



**Data-Informed
K-12 Human
Capital Strategies**

CONTENT GUIDE:

Recruitment & Hiring

OCTOBER 2021

Teacher recruitment and hiring comprises one aspect of the educator human capital system portrayed here. Local education agency (LEA) and school leaders can use this guide to learn more about:

- Desired outcomes and challenges of recruitment and hiring;
- Effective practices that LEAs can use in planning and implementing effective recruitment and hiring;
- How to address likely challenges, constraints or other considerations when designing and implementing strategies;
- Examples from other LEAs that have implemented strategies to improve recruitment and hiring; and
- Resources to support this work in your LEA.

Context

Multiple studies confirm what common sense suggests—that the quality of the teacher in the classroom, followed by the leader of the school, are the two most important in-school factors in increasing student achievement.¹ Yet, we know that simply finding enough effective teachers presents a major challenge for many LEAs.

Increasing teacher attrition and growing student enrollment require even more teachers while, at the same time, we see fewer high school students interested in teaching, declines in enrollment and completion of teacher preparation programs, and decreasing interest in alternative pathways to teaching. Couple these factors with a lack of teachers in certain subjects and a lack of teachers of color, and recruitment and hiring quality educators can be quite challenging. For example, nationally we produce twice as many elementary teachers as we hire every year. Difficulties with teacher shortages contribute to obstacles to improve instruction for students. For more detail, see [Understanding Teacher Shortages](#).

To address these shortages and find the best talent for students, leadership teams must focus on recruitment and hiring (commonly referred to as selection), which serve two distinct and complementary purposes.

- **Recruitment** builds a broad and diverse pool of high potential candidates ready to meet your schools’ needs.
- **Hiring/Selection** assesses and determines the “best fit” individual(s) to hire from the recruited pool that meet your schools’ needs.

It’s important to note that there is no one definition of a “**best fit**” candidate. Student, staff and organizational needs and context determine what’s most needed for a particular vacancy; a strong match to these needs is essential. To determine who is needed for your LEA and schools, see the [Best Fit Candidate Activity](#). This resource outlines a process to help with defining which teachers are the “best fit” for an LEA’s context and needs. Teams can use this activity to identify key characteristics of “best fit” teachers and map out the aspects of the organization that might be most attractive to highlight to “best fit” teachers.

¹ Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Loeb & Reininger, 2004; Goldhaber, 2002; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Seashore-Louis, et al. 2010.

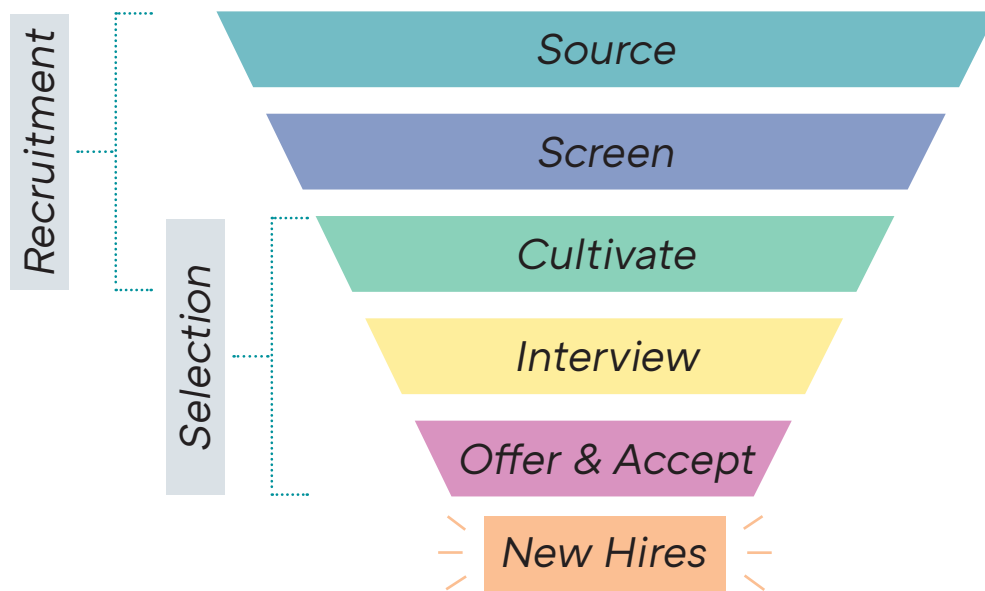
Additionally, certain words related to recruitment and selection require definition so that all stakeholders are on the same page:

- **Pipelines** are sources of future talent, which can come from internal or external sources. Internal pipelines of candidates include those staff you already employ who might be ready for a promotion, transfer or role change. External pipelines of candidates might include student teachers; those enrolled in alternative certification programs or university programs; employee referrals; past applicants; those you meet at recruitment fairs; or even your own high school students. Pipelines will vary in the amount and quality of candidates they yield.
- **Pathways** are the route by which teachers are prepared and/or certified to teach. Traditional pathways most often refer to university-based preparation programs. Alternative pathways most often refer to programs for college graduates who have little or no previous formal university preparation in teaching or education. Most alternative pathways provide some form of training in a faster route to teaching. New teachers' readiness to meet student needs varies across and within educator preparation programs.
- **Shortage Area Subjects** are those subjects where demand exceeds the supply of teachers available. Shortage area subjects nationally and locally often include: math, sciences (especially chemistry and physics), special education, bilingual education, foreign languages (such as Spanish), and English as a second language. Each LEA should review their data to see which subjects present the biggest challenges. Often, fewer than five applicants per one vacancy indicates a shortage.
- **Vacancy** is defined as an unoccupied and approved, funded position that a principal intends to fill. Positions that are open because of long-term sickness, leaves, etc. are temporary and often not defined as a true vacancy.

Effective LEA Policies and Practices

First, you must understand recruitment and hiring in your current context.

Analyze all components of recruitment and selection. At the highest level, great recruitment and selection consists of the six components below—from sourcing applicants through selecting new hires. While HR plays the lead role in recruitment and selection in many LEAs, principals and principal supervisors also make important contributions, particularly in activities further down the funnel. HR personnel can grow principals' and principal supervisors' capacity for this work. **See [Roles in Recruitment & Selection](#)** for key activities by role in each component of the funnel.



Each area of the funnel serves a key purpose in recruitment and selection, which does not end until a new hire joins the organization on their first day.

- **Source:** Proactively searching for candidates for current or future openings; building a pool for now and a continuous pipeline for the future
- **Screen:** Continuously reviewing applications to determine which candidates are the highest potential
- **Cultivate:** Offering early contracts to, and keeping the interest of, high priority candidates through constant communication
- **Interview:** Meeting between the hiring manager/team and the candidate to review and select; this can include demonstration lessons and other performance tasks
- **Offer & Accept:** Making an offer and closing the deal so the candidate accepts the position
- **New Hires:** Welcoming new hires on their first day and onboarding them for success in the LEA

Evaluate and track effectiveness of your recruitment and hiring efforts. The ultimate purpose of recruitment and selection is to consistently find and hire the best talent that meets student and school needs. While there are many input and output metrics to track to [Analyze Your Recruitment and Selection Processes for Missed Opportunities](#), the four most critical questions to ask and metrics to track are related to issues of quality, quantity, and equity:

KEY QUESTIONS	METRICS
Where do we find our best, highest quality candidates? (Quality)	Percentage of new teachers—by provider—with effective or higher ratings (according to the multiple measures used in PA’s teacher effectiveness system) at the end of Year 1, 2 & 3, disaggregated by subject and school
Do we have enough candidates? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates of color? • In all subject areas? • In the schools where they are needed? (Quantity & Equity)	Applicants per vacancy by subject (and by month), provider, and school Percentage of teachers of color in our candidate pool and as new hires, by subject, provider, and school
Are we hiring early enough to ensure quality? (Quality)	Percentage of vacancies filled by May 1, July 1, August 1 and opening of school by subject and school
Are principals satisfied with the quality and quantity of the applicant pool to meet their needs, including in high need schools? (Quality, Quantity & Equity)	Percentage of principals satisfied with the applicant pool and HR’s support to match candidates to vacancies, particularly in higher need schools (Example of a customizable Hiring Manager Satisfaction Survey)

If your LEA does not currently track the metrics above, this is the place to start. As you track the data, you can step back and review your data annually, ideally in the early fall, with the [Recruitment and Hiring Data Protocol](#). Additionally, the [Opening of School Protocol](#) offers another process for reviewing and improving upon recruitment and selection results.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *Which data do you currently track and what does it show?*
- *Where are your strengths?*
- *Where are your gaps?*

Forecast vacancies to understand the district’s needs and ensure early hiring. Calculate and analyze teacher turnover and retention by school, grade level, and subject. Revise policies to ensure earlier notifications of resignations/consequences for late resignations (after July 1) and consider incentives for early notifications of retirements and resignations. For other ideas on making it easier to foresee teacher vacancies, see Improving the Teacher Resignation Process. It’s also critical to understand broader demographic shifts within your region as you consider the types of teachers needed. Partner with local governments to understand trends. For example, you may find that your community has seen increases in immigrants from particular areas. Understanding these shifts will help you more accurately forecast your needs.

QUICK HITS

Pull together your teacher hiring data from the past several years that identifies each new teacher hired by subject. Based on this analysis, LEAs should be able to see high level trends by subject area. This information should provide an estimate of typical annual teacher hiring needs based on the hiring data from the past three to five years. Consider how other contextual factors might impact your vacancies year to year.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *What factors might be at play this year that will cause our vacancy forecasts to differ from a “typical” year?*
- *How and where might that adjust our forecasted vacancies?*

Next, you'll need to be clear about what needs to happen, by whom, and by when.

QUICK HITS

Get everyone on the same page. Create and disseminate an HR staffing calendar with all relevant dates prior to the start of the staffing season. This should include all relevant dates regarding budget allocations and other staffing and hiring deadlines. Disseminate the calendar early and often before the start of the budgeting season to teachers, principals and other central office staff; this will help set expectations and understanding of key milestones and activities. Posting the calendar on the district's website can also benefit potential candidates who may be interested in applying. All people involved in recruitment and hiring need to know what is expected of them. Be clear about who does what by outlining **Roles in Recruitment & Selection**; this tool provides a starting point for what to expect of staff involved in recruitment and hiring.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *Can key players involved in recruitment and hiring articulate their roles and timelines?*
- *What have we communicated and by what channels?*

Then, you'll need to identify WHO you are looking for and HOW you'll attract them, and to build a broad and diverse pool from multiple sources.

Define who you are looking to recruit. There is no one definition of a “best fit” candidate. Student, staff and organizational needs and context determine what's most needed for a particular vacancy; a strong match to these needs is essential. To determine who is needed for your LEA and schools, see the **Best Fit Candidate Activity**. This resource outlines a process to help define which teachers are the “best fit” for your context and needs. Teams can use this activity to identify key characteristics of “best fit” teachers and map out the aspects of the organization that might be most attractive to highlight to “best fit” teachers.

Create a clear value proposition for why your “best fit” talent should choose to work for your LEA.

Consider the following reflection questions: What makes our district special and unique for potential teachers? What makes our locale an exciting place to live and work?

- **Every community has something special to offer**, such as proximity to cultural attractions, nature, etc. Highlight what makes your locale unique and special.
- **Specifically, for rural areas**, consider how to positively frame what your community can offer prospective teachers. The [Four Types of Rural Districts](#) tool provides examples of how to do this.

Recruit/source from multiple pathways and sources of talent, such as alternative certification programs, local universities, student teachers, etc. A teacher’s pathway to certification is less important than the individual program. Certification pathway—traditional or alternative—is not a predictor of teacher effectiveness² but individual programs show meaningful differences in teacher performance.³ Thus, pay attention to whether certain educator preparation programs are producing candidates that are particularly effective in your LEA’s context.

To better understand your needs, you can [Analyze Your Current Pipelines & Pathways](#). If you choose to grow additional pipelines, review [Considerations for Growing Your Teacher Pipelines](#).

Practice “active” recruitment; track and identify the best pathways and sources of teacher candidates and proactively work to target those candidates who are part of those specific programs and partnerships. This contrasts with “passive” recruitment such as only posting vacancies and attending job fairs hoping candidates will apply or attend. After identifying the best sources of teacher candidates, [develop meaningful partnerships](#) with key preparation programs.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *Which pipelines and pathways yield the most effective teachers (as determined by the multiple measures used in PA’s teacher effectiveness system)?*
- *Of these pipelines, which yield the teachers who stay in your LEA for several years?*
- *How can you grow your partnership with those programs?*

² [Boyd, et al., 2006](#)

³ [Goldhaber and Liddle, 2011](#)

Recruit among local candidates. More than 60 percent of teachers teach within 15 miles of where they went to high school.⁴ Therefore, consider how to tap your local talent first, by asking who in your community is already interacting with students. For example, within your district, identify, track and recruit from student teachers, substitutes, and paraprofessionals. In addition, many districts are launching high-school-to-teaching programs where interested students receive academic support and professional learning through high school and college about the teaching profession. Within your community, look to local houses of worship, nonprofits, and other community organizations that provide services to children, to find individuals interested in exploring teaching as a profession.



Many LEAs use Grow Your Own programs to recruit and train individuals from within the community to be teachers. For example, the Chicago Public Schools have had success as they continue to expand Grow Your Own programs. For more information on Grow Your Own programs and some examples, see [this brief on professional learning for paraprofessionals](#) and [recent research](#).

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *Where might there be hidden or overlooked talent in your community?*
- *How might you attract and support those individuals on their pathway to becoming a teacher or other employee of your district?*

Leverage your current employees. Your current employees are also a valuable resource for finding new talent. Referral campaigns can be a valuable source for finding new and talented teachers for your district by accessing the networks of your current employees (and others affiliated with the LEA). In the most common and straightforward referral programs, current employees provide a name and contact information for potential teachers and the recruitment team follows up on each referral. Employees then receive some benefit (monetary or non-monetary) if the teacher s/he referred is hired (or after the new teacher completes the first year). Here are [Best Practices & Key Considerations for Referral Campaigns](#) which include key considerations to launch a referral program.

⁴ [Reininger, 2011](#).



Noble Charter Schools created [a recruitment program](#) to leverage the teachers in each school community to support recruitment. Many of their teachers now come directly from contacts made through this program.

REFLECTION QUESTION:

- *How likely are your current employees to recommend your district as a place to work?*

Focus on building diversity beyond traditional pipelines. Consider Grow Your Own programs to help prepare those in your community to serve as teachers. Diversity matters for students of color when building a pipeline of teachers; it is associated with improved student outcomes, increased achievement, decreased suspensions, decreased disparities in referrals to special education, and increased referrals to gifted programs for students of color.⁵

- Collect key diversity** and other data at the school level using the [School-Level Data Capture Template](#) as one example. This tool provides a way to organize and analyze key data.
- Take the lead in HR** for [Recruiting, Hiring & Retaining a Diverse Staff–What Can HR Do?](#) Use this tool when you want to understand ways in which HR can lead work to diversify the candidate pool and teaching staff.
- Spark meaningful conversations** in your district using [Diversity Conversation Starters & Strategies](#). These questions and ideas will give you a pathway into conversations that might otherwise feel uncomfortable.
- Highlight diverse candidates** in your marketing materials, as well as the benefits for teachers of color to live in your community.

For more information, see [this brief on recruiting and hiring teachers of color](#).



[Teach Cleveland](#) is a strong example where the district created brief one-page marketing material that highlights the cultural and social scene of the city which includes demographics, professional groups, and cultural events.

⁵ [Egalite, Kisida, Winters, 2015; Villegas & Irvine, 2010.](#)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *What's the experience of teachers of color in your district?*
- *How closely does your teaching workforce reflect the diversity of your student population?*

Enhance the experience of job applicants. Review all recruitment and hiring steps and work to maximize a smooth, clear process for candidates. **According to research**, candidate experience—their overall perception and opinion of your organization based on their entire (formal and informal) recruitment and selection process—matters for attracting quality candidates. Among candidates with positive experiences, 97 percent said they would refer others to the LEA, 95 percent would apply again, and 55 percent would tell their social networks. For candidates with negative application experiences, 72 percent would share their negative experiences with others.

- Assess your candidate experience**—for example, through surveys of candidates who were and were not hired.
- Review your application and hiring processes** to determine how efficient and transparent the processes are from a candidate perspective. How easy is it for candidates to find career opportunities and apply via your website? Do they receive timely updates? Can they track their application status? For more insight and tips, please refer to **Candidate Experience: Best Practices** which aims to ensure a positive experience from when a candidate is starting the job search through the application, interview, hiring, and offer stages. Clear expectations at each stage of the recruitment and hiring process, as well as consistent communication, are key aspects of creating a positive experience.
- Review the HR website** and ensure teacher vacancies (and all position vacancies) are available online within two or three clicks for applicants. Easier access to vacancies will help enable more applicants to complete the application process.

QUICK HITS

Call applicants at random and ask them about their experience in applying to the school district. Keep careful notes and provide feedback to the recruitment lead. Determine if there are enough complaints or concerns to warrant redesigned processes to ensure great customer (applicant) service. Ideal timing includes the late spring and summer—the height of the staffing season. Also make a summary set of calls in October following the start of the new school year.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *What one to two words would your applicants use to describe their experience?*
- *Ideally, what one to two words would you want them to use?*
- *What are the small changes you could make to move towards the ideal?*

Differentiate your recruitment and selection processes for high-need schools and shortage subjects.

a. Consider which schools and/or shortage area subjects may need extra support or an edge to be competitive for talent. Offer different or additional services, such as the examples in the [Edges in HC Strategies tool](#). This tool helps LEAs to differentiate policies and practices to help level the playing field and allow high need schools to better compete for talent. In recruitment and hiring, this means giving high need schools additional edges by providing:

- **Earlier access** to applicants
- **Extra applicants** and/or dedicated pipelines
- **Differentiated support** to market vacancies at high need schools
- **Ability to hire earlier** than other schools
- **Discussion with school leaders** about specific skills and qualities that make candidates a “best fit” for high need schools
- **School-specific hiring protocol** for each high need school
- **Differentiated matching processes** to identify top candidates for leaders at high need schools
- **Quality applicants** available and prioritized for last-minute vacancies in high need schools

b. Consider how HR’s role can benefit from a [Reboot in STEM subjects](#). If your HR team functions without differentiating by subject, this resource will help you consider how to address recruitment and hiring for STEM subjects.

c. For those in rural areas, see the [Four Types of Rural Districts](#) to consider how this may impact your recruitment and selection work. Recruitment and selection strategies

should address your local context.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *Which schools and subjects are your highest need?*
- *What criteria are you using to differentiate HR's limited resources?*
- *What base level of services do you want to provide to every school?*

Finally, once you've grown the pool of candidates, be sure to support principals in early hiring and selection.

Grow the capacity of principals as human capital leaders. School leaders' effectiveness in the recruitment and hiring process is a major determinant of the quality of new hires. Nearly 75 percent of candidates say that their interview experience is extremely or very important in their final decision to join your organization. More than half say their most important interview is with their prospective manager.⁶

a. Provide principals with an overview of strong Recruitment & Selection – At a Glance. As principals have a variety of responsibilities on their plate, this tool provides them a quick summary of what they need to know.

b. Provide principals with Best Practices for Recruitment & Selection for their role. Based on the areas of the funnel on page 5—Source, Screen, Cultivate, Interview, Offer and Accept—this tool provides the key ideas that principals should consider implementing. Critically, before any of this can occur, principals and hiring teams must clearly identify skills, competencies and characteristics of “best fit” teachers based on school and student context and needs. Which are essential? Which are flexible? Prioritize the top two non-negotiables in a teacher hire and **Market Your School** accordingly. All selection activities should follow from that ideal by **building an aligned selection process to the best fit candidate**.

School leaders often play a key role in interviews. Encourage principals to **Build Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into their Hiring Process**.

Specifically, principals should consider appropriate performance-based tasks that allow candidates to demonstrate their skills and competencies for a specific role. For example, for teaching positions, a sample demonstration lesson allows you to assess

⁶ [LinkedIn, 2015](#).

teaching ability and classroom management, two essential competencies that nearly every LEA seeks in their new hires. Bear in mind that the selection process and associated activities should be aligned to your ideal, “best fit” candidate. Learn how to [design effective demonstration lessons](#).



Strive Prep created a [useful rubric to evaluate demonstration lessons](#).



Louisiana’s DeSoto Parish school district uses the following [interview questions](#).



Be sure to [Avoid Unlawful Interview Questions](#).



View [sample writing prompts](#) to use in the selection process to assess specific competencies.

c. Use the [School Recruitment & Selection Planning Map](#) as a tool to plan for the year ahead. This document lays out a school’s recruitment strategy on one page.

d. Encourage strong candidate experiences with [Top 10 Candidate Experience Tips for Principals](#). These are quick and easy reminders when embarking on heavy recruitment and hiring season in the late winter and early spring.

e. Encourage principals to build effective hiring committees with [Tips for Effective Selection Committees](#). This tool provides you with ideas for who to include and how to organize the committee.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *On a scale of 1–10, how prepared are your principals for their role in recruitment and selection?*
- *If you gave your district less than a 10, what would it take to get to a 10?*

Hire early: Whenever possible, **move up the hiring timeline to at least early spring.** Early hiring not only ensures that the highest quality candidates are selected, but also increases their likelihood of retention. Hiring after the school year starts is associated with reduced student achievement.⁷ Utilize early contracts—open job offers made by the LEA to priority candidates for projected vacancies, often in shortage-area subjects.

a. Use the [Early Hire Teacher Offer Letter–Sample](#) as a guide.

b. Consider offering early contracts for projected vacancies. Here’s a planning guide for [Making Early Contracts Successful in Your District](#).

c. Limit late hiring with strategies around driving hiring accountability through the superintendent, determining the optimal sequence and timing of transfer periods, and adopting policies to mitigate late resignation.

Late Hiring Strategies

from USCHA

“This set of strategies describes how districts have made progress with filling teacher vacancies late in the hiring season. Districts can use this tool when they need to turn to late hiring to fill a significant gap.”

EXPLORE NOW AT
[humanresourcesineducation.org/
resource/late-hiring-strategies/](https://humanresourcesineducation.org/resource/late-hiring-strategies/)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *When is the majority of your hiring taking place?*
- *Does your timeline allow you to hire quality candidates as soon as they become available?*

To audit your district’s recruitment and selection strategies, we encourage you to review [this brief on recruitment and hiring of educators of color](#), and the [Top Recruitment & Selection Strategies for Critical Shortage Fields and to Support Diversity](#).



⁷ [Papay & Kraft, 2016. Levin & Quinn, 2003.](#)

Considerations and Resources for Planning & Implementation

How to Start

Begin by tracking and analyzing the data listed under Key Metrics to Track above. We also encourage you to see feedback by [Surveying Your Candidates](#) regarding their experiences, as well as [Surveying Your Hiring Managers](#) (likely principals).

Key Partners

The following key partners are crucial for HR to connect with to ensure effective recruitment and selection.

- **Principals & Principal Supervisors:** to understand school needs and human capital challenges, as well as satisfaction with HR's services
- **Finance and Budget:** to discuss staffing timelines and budget allocations across schools
- **Teaching and Learning/ Curriculum:** to understand instructional priorities/initiatives that impact recruitment
- **Communications:** to review and improve HR's website and application
- **Education Preparation Providers:** to share feedback on your needs and the quality of recent graduates from preparation programs

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *With which of the partners listed here do you have a particularly strong relationship?*
- *Where do you want to improve your relationship?*
- *Who else might be a partner to you?*

Organizing Your HR Team

Great recruitment teams carefully plan and execute recruitment and selection activities. Learn more about [A Year in the Life of a Great Recruitment Team](#).

Barriers to Proactively Address

Recruitment and selection are just two components of HR's strategic work in a district. They connect to all the other puzzle pieces that encompass the strategic work of HR, such as induction; compensation and benefits; career management; and retention. In particular, without a strategic focus on retaining the great teachers the LEA recruits, the district will find itself with a leaky bucket, recruiting teachers year after year only to lose them. Spend as much time and energy, if not more, ensuring that those effective teachers you recruit stay within your LEA.

For more information on retention, see the [Retention Guide](#) and [HRinED.org](#).



CONTENT GUIDE:
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Pennsylvania's System for LEA/School Improvement
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and
Urban Schools Human Capital Academy

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