



# ONBOARDING NEW TEACHERS: WHAT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED

MSBO Spring 2017

# Objectives

- Understand onboarding as an integral part of teacher effectiveness and teacher retention
- Become familiar with effective cultivation strategies and ensure your new hires have the information they need to begin teaching
- Identify what quality onboarding looks like
- Develop an onboarding plan for new hires

# Agenda

- Introduction to onboarding
- Cultivating teachers before school starts
- School-site orientation
- Supporting teachers during the first months of school

# Effective onboarding programs impact retention rates

- A study found that when administrators offer high-quality onboarding programs along with district orientation, the retention rate of new teachers was over 93%
  - What does it “cost” your students, you and your school to replace a teacher who is a no-show or who leaves once the school year has started
  - It costs districts on average over \$10,000 to replace or refill each teacher vacancy once the school year has started.
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- Time students lose with a full-time dedicated teacher
  - Time to find a replacement
  - Drain on other faculty and staff

# What is onboarding?

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## Cultivation

from the job offer



## Orientation

during the first days on site



## Management

during the first months of school

### **Excellent onboarding programs:**

- Have clear goals
- Have clear leadership and are grounded in the school culture
- Are differentiated
- Provide quality, ongoing training on effective strategies
- Encourage reflective practice

### **Possible impact:**

- Higher student achievement
- Increased teacher effectiveness; stronger classroom management
- Higher job satisfaction; lower levels of stress
- Retention of highly effective teachers
- A more positive learning environment

# Onboarding Timeline

Cultivation	Orientation	Management
Keep the candidate engaged and build excitement	Address teachers' needs in order of priority.	Deliver specific and actionable feedback.
Start to set expectations	Review specific performance expectations and teacher evaluation rubrics.	Give timely feedback consistently reinforcing the language of the evaluation rubric.
Build investment in school culture and philosophy	Set specific academic goals based on end-of-year assessments.	Track student progress against academic goals using interim assessments.
Connect with a strong buddy or mentor	Set specific professional development goals.	Set specific milestones to review and re-set PD goals.



# CULTIVATION

# Onboarding begins with cultivation - high-quality, meaningful, targeted contact ensures school expectations are understood early

- Purpose

- Helps ensure that candidates begin teaching despite competition from other school districts or challenges
- Provides the opportunity to start building excitement and energy around your school culture
- Allows new teachers to start the year feeling informed and supported
- Encourages staff members to arrive informed and prepared for the first few weeks of school

- When?

- Begins when you interview a teacher
- Ends when teacher starts at your school

- Why?

- It allows you to predict and plan for any potential vacancies and last minute withdrawals
- It ensures candidates continue to understand your commitment to them from the time of hire to when the school year starts
- It allows the opportunity to continue set clear expectations for teachers in your building



# The easiest support strategy to implement: communication via phone or e-mail

- What makes this a useful tactic?
  - Personalizes the hiring process and makes candidates more committed to your school
  - Quick and easy. If you have additional support, this can be delegated.
  - Creates a dialogue for questions and concerns
- Things to keep in mind
  - As the principal, you should make the first call to your new hire to offer them the position
  - Have a clear goal or message for each communication
  - Telephone calls are meant to be short, inspiring, and informative
  - E-mails should be concise and require a response to maintain and create an open line of communication

# Create a short reading assignment that sets expectations and creates an early point of engagement.

- What makes this a useful tactic?
  - Allows teachers to review reading material aligned to your school philosophy or approach to teaching
    - ex: Teach Like a Champion
  - Allows teacher to internalize culture and performance expectations before orientation
    - ex: Review our evaluation rubric and select two areas to set PD goals for your first three months
- Things to keep in mind
  - Assignments should not be onerous or discouraging
  - Participation expectations should be clear in advance
  - Discussion can be online or by phone if people are relocating
  - Group debriefs is a way to create feeling of camaraderie and commitment
  - Non-participation is an early warning sign

# Create discussion forums for connection between teachers.

## ◦ What makes this a useful tactic?

- If you are hiring a large number of new teachers, this can help them connect about housing and relocation logistics
- Teachers can begin to create connections to the school community
- Positive leaders in your school community can monitor and contribute to the discussion
- If one teacher has a question, others could benefit from the answer as well

## ◦ Things to keep in mind

- If the discussion is monitored, information might not be correct
- Be sure to set norms for what are group questions and what should be individual questions
- Make sure the current voices representing your school are positive and encouraging
- Be careful in linking personal social networks (Facebook). Email or Google groups are safer

# Planning and Prioritizing Phone Calls and Emails

	New Hires	Current Teachers
When	<p>At least once a month after hire to engage teachers</p> <p>2-3 weeks prior to the start of school to answer any questions about the orientation or 1<sup>st</sup> day of school.</p>	<p>At least twice over the summer, prioritizing teachers by level of concern.</p> <p>Early July to assess interest in helping with new teacher orientation. 2 weeks prior to the start of school to answer questions.</p>
Who	<p>The first call should always come from the principal. Follow-up calls can come from other staff.</p>	<p>Members of the leadership team.</p>
Strategies	<p>Remember to gather up-to-date contact information when an offer is made.</p>	<p>Prior to the end of the school year, gather contact information and give tentative dates for orientation activities.</p>

# Teachers have told us they want to have information about their school and school processes before school starts

## ◦ Logistics

- Schedule of the week prior to and the first week of school, including typical day structure and any special training sessions; when they can come in to set up their classrooms
- Where to park, pick up mail, location of bathrooms and lunchroom
- Important staff members – who do they go to for what

## ◦ Instructional Support

- List of professional development opportunities – summer workshops, which ones they have to go to the first week of school, schedule for the year
- Visit and set up classroom – schedule a time as early as possible
- What mechanisms exist for providing instructional feedback?
- List of assigned students with parent and contact information, as well as IEP's if special ed

## ◦ Administrative Expectations

- How will teachers be evaluated?
- What are the school's student achievement goals?
- What are the other school-wide goals?

# Onboarding plan: Outline 4 cultivation strategies for your new hires

## CULTIVATION

Activity/ Strategy	Completion date	Purpose	Leader
<i>Ex: Phone Call</i>	<i>May 15</i>	<i>Welcome phone call, outline that other staff members will be calling/emailing over the summer. Connect new hires to a positive mentor teacher.</i>	



# SCHOOL SITE ORIENTATION

# Target Topics for Orientation

- Basic Needs
- Expectations
- Community
- Academic Goals
- Professional Growth



# School-site orientation: What do teachers need to know first?

## ○ **Basic Needs**

- Where can teachers find what they need (materials, resources, copies, etc.)?
- Where are the important locations in the building (cafeteria, gym, office)?
- What is the school's policy on teacher attendance?
- How should teachers dress on days with students? For PD?
- What is the calendar?
- What is my class schedule? Where can I access IEPs?

## ○ **Expectations**

- How often will I be observed and by whom?
- What will you be looking for when you observe me?
- What are the expectations for student conduct?
- What are the positive and negative consequences?
- What is the process if there are classroom management problems?
- What is the process for documenting student behavior issues?

# School-site orientation (cont.)

- **Community/Culture**

- Who should I talk to if I have instructional challenges?
- Who will I work with in my grade team? Department?
- Is there an orientation/opportunity to meet the people who provide support services to the students?
- Will I be assigned a mentor or a coach?

What is the culture of your organization and what does the new staff member need to know?

# School-site orientation: How can we get the best performance out of teachers?

- Academic Goals

- What should my students learn this year?
- What do they already know (diagnostic)?
- How will I assess their progress (interim)?
- How will I assess their mastery (summative)?
  - *Ex: X % of student will demonstrate Y level of mastery on Z assessment*

- Professional Growth

- What skills do I need to strengthen this year?
- What resources will I access to build those skills?
- What supports do I need to build this skill?
- What role would I like to be in in five years? Two years?

# Questions to Consider

- What operational and administrative tasks do you anticipate will be most frustrating for staff?
- How did you learn about the instructional expectations when you began teaching or how have you shared these expectations as a principal?
- Describe how you have seen vision and culture messages shared and reinforced most effectively.
- What are some of the best practices or strategies you've seen for setting effective academic and professional growth goals with teachers?
- What will be your biggest challenge in creating an effective and high-quality onboarding plan?

# School-site Orientation Planning

## Activity

- What are the goals of your orientation?
- How much total time do you have for your school orientation? How much time is with your new teachers apart from returning teachers?
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- Who is available to orient new teachers during those days?

# Orientation Planning Guiding Questions

	<b>Basic Needs</b>	<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Academic Goals</b>	<b>Professional Growth Plans</b>
What should teachers who are well oriented to your/their know?					
When do they need to know it?					
What activities, resources and messages will you use?					
How and when will you reinforce these messages?					

# Onboarding Plan: Outline School-site orientation Activities

## ORIENTATION

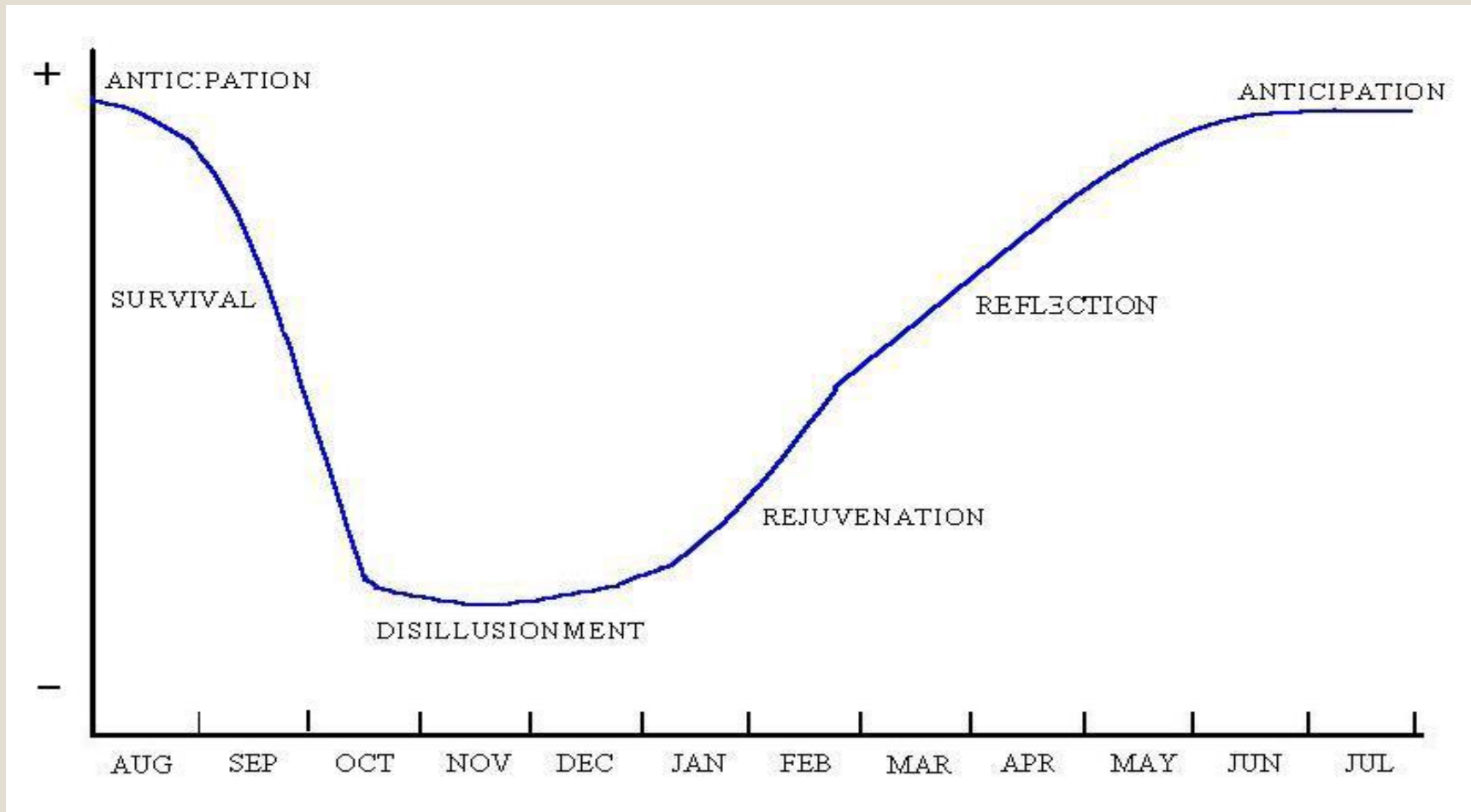
Activity/ Strategy	When should it be complete?	Who will complete?	Purpose
<i>Ex: New Teacher Staff Meeting</i>	<i>August 28</i>	<i>John Sheppard, Principal</i>	<i>Set expectations, assign mentors, give out first semester formal orientation schedule</i>



SUPPORTING TEACHERS  
DURING THE FIRST MONTHS OF  
SCHOOL



The support and management strategies you offer should be tailored based on teachers' needs and challenges



# During the first week, teachers need you to be visible and supportive



**TIPS**

- Pop in once students arrive to check on how things are going
- Share sincere encouragement about their teaching at least twice
  - Identify mentors and what the support looks like
    - Give new teachers a welcome gift

During the second month of school, most new teachers say that they need more feedback on their instructional practices



**TIPS**

- Schedule formal/informal observations; give immediate feedback (positive and constructive) so teachers can self-correct. Ask specific questions about gains they see in their students, so that their focus remains on student outcomes.
  - Set up opportunities for peer observations or model lessons at staff meetings
- Help teachers learn to identifying big and small issues and prioritize which to correct
  - Encourage self-reflection; build this into planning time or staff meetings

# Onboarding Checklist

- Begin planning activities for school-site orientation
- Gather resources for new teachers to include in emails and orientation information
- Complete a comprehensive onboarding work plan with clear objectives and aligned activities
- Draft a Mutual Expectations document for your school site and customize other relevant onboarding templates
- Create a comprehensive performance management plan with clear teacher performance benchmarks

# Questions?

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