

# Recruiting Millennial Teachers

AN INTRODUCTION

**Teacher recruitment is changing, creating new challenges—and opportunities—for schools.**

*Photography of real millennial teachers in Little Rock, Arkansas, by John David Pittman*

**T**he foundation of learning is the relationship between teachers and students, but it's hard to build those relationships when half of the equation is missing.

While substitute teachers can temporarily fill gaps caused by prevalent teacher shortages, public schools and the kids they serve need qualified, full-time teachers. But across the country, school leaders are having trouble finding them.

According to an Education Week analysis, all 50 states experienced statewide teacher shortages in at least one subject area in 2018, and 61% of superintendents indicated that they were having trouble finding and retaining great educators.

Mum Martens, Executive Director of Human Resources at Arizona's Higley Unified School District, knows this challenge all too well. "It's really been a struggle out here," she tells SchoolCEO. "Not only is there a shortage of teachers across the U.S. and in Arizona, but we're also very competitive with our surrounding districts."

Traditionally, the teacher recruitment process started with a job posting and ended with a conversation about the district's benefits package. A prospective teacher's first impression of the district was often face-to-face, usually during their interview. But now, the process starts online, long before a candidate submits an application. If a teacher isn't impressed scrolling through your social media or browsing your website, they could reject your job before they even apply.

It's not just the digital landscape that's throwing school leaders for a loop. It's the candidates themselves. According to Martens, perks that once interested applicants at Higley Unified, like medical benefits and retirement pensions, have lost their bargaining power in the last several years. Now, teachers are asking how the district will support their growth as educational leaders.

## Millennials have overtaken Baby Boomers and Generation X as the largest segment of the workforce.

What's so different about this new batch of teachers? And how are they fundamentally changing the way schools look at recruitment?

### Millennials: The New Workforce

Born between 1981 and 1996, the millennial graduates that once filled many school leaders' classrooms are now flooding the workforce. While the oldest of these may be veteran teachers in your district by now, even the youngest, at 23, are entering the teaching profession. Millennials have overtaken Baby Boomers and Generation X as the largest segment of the workforce. If school leaders were stumped by millennial students, they're just as perplexed by millennial teachers. According to a 2016 Gallup survey, only 6% of superintendents feel that their districts understand these new teachers' needs.

Old recruiting tactics don't work as well on this generation because of a fundamental shift in the way they think about work. According to a Gallup analysis, the top elements

millennials are looking for in a job (regardless of sector) are growth opportunities, great management, and interesting work. Salary doesn't even make the top five. "The emphasis for this generation has switched from paycheck to purpose," said

Gallup's CEO, Jim Clifton. Where previous generations found fulfillment in their lives outside of work, millennials want the work itself to be fulfilling.

But it seems they're having trouble finding that fulfillment in the workplace. Millennials have the highest unemployment and underemployment rates in the U.S., and of those that have jobs, only 29% are engaged in their work.

Across the country, millennial teachers are having trouble finding fulfilling work, and districts are struggling to find teachers. Clearly, somewhere, there's a disconnect.

**Britynn Davis**  
Art Teacher



## Recruiting is Marketing, Marketing is Recruiting

You might not think of marketing as an aspect of your recruitment, but it is. Your candidates—especially millennials—are monitoring your online presence more than ever before. Does this district value their teachers? Are they doing innovative work in the classroom? Would I enjoy working there? To prospective teachers, your marketing matters.

You should also start thinking about how your recruitment process markets the district to teaching candidates. What do they care about? How does the way you do recruitment prove that your district would meet teachers' needs?

At Illinois' Ball-Chatham School District, Director of Human Resources Ashley Romadka and her team have begun to take these questions very seriously. "We realized that our recruitment was a one-size-fits-all model—posting online and expecting candidates to come to us. But that's not how recruitment works in this day and age," she tells SchoolCEO. "There are so many touchpoints before the person actually completes the application."

As a response, the district took a hard look at their website, fleshing out their careers page. The team made a recruitment video titled "Why Ball-Chatham?" and built a blog of employee testimonies that lets candidates find information for themselves. They've even revamped their job postings, outlining a day in the life of a teacher at their schools and the qualities that make candidates a perfect fit for the district. "Looking at [it] from the candidate's perspective has made a huge impact on the way we recruit," Romadka says.

In the pages that follow, we'll highlight our own research on millennial teachers: what they're looking for in a job, how they find employment opportunities, and what advice they'd give school leaders on recruitment. Then, we'll take a look at what this research means for you.

Many of the factors fueling teacher shortages are beyond school leaders' control, but there's one important aspect you *can* control: your recruitment strategies. Through our research, we hope to help you bridge the gap between your schools and the new workforce: millennial teachers.

## Millennial Facts

**38%**

of the workforce is made up of millennials.

**7%**

of millennials are unemployed, and 10% are employed part-time, giving millennials the highest rates of both unemployment and underemployment of the working population.

**85%**

of millennials browse the internet on their smartphones rather than desktops.

**21%**

of millennials have changed jobs within the last year—more than three times the percentage of non-millennials who did so.

**47%**

of millennial job seekers report that opportunities to learn and grow are extremely important to them when applying for a job.

DATA FROM GALLUP

SchoolCEO Study

# What Do Millennial Teachers Want?



Roy Vaughn  
Art Teacher

In the largest study of its kind, we reached out to 30,000 randomly selected K-12 teachers born between the years 1981 and 1996. More than 1,000 teachers submitted a response—a statistically significant sample of the estimated 1.2 million millennial teachers nationwide.

**M**illennials are the largest generation in the workforce, so we wanted to learn more about the new hiring pool as a market. Hiring isn't just about vetting applicants; part of the process is selling the job to great talent. And in any sales effort, marketers need to figure out more about their audience. What features do consumers care about in a product or service? What is their process for making purchasing decisions?

Nike, for example, knows what marathoners want in a running shoe, whether it be support, lift, or style. But more than creating a great product, they also figure out where the average marathoner looks for information. Are runners shopping online or in stores? Do they ask other runners before buying their shoes? Once Nike understands their market's purchasing process, they can create a strategy that speaks directly to runners' needs, putting their brand in front of consumers at key moments.

In the same vein, we wanted to know more about millennial teachers' job searches. Our research sought to answer two questions: What are millennial teachers looking for in a job, and what is their decision-making process?

We know that teacher recruitment is fundamentally changing. A peek into our research shows us that millennial teachers are researching districts online before applying. And just like millennial employees in the private sector, millennial teachers' focus in the job has shifted.

We'll show you what teachers are looking for in a job, then break down their decision-making process. With this information in hand, school leaders can target teachers on the channels they use most.

## Survey Demographics

**FIGURE 1. WHAT WOULD BEST DESCRIBE YOUR EDUCATION BACKGROUND? (Multiple Responses Allowed)**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| MASTER'S IN EDUCATION OR RELATED FIELD | 54% |
| BACHELOR'S IN EDUCATION                | 45% |
| BACHELOR'S IN NON-EDUCATION FIELD      | 14% |
| TEACHING CERTIFICATION                 | 13% |
| ALTERNATIVE TEACHING CERTIFICATION     | 6%  |

**FIGURE 2. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT DISTRICT? (Multiple Responses Allowed)**

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| SUBURBAN   | 54% |
| URBAN      | 25% |
| RURAL      | 11% |
| SMALL TOWN | 10% |

## What are millennial teachers looking for in a job?

Research into millennials across all sectors indicates that they tend to care about impact, sometimes even more than salary. We wanted to see whether this held true for millennial teachers—especially considering that educators, historically, aren't particularly driven by their paychecks. We asked respondents to rate the following statement on its validity using a scale of 1-7: "My decision of where to work was largely shaped by salary and benefits" (see Figure 3).

The numbers suggest that while salary and benefits factor into decision-making for millennial teachers, they aren't dealbreakers. Only 26% of those surveyed answered 6 or 7, indicating that salary was critical in their decision-making. More than half responded moderately with 3, 4, or 5, and about a fifth indicated that salary didn't really matter by selecting 1 or 2. While salary is certainly important, our research suggests that other factors weigh just as heavily in millennial teachers' decision-making.

What are those other factors? Given a list of school characteristics, we asked those surveyed to select up to three factors that were very important when determining where they would teach. The most common answer was school culture, followed by location, school leadership, and flexibility, respectively (see Figure 4).

This ranking held true in teachers' open responses as well. As part of the survey, teachers were given the option to answer the question, "What advice would you give school leaders on marketing to teachers?" When we broke down teachers' responses, words like "culture" and "support" were in the top six most frequently used words besides neutral words like "teacher" or "job" (see Figure 5). "Culture" even ranked higher than "salary." One teacher's tip for administrators was, "Don't market the position that needs to be filled; market the school and the culture."

These results are consistent with millennial behavior across all sectors. In the private sector, creating great culture has become an executive level position; many companies now

hire chief culture officers. It makes sense—if millennials are finding their sense of purpose and impact at work instead of at home, they'll want to work in a fantastic environment.

Location, on the other hand, poses a unique issue for schools. Research shows that millennials are more comfortable with urban life than previous generations. However, many districts struggling to recruit teachers are categorized as rural. Whether or not you feel like your district matches millennials' desires, the numbers show that location needs to be taken into account.

From a marketing perspective, there are a couple of ways to go about this. One strategy is to draw attention to the benefits of your location—the community feel, the low cost of living, the opportunity to reconnect with nature. Another option is to build up other factors that make your district ideal for millennials: a great school environment, supportive leadership, or flexibility in the classroom. Create messaging that brands your district as the best in the area for one core

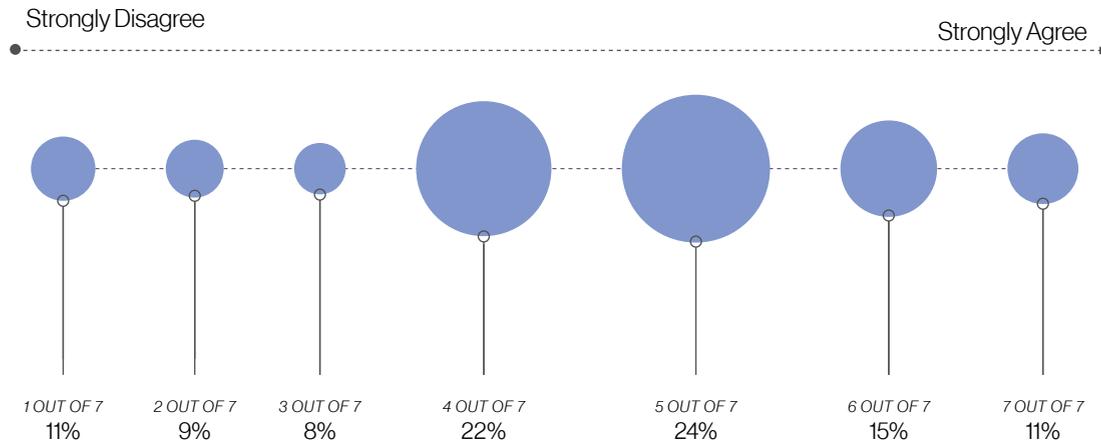
feature. We'll talk more about marketing your location on page 38.

In considering leadership, we noticed that teachers' open responses often paired the word

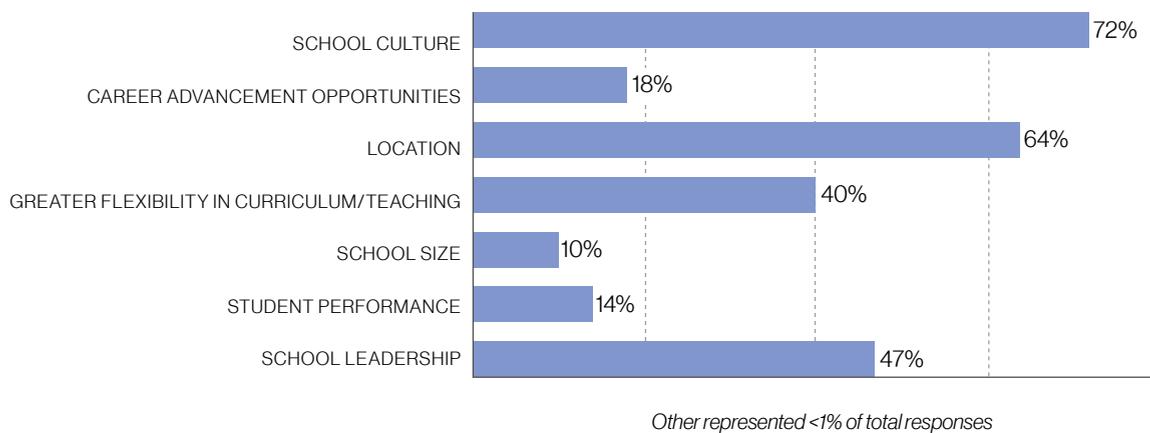
"leadership" with "support" and "honesty." One teacher asked for "better support during the first year... less promises and more honesty." Another said, "It is important for me as a teacher to know the administration is there to support me, and that they care not only about student welfare, but about me being successful and happy as an educator." One respondent even suggested that creating a teacher-focused district would allow teachers to better support students.

Fostering a great culture, building support for new teachers, providing flexibility in the classroom—these are issues that school leaders know best. Beyond discovering what teachers are looking for in a job, however, we also wanted to figure out how they're evaluating these factors in a prospective district—how are they researching future employers? As you might have guessed, the process seems to be moving online.

**FIGURE 3.** ON A SCALE OF 1-7, HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT? “MY DECISION OF WHERE TO WORK WAS LARGELY SHAPED BY SALARY AND BENEFITS.”



**FIGURE 4.** ASIDE FROM SALARY AND BENEFITS, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS ARE VERY IMPORTANT IN DETERMINING WHERE YOU TEACH? (Multiple Responses Allowed)



**FIGURE 5.** WORDS THAT APPEAR MOST FREQUENTLY IN OPEN RESPONSES TO “WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SCHOOL LEADERS ON MARKETING TO TEACHERS?”

|         |     |          |    |
|---------|-----|----------|----|
| CULTURE | 10% | HONEST   | 7% |
| SALARY  | 8%  | PAY      | 6% |
| SUPPORT | 7%  | BENEFITS | 6% |

## What is their decision-making process?

When consumers can scroll through online reviews, watch testimonial videos, and dig around a brand's website, they take the sales process into their own hands. Today, the buyer, not the seller, is in control.

When looking for a new car, for example, millennials *might* ask car dealers for their best offer. But that's usually after looking at online reviews, researching the car's value and pricing on discount sites, and consulting with friends and family.

Forming relationships with consumers is still critical; the difference is that those relationships often begin online. Successful marketers have adapted to this change by creating a multi-channel approach—a marketing strategy that meets their audiences both on the web as well as in person.

The same is true for recruitment. Today's teachers are pulling out their phones to Google the district, comparing districts' compensation packages, and checking regional housing prices before sending in an application.

Our research shows that over half of millennial teachers first found their current position on the internet (see Figure 6). About a quarter of millennial teachers looked at online job boards, and an additional 25% found their positions on district websites. In-person relationships haven't lost their value—over a third of teachers found out about the position from a colleague in the district—but that doesn't override the shift taking place. Popular forms of in-person recruitment like careers fairs (9%), university connections (8%), and direct recruitment (11%) are dwarfed by virtual options.

"I believe school leaders should consider having an online presence that explains a bit about the school and the students," one teacher advised. Others suggested posting projects students are working on, creating user-friendly websites, and focusing on school culture. Across the board, the call for digital platforms—online job boards, updated websites—was loud and clear. Since online channels are playing such a significant role in finding jobs, we wanted to

see how teachers did additional research when making a career decision. We asked a series of true or false questions about their process for learning more about a district (see Figure 7).

True to the stereotype, most millennials start their job explorations online. A whopping 81% reviewed a district's website before accepting a position there. Of that number, almost half (44%) looked at these sites on a mobile device. If a district's website doesn't work on smartphones, it risks locking applicants out altogether.

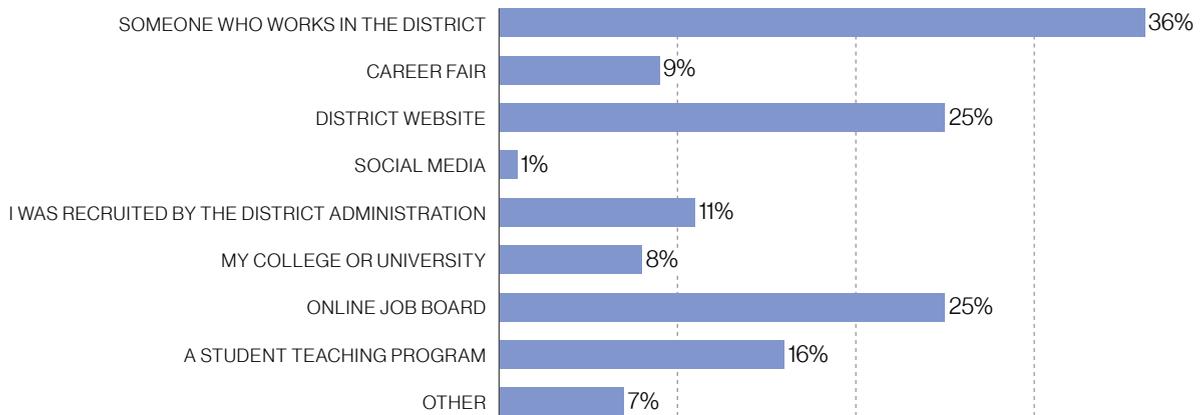
After the website, teachers are turning to search engines to learn more about a district. About 57% of teachers searched for more information about a district, and 46% specifically conducted online research on a school's town or area. Only about 22% of teachers checked districts' social media, which could be driven by the lack of school social accounts.

Teachers are eager to hear, firsthand, what it's like to work in a district; testimonials are key to teachers' decision-making process. Over half of millennial teachers surveyed reached out to current or former employees of the district where they applied—whether online or in person. Formal job review sites, however, haven't yet picked up steam; only about 10% of teachers surveyed visited job review sites like Glassdoor.

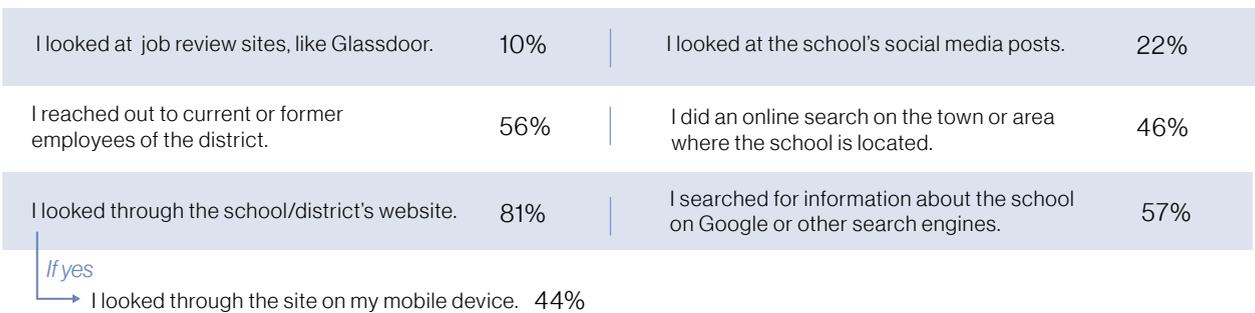
No matter how you look at it, millennials are finding information on a variety of channels. Before they fill out an application, they've already started to form a relationship with your district—whether online or in person.

School districts have the opportunity to take control of their online identities, but are they doing so? We asked teachers to indicate, on a scale of 1 to 7, how much their district's online presence attracted them to their current position (see Figure 8). Of the answers we received, a staggering 85% were negative or neutral. For every teacher who chose a 7, indicating that their district's online presence was a major pull factor, more than ten chose a 1, indicating that their district's online presence was not a key recruitment tool.

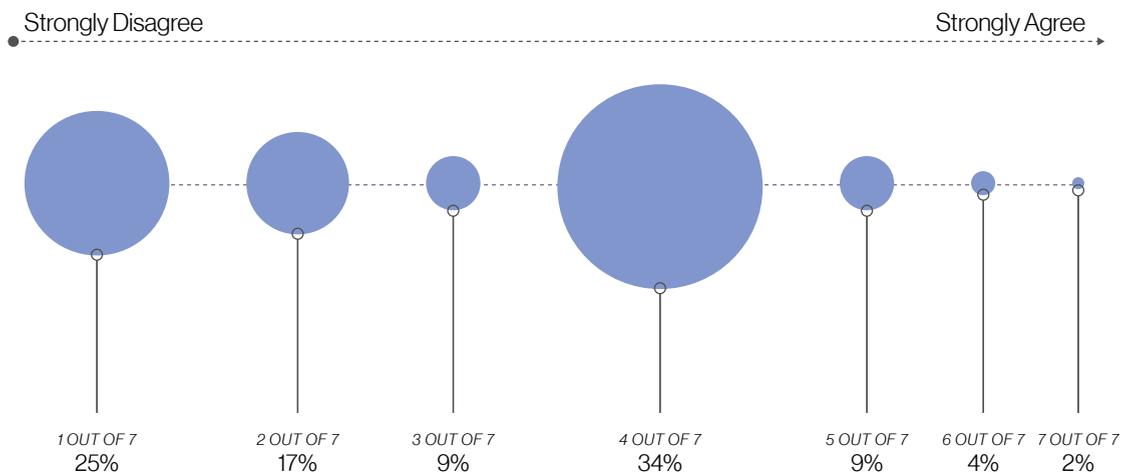
**FIGURE 6. HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR FIRST JOB IN YOUR CURRENT DISTRICT? (Multiple Responses Allowed)**



**FIGURE 7. HOW TEACHERS ARE RESEARCHING EMPLOYERS**



**FIGURE 8. ON A SCALE OF 1-7, HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT? "MY SCHOOL'S ONLINE PRESENCE ATTRACTED ME TO MY POSITION."**



# The technology gap in school recruitment

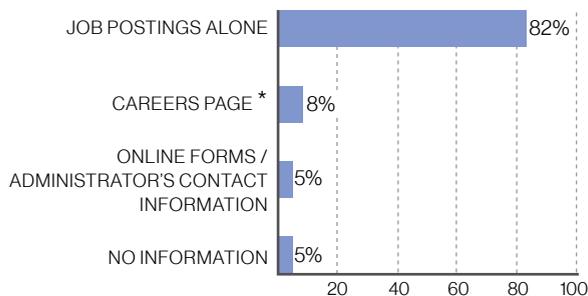
As you've probably already realized, there's a disconnect between the channels schools are using to recruit and the ways millennial teachers are researching prospective districts.

In addition to our survey of millennial teachers, we examined the online presence of a statistically significant sample of 800 U.S. schools in 2018. Only 8% of the districts sampled had dedicated space on their websites—beyond job postings alone—for recruitment (see Figure 9). These districts had at least one or two compelling pieces of content on the subject, like a page describing the district's location, a teacher testimonial, or a video showcasing the district.

Nearly 82% of districts provided job postings alone, without any reasoning as to why teachers should apply. Most only posted job opportunities, sometimes without a description of the work at all. About 5% didn't even have job postings—only an interest form for candidates to fill out or an administrator's contact information. The remaining 5% had no careers information whatsoever.

Data on districts' social media presence tells a similar story. In the private sector, LinkedIn and Instagram are popular recruiting tools. LinkedIn is essentially built for recruitment, and Instagram gives recruits a window into a company's culture. Recruiters post photos of staff meetings and team-building initiatives on Instagram to give recruits insight into an employee's day-to-day experiences.

**FIGURE 9. CAREERS INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON DISTRICT WEBSITES**



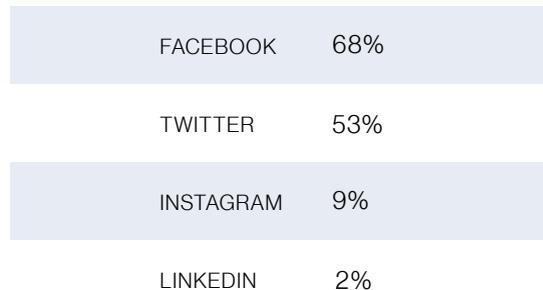
\*A separate page making the argument for why teachers should work in the district.

For the teaching community, Instagram is especially critical: teachers have formed a community on the app, noted NPR. They share curriculum ideas, post photos of student work, and share teacherly outfits. A few teachers' accounts have even gone viral. BuzzFeed recently shared the story of a teacher making quadruple her salary through the app. Most districts, however, aren't taking the opportunity to tap into this community. Around 9% of districts have a presence on Instagram, and a meager 2% are on LinkedIn (see Figure 10).

In the following article, we'll dig into three ways school leaders can begin to bridge the recruitment gap, creating strategies to reach millennial teachers.

While 81% of teachers are checking district websites, only 8% of districts have a dedicated careers page.

**FIGURE 10. DISTRICTS' PRESENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS**



# More thoughts from teachers across the nation

What advice would you give school leaders on marketing to teachers?

*Teachers' responses have been edited for grammar and clarity.*

## **First Grade Teacher, MA**

*"Invite prospective teachers to come and observe a typical school day."*

## **High School Chemistry Teacher, UT**

*"Teachers talk! Make your current teachers happy, and they will get you more! We teach the next generations of teachers as well."*

## **Sixth Grade Teacher, MN**

*The great teachers and staff you have—sell them. That's the reason, besides my students, I get up day after day to do what I do.*

## **High School English Teacher, LA**

*"Schools need to have a reputation for empowering and supporting their teachers."*

## **Second Grade Teacher, IA**

*"Make sure there is a visible presence on social media and online that shows the great things our district is doing."*

## **Special Education Teacher, NV**

*"Teachers want to work in a school with great leadership and school culture. We want that family feel. Salary and benefits are a huge factor, but if we are unhappy in a school, we will not want to stay. Leadership and culture are key."*



**Juliana Reynolds**  
Reading Interventionist



**Carli Sasser**  
Elementary Music Teacher

# Ramp Up Your Recruitment

Three recruiting strategies  
any district can implement

In the midst of teacher shortages, competition from other districts, and changing expectations from new teachers, recruitment can be daunting. But now, you have a leg-up: you know what millennial teachers want and how districts are marketing for recruitment. Of course, no silver bullet strategy will magically end a teacher shortage or guarantee dozens of applicants. But by implementing these three simple tactics, you can take a step toward reeling in more great candidates.



## #1: Build a captivating careers page.

Our research revealed that the vast majority of prospective teachers are scoping out district websites before applying, but only 8% of those websites have a dedicated careers page. Before anyone enters the interview room, your website is making a digital first impression, and if candidates can't find your employment options easily, they may move on.

So, you need a careers page—but more than that, you need a good one. This is the cornerstone of your recruitment strategy. Throughout the recruiting process, you're leaving enticing breadcrumbs and showing potential recruits how great your district is as a workplace. On your careers page, you're laying it all out on the line: *Here's why you should choose our district.*

We found that culture is a highly important factor in millennial teachers' decision-making.

### Start with culture.

In our research, we found that culture is a highly important factor in millennial teachers' decision-making. To convince your applicants they'd love working for you, your careers page should highlight the most positive aspects of your district's culture.

In the private sector, recruiters infuse every piece of the recruitment process, website included, with the company's culture. The careers page for You Need a Budget (YNAB), for example, includes a link to the startup's "culture manifesto," which highlights values like helpfulness, kindness, listening, and determination. "If you're nodding emphatically while reading it," they say, "you'll probably fit right in." Zapier, another startup, includes a "How We Work" section, hitting the high points of their work culture: "diversity and inclusion focus," "opportunity to grow," and the challenge to "solve interesting problems."

Both companies use more than just words to get their points across: they feature photos and videos of smiling employees in action. Neither focuses on perks or salary—instead, they emphasize how working for their company feels. If you're not sure which values to highlight on your own careers page, ask your most enthusiastic employees. If your current teachers appreciate your district's commitment to inclusiveness or your high expectations for students, odds are your candidates will, too.

But don't just tell prospective teachers about your great culture—show them. When we asked the teachers we surveyed how they'd like to be recruited, several wanted to see the district, not just read about it. "Pictures of current students and activities caught my attention," one teacher told us. "Photos and videos from things happening in your district are great!"

You don't have to go so far as hiring a professional photographer to get great quality photos. A team of students from a photography or journalism class could do the trick. Either way, photos give your prospective teachers a sense of everyday life in your district.

### Sell your community.

When they decide to join a school district, teachers are also deciding to join a new community—whether that means relocating or commuting from the next town over. Since location is such an important decision-making factor for your candidates, you need to make sure you're selling your area and its culture along with your schools.

Issaquah School District, just outside of Seattle, Washington, markets the beauty of the city on their careers page. In a recruitment video of community members hiking, shopping, and paragliding, they say, "From arts and culture to shopping and nightlife, you have it all at your fingertips." In Texas, San Angelo ISD features a "Discover San Angelo" promotional video on their recruitment page, including shots of the arts and history in the area. They include the "Top Ten Reasons to Choose San Angelo," citing a low cost of living and a "mild, sunny climate."

# What makes a great careers page?

## PURPOSE/MISSION

Feature your purpose front and center.

## CORE VALUES

Highlight the pillars of your district's culture "above the fold," so your candidates don't have to scroll down to find them.

## PHOTOS

Photos of your district in action give teachers a sense of their potential day-to-day life in your schools.

The screenshot shows the careers page for Central School District. At the top, the logo and navigation menu (NEWS, EVENTS, PARENTS, STUDENTS, CAREERS) are visible. The main header features a large blue-tinted image of a classroom with the text: "We educate and empower the leaders of tomorrow." Below this is a section titled "Our Core Values" with two columns: "Educational Excellence" (What we expect of ourselves and our students) and "Educating the Whole Child" (The way we see our students). The bottom section, "Life at Our School", contains two photos: one of a teacher at a chalkboard and another of students working on a laptop.

Washington's Ridgefield School District lets community members speak for themselves. Ridgefield residents Tim and Kathy Roth explain their love for the district from the comfort of their own couch, answering questions like, "How long have you lived in Ridgefield?" and "What was it like to raise a family here?"

Even if your district isn't in the nation's most exciting locale, it surely has a few selling points. If you don't have big city amenities, play up your small-town feel and close-knit community. Mention your short commute to a major city or the beautiful national park just down the road.

If you're worried your location will really detract from your appeal, you can't ignore the issue. Instead, you'll need to work on making your district itself a selling point. For example, adding a new training program to offer young teachers opportunities for advancement could make your district "the best place to launch a career in education."

No matter where your district is, find something good to say about your location—or create something worth talking about. Then, shout it from the mountaintops (or swamps).

### Spotlight your teachers.

Like every employee on the job market, teachers want to be valued. "Make sure that teachers feel like they're wanted," said one respondent. "If they feel like they are wanted at the school or district and are going to be taken care of, then they are going to want to come and will do their job well." Including the voices of enthusiastic educators on your careers page shows prospects, right from the get-go, that your district will value them.

Featuring employee testimonials in your recruiting materials convinces prospective teachers of your supportive leadership. Businesses in the private sector know this; they fill their careers pages with employee referrals. On the front page of YNAB's website, a current employee explains how working there is so vastly different from his previous jobs. Whole Foods' corporate careers page features pictures of smiling employees, gushing about their great experiences with the company.

Including the voices of enthusiastic teachers on your careers page shows prospects that your district will value them.

In the education sector, districts like Oregon's Medford Public Schools are following suit, giving the mic to teachers in one of their recruitment videos. "You get all the support you need from the staff, from the coaches, from the administration," says one Medford teacher. "But at the same time, it has a sense of 'family.'" In the first 30 seconds of Higley Unified's recruitment video, a teacher recommends the district "because their leadership is supportive... they are ready to listen to teachers."

Recruitment is like any other marketing effort—what you say about yourself matters less than what others say about you. Your prospects won't necessarily believe what *you* say about your schools, but they'll trust the recommendations of their fellow teachers.

## #2: Make the most of your social media.

It's no secret that millennials practically live on social media. Last year, eMarketer found that 58.5 million millennials are on Facebook, and 43.3 million are on Instagram. And they aren't alone. Pew Research shows that around 57% of Baby Boomers on are social media as well.

So why aren't more millennial teachers surfing district social media as they research schools? Only 22% of the teachers we surveyed indicated that they'd checked social media when researching jobs, but open responses told a different story. "Social media is key," one teacher told us. "I love being involved on campus and seeing exciting things happening at the school." Another said they specifically look for school leaders on social media.

But here's the kicker: according to our research, 22% of districts aren't even present on social media. Less than half are on both Facebook and Twitter. Therefore, it seems likely that candidates aren't checking district social media accounts because there isn't much to check.

# What makes a great careers page?

## LOCATION

Location is a priority for millennial teachers, so no matter where your district is, find something good to say about your community.

## TESTIMONIALS

Testimonials from your district's current teachers will build trust with your prospects.

## JOB OPENINGS

Keep job postings clear, up-to-date, and easy to find.

### Discover our location

Just south of Little Rock, Centerville is a small town with a big personality. Around here, we have a tight-knit community—and Central School District is the centerpiece.



**Nature**      **Small Businesses**      **Community**      **History**

### Stories



*The leadership here is so supportive—they're ready to listen to teachers.*

*It's a vibrant, diverse, caring community that embraces change and is always striving to be better.*

### Join us

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Admissions Recruiter</b><br>BACHELOR'S DEGREE                 | <a href="#">Apply Now</a> |
| <b>Art Teacher</b><br>BACHELOR'S DEGREE                          | <a href="#">Apply Now</a> |
| <b>Food Services Assistant</b><br>HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA/ GED       | <a href="#">Apply Now</a> |
| <b>Early Childhood - Teacher</b><br>ASSOCIATES PREFERRED         | <a href="#">Apply Now</a> |
| <b>Teacher, Elementary School 2nd Grade</b><br>BACHELOR'S DEGREE | <a href="#">Apply Now</a> |

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123 MAIN STREET  
CENTRALVILLE,  
AR 72207  
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“I want to work with school leaders who are forward-thinking and part of the conversation.”



Like your careers page, your social media should be hitting the high points your recruits care about: your culture, your location, and your support for teachers. (This is also a great place to use those awesome photos you got for your careers page.) Your posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram should give your prospective candidates a window into what it's like to work in your district.

### **Show your teachers some love.**

Your teachers should be a major focal point of your district's social media presence. Promoting the great work your faculty does every day builds trust with your community, makes your current teachers feel valued, and shows prospective teachers that you're a supportive school leader. As you decide what to post on social media, gather stories about your teachers and their classrooms. If the high school AP government teacher is holding a mock election, or first grade students are putting on a play, post about it. When in doubt, follow your social media-savvy teachers and watch what they post from the classroom. Sharing or retweeting current teachers' content not only boosts your faculty's credibility, but proves to prospective hires that you value your teachers' innovative ideas.

### **Actively engage teachers on social media.**

You may already be involved in a few education Twitter chats—public Twitter conversations bound together by a unique hashtag. These chats can also be a great place to find and engage with prospective teachers. If there are hashtags for teachers in your state or region (#CAedchat in California, for example), jump in on those conversations. If you can tweet, retweet, and like from a personal account, rather than the official district account, even better. “I find that leaders who leverage Twitter (or similar media) to grow their [Personal Learning Networks] or connect with other educators and leaders are most effective,” one survey respondent told us. “I want to work with school leaders who are forward-thinking and part of the conversation.”

Staying active in your region's Twitter chats gives you the chance to build personal connections with prospects before they even apply—and those relationships will help you stand out in the job search.

## #3: Turn your hiring process into a hiring experience.

Believe it or not, even your hiring process itself is a form of marketing. Once you've convinced candidates to apply, the pressure's on to sell your school. Hiring, after all, is a two-way street. You're not just evaluating your applicants; they're evaluating you. And, more likely than not, your dream candidate is considering several options.

The good news is that you have an opportunity here to really wow your candidates. Adding a few creative touches at this stage can elevate your hiring process to a hiring experience.

### Treat the job posting as your first touchpoint.

Any touchpoint with a potential recruit is an opportunity to share the district's brand, and in many cases, the job posting itself is the very first touch: your initial chance to impress a potential candidate. It's not enough to post an opening without including a job description (as many districts we researched did), but even a run-of-the-mill list of roles and responsibilities won't separate you from the competition.

The best descriptions don't just explain what teachers will be doing on a day-to-day basis. They describe the district's unique culture, including the particular traits a recruit should possess in order to thrive in that environment.

Lever, a leading software recruiting company, recommends writing "impact descriptions." Along with a list of the ins and outs of the position, they detail the impact employees will make on the job. These impact descriptions not only provide a more concrete breakdown of the job, but also set expectations for employees' success and provide a sense of purpose—which is key for millennial candidates. They're also a great place to outline support potential teachers will receive in their roles or the professional growth opportunities available to them.

### Get creative with the application process.

Your prospective teachers are more than likely filling out several applications at a time—most of which look more or less the same. That uniformity gives your district a great chance to stand out from the crowd.

Instead of focusing purely on their resumes, leave space in your application to let candidates show their personalities. In our applications, we ask questions like, "How have you become a better version of yourself in the past year?" or "In 150 words or less, tell us what makes you unique." You could even include a creative assignment. Ask candidates to submit a mock lesson plan, or record themselves presenting a lecture.

Your application should do more than show you your favorite candidates. It should make your prospects remember you—and want to work for you.

### Give interviews a personal touch.

Interviews are an opportunity for applicants to experience your school's culture. During this process, your candidates should understand, instinctively, that this is a district that will value their contributions.

This realization has changed the way interviews work in Medford Public Schools. "We used to do it in batches, and principals would sit on those committees. Now it's personalized interviews," Medford Superintendent Brian

Shumate tells SchoolCEO.

"We want them to feel more of a personal touch when they interview with our district."

Your application should make your prospects remember you—and want to work for you.

Building that personal touch goes beyond one-on-one

interviews. Michelle Hart, former VP of People Operations at media company Whisper, recommends giving candidates a short tour as part of a first interview. Walking through the halls of their potential school will help teachers "envision what their day-to-day would look like," Hart says. It would also give them a chance to interact with other teachers in their potential departments.

Some districts even bring actual students into the hiring process, giving candidates a feel for the real, everyday work. Kelly Middleton, superintendent of Kentucky's Newport Independent Schools, recommends recruiting students to simulate a class period, or even walk around campus with the prospective teacher. "Generally, when students are

excited about the candidate, they end up being a great hire,” Middleton writes in his book *Competing for Kids*. After all, your students have a better sense of your district’s culture than just about anyone else.

If a candidate really seems like a winner, set up time for them to meet informally with their potential boss, suggests Melissa Trahan, Head of Talent at Thread, a style brand. “This is a great time for them to surface questions and build rapport,” she adds. “Often, it can be the turning point meeting that drives your candidate to say yes.”

### **Make the job offer a celebration.**

When you find the perfect candidate, the way you offer a position can mean the difference between acceptance or rejection. Remember, it’s likely your dream teacher is getting other offers—so how can you set yours apart?

Little touches here can make a huge difference. Lever suggests mailing your would-be hire branded gear—a T-shirt emblazoned with your mascot or a pennant in your school colors. If you want to add a more personal touch, send a jersey with the teacher’s last name on the back. By doing this, “you’re relaying the message that you really want them to be a team member,” Lever says. “In fact, you clearly already see them as one.”

Hart recommends sending a personalized video to any candidate who receives an offer, featuring their new team excited to welcome them. “First of all, this makes them feel special,” Hart says, “and secondly, you can increase acceptance rates—and promote your brand even if the candidate turns down your offer.” The more personal details you can include, the better. Hiring a new choir teacher? Have your current employees sing a welcome song!

Ramping up your recruitment strategy doesn’t have to be overwhelming. Like any marketing strategy, it just means prioritizing the needs of your customers—in this case, your prospective teachers. Both through your marketing and the experiences you create, you can send teachers (especially millennials) exactly the message they want to hear—and recruit great talent for your district.

# Takeaways

**Millennials are now the largest generation in the workforce. We estimate that there are 1.2 million millennial teachers working today.**

**Most millennials see salary as moderately, but not extremely, important.**

**School culture, location, and leadership also have a significant impact on teachers’ career decisions.**

**While over 80% of millennial teachers are looking for hiring information online, only 8% of the school websites we researched had dedicated careers pages.**

**Knowing what your prospective teachers want and where they’re looking for information lets you tailor your recruitment marketing to the specific needs of millennials.**

**Careers pages, social media, and the recruitment experience can help you draw in better candidates.**

**J. Tyler Lewis**  
Theatre Arts Teacher

