District
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Growing Talent: Developing High-Potential Leaders to Fuel a Powerful Talent Management Strategy

by Mark Wiernusz and Amram Migdal

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Growing Talent

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A public school district's most vital assets are its people, and districts typically spend about 80% of their budgets on their workforce. At heart, school districts are people-powered organizations propelled by the efforts and talent of their teachers, staff, and administrators.

But despite the importance of talented teachers, staff, and leaders to a district's success, central offices on average devote only a few employees to human resources (HR) functions, and these staff tend to focus on administering compensation and benefits and overseeing reviews, Title IX compliance, and similar crucial activities. In most districts, much of the work to interview, hire, and cultivate staff falls to school building managers, who receive little training in these specific functions. Putting in place and managing the systems and supports to cultivate a high-caliber workforce is

work that extends beyond the typical HR functions and falls in the domain of talent management.

The need to identify and cultivate talent is growing ever more critical as the demands on teachers and staff grow increasingly complex. Over the past several decades, each component of the classical instructional core—the student, the curriculum, and the teacher—has been going through significant transformations. Student populations are increasingly diverse, with growing proportions of special education students, students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch, and English Language Learners. At the same time, changing educational standards and technology continue to affect which content is delivered to students, and how. Adding to the complexity, there are widespread teacher shortages amid declining student-teacher ratios and exploding demand for science, math, special education,

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ESL/bilingual, foreign language, reading, and elementary enrichment educators—notwithstanding the fact that the overall number of public school teachers has skyrocketed over the past 30 years.[1]

Given the importance of talented staff to district success and the increasing complexity of demands on teachers and districts, it is more important than ever for districts to establish a comprehensive talent management strategy grounded in the overall district strategy. Districts must identify the capabilities and organizational attributes needed to achieve their strategic goals and develop a systemic approach to recruit, hire, develop, and retain the best people to allow the district to succeed (see *Exhibit 1*).

Talent management needs to be a cohesive system, but we focus here specifically on the key challenge of building a strong pipeline of individuals who can successfully grow into leadership roles. These high-potential leaders are the special individuals who both consistently perform at a high level and exhibit the potential to reach beyond their current abilities: the teacher who inspires students and colleagues alike, always taking on the extra task and leading by example to improve the whole school; the talented principal who is an excellent head of school while at the same time contributing to the broader vision of the district; the visionary and capable young administrator, spearheading new initiatives and earning the respect of her peers and colleagues. A system to successfully identify these high-potential individuals and help them develop is key to building a talent management strategy that can enhance outcomes, ease the process of succession planning at the building and district levels, and help ensure the district's long-term success.

Source: District Management Group; Adapted from Brian E. Becker, David Ulrich, and Mark A. Huselid, *The HR Scorecard: Linking People, Strategy, and Performance* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2001).

The Impact of High Performers and Leadership

Dozens of studies examining a variety of productivity and output measures across a wide variety of fields— including in the private and public sectors—show that an organization's strongest performers and high-quality leadership have an outsized impact on its output and success. Research confirms again and again that a disproportionate amount of performance is attributable to the productivity of the very best employees: the top 20% of employee performers account for roughly 80% of organizational output, the top 5% of performers are

the source of 25% of output, and the top 1% of employees account for 10% of output (see *Exhibit 2*).[2]

This point holds true in the context of education, as well, where output can be measured in terms of student learning. In a study conducted in Tennessee, similar groups of students were assigned either high-performing or lower-performing teachers for three consecutive years during g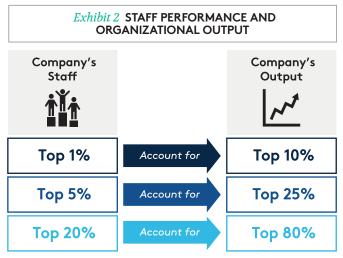rades 3 through 5. Those who were randomly placed with the high-performing teachers scored in the 96th percentile on the Grade 5 Tennessee Math Assessment, while those in the group assigned to lower-performing teachers scored in the 44th percentile, a 52-point difference (see *Exhibit 3*).[3]

Having high-quality building and district leadership is as important as having high-performing teachers and staff. Nearly 50 studies over the last 25 years correlate excellent leadership with positive effects on student outcomes. The combined direct and indirect effects of leadership on student outcomes are small but statistically significant, explaining around 3–5% of the variance in student achievement. Meta-analysis reveals 21 leadership qualities in principals—a mix of traits and practices—that correlate with student achievement. In fact, strong leadership practices can improve student mean achievement scores by a full standard deviation—a significant effect (see *Exhibit 4*).

Strong principals also have a significant positive effect on teacher retention rates. Among schools with high-performing principals, teacher turnover may be 1.3% lower

Exhibit 2 STAFF PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTPUT

Company's Staff		Company's Output
Top 1%	Account for	Top 10%
Top 5%	Account for	Top 25%
Top 20%	Account for	Top 80%

Source: Chamorro-Premuzic, Adler, and Kaiser.

than otherwise, whereas a lower-performing principal's school may have higher-than-average turnover by 2.3%. This net 3.6% decrease in turnover ascribed to the quality of principal leadership drives home the importance of keeping one's top performers in the system (see *Exhibit 5*).

Districts that retain these high-performing individuals by supporting them and giving them the opportunity to advance excel. In general, personnel retention is a priority for most organizations, which are aware that departures are disruptive and that filling vacant positions is expensive and time consuming. But retention is important for other reasons, as well. For example, employees who are promoted from within an organization tend to perform better and stay in the job longer than external hires. Overall, 14% of internal candidates promoted to top positions fail, compared to 22% of external hires. Turnover rates among middle managers hired from outside the organization are double those of internally promoted peers, while external senior executives fail at 34% compared to 24% among those who came from within the organization.[4]

Hurdles to Identifying and Developing High-Potential Leaders in the K-12 Environment

The importance of high-potential teachers and staff seems obvious, but some aspects of K-12 culture are at odds with establishing the systems and practices needed to nurture and develop leadership talent. Despite the increasing shift toward measuring teacher effectiveness and linking teacher evaluations to student learning outcomes, differentiation in teacher pe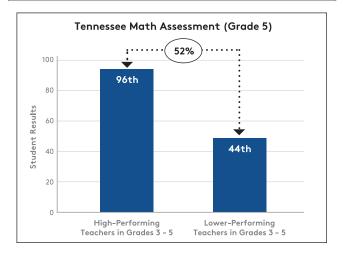rformance remains a delicate subject in many districts. Insofar as districts evaluate teacher quality, there is broad convergence of teacher evaluation ratings, and there has been a history of pushback against incorporating student outcomes to differentiate performance among teachers.

Even if districts are able to identify their high-potential teachers, collective bargaining agreements often prevent schools and districts from establishing differentiated development and career advancement paths for them. And, even when collective bargaining agreements do not prohibit it, school and district leaders do not always proactively or deliberately identify high-performing individuals, nor consistently communicate to individuals that they are on a fast track. Some principals may be disincentivized from identifying their best staff for fear of losing them to another school or assignment, and some principals may even feel threatened by high-performing teachers and staff (a problem that is also common in the private sector).

Most districts do not pay incentives to reward strong performers. Two-thirds of districts surveyed by the Center for American Progress reported that they were not allowed by law to offer incentives or differentiated pay—cash bonuses, salary increases, or different steps on the salary schedule—to reward or recruit teachers; 31% said they do use such pay incentives to reward excellence in teaching.
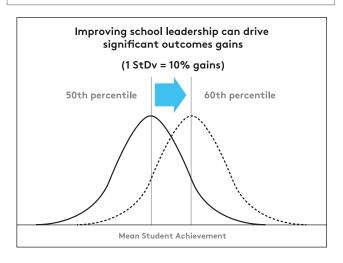
The typical district's approach to developing strong performers may also fall short of helping teachers and staff reach their full potential or addressing the district's biggest leadership gaps. About three-quarters of districts

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Tennessee Math Assessment (Grade 5)

Student Results

96th — High-Performing Teachers in Grades 3 – 5
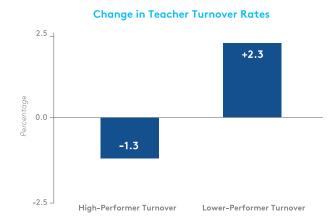44th — Lower-Performing Teachers in Grades 3 – 5
52%

Source: Pamela D. Tucker and James H. Stronge, "The Power of an Effective Teacher and Why We Should Assess It," online excerpt from *Linking Teacher Evaluation and Student Learning* (ASCD Member Book, 2005), https://bit.ly/1KR5YqR.

Improving school leadership can drive significant outcomes gains

(1 StDv = 10% gains)

50th percentile   60th percentile

Mean Student Achievement

Source: Tim Waters, Robert J. Marzano, and Brian McNulty, "Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells Us About the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement," working paper, 2003, available at https://bit.ly/2FlgTLC.

Exhibit 5 IMPACT OF PRINCIPALS ON TEACHER RETENTION

Change in Teacher Turnover Rates

Source: Grissom and Bartanen.

Exhibit 6 TYPES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH MANDATORY PARTICIPATION

Source: Annette Konoske-Graf, Lisette Partelow, and Meg Benner, "To Attract Great Teachers, School Districts Must Improve Their Human Capital Systems," Center for American Progress, December 2016, https://ampr.gs/2U5lrnf.

hold mandatory in-person workshops as a form of professional development, yet only 45% employ coaching and mentoring, an underutilized source of professional growth (see *Exhibit 6*). The result is that new teachers often develop dramatically in their first three to five years on the job—as measured by improvements in student achievement—and then plateau in their development, often failing to improve substantially or even declining slightly over the remainder of their careers.
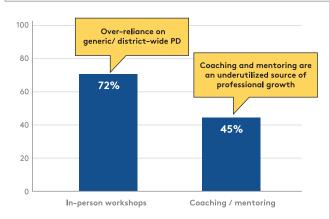
Managing the High-Potential Talent Pipeline

Creating a robust pipeline of high-potential leaders requires a strategy tailored to systematically find and nurture the district's most promising teachers, staff, and administrators. To effectively manage a high-potential talent pipeline, districts must hone a consistent, effective means of identifying high-performing individuals and then provide paths to develop them—and then systematize both methods (see *Exhibit 7*).

Performance vs. Potential: Identifying High-Potential Leaders

In order to identify strong performers among the teaching force and staff, districts must adopt a working definition of what "strong performance" means. In the corporate sector, a high-potential employee has been defined as "an employee who is assessed as having the ability, organizational commitment, and motivation to rise to and succeed in more senior positions in the organization."[5] This definition lends clarity to a common confusion: high-performing employees are not necessarily the same

as high-potential leaders. In fact, only one in seven high-performing employees is actually a high-potential leader (see *Exhibit 8*).[6]

In order to identify high-potential leaders, past performance and future potential should be assessed as two distinct dimensions. Organizations that rely too heavily on past performance are more liable to make costly mistakes. Consider the following examples:
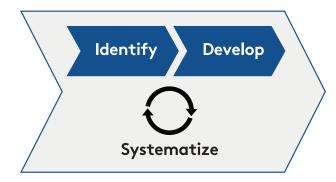
- Albert Einstein dropped out of high school at age 15, may have had a learning disability, and failed his college entrance exam. With his history, few would probably have identified young Mr. Einstein as having high potential, and yet he went on to become a tenured professor at Princeton, win the Nobel Prize in physics, and be named Man of the 20th Century by *Time* magazine. Meanwhile, Ted Kaczynski was a child prodigy whose IQ at grade 5 measured 167, and he attended Harvard at age 16. This promising young man came to be known as the Unabomber.

- Professional football quarterback Ryan Leaf was a college star and second overall pick in the NFL draft; but after playing just 25 games in four seasons, his football career ended, and he went on to struggle with opioid addiction and serve time in prison. Meanwhile, unheralded college backup Tom Brady was draft pick number 199, yet went on to become perhaps the greatest champion in league history, leading the New England Patriots to six Super Bowl wins and garnering three NFL MVP awards along the way.

Similar to these examples, the past or current performance of teachers and other staff depends on the skills, traits, and qualities needed to succeed in their current positions; but substantially different characteristics may be needed to excel in a leadership capacity in the future. Being an excellent teacher of young people may not translate into the potential to become an able leader of adults, and the ability to manage a school as a highly effective principal may or may not predict the ability to excel in a central office role.

Mapping staff and personnel along separate dimensions of performance and potential enables better identification of the most promising employees to become future district leaders. The framework allows districts to categorize their people into four broad groups (see *Exhibit 9*):

- Stars: Those who rank high on past performance and on future potential and ought to be developed further.
- Steady Performers: Those who are well-suited to their current positions but exhibit less sign of potential to rise and excel in new leadership positions.
- Coachables: High-potential individuals whose performance to date has been adequate and may warrant investment for the future.
- Underperformers: Underperforming staff who are not measuring up on performance and lack signs of successful future prospects.

Exhibit 7 **DMGROUP HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

Source: District Management Group.

Exhibit 8 **HIGH PERFORMANCE AND HIGH POTENTIAL ARE NOT THE SAME**

High Performers ≠ High Potentials

Only one in seven high performers ...

... is actually a high-potential employee

Source: SHL.

Evaluating High Performers

Certainly the "Past Performance" axis of the framework is the easier to define, measure, and evaluate than future potential. Yet, many districts struggle to identify even their current high-performing teachers and staff. In the 2009 report *The Widget Effect*, the New Teacher Project (TNTP) found that less than 1% of 15,000 teachers studied across 12 school districts in 4 states were rated "Unsatisfactory" in teacher effectiveness evaluations, even though the majority of administrators and teachers alike said they could identify a tenured teacher in their school who was a poor performer; likewise, a 2017 study that looked at teacher evaluations in 24 states found that only 3–4% of teachers were rated below "Proficient."[7]

If teacher evaluation systems are rating nearly all teachers as being proficient or satisfactory, how do districts identify who their high performers are? Accurately evaluating teacher performance entails a host of significant challenges, ranging from the choice of metrics, methods, and systems to their effective and equitable implementation within specific district cultures. Some guidelines do emerge, however, from the experiences of many districts, including those that have attempted to implement pay-for-performance compensation systems such as Denver Public Schools (CO), Houston Independent School District (TX), Baltimore City Public Schools (MD), Dallas Independent School District (TX), and Gwinnett County Public Schools (GA). For example, in Gwinnett County Public Schools, the district evaluates high-performing teachers using a mix of metrics and systems: an observation-based evaluation system, under which research-based teacher practices are assessed; relative and standards-based rankings of annual student achievement and growth data; and school-level assessments that combine student achievement, customer satisfaction, and school management measures. Other
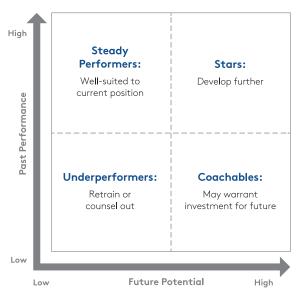
districts may use a variety of means to determine who their high-performing teachers are, while other key performance indicators are used to assess the performance of non-teaching staff.

Assessing Future Potential

While the theory—if not the execution—of effective teacher evaluation and other means of evaluating personnel performance is well understood by most districts, assessing future potential remains a murkier concept. The future potential of any given employee to become an effective organizational leader can be broken down into three component dimensions:

Exhibit 9 PERFORMANCE VS. POTENTIAL MATRIX

Where would you place your staff?
Where are you putting your time and effort?

Steady Performers:
Well-suited to current position

Stars:
Develop further

Underperformers:
Retrain or counsel out

Coachables:
May warrant investment for future

Past Performance — Low / High
Future Potential — Low / High

Source: District Management Group.

- **Ability:** Can the individual think and learn?
- **Aspiration:** Does the individual want to advance and become a leader?
- **Engagement:** Does the individual relate to and motivate peers and colleagues?

Ability: President John F. Kennedy once said that "leadership and learning are indispensable to each other," and it is this insight that is captured by the *ability* dimension of an employee's future potential. *Ability* involves the distinct but related traits of cognitive ability and learning skills.

- "Cognitive ability" refers to an individual's capacity to engage in strategic thought leadership—a person's raw analytical horsepower. Strong cognitive ability encompasses logical and effective analysis of underlying issues in a given domain and the capacity to develop and test hypotheses about causes and effects. It also includes a consistent use of creative and innovative thinking to solve problems.

- "Learning skills" refer to an individual's routine demonstration of a capability to learn and master new knowledge and skills of greater complexity. Can the person gain insights quickly and flexibly? Can the individual pick up new concepts at any time and in any place, not only in one or two preferred learning settings? Those with high learning skill quickly recognize patterns, enabling them to anticipate and resolve analytic roadblocks.

Aspiration: High-potential individuals not only must have intellectual and learning ability, they must also *aspire* to excel and become leaders. Some strong performers are content in their current positions or are precluded by personal or other reasons from committing to a leadership path. *Aspiration* reflects high-potential leaders' drive to

apply their abilities toward acquiring the skills to take on greater responsibilities. Indicators of *aspiration* include:

- Strong work ethic

- Resilience

- Ambition to advance higher in the organization

- Enjoyment derived from working in fast-paced, multi-tasking environments

- Eagerness for more responsibility

- Opportunity to exercise, influence, and shape how things get done

- Desire for increased autonomy

- Will and motivation to do whatever it takes to get the job done—willingness to sacrifice

- Willingness to take on extra duties or assignments without being prompted to do so

Engagement: Every bit as important as ability and aspiration is *engagement*—the dimension of potential that encompasses a high-potential leader's cultivation of meaningful, productive relationships with others in the organization and with the organization itself. The capacity to engage with others can be seen in the strength of the individual's interpersonal and social skills—the ability to build and maintain a strong network of contacts and alliances, to influence and persuade a range of different stakeholders, and to exhibit humility. Strong *engagement* typically correlates with high emotional intelligence (EQ) and an understanding of what drives and motivates others, along with cultural competency strengths. *Engagement* with the organization involves alignment with the
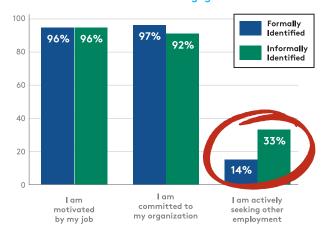
district's mission, values, and direction. It can mean putting the success of the organization above individual goals and showing a commitment to the organization's future and a desire to be a part of that future.

To Tell or Not to Tell

Talent management experts in the corporate world have long debated whether it is wise or beneficial to let high-potential leaders know that they have been identified as such. Some believe that as long as the organization knows who its high-potential employees are and develops them accordingly, there is no need to explicitly inform the individuals. However, research suggests that those who have been formally identified as high-potential leaders are more likely to think positively about their own future potential, which increases commitment and engagement while reducing the likelihood of their leaving for another job (see *Exhibit 10*).

Exhibit 10 **IMPACT OF IDENTIFYING HIGH-POTENTIAL LEADERS**

Commitment and Engagement

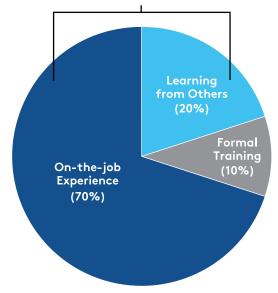Legend: Formally Identified (blue), Informally Identified (green)

- I am motivated by my job: 96% / 96%
- I am committed to my organization: 97% / 92%
- I am actively seeking other employment: 14% / 33%

Source: Campbell and Smith.

Exhibit 11 MORE EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO STAFF DEVELOPMENT

~90% of staff development should emphasize efforts outside of formal training

- Learning from Others (20%)
- Formal Training (10%)
- On-the-job Experience (70%)

Source: Rabin, Center for Creative Leadership.

Developing High-Potential Leaders

Once high-potential leaders have been identified, organizations need to proactively develop them to their full potential. Many organizations, including school districts, over-rely on professional development focused on formal training. Districts nationwide spend a combined $18 billion per year on teacher development, but it is unclear whether the spending on PD is leading to better-developed teachers, let alone future leaders. A more effective approach may be suggested by the 70-20-10 model created by researchers at the Center for Creative Leadership (see *Exhibit 11*), which recommends inverting the PD model so that 70% of development takes place through on-the-job learning, 20% is learned from others through coaching and mentoring, and just 10% takes place in a formal training context.[8]

By shifting the bulk of professional development efforts outside of formal training, districts give their high-potential leaders the chance to gain wisdom through experience. As Julius Caesar noted, "Experience is the teacher of all things." But that insight presents a challenge for many districts: when facing a near-term leadership need, how can districts afford to wait for their current high-potential employees to learn and gain wisdom from experience, which takes considerable time and investment?
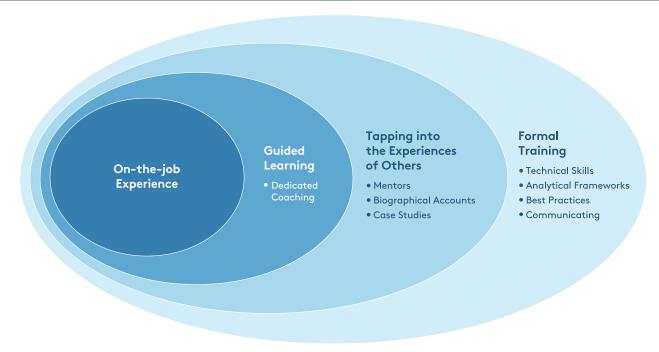
When filling current and anticipated leadership positions, districts have several options, each of which has relative advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the district could hire a leader from outside the organization, with the advantage of potentially filling the position much sooner and with an individual who is already prepared. The trade-off, however, is that the candidate is unknown, does not know the district, and, according to research, is more likely to fail than an internally promoted leader. On the other hand, the district could promote a current high-performing teacher, staff member, building leader, or administrator, which also has the appeal of quickly filling the position—but past performance does not always equate with future performance, and not all strong performers are capable of the growth and acquisition of new skills needed to succeed in a new role.

For many districts, the solution is to proactively cultivate a pipeline of high-potential leaders who can step up to take on leadership responsibilities as the district's needs arise. Districts must seek development strategies to accelerate the growth of high-potential employees and effectively prepare them more quickly for positions of greater responsibility. To that end, districts must establish a comprehensive, controlled learning and development environment focused on speeding high-potential leaders' path to readiness. Such an approach encompasses several key components: on-the-job experience coupled with guided learning in the form of dedicated coaching; tapping into the experiences of others by engaging with mentors, case studies, and even biographical and historical accounts; and formal training in the needed technical skills, analytical frameworks, best practices, and communications capabilities (see *Exhibit 12*).

> **Being an excellent teacher of young people may not translate into the potential to become an able leader of adults, and the ability to manage a school as a highly effective principal may or may not predict the ability to excel in a central office role.**

Exhibit 12 COMPONENTS OF HIGH-POTENTIAL LEADER DEVELOPMENT

On-the-job Experience

Guided Learning
• Dedicated Coaching

Tapping into the Experiences of Others
• Mentors
• Biographical Accounts
• Case Studies

Formal Training
• Technical Skills
• Analytical Frameworks
• Best Practices
• Communicating

Source: District Management Group.

On-the-Job Experience

There are multiple ways to enhance on-the-job responsibilities as a means of development, including job enlargement, job enrichment, and job rotation. Districts may employ innovative combinations of the three approaches to stretch and motivate high-potential individuals. The desired objective is to design job experiences in order to promote the development of skills, experience, and knowledge for the desired future role—and many of these approaches have no incremental cost for the district.

- **Job enlargement** – Widening the scope of the job:
  - Coaching, data team, or curriculum leadership positions for teachers (perhaps with stipends)
  - Adding additional responsibilities for operations or finance staff
  - Adding additional grade levels or geographies to responsibilities
- **Job rotation** – Taking on new tasks (perhaps temporarily):
  - School rotation
  - Geographic rotation
  - Grade-level rotation

- **Job enrichment** – Increasing the depth of job content:
  - Grade-level expansion (for instance, from K-5 to K-8)
  - Operations expansion (for instance, from food service operations to procurement or finance)

Coaching

Performance coaching aims to enhance the learning that high-potential employees gain on the job. Research shows that the ability to retain newly learned information and skills quickly deteriorates after learning occurs. Whether learning and development takes place in the course of doing daily work or in a formal training setting, most individuals lose 50% of that learning within an hour; after one week, just 10% of the knowledge is retained.[9] Performance coaching has proven to be a strong tool for improving learning: it can reduce learning loss and reinforce retention of critical lessons learned through experience. With effective coaching, individuals have been shown to retain up to 90% of the learning, even weeks after the lessons occurred (see *Exhibit 13*).

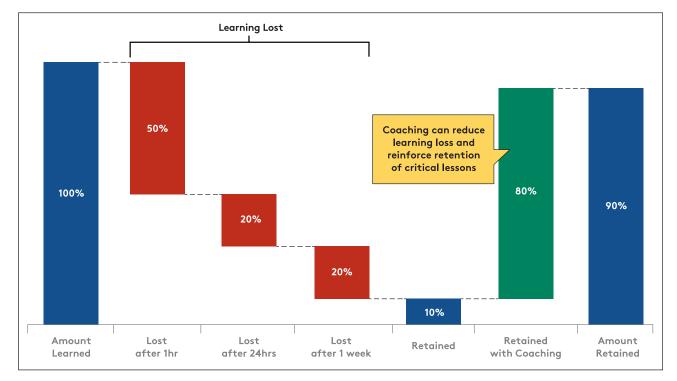Coaching high-potential leaders requires thoughtful planning and commitment from the coach to maximize

Exhibit 13 LEARNING AND RETENTION RATES: THE IMPACT OF COACHING

Source: Lueck; Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers, "The Coaching of Teaching," *Educational Leadership* 40, no. 1 (October 1982); DMGroup analysis.

effectiveness. Coaching is more than a role—it is a profession that requires a thorough and structured approach. Coaches provide identified high-potential individuals with the support required to target their specific needs, reinforce their learning, and achieve success. Coaching involves a continuous cycle that includes identifying needs, planning development goals and strategy, coaching to break down steps to success, observation and assessment to provide feedback, and reflection in order to review outcomes and identify next development steps.

Tapping into the Experiences of Others

While job enlargement, enrichment, or rotation can accelerate the process for high-potential leaders to gain relevant experience, it is impossible to learn everything from firsthand experience, and so growth-minded individuals often tap into the experiences of others. This process involves learning from the successes and failures of others; inquiring how to think, not what to think; building and strengthening analytical pattern-recognition skills; and enhancing cultural awareness and broadening horizons with different perspectives. Learning from others can include learning from the experiences of mentors and others whom the

individual knows personally or professionally. It can also encompass learning from strangers—for example, by reading memoirs or crowdsourcing wisdom.

Systematizing the High-Potential Leaders Development Pipeline

Once districts have established systems to identify high-potential leaders and created a dedicated development path to accelerate their growth, the final step is to create systems to maintain and improve upon the program. Districts must put in place metrics to measure the impact and success of their efforts. Too many organizations, including those in the private and not-for-profit sectors, fail to gather important data needed to track effectiveness and improve their talent management systems: 25% of organizations do not measure and assess their high-potential programs by closely tracking promotion rates, checking with employees to gauge their levels of engagement, or gathering data on retention and turnover rates. Tracking and analyzing such information to improve HR and talent management processes and systems is important not just for developing high-potential leaders, but for effectively managing the talented individuals throughout the organization.

After all, without the passion, dedication, and talent of its teachers, staff, and administrators, a school district cannot thrive and perform at a high level to deliver positive outcomes for students. It is therefore vital that districts have robust talent management strategies that align with and support the overall district strategy, including the theory of action—the beliefs that underlie how the district will tackle goals and accomplish priorities. Ultimately, the ability to execute the district strategy depends on the performance of the district's people. In order to ensure its people perform at their best and to their full potential, a district must ensure it has high-quality leadership at the top, both in the present moment and available to continue the district's efforts in the future. For that reason, developing high-potential leaders is an essential component of a robust talent strategy that supports staff and enables them to successfully deliver on the district's vision. ◆

NOTES

1. Richard M. Ingersoll, Elizabeth Merrill, Daniel Stuckey, and Gregory Collins, "Seven Trends: The Transformation of the Teaching Force, Updated October 2018," Research Report (#RR 2018–2), Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania, October 2018, update to report previously published April 2014, https://bit.ly/2G2b0KO.

2. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, Seymour Adler, and Robert B. Kaiser, "What Science Says About Identifying High-Potential Employees," *Harvard Business Review*, October 3, 2017, https://bit.ly/2xWFrwN.

3. Jason A. Grissom and Brendan Bartanen, "Strategic Retention: Principal Effectiveness and Teacher Turnover in Multiple-Measure Teacher Evaluation Systems," *American Educational Research Journal* (September 27, 2018).

4. William C. Byham and Paul R. Bernthal, "The Case for Internal Promotions," Development Dimensions International white paper, undated, https://bit.ly/2JZKIeK.

5. Michael Campbell and Roland Smith, "High-Potential Talent: A View from Inside the Leadership Pipeline," Center for Creative Leadership white paper, 2014, https://bit.ly/2Vapz2Z.

6. *How to Reduce Risk and Realize More Value from Your HIPO Program*, SHL ebook, 2018, https://bit.ly/2WsFDNq.

7. Daniel Weisberg, Susan Sexton, Jennifer Mulhern, and David Keeling, *The Widget Effect* (Washington, DC: The New Teacher Project, 2009); Matthew A. Kraft and Allison F. Gilmour, "Revisiting the Widget Effect: Teacher Evaluations and the Distribution of Teacher Effectiveness," Educational Researcher 46, no. 5 (2017).

8. See, for example, Ron Rabin, "Blended Learning for Leadership: The CCL Approach," Center for Creative Leadership white paper, 2014, https://bit.ly/2ofm64t.

9. Shane Lueck, "Hijack Learning Retention Rates by Teaching Learners to Fish," *eLearning* blog, Dashe & Thomson, June 27, 2017, https://bit.ly/2WzRWHX.

DMGroup's Breakthrough Team Approach:
Building Leadership Capacity and Getting Results

DMGroup's Breakthrough Team Approach is a fast-paced way to activate on-the-job learning and build leadership capacity while making measurable progress on pressing district challenges.

How the Breakthrough Team Approach works:

- Districts or schools typically launch multiple teams simultaneously, with each team composed of a cross-functional group of five to seven members.

- Each breakthrough team identifies a performance objective to achieve within a short time frame of approximately 10 weeks.

- Based on the performance objective, teams formulate SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Aggressive yet Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) that are highly specific and relevant to the team members.

- Teams then test innovative strategies, track weekly progress, learn quickly from successes and failures, and iterate in rapid cycles to achieve results.

- Just-in-time performance coaching and targeted professional development help team members develop the skills needed to address challenges and overcome obstacles.

Breakthrough Teams achieve results for the district while building skills and leadership capacity. Participating in the Breakthrough Team Approach provides on-the-job experience, targeted professional development, and coaching to build meaningful and enduring skills.

For a more in-depth look at the Breakthrough Team Approach, see "Unlocking Leadership Capacity: The Breakthrough Team Approach" in *District Management Journal* 24 (Fall 2018).