

Human Resource Needs

The school district I work for appears to be different than other districts. I met with a few key people and found that there is no set formula used to create a forecast for the human resource needs in our district. Regardless of the district, there should be.

Each year our school board meets to look at the five--year plan. The plan reviews structural, technological, and academic needs. Recommendations are made for building repairs, additions, or new structures. Technology recommendations include computer updates, programs, and technology instruction. Academic needs include new evaluation tools, new courses for students, and possible staff additions for new courses.

The superintendent, director of curriculum, and the principals make a presentation to the school board of the current programs and requested changes. During this presentation exact dollar figures are not discussed, but some estimates are given.

There are many variables that influence personnel needs and compensation. Recruiting is one way our district collects resumes for potential employees. We have a few nearby universities that our director of curriculum, special education director, and our principals visit during job fairs. Student teachers are also a source for potential teachers (S. Owens, personal communication, November 12, 2009). Student teachers get to know our school system and staff members get to know the student teachers. Student teaching is a good time to see if the student teacher fits into our programs. I was hired into the district in a different situation. I dropped off

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a resume and met with the superintendent and a principal while I was on vacation in Paris. I was interviewed a few weeks later and hired a short time later. The variety of sources used by our district enables us to collect information on potential employees.

Our elementary school serves children in pre-kindergarten through the second grade. Currently, there are eleven kindergarten classes, ten first grade classes, and ten second grade classes. All classes have twenty students or fewer as mandated by the state. There have been years when nine kindergarten classes were expected to be needed, but ended up with twelve classes. In speaking to the superintendent, I found that the current expectation is for eleven kindergarten classes, but there are funds for one more class. Based on what data? That extra slot may be used for an additional kindergarten class, or to expand another grade if needed (M. Brown, personal communication, November 18, 2009).

In April, our district conducts a registration session for incoming kindergarten students. This is a time in which we use the number of students to predict our kindergarten needs for the next school year. This is not an exact science because we typically have twenty to forty students register later than this date. There are times when a kindergarten teacher has been hired after our registration day. I have witnessed the effects of this late hiring. This is an uncomfortable and hectic time for the new teacher and current teachers. There is a rush to get set up and learn the routine, but we have an accommodating staff that is willing to help make the transition as smooth as possible. The employee also has paperwork to complete for human resources, in addition to making up the new teacher training they missed the previous week.

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In meeting with the district's business manager, I learned that there is no set formula used to figure out how many teachers we can afford to pay. Not a sound practice. The state looks at our attendance on a specific day and bases funding on that number. Based on our enrollment on that particular day, the state currently provides funds for 101 teachers. We actually have 128 teachers. The additional positions are funded through local funding (M. Hudgins, personal communication, November 18, 2009).

The business manager also stated that the state pays the district an average teacher salary. The amount we receive is \$ 38,000 per teacher. Unfortunately, that amount does not cover the salaries of many of our experienced teachers. The difference is made up from local funding. Our school board tries to give raises even when the state does not give an increase. The business manager provides the overall dollar figure for potential raises when the board is considering increases (M. Hudgins, personal communication, November 18, 2009).

Our district uses any financial resources they can to provide the best educators for our students. We use Title funds, grants, and stimulus money. Our latest additions to our district are two instructional coaches that were hired with stimulus funds. While the funds are temporary, our superintendent has already proposed making these positions permanent (M. Brown, personal communication, November 18, 2009).

It appears as though the enrollment of the kindergarten classes influences other grades. The year there were twelve kindergarten classes resulted in eleven first grade classes, then eleven second grade classes. When the kindergarten numbers decreased, other grade levels decreased in



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later years. The middle school saw a slight reduction in enrollment, but it was not enough to decrease the number of teachers. Instead, there was a decrease in class sizes that enabled the teachers to work closer with the students (M. Brown, personal communication, November 18, 2009).

This assignment demonstrated the multiple variables involved in planning for the future educational needs in a school district. At the end of a school year it could appear as though there are no openings, but many things could change. Employees may decide to retire, quit, or relocate. I believe it is important to begin the search for an employee as soon as possible. While I may be pressed for time, I would not recommend a possible employee until I'd done reference checks. Hiring is an important aspect of human resources, but I don't think it always follows a five-year plan of needed personnel. Budgets and forecasts have to be somewhat flexible because of the potential changes.

You have not collected and analyzed the necessary data to develop a 5-year forecast. At the very least, you should have considered census data to make some forecasts on your own.