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BRIEF

LEADING GEN Y TEACHERS:
EMERGING STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

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As Baby Boom teachers begin to retire, a new generation of teachers is taking on the classroom. Generation Y teachers are young, technologically savvy, and interested in global outcomes. This Research & Policy Brief focuses on strategies to recruit, retain, and support Gen Y teachers and ensure that the teaching profession benefits from their talent.

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INTRODUCTION

A generational transition is occurring in U.S. public school classrooms. Baby Boom teachers (those born between 1946 and 1964) are approaching retirement age, and many of their colleagues from Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1976) are entering their mid-career stage. The newest generation in the teaching workforce is Generation Y (those born roughly between 1977 and 1995).

Just as previous generations have shaped teacher career pathways and policies, the younger generation's expectations for their life and work will impact the ways in which Gen Y teachers enter and remain in the profession. This Research & Policy Brief aims to help state, district, and—most important—school-level leaders better understand this generation so that they can better manage and support all teachers for the improvement of teaching and learning, for current and future generations of students.

Drawing upon research from within and beyond education, this brief describes what school-level leaders can do to ensure that the teaching profession benefits from the talent that Gen Y teachers offer. It begins by reviewing the sociological and workforce research on Generation Y. Next, it provides the results of a literature review of strategies for retaining Gen Y talent that are emerging in the private sector. It then provides recent research on practices to support and retain new teachers. Finally, it offers strategies that effective school leaders can adopt to support all teachers—and Gen Y teachers in particular.

GENERATIONS OF AMERICANS

Each generation of Americans has its own character, which is shaped by the shared experiences and circumstances of its time. Table 1 presents information on the current generations, including some of the key characteristics that define each generation and the percentages of each generation in the U.S. workforce.

Table 1. Current U.S. Generations

Generation	Born Between[1]	Estimated Size[1]	Attributions[2]	% of U.S. Workforce in 2000[3]	Projected % of U.S. Workforce in 2010[3]	Projected % of U.S. Workforce in 2020[3]
The Mature Generation	1925–1945	75 million	Loyal, formal, trusting of authority	13%	3%	N/A
Baby Boomers	1946–1964	82 million	Optimistic, idealistic values, career focused	48%	37%	20%
Generation X	1965–1976[4]	50 million	Skeptical, informal, self-reliant	22%	22%	20%
Generation Y	1977–1995[4]	79 million	Realistic, moral values, committed, achievement focused	16%	38%	44%

Notes:
[1] Year range and estimated size for the Mature Generation are from Carter and Carter (2001). Year ranges and estimated sizes for Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y are from Shaffer (2008). Other sources may use varying year ranges and sizes.
[2] Attributions are from Carter and Carter (2001); Reeves (2006); and Reynolds, Bush, and Geist (2008).
[3] Percentages are from Shaffer (2008).
[4] Some sources use the ranges 1965–1979 for Generation X and 1980–2000 for Generation Y.

Who Is Generation Y?

Although the range of years sometimes varies depending upon the source, Generation Y often is defined as the cohort of people born between 1977 and 1995 (Shaffer, 2008). This period was one of relative prosperity, advancement in labor force productivity (Jorgenson, 2006), and significant labor force participation by adults living in the United States (Blau & Kahn, 2007; Juhn & Potter, 2006). The creation and initial growth of the Internet and World Wide Web also occurred during this time period. Other names for Generation Y reflect these events: They also are known as Millennials, the Net Gen, the iGeneration, and even the Echo Boom Generation (because they are the children of Baby Boomers).

Although the precise proportion of the U.S. population that makes up Generation Y depends upon the range of years that are used to identify each generation, Table 1 provides an estimate of 79 million for Generation Y. The older members of Generation Y currently are in the workforce, some are poised to enter the workforce, and many younger members are still in school—perhaps contemplating their future careers.

As of December 2008, the U.S. labor force was 154.4 million people (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). According to the human resources firm NAS Recruitment Communications (2007), the number of Generation Y in the workforce was approximately 42.7 million in 2007 and is projected to reach 62.5 million by 2014. By 2020, Generation Y is projected to make up about 44 percent of the U.S. working population (Shaffer, 2008).

Gen Y Characteristics

Although only a few rigorous research studies are available on Generation Y and cross-generational differences, the existing literature does provide a sketch of typical Gen Y characteristics and workplace demands. First, Gen Y workers tend to be highly educated and educationally minded; they typically attribute their success to their educational opportunities (Wong & Wong, 2007a, 2007b). Gen Y workers also are extremely comfortable with technology and are dissatisfied with disconnected or technologically inferior workplaces, giving them the nickname "Gen Y'erless."

Professionally, they are creative, innovative, and self-confident. They like to share what they have learned through collaboration in small groups, and they are eager for their work to make a difference and contribute to a larger movement for positive change (Carter & Carter, 2001; Shaffer, 2008; Yuva, 2007). Like Baby Boomers, Gen Y workers tend to hold strong moral values, are connected to family and community, and are highly motivated to pursue a more open and tolerant society (Reeves, 2006; Wong & Wong, 2007a). Indeed, the need for diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace is important to Generation Y.

Many of these characteristics make Generation Y well suited to become the teachers of tomorrow. Given their value for education and their desire for a working life that is relevant and has an impact, Generation Y likely will be motivated by the many opportunities for teachers to make a difference in the lives of their students and society. In addition, Gen Y's comfort with technology, collaboration, and innovation is critical for the teaching profession if teachers are to equip students with the 21st century skills that are needed to excel in the global marketplace and foster peace and cooperation as world cultures collide.

RECRUITING TEACHERS FROM GENERATION Y

According to David Saba, president of the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, the field of education is "competing for talent with private sector recruiters who understand the Gen X and Gen Y characteristics and are heavily marketing to attract top employees" (Saba, 2007). Yet while employers in other professions have been diligently addressing the effect of generational differences on human capital management, most education-sector employers are continuing to engage in the same recruitment, retention, and leadership practices that have been in place for the last 50 years. Although some limits exist regarding what can be transferred to education from other professions, several practices and strategies from the private sector can be helpful for the education field.

The literature on teacher labor markets finds that teacher shortages result not from problems with the number of teachers who are trained or certified but rather from the attrition of these individuals out of the teaching profession. This teacher-turnover situation often is referred to as a "revolving door" (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Ingersoll, 2003) or a "leaky bucket" (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007a). Although many factors influence why teachers leave the profession, analysis of the nationally representative Schools and Staffing Survey and Teacher Follow-Up Survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics found that 43 percent of those teachers who left their school or the teaching profession reported that "poor administrative support" motivated their decision (Ingersoll, 2003, p. 16). Because improving teacher retention is key to preventing teacher shortages, education leaders need strategies to enhance teacher support and retention—specifically for Gen Y teachers.

LESSONS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The education sector is competing with many other occupations for Gen Y talent. A literature review of private-sector practices with regard to Generation Y revealed that the private sector already is ahead of the game in its efforts to understand and recruit this next generation of employees. The following themes emerged from this review: a focus on Gen Y talent, strategies for retaining Gen Y employees, and policies that acknowledge Gen Y values.

PRIVATE-SECTOR FOCUS ON GEN Y TALENT

Many employers in the private sector have focused sharply on understanding their Gen Y employees. A survey conducted by Fidelity HR Services found that 80 percent of respondents from the business community believe that Gen Y talent is either "extremely important" or "very important" to the success of the business during the next 5–10 years (Shaffer, 2008, p. 2). Further, a webcast poll of U.S. companies conducted by the Human Capital Institute found that 21 percent of respondents already had implemented strategies to recruit and retain Generation Y, 25 percent are considering doing so, and 36 percent currently are researching options to do so (Shaffer, 2008).

In addition, the value that the private sector has placed on understanding Gen Y employees extends beyond U.S. borders. A study of business leaders conducted by the global accounting firm KPMG International found that 69 percent of respondents from across the world indicated that they wished to better understand Gen Y employees, 35 percent already had developed strategies specifically targeted to aid Gen Y recruitment, and 36 percent already had developed strategies specifically targeted to aid Gen Y retention (Salt, 2007).

Private-Sector Strategies for Gen Y Retention

Private industry has adopted a number of strategies that specifically improve Gen Y retention. Among those identified strategies are providing the following: flexibility in work schedules, a high-quality work environment, young talent programs to aid the career development of new employees, and young professional events for those under age 35 (Salt, 2007). But those strategies that KPMG International researchers deemed most effective included the following (Salt, 2007):

- Merit-based compensation

- Payment for higher education opportunities

- Job rotation into other departments

- Opportunities for career advancement

According to NAS Recruitment Communications (2006), Gen Y workers typically desire relationships with their supervisor and coworkers, good salaries, opportunities for growth, recognition for high-quality work, challenging assignments, flexible work schedules, and casual dress in the workplace. Private-sector companies with these benefits in place are likely to attract and retain Gen Y employees.

Based on other survey findings, specialists at Deloitte Consulting LLP suggested that Gen Y employees want to feel connected, updated, included, and involved in their work (Reynolds, Bush, & Geist, 2008). In order to better engage and retain Gen Y workers, they suggested that managers do the following (Reynolds et al., 2008, pp. 21–22):

- Provide "shorter, more frequent updates so that Gen Y workers feel plugged in."

- "Create authentic communications" that are transparent and easily understood.

- "Turn [Gen Y] workers into change agents" by encouraging their tangible contributions.

- "Develop mechanisms to generate great ideas" from all members of staff.

In addition, NAS Recruitment Communications (2006) recommends the following seven management strategies for retaining Gen Y employees:

- Encourage their values, individuality, and self-expression.

- Provide appropriate training as the basis for a job well done.

- Provide mentors, feedback, and the reasons behind decisions.

- Convey how their work will make an impact for the company.

- Be fully honest and ethical with them.

- Create customized career tracks that give them some control over their advancement as well as feedback on their progress.

- Provide the newest and best technology.

Many of these strategies are echoed and elaborated upon by staff at Fidelity HR Services (Shaffer, 2008). They emphasize the importance of providing flexibility and customization in work schedules, being honest and transparent, offering continuous feedback, and providing opportunities for Gen Y employees to work collaboratively in teams. They note, for example, that mentoring for Gen Y is best provided by Baby Boomers—rather than Gen Xers, who often cannot understand Gen Y's need for such guidance (Shaffer, 2008).

Although these strategies have yet to be studied rigorously for their effectiveness in retaining talented Gen Y workers across different types of organizations, they may hold promise for school leaders hoping to recruit, support, and retain Gen Y teachers.

Private-Sector Acknowledgment of Gen Y Values

Gen Y's concerns extend beyond the policies and practices that affect them directly. Although Gen Y employees want to work in environments that offer certain benefits, they also are concerned with the wider impact their places of employment have on society and the world. According to a specialist at Deloitte Consulting LLP, Gen Y employees have a more sophisticated perspective upon entering the workforce; they typically ask questions about the ethical views of their employer, the global impact or impact on the marketplace, the future of the industry, and the employer's path moving forward (Yuva, 2007). Gen Y workers also prefer employers that provide time for volunteer and community work (Shaffer, 2008).

To summarize, the recurring themes that emerge from the private-sector literature on Generation Y relate to the need for policies and practices that value Gen Y workers and their self-expression, provide regular feedback, are straightforward and transparent, allow flexible schedules, and ensure their personal and professional growth in a diverse and inclusive environment.

How can school leaders catch up with the private sector in reforming their talent management practices to support and retain Gen Y teachers so that young people will view teaching as an attractive and rewarding career option? Before addressing how these emerging strategies in the private sector can be applied to the teaching profession, this brief will review the factors that currently affect teacher retention.

The Research Base on Supporting and Retaining Gen Y Teachers

Because Generation Y will soon make up a large portion of the teaching profession, supporting and retaining these young teachers is imperative. The education sector cannot afford to continue losing talented teachers; instead, it must renew its efforts to ensure that all students are consistently taught by highly effective teachers.

Research on Teacher Attrition

One recent study on teacher attrition estimated that 157,000 teachers leave the profession each year while an additional 232,000 move to a different school each year, often in search of better working conditions (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). The implications of high teacher turnover are far-reaching financially—for schools as well as taxpayers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). Further, when teachers leave schools and the teaching profession, additional "costs" include lost institutional memory and lowered morale among teachers who remain.

The approach taken by the Teach Plus program of the Massachusetts-based Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy is to promote teacher retention in the long run by increasing the teacher's voice and facilitating collaboration between practitioners and policymakers (Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy, 2008). Rennie Center staff advocate mobilizing teacher advocacy for the profession, connecting teachers to innovative opportunities, developing differentiated roles and pay systems, and providing relevant decision makers with high-quality research and technical assistance (Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy, 2008).

In order to curb teacher attrition, such partnerships and policy changes in schools and districts should be informed by evidence regarding the factors that

influence individuals' decisions to leave the classroom. Many studies conducted during the past few decades have examined this issue and identified a range of important influences on teachers' decisions to leave the profession. Schools and districts can learn from this research as they work to improve the retention of talented teachers. Although the existing research finds numerous factors that are either attractive or unattractive to teachers, among the chief reasons that are consistently cited for teacher attrition are lack of administrator support and inadequate working conditions (Berry, Smylie, & Fuller, 2008; Ingersoll, 2003; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Moreover, school leaders may play an indirect role in influencing additional issues that can drive teachers from the profession.

Research on New-Teacher Attrition

Although the research shows clearly that school leaders can influence teacher retention, the research base does not cover the particular factors that influence Gen Y teachers' decisions to leave the profession. Because most current Gen Y teachers are relatively new to the profession, the findings of research on new-teacher attrition are instead considered. Much of what is known about why new teachers leave the profession is drawn primarily from studies completed more than five years ago and involves Baby Boomers and Gen Xers. Nevertheless, lessons can be learned from these cross-generational studies on teacher retention.

This body of research consistently identifies several organizational and personal factors associated with new teachers' decisions to leave their current school or district or the profession in general. (See "Factors Contributing to New-Teacher Attrition" at right.) As suggested in the list of factors, new teachers tend to experience greater and different stressors than their more experienced peers (Fessler, 1995; Huberman, 1995). Their first professional assignments often are considered the most difficult, rather than the most straightforward, to teach. Only after teachers gain more experience and seniority do professional and social supports from colleagues and more attractive teaching assignments become available (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993, 2001).

Factors Contributing to New-Teacher Attrition

Research (DeAngelis, Peddle, & Trott, 2002; Ducharme & Ducharme, 1996; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek, & Morton, 2007; Veenman, 1984; Whitener, Gruber, Lynch, Tingos, & Fondelier, 1997) indicates that the following organizational and personal factors may contribute to new-teacher attrition:

Organizational Factors

- Lack of support from administrators
- Difficult teaching assignments and heavy teaching loads
- Lack of autonomy or control over one's work
- Poor working conditions
- Isolation from colleagues
- Lack of support from students' parents
- Performance evaluation based on criteria set for more experienced educators
- Inadequate opportunities for advancement

Personal Factors

- Changes in family or life situation
- Mismatch of work and personal or professional expectations
- Feelings of being unprepared or underprepared
- New and more lucrative professional opportunities outside of teaching
- Feelings of being ineffective in influencing student decisions
- Inability to cope with classroom management issues
- Inability to solve teaching or learning problems
- Inability to balance work and personal life

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT IN REDUCING TEACHER ATTRITION

Though not the only factor contributing to teacher attrition, poor administrative support is clearly an important factor that influences teachers' decisions to leave the profession (Ingersoll, 2003). According to the Center for Teaching Quality (Berry et al., 2008), principals' leadership styles, communication skills, and supportive behaviors affect teachers' working conditions and, therefore, retention.

The following leadership qualities are associated with teacher retention:

- Leaders who back up teachers when they are confronted with student misbehavior or parental complaints

- Leaders who demonstrate competence, trustworthiness, and fairness, and who genuinely respect teachers

- Leaders who are communicative and more democratic than authoritarian in style

- Leaders who distribute leadership and reach collective goals by empowering teachers based on their areas of expertise

A recent national survey of first-year teachers conducted by the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda (2007) found that 35 percent of new high school teachers were dissatisfied with their school administration's provision of leadership and guidance and 31 percent were dissatisfied with their administration's provision of adequate instructional resources. At the elementary school level, 21 percent and 15 percent of new teachers felt the same, respectively. So, although the majority of new teachers are satisfied with the administrative support they receive, a significant minority are not.

STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL LEADERS TO SUPPORT AND RETAIN GEN Y TEACHERS

Today's educational leaders—teachers, principals, and administrators alike—are responsible for establishing supportive conditions for the next generation of educators. School leaders greatly influence teachers' workplace experiences, instructional approaches, and career pathways. School administrators channel human and financial resources toward teachers' classrooms and professional learning and are responsible for assigning classes and workloads (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004).

Following are 10 research-supported strategies for school leaders to support highly effective teachers. For each strategy, the particular needs and wants of Gen Y teachers—as currently understood—are indicated. (For a graphic presentation of these strategies, see Table 2 on page 10.) Although each strategy may apply to teachers of all generations, the Gen Y adaptations are intended to provide school leaders with examples of approaches to emphasize and communicate with Gen Y teachers to adequately support them and increase the likelihood that they will remain in the teaching profession.

STRATEGY 1: ESTABLISH A SHARED VISION AND SET GOALS

A key role for any leader is to establish a vision and garner the collective motivation and buy-in to see this vision through. Though it might sound obvious, the crucial first steps of establishing a vision and setting goals can easily be forgotten amid the mounting and endless demands on time that school leaders inevitably face. Making the time to establish a collective vision for school improvement—and doing it right—is a necessary first step to support effective teachers. Establishing a vision is the first of six standards for school leaders set forth by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008).

Emphasis for Generation Y: *Involve Gen Y teachers in developing a vision and setting goals.* School leaders can effectively support Gen Y teachers by involving them in the development of a school's vision. According to NAS Recruitment Communications (2006), Gen Y employees want to partake in decision-making processes at work. They want their voices to be heard and their individuality to be appreciated. Because Gen Y employees are innovative, creative, and on a mission to improve the world around them, school leaders who encourage the expression of Gen Y teachers' values are likely to benefit from both higher morale among teachers and stronger school communities overall. Deloitte Consulting LLP recommends turning Gen Y workers into "change agents" and developing "idea generation" mechanisms or campaigns to engage them (Reynolds et al., 2008, p. 22). This approach might include creating an "idea box" or setting aside time during departmental and all-staff meetings specifically for generating innovative ideas or thoughts on how to advance the school's mission and vision. In addition, younger teachers can be included in all meetings to this effect.

Strategy 2: Encourage Shared Leadership

No individual can ensure that highly effective teachers are supported throughout the school by himself or herself, nor would that be desirable. In the studies that they reviewed, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins (2006) found that the positive effects of school leadership are greater when leadership is widely distributed among staff members. In addition, distributed leadership lends itself to smoother transitioning when an individual leader leaves the school.

Emphasis for Generation Y: *Empower Gen Y teachers to assume leadership responsibilities from Day 1.* One area of tension between generations is the notion among experienced teachers that new teachers must "prove themselves" through competency before leading others and the expectation among Gen Y teachers to assume leadership roles and positions. Many Gen Y teachers do not think twice about

deciding to become a principal or transitioning to a different job in the field after only three or four years as a teacher (Richardson, 2008).

These competing perspectives can be reconciled in two ways. First, school leaders should brainstorm and develop multiple leadership opportunities for teachers that ensure a diversity of experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. They should make it clear to Gen Y teachers that leadership opportunities exist, even if these opportunities are not available to all teachers the moment they walk into the school building. Second, school leaders should realize that although Gen Y teachers may wish to move up the career ladder and acquire additional responsibilities quickly, these young teachers do not necessarily wish to be training their colleagues or assuming other roles for which they are not qualified. Rather, Gen Y teachers should be given leadership responsibilities that make the most of the expertise they do have, such as developing websites or creative instructional materials, assisting with uses of education technology, partaking in staff committees that guide school policy, and organizing schoolwide curricular and extracurricular activities.

Strategy 3: Create a Positive and Supportive School Culture

According to Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, and Liu (2001), research indicates consensus regarding the important role of the school principal in establishing, reinforcing, and realigning the school culture as well as promoting collegiality among staff in working toward common goals. Characteristics of a positive school culture that supports effective teachers include fostering trust and ethical behavior; encouraging learning, teamwork, and growth; and creating effective lines of communication.

Emphasis for Generation Y: *Celebrate generational differences and the unique contributions of Gen Y teachers.* In 2005, according to one source, 60 percent of workplaces nationwide were experiencing intergenerational tensions (NAS Recruitment Communications, 2006). Celebrating generational differences can help ease this tension. The National

Staff Development Council provides a user-friendly tool (see page 3 of Richardson, 2008) to assist schools in celebrating generational differences by increasing awareness and fostering collegiality.

In addition, school leaders should capitalize on intergenerational differences through the creation of cross-generational teams that move the adult learning environment in schools from isolated silos to collaborative, professional communities. This approach requires creating a commitment among the principal and veteran teachers to sustain a culture of support and success for new teachers that extends from decisions about resource allocation to technology infrastructure.

For Gen Y employees, the most valued relationship is that with their direct supervisor (Shaffer, 2008). Therefore, one way to retain Gen Y talent is by encouraging new teachers to develop positive relationships with their mentors and other school leaders and making time to nurture such relationships.

STRATEGY 4: SELECT AND ASSIGN TEACHERS EFFECTIVELY

Principals can support talented teachers—both indirectly, by encouraging districts to effectively assign teachers across schools, and directly, by effectively assigning teachers to classrooms. Johnson (2006) draws attention to the stresses that some new teachers in particular face because of out-of-field teaching, split assignments, and teaching in multiple classrooms and even multiple schools. No teacher should be subjected to these working conditions. For teachers to perform their jobs well and have the time and energy to engage in varied additional leadership roles and activities, principals must ensure that classroom assignments are appropriate.

Emphasis for Generation Y: *Realize that the career ambitions and loyalties of Gen Y teachers may differ from those of previous generations.* Talented Gen Y workers have many career options open to them. Because they value experiences that are tailored to suit their particular situation, they may become impatient with the teaching profession if their classroom assignments seem unreasonable and look for other

career opportunities that will challenge them in a more positive way. School leaders should recognize that Gen Y teachers are not as oriented as previous generations to long-term careers and are likely to leave even sooner if the tradition of assigning the most difficult classes to the newest teachers continues in many schools (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007b).

A recent study by the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda (2007) found that in high-needs schools, 42 percent of new teachers believe they are assigned to the hardest-to-teach classes while 25 percent of teachers in more affluent schools feel the same. This staffing structure is harmful to teachers and students alike. Instead, school leaders should pay attention at the start of each school year to staffing assignments and ensure that new Gen Y teachers enjoy a balanced teaching load that allows them to make a difference in the lives of the neediest students while limiting their responsibilities for teaching students who demonstrate difficult disciplinary challenges. Customized career paths should then be developed that over time will increase Gen Y teachers' responsibilities in a way that is in line with their interests and career ambitions and allows them to grow professionally and contribute effectively to a cause greater than themselves.

STRATEGY 5: IMPROVE TEACHERS' SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND CAPABILITIES

After new teachers have been given their classroom assignments, school leaders can support them through professional development, including induction and mentoring (New Teacher Center, 2007). Such support can include personally helping teachers to grow professionally or coordinating a formal professional development program to improve teachers' skills, knowledge, and capabilities. Local school leaders, who have the direct authority to choose and evaluate the kinds of professional development their teachers receive, can have a profound impact on teacher learning—which results in higher teacher effectiveness and retention.

Emphasis for Generation Y: *Provide professional development opportunities that involve collaboration and technology.* The private-sector literature indicates that Gen Y employees find professional growth to be among the most attractive qualities in a workplace. But professional development in the education sector must be delivered in a way that resonates with Gen Y's expectations, particularly with regard to technology. Through such professional learning practices, Gen Y teachers will view teaching not as a career that stagnates but rather as one that offers personalized and dynamic opportunities for growth.

A study on intergenerational learning in the workplace conducted by United Parcel Service recommends listening to employees from different generations about their preferences for online or classroom instruction workplace learning; identifying appropriate professional learning technologies based upon accessibility, cost effectiveness, and appropriateness; and continually monitoring innovations in learning

technologies (Reeves, 2006). The National Staff Development Council suggests using short, just-in-time, "YouTube-style" videos and other technology to provide differentiated professional development to accommodate teachers' different learning styles; it also encourages the use of blogs to aid teacher reflection following professional development activities (Richardson, 2008, p. 6). In addition, Gen Y teachers will benefit from trained and compensated content-based mentors and coaches who are assigned to observe novice teachers and provide constructive feedback on a weekly basis.

STRATEGY 6: ADOPT EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR TEACHER EVALUATION

School leaders play an important role in the evaluation of teachers, although in many cases only minimal guidelines, training, and standards are available to support them in doing so (Mathers & Oliva, 2008). Many of the current teacher evaluation systems were

Table 2. 10 Strategies for Supporting Highly Effective Gen Y Teachers

Strategy	Emphasis for Gen Y Teachers
Strategy 1: Establish a shared vision and set goals.	Involve Gen Y teachers in developing a vision and setting goals.
Strategy 2: Encourage shared leadership.	Empower Gen Y teachers to assume leadership responsibilities from Day 1.
Strategy 3: Create a positive and supportive school culture.	Celebrate generational differences and the unique contributions of Gen Y teachers.
Strategy 4: Select and assign teachers effectively.	Realize that the career ambitions and loyalties of Gen Y teachers differ from those of previous generations.
Strategy 5: Improve teachers' skills, knowledge, and capabilities.	Provide professional development opportunities that involve collaboration and technology.
Strategy 6: Adopt effective tools for teacher evaluation.	Offer in-depth feedback to Gen Y teachers and praise where appropriate.
Strategy 7: Use time effectively.	Set aside time for regular collaboration among all teachers and among Gen Y teachers specifically.
Strategy 8: Use data effectively.	Use technology to help Gen Y teachers use data to improve instruction.
Strategy 9: Ensure that school facilities are adequate and functional.	Ensure that adequate facilities for the latest information technology are available.
Strategy 10: Provide effective instructional leadership.	Provide honest, open, and personalized guidance and mentoring to help advance Gen Y's instructional practice.

developed in the 1970s and do not reflect the knowledge about effective teaching that has been gained since then (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). To effectively support the professional development and remuneration of teachers, school leaders should ensure that the tools they use to evaluate teachers—and the manner in which such tools are used—are in line with research and best practice.

Emphasis for Generation Y: *Offer in-depth feedback to Gen Y teachers and praise where appropriate.* Fortunately for those who are evaluating Gen Y teachers, this new generation thrives on feedback. According to NAS Recruitment Communications (2006), Gen Y workers require constant feedback because they greatly wish to add to the success of the organization. This generation of teachers, according to the National Staff Development Council (Richardson, 2008), is not afraid of being held accountable. They are more open to performance-related pay than previous generations. They expect that their performance will be subject to scrutiny in an effort to promote their own development and growth and that of their students. With appropriate training, therefore, evaluators should be able to help improve teachers' instructional practice while also satisfying Gen Y's wishes for constructive feedback that will help them achieve and succeed.

STRATEGY 7: USE TIME EFFECTIVELY

One way that school leaders can support highly effective teachers is to use time effectively. Increasingly, schools and districts have begun to lengthen the amount of time that is devoted to focused and engaged learning in schools, particularly through the use of 80- to 100-minute block scheduling (Silva, 2007). The effective use of time also includes setting aside time for collaboration between teachers in the same grade and teachers of the same subjects. Compared to teachers in other countries, U.S. teachers have insufficient time for collaboration, professional learning, planning, and preparation (National Education Commission on Time and Learning, 2005). Effective school leaders structure the school schedule so that the needs of teachers and students are accommodated.

Emphasis for Generation Y: *Set aside time for regular collaboration among teachers of all generations and among Gen Y teachers specifically.* Gen Y employees enjoy working in small groups and are receptive to the wisdom of their more experienced peers (Wong & Wong, 2007b). Setting time aside for Gen Y teachers to collaborate with older teachers in their school provides them an opportunity to learn from their more experienced colleagues and also offers them a chance to help these colleagues with latest technological innovations.

According to Lovely, Buffum, and Barth (2007), Gen Y teachers have a strong desire to develop friendships with colleagues at work. Therefore, in addition to setting aside time for subject- and grade-specific collaboration, school leaders should set aside time for collaboration, reflection, and inclusive socializing among Gen Y teachers. School leaders also should recognize that flexibility and customization in work scheduling is highly important for this generation; human resources protocols should be adapted accordingly whenever possible (Shaffer, 2008).

STRATEGY 8: USE DATA EFFECTIVELY

School principals are in a strong position to establish the conditions necessary to support the effective use of data by teachers; they can establish a culture of inquiry in the school by making available relevant data and technology for analyzing these data. This approach may involve enrolling teachers in data retreats or other professional development activities that highlight the importance of data-driven decision making and develop teachers' skills in doing so effectively.

The three most common areas for data use are school improvement planning, responses to external accountability requirements, and public tracking of educational performance (Knapp, Swinnerton, Copland, & Monpas-Huber, 2006). Effective school leaders lead by example in making data-informed instructional decisions, whether through value-added or more basic descriptive statistical measures.

Emphasis for Generation Y: *Use technology to help Gen Y teachers use data to improve instruction.*
Gen Y wants to be recognized for the ability to produce high-quality results, not for just putting in the time (Shaffer, 2008). According to KPMG International, they wish to be acknowledged, promoted, and rewarded, based on their proven abilities (Salt, 2007). Yet regarding evaluations of teacher ability, a recent Education Sector poll found that only 26 percent of teachers found their most recent evaluation to be "useful and effective" (Duffett, Farkas, Rotherham, & Silva, 2008, p. 3). Using data to assess student progress and teacher effectiveness is likely to go over well with this generation but only if used effectively to advance their instructional practice.

Gen Y teachers expect that technology will feature heavily in their everyday working lives. One way for school leaders to incorporate the latest technological innovations is by adopting comprehensive, user-friendly data systems that are designed to improve teachers' effectiveness. Gen Y teachers likely will enjoy the challenge of using student achievement data to inform their instructional practice.

STRATEGY 9: ENSURE THAT SCHOOL FACILITIES ARE ADEQUATE AND FUNCTIONAL

Johnson (2006) mentions the importance of well-maintained and functional school facilities in contributing to teacher effectiveness. First, broken windows, dysfunctional drinking fountains and bathroom facilities, peeling paint, and dirty hallways signify a lack of respect for those who teach in the school. Second, low-quality acoustics that hinder classroom discussions, malfunctioning equipment for scientific experiments, poor lighting that discourages reading, and insufficient electrical systems to support classroom computers can reduce teachers' effectiveness (Johnson, 2006). As building managers, effective school leaders must support teachers by ensuring that the facilities facilitate effective teaching and signal the value of the teacher's work.

Emphasis for Generation Y: *Ensure that adequate facilities for the latest information technology are available.* One of the most defining features of Gen Y teachers is their expectation regarding the use of technology. Providing the best and latest technology is among the recommendations of NAS Recruitment Communications (2006) for retaining Gen Y workers. This recommendation includes equipping classrooms with computers for student use and ensuring that projectors and other technology are available and functional. High-quality information technology is essential if teachers are to make effective use of comprehensive, user-friendly data systems. Such technology can aid classroom instruction and provide access to the latest education research for addressing pedagogical challenges that may arise. Most important, this technology can keep Gen Y teachers "plugged in," which the literature suggests is vital to their well-being (Reynolds et al., 2008).

STRATEGY 10: PROVIDE EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Although principals often end up preoccupied with "putting out fires," providing instructional leadership is a crucial characteristic of effective school leaders (Marks & Printy, 2003). The Southern Regional Education Board (2001) notes three actions for school leaders to be effective instructional leaders: modeling learning by attending teachers' professional development courses and sharing recent material they have read, providing compelling reasons for students to want to learn, and coaching teachers to be better instructors.

One emerging strategy to facilitate instructional leadership is the employment of school administration managers, who take on some of a principal's noninstructional duties. In some cases, these managers also help principals track their use of time in order to ensure that sufficient time is allocated to providing instructional leadership for teachers (Holland, 2007).

Emphasis for Generation Y: *Provide honest, open, and personalized guidance and mentoring to help advance Gen Y's instructional practice.* All teachers benefit from strong instructional leadership, and Gen Y teachers—with their urgency to make a positive contribution—particularly appreciate it. A recent survey of new teachers found that only 65 percent of new secondary school teachers and 79 percent of new elementary school teachers rated their school administrators as "good" or "excellent" at providing instructional leadership and guidance (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda, 2007, p. 13). Gen Y teachers want their leaders to be honest and straightforward with them. They also want the guidance they receive to be customized for their specific situation. Clearly, improvements can be made so that all teachers—and particularly the incoming generation of Gen Y teachers—receive the instructional feedback and support that they need and deserve to improve student learning.

CONCLUSION

By the year 2010, the numbers of Generation Y in the workforce will be slightly greater than the numbers of Baby Boomers; by 2020, Gen Y workers are projected to make up about 44 percent of the working population (Shaffer, 2008). Although other professions have endeavored to understand what is needed to attract and retain Gen Y talent in the workplace, human capital management and development typically have been undervalued in education. The education field must adapt to the needs of this new generation of teachers and do so expediently. If Gen Y teachers view education as a profession that lags behind rather than one that resonates with their own confidence and eagerness to engage with others in leading a reform movement, they likely will invest their energies elsewhere.

Because Generation Y is so committed to achievement, to changing the world for the better, and to communication and presentation styles that are engaging and innovative, Gen Y teachers likely will be strong educators. With the support of communities, districts, and states, school leaders can take crucial steps to create the conditions that will support and retain this next generation of teachers. Attracting the "best and brightest" from Generation Y to the teaching profession can help ensure that future generations of students are taught by individuals who will equip them to lead meaningful lives and to collectively advance human progress in a positive way.

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About the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) was created to serve as the national resource to which the regional comprehensive centers, states, and other education stakeholders turn for strengthening the quality of teaching—especially in high-poverty, low-performing, and hard-to-staff schools—and for finding guidance in addressing specific needs, thereby ensuring that highly qualified teachers are serving students with special needs.

The TQ Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and is a collaborative effort of ETS, Learning Point Associates, and Vanderbilt University. Integral to the TQ Center's charge is the provision of timely and relevant resources to build the capacity of regional comprehensive centers and states to effectively implement state policy and practice by ensuring that all teachers meet the federal teacher requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

The TQ Center is part of the U.S. Department of Education's Comprehensive Centers program, which includes 16 regional comprehensive centers that provide technical assistance to states within a specified boundary and five content centers that provide expert assistance to benefit states and districts nationwide on key issues related to the NCLB Act.

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