

## Ep #324: Teacher Hiring Journey



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

## Ep #324: Teacher Hiring Journey

Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 324.

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.

Hello, my empowered leaders. Happy Tuesday. Welcome to the podcast. Hope you are well. I hope you're enjoying this podcast. Hey, if you're enjoying this podcast, can you do me a favor? Because this is all free for y'all. Can you give it a five star rating or share it with a friend or do both? It would be amazing. We want to spread the word.

This podcast, look, you can Google a million ways to lead your school. This podcast dives deep into leading your school, leading yourself, being courageous, being empowered, and handling the mental and emotional demands of the job. It's not all about the strategy. It's not all about the doing. It's about the thinking and the feeling. So this podcast is a little bit different. I know some people, this is not their cup of tea. I've got some one star reviews. That's okay. It doesn't hurt my feelings. I'm just not their flavor.

This is not about another strategy, per se. It's not so much about the actions. It's about the doing. Today, we're here to talk about, are you ready for it, teacher hiring. You're getting ready to hire your next round of staff members. I want to offer you some words of wisdom words of contemplation for you to consider.

The reason I'm giving this to you now is because I just got off the phone with one of my clients who was presenting a professional development for brand new teachers. So she is at the district level now. She was a principal. She's worked with me for three years. She got promoted. She's now at the district level. She was hosting a training for brand new teachers. We were

## Ep #324: Teacher Hiring Journey

talking about the outcomes of that training and of that meeting. We walked through a conversation.

So I'm just going to jump on here and share the conversation I had with her so that you can imagine you and I having this conversation should you be in the Empowered Principal® Collaborative at any point. So here's how this went.

We started the conversation and I asked my client what is your desired outcome for this training? Have you thought about what you want teachers walking away knowing that they didn't know before they came into this meeting? What is the training outcome? What are the benefits of this information you're going to share? Why is it important to share this information? What is the outcome you expect? What are the benefits or the extended benefits and outcomes from this training? Okay.

So initially, my client said I think we should teach the new teachers how to manage their time. They're worn out. They're going 1,000 miles per hour. They can only do it for so long. They're trying to perfect each lesson. If there's anything that I see when I go into a classroom, now you've got to remember she's a district level person. When she goes in, she feels like the teacher is trying to perfect each lesson.

We were talking about when she was a principal. She said when I was a school leader and under your coaching, I learned to encourage my teachers to feel empowered, to try things, to be willing, to fail, to not feel afraid of failing, to use it as an experiment, to be open to trying different ideas, different concepts, different strategies. Because what's a best practice for one student might not be a best practice for another student. So we have to think about the equity piece, the inclusion piece, the diversity piece here.

## Ep #324: Teacher Hiring Journey

By the way, my client is the director of bilingual education. So she's definitely a proponent of diversity, inclusion, and equity. She works with her teams on this, and she wants to bring that to her new teachers. Okay.

So she was concerned that people were very attached to the pacing guides, and they were worried about doing really good lessons but staying on pace and not getting behind. Then feeling overwhelmed and getting behind because they're trying to do everything so perfectly. She wants them to be able to play with the tools they have.

I said okay, definitely, that can be a component. But let's talk about the results that you want out of this training. Here's what she said. She said, "Well, the district wants me to teach them how they're going to be evaluated. So they want us to walk through the components of the teacher evaluation process." I'm like wow, what a way to welcome brand new teachers. Hello, sit down, nice to meet you. Now, I'm going to tell you all the ways that I'm going to come in and observe you and judge and criticize you and give you feedback.

I was like no. If you have to share evaluation information, how do you want these new teachers to feel on their very first day at the district getting trained? What do you want them to feel about themselves, about the district, about the relationship that they are entering into with you as a district?

She said, "Oh, I see it now." Right? She said, "I want to tell them that evaluations don't have to be scary." I said yes, teachers are terrified, especially brand new teachers. Coming into your district, they are terrified of not being good enough, getting it wrong, getting poorly evaluated, losing their job, right? The brain goes all the way down the rabbit hole to the worst case scenario where they get fired, and they will never get a job again.

## Ep #324: Teacher Hiring Journey

So we don't want to welcome them into the district and start off with here are our policies. Here's how we're going to be judging you. They're afraid. So my client was able to see that, and we laughed about it. She's like, "Okay, let's look at it from their perspective." I said I agree. Let's look at it from their perspective. What do they need to know?

You can honor your district's request to cover the evaluation process. But we want to do it in a way that lands for teachers. This is why I titled this podcast episode The Teacher Hiring Journey. When we're hiring teachers, and you can go back to my previous work, I think last year or the year before around this time in March, April, somewhere in there. Maybe February.

I recorded a bunch of podcasts about hiring and attracting and retaining ideal teachers, how to set them up for success, how to attract them, how to hire them, all that HR stuff that goes on in the spring. I talked about that in previous seasons.

This season I want to talk about I want you to think about the actual teacher journey. What is their experience from their perspective as they are looking for an ideal district that's a match for them, a district that honors what they value as a teacher who's going to support them, think about what they are looking for, think about how they want to feel in order to say yes to your offer of employment. Then welcome them and onboard them in a way that doesn't freak them out and scare them and make them think they've made a wrong decision by choosing this district.

It's not to say you're going to be all fluff and no games, right? Yes, you're going to have standards. You're going to have expectations, but you communicate those expectations in a way that's compassionate and kind and loving and understanding of that brand new teacher's perspective.

## Ep #324: Teacher Hiring Journey

So I asked my client, think about how these new teachers are sitting and feeling in that meeting. Imagine them. They're coming in. They don't know anybody. They're signing in. They're finding a spot to sit. They're saying hello. They're eager. They're anticipating, but there's a high anxiety, right. They're in a really nervous vibe because they don't know what to expect.

You want to reassure them, calm them down, break it down to make it easy to understand, open to ask questions, and let the teachers know that yes, evaluations are a part of teaching. This is how we're going to approach them. We're going to use them as a tool for growth. We're going to use them to empower you.

No one's going to believe your words if you say these kinds of words, right? Because what do teachers think about evaluations? They are top down. They are threatening. They are scary, and people are just coming in to see where you're doing it wrong and to tell you how to do it better, right? That does not welcome new teachers in.

So in order for them to feel comfortable, they need to feel safe. They need to feel supported. They need to feel trusting of you, and they need to feel trusted by you. I asked my client. I said when you were a teacher, and you were being evaluated by a principal or the principal was telling you this is the evaluation process that we're going to be going through this year, what are the thoughts and feelings that you had that made you stay with this school or this principal or this district?

She thought about it for a second. She said, "I loved my principal. I loved her approach. This is how I felt. These were the thoughts I had. I can make my own decisions. I have a voice as a teacher. I'm allowed to take risks. It's okay to fail and try again. I'm not afraid to speak up and ask questions. I feel support as a teacher."

## Ep #324: Teacher Hiring Journey

So when you think about those thoughts, it feels so warm and cozy and fuzzy. It's like a little child being with a parent and feeling safe to explore the playground or splash in the puddle. Or they fall down and get hurt, they can come over and get a little cuddle and go back at it. Our brand new teachers are like those toddlers. This is the first time they're exploring their teaching capacity and their teaching ability. It's going to really challenge them. It's hard work.

It's one thing to be a teacher in theory at your university and maybe playing teacher in the environment of like a master teacher overseeing you and your student teaching. That does give you definitely a taste of teaching. But you know what it's like to go over that threshold into actually owning your own classroom, being responsible for students, for IEPs, for differentiation, for diversity, equity, inclusion, for parent involvement, parent communication. You're juggling a lot, and all of a sudden you feel very grown up and very adulting very fast.

So we want to make sure our teachers feel like they have someone on their side, someone who's safe to talk to, somewhere where they can ask the questions that they feel silly to ask, and you want to think about their STEAR cycle.

In an ideal situation where you're attracting ideal people, you're hiring ideal teachers, you have to be thinking about the experience and the journey that they go through from their perspective. What are their thoughts? What are their emotions? What actions are they taking? What actions are they afraid to take? Those are obstacles. They're afraid to ask this question, or they're afraid to show vulnerability, or they're afraid to get it wrong. They'll stay for hours on end, nights and weekends, just to make sure they're planned and prepared.

They freak out when somebody walks into the room and throws them off because they're barely in their own groove, let alone somebody watching

## Ep #324: Teacher Hiring Journey

them. My niece is a brand new teacher this year. I'm listening to her experience. I'm thinking about how she's thinking about herself and her students, how she feels about her boss walking into the room, or just random people coming in and observing kids or pulling a kid out for resource or whatever it is, and all this coming and going.

She doesn't really know what's going on because she's brand new. She's just trying to stay focused. She's working very late. She's working on her weekends trying to be the best version of herself. But she's also very vulnerable and afraid and unsure of herself because it's her first time.

So when you think about teachers who stay and teachers who love the district and teachers who want to work for you, you have to consider how they're thinking, how they're feeling about you, about the hiring process, about the onboarding process, about this level of support they have. They're not selfish when they ask what are the support systems your district has in place?

If somebody asks that in an interview, that's not like they're being selfish, and they're wanting you to solve all their problems. They're asking a question that's empowering them and advocating for themselves. They need to know what kind of support can I expect and rely on?

Where will I go as a brand new teacher in this district to have my questions answered and to be the best version of myself because I can't be the best version of myself alone. I need to do it in community. I need to do it in partnership and in collaboration. I don't want to be afraid to ask and I don't want to not know who to ask or where to go to get the support I need to be the best version of me so that I can be the best teacher for my students. I can be the best colleague for my peers, and the best teacher to support community and family outside of that classroom.



## Ep #324: Teacher Hiring Journey

So you want to think about how teachers need to feel. They need to feel that they are supported, trusted, appreciated. They want to feel proud of their decision. This was the right district. I want to feel joyful. This was the greatest district. This was the greatest decision. These are great people. I want to stay here.

I have to tell you. I've been talking with some of my new principals, same holds true for you guys when you're brand new. You want to know what kind of supports are in place for principals. Most districts don't have support for brand new principals. That's why people hire me. There isn't a lot of support out there unless your district has a robust program.

There are some programs out there to support you in the position, but most people come to me because they want that mental and emotional support to feel reassured, to feel joy in their job, to feel trusted, to know how to build trust with their teams. To feel appreciated when nobody's showing you love, right? To come get warm and fuzzy feelings with me to feel proud of yourself even when nobody's telling you you're doing a good job.

I help you create the internal empowerment that generates that external empowerment that you will receive, the love and the pride and the joy and the respect and appreciation that you want to receive from others, you first have to generate it with yourself. That's what we're doing over here.

So as you're going into hiring season, please consider the perspective of your teachers. Think about the journey they go on from the time they find out that you have an opening in your district all the way through the process. How do they apply? What happens next? What thoughts and feelings do they have at that beginning stage?

How do they find out next steps? What does HR do? Know the process for your teachers. Understand from their perspective what steps they're going through so that you know how to reassure them and how to guide them to

## Ep #324: Teacher Hiring Journey

be a successful candidate in order for them to be a best match for your school.

Then once they do get the offer? They go through the interview process maybe once or twice. They do get the offer, then what happens? What do they do now? How do they sign up? How do they make that decision and say yes? What are they thinking and feeling then? Then they get on boarded.

That's where this podcast idea came from, helping brand new teachers get on boarded and thinking about that entire journey from point A to point Z. To guide them along the path so that they are feeling like this was the best decision for them, and that they're on the right path. They're with the right district. They're being led by the right people. Everybody feels in alignment so that they can be the best versions of themselves, not just for them but for you and for students. All right.

If you have any questions, please reach out. If you want coaching, this is the perfect time to sign up because you're getting ready. You're hiring. You're getting ready for the new year. Now think about this, principals, you have to be three to six months ahead of the calendar. So if you're listening to this at the end of March, you've got to be already thinking end of school year, summer hiring, staffing for next fall. You've got to be three to six months ahead.

EPC will help you get there because we plan three months in advance. So you're always three months ahead of the game. You're always thinking ahead and prepared for what's coming up your way. So if you feel like you're reacting in real time, like oh my gosh, it's April next week. What are we doing in April? Testing this and that. Oh my gosh, it's May, end of year. Oh my gosh.

## Ep #324: Teacher Hiring Journey

If you feel like you're on reacting mode and you feel behind, EPC will get you on track and keep you three months ahead. That is how we do our systems. That's why it feels so calm and peaceful and joyful. You're not overworking. You're not overextending. Even if you have a long day, it doesn't mean that you're over extending yourself to the point of burnout and exhaustion. Okay. So come on into EPC.

If you want one-on-one coaching, you contact me privately. We'll set up a call, and we'll discuss options for one on one if that is your preference. All right, my friends. Have an amazing week. Get busy getting those teachers on boarded and hired and ready to go for next fall. It'll be here before you know it. Oh my gosh. All right, you guys, love you all. Take good care. Bye.

Hey empowered principal. If you enjoyed the content in this podcast, I invite you to join the Empowered Principal® Collaborative. It's my latest offer for aspiring and current school leaders who want to experience exceptional impact and enjoy the school leadership experience.

Look, you don't have to overwork and overexert to be a successful school leader. You'll be mentored weekly and surrounded by supportive like minded colleagues who truly understand what it means to be a school leader. So join us today and become a member of the only certified life and leadership coaching program for school leaders in the country. Just head on over to [angelakellycoaching.com/work-with-me](https://angelakellycoaching.com/work-with-me) to learn more and join. I'll see you inside of the Empowered Principal® Collaborative.

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