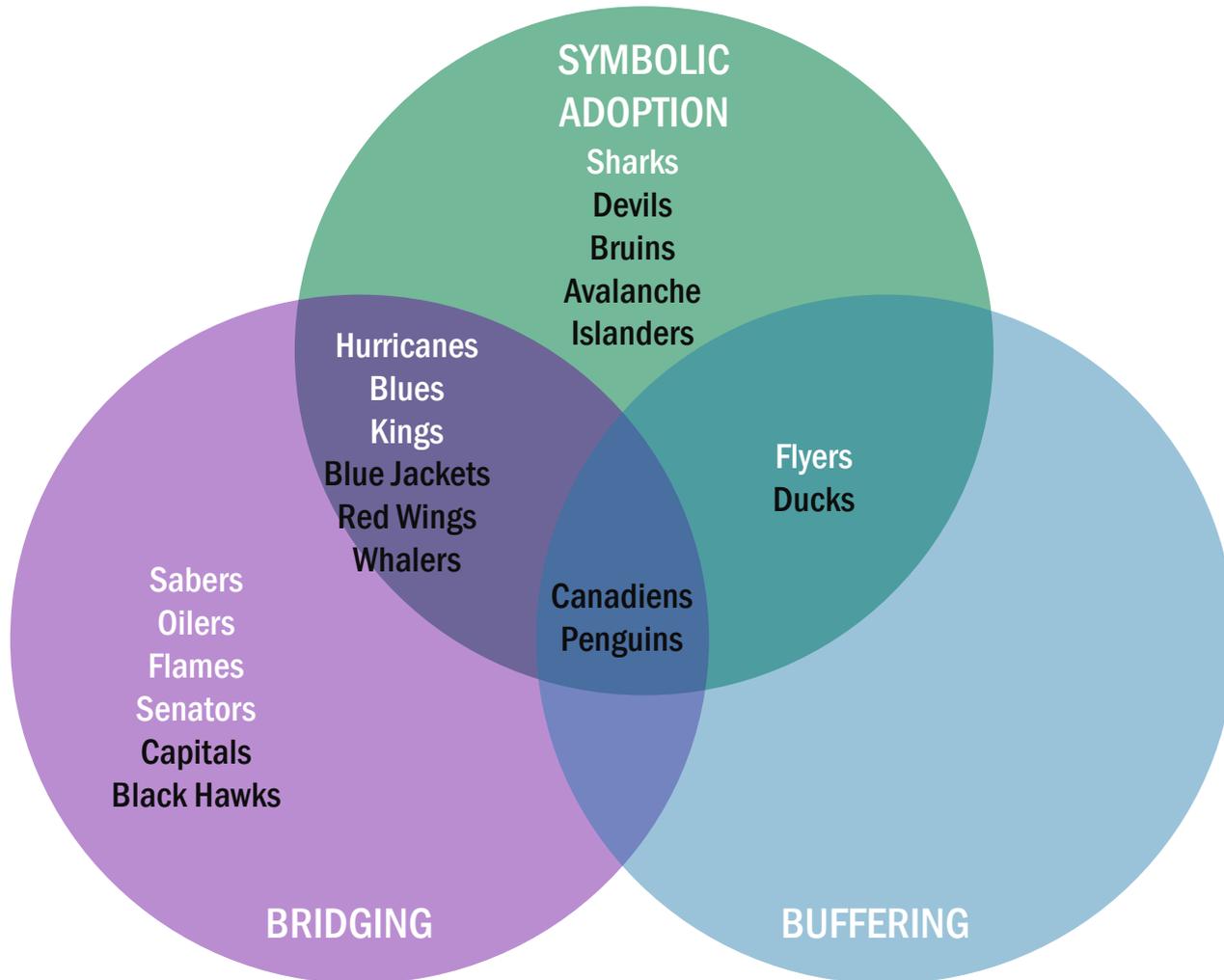


# WE INTERVIEWED 21 SUPERINTENDENTS AND CHARTER LEADERS ACROSS MICHIGAN



# SUPERINTENDENTS SEE HUMAN CAPITAL AS KEY TO IMPROVEMENT

20 out of 21 superintendents identified human capital issues as among the most significant challenges to turning around their districts.



"It's a pool problem. I spent time with other states [in a prior role], and we'd talk about teacher pools. I would raise my hand, and I'd say it's wonderful that there's 17 states in the United States that can talk really effectively about teacher pools. I said Michigan might have a puddle." - *Capitals Superintendent*

"There's a serious teacher shortage in Michigan. Teachers will go where you put a lot of equity in, and then go to other places, because they can make more money and do different things like that." - *Islanders Superintendent*



# **TURNOVER IMPEDES PARTNERSHIP DISTRICTS' IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS**



*“We've been unable to have one program model implemented more than one year due to a turnover in either leadership and/or teachers. [...] There's the consistency issue, which prevents the model from being able to really take hold, and then there's the lack of talent.” – Flyers superintendent*

*“Spend all this money and time on professional development and then have to start from scratch with a new teacher who has not had that information because the other teacher left. It's a constant struggle.” – Flames superintendent*



*“That kind of turnover—every time that happens—that puts us in a situation where we're trying to rebuild things that had previously been functioning and working and now we're trying to rebuild it.”  
– Avalanche superintendent*

# PARTNERSHIP DISTRICTS USE VARIOUS STRATEGIES TO RESPOND TO HUMAN CAPITAL CHALLENGES

## LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTES



*“It’s not like we’ve got a list of potential candidates for any of these openings. Yeah, it’s a challenge to fill those positions. We have a fair number of subs in the building. We do our best to hire solid ones.”*

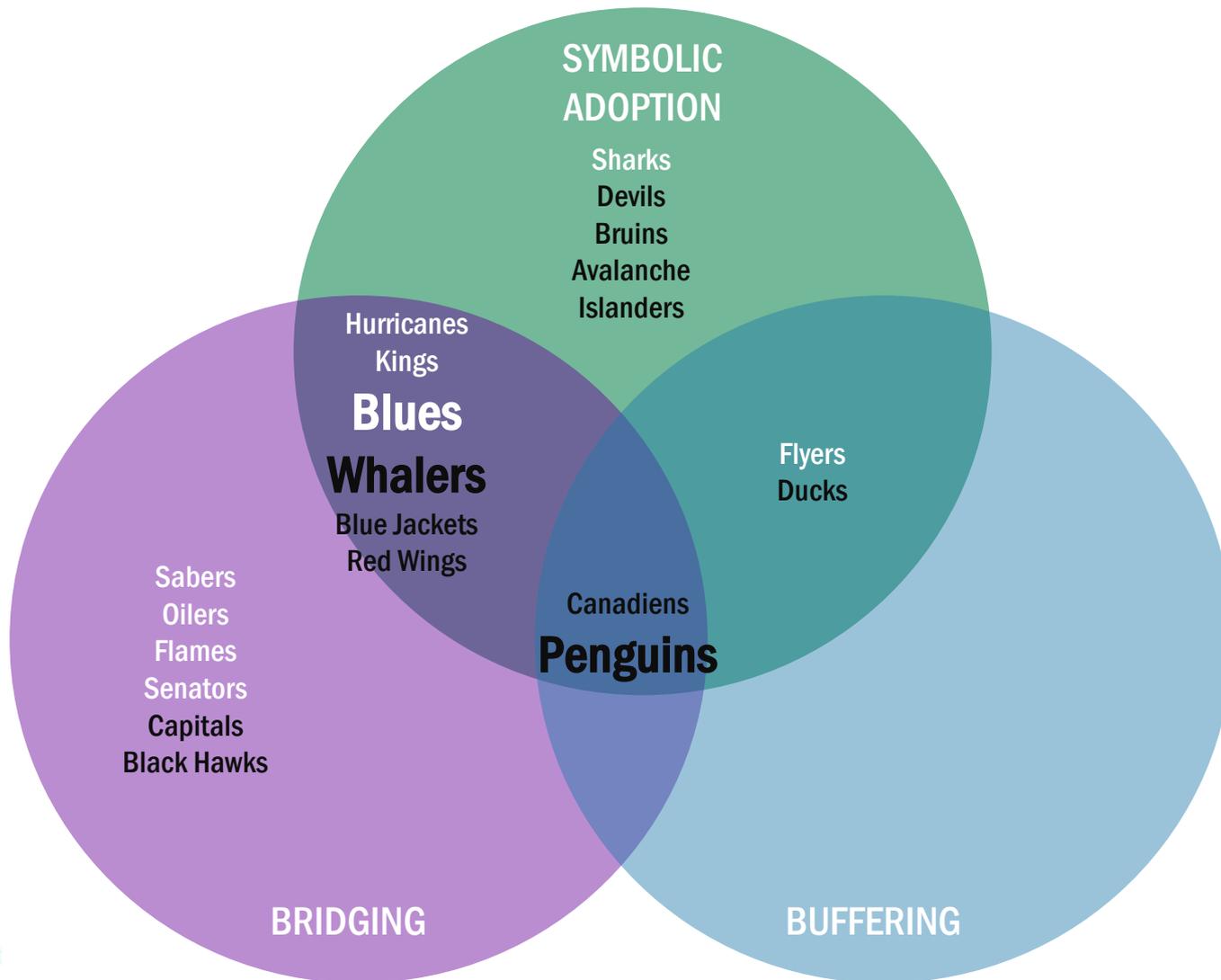
*– Sabres superintendent*

## TEACHER PAY



*“We allocated funds to offer signing bonuses for staff who come on. We were able to give a \$1,000 signing bonus to any highly-qualified staff member that agreed to come on, which we did get. – Hurricanes superintendent*

# THREE IN-DEPTH CASE STUDY DISTRICTS





# CASE STUDY: BLUES

# POSITIVE CHANGE AT DISTRICT LEVEL

- **District Changes Attributable to Partnership**

- Creating new roles for implementation (e.g. Partnership coordinator)
- Creating new partnerships with MDE, MI Excel, and community partners.
- Adopting a new curriculum and creating new district systems.

- **Curricular Change to Account for Turnover**

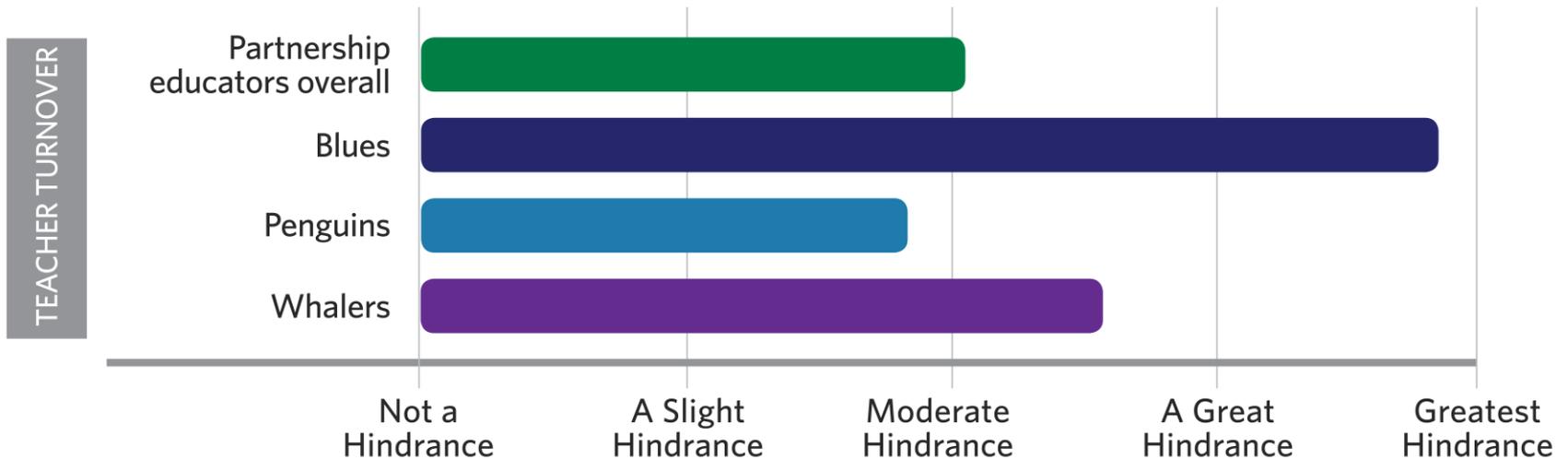
- *“One of the things that we [had to] take into account was teacher turnover. That is one of the reasons why we chose the language arts program that we did because anyone literally could come in, and it is a scripted program.”*

*– District-level employee in Blues*

# MANY IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AT SCHOOL LEVEL BECAUSE OF CHRONIC TEACHER TURNOVER



*"We started to spin our wheels again this year even though we have these systems now. It was just like every third day we had new staff... To train them and to spend the time with them was taking up a majority of our time. We never got our feet off of the ground." – District staff*



*Note: Educators were asked "To what extent is the following a hindrance to achieving your Partnership Agreement goals?"*

*Source: EPIC survey of educators in Partnership districts.*



**CASE STUDY:**  
**PENGUINS**

# A STRONG AND EXPERIENCED LEADER ALONGSIDE COHERENT PRE-EXISTING INITIATIVES LED TO SYMBOLIC ADOPTION AND BUFFERING OF THE PARTNERSHIP REFORM

## Symbolic Adoption

- Aligning pre-existing plans with agreement.
- Because of strong and stable leadership from the superintendent the district mainly *“[does] what it was going to do anyway,”* according to a Penguins board member.



# THE MAIN ISSUE FACING THE DISTRICT



*“The main issues facing our district are -- I think one of the primary issues is regarding teacher, the **absence of quality teacher candidates**. People who are **prepared, A, B, willing to work in an urban environment**. Not everyone is cut out to do that [...] The absence of good teacher candidates is one of our problems, one of our challenges.” – Penguins superintendent*

# USING THE REFORM AS A BRIDGING STRATEGY TO RECONSTITUTE A PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL

Partnership offered a language, urgency and an opportunity to navigate those politics and implement a difficult change.



*“Sometimes there are schools that just need to be shut down and restarted... By saying we’re hiring staff from the beginning now, the principals going to be hired. We just started all over again and set the expectations for what you want.” – Penguins Superintendent*



**CASE STUDY:**  
**WHALERS**

# ATTEMPTS TO ENACT PARTNERSHIP LED TO CONFLICT, LACK OF CONSENSUS OVER GOALS, AND PERCEPTIONS OF WASTED TIME



*“Has [partnership] impacted us? It's impacted us negatively. It stops the work. It doesn't promote the work, unfortunately. As soon as this Partnership hit, we stopped. Halted completely. [Our other work] was dead in the water, because we spent so much time, weeks at a time, all day in this room knocking out the Partnership. That was us. Then when our part was written and we started moving forward, [the superintendent] has been out of the picture working on bringing in partners, meeting partners.”*

*- District administrator*

# WHALERS' PERPETUALLY LOW DISTRICT CAPACITY WAS EXACERBATED BY A CRIPPLING LACK OF HUMAN CAPITAL



*“I mean, you can develop these goals, these lofty goals, and say that our students are capable of achieving them, but they need teachers to teach them.” – District employee*

*“Great curriculum, high ranked by ed reports. Very rigorous for students. The problem is, it’s rigorous for staff. When I have a third of my staff who, A, they have no content, no understanding of teaching, and they were supposed to come in and pick up a sub and teach it, and then I have low students. Beginning of this year, [hundreds of] kids who didn’t know letter sounds or letter IDs. How do you implement something that’s so rigorous, right?” – District employee*



# POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Human capital challenges are largely unaddressed by the Partnership Model.**
  - How can MI **build workforce capacity** and educator supply to serve the state's lowest-performing districts and schools?
- **Resource constraints plague Partnership schools and districts, and it is harder for Partnership schools/districts to compete for teachers based on salaries.**
  - How can MI **support** low-performing schools and districts to **implement** strategic far-reaching reforms?
- **Despite these constraints, we see some initial positive trends due to Partnership.**
  - How can MI **sustain** school improvement efforts in light of their issues with recruiting and retaining a high-quality educator workforce?



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