

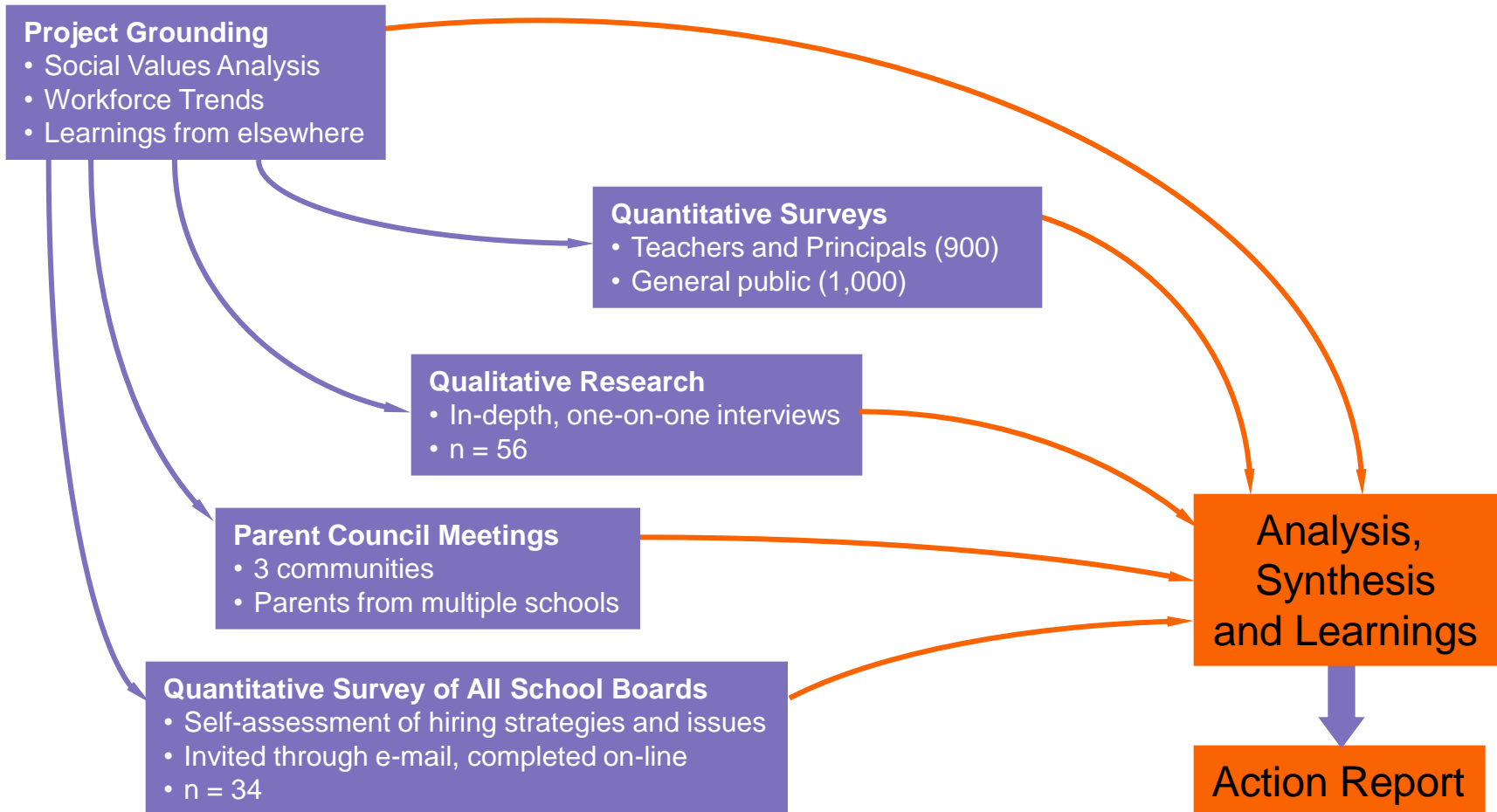
Market Analysis of the Teacher Workforce in Alberta

Preliminary Learnings and Initial Strategic Directions
DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

April 30, 2010



Methodology



Qualitative Research Segments

One-hour long, in-depth, one-on-one telephone interviews

School Superintendents	8
School District HR	6
Principals	6
Educators (Deans & Professors)	6
Teachers	
• early career	6
• mid-career	6
• recently left teaching	6
Students	
• pursuing an Education degree	6
• in other post-secondary, teaching interest	6

Current project status

Background research review and Social Values Analysis complete.

School board self-assessment complete.

Teacher and principal survey completed and being analyzed.

A few teacher in-depth interviews remain to be completed.

Parent council meetings scheduled for April 26 - May 12.

- Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray and Brooks

Public survey in field.



The Social Values of Alberta Teachers



Introduction to Social Values

Social values defined as deep beliefs or broad orientations toward fundamental aspects of living in the world. Social values are:

- A person's mental posture or fundamental world view that sets the context in which they react to situations, events, opportunities and challenges
- Shaped by one's upbringing, family life, schooling, community and cultural influences
- Can evolve slowly over time through education and life experiences

Social Values and Employment

Conformity & Exclusion

Outer-Directed

Inner-Directed

Social Success, Materialism and Pride

- Job/title represents status/identity
- Moderate skills, moderate control over work
- Prefer hierarchical environments
- “To get ahead you have to work hard and pay your dues”

Security, Stability and Exclusion

- Job is just a source of (low) income
- Fewer FT/PT, more at home/students
- Few skills, little control over work
- “I’m just a cog in the wheel, working for the weekend”

Experience and Personal Development

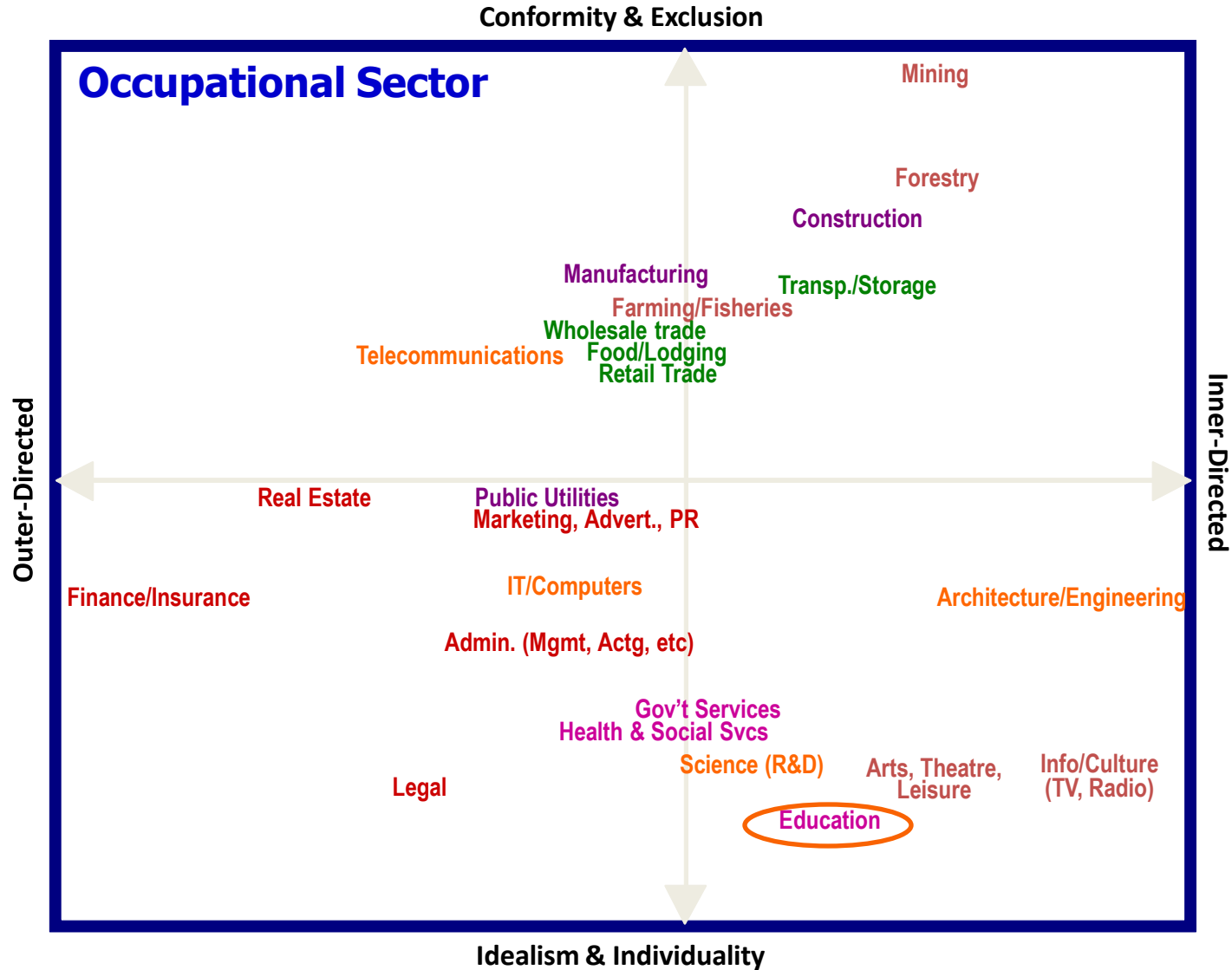
- Job is an opportunity to create/experience
- Highly skilled, higher control over work
- Prefer high paced, action-oriented teams
- “Wait till the client sees this!”

Autonomy and Well-being

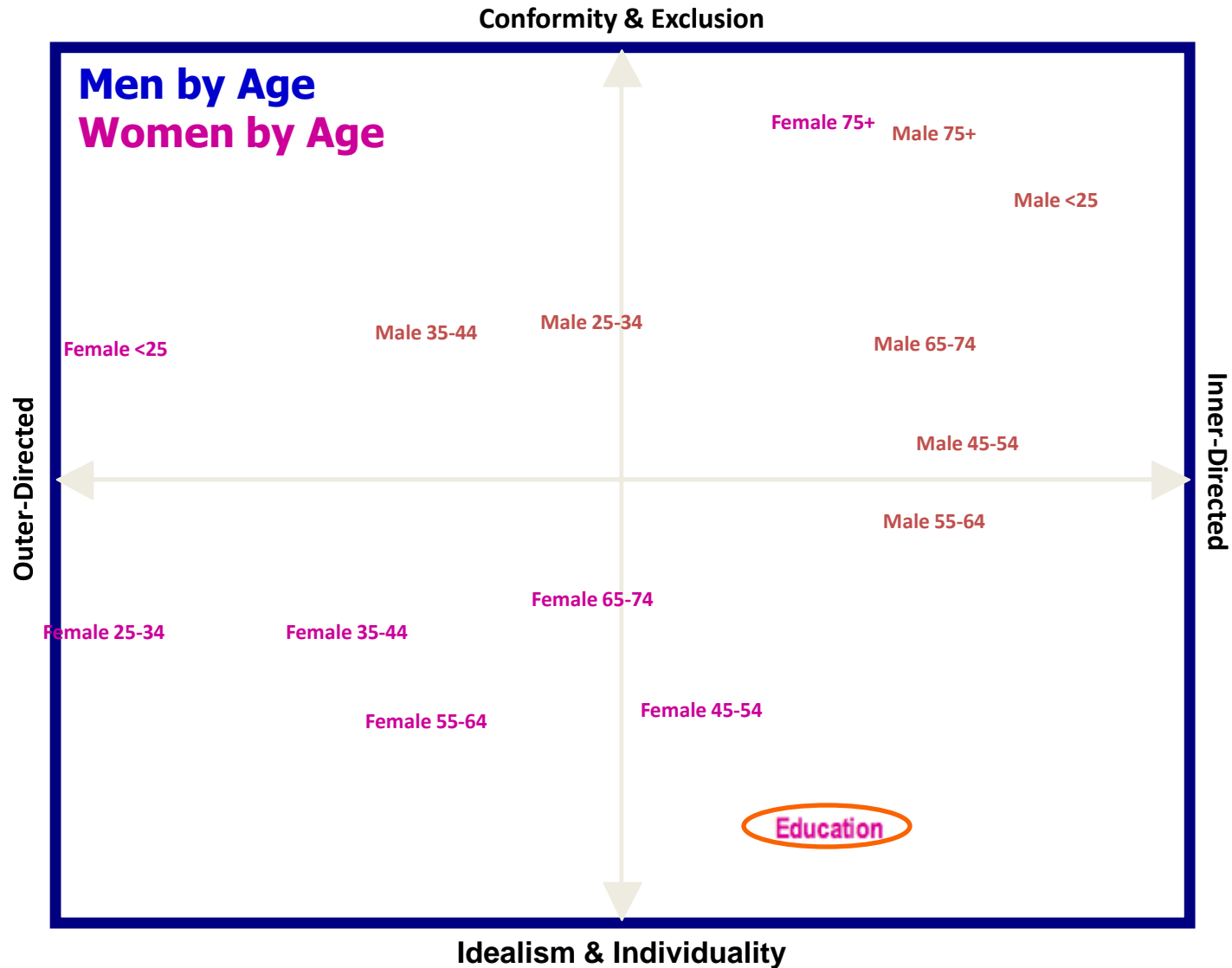
- Job is an opportunity to learn/grow
- Highly skilled, work independently
- Work must be personally/socially meaningful
- “Titles mean nothing – it’s what you *do* that matters

Idealism & Individuality

Sectors of employment



Age & Gender



Teachers' Values

A strong need to invest their professional lives with meaning and to find personal fulfilment through their work.

A need to feel that their work is useful to others and has social value.

Teachers tend to invest their entire lives with meaning or goals, and to regularly reflect on these goals.

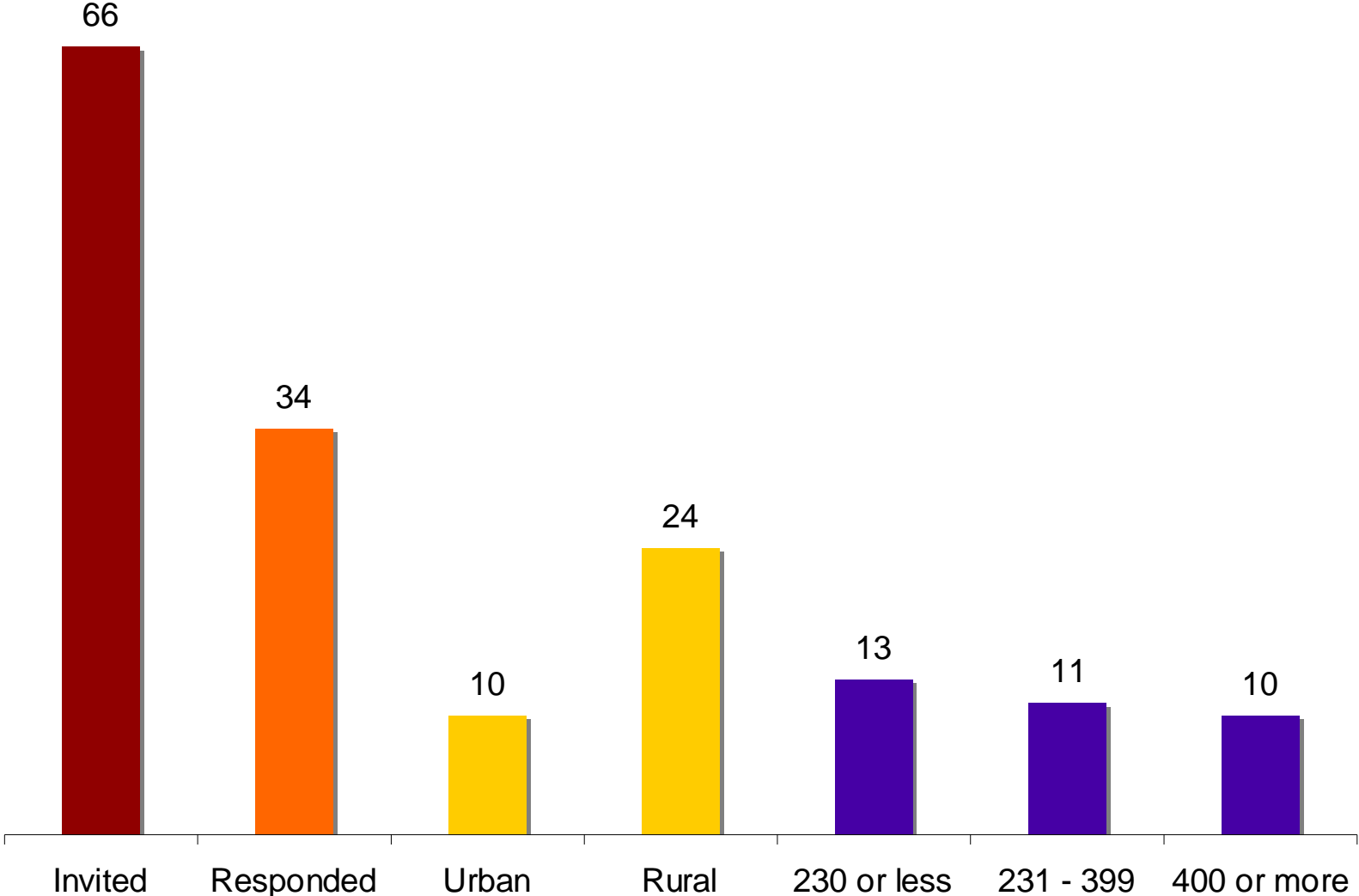
A strong need for frank, warm and spontaneous relationships with people as well as a need for communication and deep, affective exchanges with others.



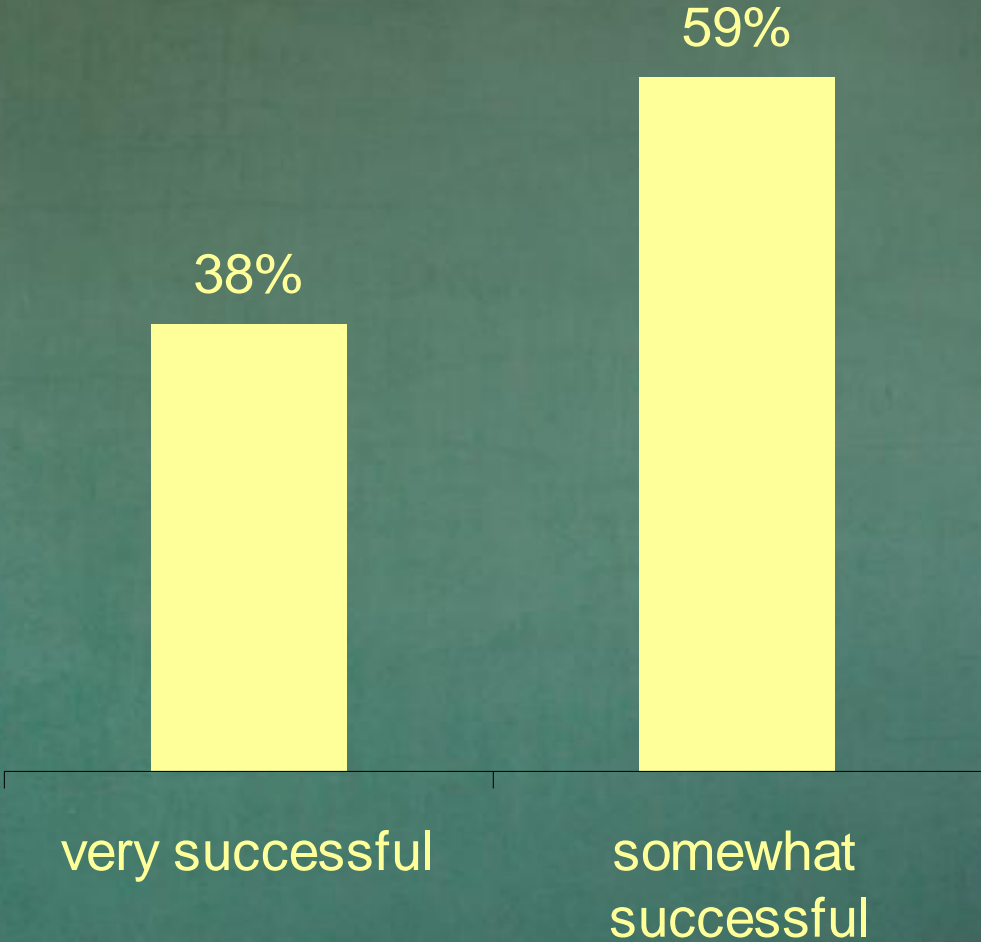
School Board Self-assessment Survey



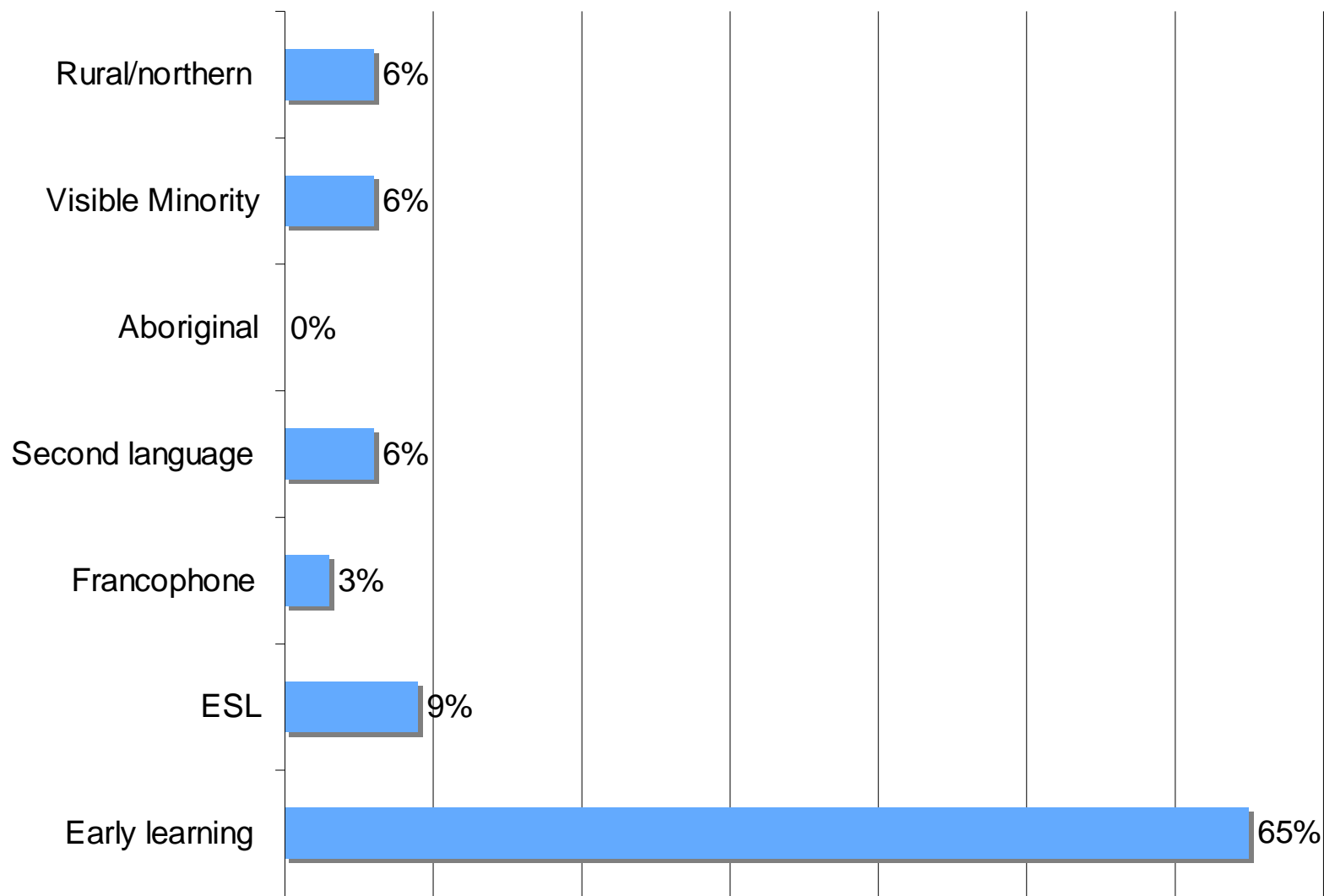
Survey participation



Recruitment – Current Situation



Where recruiting is very successful...



Emerging recruiting challenges

Recruiting challenges are only expected to get moderately more challenging in 3 - 5 years.

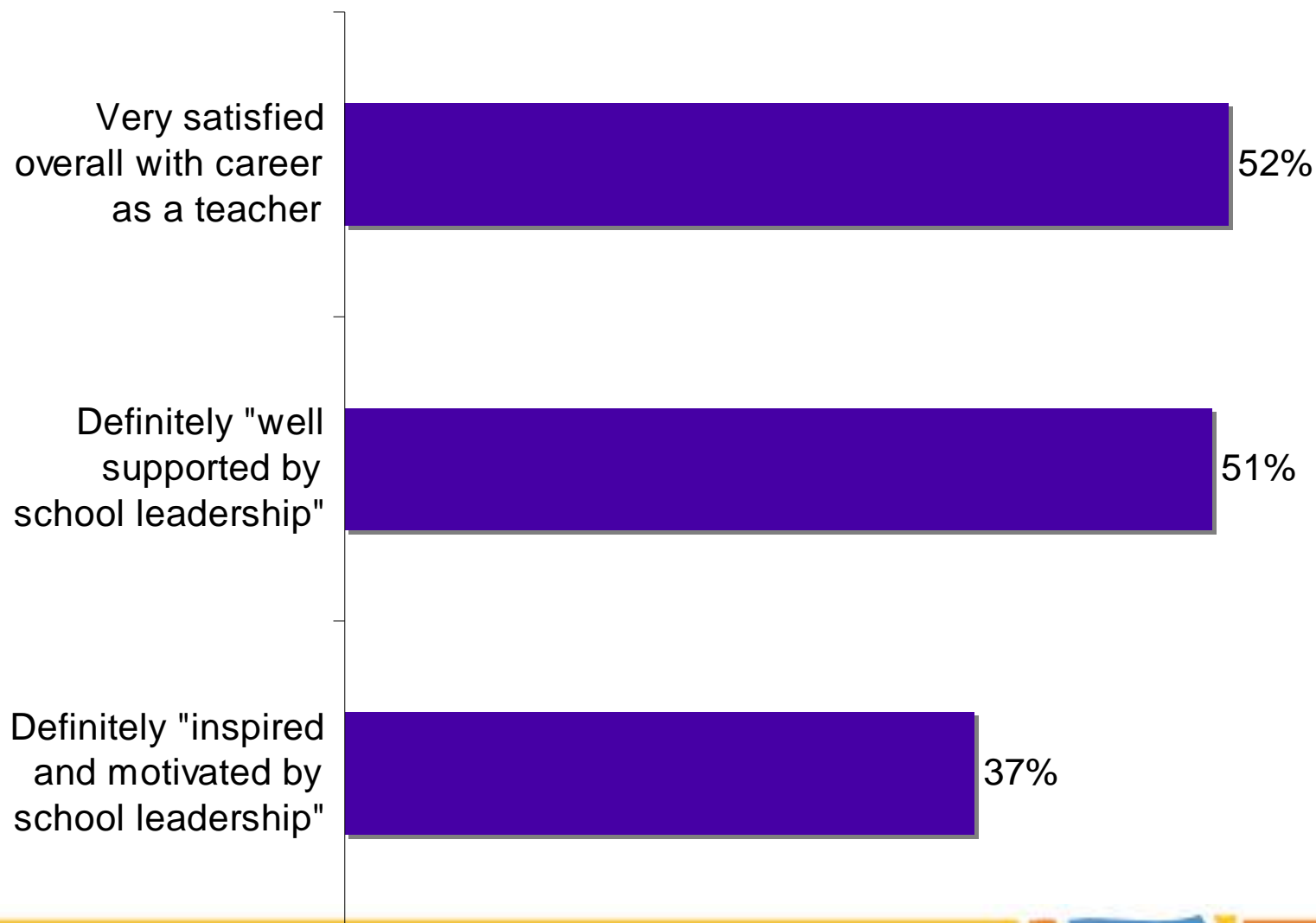
Areas of moderate concern are

- Math and science
- Second language positions
- ESL teachers
- Special education

Staffing teachers of FNIM heritage also a consistent challenge



A snapshot of teacher and principal perspectives - is this good enough?



Insights from In-Depth Interviews



Little urgency about the workforce challenge

A lot of jurisdictions just don't see a big problem; think they will be just fine.

We are small urban jurisdiction in a part of Alberta where people tend to want to be and when they get teaching jobs they want to stay. We have relative small turnover. So recruitment is not difficult.

More challenge in rural areas

I know how important it is to have teachers who are well trained and kept current. In our small communities, away from the major cities, we have to do everything to make sure the children are getting the same quality of education in any other community.

Attrition somewhat downplayed...

We have about 1% - 2 or 3 teachers that probably realize they made the wrong decision, and now they feel trapped, as a result, where do you go now with a Bachelor of Education? If they are not happy, the kids in the classroom are not happy either. We have to be better at counseling people out of the profession too.

Teachers and Teaching: Who are they and Why?



Motivations to become a teacher

Being a teacher is important.

Because I love children.

I love my subject and want to share it.

I was inspired by my teachers.

I discovered that I love teaching.



Discovering a love of teaching

... After a year and a half [studying science] I realized I was a square peg in round hole. I transferred to education and found I had found my niche. I finished off my B Ed and that is how I found to be there.

I unintentionally discovered a love of teaching.



De-motivations

My mom is a teacher, my uncle is a teacher, my great aunt was president of the ATA. It's in my family. It was always a first choice.



Teachers discourage teachers

More students reported being discouraged than encouraged to enter the profession.

When I was growing up, my parents told me not to be a teacher. They didn't push me in that direction.

I can't think of one person who has said yes go into teaching. I went back to my high school to say hi to my favorite teacher and she said "really, you want to be a teacher?"



Academics discourage teachers

Absolutely. In fact, a professor of mine who was something of a mentor, said “really, are you sure you don’t want to go to grad school?”

... my anthropology professor said I was the best student he ever had and when I said I was going into education, he said what a waste.

This is of particular concerns as the largest pool of potential new teachers in 3 – 5 years, may be in post-secondary education today.



Finding people in high needs areas



Strengths of a rural teaching career

There are benefits of being a teacher in rural Alberta that are not always well considered or well marketed:

For us specifically: plumbing the richness out of rural life and bringing it to articulation for recruitment... what is great about rural life and rural teaching... could make a difference for us...

I think that is what draws me to rural Alberta, schools are smaller and more intimate.

Opportunity

When you are in a small community there are probably opportunities that arrive more quickly than if you in a city.

Finding a place in the community

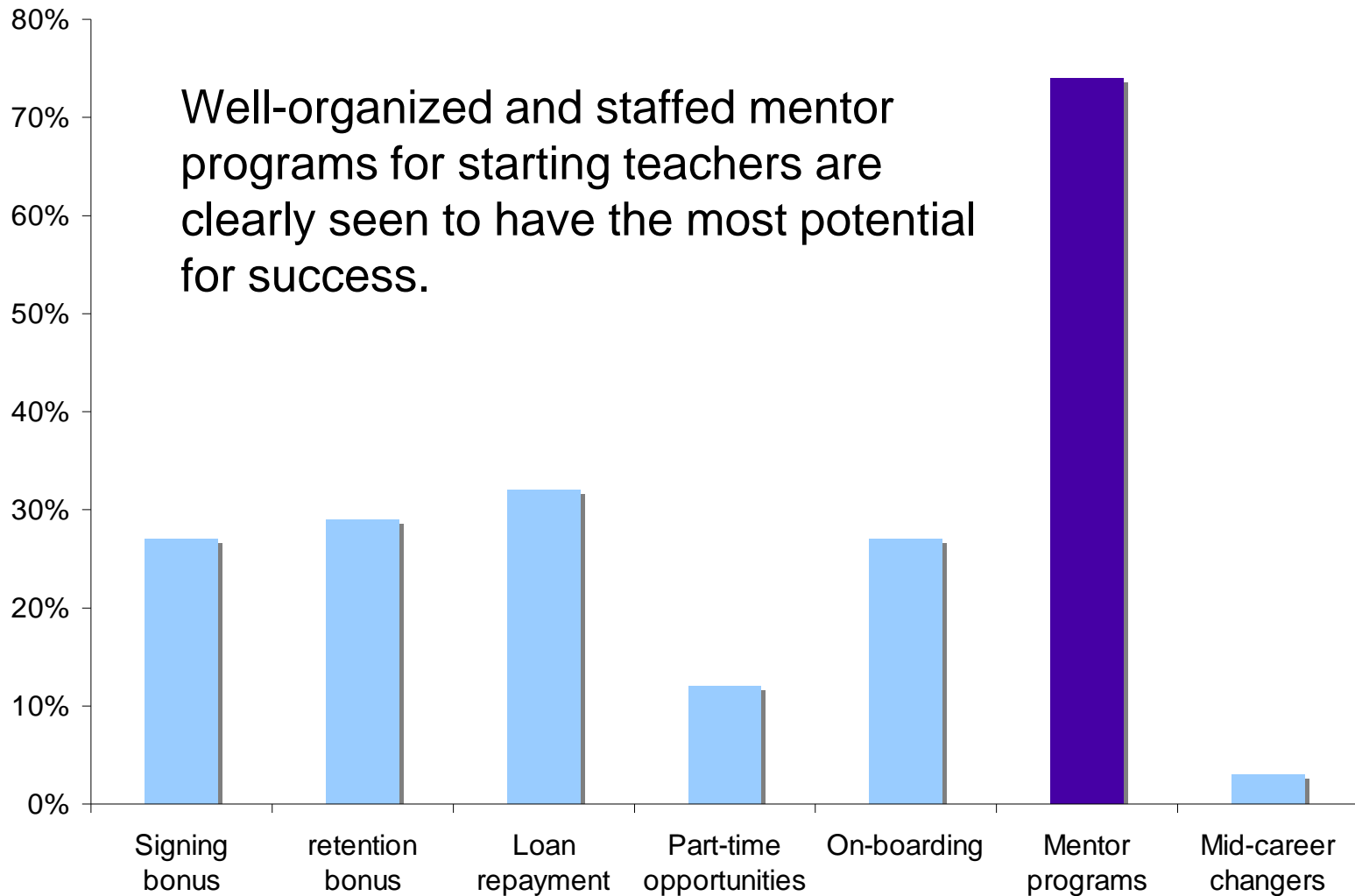
It is essential in small communities that new, young teaching professionals find a way to “belong” within the first couple of years.

Often when we hire staff, we hire single people. Their staying is dependent on whether or not they meet someone that they are going to marry and live in the community with.

Effective Recruitment and Retention Strategies



Potential strategies:



Word-of-mouth is an important recruiting tool

We have also found, if you want to hire new young teachers out of college, word of mouth is the best way. Teachers in our system will bring them to us. Get out teachers to advertise our school and division.

I think if teachers who are really interesting people can talk about it that will attract people. There are some really exciting things going on there. We need to highlight that.



Local teacher education

If more teacher education can be available in smaller communities, we are more likely to keep people in those communities.

We just have to focus on educating the people in the north. Métis, Natives – so they can be the leaders. Take the education to them. For a lot of people going to university is stressful, bring the education to them.

There is a project in Lloydminster where a cohort of students is on site there, rather than attending U of C. Almost without exception those students want to stay in their community... and if they went to Calgary they might not go back.

Mentoring works

There is a lot of reported success for mentoring programs. They should be refined and continued.

Chinook's Edge is doing really good work. And there are other districts that do. They are very concerned to help their teachers. Not just to have a mentor teacher, but trained mentor teachers. And to get the beginning teachers together. To have real support, and that administration is reminded what it is like to be a beginning teacher. It can be a very sink or swim profession.

Easing the first years

In addition to mentoring, other strategies have been recommended for easing the entry of teachers into the classroom.

Another thing we do is that schools still tend to give the worst assignments to the beginning teachers. The 22 year old teacher from out of province, gets hit with loads that are far too large.

We should create a system where a beginning teacher would be paid full time, but be given a .8 assignment. Just given more time. Maybe someone else's course to teach. We would never expect a doctor, or lawyer to hit the ground running, without their one year prep.

School Leadership



Importance of school leadership

In what ways do people inspire others in the school?

Support from school leaders is really important ... I don't think principals realize how important it is ... teachers need to feel connected to someone who provides stability, leadership and support.

At the school level, teachers can receive very important recognition.

Our teachers put in hundreds of hours doing the work in preparing the files for the system to look at. Our board said, we are going to give every teacher a \$10 Tim's card, it did more to build morale. It recognized their work.



Professional Development

Our board invests significant sums in professional development – the road to student success is paved with staff learning.

My first reaction is professional development support... more than ever before the profession is faced with a different world in terms of the kids we are teaching... the connected generation...



Image of the Profession



Reputation and Respect

The concepts of reputation and respect seem to get a bit mixed up. The reputation of education in Alberta is strong, particularly on an international scale. But teachers are looking for more respect from key constituencies.

I think it is fairly high, I know the Alberta education system is looked at world wide as an example, I think there are really good things about it, There is always room for improvement. But the overall reputation is really good.

Respect

Teachers are respected, everyone understands how important they are, but not in that people don't know what they actually do and how much they do.

I think for the most part, parents do have respect for the teachers.

Teachers would like more recognition that teaching is hard work

If all that teachers had to do was teach, it would be perfect, but between meetings and paperwork, the ratio of teaching to other stuff is crazy.

Respect from government?

The government is seen to send mixed messages about the importance of education

They can be cutting back and cutting back, and saying education is important. Overall, the education system in Alberta is a good one. I don't think people really think about it though.

I mean as far as the work force, you have to draw them in with respect. It has to be a profession of respect, if it is not respected by government, society is not going to respect it. Teaching is a profession, on par with doctors, responsible to the public.

Positioning teaching

Recruitment strategy should be about what rewards teaching brings to your life... revitalizing the great career that teaching is in people minds.



Challenge

Teaching should be seen as full of diverse challenges

I think you can always be challenged as a teacher, first of all you shouldn't teach the same grade for 20 years of your career... you are not challenging yourself, and you get bored. There are 13 grades you can teach, each has its challenges. If you teach all, you will never not be challenged. Try new things ...



and opportunity

Teaching needs to be seen as a vibrant profession, with lots of opportunities.

We have to be able to put out a public image of teaching as a vibrant profession, a profession that is full of energy, ideas and opportunity. To find a public face that focuses on the wonderful opportunities of the profession. It has to be a profession that people want to belong to. It shouldn't be hard to show that because it is there.

The challenge is to make it more exciting. It has to be seen as a vibrant, engaging profession. So many kids have sat in school and they don't want to be doing more of that right now.

Initial Strategic Considerations and Directions



Important, but not urgent

The attraction and retention of teachers is seen to be important, but not necessarily urgent.

- There is not the sense of urgency in regions that the forecasting numbers would suggest should exist.



Not a quantity issue

A better problem to solve may be to focus on attracting the best possible candidates, getting them high performing faster, keeping them engaged and learning longer.

This will increase the engagement of high performing teachers across the province, and it also will increase the overall teaching supply.



Focus on emotional attrition

Emotional
attrition

Too late

Physical
attrition

1. Start the new job with enthusiasm.
2. Question the decision to accept the job.
3. Think seriously about quitting.
4. Try to change things.
5. Resolve to quit.
6. Consider the cost of quitting.
7. Passively seek another job.
8. Prepare to actively seek.
9. Actively seek.
10. Get new job offer.
11. Quit to accept new job, quit without a job, or stay and disengage

(Branham, 2005)

Increase collaboration in smaller regions

Resources and economies of scale make recruitment and retention in large, urban boards extremely different than the challenges faced by smaller school jurisdictions.

Collaborating to create larger “employment zones” would allow smaller jurisdictions to

- Provide more career opportunities within a rural environment
- Invest in out-of-market recruitment more consistently
- Make offers earlier to candidates



Short-term Strategies

Focus on local school leadership

- Create strong learning communities
- Minimize early career attrition

Develop and execute a targeted positioning campaign

- Attract high-performing candidates by focusing on the challenge and opportunity presented by teaching.
- Promote teaching directly to post-secondary students through advertising and campus fairs.



Short-term Strategies

Have the profession promote teaching at high school job fairs.

Formalize mentoring programs for new teachers.

- Share best practice across the province.
- Develop specific mentoring training.



Medium-term Strategies

Make it easier for teachers to pursue job opportunities across different school regions in the province, particularly among the rural jurisdictions.

Create global learning communities. Develop partnerships with other jurisdictions around the world and encourage teachers to join these global learning communities.

Encourage more practicums in teacher preparation programs.



Medium-term Strategies

Rural retention

- Encourage a minimum 3 year initial placement in rural communities.
- Facilitate local community engagement.
- Work with parent councils to integrate new teachers into the community.
- Create community-based “learning communities” in small towns
- Schools as a centre for arts, culture and learning in the community

Expand professional development beyond the profession

- For high-school and university age tutors.
- For special needs caregivers.



Long-term Strategies

Create a high school course about “teaching and coaching”.

Create more satellite campus centres for teacher education, allowing students to learn to become teachers closer to their homes.



Discussion



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