plan assessment, interviews with affected educators, and/or simple participant counts and tracking over time).

An overriding goal of this three-strand evaluation will be to determine whether and to what extent all of the initiatives collectively or any of the initiatives separately contribute to a positive change in the distribution and effectiveness of teachers in the state’s lowest-performing schools.

RttT Initiative Context

Policy Objective(s)/Purpose(s) of the Initiative

- Initiative to Relocate Teachers to the Lowest-Performing Schools—To enhance equality of educational opportunity for students in hard-to-staff areas, and to increase the performance of students in these areas.

Initiative Activities

State-Level Recruitment Incentive (Voucher)

- The State will spend approximately \$3 million over three years to fund vouchers for highly-qualified teachers¹⁸ who move to selected hard-to-staff schools.
- Eligible LEAs were selected from the list of LEAs with at least one school on the *RttT* District and School Transformation list, using the following variables: a) the LEA 3-year

¹⁸ As identified by State Board policy, eligible educators will include: classroom teachers (but not instructional support staff or administrators) who hold Standard Professional II licenses and, if evaluated using the NC evaluation instrument, have received performance ratings of above proficient or higher in all categories; in addition, of those teachers, only those who have not worked in a lowest-achieving school in the previous 12 months will be eligible.

average teacher turnover rate; and b) LEA geographic location. The 10 LEAs selected were those with the highest teacher turnover rate in each education region, followed by any LEA with a turnover rate greater than 20% (*Note:* There were no eligible schools in Region 8, and no large urban LEA met the selection criteria). All qualifying schools in the LEA (*i.e.*, schools on the *RttT* list) are eligible (see Table, below).

- Vouchers can be used for tuition, housing, and/or loan forgiveness.

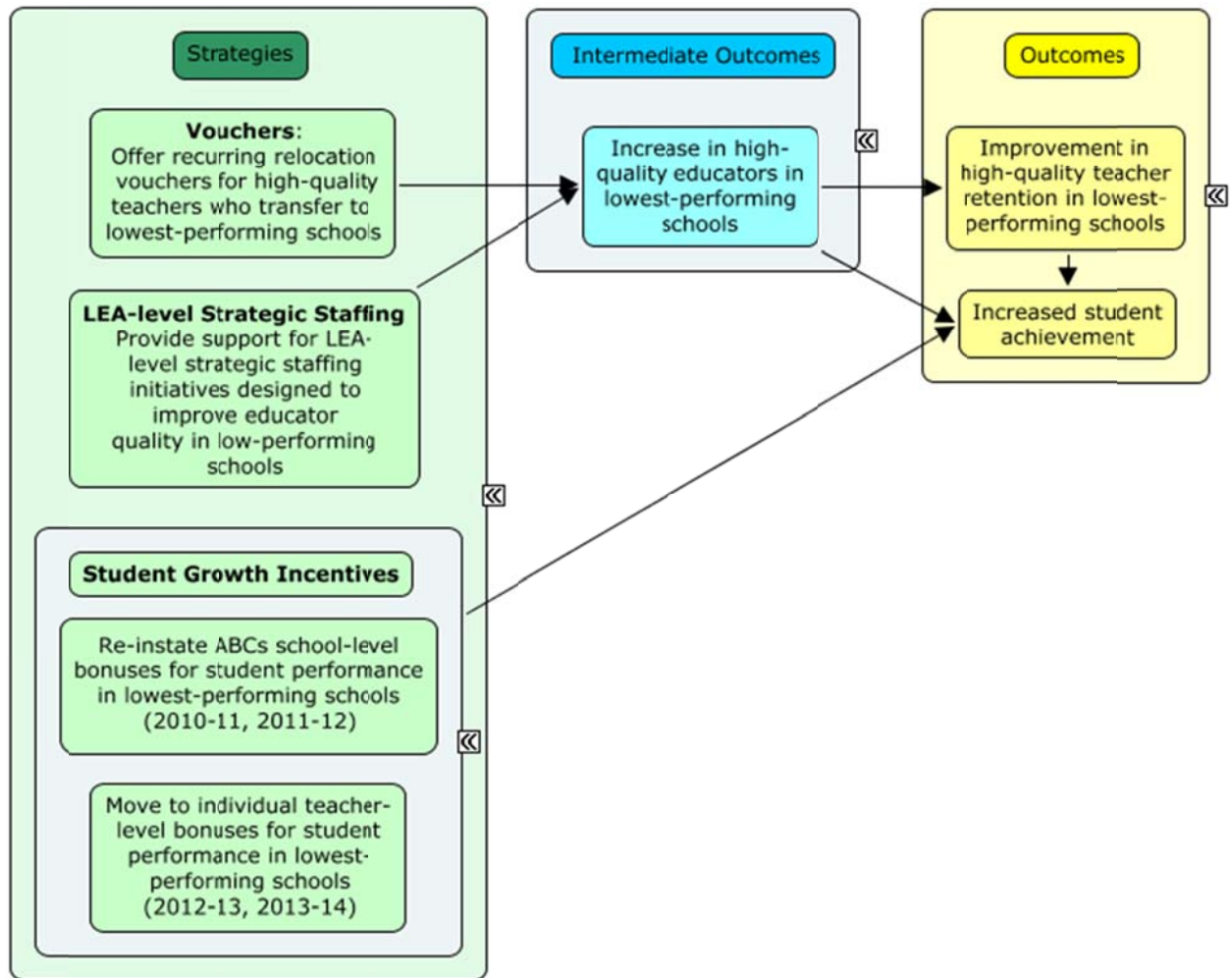
Table of LEAs and Schools Eligible for Recruitment Incentives

Average Teacher Turnover	LEA*	School	Est. New CT FTE**	Budget Per Year
17.03%	Hertford	Hertford County Middle	6.61	\$38,140
		Riverview Elementary	6.22	\$35,890
		Student Development Center	1.02	\$5,885
16.40%	Lenoir	Northeast Elementary	5.25	\$30,293
		Rochelle Middle	6.19	\$35,717
		Southeast Elementary	4.26	\$24,580
20.27%	Edgecombe	Coker-Wimberly Elementary	5.82	\$33,582
		W A Pattillo A+ Elementary Sch	5.75	\$33,178
		Princeville Montessori	5.04	\$29,081
23.33%	Halifax	Aurelian Springs Elementary	5.48	\$31,620
		Dawson Elementary	2.33	\$13,444
		Enfield Middle	6.30	\$36,351
		Everetts Elementary	4.90	\$28,273
		Inborden Elementary	4.87	\$28,100
		Northwest High	12.12	\$69,933
		Pittman Elementary	2.32	\$13,386
		Scotland Neck Primary	2.33	\$13,444
		Southeast Halifax High	9.80	\$56,546
28.57%	Weldon City	William R Davie Middle	7.70	\$44,429
		Weldon Middle	7.42	\$42,814
20.10%	Vance	Weldon STEM High School	9.05	\$52,219
20.77%	Hoke	L B Yancey Elementary	5.42	\$31,274
20.77%	Hoke	Hawk Eye Elementary	6.36	\$36,697
20.03%	Thomasville City	Thomasville Primary	12.12	\$69,933
17.47%	Anson	Anson Middle	7.05	\$40,679
		Morven Elementary	3.48	\$20,080
		Wadesboro Elementary	2.45	\$14,137
		Anson High School	11.62	\$67,048
12.27%	Rowan-Salisbury	Knox Middle	5.88	\$33,928
		North Rowan High	6.08	\$35,082
Total Projected Annual FTE			181.24	\$1,045,762
3-Year Program Total				\$3,137,286

*LEA: Local Education Agency

**FTE: Full Time Equivalent

Imputed Logic Map of Initiatives



Implementation Timelines

State-Level Recruitment Incentive (Voucher)

- An estimated 181 teachers in 30 schools will be eligible for recruitment incentives for the 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14 school years. Teachers that move to an eligible low-performing school will receive a voucher for each of the remaining RttT years as long as they stay in one of the low-performing schools.
- State will award up to \$1M per year; approximately \$3M total (see Table, above).

Evaluation Goal(s)/Purpose(s) of the Evaluation

- Inform implementation of the Recruitment Incentive Program.
- Provide data for policy makers and other stakeholders that can improve the design and implementation of statewide performance incentive programs.
- Provide initial of the Recruitment Incentive’s impact on strategic teacher movement within target LEAs as possible.

- Provide recommendations for continuation, expansion, changes or termination of the Recruitment Incentive Program.

Overall Approach to Evaluation

Qualitative: Due to the nature of the small sample size for the Recruitment Incentive Program evaluation questions to be addressed by applying analyses from qualitative sources.

Relevant Major/Overall Research Questions for the Recruitment Incentive

- What is the nature and quality of the experience for participating teachers?
- To what extent does the initiative meet critical needs for teachers and principals and improve equitable access to higher-quality teachers and leaders in targeted geographic and content areas?

Research Questions & Anticipated Data Sources

Projected/Proposed Sources of Information	Interviews			
	State level administrators	LEA level administrators	Principals	Teachers
Evaluation Question				
Major/Overall Questions				
What is the nature and quality of the experience for participating teachers?			X	X
To what extent does the initiative meet critical needs for teachers and principals and improve equitable access to higher-quality teachers and leaders in targeted geographic areas?	X	X	X	X
Specific Questions				
How does the voucher recruitment incentive impact:				
- Teacher retention?	X	X	X	
- Changes in school climate?	X	X	X	X
If the recruitment incentive does not meet critical needs for teachers and principals to improve equitable access to higher-quality teachers and leaders in targeted geographic areas, why?	X	X	X	X
- What factors challenge or inhibit implementation of this program?		X	X	X
Was the initiative implemented as intended?	X	X	X	X
- How are teachers recruited to this program?	X	X	X	X
- What are the characteristics of teachers who participate in this program?			X	X
- How was information about the recruitment incentive presented and reinforced?	X	X	X	X
- What characteristics of the eligible schools and LEAs were important in teachers' decision to apply for the recruitment incentive?				X

Evaluation Activities & Potential Data Sources

The evaluation will focus primarily on educator perceptions of the Recruitment Incentive program including the extent to which the program was implemented as intended.

Approach:

Due to the small sample size, this study will rely more heavily on a qualitative approach. The sample will include all teachers (N=6) who accepted the recruitment incentive as well as their current and previous school principals, LEA-level administrators from LEAs that qualify for the recruitment incentive and state-level administrators.

Primary data sources for the recruitment incentive will include:

- Interviews with teachers
- Interviews with administrators (school, LEA, and state-level)

Administrative data, such as teacher turnover data, may be utilized to provide contextual evidence for the interview data but will not be a primary source of information for this evaluation.

Anticipated Procedure:

This evaluation will focus on implementation of the recruitment incentive program and educator perceptions on its effectiveness.

For interviews, the evaluation team will select all teachers and their current and former administrators for phone interviews from the 2011-12 year to participate in fall and spring phone interviews. The team will track new teachers who take the recruitment incentive during subsequent years of the evaluation and interview those teachers and their administrators during the spring and fall. State level administrators who manage recruitment activities for the initiative will also be contacted for interview.

All documents gathered for analysis will be imported into the Atlas Qualitative Analysis Software package. Once imported, these documents will undergo multiple readings in their entirety, and then the texts will be coded at the smallest unit of meaning, often at the sentence level in this data set. The Constant Comparative Method (Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) will be used to assign codes and to then to develop the themes found in the data. Patterns of similar responses and outliers will be noted in the analysis.

Limitations:

- Qualitative—Limited capacity to conduct multiple site visits, focus groups, *etc.*

State Strategic Staffing: Recruitment Incentive for Lowest-Performing Schools
August 2013

Plan:
Timeline

Semester	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015
<i>RttT</i> Year	1	2		3		4			
Initiative Schedules	Voucher Awarded	V1 (for 2011-12)		V2 (for 2012-13)		V3 (for 2013-14)			
	Phone interview			Vouchers	Vouchers		Vouchers		
	Reports		<i>Local SS</i> : Annual Headcount/ Implementation Report	<i>Local SS</i> : Initial Plan & Implementation Review	<i>Incentive</i> : F1 on R1 (Sch) <i>Local SS</i> : Annual Headcount/ Implementation Report	<i>Incentive</i> : Q1 on R1 (Sch) <i>Voucher</i> : V1 & V2 Report	<i>Local SS</i> : Annual Headcount/ Implementation Report	<i>Incentive</i> : Q2 on R1 Sch; F2 on R2 Sch & R1 Tch; <i>Voucher</i> : Summative ; <i>Local SS</i> : Summative	<i>If funded</i> : <i>Incentive</i> : Q3 on Incentive R1 & R2 Sch & R1 Ind

Anticipated Schedule:

Summer/Fall 2012

- Update literature reviews
- Design interview protocols
- Obtain interview sample
- Begin phone interviews for V1 participants

Spring 2013

- Track voucher participant sample
- Finish phone interviews for V1 participants
- Conduct phone interviews for V2 participants
- Conduct data analysis and write first report on 2010-11 & 2011-12 vouchers

Fall 2013

- Revise interview protocols

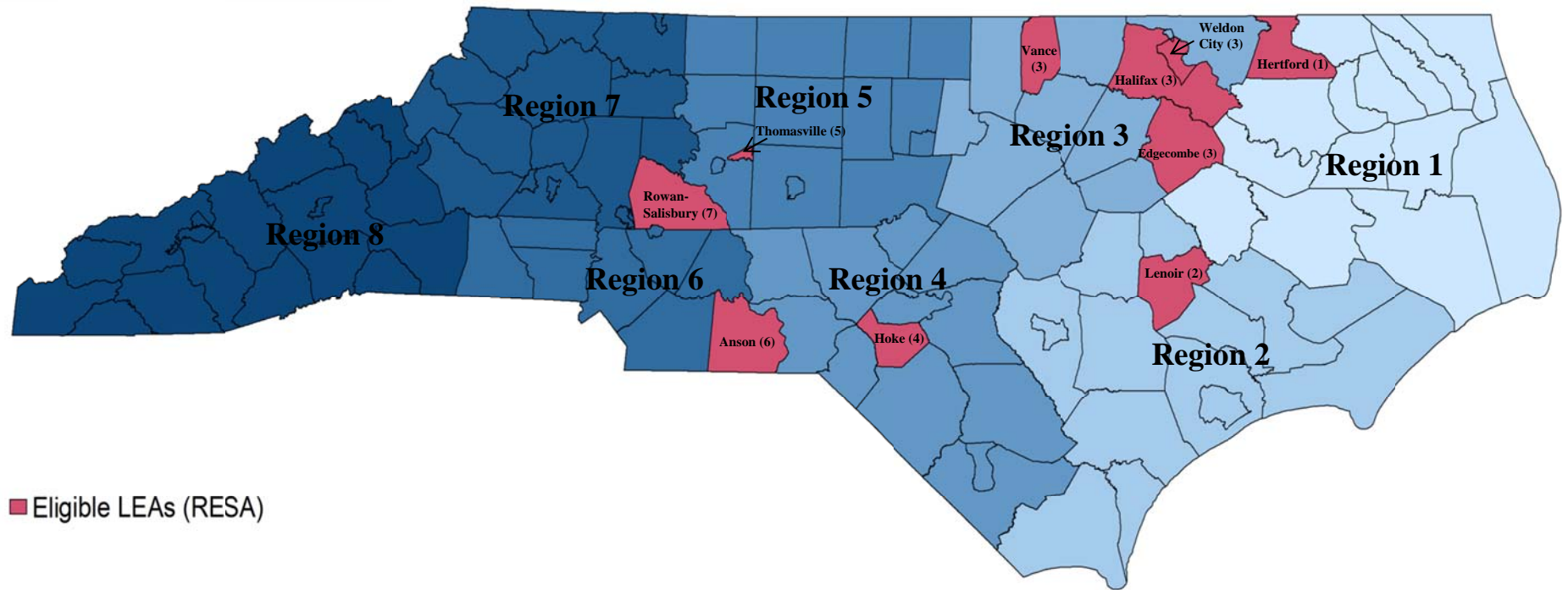
Spring 2014

- Conduct final phone interview of all voucher recipients
- Write summative reports

Major Evaluation Deliverables

- **Deliverable**—V1 and V2 vouchers report—6/13
- **Deliverables**—Summative evaluation reports—6/14
 - Information from all three voucher years

Appendix C: Map of LEAs Eligible for the Recruitment Incentive



Appendix D: Teacher Interview Protocol

State Recruitment Incentive Interview Protocol (Teachers Who Accepted the R.I.)

(1) Teacher Information:

- a. Date:
- b. Name:
- c. Position/Title:
- d. LEA:
- e. School Name:

Teacher Placement

(2) Describe your current teaching placement:

Possible Probes:

- a. Subject(s)/Grade(s):
- b. School Demographics (student characteristics, unique features, etc.)

(3) Describe your previous teaching experience:

Possible Probes:

- a. Previous teaching experience (subjects/grades/number of years)
- b. Location of teaching experience (state/LEA/school)
- c. School Demographics (student characteristics, unique features, etc.)
- d. Do you have previous experience teaching in high need school environments? Describe:

Recruitment Process

(4) Describe the process you went through to learn about and apply for the Recruitment Incentive.

Possible Probes:

- a. When and how did you learn about the Recruitment Incentive (NOTE: Did they become aware of the program mid-year or prior to the start of the school year?)?
- b. Were you already teaching in the recruitment school when you learned about the voucher? (NOTE: In other words, did they get the voucher retroactively?)
- c. Did anyone encourage you to apply for the voucher, such as an administrator or co-worker?
- d. Describe the level of clarity by which the various steps in the application and selection process were communicated to you.
 - o Do you have any suggestions for improvement for the communication or selection process?

- e. What attracted you to take the Recruitment Incentive? (For instance, did the voucher amount factor into your decision to teach in this school?)
- g. [If the teacher was already there and given the voucher retroactively, ask if the amount would have influenced them to move to this school).

(5) In considering the voucher program, how much did other factors related to your school impact your decision to take the Incentive?

Possible Probes:

- a. Location (if you would have to move or not, distance to work).
- b. Reputation and demographics (both social and economic) of the voucher school.
- c. Strong match to teaching interests, previous teaching experience, and/or student population
- d. Desire to work in a high-need school.
- e. Personal reasons (ex: change of job for significant other, schools for children).
- f. Other

Impact of the Recruitment Incentive

(6) One of the goals of this incentive is to improve access to higher quality teachers. What are your thoughts on the potential impact on students and colleagues of your work in this school?

Possible Probes:

- a. Can you provide an example of how your work in this school may be impacting your students and/or colleagues?
- b. What challenges you in this work, and what facilitates your work?

Retention

(7) One of the goals of the Recruitment Incentive is to improve retention of teachers in these eligible schools. What are your thoughts on the extent to which this incentive could influence a teacher to choose to teach in one of these schools and ultimately continue teaching in one of these schools?

Possible Probes:

- a. Do you think the voucher amount is sufficient in supporting a teacher's decision to choose to teach in this school?
- b. Do you think the voucher amount is sufficient in supporting a teacher's decision to choose remain in this school?
- c. How have you used your voucher?
- d. IF THEY ARE LEAVING or HAVE LEFT: Where are you planning to go next? Why are choosing to leave your school?

(8) What is your feedback on how to make the Recruitment Incentive more effective?

Possible Probes:

- a. How do you plan on using the Incentive in the future? How is that different or similar to what you have been doing at present?
- b. Is there anything else you would like to share about the Recruitment Incentive?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix E: Principal Interview Protocol

State Recruitment Incentive Interview Protocol (Current Principals of Teachers who accepted the R.I.)

(1) Principal Information:

- a. Date:
- b. Name:
- c. Position/Title:
- d. LEA:
- e. School Name:

Background of the Recruitment Incentive

(2) What is your impression of the rationale behind the way the state chose to structure this initiative?

Possible Probes:

- a. What do you think are the greatest areas of need that the state hopes this initiative will be able to address?
- b. Do you think the state's selection rationale was appropriate? If so, why? If not, how might you have changed it?
- c. In your school, what are the unique features that make teacher recruitment and/or retention a challenge?

Recruitment Process

(3) Describe in general terms how you recruit teachers for your school.

Possible Probes:

- a. What are some of the characteristics that appeal to you when considering the needs of your school? (areas of high need, specific desirable characteristics, reputation, credentials)
- b. Where do you find your potential new teachers? (e.g.; a university, lateral entry program, etc.)
- c. How important is it that the staff has previous experience in an environment similar to yours? (high need, rural/urban, SES, minority status)
- d. How important is it that the staff be similar/different from the student population?

Recruitment Incentive Process

(4) The Recruitment Incentive is intended to help provide a pool of qualified teachers to identified schools. Describe how you learned about the Recruitment Incentive. Please feel free to trace the history of this communication back to the 2011-2012 school year.

Possible Probes:

- a. When and how did you receive recruitment information about the Recruitment Incentive? (Mid-year or prior to the start of the school year?)
- b. Describe the level of clarity in the communication about the Recruitment Incentive including the application and selection process to your office.
- c. Do you have any suggestions for improvement for the communication to your office regarding the recruitment and selection process?

(5) Describe the process that your office used to recruit and select teachers.

- a. Were there any special characteristics of interest that you wanted to find in the Recruitment Incentive pool?
- b. How did you locate and identify eligible candidates?
- c. Describe the timing of the recruitment process. What time of year have teachers ultimately accept the incentive?
- d. What challenges did you encounter in this process? For instance, was it difficult to find eligible candidates?
- e. What are your thoughts on the recruitment incentive amount? Do you think it was sufficient in attracting qualified candidates?

(6) Describe the teacher(s) in your school who took the Recruitment Incentive. Why were they a good fit for this incentive? If you have teachers who took the incentive in 2011-2012 in addition to this school year, please elaborate on both sets of teachers.

Possible Probes:

- a. Where did these teachers come from? For instance, were any of these individuals new to the school or LEA upon receiving the incentive or were they already at the school?
- b. When were they recruited? (If they received the incentive after the school year began) Was anyone given the incentive retroactively? If so, why?
- c. What skill sets do they bring to their schools?
- d. Was there any kind of competition amongst eligible schools to recruit this pool of teachers?

Impact of the Recruitment Incentive:

(7) What are your thoughts on the extent to which the Recruitment Incentive has met its goals, to date?

Possible Probes:

- a. What are some of the observed benefits of the incentive?
- b. In what ways has the Incentive not been sufficient in addressing your goals? What areas were overlooked by the implementation of the incentive?

(8) What impacts, if any, do you think the incentive has made on:

- Student outcomes
- Teacher turnover rates
- Teacher retention
- School Climate/Culture

(9) What is your feedback on how to make the Recruitment Incentive more effective?

Possible Probes:

- a. How do you plan on using the Incentive in the future? How is that different or similar to what you have been doing at present?
- b. Is there anything else you would like to share about the Recruitment Incentive?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix F: LEA Administrator Interview Protocol

State Recruitment Incentive Interview Protocol (LEA Administrators—LEAs Where Teachers Accepted the R.I.)

(1) Administrator Information:

- a. Date:
- b. Name:
- c. Position/Title:
- d. LEA:

Background of the Recruitment Incentive

(2) What is your impression of the rationale behind the way the state chose to structure this initiative?

Possible Probes:

- a. What do you think are the greatest areas of need that the state hopes this initiative will be able to address?
- b. Do you think the state's selection rationale was appropriate? If so, why? If not, how might you have changed it?
- c. In your LEA, what are the unique features that make teacher recruitment and/or retention a challenge?

Recruitment Process

(3) Describe in general terms how you recruit teachers for your LEA.

Possible Probes:

- a. What are some of the characteristics that appeal to you when considering the needs of your LEA? (areas of high need, specific desirable characteristics, reputation, credentials)
- b. Where do you find your potential new teachers? (e.g.; a university, lateral entry program, etc.)
- c. How important is it that the staff has previous experience in an environment similar to yours? (high need, rural/urban, SES, minority status)
- d. How important is it that the staff be similar/different from the student population?

Recruitment Incentive Process

(4) Describe how you learned about the State Recruitment Incentive. Please feel free to trace the history of this communication back to the 2011-2012 school year.

Possible Probes:

- a. When and how did you receive recruitment information from DPI about the Recruitment Incentive? (Mid-year or prior to the start of the school year?)
- b. Describe the level of clarity in the communication about the Recruitment Incentive including the application and selection process from DPI to your office.
- c. Do you have any suggestions for improvement for the communication from DPI to your office regarding the recruitment and selection process?

(5) Describe the process by which your office worked with eligible schools to recruit and select teachers.

Possible Probes:

- a. When and how did you work with eligible schools and teachers to distribute information about the Recruitment Incentive?
- b. Were there any special characteristics of interest that you wanted to find in the Recruitment Incentive pool?
- c. How did you locate and identify eligible candidates?
- d. Describe the timing of the recruitment process. What time of year have teachers ultimately accept the incentive?
- e. What challenges did you encounter in this process? For instance, was it difficult to find eligible candidates?
- f. What are your thoughts on the recruitment incentive amount? Do you think it was sufficient in attracting qualified candidates?

(6) Describe the teacher(s) in your LEA who took the Recruitment Incentive. If you have teachers who took the incentive in 2011-2012 in addition to this school year, please elaborate on both sets of teachers.

Possible Probes:

- a. Where did these teachers come from? For instance, were any of these individuals new to the school or LEA upon receiving the incentive or were they already at the school?
- b. When were they recruited? (If they received the incentive after the school year began) Was anyone given the incentive retroactively? If so, why?
- c. What skill sets do they bring to their schools?
- d. Was there any kind of competition amongst eligible schools to recruit this pool of teachers?

Impact of the Recruitment Incentive:

(7) What are your thoughts on the extent to which the Recruitment Incentive has met its goals, to date?

Possible Probes:

- a. What are some of the observed benefits of the incentive? Has it met your goals as an incentive?
- b. If you have eligible schools that did not hire a teacher through the incentive, please explain.
- c. In what ways has the Incentive not been sufficient in addressing your goals? What areas were overlooked by the implementation of the incentive?

(8) What impacts, if any, do you think the incentive has made on:

- Student outcomes
- Teacher turnover rates
- Teacher retention
- School Climate/Culture

(9) What is your feedback on how to make the Recruitment Incentive more effective?

Possible Probes:

- a. How do you plan on using the incentive in the future? How is that different or similar to what you have been doing at present?
- b. Is there anything else you would like to share about the Recruitment Incentive?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix G: State Administrator Interview Protocol

State Recruitment Incentive Interview Protocol (North Carolina State Level Administrator of R.I.)

(1) Administrator Information:

- a. Date
- b. Name
- c. Position/Title:

Background of the Recruitment Incentive

(2) What is your impression of the rationale behind the way the state chose to structure this initiative?

Possible Probes:

- a. What do you think are the greatest areas of need that the state hopes this initiative will be able to address?
- b. Do you think the state's selection rationale was appropriate? If so, why? If not, how might you have changed it?

Recruitment Incentive Communication:

(3) Tell us about the state's process for communicating the R.I., to date.

Possible Probes:

- a. How is information about the R.I. disseminated to the: (1) LEAs; (2) Schools; and (3) eligible teachers?
- b. Describe the timing of the recruitment process. When was information disseminated to the groups?
- c. What were some of the challenges you faced in disseminating information about the R.I.?
- d. What worked well about this process?
- e. What has changed, if anything, about the communication process since the 2011-2012 school year? (What have you learned?)

(4) Describe the process by which your office worked with eligible schools and LEAs to recruit and select teachers.

- a. Were there any special characteristics of interest that you wanted to find in the Recruitment Incentive pool?
- b. How were eligible candidates located and identified?
- c. Describe the challenges, if any, that you have encountered in recruiting qualified candidates.

(5) Describe the teachers who took the Recruitment Incentive. Please distinguish teachers who may have taken the Incentive last year from those who took it this year.

Possible Probes:

- a. Where did these teachers come from? For instance, were any of these individuals new to the school or LEA upon receiving the incentive or were they already at the school?
- b. When were they recruited? (If they received the incentive after the school year began) Was anyone given the incentive retroactively? If so, why?
- c. What skill sets do they bring to their schools?
- d. Was there any kind of competition amongst eligible schools to recruit this pool of teachers?

(6) So far, only 10 schools from five LEAs have recruited teachers via this incentive. What are your thoughts on why the other LEAs and schools have not recruited teachers with the incentive?

Impact of the Recruitment Incentive:

(7) What are your thoughts on the extent to which the Recruitment Incentive has met its goals, to date?

Possible Probes:

- a. What are some of the observed benefits of the incentive? Has it met your goals as an incentive?
- b. In what ways has the Incentive not been sufficient in addressing your goals? What areas were overlooked by the implementation of the incentive?

(8) What impacts, if any, do you think the incentive has made on:

- Student outcomes
- Teacher turnover rates
- Teacher retention
- School Climate/Culture

(9) What feedback do you have on improving the Recruitment Incentive?

Possible Probes:

- a. How do you plan on using the incentive in the future? How is that different or similar to what you have been doing at present?
- b. Is there anything else you would like to share about the Recruitment Incentive?

Thank you for your participation!

Contact Information:

Please direct all inquiries to Nathan Barrett

nate.barrett@unc.edu

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