

This week, I finish the series I began two weeks ago reporting on the results of a study of our teacher hiring processes as conducted by the consultants from K12 HR Solutions.

The issue of fairness is one that arises around this topic so we asked the consultants to address it. The consultants noted that there are two categories of fairness: process fairness and outcome fairness.

Outcome fairness “is derived from perceptions of equity in outcomes. In the selection processes, outcome fairness can be challenging to manage.” “If an organization has a large pool of applicants, but only a few positions, it is likely many applicants will feel the outcome was unfair, regardless of the process used.” “Further research on applicants’ perceptions of fairness related to job selection outcomes suggests that an individual’s personality may be large contributor to overall perceptions of outcome fairness.”

So, essentially there will always be people who believe the process is unfair based on who we hire. Since that perception is largely a function of personality, there is not much we can do about it. Process fairness, however, is the “procedural justice of selection procedures.” “Process fairness can be managed by providing applicants with upfront information regarding the selection process or events, expected job related tasks and KSAs and ensuring selection practice share a level of face validity.” “Research has consistently found that hiring practices are viewed as fair when they are perceived as relevant to the job and when applicants feel they can demonstrate their abilities. (Anderson, Born, & Cunningham-Snell, 2001)”

The consultants concluded their section on fairness with the following: “Managing overall perceptions of fairness, both process and outcome, can be difficult. GMSD should focus their attention on using the guidelines outlined through this report to promote perceptions of process fairness, ensure all selection practices are executed with fidelity, and continually verify that all events in the selection process are job related.”

So, we will be focusing on the process. As you read the first week of this series, the consultant felt our system is good and did not recommend a major overhaul; however, we are making some tweaks that will “promote reliability, perceptions of fairness and confidentiality”

The best way to describe the tweaks we’ve made is to say that everything we do in the hiring process will be aligned to the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching (required teacher evaluation instrument of PA) and the most important KSAs (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities) as identified by our Job Analysis. All scoring forms are “anchored” in those two documents.

We increased the specificity of our scoring instruments by writing detailed rubrics (what does a score of 1 mean, a 2 mean, etc. for each item). We also inserted benchmarks that describe what elements a correct answer should contain for each level of scoring. The level of detail now provided in our scoring instruments will increase the reliability (would the process result in the same person each time) and having everything linked to the Job Analysis and PA teaching framework insures process fairness. (Asking a candidate to do or answer anything not related to the job begins to weaken process fairness.) The anchoring and specificity now inserted into our evaluations also protect us from any potential legal action taken against us.

For many years, we have utilized teachers on our staff to help us select their future colleagues. The consultants state, “Current methods used to select new GMSD staff members incorporated the use of incumbent teachers . . . Overall, K12 HR feels this has been a beneficial practice and has likely contributed to highly favorable ratings . . . related to “fit.”

Indeed, we have benefitted greatly from our teachers who have volunteered to help us in the hiring process. One challenge, though, is that when expanding the number of people

involved, managing confidentiality is more difficult. The consultants gave us a number of elements to incorporate into our process that will help with this challenge. Now, only the principal and superintendent will know who is to be recommended to the board for hiring.

As I said when I started this series, teacher hiring is one of the “opposable thumbs” situations that always has tension present. I feel that bringing in outside experts was extremely helpful for taking what was a good system and making it excellent. We are looking forward to implementing this new process for next year’s hirings.