

Module 002: Innovation for Teacher Retention

Leadership & Equity Strand

District Level

Charlotte, NC

Overview

This module features a simulation in which district leaders must plan and execute reforms to address a teacher retention crisis. Based on a case in Charlotte, NC where opportunity and achievement gaps persist for students in racial and linguistic minority groups, leaders must build effective coalitions among the many interest groups within the community to recruit more diverse teachers and leaders across the district.

Key Skills Developed

- Intercultural Competencies in Leadership
- Leading Professional Learning for Adults
- Recruitment for Diverse Teachers and Leader

Leadership Tools & Assessments

- Intercultural Development Index ([IDI](#))
- Talent Recruitment Plan

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (ISLLC 2015)

- 1) Mission, Vision, and Core Values
- 3) Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
- 6) Professional Capacity of School Personnel
- 7) Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

Case Background

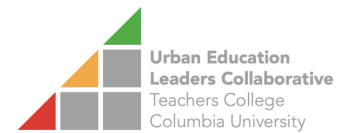


More than 100 educators and support staff from across North Carolina rallied in downtown Raleigh in 2014. Photo Credit: Robert Willett, [Charlotte Observer](#)

With a 2015-2016 operating budget of \$1.3 billion; a \$9,215 per pupil spending rate for 146,000 students; and a starting teacher salary of just over \$40,000 per year, leaders in Charlotte, NC are struggling to attract enough qualified teachers to fill the 9,000 teaching positions in the district.

In 2015 the teacher turnover rate reached a five-year high of 14.8 percent statewide in North Carolina, and a 12-year high of 16.5 percent in [Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools](#). Over 1,400 teacher left Charlotte classrooms last year alone. The district has a significant number of high-poverty schools with tough challenges and labeled

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as low-performing. With the presence of lower-stress, higher-paying schools in neighboring states, Charlotte schools are facing a teacher retention crisis. Last year, the school district even turned to population online classified sites to try and attract high qualified teachers from outside the region.

WSOC-TV-1 Video: [CMS Using Craigslist to Recruit Teachers](#)

In the midst of the record teacher turnover, the district has also been the focus of public scrutiny with regard to its inability to pass timely budgets. The district has approved raises for new teachers, and yet has been unable to pay teachers and teaching assistants.

WSOC-TV-1 Video: [CMS Leaders Approve Raises for Newer Teachers](#)

The district has also failed to secure achievement for students living in high-poverty neighborhoods in the city.

WSOC-TV-1 Video: [CMS Doubles Number of Schools with Low Performance Grades](#)

Project LIFT

In 2014, district and business partners announced a public-private partnership through [Public Impact \(PI\)](#) and [Education Resource Strategies \(ERS\)](#) to use innovative classroom re-design models that offer highly-effective teachers opportunities to advance in their careers without leaving the classroom. New teacher leadership models are expected to both positively impact academic achievement for students and attract talented teachers to the city schools.

The central idea of the reform, called [Project LIFT](#), is to reallocate funds to pay teachers more for additional contributions, increase on-the-job planning and development time, and provide for flexible scheduling and grouping, while remaining within budget constraints for city and state allocations for teachers' salaries.

Our Approach to Education

$$(LIFT) 5 = 90^3$$

Time:

Focusing on how to provide extended learning opportunities.

Talent:

Recruiting, training, and retaining excellent principals and effective teachers.

Technology:

Providing access to technology and offering resources to help increase the use of technology.

Community and Parent Engagement:

Working to create a cadre of engaged parents, motivated mentors and community connections.

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Reading and Math

90 percent of our students will be proficient in reading and math.



In One Year's Time

90 percent of our students will achieve more than one year's growth in one year's time.



Graduate High School

90 percent of our students will graduate.

Project LIFT was piloted in West Charlotte. Now halfway through its 5-year span, the project is not without its critics.

Project Lift Video: [Highs and Lows for Project LIFT](#)

Project Lift Video: [Project LIFT's Third Year Results 'a Mixed Bag' for Student](#)

Home: Simulation Start

With this context in mind, your team is now entering into a simulation experience. Your school district, Charlotte Public Schools, is facing the challenge of recruiting qualified teachers while enacting controversial school reform initiatives. You are now serving as a community advisory group the Superintendent has assembled to make decisions with regard to how the district should proceed with the Project LIFT program. Within your team, you will each take on one role for the duration of the simulation. These are fictitious roles; please bring your past experiences in education and education leadership with you into the role as well as what you have learned about the context in Charlotte, NC.

Simulation Roles

Superintendent	You have been in the district for nearly 10 years, having worked in Charlotte for your entire teaching and school leadership career. You work easily with those in the community and are well-respected by groups across the city as well as within the district offices.
Community Business Leader	You are one of the district’s biggest advocates within the Charlotte business community. You forged the partnerships needed to bring Project LIFT to Charlotte. You district the Teachers Union and the Union President. You have three children in Charlotte Public Schools.
Community Activist	You are an outspoken member of the community who was chosen for this team because you know and represent parts of the community who oppose Project LIFT. You are concerned that the best teachers are now teaching in the worst schools in the district and that this will negatively impact families and the district.
Teachers Union President	You have a solid working relationship with the Superintendent, and you do not want to jeopardize that over Project LIFT. You sincerely want to find ways to address the teacher shortage crisis, yet you see your first objective as securing and improving jobs for current teachers.

Project LIFT High School Principal	You are the principal of the high school where all the Project LIFT middle schools are feeding into, and you are in the first year of a Project LIFT pilot in your school with one group of teachers. You are skeptical of what Project LIFT can do in the short-term to address concerns relating to student dropout and graduation rates.
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After allocating simulation roles in your team, please choose additional group process roles to support your team’s successful completion of the simulation.

Group Process Roles

Group Leader	You will take a lead role in facilitating the group’s decision-making process. It is important that you work to encourage participation from all of the team members, even if they seem shy or reluctant to speak. The simulation experience depends upon all team members contributing to the decision-making process.
Time Keeper	Please help your team work deliberately through the case. Periodically give reminders of the current time and finish time for the group’s work.
Reporter	Take notes during the simulation experience for your group. Pay attention to the approach your team uses to make decisions in this case and the key issues in the case you discuss. There is no “right” way to take notes, but it will be helpful for your team to have your notes when crafting a final presentation.
Team Members	The simulation experience depends upon all team members contributing to the decision-making process. The team member taking on the group leader role will be encouraging all team members to share their ideas and offer their perspectives. Blend your own education leadership experiences with the background information provided about the role you are taking on in the case.

Decision-Making Process

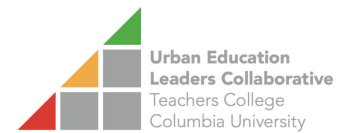
As the details of the case unfold and you are confronted with your first decision, please consider which kind of decision-making process will be best for your team and for this leadership challenge.

Decision-Making Processes (Vroom)

1. **Decide** – the leader makes the decision or solves the problem alone and announces his/her decision to the group. The leader may gather information from members of the group.
2. **Consult (individually)** – the leader approaches group members individually and presents them with the problem. The leader records the group members' suggestions and makes a decision, deciding whether or not to use the information provided by group members.
3. **Consult (group)** – the leader holds a group meeting where he/she presents the problem to the group as a whole. All members are asked to contribute and make suggestions during the meeting. The leader makes his/her decision alone, choosing which information obtained from the group meeting to use or discard.
4. **Facilitate** – the leader holds a group meeting where he/she presents the problem to the group as a whole. This differs from the consulting approach as the leader ensures that his/her opinions are not given any more weight than those of the group. The decision is made by group consensus and not solely the leader.
5. **Delegate** – the leader does not actively participate in the decision-making process. Instead, the leader provides resources (e.g., information about the problem) and encouragement.

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Discuss all the options together, and then decide which decision-making process the group will ultimately use. Then proceed through the case, making critical leadership decisions to frame a successful recruitment plan. At the end of your simulation experience, you will be asked to revisit your team's decision-making process and create a short presentation to summarize your group's process, decision-making experiences, and learnings for the case.

Using ELDEx

Step 1:

In your group, you will explore this case that leverages various media and technology to immerse you in this learning process and ensure that the UELC program delivers on its promise to empower and prepare you for the dynamic challenges of the urban education leadership role.

Step 2:

Please move through the case using the "Main Case Menu" on the right of this page. Once you reach your first task, "Your First Decision," use the information presented in the case, the foundational input offered at the start of today's session, and your learnings from your own experience in education leadership to come to your first decision. Time allowing, continue onto the Second Decision in the case.

Step 3:

Revisit your team's decisions, the impacts and results of the decisions, and then create a short presentation to share during the full-group debriefing to present your team's decision-making process, learnings, and revised final decision for the case.