

Ep #63: Hiring New Teachers



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With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, Empowered Principals, welcome to episode 63.

Welcome to *The Empowered Principal Podcast*, a not so typical, educational resource that will teach you how to gain control of your career and get emotionally fit to lead your school and your life with joy, by refining your most powerful tool: your mind. Here's your host, certified life coach, Angela Kelly Robeck.

Well hello there, how are you doing? I am so happy to be here with you today and I am so excited. I have to tell you guys this; as I'm recording this, it is the day before my birthday. So I am actually heading out after I record this to go down to Paso Robles with my teacher friends who are all on Ski Week break. They are helping me celebrate my 48th birthday and I cannot wait.

So, this episode is really fun for me to record right now because the entire group of teachers that I am traveling with this weekend and wine-tasting with are all teachers that I have hired. And today, we're going to talk about the mindset behind hiring and how you can attract the ideal teachers for you.

So, I want you to think about the type of teacher you are looking for, for your staff, the type of teacher you are looking for for a particular grade level, and the energy that you want to use in attracting these teachers to your school, because hiring new members of your team is actually a selling process.

You are basically selling them on becoming a member of your team and they are selling you that they are qualified to become a member of your team. I know this sounds kind of cheesy, and we're going to talk about this a little bit more. But I want to step back and talk to you about how you prepare yourself to hire teachers.

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So, number one, you need to know the role. This is so important when you are preparing to hire new staff for the year. In last week's episode, we talked about letting people go. And the reason we talked about that first is because you have to let teachers go in order to know what positions you need to hire for in the upcoming year.

So, as you are getting clarity on who is not coming back, you will gain clarity on what positions you do have open, and it will be important for you to know what you are looking for, know what you expect of those teachers, know how you want this job done. And it's best to have done the job itself before you hire for it.

So, if you're a principal hiring teachers, you want to have been a teacher. And I think, in most cases, like a high percentage of cases, that is the case. I know actually one dear friend of mine was not actually a teacher. She was a tech support and then went into a leadership role, but that's abnormal. Most of you have been a teacher, and that's key. You need to know the position in order to hire for it, to be the best person to hire for that position.

So, this way, when you have been a teacher, you know what you want. You know how you want it done and you know what you're looking for; meaning, what criteria are you going to use to observe their instruction and manage and measure their growth and have that very clearly defined for them? So, you don't have to have taught every single grade level to know the role that you want from a teacher, but you do have a general sense of what you're looking for.

And even though there are some variances between primary and secondary classrooms, most of what you're looking for in teachers are universal across the grade levels, right? You want them to have good people skills. You want them to be able to manage their classroom. You want them to be able to design lessons and deliver them with impact. They need to be able to give feedback to their students and measure their

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students' progress and work clearly and well with parents, all of those kinds of things, you want to have a clear description.

But the more specific that you can be about that job description and designing the job so that they have extreme clarity about what it is you expect, that will help the people that you do hire be as successful as possible. So, know the role you want them to fill.

Number two, do not hire them expecting them to problem-solve problems that you yourself have not yet solved. If there is an issue in a grade level, don't hire someone with the mindset that you want this person to come in and clean up the mess or solve the problem, right? Basically, you're putting them in a losing position.

They're being hired to teach, not problem-solve. And if you are hiring to have them clean up a mess that you don't want to deal with or that you haven't yet figured out how to solve, you're setting them up for failure. So, I want you to hire teachers with the mindset that they're being hired to execute solutions versus having to solve problems coming in off the bat. That's just setting them up to be focused on problem-solving versus teaching.

Number three, your mindset needs to include the idea that whomever you hire is going to need coaching and feedback. So, we don't hire somebody with the thought that you want them to just come in, do the work so that you can get back to your own, and that they are not going to bother you, you don't want to be bothered by them. You want to hire somebody knowing that no matter where on the spectrum they are in terms of their years of teaching experience or how qualified they are or how amazing they are, they're going to need support from you at some level.

So many times, I went into the hiring process just wanting to find that perfect person because the impact of somebody less than perfect was

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going to have an impact on me, right? I was going to have to go in and help support them, and I was like, I don't want to do that. I just want to hire someone who can do the job so that I can get back to the business of doing my job.

Well, this is going to put you in some serious negative energy and space when they do come to you for help in the future, because they will. Even my best teachers – I had a brand-new teacher I hired right off the bat, she's one of my favorite people in the world; she rarely asked for help. So when she did, I knew to give her all the attention and time and love that she needed because she was doing the best job she could, and she still needed support and coaching.

So, you need to adjust those expectations before you enter into the hiring process because it will play into who you hire and why you hired them. You need to know that even incredibly talented teachers or incredibly talented veteran teachers, new or not, they're going to be new to your campus, new to their team, and new to the district and site systems and processes and policies. So plan on hiring them with the intention of supporting them as new members of your staff.

Number four, you have to balance being particular with being reasonable. So, in education, you guys, you have to ensure that you have the best staff possible for the sake of your students and your own sanity, right? Because the better that you hire, the less problems you have to clean up, right? Yes, amen to that, right?

I bet that you can think of teachers right now on your team who have got it going on and need little support from you, versus teachers who are constantly needing support, they're constantly having to meet with you, you're constantly having to meet with their parents or clean up some kind of issue, right? And a bad experience like that with a hire can be easy to err on the side of caution.

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Sometimes, you try too hard to get just the perfect person. So, when you have lots of time and your candidate selection is really wide, you can be choosy, and that's fine because you definitely want to try and get the best match that you can for your team. But keep in mind, you have to fill all of the positions by that first day of school. At least that should be your ultimate goal. You want teachers in front of students.

This is another difference between education and the private sector. In private sector, they have a position for as long as they have until they find the right person for the job. They can allow that sometimes. I know my husband speaks of this in his company, that there are positions open but there aren't people applying for the job, so the position stays open and people just have to do that work of that person until they fill it.

Well, in school, I mean, the same is true, but you have children walking in the door regardless of whether or not you have a teacher on staff, right? You've got beautiful little children coming to you ready and eager to learn regardless of whether you've done all your hiring. So, this can cause quite some panic if you are in a time crunch.

But, I ask you, be careful not to swing too far in the other direction and just rashly hire the first person that you interview. Now, I've seen principals who hire just because they hate hiring. They want to fill that roster, have their staff in place before they go off on summer break, and they just want to be done with the process.

And trust me, this never ended well. I had a principal who did this. And as a staff member of hers, I did not appreciate the hastiness in which she hired because, quite frankly, I had to deal with that person as a peer on my team and I didn't like it. It never ended well, you guys. People were not vetted with intention, and this always led to problems.

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You need to balance your fears about not having all of your staff hired in time with a knowingness and a trust within yourself that the right people are available and all you have to do is be centered in your own mindset and follow your hiring process without that waver of fear that can creep in when time is starting to run short.

So, the goal here is to hone in on your hiring energy. When you're hiring, you are actually in an act of selling. I mentioned this right at the beginning of the podcast. And I know it sounds absurd, but when you break down what hiring actually is, what it is, is the process of you selling yourself and your school to that candidate, and the candidate is selling themselves to you as a potential member of your team.

Now, I don't want you to go into your interviews with the mindset of a car salesman. Don't be picturing some cheesy car salesman or, like, those annoying people at the mall who accost you in the middle of the hallway. Not that kind of selling, not that needy, graspy, cheesy, like trying to trick people selling.

When I refer to selling, I'm talking about attracting the kind of teachers that you want for your school and inspiring them into action; the action of saying yes to you, right? That's what you want. You want them to say yes to your offer. Your goal is to be so sold on them that you can't wait to offer them a position. And, in the meantime, you've built up an offer so inviting that they are eager and committed to saying yes to you.

Your hiring energy needs to be attractive. Like attracts like. You want strong teachers to be attracted to you and to want to work for you and with you. This means that you want to show up in your interviews with an energy that exudes excitement, confidence, and expertise, but also one of warmth, authenticity, and connection.

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My district had an amazing hiring process and one of the things I love most about it is the entire group of principals would agree to work on a Saturday. HR would schedule all of the interviews for this Saturday, and we were there from like eight until five.

We brought in all the candidates at 45-minute interview intervals and we interviewed in teams. I loved interviewing in teams. So, my friend and colleague, Tyler – shout-out to Tyler. Hey, Tyler. He's out there doing his thing up in San Francisco right now. I love it. But my friend and colleague, Tyler and I, always chose to hire together.

And that's because – well, first of all, I was the principal of his school, so I was the leader of his school before he got hired into our district, and I moved to another school. So I knew his school really well. I knew the type of teacher that school needed, so I could help him vet teachers coming in and help him hire in the process.

Number two, Tyler and I just had such good energy and chemistry together as friends and we had this amazing energy together when we hired. And that energy led really, really strong teachers to both of our schools. That energy of the entire school leadership team coming together on a Saturday to help one another hire for the upcoming year was so infectious that teachers loved coming and spending the day with us. It was amazing, you guys.

And the reason this high level of energy is so important is because you want new teachers to feel comfortable and safe so they openly share themselves in the interview. When you're open and you've got this high vibe, they're going to show up with the same high vibe. They're going to match or mirror your energy.

You also want these teachers to like you and to feel like you like them back, that you will have their back and support them when they're learning

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to do the job. You want them to feel like you know what you're doing and that they are in good hands should they decide to accept an offer from you.

This means you have to believe in yourself. You have to believe in yourself that you are a strong leader, that you have a vibrant school, and that this person is going to flourish under your leadership. You want to believe in yourself and your school so hard and so much that any teacher who you do offer a position would be so lucky as to get an offer from you and crazy not to accept it. That's the kind of energy you want when you're kicking off your interviews.

Now, be forewarned, this does not mean faking it, like fake pretending you're happy, or selling them on something that is not true or not the case. Don't tell them things are rosy on the second-grade team if you know the rest of the team has collaboration issues. Be honest and upfront with your interview and reassure them that you're going to support them.

So if, let's say the second-grade interview is coming up, be honest with them and let them know what they're going to face, but reassure them by telling them you've got their back, you're going to support them, and that you know just how you want to lead that team so that they don't have to fear having to solve that problem on their own.

You might be able to get somebody hired if you are fake and overly positive, but you're not going to be able to retain teachers if they feel they've been sold, basically, sold them a lemon, right? And in the long run, you're not going to be able to hire the best of the best. And here's why; teachers talk, especially teachers right out of college.

Those teachers know one another. They have teacher friends. They go to the job fairs together and they discuss their interview experience. I know this firsthand because the teachers that I'm going down to taste wine with this afternoon for my birthday have all confided this in me. They tell me

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they do this. They share with me that the people who interview them, they can tell their energy. So they know what's going on and they talk. They talk amongst the different schools. They talk about their different districts.

You guys, the key is this; step into your empowerment as a leader and show up with authentic energy; that's it. This is going to attract the teachers that are right for your school and your district. Hiring the right team is all about your thoughts and your energy. When you are sold on your school, hiring the teachers is going to be so much easier.

Now, I would love to go into depth about how to do the interview process, but most of you have specific ways that your district interviews. And that's fine. But let me offer you this, because I would love to do this for you as a bonus. So I'm going to offer you this as a bonus to this podcast.

For those of you who are interested in discussing this process over the phone with me and you schedule a call, I'm going to send you the monthly workbook for March that comes along with this month's theme, all of the podcast themes for the month of March, and I'm going to include some ninja interview questions. There are some badass questions out there, guys, and I want you to have them.

So, just pop over to my website, schedule a mini-session with me. I look so forward to talking with you. And just for signing up for the call, I'm going to send you this month's workbook so you can get a taste of what the workbooks look like and the bonus questions with some ninja interview questions just for you. Okay, I love you guys. Have an amazing week. I will talk with you all next week. Take care.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *The Empowered Principal Podcast*. If you enjoyed this episode and want to learn more, please visit www.angelakellycoaching.com where you can sign up for weekly updates

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and learn more about the tools that will help you become an emotionally fit school leader.