

The New Playbook for Recruiting & Retaining Gen Z Teachers

By Jason Lange, President and Co-Founder of BloomBoard

By 2030, Gen Z will account for around 30% of the workforce. For school district leaders competing to recruit teaching candidates, it will be essential to understand how this generation thinks, what they value, and what other options they have available.

Here are 7 ways to reimagine how we recruit and retain Gen Z teachers.



1. Reduce barriers to entry.

Traditional approaches to educator preparation programs are expensive and time-intensive. They also require more time learning about teaching in theory than on-the-job training.

Gen Z wants more affordable, efficient, and relevant learning opportunities. In a [2022 study by ECMC Group](#), 60% of Gen Z respondents said they worry about how they will pay for college, and 68% cited the cost of tuition as an important factor in their decision about post-high school education.

In addition, more than half said they were open to something other than a traditional four-year degree, and agreed that skills should be taught hands-on in small classes or on the job.

To better attract Gen Z candidates, districts should consider offering employer-centric degree programs, where future teachers can learn on the job, earn a salary, and incur few to no education costs.

2. Highlight career pathways.

The world where people sign up to teach for 30 years is no longer a given. Gen Z makes career choices based on a number of factors, including opportunities for economic mobility, and often even more importantly, the potential for a future upward trajectory.

According to [LinkedIn's 2024 Future of Recruiting report](#), when considering their workplace, Gen Z candidates are 36% more likely to prioritize advancement opportunities and 35% more likely to prioritize professional development opportunities than Millennial or Gen X candidates. In addition, [Gen Z values opportunities](#) to build marketable skills and continue learning throughout their lifetime.

To attract more Gen Z teachers, we should reposition teaching as a stepping stone to future leadership roles in areas like administration or coaching, or even as a jumping off point into the corporate world given how many former teachers are now in the corporate ranks. The most savvy districts will offer teachers on-the-job development and advancement opportunities that align to these future career pathways.

3. Have a tech-savvy recruiting process.

Gen Z candidates are not just digital natives; they're digitally dependent. We need our recruiting tools to meet them where they are.

Gen Z is a mobile-first generation who, on average, [received their first smartphones at age 10](#). They use mobile devices to



socialize, connect, create, learn, consume, and even work.

Districts need to ask themselves questions like: Can applicants apply for jobs on their phones? Can they ask follow-up questions over text? Invest in user-friendly, mobile-centric ways to engage prospective teachers in recruitment.

4. Pick the right ambassadors.

Stop sending district administrators to teacher recruitment fairs. Gen Z candidates [value peer collaboration and connection](#) and want to hear from teachers on the ground.

In addition, [they are more diverse](#) than previous generations and benefit from seeing themselves and their backgrounds represented in the workforce. In fact, [30% of Gen Z candidates say](#) they would not work for an employer that didn't have a diverse workforce.

Appeal to Gen Z candidates at recruitment fairs by sending a diverse mix of your most engaged teachers who can share:

- What they love about their job.
- What a typical day looks like.

- What kind of support they get from their principal and peers.
- How the district prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion for both staff and students.

5. Prioritize great leadership.

Having a good boss used to be a nice-to-have feature in a job, not an expectation. Gen Z feels differently; [they want an effective leader they can learn from](#) on day one. According to a [Monster study](#), having a boss they respect is the 3rd most important criteria for Gen Z candidates when choosing a job, after health insurance and a competitive salary.

There's a powerful relationship between teacher retention and the quality of your principal pipeline. Leaders who create great school cultures are essential for keeping teachers (at the school and in the profession).

6. Emphasize the flexibility of having summers off.

Many aspects of teaching are not flexible, like your daily schedule and where you work. [However, 81% of Gen Z is interested in more flexible work options](#). How can school districts compete with companies that offer work-from-home options or flexible schedules?

Here's a chance to reimagine your recruiting messaging regarding summers off. In addition to a time for rest, summers can also be a time and space for teachers to explore additional interests, travel, advance their learning, or pursue side hustles.



7. Be mission-forward.

Gen Z doesn't care about a pension (at least not yet). [They're driven by purpose and a desire to make a difference](#). Here is where the education system can shine.

Recruiting the next generation of teachers is about messaging the potential for impact they can have:

- on students
- on communities
- on social justice

We have a massive teacher shortage in this country. It's time to transform how we recruit and retain future teachers. The solution: educational and career pathways that are more accessible and appealing to Gen Z.

To learn more about BloomBoard and how we're helping school districts recruit, advance, and retain great teachers, contact our team:

bloomboard.com/contact-us