

***The Providence School District Proposal for Criterion-Based  
Hiring and Transfer and Need-Driven Instructional  
Assignments***

***Presented to the Rhode Island Commissioner of Education***

***April 7, 2009***

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## Introduction

The Providence School District has been ordered to develop a teacher job assignment, hiring and transfer process that is predicated upon the assignment of highly effective teachers to high-need classrooms. This proposal has been built on the following four core beliefs:

- (1) The Providence School District has among the most highly trained and effective teachers in the state of Rhode Island and it is incumbent upon the district to support their continued professional growth in critical areas.
- (2) The needs of students should be the driving force behind all structural, staffing, and instructional decisions.
- (3) Teacher hiring, transfer, and assignment policies must treat all teachers with professional respect.
- (4) Teachers, administrators, and students are all best served by a system that is driven by the principles of mutual consent.

This proposal is the culmination of a planning process that has included extensive research into best practice approaches from urban school districts throughout the county, as well as consultation with technical assistance organizations, and the Rhode Island Department of Education. Despite the concerted efforts to develop a comprehensive, research-based, appropriately tailored plan, this plan will require continuous consideration and revision to accommodate developments that are currently unforeseeable. Consequently, Providence views this proposal to be the first step in an 18-month planning process and the initiation of a teacher hiring, transfer, and assignment system that will require continuous revision throughout implementation.

This proposal – in concert with Providence’s adoption of an aligned instructional system -- has the potential to dramatically improve the quality of Providence’s teaching and learning culture and in so doing, affect the day-to-day business of teachers, building and district administrators, and human resources staff. The details of this proposal have been carefully reviewed for feasibility by both district staff and technical assistance organizations; all agree that implementing a new teacher job assignment, hiring and transfer process is at once challenging and utterly within our grasp. Providence embraces this challenge and the many dividends that successful implementation will yield for the students of Providence.

The Commissioner’s February 23, 2009 letter orders the Providence School District to develop a criterion-based hiring, assignment, and transfer process for all district staff. Though this order will eventually extend to all school-based employees, Providence has chosen to focus first on the processes that govern *teacher* hiring, transfer, and instructional assignment. This initial focus on teachers will be complemented with a simultaneous district commitment to stabilizing administrative transfers to the degree possible and reasonable within a mid-sized urban system. This proposal will be followed by additional submissions that serve the long-range goals of faculty stability, ensuring high-quality job fit, and system transparency.

## **Communication Plan**

### **Strategies and Related Objectives**

1. Ensure that all target audiences are aware of and understand the Commissioner's Order to develop a protocol for the assignment of highly effective staff to high-need schools and classrooms.
2. Ensure that all internal and external stakeholders are aware of the principles underlying the district's new hiring, transfer and assignment system.
3. Ensure that all internal stakeholders, particularly principals and teachers, are aware of and fully understand all components of the new hiring and assignment and how it will be implemented.

### **Target Audiences**

1. RI Department of Education
2. PPSD administrators, teachers and staff
3. Labor union's leadership
4. Elected officials, including the Mayor, City Council, Governor, General Assembly leadership, key staff members for all of the aforementioned
5. PPSD parents and families
6. Media outlets – print, radio, Web and television

### **Message(s) to be Communicated**

1. The Commissioner's Order is a legal document that that the school district is legally bound to execute.
2. The proposed hiring, transfer and instructional assignment system is better suited to meeting student need than the former system which was based on seniority only. The proposed system will result in better matches between teacher and position, and will result in a better teaching and learning environment driven by student need.
3. This proposal is the culmination of a planning process that has included extensive research into best practice approaches from urban school districts throughout the country, consultation with technical assistance organizations and the Rhode Island Department of Education.
4. Hiring and transfers will be made through a moderately centralized process of mutual consent, with both applicants and schools accepting assignment to vacant positions.
5. Experience remains an ingredient in hiring, transfer and instructional assignments, but is secondary to the needs of students.
6. Teacher mobility will significantly decrease due to improvements in the matching process and satisfaction with job placement.
7. Instructional assignments will be dynamic and driven primarily by the needs of students and the school, taking teacher preferences into account whenever possible.

*Communications Timeline and Tactics/Action Steps*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Tactics / Action Steps</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Week of March 23	Meet with PTU to discuss components of proposal and solicit their feedback, support of process.	Superintendent
	Informally brief the School Board and Mayor about the proposed new hiring, transfer and instructional assignment plan.	Superintendent
Week of March 30	Present draft to RIDE	Superintendent
Weeks of March 30 – April 10	Send an internal communication to all PPSD staff providing an overview of the proposed hiring, transfer and instructional systems and processes.	T&L Communications
	Post new hiring, transfer and instructional assignment plan on PPSD website	Communications
	Utilize media outlets to announce new hiring, transfer and instructional assignment plan to external stakeholders.	Superintendent Communications
	Send a communication to City Council and Providence Delegation of the General Assembly to ensure that they understand the factual basis of the changes to the hiring, transfer and assignment processes, including the benefits to student learning.	Supt/COS Communications
April 15- May 15	Following Commissioner’s approval, present new hiring, transfer and instructional assignment plan at the School Board meeting.	Superintendent
	In conjunction with the Providence Teachers’ Union, notify all teachers of the elements of the Commissioner’s Order and the district plan using a variety of communication media	Human Resources, Communications
	Meet with all principals to reiterate hiring and transfer system and needs-driven instructional assignments.	T&L
	Send weekly update emails to teachers, PTU, and principals on the status of the hiring, transfer and instructional assignments, informing them of what has been implemented and accomplished and issues arising.	T&L, Human Resources, Communications

## **Need-Driven Instructional Assignment Process**

### *Context*

Providence has been ordered to revise the process used to make instructional assignments of teachers to classrooms within each school. In response, Providence proposes a new process for staffing assignments that is driven, first and foremost, by student and school need. This new process, called “need-driven instructional assignments” will be implemented district-wide during the 2009-2010 academic year. The need-driven instructional assignment processes described in detail on the following pages will be used only for intra-building assignments and will not be used to reassign teachers to different schools.

Empowering district and building administrators to make appropriate, need-driven instructional assignments within their building is a vital step to ensure that students are being educated by highly effective and appropriately matched teachers. With the move toward multi-tiered instruction and the implementation of intensive interventions in core content areas, the importance of this staffing authority has become yet more acute.

While it is critical that all students are served by the best possible teacher, Providence places particular emphasis on the importance of matching highly-skilled teachers with relevant experience with high-need classrooms. Providing the highest quality support to students at greatest risk of academic failure is one of the most important obligations of the Providence School District, and one that can only be fully met through the ability to assign staff on the basis of student need.

Within the context of these proposed staffing procedures, the term “highly effective” is used to designate a teacher that has both experience and empirical success.

### *Parameters*

Need-driven instructional assignments shall rely upon professional judgment of the district and building administrators, which must be derived from data review and analysis and incorporate input from teacher preference sheets. Though building administrators will be empowered to exercise professional judgment making instructional assignments; they are responsible for demonstrating that all decisions meet one or more of the following criteria, in prioritized order:

***Priority Areas of the Need-Driven Instructional Assignments***

<b>Priority Area, in Order of Importance</b>	<b>Elements of the Priority Area</b>
<i>1. Prioritizing the staffing of high-need and/or specialty classrooms with highly effective and appropriately trained teachers</i>	Assignment practices that match: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly effective teachers to intervention classes</li> <li>• Teachers with specialized and relevant training to high need and specialty classrooms</li> <li>• Teachers with successful experience working with high need or specialty classrooms</li> </ul>
<i>2. Ensuring an appropriate, manageable, and equitable balance of course assignment between and amongst instructional staff</i>	Creation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher schedules that don't unreasonably assign large numbers of either intervention or advanced student groups to a single teacher</li> <li>• Teacher schedules that distribute the number and timing of administrative and preparatory periods on the basis of student and school need</li> </ul>
<i>3. Maintaining the staffing and overall integrity of established student cohorts or teams, should they pre-exist within a school</i>	Assignment practices that match: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers to classrooms that maintain adult/student relationships</li> <li>• Teachers within student cohorts to create or extend stability of long-term adult/student relationships</li> </ul>
<i>4. Consideration of teachers' programmatic preferences, as communicated through their preference sheets.</i>	Assignment practices that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take seriously the consideration of teachers' professional judgment and expertise in meeting student needs as expressed through preference sheets;</li> <li>• Honor preference sheets whenever such assignments are instructionally sound and coincide with student need</li> </ul>

These priority areas shall be the driving force behind instructional assignments. In no case shall principals make staffing decisions that are arbitrary, capricious, or driven by forces that are not clearly and demonstrably associated with these four priority areas in their stated order. To that end, all tools and processes developed to support need-driven instructional assignments will require transparency, objectivity, and professionalism on the part of all participants.

*Role of Teacher Preference Sheets*

Teacher preference sheets will remain an active part of the process used to make instructional assignments, and principals will honor them whenever the needs of students and the school coincide with the staff requests and experience. Teachers shall be given the opportunity to discuss their assignment requests with their principal.

*Secondary Teacher Preference Sheets and Assignment System*

At the secondary level, teacher preference sheets will be used to express teacher programmatic preferences by content area. The use of preference sheets shall not be construed as a means for either building administrators or teachers to circumvent the criterion-based hiring process in the event of building vacancy.

These preference sheets will be honored after or simultaneous to – but not before -- the four priority areas.

**PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT TEACHER PREFERENCE SHEET - HIGH SCHOOLS AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

This preference sheet is provided to all high school and middle school teachers for the purpose of informing class assignments as part of the need-driven instructional assignment process. Teachers who desire to register a preference should list the preferred subjects/levels in order of priority and submit this form to the Principal.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

Present Program by Subject and Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject(s) and Level(s) Preferred:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Other relevant information related to the match of my professional skills and the assignment requested: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In accordance with Article 8, Section 4-6, teachers shall indicate on their programming preference sheets whether they wish to teach during their unassigned period during the subsequent school year. Please indicate your preference:

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

This form is to be filled out in duplicate and returned to your Principal.



***Elementary Teacher Preference Sheets and Assignment System***

At the elementary level, teacher preference sheets will be used to express teacher programmatic preferences by grade level and classroom type. The use of preference sheets shall not be construed as a means for either building administrators or teachers to circumvent the criterion-based hiring process in the event of staffing vacancy.

These preference sheets will be honored after or simultaneous to – but not before -- the four priority areas.

**PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT TEACHER PREFERENCE SHEET - ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

This preference sheet is provided to all elementary school teachers for the purpose of informing class assignments as part of the need-driven instructional assignment process. Teachers who desire to register a preference should list the preferred grade levels and/or class types, in order of priority and submit this form to the Principal.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

Present Assignment - Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Span and Type of Class Preferred:

1. Grades Pre-K-K

Class Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Education General Setting:  Yes  No

Special Education in a Special Class:  Yes  No

2. Grades 1-2

Class Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Education General Setting:  Yes  No

Special Education in a Special Class:  Yes  No

2. Grades 3-4

Class Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Education General Setting:  Yes  No

Special Education in a Special Class:  Yes  No

3. Grades 5-6

Class Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Other relevant information related to the match of my professional skills and the assignment requested: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

This form is to be filled out in duplicate and returned to your Principal.

### *Midyear Assignment Changes*

With the implementation of intensive intervention programs, increasingly accurate and responsive diagnostic and progress-monitoring assessment instruments, and highly trained instructional staff, the Providence School District is facing ever-increasing complexity in the management of student placement in instructional groups. Across the system, staffing demands are increasingly linked to student movement between and amongst instructional groups, especially within intervention programs. Beyond intervention programs, Providence routinely faces substantial fluctuation in student enrollment. These conditions, both separately and taken together, can merit changes to teacher schedules and instructional assignment throughout the year.

This proposal provides a mechanism for building and district administrators to make justifiable changes to teacher instructional assignments and/or schedules based on a clear and demonstrable change in student educational needs and/or instructional groups, enrollment, or justifiable programmatic change. Though administrators will be granted authority to change teacher schedules at any point during the year, they will be required to:

1. Provide all affected teachers with no less than two weeks notice prior to implementing the schedule change, unless otherwise mandated by laws or regulations, such as those governing special education and other special populations;
2. Execute schedule changes on five week increments or at the quarter mark, whichever is earlier;
3. Provide a rationale for the schedule change; and
4. Be able to demonstrate that the change in instructional assignment or schedule is the result of fluctuations in student need and could not have been reasonably predicted and addressed through early and proactive planning.

The district will engage in an annual process of rebalancing of classrooms to ensure that staffing is commensurate with student enrollment and educational need. The enrollment analysis associated with rebalancing and any associated changes in staffing will be done no later than 20 instructional days after the first day of school. In rare cases, teachers may be displaced from classrooms that were consolidated; in this event, displaced teachers will become the building-based substitute. In the event that the building-based substitute position is already filled, the displaced teacher will be placed in the reserve pool and provided the opportunity to interview for new assignments through the criterion-based process. In the rare event that classroom rebalancing results in the displacement of a teacher from a building, the most junior teacher working under the same active certification and in the affected instructional area/grade level will be displaced into the reserve pool.

Need-driven instructional assignment processes are not intended to take the place of high quality, thoughtful, data-driven, and proactive planning on the part of building administrators. To that end, building administrators will continue to be held accountable for the creation of well-designed building schedules in the spring of each academic year. The provisions for fluid changes to instructional assignments shall not be remedy for poor planning and may only be enacted in the event of clear and reasonably unforeseeable fluctuations in student enrollment or academic need. In addition, the use of preference sheets or the processes associated with need-

driven instructional assignments shall not be misunderstood as a means for either building administrators or teachers to circumvent the criterion-based hiring process in the event of building vacancy.

*Timeline*

The current timeline for the establishment of course offerings and associated teacher schedules is not fully aligned with the demands of a dynamic, multi-tiered instructional environment that aggressively utilizes diagnostic assessments to determine student placement in intervention programs. Consequently, the need-driven instructional assignment process proposes reasonable adjustments to the contractually described timeline.

Date	Item
April 1st	Provide teachers with a list of course offerings/program of study
April 15th	Teachers return Preference Sheets to the Principal
No later than ten days prior to the end of the school year	Principals provide teachers with the names of the courses or grade level that the teacher will teach the following school year
No later than fifteen days prior to the beginning of the school year	Principals will provide teachers with the names of the courses or grade level that the teacher will teach including periods, advisory and/or homeroom.
No later than fifteen days prior to the beginning of the school year	Principals will provide teachers with their room assignment.

Mid-year vacancies resulting from resignations or retirements will be filled on a regular basis through the criterion-based process described on pages 11-26 of this document. The filling of positions will be managed to maximize the flexibility and minimize disruptions to instruction.

*The Appeals Process*

While the need-driven instructional assignment process is a management responsibility held by building and district administrators, Providence recognizes the importance of ensuring adequate, systemic protections to ensure that this authority is not abused, misconstrued, or overused.

Prior to the initiation of a formal appeals process, teachers shall be given the opportunity to discuss their assignments with their principal. In addition, prior to the start of a new school year or upon the event of a schedule change, teachers shall have the right to request a verbal and written explanation of the rationale resulting in their instructional assignment.

Building administrators will be responsible for providing an adequate explanation that clearly associates their decision with one or more of the priority areas. In the event of an unclear or unsatisfactory response, teachers will have the opportunity to appeal their assignment to the Superintendent or his/her designee through a fair, timely, and reasonable appeals process.

Teachers will be required to assume or retain their contested assignment until the conclusion of the appeals process.

Participants in the appeals process may include:

- (1) The Superintendent or his/her designee,
- (2) Appropriate district administrators, and
- (3) Human Resource personnel.

In the event that a teacher is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal process, she or he may appeal to the Providence School Board. If the teacher remains dissatisfied, he or she may then appeal the decision to the Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of the Commissioner. The decision rendered by the Commissioner is non-arbitable.

The appeals process has been designed to provide teachers with reasonable protection and remedy throughout the school year. This proposal removes the formal role of the school improvement team in adjudicating schedule changes during the school year. These core management responsibilities are ceded to the administrators. The removal of the role of the school improvement team from this management duty is driven in part by Rhode Island General Law, which specifically states that the school improvement team serves in an advisory capacity to the building administrator.

The Joint Providence Teacher's Union/Providence School Department Teacher Program Committee will continue to play an active role in the management and resolution of teacher appeals. However, the Joint Committee meeting shall not unduly delay school-based efforts to resolve the dispute or the placement of the teacher in the contested instructional assignment pending resolution through the process.

The above-described process will be used to make routine assignments of teachers to classrooms within their building and as such, will become part of standard operating procedure. However, the Superintendent shall retain the authority described in section 12-3.3 of the collective bargaining agreement, which reads, "No teacher shall be involuntarily transferred except at the discretion of the Superintendent."

#### *Associated Professional Development*

The need-driven instructional assignment process is predicated on administrator ability to create appropriate, reasonable, forward-thinking, and data-driven building schedules and associated teacher assignments and the Providence School District will provide professional development to support and ensure administrator readiness to implement this plan as it is intended.

## **Criterion-Based Hiring and Transfer**

This plan introduces a teacher hiring and assignment system that is predicated on mutual consent. Mutual consent systems have the potential to dramatically improve the educational climate for both students and teachers in urban settings. Providence's new system will empower building administrators, in conference with fully trained, school-based interview teams, to make their own hiring decisions. In collaboration with the Providence Teachers' Union, Providence has already accrued many years of experience with a related hiring model, which has been in effect at site-based managed schools. This new criterion-based system is grounded in many of the same core principles and adds the necessary rigor and centralized, systematic support necessary to bring the system to scale, district-wide.

Implementation will be complex for both teachers and district and building administrators and will eventually have a dramatic effect on the teaching and learning environment. Providence expects to face logistical, administrative, and organizational challenges. This system will be implemented in two stages. During the 2009-2010 year, criterion-based hiring will be in effect for the following Cohort 1 schools:

1. Veazie Street Elementary School
2. Carl Lauro Elementary School
3. Nathan Bishop Middle School
4. Oliver Hazard Perry Middle School
5. Hope High School
6. Providence Career and Technical Academy

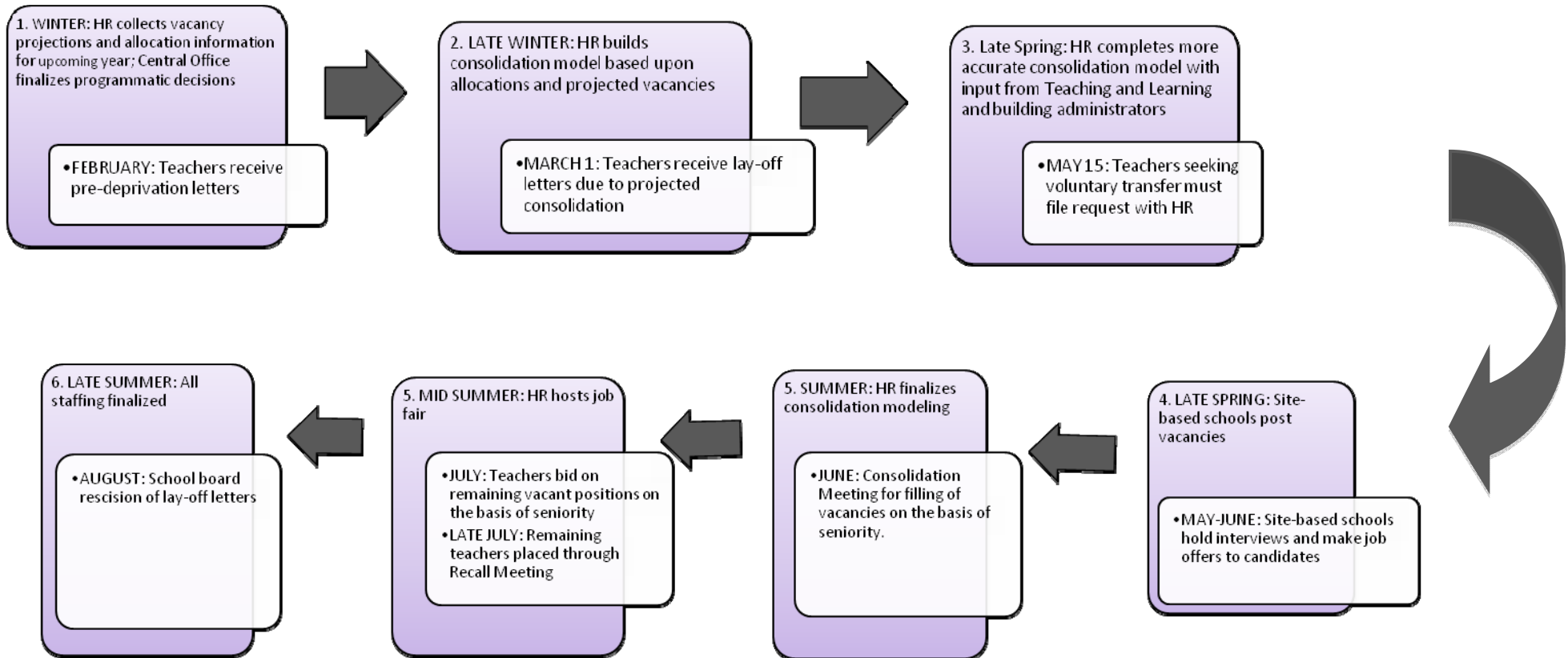
Over the course of implementation, the Providence School District anticipates that revisions, modifications, and system improvements will be necessary. These will be made on a continuous basis in anticipation of bringing criterion-based hiring to scale during the 2010-2011 academic year. The 2010-2011 year will have the benefit of both the improvements resulting from the experience of 2009-2010 and the use of a Web-based applicant tracking and processing tool that is currently being procured.

### *Evaluation of the Criterion-Based Hiring System*

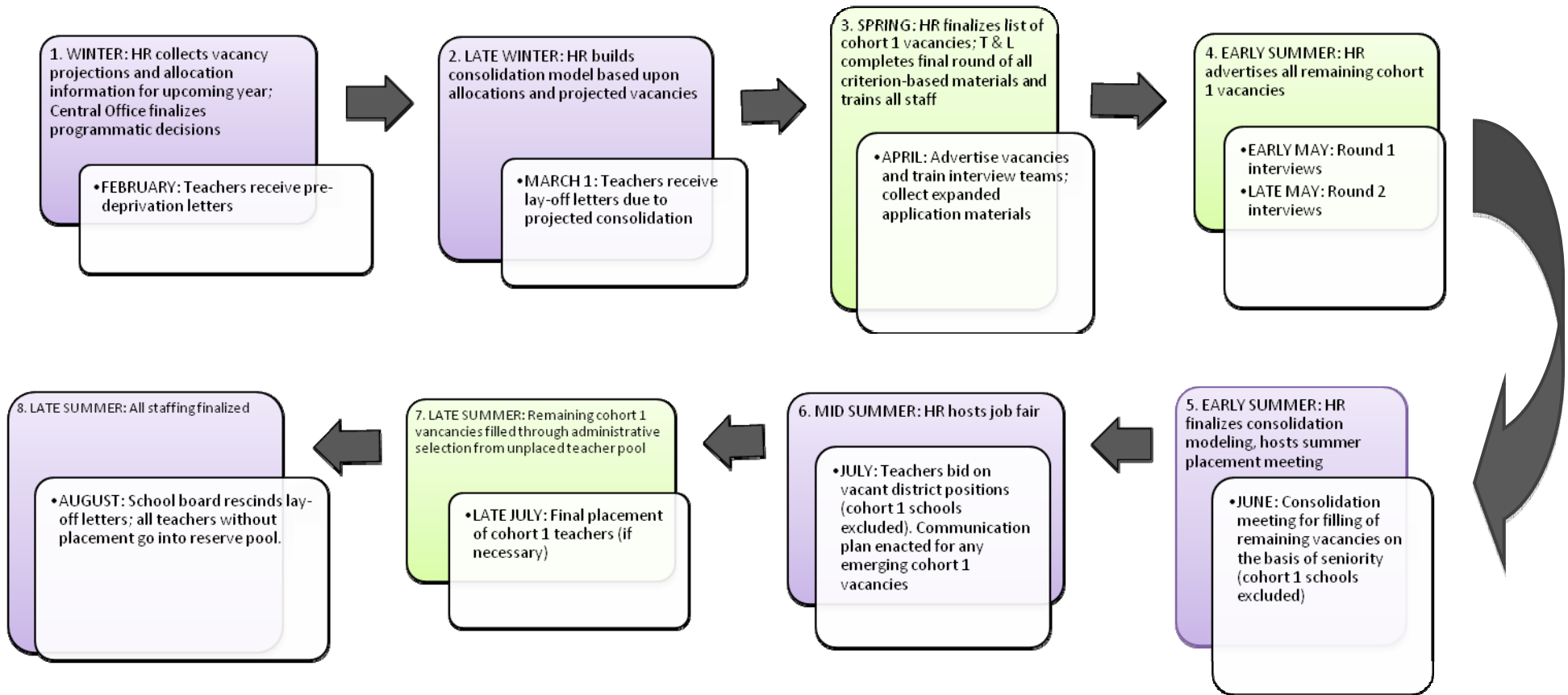
The implementation of the proposed system will be evaluated by a third party, independent evaluator to be appointed by the Commissioner.

The following pages provide detail on the two-year roll-out plan.

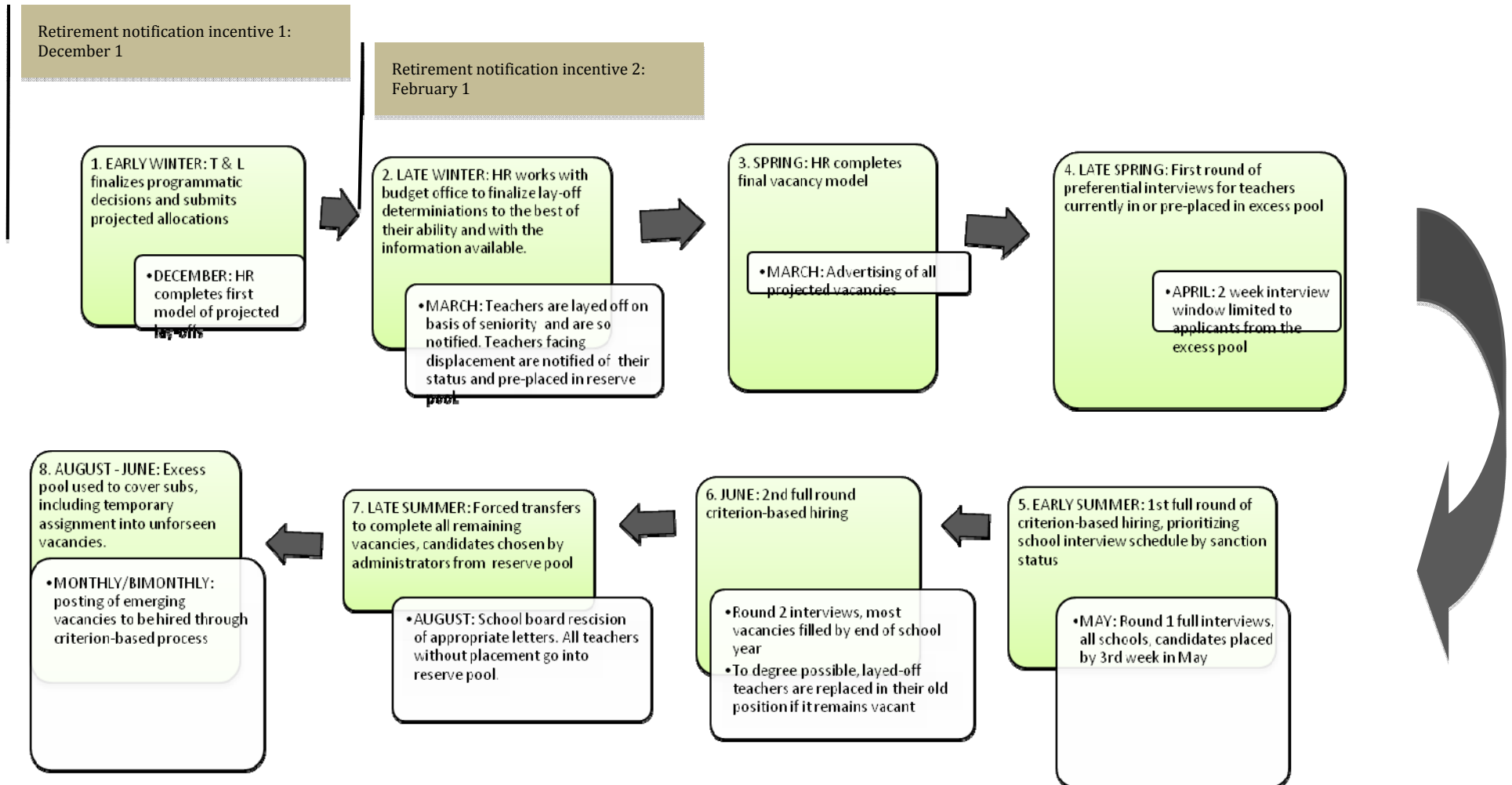
### Current Seniority-Based Process



**2009-2010 Bridge Year: Hybrid Criterion-Based Hiring/Seniority Based System  
(Preliminary Design Subject to Revision)**



**2010-2011 Year: Pure Criterion-Based Hiring  
(Preliminary Design Subject to Revision)**





## ***Required Application Materials***

### ***From the Applicant:***

Application materials provided by the applicant must include, but are not limited to, the following items<sup>1</sup>:

- (1) Cover letter that responds to a series of common and general prompts organized to reflect the criterion domains that will be used to consider and rank applicants;
- (2) Two current letters of professional reference: one from a colleague and one from a reference of the candidate's choosing;
- (3) Résumé;
- (4) For classroom teachers:
  - a. Three current one-page pieces of student work from a range of student proficiency levels, each annotated with a response to a set of common prompts about the lesson, student performance, and evaluation process,
- (5) For non-instructional PTU members:
  - a. A set of professional artifacts that are materially comparable to those required of instructional applicants,
- (6) A professional development portfolio, including MLP data and any relevant additional documentation such as the teacher I-Plan;
- (7) A copy of a parent communication transmitted by the applicant within the last twelve months; and
- (8) For external candidates, a completed application.

### ***From the Human Resources Department***

Human Resources will provide supplementary information to the applicant-submitted materials, which may include certification and credentialing information.

Human Resources will maintain full confidentiality of all sensitive personnel information.

Applicants who fail to submit a complete application in a timely manner will be deemed ineligible and will not be granted an interview. Human Resources staff will be responsible for timely notification to all applicants who have submitted incomplete applications.

### ***Training and Support for Providence Teachers***

The Providence School District and the Providence Teachers' Union will jointly provide for voluntary professional development sessions designed to help prepare teachers for participation in the criterion-based hiring process. These sessions may include topics such as portfolio development, résumé writing, and interview skills.

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<sup>1</sup> The district will make reasonable accommodations to select application items for applicants that with unique circumstances, instructional assignments, or persistent lack of an instructional assignment.

## *Interview Process*

### **Proposal for the 2009-2010 Year: A Moderately Centralized Hiring System**

This proposal recommends a moderately centralized, criterion-based hiring process for the 2009-2010 year and a largely decentralized process for the 2010-2011 academic year. Over a two-year period, this will transition Providence from a largely centralized system whose staffing is run primarily by Human Resources staff to a decentralized process that empowers building-level hiring committees to make the staffing decisions in the best interest of their schools and students.

**Application Process:** For the 2009-2010 year, Providence will not have a fully operational and comprehensive, Web-based application collection and tracking system. To ensure that the first year of implementation of criterion-based hiring for the six cohort 1 schools is feasible, Human Resources will need to maintain some centralization including:

1. External applicant vetting;
2. Review of internal and external applications for completion and communication with applicants regarding their status;
3. Transmittal of application packages to appropriate building administrators in preparation for the interview process;
4. Applicant notification about their employment status subsequent to interview.

**Interview Committee:** A standing interview committee consisting of no fewer than three individuals and no more than six individuals shall drive the criterion-based hiring system. The interview committee will be appointed from a pool of volunteers for the duration of the school year and chaired by the building principal. The members of the committee may include up to six members comprised of the building principal and:

1. two teachers appointed by the building principal;
2. two teachers from the school improvement team, and
3. a teacher leader at the secondary level or designated teacher at the elementary level.

The interview committee will serve in an advisory capacity and the building administrator must take the committee's recommendation into account when making final hiring decisions. A teacher leader (secondary) or designated teacher at the elementary level must be invited to serve on the interview team.

**Interview Process:** At the conclusion of the vacancy advertising window, Providence will host an interview fair, which will provide time, structure, and space for all eligible applicants to be interviewed by trained interview committees. All interviews will have the following common characteristics:

1. Standard length and format;
2. Use of a common, standard process and criterion-based instrument to gauge the appropriateness and "fit" of applicants;

3. Utilization of interview questions from a common, secure, district-approved “bank” of interview questions. The question bank will focus primarily upon the use of concrete scenarios, short model lessons, and other similarly designed “real-life simulations” designed to elicit observable behavior within the domains of the criterion-based system. The interview protocol will provide for school-specific questions that are not part of the district question bank.

This proposal does **not** provide for “on-the-spot” hiring, a common practice in large, wholly decentralized systems. Rather, this process will run for a full day or days and will conclude with an organized “check-out” system. All interviewed candidates will be required to complete a check-out process that includes:

1. All schools with whom they interviewed, including a rank ordering of the schools from which they would accept job offers; and
2. Evaluation instrument surveying their experience.

All interview committees will be required to complete a check-out process that includes:

1. Turning in all completed criterion-based instruments and associated notes;
2. Submission of a rank-ordered list of all interviewed applicants (by vacancy) to whom they would be willing to extend job offers; and
3. Evaluation instrument surveying their experience.

***Participation of District Charter Schools:*** Teaching staff in the district charter schools are members of the Providence Teachers’ Union; consequently, district charter schools will participate in the need-driven instructional assignment and criterion-based hiring process described in this document. Providence district administrators will collaborate with the leadership of the charter schools to ensure that the process is useful, fair, and effective within the charter schools and will make appropriate and reasonable accommodations if so requested.

***Job Assignment Process***

The job matching process is designed to honor rank-ordered job preferences of both building administrators and interviewed candidates through a transparent system. Like all other elements of the system, the needs of students and the school will be the driving force behind the job assignment process. However, all job assignments will honor the four guiding beliefs that undergird this proposal:

- (1) The Providence School District has among the most highly trained and effective teachers in state of Rhode Island and it is incumbent upon the district to support their continued professional growth in critical areas.
- (2) The needs of students should be the driving force behind all structural, staffing, and instructional decisions.
- (3) Teacher hiring, transfer, and assignment policies must treat all teachers with professional respect.
- (4) Teachers, administrators, and students are all best served by a system that is driven by the principles of mutual consent.

In most instances, no instructional assignments will be made without the consent of both the applicant and the building administrator. This consent will be collected and considered through the following process:

**Step 1** .....At the conclusion of each round of hiring interviews, Human Resources personnel will collect all “check-out sheets” from applicants and committee chairs.

**Step 2** .....Human Resources personnel and district administrators will gather to begin the process of assigning candidates to jobs based upon their check-out form. The process will match the expressed preferences of both applicants and schools through rounds. To the degree that is possible, this matching will attempt offer both schools and candidates their first choice selection. However, the district matching process will privilege the matching of highly trained, highly effective teachers to high need classrooms. Except in the rare instances provided for in “Step 5” no applicants or schools will be forced into transfer or hire that they have indicated to be unacceptable. Representatives from labor and the Rhode Island Department of Education may monitor this process.

**Step 3:**.....Continuing in rounds, all possible job assignments will be made. Except in the rare instances provided for in “Step 5”, no applicants or schools will be forced into transfer or hire that they have indicated to be unacceptable.

**Step 4:**.....Human resources will notify all applicants of their employment status as soon as possible and unplaced applicants and new or continued vacancies will be incorporated into the next scheduled round of interviews.

**Step 5:** .....In rare instances, and only at the conclusion of multiple rounds of interviewing, the district may be forced to fill the small number of continued vacancies through forced placement. This step will be necessary to ensure that the school year begins with every building fully staffed.

***Associated Commitments:*** Teachers accepting transfer must commit to working in their new

position for no less than the remainder of the academic year. The filling of positions will be managed to maximize the flexibility and minimize disruptions to instruction.

In the event that a teacher has received an unsatisfactory evaluation he or she will not be allowed to request voluntary transfer. This provision will go into effect only upon the implementation of a mutually acceptable teacher evaluation instrument.

This process has been designed to ensure complete transparency and include multiple stakeholders (including union representatives and RIDE-assigned monitor) to assure applicants and schools that all hiring decisions were handled with seriousness and professionalism and adhered to established protocols designed to govern the process.

## *Training for Interview Committees*

The criterion-based hiring and teacher transfer process has been designed as a transparent, fair, equitable, and standards-driven hiring system. In order to ensure that these characteristics are deeply embedded throughout the hiring process, all participants must be thoroughly trained prior to the onset of interviews. This training process will be extensive and informed by research, technical assistance providers, and include support and assistance from the Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Teacher Certification.

The training process will be a 4-6 hour training that will include the following elements:

### *Introduction*

1. Overall goals of the process and the research that undergirds criterion-based job assignment through an interview process;
2. Proposed roll-out plan and flow of the system; and
3. Importance of staff selection and its impact on student achievement.

### *Training on Professional Standards and Legal Responsibilities as a Member of a Hiring Committee*

1. Legal responsibilities and EEO standards;
2. Professionalism and confidentiality;
3. The role and purview of the committee; and
4. Conflicts of interest and expectations around recusal from service.

### *Domains, Strands, and Criterion*

1. Training on the domains, strands, and criterion and associated instruments;
2. Practice using the instruments; and
3. Exposure to sample questions from the interview bank, organized by domain.

### *Limited Simulation*

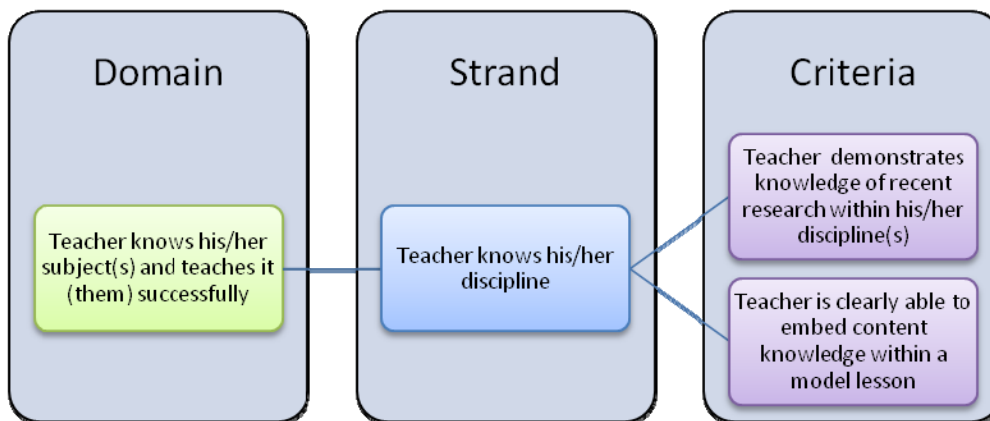
1. Shortened mock interviews to practice skills; and
2. Mini-calibration session to ensure consistency of instrument use by committee members.

No one will be allowed to serve on a committee unless they have completed the training. Interview training will not be paid, as service on an interview team will be considered voluntary.

## Proposed Criterion

Providence’s criterion-based hiring system design is derived from research-based and nationally benchmarked criterion sets that have been demonstrated to have predictive value in appropriately matching teachers and schools through the process of mutual consent. These criterion sets are organized under a series of broad domains that are also grounded in best practice across Providence’s urban peers.

The proposed criterion-based system is designed to be simple, clear, and intuitive for all participants of the interview-based process. The overarching design utilizes a three-level taxonomic structure that flows from largest to smallest: *domain, strand, criteria*.



### Domains

This proposal recommends five broad domains that have been synthesized from common elements drawn from the following well-respected state and national sources:

1. Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards;
2. Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leadership;
3. North Carolina Teacher Quality Standards;
4. National Board Standards (AFT Endorsed);
5. Chicago Teacher Standards (AFT District);
6. Wisconsin Teacher Standards (AFT District); and
7. Charlotte Danielson’s Research (PTU Endorsed)

Research indicates that teacher hiring and transfer processes are most successful when coupled with a fully articulated and high quality, teacher evaluation system. Providence is currently in the process of revising its teacher evaluation instruments. Consequently, the criterion-based hiring system is being built upon a series of domains that are research-based, nationally benchmarked,

and appropriately descriptive to bear the burden of a teacher selection process. Through the creation of domains derived from our urban peers, Providence will ensure that the criterion-based hiring system will require only retrofitting – not wholesale revision – at the conclusion of the development of the evaluation system.

### Strands

Within each domain, there will be several layers, or *strands* that provide specificity and contour to the larger domain. Like the domains, these strands are synthesized from regional and national teacher quality standards and tailored for appropriateness within an interview-based setting.

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Teachers know their subjects and teach them successfully</b>	<b>Standards Crosswalk</b>
<b>Strands</b>	Teachers are experienced in and committed to staying current in their discipline	RI 1 & 2, NC3, WI 1, IL 1, NB 2, CD 1a
	Teachers create interdisciplinary learning experiences	RI 1, NC4, CD 3c
	Teachers make instruction relevant to students using a variety of learning activities	NC 3, RI 5, CD 1f & 3b
	Teachers set clear rules	RI 6, CD 2d

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Teachers create culturally and developmentally-appropriate lessons for a diverse pool of learners</b>	<b>Standards Crosswalk</b>
<b>Strands</b>	Teachers have experience with and the ability to associate learning needs with instructional design that meets the current cognitive, social and personal needs of their students	RI3, NC2, WI 2 & 4, IL2, NB1, CD 1b & 2a
	Teachers create age-appropriate lessons and activities	RI 1, NC4
	Teachers demonstrate social and cultural understanding in their teaching	RI 1, NB3
	Teachers encourage culturally competent standards of behavior, positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation	RI 6, IL 5, CD 3d

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Teachers behave professionally as classroom managers, colleagues, and educational leaders</b>	<b>Standards Crosswalk</b>
<b>Strands</b>	Teachers interact with students, colleagues, parents, and others in a professional manner that is fair and equitable	RI 11, CD 4f & 4c
	Teachers lead in the classroom, in the school, and in the teaching profession	NC1
	Teachers maintain standards of professional conduct	IL 11
	Teachers seek the advice of others and draw on education research and scholarship to improve their practice	NB4, CD 4e



<b>Domain</b>	<b>Teachers utilize assessment data to guide instruction and plan for the future</b>	<b>Standards Crosswalk</b>
<b>Strands</b>	Teachers have experience with and/or knowledge about the use of formal and informal assessment strategies to determine the impact of instruction on learning, to provide feedback, and to plan future instruction	RI 9, IL8, WI8 RI 9, IL8, WI8, CD 1f & 4a
	Teachers reflect on their practice and assume responsibility for their own professional development	

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Teachers communicate well and are knowledgeable about and committed to the extended school community</b>	<b>Standards Crosswalk</b>
<b>Strands</b>	Teachers communicate well and foster relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community	RI7 & 8, WI 6 & 10, IL9, NB5, NC2, CD 4c
	Teachers work with specialists to develop alternative instructional strategies when needed	RI4
	Teachers are mindful of the principal objectives of their state, district, school and department	NB 3, CD 4d
	Teachers interact with students, colleagues, parents, and others in a professional manner that is fair and equitable	RI 11, CD 1d

### **Criteria**

Each domain and strand will be associated with criteria that will enable trained interview committees to make fair and reliable determinations about applicants seeking employment within their building. These criteria will be designed to focus on observable behaviors and educated inferences associated with the review of application materials.

### *The Proposed Providence School District Reserve Pool*

Effective for the 2011-2012 year, the reserve pool will be comprised of displaced teachers that fall into any of the following three categories.

1. Teachers that were consolidated out of positions and were not placed in a new position through the interview-based process;
2. Teachers that were in the substitute pool prior to summer of 2010; or
3. Teachers that have been consolidated out of positions mid-year and are awaiting the opportunity to participate in the criterion-based hiring process.

#### *Function of the Reserve Pool*

The reserve pool will provide employment for Providence teachers that have been displaced from their instructional assignment. The Providence School District will transition from the current substitute pool into a formal reserve pool incrementally, reaching full implementation in the 2010-2011 academic year. Teachers in the reserve pool will be deployed out to schools to meet the day-to-day substitute demands of the district. These assignments will include:

1. Short and long-term substitute assignments for typical teacher absences based upon teacher training, experience and certification; and
2. Temporary assignment to classrooms with unexpected vacancies, pending the filling of the vacancies through the criterion-based process.

In addition, the reserve pool will provide displaced teachers with a clear and supported pathway to return permanently to the classroom. Teachers in the reserve pool will retain the benefits detailed in current Providence Teachers' Union/Providence School District collective bargaining agreement.

#### *Placement of Teachers in the Reserve Pool*

Beginning in the 2010-2011 academic year, teachers would be consolidated out of eliminated classrooms based upon seniority both within their content area and within their building. Classroom eliminations in a single school will no longer affect the staffing in any other building or elsewhere in the district. This critical change will stabilize staffing district-wide through the elimination of cyclical, widespread bumping.

Teachers can be displaced into the reserve pool through the result of either (1) cyclical, anticipated programmatic changes, (2) mid-year, unanticipated programmatic changes, or (3) classroom rebalancing completed no more than 20 instructional days after the start of the school year.

Teachers facing displacement caused by *cyclical, anticipated programmatic* changes (e.g. building or classroom closures) will receive a displacement letter that "pre-places" them in the reserve pool. Displaced teachers receiving a displacement letter will not face loss of employment or termination, nor will they face immediate removal from their current position. Rather, they will complete the academic year and, at the same time, have the benefit of participating in a preferential hiring window to facilitate their placement in a new and appropriate instructional assignment.

Teachers facing mid-year displacement caused by unanticipated programmatic changes (e.g. changes in student instructional need or fluctuations in enrollment) shall be directly placed in the reserve pool. Schedule changes shall be executed on five-week increments or at the nearest quarter, whichever is first. However, teachers must be provided no less than two weeks notice. This direct placement is not a “pre-placement”; affected teachers will not retain their previous instructional assignment or any rights to a comparable position. No less than two weeks after notification of their displacement, affected teachers will be moved directly into the reserve pool. This two-week notification requirement and the five week transfer window must be waived when students with regulatory or statutory protections are affected. These displaced teachers will have the benefit of a preferential hiring window to speed their placement in a new and appropriate instructional assignment.

Teacher facing displacement as a result of classroom rebalancing shall be placed directly in the reserve pool with no less than two weeks notice subsequent to the determination to rebalance the classroom. This direct placement is not a “pre-placement”; affected teachers will not retain their previous instructional assignment or any rights to a comparable position. No less than two weeks after notification of their displacement, affected teachers will be moved directly into the reserve pool. This two-week notification requirement will only be waived when students with regulatory or statutory protections are affected. These displaced teachers will have the benefit of a preferential hiring window to speed their placement in a new and appropriate instructional assignment.

#### *Management of Staff in the Reserve Pool<sup>2</sup>*

The Providence School District has a professional commitment to full time instructional faculty, regardless of whether they hold a permanent instructional assignment or serve in the reserve pool. To that end, Providence will implement a series of measures to ensure that displaced, full time teachers serving in the reserve pool are treated as valued members of the district’s teaching and learning team and subject to reasonable expectations as professional job-seekers.

Providence’s support services will include:

1. A preferential early April hiring window during which building administrators with vacancies can begin interviewing candidates drawn exclusively from the reserve pool. This preferential hiring window will provide displaced teachers with the first opportunity receive a new permanent instructional assignment;
2. Professional development for building administrators to ensure that all clearly understand both the nature and function of the reserve pool and that placement in the reserve pool is unrelated to job performance.

In the event that a teacher is displaced from his/her classroom through an overreaching consolidation projection and on July 15, the following conditions are all met, the affected teacher(s) may return to his/her previous position through rescission of the displacement letter:

1. The position remains unchanged, active, and vacant;
2. The district confirms that the position will be active for the upcoming school year; and

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<sup>2</sup> These services and requirements will apply only to full time employees. They will not apply to per diem substitutes.

3. The displaced teacher has not accepted a transfer into another school through the criterion-based hiring process.

Displaced full time teachers serving in the reserve pool must actively seek employment through the criterion-based hiring process. If displaced teachers serving in the reserve pool are not successful obtaining a position during the first twelve-month period, they will be provided support services to improve their chances for obtaining a position in the district. These voluntary support services may include professional development, mentoring, and employment counseling by human resource personnel to speed their return to a permanent instructional assignment.

In rare instances, Providence retains the right to terminate teachers from the reserve pool through one of the following unusual circumstances:

- (1) A teacher's background and training no longer serve the needs of the district, no vacancies in that instructional field have become available in the 12 month period following their placement in the reserve pool, and the displaced teacher is not aggressively pursuing additional certification in a more relevant instructional area;
- (2) A teacher does not actively seek employment or participate in the criterion-based hiring process during a 24 month period, despite vacancy availability; or
- (3) Chronic and acute performance deficiency documented and managed through the teacher evaluation system and subject to the administrative requirements of due process.

#### *Reductions in Workforce*

If necessary, a teacher or teachers may be laid-off from the Providence teaching force due to overall workforce reduction will follow these guidelines:

1. Reductions to overall workforce will be made starting from the most junior teachers within the affected areas of certification in the reserve pool.
2. Teacher termination due to reduction in workforce will not necessarily provide affected teachers with two years of service in the reserve pool.
3. The district will carefully manage any workforce reductions to ensure compliance with state labor laws.

In the event that a teacher is laid-off directly from a permanent instructional assignment and the position remains active and vacant on July 15, the affected teacher will be replaced in their previous position without the requirement of hiring through the criterion-based system.

### **Timeline for Submission of Additional Materials**

The Providence School District will continue to submit additional documents pertaining to this process as they are developed. The following timeline will guide ongoing submissions.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>
Early May	Criterion-Based Interview Materials, including interview packets, member instructions, etc
Mid May	Training modules for committee members
Mid May	Detailed process and protocols governing interview rounds
Mid May	Human resource materials and process for collecting and handling applications

## **Appendices**

## *Appendix I: Commissioner's Order #1*

### 1. Protocol for the Assignment of Highly Effective Staff to High Need Schools and Classrooms

PPSD will introduce and implement incrementally criterion-based hiring and job assignment processes that are driven by student need rather than by seniority. The criterion-based hiring system will fill all vacant positions with candidates selected through district-managed interview process. A detailed description of the criterion-based hiring process, the district-managed interview process, communication strategies with staff, and the two-year time-frame for incremental phases will be submitted to RIDE for review no later than March 16, 2009. The two-year plan shall identify the schools that are to be included in the incremental phases and provide a time-line for when the criterion-based hiring process will be district-wide. This list shall include six schools at a minimum, with at least two schools from each level of the system (elementary, middle, and high) that are in the furthest level of sanction status, including two new schools (i.e., Nathan Bishop Middle School and the Providence Career and Technical Center) that will open in 2009-2010. These schools were closed because of insufficient student performance over long periods of time and/or the lack of viable career and technical programs that meet state standards. In addition to criterion-based hiring, staffing procedures in all schools in 2009-2010 will adhere to the following: (a) administrators shall make justifiable staffing and schedule changes throughout the academic year in response to changes in student enrollment or instructional need; and (b) instructional assignments, including but not limited to grade level and courses, shall be driven by student needs first rather than by weight of teacher preference sheets. Existing processes that exist in contractual language and/or school operations (e.g. school-based SITs and/or joint PSD/PTU program committee) that impede these practices, or that prevent compliance with applicable law, shall be removed or modified.

This plan was written by the Providence School District and approved by the Commissioner of Education. To that end, the Commissioner's authority compels the Providence School District to implement the terms of the approved plan and "the current contractual practices that prevent compliance shall be removed or waived."

*Appendix 2: Projected Scope of 2009-2010 Implementation, Cohort 1 Schools*

Implementation of the criterion-based hiring system for the cohort 1 schools is projected to include hiring for the following vacancies, by school:

Veazie Street Elementary School: .....	1 vacancy
Carl Lauro Elementary School: .....	12 vacancies
Oliver Hazard Perry Middle School: .....	19 vacancies
Nathan Bishop Middle School: .....	All positions
Hope High School: .....	66 vacancies*
Providence Career and Technical Academy: .....	All positions

\* The large number of vacancies at Hope High School are the result of the now-expired Commissioner's Order. These vacancies will not be incorporated into the criterion-based hiring process for 2009-2010 year, as they affect teachers that were previously hired through an interview-based, building-driven hiring process.



*Appendix 3: Teacher Hiring and Transfer Glossary*

<b>Consolidated Position</b>	A position that was eliminated from the active teaching force due to a decline in student enrollment or a change in programs. Positions – not people – are consolidated
<b>Criterion-based hiring</b>	Hiring decisions made through the use of a transparent, standards-based and criterion-grounded set of interview protocols and review instruments
<b>Displaced</b>	Employee of the district without an instructional placement and who is serving in the reserve pool as a substitute pending a new instructional placement
<b>Reserve Pool</b>	The category (or pool) of displaced teachers who are awaiting appointment to new positions through the criterion-based hiring process. Teachers in the reserve pool remain members in active standing in accordance with the terms of the collective bargaining agreement
<b>Forced Transfer</b>	Teachers moving between positions without the consent of either the school or the teacher; also known as “involuntary transfer”
<b>Hard-to-Fill Area</b>	Teaching positions that are difficult to fill, typically including teachers with certification/endorsement in math, physics, chemistry, technical educators, special education and English Language Learner instruction
<b>Incumbent candidate</b>	Employee of the district with an instructional placement seeking a new position (voluntary transfers)
<b>Involuntary transfer</b>	Teachers moving between positions without the consent of either the school or the teacher; also known as “forced transfer”
<b>Lay-Off</b>	Teachers who have had (or have been notified that) their employment in the district will be discontinued due to an overall reduction in workforce
<b>Mutual Consent</b>	Interview/criterion-based hiring that requires both teacher and administrator to agree to transfer (site-based hiring privileges)
<b>Need-Driven Instructional Assignments</b>	The process of making instructional assignments within buildings using a process that prioritizes the needs of students and the school and takes teacher assignment requests (made through preference sheets) into consideration whenever possible and appropriate
<b>Outside candidate</b>	Candidate seeking employment in the Providence School District who is not a member of the bargaining unit
<b>Preference Sheet</b>	Form completed by all teachers that is used to communicate teacher programming preferences
<b>Seniority-based hiring</b>	Hiring processes that are driven primarily by removing/placing teachers in jobs on the basis of seniority
<b>Vacancy</b>	Any active teaching position that is not filled with a permanent teacher hired through the criterion-based process
<b>Voluntary transfer</b>	Teachers seeking a transfer out of their current school and into another school