**BEST PRACTICES: STAFFING**
**Updated January 18, 2016**

The National Summer Learning Association reports "research consistently shows that effective summer learning programs – those able to achieve youth outcomes – are staffed by high quality staff." (Source: ***Summer Starts in September***)

Plan and recruit early to attract high quality staff for your summer program.

Many of the staffing best practices in this section are specific to the context of the **Summer Learning Project**, which employs a mix of academics and enrichment over a 4-6 week period. Organizations that utilize a different program model should consider customizing these staffing best practices to their own context, at their own discretion.

## A. Clear & Effective Hiring Process

Hale Reservation, a member of the Boston Summer Learning Community since 2011, reminds us of the importance of establishing a clear and effective hiring process (for hiring teachers and/or enrichment staff). Check out their **1-pager** for quick tips to set up your organization for hiring success.

## B. Strategic Recruitment

Recruiting the right staff person for a position is a matter of thoughtful planning and clear communication. These strategies will help your program recruit and hire the best people to lead your summer program.

**Leverage School Partnerships**
- If your program recruits students from local schools, ask school administrators to recommend teaching staff candidates, especially if your program focuses on academic outcomes.
- Place staff recruitment materials (see next bullet) in the teacher's lounge or in teacher mailboxes.

**Targeted Recruitment Materials**
- Create a flyer to post at local schools, or to disseminate through your organization's hiring, e-newsletter and/or social media channels. Check out a **sample staff recruitment flyer** for ideas for your program's outreach to candidates.

- Ensure the flyer is easy to read, well organized, and highlights aspects of the program that are beneficial for teachers (i.e. professional development opportunities, etc.).
- Include contact information or a link to apply.

**Job Description**

Site coordinators are the lead staff for program management and daily operations. This position works closely with senior leadership and program staff to ensure program goals are met. The details of this position vary by site context.

See this **sample site coordinator job description** for sample duties and qualifications. This sample description assumes the site coordinator is an instructional leader on site, and works in conjunction with a lead enrichment staff person. The details of this position can be customized per site context and per site goals.

If your site includes academic instruction, consider hiring certified academic teachers and paraprofessionals. A **sample teacher job description** can be found here, and check out here for a **sample paraprofessional job description**.

In job descriptions, be sure to include information pertaining to:
- Duties and responsibilities
- Schedule
- Qualifications/requirements
- Payment information
- Necessary contract to ensure roles/responsibilities are fulfilled

**Terms of Employment**

Create a clear and concise document outlining guidelines for teacher hiring, oversight and supervision, to inform program hiring and to include in hiring materials.

Consider including topics such as:
- The individual to whom teachers directly report
- The individual(s) responsible for tracking teachers' work hours
- Staff attendance policy, complete with policy for missing work days
- Required dates for orientation, workshops and/or trainings (in spring and summer)
- Schedule for teacher pay (bi-weekly, monthly, etc.)
- Attach job description, outlining roles/responsibilities

## C. Ongoing Support for Staff

Offering professional development and ongoing support is a key way to attract and retain high quality staff.

Pre-summer professional development topics can include:
- Curriculum planning
- Student engagement and family engagement
- Student behavior management
- CPR and First Aid
- On-site planning/classroom set up, allowing all staff to meet each other and prepare program space in advance of program start

In the Boston Summer Learning Community, many organizations utilize data trends collected from the prior year to inform staff professional development. If a program struggled in specific domains in the prior summer (examples: offering youth leadership opportunities or building positive relationships between staff and youth), program leaders will focus on these areas in staff trainings the following spring to improve performance and program quality. The Phillips Brooks House Association, a member of the Boston Summer Learning Community since 2013, **presented on its approach** to using data to improve staff training at the February 2015 Summer Learning Summit.

During summer, programs allot time each week for staff (in some cases, teachers and enrichment staff) to jointly plan.

This joint planning time can be complemented with formal performance feedback to further provide ongoing support to staff. Hale Reservation's day camp serves thousands of students each summer in Westwood, MA. Check out their **staff accountability** and **staff assessment** rubrics, focused on setting expectations, conducting formal observations and check-ins, and helping staff succeed in summer.

Sites with a formal focus on academics may also provide feedback to teachers about summer instruction. Boston Public Schools presented on this topic at a May 2015 Summer Learning Community institute. Check out **their insights** into this important topic in our Summer Insight library, under the section entitled "Site Manager Summer Institute: Workshop 2".