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Root Cause Analysis

ELP 681 SEM A: Curriculum and Instructional Leadership

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During my tenure at the Erie 1 BOCES, I have noticed the difficulty over the last five years to hire talented, skilled professionals in the trades to teach high school students. When teaching positions are vacated or a new program is created, positions are posted for new instructors. Through the trades, NYS Ed requires candidates to have three years of industry experience before being eligible to earn a CTE Transitional A certificate. With starting teacher salaries in the \$40,000s it is difficult for a person who has three years of trade experience to leave their stable job and return to college to earn their CTE teaching certificate. Sitting on hiring teams to fill vacant positions, I have observed that on average there are less than three candidates that make it to the interview stage. When one of the candidates is offered the position, many want to challenge the salary or walk away from the opportunity feeling the compensation is too low compared to what they are earning in their industry. When a teacher accepts the position, often these individuals may not make it to tenure returning to their industry to resume their previous role at higher pay in a more familiar role. In the past three years, five out of eight new teachers hired have not stayed to meet their tenure goal. Researching this problem led me to the Root Cause of the lack of individuals wanting to leave the trades to join CTE Education.

The goal of my Driver Diagram is how to market teaching to trades workers who are qualified, skilled individuals that value the reward of preparing the future workforce assisting in closing the skills gap in WNY. The philosophy behind my solution, is to recruit industry professionals to CTE Centers to gain inspiration from youth who want to follow in their footsteps. I have often said that teaching is a calling. Most teachers do not teach for the money. In fact, this is a career that we earn more money in the years that are not as challenging as the untenured years of teaching. Enticing industry professionals to follow the calling to be an educator needs to start with connections and relationships. Our Work Based Learning team should add this to their goals when developing the connections with internship sites and job fairs. Through these connections, professionals should be invited into classes to connect with our passionate students to begin the desire to wanting to teach. This can also be done through teacher connections with graduates from their programs as well. Having these persons come into class and do demonstrations or co-teach small lessons with the teacher can help share the educational experience with someone who has never seen how rewarding teaching can be. Through Buffalo State University there is a CTE Graduate School. The same philosophy can be shared with this program. Inviting Graduate students in to work with teenagers to see their passion and the want to follow in their footsteps will inspire the next generation of teachers. Another way to attract individuals to working with youth is to create a Community Outreach Program where their classes help community groups with projects bringing the students from a CTE Center to the forefront of many conversations promoting the good that teaching the trades can have on a community. Promoting the centers, programs, and students to the community will drive interest. More professionals will be attracted to the positives of teaching the trades making a larger response to instructor postings.

When CTE teachers are hired, they need a support system to navigate leaving the industry and entering the world of education. A strong Intern/Mentor Program assists with the inner procedures of education but does not allow for teaching a new hire to be a teacher. Since the many changes in APPR, NYS Ed requirements and national assessments, it is clear new teachers need more support. My solution is a New Teacher Academic Group that has educators above the classroom teacher level helping to focus on educational strategies of classroom management, standards, self-care, and organization to assist these individuals with areas a mentor cannot get to through the time allotted in the Mentor/Intern program. With the creation of the Teach to Lead Program and NYS Education Transitional Certificate, CTE teachers are being hired with no classroom experience working with teenagers, no experience with an IEP or 504, and no knowledge of NYS Learning Standards or how to create a well thought out lesson plan to meet the needs of CTE students. Without the prior mentioned, new hires often struggle with classroom management, paperwork, discipline of students and creating a grading scale that is fair and equitable for all learners. Adding a level of academic support in these areas would assist a new hire without an Initial Teaching Certificate by assisting with differentiated instruction, understanding learning standards, creating valid assessment and fulfilling the requirements of an IEP or 504 which all feed into successful classroom management. While our New Teacher Focus Group gives new teachers a platform to share experiences and support other new teachers, it is not mandatory and new hires can be too overwhelmed to attend. One additional solve would be a Teacher Support Group where a safe space for all teachers to support each other within a building. Lifting and helping each other on tough days helps to create essential connections promoting an educational community where those around you have your back.

First, we need to grow the number of tradespeople that are interested in educating and training future members of the workforce. Next, we need to build relationships with communities and grow the passion for trained individuals to share their expertise with teenagers. This will take time, but once relationships and the idea of educating the workforce sets in, I believe more qualified individuals will apply for open teaching positions in the trades. With multi-levels of support persons for new hires, new teachers will become successful and stay on the job longer creating a better outcome for all students.