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**EVALUATING THE IMPROVEMENT PROCESS OF A TEACHER ONBOARDING  
PROGRAM IN A LARGE, URBAN, MIDWESTERN SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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EVALUATING THE IMPROVEMENT PROCESS OF A TEACHER ONBOARDING  
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## **Abstract**

Employee onboarding is the first opportunity an organization has to create space for individuals to acclimate to their work environment, helping them adjust to the social, operational, and performance aspects of their roles while building the individual tools necessary to contribute to larger organizational goals. In education, particularly in schools characterized as low income, onboarding is all more important due to the difficulty schools often have in recruiting high quality teachers and retaining those teachers after their first 5 years. It is important, then, for school districts to hire highly-qualified candidates and ensure that those candidates are adequately prepared to assume their new teaching positions, thus improving their chances of becoming effective educators within their new district.

Through the development of efficient processes for administrative onboarding, districts can provide opportunities for new teachers to steep in the vision, core values, and norms of the organization and engage in meaningful opportunities to practice essential skills prior to day one in the classroom. Through a lens of organizational socialization and uncertainty reduction theories, the purpose of this study was to develop, implement, and evaluate a new onboarding process in a large, urban Mid-western school district. Using mixed-methodological approach, the researcher evaluated the effects of this onboarding process with respect to three key outcomes increased novice teacher self-efficacy, increased investment in the career (intent to stay), and increased feelings of support and connection to the district office (perception of service culture). Study findings reveal that the interventions in this study failed to improve intent to stay and perception of service culture over the study period. They did, however, appear to increase novice teacher's perception of self-efficacy over time.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study**

When becoming a part of an organization or social group, people want to feel a sense of belonging; they want to feel like they fit. It is important that an organization creates space for individuals to acclimate to their new work environment. One of the first opportunities that organizations have to create this space is through employee onboarding. Employee onboarding is the organizational support of new hires to help them adjust to the social, operational, and performance aspects of their roles while building the individual tools necessary to contribute to larger organizational goals (Bauer, 2010).

In order to hire top talent and build the strength of an organization, employers spend a significant amount of resources—time, financial, and personnel—to identify, recruit, and secure highly qualified candidates for any given position (Arnold, 2010; Hatva, 2012; Bausch & Svare, 2010). This is also true of educational organizations and public school districts, who aim to recruit top talent with limited resources (Odden & Kelly, 2008). Once talent is secured, employers must provide new hires with the information, direction, and support they need to be successful in their roles. This support, frequently referred to as employee onboarding, looks different across any given organization. In order to transition employees from the point of hire into the work environment, employers must provide opportunities to complete the necessary paperwork and forms, define the roles and responsibilities, as well as create a positive environment for learning, development, and socialization (Doke 2014, Graybill et al., 2013; Robb, 2012, Savitt, 2012).

In education, onboarding is all more important due to the difficulty schools often have in recruiting high quality teachers and retaining those teachers after their first 5 years (Newburry & Allsop, 2017). This challenge is especially acute at low income and minority schools (Ingersoll

& Strong, 2011). Districts with high teacher attrition are often forced to hire less experienced teachers, which will likely result in poorer quality teaching and learning for the students who attend those schools (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). It is important, then, for school districts to hire highly qualified candidates and ensure that those candidates are adequately prepared to assume their new teaching positions, thus improving their chances of becoming effective educators within their new district.

### **Statement of The Problem**

Newburry and Allsop (2017) report that when “it comes to leaving the profession, it has been found that up to 30-46% of new teachers quit teaching within the first 5 years and nearly 8-14% of all teachers leave teaching in any given year” (p. 863). In the past five years in this urban, midwestern school district, 20% to 23% of novice teachers left in their first two years of teaching; 1% of novice teachers left after their first semester. That number was as high as 30% in the 2016-2017 school academic year. One potential cause of early departures from the teaching career may be ineffective onboarding programs. While there are various factors that lead to novice teacher burnout, one of those factors is that teachers lack the specific knowledge and skills necessary for success in their first 5 years of teaching. Many teachers enter the profession feeling confident about their knowledge of subject matter and content, but unprepared to handle other elements that are a part of being an effective educator such as: behavior management, scheduling, climate and culture, and individual human resource needs (Kidd, Brown, & Fitzallen, 2015; Pogodzinski, Youngs, & Frank, 2013; Smeaton & Waters, 2013; Zepeda & Mayers, 2011). One way to prepare teachers more effectively might be through the onboarding process they experience as they are hired into the school district.

Onboarding is a broad process, defined in terms of "... formal and informal practices, programs, and policies enacted or engaged in by an organization or its agents to facilitate newcomer adjustment (Klein & Polin, 2012, p. 268). We know that organizations with well-rounded and stimulating onboarding programs show increased employee engagement, productivity, and lower attrition and turnover (Savitt, 2012). Onboarding programs for new teachers are invaluable because they create a sense of organizational belonging and buy-in, which aids in retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Savitt, 2012). Additionally, providing new hires with necessary information such as access to important networks, organization contact information, and setting expectations prior to their first day onsite gives all individuals a head start and reduces wasted time on the first day on the job (Steer, 2013). As this need is recognized across organizations, employers are continually looking for better approaches, designs, and strategies for onboarding and orientation. Depending on the organization, onboarding can range from simply providing time to complete new-hire paperwork to handing out a welcome guide on the first day, to offering multiple-day workshops to help new employees transition to the uncertain work environment. More comprehensive onboarding programs begin during recruitment, carry through hiring and orientation, and often include mentoring during an employee's first year or beyond.

This being said, the current onboarding processes in most school districts need improvement. Despite being among the top employers for recruiting talent, onboarding is limited in public schools districts due to limited resources and capacity (Odden & Kelly, 2008). Ironic as it might be, employers often spend the majority of their resources identifying, recruiting, and securing top candidates (McNeill, 2012; Nyman, 2010; Robinson, 2012), which limits the amount of time, effort, and financial resources available for onboarding programs. As it is, the

onboarding process consists of mostly of induction-related activities: completion of new-hire paperwork, initial introduction to team members, and addressing workspace needs. The main goals of induction are to define a new hire's roles and responsibilities (Odden & Kelly, 2008), provide opportunities for learning and development related to the first few months of employment (Campbell, 2015), and establish a positive work environment or introduction to the culture of the organization (McNeill, 2012). Some educational organizations have even expanded their onboarding programs to include mentoring for novice teachers in their first year or beyond, but this is not common or, if available, is provided on a limited scale (Arnold-Rogers, Arnett, & Harris, 2008).

Onboarding programs that consist mainly of induction practices and limited mentoring provide only minimal guidance to new hires (Derven, 2008; Robb, 2012). Teachers who are new to a school, district, or the profession altogether require support in order to become accustomed to school procedures, practices, and requirements (Arnold-Rogers, Arnett, & Harris, 2008; Hudson, 2012; Resta, Huling, & Yeargain, 2013) as well as the "...resources to become fully engaged and culturally-aware members of a productive workforce" (Hillman, 2010, p. 1). Using existing research and theory, public school systems can design and implement more beneficial, efficient, onboarding programs/processes for new employees in order to increase new hire satisfaction, effectiveness, and retention.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to develop, implement, and evaluate a new onboarding process in a large, urban Midwestern school district in Oklahoma through the lens of organizational socialization and uncertainty reduction theory. Organizational socialization theory centers on the idea that newcomers in an organization must first adapt to common culture and

practices and develop the skills necessary in order to be successful in their new roles. Further, to become “socialized” into an organization an individual must move from a place of uncertainty to certainty; from a place of “outsider” to a place of belonging (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012; Wanberg, 2012). For novice teachers, this includes efficient onboarding processes related to human resources, introduction to organizational vision, core values, and district norms, as well as providing meaningful opportunities to practice essential skills prior to their first day in the classroom.

At the conclusion of the new onboarding process, the researcher evaluated the effects this onboarding process had on novice teachers’ perceptions of service culture, self-efficacy as well as their intent to stay in the organization beyond their first year.

### ***Research Questions***

The study was framed by the following research questions:

1. Did new educator hires’ perception of self-efficacy change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?
2. Did new educator hires’ perception of intent to stay beyond their first year of teaching change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?
3. Did new educator hires’ perception of service culture in the district change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?
4. What are some remaining challenges associated with the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?

### **Potential Contributions**

There are few studies specific to the experiences of novice teachers in onboarding programs. The studies that do exist are mostly doctoral dissertations and are highly specific:

orientation programs for university-level educators (Williams-Smith, 2017), year-one supports for new teachers such as coaching and mentorship (Morales, 2016), and school-level orientation programs (Caughey, 2018). The potential contributions of this study are to: a) add to scholarly literature studying novice teacher onboarding; b) explore the role of novice teacher onboarding; and c) gather and assess evidence of the relationship of onboarding practices to teacher preparedness, self-efficacy, and intent to stay.

### **Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Dissertation**

In summary, novice teachers leave their profession at a high rate in their first five years of teaching. One potential cause of this turnover is onboarding programs that do not build in organizational socialization or help to develop and build upon the essential knowledge and skills necessary for novice teachers in their first several years of teaching. Therefore, a novice teacher onboarding program was launched and evaluated in order to examine its effects on new teachers' self-efficacy, intent to stay, and perception of service culture.

This dissertation is organized in chapters according to common dissertation conventions. Chapter Two is a review of the current literature relevant to the study used to highlight gaps in our current understanding of employee on-boarding in educational settings. Chapter Three outlines the theory and process undergirding the development of the on-boarding intervention as well as the plan for evaluation. Chapter Four elaborates on method for the study around research design, setting, and procedures involved in the evaluation study. Chapter Five presents the study findings and Chapter 6 includes a summary of the findings, discussion, implications for policy practice, limitations and suggestions for future research.



## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

There is a wide array of existing literature which offers insight, perspective, and direct applicability for this research project. I first examine literature about the primary components of onboarding including definitions, characteristics, and processes. This section includes research about the induction phase of onboarding, which will become the primary focus of this study. Next, I review research related to onboarding practices in business and education to understand the state of current research and help identify gaps and areas for potential contribution. I conclude with a review of literature related to teacher preparedness—in particular, training programs, knowledge, skills, and their relationship to motivation, in order to understand of what teachers need to be successful. It is hoped this knowledge would inform the development of a strong, evidence-based on-boarding program.

### **Organizational Socialization and Onboarding**

Onboarding has been defined in many ways, depending on the language used by independent organizations or groups. Most define it in terms of the process or outcomes (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011; Frear, 2007) as they relate to new hires. These definitions treat onboarding as “...formal and informal practices, programs, and policies enacted or engaged in by an organization or its agents to facilitate newcomer adjustment” (Klein & Polin, 2012, p. 268). Onboarding programs that consist mostly of completion of new-hire paperwork, initial introduction to team members, and addressing workspace needs provide insufficient guidance to new employees (Derven, 2008; Nyman, 2010; Robb, 2012). More comprehensive onboarding processes begin during recruitment, carry through hiring and orientation, and often include mentoring during the new employees first year or beyond (Bauer, 2010; Campbell, 2015; Doke, 2014; McNeill, 2012). Organizations that have well-rounded and stimulating onboarding processes show increased employee engagement and retention over time (Savitt, 2012). These

processes should include a general introduction to the organization and employment practices, but should also expose the employee to key organizational values and culture (Doke, 2014, Graybill et al., 2013; Robb, 2012).

Onboarding is a socialization process that should occur over time, distinguished from “orientation” which is typically confined to a single event (Vernon, 2012). The onboarding process is facilitated by the organization, while the socialization process happens internally for each newcomer (Klein et al., 2015). Strong onboarding processes move beyond orientation “...to provide an integration program that equips new hires with the resources to become fully engaged and culturally aware members of a productive workforce (Hillman, 2010, p. 1). This process could take over a year to be considered complete (Doke, 2014).

Thus, onboarding is the overall process of supporting new hires in adjusting to the social and performance norms of an organization (Bauer, 2010). Beyond this term, onboarding can be broken down into several primary components: recruitment, induction/orientation, and mentoring. Recruitment is the strategy, plan, and steps that an organization takes in order to acquire and produce top talent that is needed in order to staff the organization effectively (Odden & Kelly, 2008). Recruitment takes place before a new hire is offered a role in the organization. It is the first phase of onboarding. Induction (sometimes called orientation) is the strategies, processes, and resources that organizations use in order to provide talent with the skills and knowledge they need in order to perform their roles within that organization (Odden & Kelly, 2008). Induction is the central phase of onboarding that takes place after an individual has accepted their job offer. Organizations use the induction phase to provide information, direction and support that new hired need in the first few months of their role. Mentoring is “the use of an experienced and knowledgeable individual to teach, guide, and develop an individual with less

experience or knowledge in a specific area” (Corner, 2012, p. 51). Mentoring typically takes place after the induction process and is considered the final phase of onboarding.

### **Primary Components of Onboarding**

The following is a review of literature related to the primary components of onboarding, which includes recruitment, induction/orientation, and mentoring. The term “onboarding” can often be broadly stated, so it is helpful to break down the different components as they relate to the overall process in order to better inform the development of new onboarding programs. If onboarding is defined as “...formal and informal practices, programs, and policies enacted or engaged in by an organization or its agents to facilitate newcomer adjustment” (Klein & Polin, 2012, p. 268), these components are the phases of onboarding that, when combined, facilitate acclimation to the job or workplace.

#### ***Recruitment***

Recruitment is the strategy, plan, and/or steps that an organization takes in order to acquire and produce top talent needed to staff the organization effectively (Odden & Kelly, 2008). Recruitment is one of the top areas where employers invest time, effort, and money to identify, recruit, and secure candidates (McNeill, 2012; Nyman, 2010). Public school districts are among the top employers in any region recruiting talent (Odden & Kelly, 2008), but do so with limited resources and market barriers. Several strategies to solve this problem have been recommended, such as using Title I and II federal funds for things like merit pay, signing bonuses, or recruiting non-traditional candidates (Berry, 2004). Strong recruitment efforts increase the available pool for teaching positions, placing administrators in a better position to staff their schools with effective teachers (Loeb & Myung, 2010).

The ability of businesses and school districts to recruit effective talent is influenced by many constraints such as: availability of quality applicants or information regarding their qualifications, competencies of hiring managers, legal requirements, or budget constraints (Hanushek, 2005; Loeb & Myung, 2010). However, even with these constraints, organizations focusing substantially on recruitment efforts will increase applicant pools in both quantity and quality (Loeb & Myung, 2010). Strategies for effective recruitment include accessible information about the culture and goals of the organization, particularly through the use of technology (Vanden Bos, 2010). Candidates are often attracted to organizations that align with their personal values, goals, and culture (Doke, 2014; Sims, 2009; Vanden Bos, 2010). Research also shows that teacher candidates are attracted to districts that demonstrate family and community support, progressiveness, staff relationships, available resources, challenge, teacher autonomy, and flexibility with curriculum (Milanowski et al., 2009), so highlighting these attributes during recruitment efforts is important. Other effective strategies consist of including current teachers or employees in the selection process (Rogoff, 2014), and increased participation in open houses and job fairs, particularly on college campuses (Bielski, 2007).

### ***Induction/Orientation***

Induction (sometimes called orientation, typically in business) is the strategies, processes, and resources that organizations use in order to provide talent with the skills and knowledge they need in order to perform their roles within that organization (Odden & Kelly, 2008). In education, specifically for teachers, this would mean things such as classroom management strategies, instructional vision of the school, expected levels of performance, et cetera (Odden & Kelly, 2008). This process takes place after a new hire has signed the necessary paperwork and is ready for direction and support from the organization (Arnold, 2010; Derven, 2008; Ferri-Reed, 2013; Graybill et al., 2013; McNeill, 2012; Robb 2012). Induction programs vary from

organization to organization. Strong programs are purposeful, highly interactive, consistent, and granular (Steer, 2013). Common threads should include defining the roles and responsibilities for new talent (Campbell, 2015; Derven, 2008; Nancheria, 2008), creating a positive environment (Robb, 2012), and provide consistent opportunities for learning and development (Campbell, 2015; Youngs et al., 2011).

There have been many studies on induction processes and the subsequent outcomes in both business and education. Given the extensive and varied scope of research in this area, these studies can be further organized by the subcategories of culture and environment, roles and responsibilities, and learning opportunities.

**Culture and Environment.** Beyond recruitment efforts, induction is the first opportunity to steep new hires in the culture, norms, and mission of the organization (Sims, 2009). A strong induction design creates opportunities for new hires to feel accepted, appreciated, and acknowledged (Lindo, 2010). Employees who are aligned with the values of an organization are more emotionally invested and likely to perform at higher levels (Kardos et.al., 2001; Savitt, 2012). Additionally, there is a positive correlation between strong organizational and school culture and student achievement (Negis-Isik & Gursel, 2013), so steeping employees in the organizational culture early on directly supports strong teacher performance (Kardos et.al., 2001; Savitt, 2012) and student achievement (Negis-Isik & Gursel, 2013).

Beyond an introduction to the organizational culture, induction is an important time to create opportunities for new employees to build relationships with peers as well as connect with internal and external contacts (Campbell, 2015; McNeill, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Sims (2009) concludes that introducing new hires to the organization is just as important as introducing the organization to them in order to create connections between cross-functional

teams and the new talent. In order to ensure new hires are quickly vested in an organization, orientation practices should facilitate positive social relationships (Vanden Bos, 2010). New employees report that fitting in is important, which involves both a connection to organizational culture as well as engagement with peers (Negis-Isik & Gursel, 2013; Steer, 2013; Vanden Bos, 2010). Effective induction programs work to ensure new hires feel welcome thus mitigating the stress and anxiety that naturally occurs as one takes on a new role (Bauer, 2010; Billingsley et al., 2004; Hacker, 2004; Mastropieri, 2001; McNeill, 2012). Providing opportunities for collaboration with colleagues during induction also reduces a novice teacher's likelihood of leaving the profession in their first year of teaching (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). On the contrary, a lack of opportunity and poor relationships with colleagues has been cited as a source of burnout among teachers, further reinforcing the need to create the opportunities for novice teachers as early as possible (Billingsley et al., 2004; Jones et al., 2013; Mastropieri, 2001).

**Roles and Responsibilities.** Beginning a new role is challenging when new hires are not given clear direction or established role expectations (Derven, 2008; Doke, 2014). Role ambiguity is when a new employee does not have clarity regarding the expectations of their role, which includes both technical and practical aspects of their new position (Eatough, et al., 2011; Hatva, 2012). It is important for the success of new hires that they do not have role ambiguity—that they understand their role in and of itself as well as in relation to their colleagues (Nancheria, 2008). Defining the role of a new hire, both within their department or school, as well as within their organization or district, should be a high priority of induction programs (Hillman, 2010). Effective orientations strive to acclimate talent into their new role while also acknowledging stressors such as changing work conditions (Koster, 2013; Vargas, 2013). Organizations should designate significant time to review job descriptions and allow the new

hire to ask questions (Lindo, 2010; Sims, 2009). When teachers experience role ambiguity, it can affect the degree to which they are committed to their school and/or a long-term teaching career (Billingsley & Tomchin, 2002; Mastropieri, 2001; Youngs et al., 2011; Zabel & Zabel, 2001).

Induction is the time to introduce expectations to new employees to assist their ease into the organization. Organizational standards and procedures should be defined, with subsequent documentation and resources (Hacker, 2004; Hillman, 2010; McNeill, 2012), and culturally responsive practices and equitable conditions should be explained (Hillman, 2010). Induction programs should clearly define responsibilities, goals, outline processes for accountability, communicate compliance expectations, and articulate the contribution of the role to the overall organization (Doke, 2014; Derven, 2008; Hacker, 2004; McNeill, 2012; Minnick et al., 2014; Nancheria, 2008; Vargas, 2013).

**Learning Opportunities.** It is important for new hires to have learning opportunities and an early introduction to resources during the induction period. Some studies tie new hire effectiveness to being provided the right tools, early on, to be successful in their new position (Doke, 2014; McNeill, 2012; Youngs et al., 2011). In both business and education, employees need access to basic information and operational resources such as organizational charts, handbooks, calendars, instructions for using technology systems, etc. (Arnold, 2010; Derven, 2008; Pitman, 2015, Vernon, 2012). Some research also calls out the benefit of supplying new hires with information regarding local resources such as housing, banks, gyms, etc., particularly if they have relocated for the role (Arnold, 2010; McNeill, 2012).

Effective school administrators have been connected to school-level induction practices and their intention to provide new teachers with necessary resources and supplies (Carver, 2003; Kardos et al., 2001; Youngs, 2007). Principals serve an important role in helping novice teachers

“to become acquainted with the way their new school does things” (Carver, 2003, p. 3). School leaders who are actively involved, responsive to the needs of new hires, and focused on student learning also promote high levels of teacher collaboration, often associated with key outcomes for novice teachers (Grossman & Thompson, 2004; Kardos et al., 2001; Youngs, 2007).

It is, however, important to create a balance between providing enough information for new hires to be effective without being overwhelmed with resources (Hacker, 2004; Koster, 2013). It is recommended that new hires are given ample time to receive, digest, and apply new learning during induction periods in order to better retain information and be more successful in their roles later on (Klein, 2013; Vargas, 2013). Creating these opportunities during induction can help with long-term success. Young teachers report that professional development opportunities, both at induction and ongoing during their careers, are important to their success in the classroom (Odden & Kelly, 2008). Clear learning opportunities regarding curriculum, instructional frameworks, and district priorities creates more adaptable novice teachers and increased teacher growth (Kauffman et al., 2002; Valencia et al., 2006; Youngs et al., 2011). Without instructional program coherence through district policies and professional development, “there is less of a basis for novices to engage in productive interactions with mentors or colleagues (Youngs et al., 2007, p. 474).

### ***Mentoring***

Mentoring is “the use of an experienced and knowledgeable individual to teach, guide, and develop an individual with less experience or knowledge in a specific area” (Corner, 2012, p. 51). Teachers who are new to a school, district, or the profession altogether require support in order to become accustomed to school procedures, practices, and requirements (Arnold-Rogers, Arnett, & Harris, 2008; Hudson, 2012; Resta, Huling, & Yeargain, 2013). Researchers strongly recommend the use of mentors, feedback, and on-the-job training (Stanley, 2013; Berry, 2004) in



order to prepare teachers for the challenges of a new career, district, or school while also building their skills to positively affect student learning (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006; Hudson, 2012).

Novice teacher mentors should focus on developing relationships with new talent, clarifying expectations, and modeling appropriate practices and behaviors for the school or district (Arnold-Rogers et al., 2008; Hudson, 2012; Minnick et al., 2014). A mentor can be a co-worker or peer who can provide guidance and training, but they are cautioned to create a boundary so that they do not become an intermediary between the new hire and leadership (Nyman, 2010). Mentorship programs are a form of organizational socialization because they create opportunities for new hires to build immediate relationships with a colleague which decreases feelings of isolation (Bradt, 2010; Carver, 2003). In a study by Kapadia and colleagues (2007), novice teachers with “strong” mentoring structures are “much more likely (than other novices) to report good experience, intend to continue teaching, and plan to remain in the same school” (Kapadia et al., 2007, p. 28).

### **Studies Related to Onboarding**

The following is a review of the literature that details existing research of onboarding practices in multiple types of organizations. The review includes business organizations, such as for-profit industries and healthcare, as well as K-12 and higher educational contexts. While structurally different in many ways, there are parallels in talent management and onboarding practices across these organizational types.

#### ***Business***

The onboarding of newcomers has been studied in many sectors as it relates to: newly hired executive level roles (Dutton, 2010; Ndunguru, 2012), nurses (Balke 2011; D’Aurizio, 2007; Goldschmidt et al., 2011; Jeffery & Jarvis, 2014; Smith, 2013), telecommunications

employees (Kumle-Hammes & Elvers, 2015), board members (Pelletier, 2013), commercial and professional drivers (Huff, 2016), and generational groups (Ferri-Reed, 2013); Putre, 2015).

There are also studies related to the practices in large successful corporations such as Verizon (Cohen, 2010) and Google (Johnson & Senges, 2010). In this research, it is widely recognized that there is a need for an onboarding programs in order to help their employees adjust to their new work environment.

In many studies, it has been shown that having any onboarding program, no matter how minor, is better than having no process at all (Radosh, 2013) because onboarding is associated with positive outcomes and can help to reduce stress and increase adjustment, job satisfaction, and retention (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011; Harnett, 2016; Hall-Ellis, 2014; Ndunguru, 2012).

Onboarding programs introduce newcomers to shared values from the beginning of their entry into the organization. This creates a shared sense of belonging and increases the possibility of retention (Ndunguru, 2012). This is a parallel to onboarding in educational organizations, in which induction is considered to be the first opportunity to steep new hires in the culture, norms, and mission of the organization (Sims, 2009). Additionally, employees who are aligned with the values of an organization are more emotionally invested and are more likely to be intrinsically motivated and thus perform at higher levels (Savitt, 2012).

In business, as well as other organizations, the onboarding process can range from a written guide for organizational norms and practices to several day workshops that aim to socialize new employees to the organization (D'Aurizio, 2007). Because of this range in processes, it is important for researchers to find the best, most effective strategies to achieve the overall goals of increased employee engagement, job satisfaction, and retention (Arnold, 2010; Hatva, 2012; Bausch & Svare, 2010). A strong onboarding design creates opportunities for new

hires to feel accepted, appreciated, and acknowledged (Lindo, 2010), which leads to these intended positive outcomes. Strong onboarding designs include strategies such as steeping in organizational mission, vision, and norms (Savitt, 2012; Sims, 2012), clear definition of roles and responsibilities (Derven, 2008; Doke, 2014; Hillman, 2010; Lindo, 2010; Sims, 2009), and learning opportunities for new hires to develop essential skills and understanding (Arnold, 2010; Doke, 2014; McNeill, 2012, Pitman, 2015). Implementing onboarding practices of all kinds, with a focus on socialization initiatives, is the most effective strategy for employee retention (Allen & Shanock, 2013). A well-developed onboarding plan is important for all organizations, business and education alike.

There are many perspectives regarding what are the best, most effective strategies for onboarding. Klein et al. (2015) studied the specific onboarding practices of 10 different organizations in order to learn which practices were most effective in the socialization of new employees. In looking at all business organizations and corresponding practices, they found that most practices fall into three different design categories: informational, welcoming, and guidance or direction (Klein et.al., 2015). Their insights reflect on reasons, rationales, and sometimes excuses regarding why certain practices are better than others in any given context. Ultimately, they determine that regardless of the gaps in organizational strategies and employee perception, it is better to have multiple and varied strategies to onboarding rather than few and focused (Klein et.al., 2015).

Another significant study in business is by D'Aurizio (2007), who studies onboarding for nurses. The nursing field has incredibly high turnover for novice nurses, similar to education and novice teachers. D'Aurizio (2007) argues that onboarding begins before an employee is hired and continues through their first year in the organization. She details three distinct phases of

onboarding: process, support, and follow up. “Process” involves strong recruitment before hire, and after hire welcoming the new employee to the organization with important information and an introduction to norms and values (D’Aurizio, 2007). This parallels the need for effective recruitment in education for high-quality teacher candidates (Milanowski et al., 2009) and the beginning stages of the induction process (Robb, 2012; Savitt, 2012). “Support” is about integrating a new hire into the organization through socialization with teams and mentors, learning opportunities for essential skills and processes, and an opportunity for new hires to provide feedback (D’Aurizio, 2007). This parallels the induction/orientation stage of onboarding in education, in which novice teachers acquire the skills and knowledge they need in order to perform their roles within their schools and districts (Odden & Kelly, 2008). The third phase, “follow up”, involves follow-up interviews with new hires and candidates to solicit feedback on their experience with onboarding as well as their ongoing experiences in their organizations. She recommends follow-up at various intervals (45 days, halfway, full year) through an employee’s first year in their new role (D’Aurizio, 2007). This could be most similarly related to the informal feedback that a novice teacher is able to provide through mentorship, in which the channels of feedback are interchangeable (Bradt, 2010; Carver, 2003, Nyman, 2010). Conclusively, “Best-in-class onboarding programs result in highly integrated, productive, and satisfied employees and dramatically affect turnover rates as well as customer satisfaction” (D’Aurizio, 2007, p. 229). While this statement is intended to inform the onboarding practices of nurses, it is not difficult to connect the research to novice teachers and education.

### ***Education***

There are a few studies relating to onboarding in education, many of which are dissertations. These range from looking at the onboarding of public school teachers (Morales

2016; Savitt, 2012) to onboarding of faculty and staff in higher education institutions (Marble, 2013; Vuong, 2016; Williams-Smith, 2017; Wolf, 2014). There are also several studies related to the induction and support of novice teachers, which includes, in part, pieces related to the onboarding experience (Collins et al., 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011) as well as the influence of district contextual factors and mentoring on new teacher support (Youngs, 2003). Onboarding programs for new teachers are invaluable because it creates a sense of organizational belonging and buy-in, which aids in retention (Savitt, 2012).

For schools and school systems, onboarding programs overwhelmingly center on information about the university or district (such as policies, procedures, etc.) and rarely include memorable experiences for new hires (Patton, 2014). Given that most educational organizations engage in programs designed to be informational, these experiences are often forgettable and new employees retain little of the information (Klein et al., 2015). Colleges and research libraries also often include information about evaluation measures as a part of the onboarding process and they include very little about organizational mission, vision, or culture (Graybill et al., 2013). This is counterintuitive to intended goals of organizational socialization and belonging.

Marble (2013) and Vuong (2016) extend the recommendations for best practices in onboarding to include specific training for departments in which faculty will teach, including development of specific teaching and technical skills necessary to be effective in respective roles. There is also some research about the design of induction programs for novice teachers in K-12 systems. These studies focus less on the operational components of onboarding and more on the importance of cohesive learning opportunities in novice teacher induction programs, demonstrating the importance of a districts' shared goals and strategies as well as novice teachers' access to resources during induction (Honig & Hatch, 2004; Rorrer et al., 2008;

Youngs et al., 2007). Beyond onboarding programs in the first few weeks of employment, there are numerous studies in support of mentorship programs for novice teachers, some of which consider extended mentorship to be a part of the onboarding process (Cawyer et al., 2002; Savage et al., 2004; Eisner, 2015; Jones et al., 2013; Sorcinelli, 1994).

All of this research helps to link new employee onboarding to positive outcomes such as increased employee engagement, greater socialization, and improved retention. However, while there are a few studies that repeat and reinforce the need for effective onboarding programs for new faculty and staff, there is very little to support and specifically address the onboarding and orientation of novice teachers. This study, therefore, hopes to make a small contribution to that gap in research.

### **Teacher Preparedness**

The following is a review of literature related to teacher preparedness. In considering novice teacher onboarding and strategies, it is important to consider what it means for a teacher to be prepared for their first days in a classroom. Training programs, essential knowledge and skills, and motivational influences are all elements of perceived efficacy for novice employees. Understanding these factors aids in creating a more robust and effective improvement plan.

### ***Training Programs***

Teacher training programs, both university-level and non-traditional, are widely varied. Most programs aim to train teachers in content knowledge and pedagogical skills such as basic classroom management and necessary legal/professional knowledge (Curry & O'Brien, 2012), but few truly prepare novice teachers for their first year of teaching and full immersion in the profession (Nourie, 2011; Onafowora, 2015; Smeaton & Waters, 2013). Lortie (1975) describes the same concerns, explaining that teacher preparation programs inadequately prepare teachers

for the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare them for abrupt transition into the classroom. Graduates report that they felt inadequately prepared for leading a classroom of their own, despite their pre-service training (Stanulis, Fallona, & Pearson, 2002). Many teachers enter the profession feeling confident about their knowledge of subject matter and content, but unprepared to handle the other elements that are a part of being an effective educator such as behavior management, scheduling, climate and culture, and individual human resource needs (Kidd, Brown, & Fitzallen, 2015; Pogodzinski, Youngs, & Frank, 2013; Smeaton & Waters, 2013; Zepeda & Mayers, 2011).

In a study by Ingersoll and Strong (2011), upon reflection on their formal training and first year of teaching, new teachers described their first year as “trial by fire” and “sink or swim”, characterizing teaching as a profession that “cannibalizes its young” (p.3), leading to 40%-50% of teachers leaving within their first 5 years (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Compared to their more experienced colleagues, first-year teachers face the greatest difficulty and most responsibilities (Brock & Grady, 1997). Fantilli and McDougall (2009) report that new teachers perceive that a lack of practical skills and subject-specific professional development in their formal training programs, as well as hiring timelines “with ample time to gain familiarity with the school and curriculum, set-up and organize their classroom, and plan their first week” (p. 823) creates barriers to their becoming effective teachers.

### ***Knowledge and Skills***

In their first five years of teaching, things that influence teacher preparedness and subsequent attrition are “limited initial teacher education, negative practicum experiences, work intensification, low pay, student misbehavior, and a lack of public respect” (Sinclair, 2008, p. 79). Many studies about challenges faced by new teachers report issues such as inconsistent

hiring dates, capacity to support students with special needs, lack of time to prepare classrooms or lessons, student misbehavior, and inadequate training for essential knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective teacher (Amschler & McKenzie, 2010; Donaldson, 2009; Gratz & Claffey, 1996; Kelly, 2004; Stosich, 2016; Youngs et al., 2007).

There are several types of knowledge types and knowledge-related influences that impact the ability of teachers to feel successful in their first year of teaching. As many teacher training programs are theory-based, with a focus on student learning styles and organization of units of study, it is then important to also analyze the learning styles of the teachers themselves (Sinclair, 2008). Declarative knowledge is factual knowledge that can be demonstrated immediately (Krathwohl, 2002). An example of this in the classroom is declarative knowledge about school calendars or curriculum information. Many teacher training programs focus on content knowledge and pedagogical skills, but little is taught about the day-to-day responsibilities of an educator (Curry & O'Brien, 2012). A major cause of dissatisfaction among teachers in their first years of teaching is a discord between job expectations and job realities. Many teachers enter the profession without the declarative knowledge necessary to be successful on day one (Harris et al., 2001; Smeaton & Waters, 2013). Preparation programs help novice teachers learn theories and pedagogical practices related to teaching and learning, but they fail to build their abilities for factual knowledge such as classroom management, parental involvement, organizational dynamics, and other stressors (Smeaton & Waters, 2013). There is space for creating this knowledge in organizational onboarding.

Procedural knowledge is the knowledge of how something is done; how to complete a task or series of tasks (Krathwohl, 2002). For example, how to report discipline infractions or organizational communication norms. Procedural knowledge in pre-service programs may focus



on strategies such as classroom organization or strategies to build equitable discipline policies (Bullough, 2012). There are other day-to-day challenges that teachers encounter that are not addressed in pre-service programs: physical challenges such as heavy lifting and bending, health and immunity concerns in younger grades, and the length of time between breaks, which can interfere with a teacher's perception of self-efficacy (Gratz & Claffey, 1996). Teachers often feel unprepared with the realities of everyday working conditions in the classroom beyond the theoretical tools they received in their respective preparation programs. This type of knowledge is an important component of induction.

Metacognitive knowledge, sometimes called self-knowledge, is about an individual's ability to look at their own actions and adjust based on other conditions (Kratwohl, 2002). Novice teachers need to exercise metacognitive knowledge when reflecting on student performance as it relates to the teacher-developed lesson or materials. Unlike declarative and procedural knowledge, metacognitive practices are often a focus in pre-service training programs. Teachers are given opportunities to reflect on lessons, professional development strategies, and introspection into their practice (Bullough, 2012). During the student-teaching phase of pre-service teachers are often put in situations designed to reflect on their own abilities, adapt and change lesson plans, and consider alternative classroom management techniques based on their practice (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). This type of learning opportunity should be carried into organizational onboarding programs.

### ***Motivation***

Motivation-related influences, such as self-efficacy, are important variables in early success for new teachers. Motivation gives individuals the desire to complete any given task (Pintrich, 2001). Self-efficacy is the belief that that task can actually be completed. People with

high self-efficacy pursue difficult or challenging tasks with confidence (Pajaras, 2009). Self-efficacy is important in motivation because it influences an individual's course of action, amount of perseverance in challenge, and amount of stress they experience (Pajaras, 2009). Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998) define teacher efficacy as a teacher's "belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context" (p. 233). New teachers often experience low self-efficacy because they are unprepared for the demands of the profession (Gokce, 2010). As teachers begin the profession motivated by their commitment to youth, altruism, and connectedness to family members or other teachers, they can quickly become discouraged with the realities over time (Sinclair, 2008). Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) state, "efficacy beliefs can influence how hard and how long an individual will persevere at a particular task, how resilient people will be when faced with obstacles, and the amount of stress or anxiety they will experience in a given situation" (p. 15). Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy, then, are more likely to experience success in their first years of teaching. A lack of preparedness leads to a lack of motivation and self-efficacy (Gokce, 2010).

Yough and Anderman (2006) focus on motivation and goal orientation, which is why people choose to engage in a given activity. Novice teachers are often motivated by setting goals, both short-term and long-term (Eyal & Roth, 2011). It is important for preparation programs, including onboarding programs, to create learning opportunities to build the knowledge and skills necessary for day one in the classroom. However, beyond that, these programs should also create opportunities for new teachers to set goals related to their teaching such as student achievement goals or professional goals like becoming a department chair (Eyal & Roth, 2011).

## *Stages of Learning*

Some early researchers have looked at the stages of developmental learning that teachers experience in their first few years of teaching: the survival stage and the mastery stage (Burden, 1990; Fuller & Bown, 1975; Huberman, 1993). These stages are often overlapping and are based on a novice teacher's ability to develop strong teaching practices through opportunities for collaboration, acquisition of pedagogical knowledge, and self-reflection.

The survival stage is the first stage of development. This stage, for many, is the reality shock of the complexities of teaching and can last for several months or longer. Survival is characterized by a preoccupation with one's self-efficacy and sense of adequacy, larger focus on student behavior, continuous trial and error, and a lack of access to appropriate instructional materials (Fuller & Bown, 1975; Huberman, 1993). Teachers who are unable to escape the survival phase often leave the profession because they are unable to develop coping strategies beyond controlling student behavior and making it day to day.

The second overlapping stage of development is mastery. This is the time in which novice teachers develop their craft of teaching, focusing less on themselves and student behavior and more on acquiring new curricular knowledge, delivering instruction, and conducting strong assessments (Burden, 1990; Fuller & Bown, 1975; Huberman, 1993). While these activities are often a part of a novice teacher's first 100 days of teaching, the ability to focus on them without challenge is dependent on their ability to move beyond the survival stage. These researchers focus closely on the connection between a teacher's stage of development and their intent to stay in the teaching profession. They do not, however, make any connection between district induction practices and a teacher's ability to move more easily through these stages.

## Summary

There are only a few studies regarding teacher preparedness as it relates to novice teacher onboarding programs. The studies that do exist are mostly doctoral dissertations and are highly specific: orientation programs for university-level educators (Williams-Smith, 2017), year-one supports for new teachers such as coaching and mentorship (Morales, 2016), and school-level orientation programs (Caughey, 2018). There are also several studies related to the induction and support of novice teachers, which includes, in part, pieces related to the onboarding experience (Collins et al., 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The potential contributions of this action-research study are to: a) add to scholarly literature studying novice teacher onboarding; b) explore the role of novice teacher onboarding; and c) gather and assess evidence of the relationship of onboarding practices to teacher preparedness, self-efficacy, and intent to stay.

In this chapter, research related to onboarding and the subsequent definitions, best practices, and primary components, such as recruitment and orientation, were reviewed to build a wider view of onboarding to better build a focus for the study. Diving deeper into the induction literature and embedded categories of culture and environment, roles and responsibilities, and learning opportunities, the purpose was to gain a stronger understanding of the phase of induction as it relates to the overall process of onboarding. Next, a review of the many studies that currently exist related to onboarding in both business and education contexts was conducted. These studies link employee onboarding to broader organizational goals and provide a lens into the potential areas for contribution. Finally, the literature related to teacher preparedness was reviewed to better understand how these components interact with novice teacher adjustment.

### **Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework**

This chapter introduces the theory of action and rationale for the development and evaluation of a new novice teacher onboarding program, designed to help novice teachers to feel safe, supported, valued, connected, and effective in their new roles. In order to develop, implement, and evaluate an improvement plan for this onboarding program in a large, urban, Mid-western school district, it was important to first understand the current state of the onboarding and induction process. The improvement plan used the lens of two major theoretical frameworks: organizational socialization theory and uncertainty reduction theory. Each of these theories supported the goal of employee onboarding as an important component of employee efficacy, perception of service culture, and increased retention.

#### **Developing an Onboarding Program for an Urban, Midwestern District**

The research-setting was a large, Urban, Midwestern school district in Oklahoma. The district occupies 173 square miles and is comprised of 88 schools. The district is part of the State public school system and remains under the general direction and control of the State Board of Education. The district is currently 30.4% Hispanic, 27% Caucasian, 26.1% African American, 8.8% Mixed Race, and 5.6% Native American. The District is composed of 51.2% male students and 48.8% female students. Currently, 95% of the District is comprised of students on Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL). There are currently 6,837 employees, of which 3,364 are certified teachers. Seven-hundred and forty-two of these teachers were considered “novice” teachers, which means they are in their first 3 years of teaching, having never worked at another district before this role.

Due to its size and geographical location, this district has historically experienced challenges in realizing district-wide system changes. Each school possesses a unique set of

needs, which calls for individualized support and strategic initiatives. Nevertheless, some processes, such as talent management and onboarding of novice teachers, are centralized services.

In January 2018, the district executive team put into action a collaborative strategy to conquer five bold initiatives within 24 months. This launch was based on a new strategic plan, developed in 2015 with input from administrators, staff, community members, teachers, families, and students. One of these initiatives that the district wanted to achieve was to give novice teachers the appropriate levels of support that they need in order to be effective classroom teachers, beginning with recruitment, through onboarding, into ongoing instructional support and mentorship. In February of 2018, this initiative became known as Novice Teacher Experience Program, and the teams were formed to begin this collaborative work. In the initial stages, the project owners were responsible for drafting organizational documents such as the Design Brief (Appendix A), People Plan (Appendix B), and Program Focus (Appendix C) (Liedtka, et al., 2009, p. 10-15).

The purpose of the Design Brief (Appendix A) was to identify the problem and program goals and design, clarify the scope of the project, and identify strategic opportunities and restrictions (Liedtka, et al., 2009, p. 10-11). The scope of this project was specific to onboarding, which included new hire cultivation, orientation, and induction but did not include strategies before and after onboarding such as application support or ongoing mentoring. The vision was to develop and retain masterful teachers who catalyze college and career ready students. The goal was to accomplish this by providing world-class hiring, onboarding, and ongoing coaching and professional development aligned to and supported by the “District Way for Teaching and Learning. To do this, we set three goals: 1) Design and implement a new teacher orientation—a

formal, in-person introduction to the district that incorporates activities and programming centered around who we are as a district and what it means to be an educator there, and includes opportunities for relevant systems access and technical support related to onboarding; 2) Design and implement a new hire cultivation process—activities that maintain meaningful connections to reinforce novice teacher grounding in the district way and provide technical support and associated preparation from end of orientation through induction; and 3) Design and implement a week-long pre-service teacher induction—intensive foundational training days designed to prepare teachers to develop supportive classroom cultures, and to deliver rigorous instruction on day one of school. The team also collaborated on some expected outcomes, which included early success for new teachers (efficacy) and teacher investment in a career (intent to stay) due to feeling safe, supported, valued, connected, and effective (perception of service culture). These outcomes were measured using data from the Panorama Teacher Perception Survey, internal Human Capital analytics, and network support feedback channels.

In the People Plan (Appendix B), the project team worked together to identify key stakeholders who would be the target of the efforts or whose help was needed in order to succeed, such as talent management, teaching and learning teams, teachers, and other district support staff. This plan was important because it helped to target individuals who would be valuable for empathy interviews and the broader impact of the onboarding plan as it relates to expanded stakeholders (Liedtka, et al., 2009, p. 12-14). The People Plan also helped to break down who would be needed at each stage in the process. The Program Focus (Appendix C) was developed as a tool to help the team identify their fit in the overall district strategic plan; a tool to help know where to go with the research and program design (Liedtka, et al., 2009, p. 15). The Program Focus was used to develop plans for research, design programs and strategies, and

establish and measure intended outcomes. The Design Brief, People Plan, and Program Focus became living documents throughout the research and collaborative process.

### ***Major Theoretical Frameworks***

The major theoretical frameworks that undergirded the research and development process for the onboarding program were: organizational socialization theory and uncertainty reduction theory. Each of these theories support the goal of employee onboarding as an important component of employee efficacy, perception of service culture, and increased retention.

**Organizational Socialization Theory.** Organizational Socialization Theory was developed by John Van Maanen and Edgar H. Schein in 1979. It centers on the idea that newcomers in an organization must first adapt to common culture and practices and develop the skills necessary in order to be successful in their new roles. Newcomers are essentially “...strangers in a strange land who must learn how to think, behave, and interact with other members of the organization” (Saks & Gruman, 2012, p. 27). Whenever a new hire enters an organization, they must be socialized into that organization in order to learn about the social, professional, and cultural norms that will allow them to be effective in that organization (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012). The process by which this takes place is called organizational socialization. This theoretical perspective focuses on multiple stages of a newcomer’s socialization experience, including but not limited to the onboarding stage in which the organization assists newcomers with the beginning stages of adapting to norms (Wanberg, 2012).

**Uncertainty Reduction Theory.** Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) explains the process of individuals to move from a position or space of uncertainty to a position of predictability. When strangers meet and must interact with one another, they are believed to experience some level of uncertainty. People often struggle with uncertainty, so in order to move



past this feeling, they must learn more about each other, including information about the other's beliefs, values, attitude, and behavior (Berger, 2011). Upon learning new information about an individual or group, people move from a place of uncertainty to a space where they can anticipate behavior and react based on this information.

Uncertainty reduction theory focuses primarily on cognitive uncertainty, specifically over how to behave and who or what the "other" is. Berger introduces eight concepts to explain the relationship between uncertainty and reduction, all based in the idea that the more someone knows the less uncertain they feel. When faced with uncertainty, individuals instinctively seek out new information in order to reduce this feeling. As more information is discovered, the less unknown possibilities exist, therefore reducing anxiety and feelings of negative uncertainty (Berger, 2011).

While URT is developed using concepts of interpersonal relationship development, there is some precedent for applying the theory to an organizational context. When individuals begin a new job, they experience the same level of uncertainty as they would when meeting a new person (Kramer, 2014). When a newcomer joins an organization, they are in a place of uncertainty until they have enough information to transition out of this phase. There are new settings, expectations, and relationships that require adjustment and if newcomers have insufficient information to make this adjustment that will lead to increased dissatisfaction in their new role. Therefore, it is important that newcomers feel socialized to the organization so that they may develop role competencies and learn how to function appropriately, leading to greater job satisfaction (Kramer, 2014). Reducing their uncertainty helps newcomers feel like they can succeed in an organization. This could mean learning about specific expectations of their new

role, understanding the political and organizational structures of their new group, cultivating relationships with colleagues, and establishing an identity as it relates to the new context.

Berger (2011) concludes, “I have come to realize that there are many good reasons to anchor firmly in theory, including research aimed at solving practical problems” (p. 215). Both Organizational Socialization Theory and Uncertainty Reduction Theory were drivers in the three goals established by the Novice Teacher Onboarding Team in the Design Brief (Appendix A). The first goal of the planning process mentioned above, to design and implement a new teacher orientation, draws on Organizational Socialization Theory concepts of learning about the social, professional, and cultural norms that will allow newcomers, in this case novice teachers to be effective in that organization (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012). The second goal of the team, to design and implement a new hire cultivation process, was also grounded in Organizational Socialization and URT framework because the focus is to support building newcomer skills while also prioritizing meaningful connection with colleagues to build a strong sense of team prior to day one in the classroom. This goal concerns learning about specific expectations of their new role, understanding the political and organizational structures of working in a new group, cultivating relationships with colleagues, and establishing an identity as it relates to the new District context. The final goal was to design and implement a week-long pre-service teacher induction—intensive foundational training days designed to prepare teachers to develop supportive classroom cultures, and to deliver rigorous instruction on day one of school. Through teacher induction, newcomers had opportunities to reduce feelings of uncertainty about their role, district context, and school-level needs. Through reduction of this uncertainty, the organization assists newcomers with the beginning stages of adapting to norms for greater socialization and increased adjustment (Wanberg, 2012).

### *Desired Outcomes*

At the conclusion of the onboarding process, the researcher evaluated the effects of novice teachers' self-efficacy and perception of service culture as well as the effects on novice teacher's intent to stay in the organization beyond their first year. These desired outcomes were used by the team throughout the design (QuEST) process, development of the theory of action, and as measures of success upon project completion.

**Self-Efficacy.** The first outcome measured was self-efficacy, defined as a teacher's belief about their own teaching abilities and effectiveness. Bandura (1978) presents the theory that an individual's self-efficacy has a strong influence on their achievement. This applies to multiple setting such as health, business, and education. Thus, a novice teachers' self-efficacy, their beliefs about their own effectiveness, influences many things in the classroom from the culture they create to their "judgements regarding the different tasks introduced in the classroom in order to bring about student learning" (Bandura, 1997, p. 7).

A lot of research about teaching and learning practices relates a teachers' attitudes, perceptions, assumptions, emotional intelligence, and motivation levels to teacher actions and student outcomes (Bandura, 1993; Johnson, 1992; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Soodak & Podell, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Yingying et al., 2019). Studies have shown that a teacher's self-efficacy has an effect on student proficiency (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), their willingness to be innovative in the classroom (Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997), and their classroom management style and execution (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Additionally, teachers with a higher self-efficacy report a stronger commitment to teaching with less intention to quit the profession in the future (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Yilmaz, 2011). Accomplishments in performance are the most influential source of efficacy, so if teachers

perceive that their performance is a failure then they will expect failure in the future and vice versa (Bandura, 1978). Teachers with low self-efficacy report difficulties in teaching, higher levels of job-related stress, and low levels of job satisfaction (Betoret, 2006; Klassen et al., 2009; Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Therefore, focusing on teachers' self-efficacy, beginning at onboarding by providing them the tools they need to feel successful in their first 100 days, was an important measure for the improvement plan.

**Intent to Stay.** The second outcome, closely related to self-efficacy was intent to stay; in other words, commitment to the organization or profession. Kushman (1992) details two types of commitment: organizational commitment and commitment to student learning. Organizational commitment is the “degree that an individual internalizes organizational values and goals and feels a sense of loyalty to the workplace (Kushman, 1992, p. 6). Commitment to student learning is distinguished as “the willingness to put forth effort required for student learning to take place in the classroom” (p. 9). Most relevant to this study is the concept of organizational commitment; whether or not an individual intends to stay teaching in their current school or district beyond their first year.

Effective onboarding programs can positively influence a novice teacher's investment in their career. Teacher commitment has been linked to principal and peer support (Ware & Kitsantas, 2011) clear expectations for role and responsibilities, both initially and ongoing (Singh & Billingsley, 1998), promotion of shared vision and values (organizational fit) (Edwards & Cable, 2009), and high levels of teacher self-efficacy (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Yilmaz, 2011). There is also evidence that higher levels of teacher commitment are related to higher student achievement (Kushman, 1992; Riehl & Sipple, 1996; Rosenholtz, 1989). Increasing opportunities during onboarding for employees to steep in organizational vision, core

values, and district norms as well as academic, behavioral, and personal growth learning opportunities could impact a novice teacher's intent to stay in the teaching profession beyond their first few years.

**Perception of Service Culture.** The final outcome measures was perception of service culture. Service culture can be defined as the support to everyday processes that contribute value to an individual or organization (Gronroos, 2017; Kaufman, n.d.). Service culture is mostly recognized in business, largely associated with customer service, and a focus on supporting customer needs as a key component of organizational success (Liebenberg & Barnes, 2004; Ueno, 2012). In education, district-level service and central office supports can take the same approach. In large, urban, education settings the service culture often seems to be more bureaucratic and operational, with a support focus on policies, procedures, and compliance instead of a focus on community and individualized connection between the district, school, staff, and students. Much of the literature in education supports the idea that central office service plays a large role in customer success, in this case the customer being schools, staff, students, & families, but there is some question as to what that role looks like (Adams & Miskell, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 1998).

A positive perception of service culture exists when an organization provides a service that directly meets the customer's needs. It is better to prioritize fulfilling the needs of the customer rather than just meeting their expectations (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Further, just providing a service does not necessarily mean that the service was a high-quality experience. Employee attitudes and behavior, in this case the behavior of central office supports, is critical to delivering quality service experiences (Ueno, 2012). Strong HRM practices, such as recruitment, training, teamwork, and empowerment, are essential to create and sustain high levels of service

quality, which influences perception of service culture (Gronroos, 2007; Hauser & Paul, 2006; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Sturdy, 2000; Ueno, 2012). Additionally, collective trust between all school stakeholders, including district level supports, promotes stronger skillsets and supports school improvement and enhanced perception of service culture (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Service culture begins at onboarding, where central office teams support new hires by responding to and meeting their needs, building stronger levels of collective trust, and working to lessen any organizational uncertainty.

### ***QuEST Process and Development of the New Onboarding Program***

To create a new and effective onboarding program, designed to attract, develop, and retain a highly effective and empowered team, executive leadership recommended that the onboarding project team follow a QuEST process as a formative needs assessment. The QuEST framework is a four-part collaborative strategy that, at the end of the process, helps to identify needs and develop a theory of action for any determined project. The framework is comprised of:

- 1) Question – collect information to enable a clear, deep, and rich understanding of the need or opportunity to address,
- 2) Envision – create strategic ideas from across the organization to find viable options and the reasoning behind why these options matter to the district,
- 3) Select ideas and fix, merge, tune, and toss them until one final winning approach remains, and
- 4) Create Accountability by specifying the details of the approach and determining who is responsible, the actions required to execute, the changes needed to enable, and the means of how well the strategy is hitting the intended outcomes.

Each phase produces a set of deliverables that help to design the intended program, in this case the Novice Teacher Onboarding Experience (Liedtka, et al., 2013; Merchant, 2009). From February 2018 to April 2018, an 11-member “Onboarding

Task Force” engaged in the QuEST process together, guided by the Design Brief, People Plan, and Program Focus.

Week Of	What’s the Focus?
Before 1/22	<b>Examine</b> Priorities and build conceptual knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claire interview stakeholder to learn more about current onboarding practices, identify current areas for growth</li> </ul>
1/22	<b>Finalize Priorities</b> and <b>prepare/launch</b> Onboarding Task Force <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with OBTF to discuss current progress and plans for QUEST</li> </ul>
2/5	<b>Questioning</b> Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OBTF will participate in key activities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research, new employee interviews, synthesize insights</li> <li>• Results in clearer understanding of the opportunity and criteria for success</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2/12	
2/19	
2/19	<b>Envision</b> Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm ideas, develop concepts, create pitches and get feedback</li> <li>• Results in options to address the opportunities (criteria for success)</li> </ul>
2/26	
3/5	
3/12	<b>Select</b> Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully select/develop options               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results in recommendation to Managers and Approvers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3/19	
3/26 (ongoing)	<b>Take</b> Accountability Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plan, identify milestones, research needs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results in “game plan”, resource needs, accountability, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Figure 1. *QuEST Timeline*

Phase one of the QuEST process was to ask questions to explore the current reality of the issue and build a deeper understanding of the roots of problems (Merchant, 2009, p. 129). Before planning any programmatic changes, it was important to learn what the opportunities were and understand what to accomplish so that the resulting strategies would match our opportunities. By taking the time to develop deep insight into the problem or opportunity and its context before trying to generate solutions we could establish the reference points for change, the constraints that shape it, and the criteria for what success looks like. Anecdotally, the current state of new hire onboarding lacked urgency, efficiency, and was shallow in depth of learning content and opportunity for socialization with colleagues. This current state is in line with other districts and organizations, whose onboarding programs overwhelmingly center on information about the

university or district (such as policies, procedures, etc.) and rarely include memorable experiences for new hires (Patton, 2014). Studies show that most educational organizations engage in programs designed to be informational, these experiences are often forgettable and new employees retain little of the information (Klein et al., 2015).

Each member of the Onboarding Task Force was charged with conducting 2-5 empathy interviews to unravel the issues and gain clarity around opportunities. The individuals selected for interviews came from multiple stakeholder groups: new employees, certified employees, central office employees, and support employees in order to ensure the information gathered was representative of the whole district. Responses were collected via notetaking by the interviewer. A total of 29 interviews were performed with 17 district office staff, eight certified teachers, and four school site personnel. Some of the interview protocol questions (Appendix D) used to assess the current state of onboarding at the district were:

1. What was your onboarding process like? Describe your experience.
2. What would you describe as “basic needs” that a new teacher would need prior to day one of teaching? Did you receive these things during your onboarding?
3. Are there things that you needed before beginning teaching that you did not receive?
4. Do you have an experience that stands out from onboarding to share?

The Onboarding Task Force interviewers recorded the responses via notetaking and brought them back to the full group to synthesize results and discuss trends. Interviewers were also asked to test their own logic and establish proof points for what they learned during the question phase to answer discussion questions such as “What is known and can be confirmed?”, “What do you doubt?”, “What doesn’t fit?” and “What do you believe, but don’t have enough facts to confirm?”



The team was not particularly surprised by most of the responses from various colleagues, customers, and supporters. For example, one central office support professional regarded, “People have different experiences with onboarding depending on who they are. There isn’t a standard for every person it depends on who you come in contact within our department first.” Another coordinator said, “We have been doing the same things for 30 years, and they weren’t good 30 years ago.” In reference to the needs of teachers in their first year of teaching, one teacher stated, “I don’t know if it would have mattered if I had been paying close attention during my onboarding, which I didn’t really because it was just so much paperwork. I found in my first year that I relied more on my colleagues than anything else. It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” After completing all of the interviews, the onboarding task force met again to analyze the feedback via several deliverables such as a value proposition canvas and empathy persona graphics based on stakeholder group (new employees, certified employees, central office employees, and support employees).

The results of the empathy interviews and process conversations helped the team to create a fishbone diagram, also called the Ishikawa diagram, of the current state of onboarding at the district (Figure 2). Many talent management support professionals were interested in the operational pieces of the onboarding process, characterized by one team member as “confusing... inefficient and inflexible.” Novice teachers are individually “onboarded” by talent management support staff in person, which mostly consists of going over necessary human capital paperwork, badge access, and e-mail setup. The process is tedious and frustrating to both the support individuals and novice teachers. The task force created a process evaluation diagram

(Figure 3) of just the operational pieces to identify areas of opportunity for the human capital team.

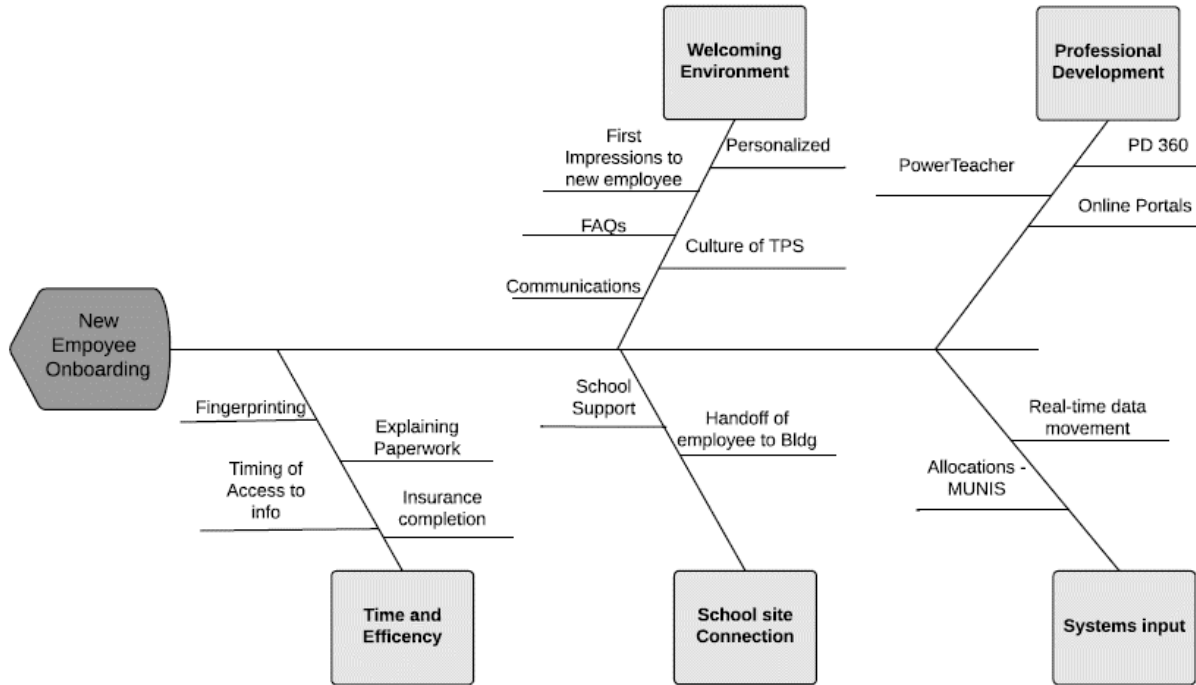


Figure 2. Onboarding Fishbone Diagram- Current State

Using these tools, the onboarding task force identified critical missing aspects of the current state of onboarding as well as processes that currently take place but show increased opportunity for improvement. The cause of the problem, which ultimately became the problem statement (see Appendix A), was that teachers feel “... confident about their knowledge of subject matter and content, but unprepared to handle the other elements that are a part of being an effective educator such as: behavior management, scheduling, climate and culture, and individual human resource needs.” Through a lens of organizational socialization and uncertainty reduction theory, teachers were missing information about the social, professional, and cultural norms that will allow them to be effective (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012), leading to uncertainty in their new roles.

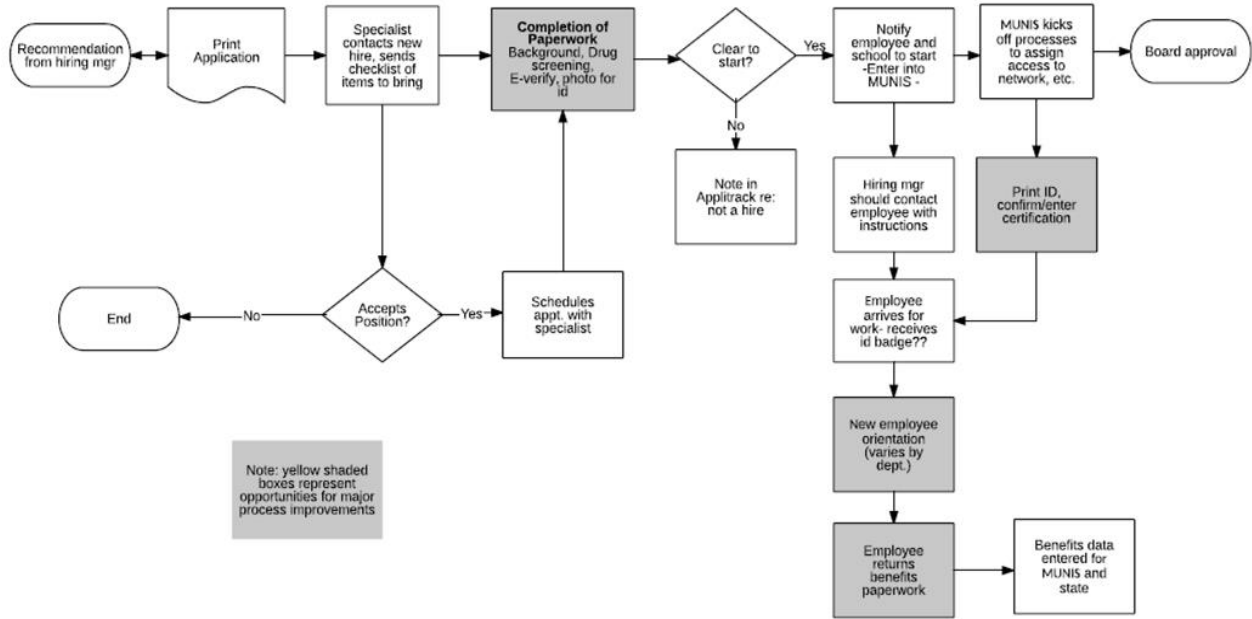


Figure 3. *Onboarding Process Evaluation Diagram- Current State*

The most significant missing aspects of onboarding were connection to the district mission and vision, a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, centralized access to information and human resource needs, and support for skills that teachers do not bring with them on day one of teaching. The feedback from these interviews aligned with the suspicions of the members of the onboarding task force and helped to energize stakeholders toward the goal of an improved Novice Teacher Experience, which includes Onboarding and Induction, to ensure new teachers have a foundation to realize early successes in the classroom while building their sense of belonging.

***Addressing Issues: Development of the New Onboarding Program***

The new employee onboarding process at this large, urban Midwestern school district consisted of several components. Beyond recruitment, application, interview, and being offered the role, the first component of onboarding was operational hiring processes, which began the induction phase. This included details like fingerprinting, background checks, urinary analysis,

receipt of employee badge, explanation of benefits, and paperwork completion. These processes were previously completed through individual one-on-one meetings with talent specialists at the district office. After the business processes were complete, applicants were provided with general district information and expectations via printed packets and slide presentations. Focusing on improvement of business practices and HR needs early on in the onboarding process allowed for novice teachers to spend the remainder of their onboarding with a clear focus toward learning new things about the organization. Improvements to business practices, it was hoped, would also lessen newcomer uncertainty and would support their initial perception of district service culture.

The next component of induction was professional development and learning opportunities. The amount of learning opportunities available varied depending on the time of year a new teacher was hired. Novice teachers hired during the summer recruitment period had more opportunities than those hired during the academic year, mid-semester. Summer hires had a half-day learning opportunity in August that takes place at a central location and is considered optional. If new hires attended this opportunity, they were compensated for their time. At this opportunity, novice teachers were given a chance to learn about the district mission and vision, options for support with technology, Q&A opportunities about alternative certification structures, and a chance to learn about district curricular resources and strategies. All teachers, regardless of hire-date, were provided with learning materials during induction. This includes a copy of the District's strategic plan, information about completion of web-based state compliance trainings (e.g. bloodborne pathogens, Title 9 rights, child abuse laws), and instructions for self-guided exploration of technology and platforms frequently used by teachers (e.g. PowerSchool, PD 360, Google Drive). These pieces of onboarding prioritized job-related coursework to lessen

newcomer uncertainty and directly meet the needs of the customer, which is a significant factor in perception of service culture (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). By providing novice teachers the tools they need to feel successful in their first 100 days, it was hoped this would support the development of early self-efficacy and build on a newcomer's organizational socialization and reduce their feelings of uncertainty.

After completion of these components of onboarding, the final component was the school site connection. This is where the past onboarding process ended; new hires were "released" to their respective school sites where they made connections with their school leaders and colleagues. Onboarding and orientation varied at this level. There was no source for information about site processes or evidence of employee experience once novice teachers were at the building level. School leaders had autonomy in the orientation experience of new teachers, whether novice hires or just new to the building. District support at this level was not standardized and varied by school site. Additionally, there was not currently a process in place to solicit feedback from novice teachers about their onboarding experience or proactive follow-up to determine if there were any additional needs.

There were several issues with the past onboarding process, including but not limited to a lack of urgency and access to initial business processes, large variation in quality and quantity of learning opportunities for new hires, and a lack of information or accountability once new hires were released to their school sites. Without formal feedback from new hires on their experience with the current onboarding process, it was difficult to know if a lack of effective onboarding processes had affected their perception of service culture in the district or their school site, perceived self-efficacy in their first 100 days, or intent to stay in their role.

After exploring and documenting insights related to the past onboarding process, the second stage of the QuEST process was about looking toward the future and generating a wide range of insights related to the criteria shaped by the question phase. The purpose of this phase was to ask “what if?” and, at the end of the process, to be able to draw important connections between the learning from the Question phase and the solutions generated by the team (Liedka, et al., 2013, p. 2). To begin this phase, the team brainstormed options using a tool called “the wall of ideas.” This tool is a visual strategy in three steps: 1) Develop trigger questions based on your deliverables from the question phase (like the fishbone diagram) or true/false assumptions launched from the problem and opportunity, 2) Ask trigger questions to the team in rapid succession, and each team member writes what comes to mind on individual sticky notes, and 3) Cluster your ideas on the wall one at a time, organizing them into high-level clusters that will ultimately form the basis of the Solution phase (Van der Pijl, et al., 2016, p. 144-145). Based on the data gathered, the team decided to focus on administrative onboarding (including technical

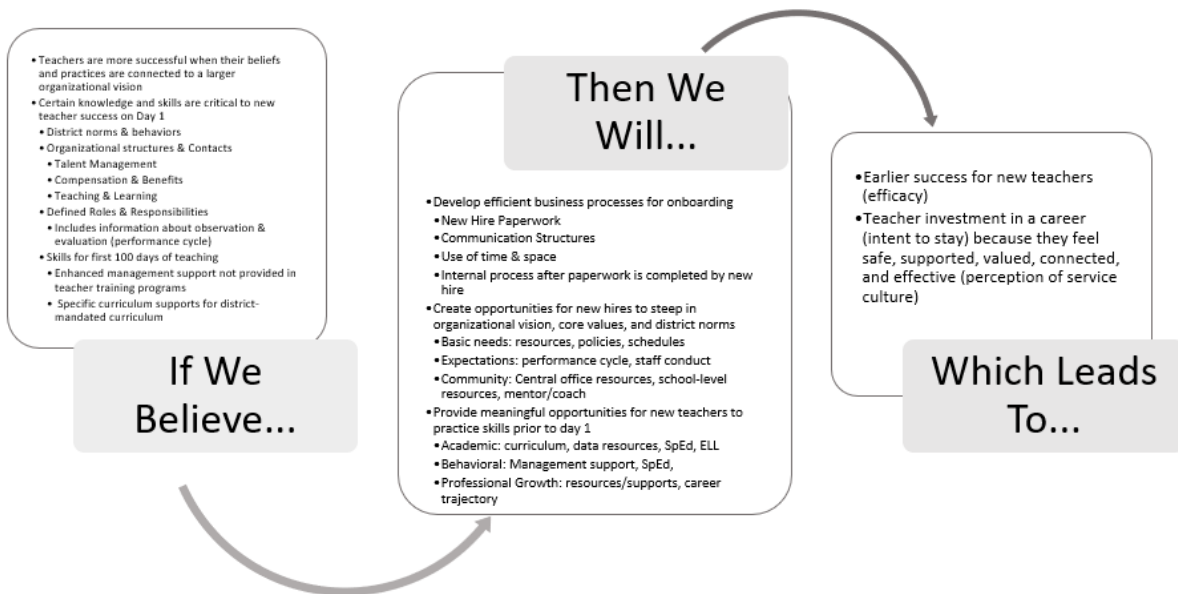


Figure 4. *Theory of Action for the New Novice Teacher Onboarding Process*

supports), “who we are” as a district (mission, vision, organizational goals), meaningful connections with colleagues, and foundational skills (management, essential curriculum, etc.). Based on these goals, the onboarding task force developed the theory of action (displayed in Figure 4).

Organizations that have well-developed and stimulating onboarding programs show increased employee engagement, productivity, and lower attrition and turnover (Savitt, 2012). This may be due to an intentional focus on providing new hires with necessary information such as access to important networks, organization contact information, and setting expectations prior to their first day on site (Steer, 2013). As this need is recognized across organizations, employers are continually looking for better strategies for onboarding and orientation opportunities. The Theory of Action (Figure 4) is presented in 3 parts, demonstrating a logical relationship between organizational beliefs, novice teacher support, and their subsequent self-efficacy, perception of service culture, and intent to stay.

The first part focuses on organizational beliefs about teacher preparedness and onboarding practices. The work of the onboarding team maintained the belief that teachers are more successful when their beliefs and practices are connected to a larger organizational vision. Organizational Socialization and Uncertainty Reduction Theories support this belief, maintaining that new hires feel more committed when they develop “an emotional attachment to the organization leading to strongly committed identification with, involvement in, and enjoyment of membership” (Filstad, 2011, p. 378). The district also believed that certain knowledge and skills were critical to new teacher success on Day 1; knowledge and skills that may not necessarily have been a part of any formal or informal teacher preparation program. This knowledge and these skills may include things such as district norms and behaviors, organizational structures

and contacts, defined responsibilities, and pedagogical skills needed for the first 100 days of teaching.

The second part of the Theory of Action details the activities deemed necessary to lead to the desired outcomes of increased self-efficacy, intent to stay, and positive perception of service culture. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) report that “teaching is complex work, that pre-employment teacher preparation is rarely sufficient to provide all of the knowledge and skill necessary to successful teaching, and that significant portion can only be acquired while on the job” (p .3). Operational variables such as late hiring, extensive new hire paperwork, and slow district processes can cause barriers to a new hire’s immediate perception of self-efficacy (Allen & Shanock, 2013; Kidd, Brown, & Fitzallen, 2015). The district provided meaningful opportunities for new teachers to practice essential knowledge and skills prior to day 1, including academic and behavioral skills as well as knowledge about professional growth opportunities and resources. High-level professional development and opportunities to practice these essential skills were considered essential to boost novice teachers’ self-efficacy (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003).

Another important action was to create opportunities for new hires to steep in the vision, core values, and norms of the district in order to influence novice teachers’ perception of service culture and intent to stay. Organizational culture is described as “the core values, goals, beliefs, emotions, and processes learned as people develop over time in our work environments” (Clark & Estes, 2008, p. 108). Organizational culture is developed over time, but begins at onboarding with communication and practice of the district and novice teacher’s basic needs, expectations, and organizational resources. Placing a focus on organizational culture at the beginning of a novice teacher’s onboarding experience creates a stronger sense of socialization and sense of



belonging. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) maintain that it is the role of the district to create these opportunities, rather than the new hire. Being strategic around each of these dimensions would produce specific organizational responses, such as in increased sense of belonging and positive intent to stay. As Van Maanen and Schein (1979) point out, “Organizational results are not simply the consequences of the work accomplished by people brought into the organization, rather, they are the consequences of the work these people accomplish after the organization itself has completed its work on them” (p. 71). When a newcomer joins an organization, they are in a place of uncertainty until they have enough information to transition out of this phase. There are new settings, expectations, and relationships that require adjustment and if newcomers have insufficient information to make this adjustment that will lead to increased dissatisfaction in their new role. Therefore, it is important that newcomers feel socialized to the organization so that they may develop role competencies and learn how to function appropriately, leading to greater job satisfaction (Kramer, 2014).

With a theory of action and concept development in place, the team moved into the third phase of the QuEST process: Envision. In this phase, the team had to make tough choices and hone in on the concepts that would guide next steps. The task force looked for concepts that feel in the “wow zone”, at the intersection of three criteria: targeted stakeholders want it, the district can produce and deliver it, and the concepts will allow the organization to meet its objectives (Liedka, et al., 2016, p. 3). The deliverables for this phase of the process were to create a picture of the future state of the Novice Teacher Journey, which ultimately became the “where we’re going” program focus (Appendix C), the Program Roadmap for the Novice Teacher Experience, (Appendix E), including a future state graphic for administrative and operational processes, and a Program Performance Scorecard (Appendix F) so that the team had clear measures for success.

The Program Roadmap (Appendix E) and “Where We’re Going” visuals (Appendix C) were this team’s version of a logic model, which categorizes a program’s efforts from start to finish (Knowlton & Phillips, 2012). The inputs and activities with the greatest opportunity for impact on a novice teacher’s onboarding experience were: enhanced pre-hire cultivation, district office staff resources, enhanced induction programming and materials, a project manager, and potential need for funding for activities that extend beyond the contract day. Depending on their role in the new design, the district office cross-functional team members were asked to attend regular weekly or bi-monthly meetings, help design and execute enhanced processes, and attend events related to novice teacher onboarding.

The final stage of the QuEST process was for the team to finalize and submit an action plan (Appendix G), which detailed the key milestones, activities and action items, and targeted completion dates. The action plan was designed to be used as a project management tool to track ongoing completion and status and to be updated at each project status meeting with cross-functional team members. The team settled on the definition of onboarding from Klein and Polin (2012), defined in terms of “... formal and informal practices, programs, and policies enacted or engaged in by an organization or its agents to facilitate newcomer adjustment” (p. 268). As mentioned previously, the overall project goals became 1) Design and implement a new teacher orientation—a formal, in-person introduction to TPS that incorporates activities and programming centered around the district and what it means to be an educator there, and includes opportunities for relevant systems access and technical support related to onboarding; 2) Design and implement a new hire cultivation process—activities that maintain meaningful connections to reinforce novice teacher grounding in the “District Way” and provide technical support and associated preparation from end of orientation through induction; and 3) Design and implement a

week-long pre-service teacher induction—intensive foundational training days designed to prepare teachers to develop supportive classroom cultures, and to deliver rigorous instruction on day one of school.

The first project goal, to design and implement a new hire cultivation process, included program milestones such as: development of orientation programming and materials, adjustments to administrative hiring and onboarding practices, and overall alignment of communication and onboarding of teachers who enter the district via various pipelines. Beyond recruitment efforts, orientation is the first opportunity to introduce new hires in the organizational culture, norms, and mission (Sims, 2009), create opportunities for new employees to build relationships with peers as well as connect with internal and external contacts (Campbell, 2015; McNeill, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), and clearly define responsibilities, goals, outline processes for accountability, communicate compliance expectations, and articulate the contribution of the role to the overall organization (Doke, 2014; Derven, 2008; Hacker, 2004; Minnick et al., 2014; Nancheria, 2008; Vargas, 2013). To do this, the cross-functional team first worked on consolidating and simplifying administrative onboarding tasks, such as new hire paperwork, access to technical platforms like e-mail and student portals, and improved opportunities for mandatory compliance trainings like Drug & Alcohol Safety, Child Abuse, and FERPA regulations. Previously, these administrative opportunities took place separately in novice teacher orientation, either as a separate individual appointment, in the case of new hire paperwork, or as unpaid, independent work-off-contract time. The team determined that these activities should take place as a part of new teacher orientation to solve for the concern of frustrating time expectations as well as lack of access to support and resources when there is an issue. These administrative and technical aspects were built until the daily schedule of new

teacher orientation and considered as an initial part of the arc of learning rather than a separate process. In conjunction with the technical and administrative sessions were learning opportunities to create an initial introduction to the district mission, vision, and core values, the contribution of the role of teacher in the overall work as a district, and enhanced opportunities to connect and build relationships among colleagues. District support staff from Talent Management, Information Technology, and select staff from the Teaching and Learning offices were on-site to lead this time and the orientation sessions were available, by appointment, for all novice teachers twice a day, three times a week beginning in June and running through early August (see Figure 5).

<b>AM Session</b>	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>PM Session</b>
8:30-8:45	<b>Welcome &amp; Framing</b>		1:00-1:15
8:45-9:45	<b>Destination Excellence</b>		1:15-2:15
9:45-9:55	Transition	Transition	2:15-2:25
9:55-10:40	<b>Badge/Email/Online Resources</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	2:25-3:10
10:40-10:50	Transition	Transition	3:10-3:20
10:50-11:35	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Badge/Email/Online Resources</b>	3:20-4:05
11:35-11:45	Transition	Transition	4:05-4:15
11:45-12:00	<b>Closing and Next Steps</b>		4:15-4:30

Figure 5. *New Teacher Orientation Schedule*

After a novice teacher attended orientation, they entered the pipeline for new teacher cultivation. Effective novice teacher onboarding programs work to ensure new hires feel welcome and considers reduced stress and anxiety regarding their new role (Bauer, 2010; Billingsley et al., 2004; Hacker, 2004; Mastropieri, 2001; McNeill, 2012). To alleviate stress and anxiety, select district support team members engaged in enhanced processes of new hire cultivation. This included follow-up calls to all novice teachers with a focus on completing or

clarifying any human capital needs, connecting new hires to district resources not yet introduced at orientation (such as online student portal support or information about evaluation measures), and developing points of contact at their school sites. These cultivation calls took place within one week of orientation attendance and again the week proceeding centralized novice teacher induction. The purpose of these cultivation calls was to provide an opportunity to start building excitement and energy around district culture, allow teachers to start the year feeling informed, supported, and prepared to enter induction with clear expectations and connection to resources (TNTP, 2012).

The final goal of the onboarding task force was to design and implement a week-long pre-service teacher induction—intensive foundational training days designed to prepare teachers to develop supportive classroom cultures, and to deliver rigorous instruction on day one of school. Strong induction programs are purposeful, highly interactive, consistent, and granular (Steer, 2013). Common threads included defining the roles and responsibilities for new talent (Campbell, 2015; Derven, 2008; Nancheria, 2008), creating a positive environment (Robb, 2012), and providing consistent opportunities for learning and development (Campbell, 2015; Youngs et al., 2011). We know that clear learning opportunities regarding curriculum, instructional frameworks, and district priorities creates more adaptable novice teachers and increased teacher growth (Kauffman et al., 2002; Valencia et al., 2006; Youngs et al., 2011). It is, however, important to create a balance between providing enough information for new hires to be effective without being overwhelmed with resources (Hacker, 2004; Koster, 2013). The new teacher induction was held in August 2018 and consisted of one week of learning opportunities for all novice teachers for the 2018-2019 school year. Cross-functional district support teams from Talent Management, Teaching and Learning, and Professional Development

worked together to create a content and learning outcomes for novice teacher induction (Appendix H). The induction was held centrally in the district professional learning building, and content was delivered by select district Teaching and Learning staff such as Content Directors and Instructional Mentors. The primary goal of novice teacher induction was to provide meaningful opportunities for new teachers to practice skills prior to day one in the classroom. The content sessions focused on: academic skills, such as district-level curriculum, centralized data resources, and supports for exceptional students and English language learners, behavioral supports for classroom management and social-emotional learning, and professional growth supports for ongoing learning and development beyond induction.

Despite a strong overall human capital team and recent improvement, the large, urban, Midwestern school district faced significant issues with workforce instability and turnover, particularly in the district's neediest schools and novice teacher attrition. It was clear to the executive team that significant improvements should be made to novice teacher onboarding in order to develop and retain masterful teachers who catalyze college and career ready students. The QuEST framework was used to identify the current problems with onboarding as well as opportunities for improvement and possible solutions. After this process, the cross-functional support team determined the conceptual framework to guide improvement with the vision of providing world-class hiring, onboarding, and ongoing coaching and professional development aligned to and supported by the District Way for Teaching and Learning. The team made improvements to novice teacher orientation, cultivation, and induction, combined to become the Novice Teacher Experience, and introduced these improvements district-wide for novice teachers in July through August of 2019.

## **Summary**

This chapter began with an introduction of the current state of onboarding in this large, urban, Mid-western school district. I also reviewed the literature for the leading theoretical perspectives of organizational socialization and uncertainty reduction theory to highlight the findings and build a guide for the study. Based on the needs of the past onboarding process, a novice teacher experience team worked collaboratively using a QuEST process to design and implement a Novice Teacher Experience Program, which included enhanced recruitment, cultivation, and a week-long pre-service teacher induction program to reinforce novice teacher grounding in the District way. It was also designed to provide technical support and associated preparation after orientation, intensive foundational training days designed to prepare teachers to develop supportive classroom cultures, and to deliver rigorous instruction on day one of school. The goal of our implementation of an improved novice teacher onboarding program in our focal, urban, Midwestern school district was for teachers to experience earlier successes and increased investment in a career because they feel safe, supported, valued, connected, and effective.

## **Chapter 4: Method**

The purpose of this study was to develop, implement, and evaluate a new teacher onboarding process in a large, urban Midwestern school district in Oklahoma. In this chapter, I present the method used to evaluate this new program. In order to do this, I discuss the proposed method of research, research phases, target population, and detail the procedures to measure and analyze the desired outcomes. Recall the research questions guiding the study:

1. Did new educator hires' perception of self-efficacy change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?
2. Did new educator hires' perception of intent to stay beyond their first year of teaching change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?
3. Did new educator hires' perception of service culture in the district change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?
4. What are some remaining challenges associated with the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?

### **Focal District Context and Onboarding Background**

The research-setting was a large, Urban, Mid-western school district in Oklahoma. The district occupies 173 square miles and is comprised of 88 schools. The district is part of the State public school system and remains under the general direction and control of the State Board of Education. Currently, 95% of the District is comprised of students on Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL). There are currently 6,837 employees, of which 3,364 are certified teachers. Seven-hundred and forty-two of these teachers were considered “novice” teachers, which means they were in their first 3 years of teaching, having never worked at another district before this role.

Due to its size and geographical location, this district has historically experienced challenges in realizing district-wide system changes. Each school possesses a unique set of



needs, which calls for individualized support and strategic initiatives. Nevertheless, some processes, such as talent management and onboarding of novice teachers, are centralized services. Anecdotally, the current state of new hire onboarding lacked urgency, efficiency, and was shallow in depth of learning content and opportunity for socialization with colleagues. This current state is in line with other districts and organizations, whose onboarding programs overwhelmingly center on information about the university or district (such as policies, procedures, etc.) and rarely include memorable experiences for new hires (Patton, 2014). Studies show that most educational organizations engage in programs designed to be informational, these experiences are often forgettable and new employees retain little of the information (Klein et al., 2015).

As mentioned in the prior chapter, there were several issues with the current onboarding process, including but not limited to: a lack of urgency and access to initial business processes, large variation in quality and quantity of learning opportunities for new hires, and a lack of information or accountability once new hires are released to their school sites. Without formal feedback from new hires on their experience with the current onboarding process, it was difficult to know if a lack of effective onboarding processes had affected perception of service culture in the district or their school site, perceived self-efficacy in their first 100 days, or intent to stay in their role.

### **Research Design**

This study employed an evaluation study, action-research research design. The primary goal of an action research study is to solve a problem while in the process building and contributing to the body of knowledge surrounding that problem. Specifically, action research is about change within an individual's organization and learning lessons from that change (Coghlan

& Brannick, 2014; Herr & Anderson, 2005). According to Coghlan and Brannick (2014), action research contains four major components: planning, implementing, evaluating, and developing new action based on lessons learned.

The first, most significant, and often underestimated, part of any action research process is identifying the problem and research questions which will guide the study and become the framework for the process (Agree, 2008). After the questions have been identified, the researcher must create a research design that will most effectively answer these questions. After collecting the data, often from multiple sources, the last step is to synthesize the data and respond to the research questions. One suggestion for approaching these four steps is contained in three phases, named the Action Research Paradigm Protocol, which serves as a guide for research and solving problems, suggestions for taking action, and support for evaluating and reflecting on the results (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014).

There is a strong argument for including action research in terminal degree programs for educational practitioners. Grogan et al. (2007) argues that one of the roles of educators is “to engage in social justice” (2) and participating in action research allows educational practitioners to think critically about problems in their current educational organizations and take important steps to make improvements. While other methodological approaches may more commonly associated with terminal degree programs, the authors argue that action research in educational programs is as good, if not superior, to other options.

While not necessary, there is precedent for using action research to study the effectiveness of onboarding practices in a large organization. Wolf (2014) and Williams-Smith (2017) both use action research in studies about the onboarding of both new staff and current faculty in higher educational organizations. Both studies result in positive transformations in

their university level organizations, further contributing to the body of knowledge on onboarding practices in large educational organizations. Bauer and Erdogan (2011) study onboarding of new employees with a lens of organizational socialization. Their action research finds that having onboarding programs that include learning opportunities with time for networking can help to reduce stress and increase adjustment, job satisfaction, and retention (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). Beyond onboarding programs in the first few weeks of employment, there are numerous research studies in support of year-long orientation and mentorship programs for novice teachers, some of which consider the first few years of support to be a part of the onboarding process (Eisner, 2015; Cawyer et al., 2002; Savage et al., 2004; Sorcinelli, 1994).

Many think about an organization being made up of different parts, each interconnected, so change in one part affects some level of change in every other part (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2009). This systems approach is in contrast to a more traditional, singular, way of thinking in which change in one part of the organization affects only that part and does not consider consequences in all areas of the organization. Change, then, must come with investigation, collaboration, dialogue, feedback, and reflection (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014; Grogan, Donaldson, & Simmons, 2007). As such, the study involved three major phases, some of which was discussed in the prior chapter. It began with planning the theory of action (see Figure 4). The second phase was implementing the action plan. The third phase was an evaluation and reflection of the results of the action plan.

### ***Phase 1: Planning***

The onboarding development program began in January 2018. In order to understand the current state of the district onboarding program, an Onboarding Task Force performed internal/external district interviews in February of 2017 in order to unravel the issues and gain

clarity around opportunities. The Onboarding Task Force team consisted of 11 people who engaged in the full QuEST process together. A total of 29 interviews were performed with 17 district office staff, eight certified teachers, and four school site personnel. The individuals selected for interviews came from multiple stakeholder groups: new employees, certified employees, central office employees, and support employees in order to ensure the information gathered was representative of the whole district. The Onboarding Task Force interviewers recorded the responses via notetaking and brought them back to the full group to synthesize results and discuss trends. Literature about onboarding and best practices in education was also consulted (see Chapter 2) to provide information and perspective for the Onboarding Task Force.

Based on the needs assessment, the team developed an initial action plan to make improvements to the current onboarding process (Appendix A). With a theory of action and concept development in place, the team moved into the third phase of the QuEST process: Envision. In this phase, the team had to make tough choices and hone in on the concepts that will guide next steps. The team developed a picture of the future state of the Novice Teacher Journey, which ultimately became the “where we’re going” program focus (Appendix C), the Program Roadmap for the Novice Teacher Experience, (Appendix E), including a future state graphic for administrative and operational processes, and a Program Performance Scorecard (Appendix F) so that the team had clear measures for success. The Program Roadmap and “Where We’re Going” visuals were this team’s version of a logic model, which categorizes a program’s efforts from start to finish (Knowlton & Phillips, 2012). The team concluded the planning phase with the development of an Action Plan (Appendix G). which detailed the key milestones, activities and action items, and targeted completion dates.

## ***Phase 2: Implementation***

The second phase of this research was the implementation of the action plan (Appendix G) developed after Phase 1. Changes took effect in the Summer for new hires for the 19-20 academic year. Changes were based on the action plan (Appendix G), developed in partnership with the stakeholder focus group, and theory of action (Figure 4), based on organizational socialization and uncertainty reduction theories. The team made improvements to novice teacher orientation, cultivation, and induction, combined to become the Novice Teacher Experience, and introduced these improvements district-wide for novice teachers July through August of 2019.

The overall project goals became 1) Design and implement a new teacher orientation- a formal, in-person introduction to TPS that incorporates activities and programming centered around the district and what it means to be an educator there, and includes opportunities for relevant systems access and technical support related to onboarding, 2) Design and implement a new hire cultivation process- activities that maintain meaningful connections to reinforce novice teacher grounding in the “District Way” and provide technical support and associated preparation from end of orientation through induction, and 3) Design and implement a week-long pre-service teacher induction—intensive foundational training days designed to prepare teachers to develop supportive classroom cultures, and to deliver rigorous instruction on day one of school.

Using best practices from the literature, the team made several key changes to the onboarding program for novice teachers to meet their designated goals. Improvements were implemented through administrative and operational procedures, such as new hire paperwork, access to technical platforms like e-mail and student portals, and improved opportunities for mandatory compliance trainings like Drug & Alcohol Safety, Child Abuse, and FERPA regulations (Campbell, 2015; Doke, 2014; Derven, 2008; Hacker, 2004; McNeill, 2012; Minnick

et al., 2014; Nancheria, 2008; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Vargas, 2013). Improvements were made to new hire cultivation through follow-up connections, building relationships, and responding to individual needs to reduce and anxieties about their new role (Bauer, 2010; Billingsley et al., 2004; Hacker, 2004; Mastropieri, 2001; McNeill, 2012; TNTP, 2012). Improvements were also made in novice teacher induction, of which the primary goal was to provide meaningful opportunities for new teachers to practice skills prior to day one in the classroom. The content sessions focused on academic skills, such as district-level curriculum, centralized data resources, and supports for exceptional students and English language learners, behavioral supports for classroom management and social-emotional learning, and professional growth supports for ongoing learning and development beyond induction. The induction was held centrally in the district professional learning building, and content was delivered by select district Teaching & Learning staff such as Content Directors and Instructional Mentors (Campbell, 2015; Derven, 2008; Nancheria, 2008; Robb, 2012; Steer, 2013; Valencia et al., 2006; Youngs et al., 2011).

### ***Phase 3: Evaluation***

After implementation, it was important to review the results and look at the ways in which the changes to the onboarding process affect a novice teacher's perception of self-efficacy, perception of service culture, and intent to stay. Novice teachers who participated in the onboarding process in the Summer completed the Panorama Perception Survey (Appendix I) as part of normal district continuous review processes.

### **Participants and Sample**

The population for this study was all novice teachers teaching in the district hired in the AY18-19 (pre-intervention) and AY19-20 (post-intervention). This is a final sample of 468 novice teachers, with 285 teachers hired pre-intervention and who experienced the old

onboarding process and 183 who experienced the new onboarding process. Sample sizes at response level for all outcomes are presented in Table 1 below.

### **Measures and Instrumentation**

In order to measure the intended outcomes of self-efficacy, intent to stay, and perception of service culture, the primary instruments used were a survey and an interview protocol. The target population was all new teacher hires at an urban, Midwestern school district. The study involved two key groups: key stakeholders in the District (Onboarding Task Force) who reviewed original plans, served on focus groups, and implemented the action plan. The second group was new teachers at the District, some who experienced the new onboarding program, and some who were new teachers who experienced the old onboarding program. These teachers responded to the Panorama survey in the Fall 2018, Spring 2019 and Fall 2019 administrations.

### **Panorama Perception Survey**

As part of normal continuous review processes, The District currently administers multiple surveys annually, including the Panorama Teacher perception survey (<https://panoramaed.com>). The Teacher Perception Survey, developed by Panorama, was first introduced to The District in 2017 and is currently administered to all teachers twice a year, in the Fall and Spring semesters. *Panorama Education* administers the survey via e-mail to all teachers and principals in The District and the results are collected and sent to teachers via individual report as well as district collection of raw data for future use and analysis. Some benefits of the Panorama Teacher Perception Survey was that it: was a research-based survey instrument, 2) had a user-friendly dashboard which allowed for easy interpretation of results, 3) functioned as an immediate resource for principals and district office staff to guide data-driven

decision making and strategic planning, and 4) had the ability to administer survey in multiple languages.

The survey had approximately 80 questions, measured via a Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree; see Appendix I for measures used in this study). Panorama uses primarily quantitative methods for data analysis. The data is benchmarked against national norms and differentiated by school site and overall district. While Panorama does most of this analysis, the District's internal data analytics team extracted the raw data for the researcher's purposes.

## **Interviews**

Each member of the Onboarding Task Force was charged with conducting 2-5 empathy interviews to unravel the issues and gain clarity around opportunities from the newly designed onboarding process. The Onboarding Task Force used snowball sampling in order to gather information and/or additional feedback. Snowball sampling "is sometimes the best way to locate subjects with certain attributes or characteristics necessary in a study" (Berg, 2004 p. 36). The individuals selected for interviews came from multiple stakeholder groups: new employees, certified employees, central office employees, and support employees in order to ensure the information gathered was representative of the whole district. Responses were collected via note-taking by the interviewer. A total of 29 interviews were performed with 17 district office staff, eight certified teachers, and four school site personnel. Some of the interview protocol questions (Appendix D) used to assess the implementation of the new Novice Teacher Experience Program at the district were:

1. What was your onboarding process like? Describe your experience.
2. What would you describe as "basic needs" that a new teacher would need prior to day one of teaching? Did you receive these things during your onboarding?



3. Are there things that you needed before beginning teaching that you did not receive?
4. Do you have an experience that stands out from onboarding to share?

The Onboarding Task Force interviewers recorded the responses via notetaking and brought them back to the full group to synthesize results and discuss trends. Interviewers were also asked to test their own logic and establish proof points for what they learned during the question phase of the QuEST process to answer discussion questions such as “What is known and can be confirmed?”, “What do you doubt?”, “What doesn’t fit?” and “What do you believe, but don’t have enough facts to confirm?”.

### **Variables and Data Sources**

At the conclusion of the onboarding process, the researcher evaluated the effects of novice teachers’ self-efficacy and perception of service culture as well as the effects on novice teacher’s intent to stay in the organization beyond their first year. The Panorama Teacher Perception Survey was the source of the data for the teacher outcomes of self-efficacy, intent to stay, and perception of service culture. All control variables for the analysis such as teacher corps membership, race, gender, age, highest degree were obtained from district administrative data and merged with the Panorama survey data. The four latent variables (3 focal outcomes and one independent variable) are discussed below. For all variables, I factor analyzed the items that comprised each measure. All measures loaded on one factor, with all loadings above 0.8. Reliability analysis was also conducted on the measures and those findings are noted below. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for the variables used.

**Self-Efficacy ( $\alpha = .88$ ).** The first outcome measured was self-efficacy, defined as a teacher’s belief about their own teaching abilities and effectiveness. Bandura (1978) presents the theory that an individual’s self-efficacy has a strong influence on their achievement. This applies

to multiple settings such as health, business, and education. Thus, a novice teachers' self-efficacy, their beliefs about their own effectiveness, influences many things in the classroom from the culture they create to their "judgements regarding the different tasks introduced in the classroom in order to bring about student learning" (Bandura, 1997, p. 7). Accomplishments in performance are the most influential source of efficacy, so if teachers perceive that their performance is a failure then they will expect failure in the future and vice versa (Bandura, 1978). Teachers with low self-efficacy report difficulties in teaching, higher levels of job-related stress, and low levels of job satisfaction (Betoret, 2006; Klassen et al., 2009; Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Therefore, focusing on teachers' self-efficacy, beginning at onboarding by providing them the tools they need to feel successful in their first 100 days, was an important measure for the improvement plan.

The Panorama Teacher Perception Survey was the data source used for the measure of self-efficacy. Panorama uses primarily quantitative methods for data analysis. The data is benchmarked against national norms and differentiated by school site and overall district. While Panorama does most of the analysis, the District's onboarding team extracted the raw data and performed additional analysis. Examples of the items on the Panorama Perception Survey used to measure a self-efficacy, with anchors from not at all to extremely, were: "How thoroughly do you feel that you know all the content you need to teach?", "How knowledgeable are you regarding where to find resources for working with students who have unique learning needs?" or "To what extent can teachers improve their implementation of different teaching strategies.

Table 1.

*Descriptive Statistics for All Variables*

<i>Measure</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Level 1 Variables (Response Level)</b>			
Self-Efficacy F18 (SELFEFFS)	146	3.47	.534
Self-Efficacy SP19	162	3.64	.505
Self-Efficacy F19	296	3.64	.548
Service Culture F18 (SERVCULT)	145	4.02	.721
Service Culture SP19	162	3.47	.634
Service Culture F19	295	3.55	.716
Intent to Stay Fall 2018 (ITS_F18))	144	4.64	1.11
Intent to Stay Fall 2019 (ITS_F19)	126	4.25	1.19
Supportive Leadership F18 (SUPPLEAD)	149	18.38	5.65
Supportive Leadership SP19	145	17.59	6.44
Supportive Leadership F19	274	17.51	6.14
<b>Level 2 Variables (Teacher Level)</b>			
Full-Time Equivalency (FTE)	466	.9769	.101691
Female	468	.7051	.45647
Age	468	37.05	11.905
[District] Teacher Corps (DTC)	468	.1731	.37872
Highest Degree GED	465	.0065	.08015
Highest Degree Bachelors	465	.8065	.39550
Highest Degree Masters	465	.1699	.37594
Highest Degree Doctorate	465	.0172	.13017
White	468	.6303	.48323
Asian	468	.0150	.12151
Black	468	.2350	.42448
Hispanic	468	.0748	.26333
Native American	468	.0449	.20724

*Note.* SUPPLEAD was transformed by squaring the raw values to produce normality needed for regression analysis.

**Intent to Stay ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ).** The second outcome, closely related to self-efficacy and perception of service culture, was intent to stay; in other words, commitment to the organization or profession. Effective onboarding programs can positively influence a novice teacher's investment in their career. Teacher commitment has been linked to principal and peer support (Ware & Kitsantas, 2011) clear expectations for role and responsibilities, both initially and ongoing (Singh & Billingsley, 1998), promotion of shared vision and values (organizational fit)

(Edwards & Cable, 2009), and high levels of teacher self-efficacy (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Yilmaz, 2011). There is also evidence that higher levels of teacher commitment are related to higher student achievement (Kushman, 1992; Riehl & Sipple, 1996; Rosenholtz, 1989). Increasing opportunities during onboarding for employees to steep in organizational vision, core values, and district norms as well as academic, behavioral, and personal growth learning opportunities could impact a novice teacher's intent to stay in the teaching profession beyond their first few years.

The Panorama Teacher Perception Survey was the data source used for the measure of intent to stay. The questions on the Panorama Perception Survey used to measure intent to stay, with anchors from strongly disagree to strongly agree, are straightforward stems such as "I am likely to remain working at [The District] beyond the current school year." and "If I could do it all over, I would still become a teacher in [the District]." The survey questions measured novice teacher's perceptions of the present school year (proximal), which is displayed by commitment to school site and district (mid distal outcome) resulting in novice teachers investment in their career and increased retention (outcome).

**Perception of Service Culture ( $\alpha = .92$ ).** The next outcome was perception of service culture, defined as an individual's perception that the support they receive contributes value to an individual or organization (Gronroos, 2017; Kaufman, n.d.). A positive perception of service culture exists when an organization provides a service that is directly meets the customer's needs, rather than just meeting their expectations (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Strong HRM practices, such as recruitment, training, teamwork, and empowerment, are essential to create and sustain high levels of service quality, which influences perception of service culture (Gronroos, 2007; Hauser & Paul, 2006; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Sturdy, 2000; Ueno, 2012).

Additionally, collective trust between all school stakeholders, including district level supports, promotes stronger skillsets and supports school improvement and enhanced perception of service culture (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Service culture begins at onboarding, where central office teams support new hires by responding to and meeting their needs, building stronger levels of collective trust, and working to lessen any organizational uncertainty.

The Panorama Teacher Perception Survey was the data source used for the measure of perception of service culture. The questions on the Panorama Perception Survey used to measure perception of service culture, with anchors from strongly disagree to strongly agree, are stems such as “Teamwork is practiced in [the District]”, “District office personnel are empathetic toward my concerns or issues” or “District office teams are focused on serving teachers, school leaders, students, and families.” The survey questions measured novice teacher’s perception of district-level supports (proximal), which is displayed by their experience with communication, empathy, and trust (mid distal outcome) resulting in novice teachers feeling safe, supported, valued, and connected in the workplace (outcome).

**Supportive Leadership.** Effective school administrators have been connected to school-level induction practices and their intention to provide new teachers with necessary resources and supplies (Carver, 2003; Kardos et al., 2001; Youngs, 2007). Principals serve an important role in helping novice teachers “to become acquainted with the way their new school does things” (Carver, 2003, p. 3). School leaders who are actively involved, responsive to the needs of new hires, and focused on student learning also promote high levels of teacher collaboration, often associated with key outcomes for novice teachers (Grossman & Thompson, 2004; Kardos et al., 2001; Youngs, 2007). School leaders have autonomy for orientation of new teachers,

whether novice hires or just new to the building. Supportive Leadership was included as an important independent variable because district support at this level is not standardized and varies by school site which could have an effect on novice teacher self efficacy or intent to stay.

**Control Variables.** Several control variables for the main regression analysis were used and were obtained via district administrative data. Teacher race, age, gender, highest degree, and [District] Teacher Corps (DTC) membership were all used. DTC membership was a variable that indicated whether or not a new teacher to the district participated in a special training experience in addition to the onboarding process. DTC novice teachers were members of a specialized application group, recruited from alternative career fields such as business or arts. These novice teachers were all alternatively certified and, in addition to traditional orientation and induction experiences, completed a “crash course” six-week training intensive each summer. This intensive experience included additional training and best practices designed for alternatively certified educators and hands on teaching experiences with students attending summer programs. In order to ensure that only the effects of the new onboarding process were captured, it was necessary to control for this additional preparation experience.

## **Data Analysis**

Table 2 displays an overview of the data sources and analyses conducted to answer each of the four research questions in this study. For all quantitative analyses, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. First, the Panorama Teacher Perception Survey data files were examined. The Teacher Perception Data Files for each survey administration (Fall 2018, Spring 2019, and Fall 2019) were aggregated by teacher ID and merged into one SPSS file along with teacher demographic data. This file was then restructured into a person-period dataset for longitudinal analysis. For research question 2, a paired samples t-test was performed to

analyze the variable of intent to stay which was captured in Fall 2018 (pre-intervention) and Fall 2019 (post-intervention)—only had two time points instead of the three available for self-efficacy and service culture. For research questions 1 and 3, a linear curve estimation analysis was conducted for self-efficacy and service culture to examine potential growth or decline of the variables of intent to stay, self-efficacy, and perception of service culture. A linear curve estimation analysis provides a statistical visualization to analyze the results of the study and Table 2.

*Overview of Research Design*

	<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Analytical Approach</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
<b>Research Question 1</b>	Did new educator hires’ perception of self-efficacy change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?	Quantitative: Descriptive Statistics Linear Curve Estimation Model OLS Regression	Panorama Teacher Perception Survey
<b>Research Question 2</b>	Did new educator hires’ perception of intent to stay beyond their first year of teaching change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?	Quantitative: Descriptive Statistics Independent Samples T-Test	Panorama Teacher Perception Survey
<b>Research Question 3</b>	Did new educator hires’ perception of service culture to the district change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?	Quantitative: Descriptive Statistics Linear Curve Estimation Model OLS Regression	Panorama Teacher Perception Survey
<b>Research Question 4</b>	What are some remaining challenges associated with the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?	Qualitative: Effects Matrix Explanatory Effects Matrix	Stakeholder Interviews

allows us to model change in outcomes over time as a linear (or curvilinear) function. This was followed by an OLS regression of each of these outcomes with the full statistical controls mentioned in the previous section.

As part of the data reduction process for research question 4, I organized the qualitative research data in two types of matrices, an Explanatory Effects Matrix and an Effects Matrix. An Explanatory Effects Matrix is “a broad brushstroke chart that serves as an exploratory first step to answer why outcomes were achieved and what caused them” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 140). This matrix is useful to look at data in conceptual terms and to look at emerging trends and possibilities of causation. This matrix includes quotes as one variable, “state of user”, to synthesize concepts. An Effects Matrix uses multiple variables, two of them distinguished according to time, and calls for the researcher to “pool responses, to align some responses along an evaluative scale, and to explain the response pattern for each type of assistance source” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 109). In this type of matrix, there are no quotes; the data are abstractions. Organizing the interview data into matrices allowed for the team to display the data visually, focusing and organizing the information more coherently so that we could ignore irrelevant data and identify gaps in analyses.



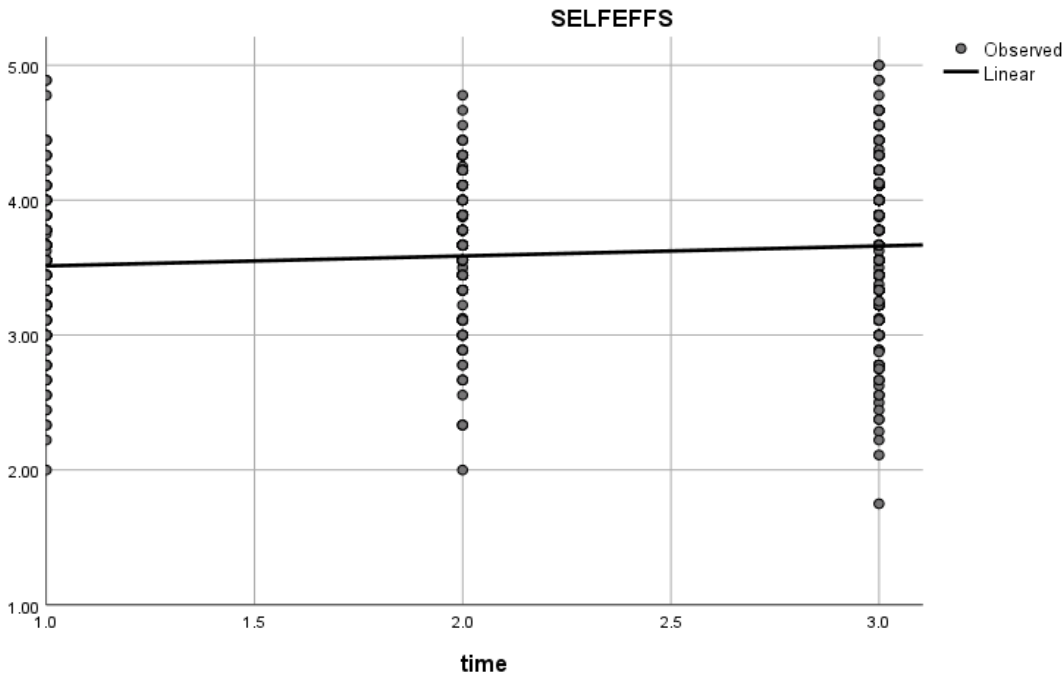
## Chapter 5: Results

The goal of our implementation of an improved novice teacher onboarding program in our focal, urban, Midwestern school district was for teachers to experience earlier successes and increased investment in a career because they feel safe, supported, valued, connected, and effective. This chapter presents the results of this program evaluation, examining changes in the focal outcomes before and after the intervention, which took place in the Summer of 2019. The presentation of the results is organized by research question, according to the data analysis framework presented in the previous chapter (Table 2). Descriptive analysis, linear curve estimation, and OLS regression results are presented for each of the first two research questions, followed by t-test analysis of intent to stay (Research Question 3). The quantitative results are presented first, followed by the presentation of the qualitative results (Research Question 4).

### Self-Efficacy

Research question one is about whether the new novice teacher on-boarding program resulted in any appreciable change in a teacher's self-efficacy, in other words, their ability to experience successes in their first 100 days of teaching. Descriptive analysis shows that, on average, self-efficacy scores increased slightly over the study period,  $M = 3.47$ ,  $SE = .534$ ,  $M = 3.64$ ,  $SE = .505$ ,  $M = 3.64$ ,  $SE = .548$ , respectively. As an additional test, a linear curve estimation analysis was run in SPSS to examine potential growth or decline over time in self-efficacy. The independent variable, in this case time, consisted of three separate points: Spring 2018, Fall 2018, and Fall 2019. Visually, Figure 6 demonstrates that the linear curve estimation analysis shows there was a small but significant increase in self-efficacy over the study period,  $F(604) = 8.290$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $r^2 = .014$ .

Figure 6. *Linear Curve Estimation Model of Self-Efficacy over the Study Period*



Of course, this demonstrated increase was for all novice teachers in the study, and so further analysis is needed to see if there was an “intervention effect,” which separates those novice teachers who served as a baseline for the intervention and those who participated in the intervention. An OLS regression of self-efficacy was run to test the relationship of various independent variables, including controls and intervention with respect to the dependent variable self-efficacy. These results are displayed in Table 3.

Statistically significant variables were age,  $\beta = .226, p < .001$ , teachers with Master’s degrees versus doctorates,  $\beta = -.228, p < .05$ , teachers with strong supportive leadership at their school sites,  $\beta = .260, p < .001$ . Differently than expected, [District] Teacher Corps (DTC), a designated novice group with a stronger intervention, did not show statistically significant differences in self-efficacy above and beyond those gained by the sample as a whole,  $\beta = -.025, p = .531$ . Most importantly, however, even though time itself was statistically significant, showing that the sample as a whole improved in self-efficacy over time,  $\beta = .131, p < .01$ , there was no

effect of the new novice teacher program on self-efficacy,  $\beta = -.025$ ,  $p = .676$ . The model displayed in Table 3 explained 15.7% of the variance in the outcome self-efficacy.

Table 3.

*OLS Growth Analysis Regression of Self-Efficacy by Intervention Status*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b>Sig.</b>
(Constant)	2.633	.256		10.303	<b>&lt;.001</b>
FTE	.154	.209	.030	.740	.460
Female	.047	.048	.038	.963	.336
Age	.010	.002	.226	5.522	<b>&lt;.001</b>
DTC	-.034	.054	-.025	-.626	.531
HD- GED	.689	.386	.075	1.758	.079
HD- Bach	-.225	.151	-.168	-1.486	.138
HD- Mast	-.320	.156	-.228	-2.044	<b>.041</b>
Asian	-.184	.180	-.040	-1.025	.306
Black	.147	.053	.113	2.796	<b>.005</b>
Hispanic	.297	.088	.136	3.359	<b>.001</b>
Native Amer.	.175	.103	.068	1.701	.089
Supp. Ldsp	.023	.003	.260	6.614	<b>&lt;.001</b>
Time	.086	.029	.131	2.965	<b>.003</b>
Intervention	-.025	.060	-.019	-.419	.676

*Note.* Reference categories for dummy variables were Doctoral degree, White teacher, and male teacher.

**Intent to Stay**

Research question two concerned whether or not the interventions in the novice teacher training program affected teachers' intent to stay working in the district beyond their first year of teaching. Intent to stay decreased from the baseline group of novice teachers in Fall 2018 to the intervention group in the Fall of 2019,  $M = 4.64$ ,  $SE = 1.11$  to  $M = 4.25$ ,  $SE = 1.19$ , respectively.

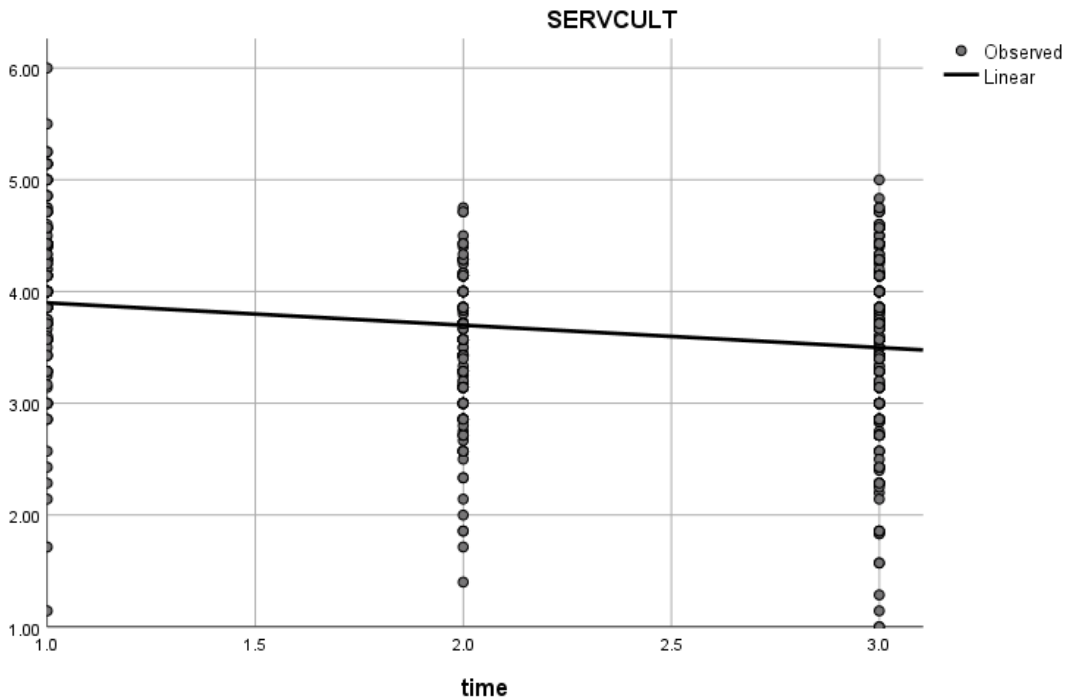
Next, as an additional step to understanding is intent to stay in the district changed before and after program implementation, an independent samples T-test was run on average intent to stay comparing the intervention group to the non-intervention group. The intent to stay analysis

showed a statistically significant decline,  $D = .385$ ,  $t(268) = 2.747$ ,  $p < .01$ ) from the baseline to the intervention group.

### Service Culture

Research question three is about whether the interventions in the novice teacher training program affect teachers' perception of service culture, or their degree of connection to the district office and their sense of safety, support. Descriptive analysis shows that, on average, service culture scores declined slightly over the study period,  $M = 4.02$ ,  $SE = .721$ ,  $M = 3.47$ ,  $SE = .634$ ,  $M = 3.55$ ,  $SE = .716$ , respectively. As an additional test, a linear curve estimation analysis was run in SPSS to model this change over time in perception of service culture. Figure 7 shows these results visually. The independent variable, time, consisted of three separate points: Fall 2018, Spring 2018, and Fall 2019. As can be seen over time, there is a decrease in perception of service culture during the study period,  $F(566) = 24.503$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = .364$ .

Figure 7. *Linear Curve Estimation Model for Service Culture over the Study Period*



Of course, this demonstrated decrease was for all novice teachers in the study, and so further analysis was needed to see if there was an “intervention effect,” which separates those novice teachers who served as a baseline for the intervention and those who participated in the intervention. An OLS regression of service culture was run to test the relationship of various independent variables, including controls and intervention with respect to the dependent variable service culture. These results are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4.

*OLS Growth Analysis Regression for Perception of Service Culture*

Variable	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	Sig.
(Constant)	2.468	.301		8.207	<.001
FTE	-.033	.246	-.005	-.133	.894
Female	.130	.057	.079	2.267	<b>.024</b>
Age	.004	.002	.062	1.736	.083
DTC	-.042	.064	-.023	-.663	.507
HD- GED	.910	.455	.074	2.002	<b>.046</b>
HD- Bach	.327	.178	.181	1.840	.066
HD- Mast	.267	.184	.140	1.450	.148
Asian	.170	.211	.027	.804	.422
Black	.082	.062	.047	1.327	.185
Hispanic	.357	.104	.121	3.431	<b>.001</b>
Native American	.087	.121	.025	.719	.473
Supp. Ldsp (SUPPLEAD)	.064	.004	.540	15.752	<.001
Time	-.248	.034	-.279	-7.246	<.001
Intervention	.225	.070	.124	3.193	<b>.001</b>

Statistically significant variables were female teacher,  $\beta = .079$ ,  $p < .05$ , Hispanic versus white teachers,  $\beta = .121$ ,  $p < .001$ , and teachers with strong supportive leadership at their school sites,  $\beta = .540$ ,  $p < .001$ . Differently than expected, [District] Teacher Corps (DTC), a designated novice group with a stronger intervention, did not show statistically significant differences in self-efficacy above and beyond those gained by the sample as a whole,  $\beta = -.023$ ,  $p = .507$ . Most importantly, however, even though time itself was statistically significant, showing that the

sample as a whole decreased in service culture over time,  $\beta = -.279, p < .001$ , there was a positive effect of the new novice teacher program on service culture,  $\beta = .124, p < .001$ . The model displayed in Table 4 explained 36.1% of the variance in the outcome service culture.

### Remaining Challenges

The final research question in this study concerned remaining challenges associated with the implementation of the new educator onboarding process. As part of the data reduction process for research question 4, I organized the qualitative research data in two types of matrices, an Effects Matrix (Appendix J) and an Explanatory Effects Matrix (Appendix K). Organizing the interview data into matrices allowed for the team to display the data visually, focusing and organizing the information more coherently so patterns could be more readily identified.

Appendix J shows the results of the interview protocol, organized in an effects matrix. The left side of the matrix shows various strategies in the novice teacher experience and the user assessment of those intervention strategies. The corresponding rows for each intervention strategy provide details of user feedback and a possible researcher explanation for that feedback. Table 5 summarizes the effectiveness of each intervention activity.

Table 5.

*Summary Table of Effects Matrix (Appendix J)*

<b>Intervention Activity</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>
Recruitment	Effective
Administrative Onboarding	Mixed Effective
Cultivation	Mixed Effective
Induction (Professional Learning)	Very Effective
Induction (HR Processes)	Mixed Effective
Induction (Socialization)	Mixed Effective

Recruitment was the first activity studied in the novice teacher onboarding experience. For Recruitment, user experience ranged from mixed effective to highly effective, with the

majority assessing the experience as effective. The most significant intervention at this initial phase was the updating of electronic application portals and online platforms, like Applitrack. Users at each level noticed these improvements, particularly related to processing times for corresponding applications. Some users noted that the enhanced online platforms created greater ease of use for the consumer and district-level supports. One novice teacher said: “Doing everything online was really easy!” which is exactly how the intervention was designed. Talent Management supports valued the enhanced pipeline pathways, which “cut out the middle-man” through automatic processes and improved HR operation procedures. In one interview, a talent management specialist stated: “it is easier to track progress and updates now, which will ultimately help me when I have to key in data later on.” Online recruitment portals also allowed for easier communication between applicants and district supports, adding to the service culture environment so that novice teachers begin their first interactions at the district feeling safe and supported.

Immediately after recruitment and application was administrative onboarding. The experience with administrative onboarding was mixed effective to effective. Enhancements with this intervention, from the previous state of the district, were processes like providing materials electronically. Sending new hires electronic materials meant that they could begin their administrative onboarding remotely, rather than scheduling one-on-one meetings with a specialist. Users reported improvements from the intervention noting the ability to complete and submit documents online. Talent Management specialists recognized the value in this change, with one support specialist recalling “we used to have to meet one on one, which could take several hours per person. I like that we don’t need to do that anymore, but some of the documents still need to be signed in-person like the UA form because it’s carbon copy.” The

vision behind the administrative interventions was to respect the time of new hires and protect them from extended visits to the central district office. Some novice teachers appreciated the changes, calling it “straightforward and easy”, though the paperwork is “a necessary evil”, but others were less enthusiastic about the changes due to individualized need to still visit the district office, such as extended questions about benefits or supports with technology. Adjusting administrative onboarding processes from individual in-person meetings to partially electronic does saved time, freed capacity for talent management, and allowed for better customer service. There are remaining gaps in some areas like unanswered questions, non-proactive customer service, and limitations with paperwork that could not be completed electronically.

Cultivation feedback ranged from ineffective to very effective, largely based on user-type. Novice teachers were happy with the cultivation follow-up, one teacher reporting “someone called after onboarding to answer any of my questions... [I have] never experienced that before in a workplace”. This proactive, versus reactive, customer service was designed intentionally to establish a stronger service culture environment and increase organizational socialization and reduce uncertainty in the process. Talent management specialists increased capacity due to the enhanced administrative onboarding, and much of that capacity was re-purposed for new hire cultivation. While intentional in design, central office supports do not necessarily recognize the value. Novice teachers appeared to appreciate the calls, while central office supports reported them as a “a waste of time” because “people don’t want to be bothered”/“don’t need a follow-up”, signaling a dissonance between results of cultivation and support-user experience. The negative reactions from talent management supports regarding novice teacher cultivation could potentially influence service culture and continued work with new hires. Cultivation leads to greater organizational socialization and decreased attrition from the time of administrative



onboarding to induction, but is also time intensive and may not meet the needs of all users. The ultimate goal of new hire cultivation was decreased attrition from phases of administrative onboarding, induction, and day one in the classroom.

For the purposes of this intervention, induction was defined as: professional learning opportunities, human resource processes, and organizational/peer socialization. Arguably, professional learning at induction was the largest piece of the intervention. Embedding opportunities for novice teachers to practice essential skills prior to day 1 of teaching was a top priority for the Novice Teacher Onboarding team. These pieces were included in the learning outcomes for novice teacher induction (see Appendix H), with a focus on outcomes that are not necessarily included in traditional teacher training programs. These improvements created an enhanced understanding of district priorities and expectations with respect to the role of teacher. A lot of the professional learning focused on development of essentials skills necessary for day 1 of teaching. The professional learning opportunities were characterized as very effective by all stakeholders who participated in interviews. Teachers reported a significant increase in knowledge, with statements such as “I learned a lot” and “I felt more ready to be a teacher than I did before”. One instructional coach reported; “I had people tell me they learned more [at induction] than in a year of college classes.”

Another focus of the intervention was to create opportunities for new hires to steep in the vision, core values, and norms of the District to influence a novice teacher’s self-efficacy and relationship to the organization. An initial grounding in this vision created a through-line for all the novice teacher work and set a tone for greater internalization of these norms long-term. Creating this through line, with consistent reinforcement, likely influenced novice teachers’ perception of self-efficacy in their first 100 days. This learning was embedded in all content

cycles, so there is no direct interview data regarding the specific piece of organizational vision. However, we do know that placing a focus on organizational culture at the beginning of a novice teacher's onboarding experience creates a stronger sense of socialization and sense of belonging (Clark & Estes, 2008; Kramer, 2014; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). There is a remaining opportunity to build out a plan for ongoing learning based on induction and novice teacher cohorts, which was not a part of the initial intervention.

As designed, the professional learning framework and components of induction were generalized for all novice teachers (see Appendix H). While based in best practice and district priorities, the learning outcomes, content modules, and method of delivery were the same for all participants. However, not all novice teachers were the same. In interviews, one novice teacher stated "I had several sessions that didn't apply to me. I will be teaching music, so learning about creating aligned assessments or walk to read strategies wasn't really helpful in my case. But, I get that I am maybe the only new music teacher, so it makes sense there wasn't a whole session on music." While true in acknowledging that there were limited new hires for fine arts, this feedback does suggest that it would be helpful to look at incoming hires to create more differentiated opportunities. Instructional central office supports made statements such as "There is a lot of space to think about how we make an intentional plan for ongoing PD based on the induction programs", which may fill the gap for learning that is not offered during induction.

Human Resource (HR) processes at induction were characterized as mixed effective, with feedback focused on the use of time and processes. New to induction with this intervention was opportunities to complete HR and administrative processes that would otherwise require a separate visit to the district office, things such as: obtaining an employee badge, setting up a district electronic device, completing the mandatory urinalysis, or speaking with a representative

and making final selections for health benefits. Some novice teachers appreciated the time to do some of these processes, but others called them “not necessary” because they had already completed the processes, or they “would have rather had a break in the day instead of waiting in line to take a badge picture.” Additionally, there were other processes that were not as easily addressed during induction, such as sufficient time to work with the various software platforms required for teachers. The assumption is that adding opportunities for task-like processes at induction would be a stronger customer service experience. However, it is hard to determine whether these interventions were an improvement using just data from the interview protocols because many of the users, namely novice teachers and district supports, do not have cross-departmental experience with the previous processes. There is room with this intervention to make ongoing, real-time pivots to the processes using current novice teacher feedback to meet the needs that are not being addressed in their onboarding experiences to this point of induction.

The final category of induction was peer and organizational socialization, which was characterized as mixed effective. Experiences were positive in terms of feelings of isolation and uncertainty but might not be as valuable as induction processes because individuals go to different fall school site placements. When asked about opportunities to socialize with peers, novice teachers who participated in the intervention didn’t have significant memories of these strategies. One teacher recalled that it was “awkward when you don’t know anyone” despite having intentional opportunities to socialize in groups. Some district level supports appeared to be awkward, or not as effective, because it is “nice to meet new people, but they won’t be with them in the fall so there isn’t really any motivation to truly connect or get to know who you’re sitting with.” The intentional socialization opportunities at induction were at the district-level, so most peer socialization at this time will happen between teachers who will not be at the same

school site. As mentioned above, the broader organizational socialization work around district mission and vision, also a part of the professional learning intervention, was positively received, giving novice teachers an opportunity to increase early internalization of these ideals that will continue to present throughout their career. Longer term implications and researcher explanations for the data summarized in Appendix J are discussed in Chapter 6.

Appendix K shows the results of the interview protocol, organized in an explanatory effects matrix. The left side of the table is organized by user group, each of whom participated in the intervention in some capacity. Corresponding rows show user assessment of the intervention, short-term effects, and long-term effects. Table 6 summarizes the user assessment for each user group.

Table 6. *Summary Table of Explanatory Effects Matrix (Appendix K)*

<b>User Group</b>	<b>User Assessment</b>
Superintendent	No Data
Chief Talent	No Data
Management/Learning Officer	
Novice Teacher	Mixed Effective
Talent Management Supports	Effective
Teaching & Learning Supports	Effective

The Novice Teacher feedback as a user group was mixed effective. Novice teachers received service from all pieces of the intervention including services from central office supports and full participation in novice teacher onboarding processes. Novice teachers provided feedback such as “I felt more ready to be a teacher than I did before” and “I know things now that I didn’t before, but I also felt overwhelmed by it all.” This feedback was mostly in response to the professional learning components of induction, discussed above, and demonstrates that they appreciated the increased opportunities for professional learning but there was a lot of content condensed into a short amount of time. The hopeful long-term effects for novice teachers

of this intervention are as theorized in this study: through the development of efficient processes for administrative onboarding, opportunities for new hires to steep in the vision, core values, and norms of the District, and meaningful opportunities for new teachers to practice essential skills prior to day one in the classroom, the novice teacher onboarding team believed we would see earlier successes for new teachers (self-efficacy), and increased investment in a career (intent to stay), because they feel safe, supported valued, connected, and effective (service culture).

Talent management supports and teaching and learning supports were the categories representing district office administration who were directly involved in the intervention. These groups offered positive feedback about changes to their daily involvement in novice teacher onboarding processes. These groups also provided the most feedback for future areas of improvement, such as increased capacity of user groups and individualized support for novice teachers differentiated based on need, compared to a “one-stop-shop” for orientation. Talent Management support involvement was to supervise recruitment processes, support new hire cultivation, manage administrative onboarding processes, and contribute HR content for Induction. Talent management supports assessed the intervention as effective, calling out feedback such as “Some things take less time, but others take more now. I guess it evens out and is better” and “I am so glad we moved to electronic forms. There is so much less literal paperwork!” Talent Management supports previously spent significant time on new hire paperwork and onboarding, so transitioning to electronic forms frees this capacity for other areas in their work. However, that time was filled with additional pieces of the intervention, such as new hire cultivation. Teaching & learning supports came mostly from instructional coaches and novice teacher mentors. Their main involvement was during induction, leading novice teacher induction professional learning opportunities. Teaching and learning support staff made

comments such as “I had people tell me they learned more in that week than in a year of college classes” and “There is a lot of space to think about how we make an intentional plan for ongoing PD based on the induction programs”. This was the first year for instructional coaches to be involved in district-level novice teacher onboarding, so there is significant room for development such as designing professional learning content to meet the individual needs of novice teacher cohorts.

It is worth noting that the Superintendent and Chief Talent Management/Learning Officer are both executive leadership and therefore are missing assessment data due to limited involvement in the intervention beyond ultimate approval of strategies. The Chief Talent Management/Learning Officer was the ultimate approver of intervention strategies and content developed by the onboarding team, but they did not have any feedback after implementation. Longer term implications and researcher explanations for the data summarized in Appendix K are discussed in Chapter 6.

### **Summary of Findings**

Self-efficacy increased from before to after the intervention, which met study hypotheses, but the intervention resulted in no added effect for participants of the new onboarding program. Teacher intent to stay declined from before to after the intervention for study participants, which did not affirm study hypotheses which predicted that, due to participating in the onboarding intervention, this would increase. However, when examining the effects of the intervention on service culture, there was a positive effect of the intervention on service culture, even though the study sample as a whole declined in service culture over time.

Interviews with various user groups provided qualitative feedback for the intervention and will lend greater insight into the researcher’s insights and opinions about the study, including

the discussion, implications, limitations, and opportunities for future research, discussed in Chapter 6. The novice teacher onboarding team believed that teachers are more successful when their beliefs and practices are connected to a larger organizational vision and, beyond vision, certain skills for novice teachers are essential for their first 100 days of teaching. Through the development of efficient processes for administrative onboarding, opportunities for new hires to steep in organizational vision, core values, and district norms, and meaningful opportunities for new teachers to practice essential skills prior to day one in the classroom, the novice teacher onboarding team believed we would see earlier successes for new teachers (self-efficacy), and increased investment in a career (intent to stay), because they feel safe, supported valued, connected, and effective (service culture).

## **Chapter 6: Discussion, Implications, Limitations, and Opportunities of Future Research**

This chapter begins with a restatement of the purpose of the study and research questions. Following is a discussion of the findings, implications for practice, limitations, and opportunities for future research.

### **Restatement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to develop, implement, and evaluate an improvement to the employee onboarding program in a large, urban mid-western school district in Oklahoma. The study was framed by the following research questions:

1. Did new educator hires' perception of self-efficacy change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?
2. Did new educator hires' perception of intent to stay beyond their first year of teaching change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?
3. Did new educator hires' perception of service culture in the district change as a result of the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?
4. What are some remaining challenges associated with the implementation of the new educator onboarding process?

Using an improvement plan and theories of organizational socialization and uncertainty reduction theory, the large, urban, mid-western school district developed a program to onboard new employees in better, faster way in order to increase new hire satisfaction, effectiveness, and retention. At the conclusion of the novice teacher onboarding process, the researcher evaluated the effects of novice teachers' perception of self-efficacy and service culture as well as the effects on novice teachers' intent to stay in the organization beyond their first year.



## **Summary of Findings**

Below is a summary of the results of this study and a discussion of those results, as related to the intended outcomes of self-efficacy, intent to stay, and perception of service culture.

### ***Self-Efficacy***

The first research question focuses on self-efficacy, defined as a teacher's belief about their own teaching abilities and effectiveness (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Self-efficacy is important in motivation because it influences an individual's course of action, amount of perseverance in challenge, and amount of stress they experience (Pajaras, 2009; Pintrich, 2001). New teachers often experience low self-efficacy because they are unprepared for the demands of the profession and realities over time (Gokce, 2010; Sinclair, 2008) and they ultimately report difficulties in teaching, higher levels of job-related stress, and low levels of job satisfaction (Betoret, 2006; Klassen et al., 2009; Klassen & Chiu, 2010). A lack of preparedness leads to a lack of motivation and self-efficacy (Gokce, 2010). Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy, then, are more likely to experience success in their first years of teaching, higher levels of perseverance, greater resiliency, and decreased stress (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003; Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Woolfok & Hoy, 1990). Additionally, teacher's with a higher self-efficacy report a stronger commitment to teaching with less intention to quit the profession in the future (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Yilmaz, 2011). Therefore, focusing on teachers' self-efficacy, beginning at onboarding by providing them the tools they need to feel successful in their first 100 days, was an important measure for the improvement plan.

The survey questions for research question one measured novice teacher's knowledge of content as a short-term outcome, which is displayed by their ability to find resources and develop

different instructional strategies, resulting in early successes in their first 100 days of teaching. Study analysis showed there was a small but significant increase in self-efficacy for all participants during the study period, but this effect could not, unfortunately, be attributed to the onboarding program. Interview feedback from novice teachers reinforced the value of initial grounding in district vision and organizational socialization and increased opportunities to practice essential skills prior to day 1. Novice teachers made statements such as “I learned a lot” and “I felt more ready to be a teacher than I did before” and one instructional coach noted “I had people tell me they learned more in that week than in a year of college classes”. These results support the hypothesis that teacher induction improvements would increase novice teachers’ self-efficacy over time.

To better understand the increase, a regression test was run to test the regression of various coefficients for the dependent variable of Self-Efficacy. Black and Hispanic novice teachers experienced higher perception of self-efficacy than their white colleagues. Additionally, as novice teachers with doctoral degrees experienced higher self-efficacy than those with bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Similarly, as age increases in novice teachers their perception of self-efficacy also increases. Interestingly, DTC, a designated novice group with stronger interventions, did not show any appreciable change in self-efficacy as a result of the new onboarding process.

One of the most significant influences of self-efficacy is teacher preparedness. The research team recognized that traditional teacher training programs often do not adequately prepare novice teachers for their first year of teaching and full immersion in the profession (Curry & O’Brien, 2012; Lortie, 1975; Nourie, 2011; Onafowora, 2015; Smeaton & Waters, 2013; Stanulis, Fallona, & Pearson, 2002). Many teachers enter the profession feeling confident

about their knowledge of subject matter and content, but unprepared to handle the other elements that are a part of being an effective educator such as behavior management, scheduling, climate and culture, and independent human resource needs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Fantillilli & McDougall, 2009; Kidd, Brown, & Fitzallen, 2015; Pogodzinski, Youngs, & Frank, 2013; Smeaton & Waters, 2013; Zepeda & Mayers, 2011). Self-efficacy is also influenced by metacognitive knowledge, or an individual's ability to look at their own actions and adjust based on other conditions (Krathwohl, 2002). For teachers, this means opportunities to reflect on lessons, professional development strategies, and introspection into their practice (Bullough, 2012) and build their own abilities, adapt and change lesson plans, and consider alternative classroom management techniques based on their practice (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). This also includes career goal-setting, both short-term and long-term (Eyal & Roth, 2011). Therefore, embedding opportunities for novice teachers to practice essential skills prior to day 1 of teaching was a top priority for the Novice Teacher Onboarding team (see Appendix A). These pieces were included in the learning outcomes for novice teacher induction (see Appendix H), with a focus on outcomes such as "Teachers will develop four foundational strategies for supporting and maintaining classroom community and investment", "Teachers will understand how strategies for developing classroom community and investment work in conjunction with curricular resources to inform effective instruction and cycles of teaching and learning", and "Teachers will recognize challenges of teaching and understand strategies for managing difficult situations, including root causes, de-escalation strategies, self-care and awareness, and working with colleagues". Placing an emphasis on extended elements of teaching, beyond what is supported in pre-service training, likely led to higher feelings of self-efficacy in novice teachers, particularly from the qualitative data.

Beyond pedagogy, operational variables such as hiring, administrative paperwork, and district processes can influence a new hire's immediate perception of self-efficacy (Allen & Shanock, 2013; Kidd, Brown, & Fitzallen, 2015). The novice teacher onboarding team designed administrative and onboarding processes such as recruitment, cultivation, and HR pieces of induction with operational best practice in mind. Interview feedback showed that these components of onboarding were mixed effective to effective, particularly enhanced application platforms and opportunities to complete new hire paperwork. Novice teachers stated "doing everything online was really easy" which alludes de-creased stress around operational processes. Designing strategies for less time and separate events for completing administrative tasks leads to more opportunities for novice teachers to build essential skills, which increases preparedness and higher perceptions of self-efficacy (Nourie, 2011; Onafowora, 2015; Smeaton & Waters, 2013).

Another focus of the intervention was to create opportunities for new hires to steep in organizational vision, core values, and district norms to influence a novice teacher's self-efficacy and relationship to the organization. Organizational culture is developed over time, but begins at onboarding with communication and practice of the district and novice teacher's basic needs, expectations, and organizational resources. Placing a focus on organizational culture at the beginning of a novice teacher's onboarding experience creates a stronger sense of socialization and sense of belonging (Clark & Estes, 2008; Kramer, 2014; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The Novice Teacher Onboarding Experience embedded opportunities to steep in District mission, vision, and norms beginning at recruitment and carried through administrative processing, induction, and ongoing supports. An initial grounding in this vision creates a through-line for all of the novice teacher work and sets a tone for greater internalization of these norms long term.

Creating this through line, with consistent reinforcement, likely influenced novice teachers' perception of self-efficacy in their first 100 days.

### ***Intent to Stay***

Research question two addressed the issue of whether the intervention, the novice teacher training program, improved teachers' intent to stay working in the district beyond their first year of teaching. This could also be characterized as organizational commitment, the "degree that an individual internalizes organizational values and goals and feels a sense of loyalty to the workplace (Kushman, 1992, p. 6). Effective onboarding programs can positively influence a novice teacher's investment in their career through strong principal and peer support (Ware & Kitsantas, 2011) clear expectations for role and responsibilities, both initially and ongoing (Singh & Billingsley, 1998), promotion of shared vision and values (organizational fit) (Edwards & Cable, 2009), and high levels of teacher self-efficacy (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Yilmaz, 2011). There is also evidence that higher levels of teacher commitment are related to higher student achievement (Kushman, 1992; Riehl & Sipple, 1996; Rosenholtz, 1989).

According to literature, increasing opportunities during onboarding for employees to steep in organizational vision, core values, and district norms as well as academic, behavioral, and personal growth learning opportunities could impact a novice teacher's intent to stay in the teaching profession beyond their first few years. However, results from the Panorama Teacher Perception Survey showed that intent to stay in novice teachers decreased over time, forcing the conclusion that the intervention was not able to influence intent to stay in the district.

There could be several explanations for this unexpected outcome. One explanation is that the intervention strategies in the novice teacher onboarding experience were not designed intentionally enough to affect intent to stay. The intervention strategies most focused on intent to

stay during the period of study were: recruitment, pre-hire cultivation, and supportive processes during induction. Recruitment and pre-hire cultivation are the first processes of novice teacher onboarding support, taking place before an individual is hired. Strategies for effective recruitment include accessible information about the culture and goals of the organization (Doke, 2014; Milanowski et al., 2009; Sims, 2009; Vanden Bos, 2010), including site-level employees in the selection process, for example a panel of faculty in the interview process (Rogoff, 2014), and considering innovative ways to provide additional monetary and non-monetary benefits for new hires (Berry, 2004). Recruitment efforts in this midwestern, urban school district focused more on ease of application and hiring platforms and increased participation in open houses and job fairs, particularly on college campuses (Bielski, 2007). The focus on recruitment was more operational and provided shallower supports for novice teachers than other processes that occurred later in the intervention.

Along the same lines, the enhanced new hire cultivation was more about answering any needs that may arise between application/hiring and induction, but not necessarily an intentional focus on customer satisfaction or intent to stay. The interview data (see Appendix K) showed feedback about short-term effects of recruitment and cultivation strategies, such as decreased attrition between onboarding and day 1 of teaching, but that is anecdotal evidence from talent management supports and only affects short-term intent to stay, over a matter of weeks. There is not enough qualitative feedback to relate to the outcome of intent to stay beyond cultivation.

An additional potential cause of the negative outcome is the time between a novice teacher's experience in the onboarding program to the time they responded to the Panorama Teacher Perception Survey. The majority of the intervention took place in July/August 2019 and the Fall 2019 Teacher Perception Survey was administered in November 2019. This left only 3

months for the intervention to influence a novice teacher's sense of belonging and commitment to the district. There are also likely confounds outside the control of the study that may have influenced intent to stay. There is some literature to confirm this idea, including variables such as competencies of school leaders (Hanushek, 2005), budget constraints (Loeb & Myung, 2010), extended opportunities for engagement with peers (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), and various ongoing changes to work conditions (Koster, 2013; Vargas, 2013).

Finally, we know that providing opportunities for collaboration with colleagues during induction reduces a novice teacher's likelihood of leaving the profession in their first year of teaching (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). On the contrary, a lack of opportunity and poor relationships with colleagues has been cited as a source of burnout among teachers, further reinforcing the need to create the opportunities for novice teachers as early as possible (Billingsley et al., 2004; Jones et al., 2013; Mastropieri, 2001). Implementing onboarding practices of all kinds, with a focus on socialization initiatives, is the most effective strategy for employee retention (Allen & Shanock, 2013). The qualitative data in this study demonstrates that, while opportunities for organizational socialization were present at induction, those opportunities were limited in scope and depth and did not place a significant enough focus on peer socialization. Novice teachers had opportunities to interact with colleagues in small groups, but not necessarily or intentionally in groups with whom they will share a school site in the Fall (see Appendix K). To become "socialized" into an organization an individual must move from a place of uncertainty to certainty; a place of outsider to a place of belonging (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Wanberg, 2012). Given the intervention as designed, it could be difficult for a newcomer to move into a place of social belonging at this point without more intentional matching of peers who will share the same school site. Newcomers are essentially

“...strangers in a strange land who must learn how to think, behave, and interact with other members of the organization” (Saks & Gruman, 2012, p. 27). One missing piece of this intervention was intentional interaction with other members of the organization.

### ***Perception of Service Culture***

Research question three was about perception of service culture, defined as an individual’s perception that the support they receive contributes value to an individual or organization (Gronroos, 2017; Kaufman, n.d.). Service culture begins at onboarding, where central office teams support new hires by responding to and meeting their needs (Gronroos, 2007; Hauser & Paul, 2006; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Sturdy, 2000; Ueno, 2012), building stronger levels of collective trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014), and working to lessen any organizational uncertainty.

The hypothesis was that the interventions established in the novice teacher onboarding program would positively affect novice teacher perception of service culture, which is displayed by their experience with communication, empathy, and trust resulting in novice teachers feeling safe, supported, valued, and connected in the workplace. The results of this study somewhat support this hypothesis. The results of the Panorama Perception Survey showed a small decrease in perception of service culture during the study period, but a substantial positive effect of the intervention on novice teachers’ perceptions of service culture. Further, interview feedback suggests mixed effectiveness at most levels of the novice teacher experience (see Appendix J & K).

There could be several explanations for this outcome. Service culture involves everyday processes that contribute value to an individual or organization (Gronroos, 2017; Kaufman, n.d.), meaning that the support is ongoing and not specific to any moment in time. Similar to intent to



stay, a potential cause of the outcome is the time between a novice teacher's experience in the onboarding program to the time they responded to the Panorama Teacher Perception Survey, which was 3 months from Summer to Fall. This is significant time for external variables and micro-level interactions to influence a novice teacher's perception of service culture that was outside of the scope of the intervention and onboarding experience. As a customer moves further from the intervention, the more they are subject to outside influence. Confounding variables may be things such as ongoing experiences with employee attitudes and behavior beyond the induction (Ueno, 2012), State and Federal influence such as funding reductions, external supports from district office services who were not included in the development or vision behind the novice teacher onboarding, and varied experience with supportive school leadership (Grossman & Thompson, 2004; Kardos et al., 2001; Youngs, 2007). Additionally, even without the added variable of time, the questions on the Panorama Teacher Perception Survey about perception of service culture were not specific to novice teacher onboarding, so these confounding variables would likely be present in the results.

A positive perception of service culture exists when an organization provides a service that is directly meeting the customer's needs (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Service occurs at all levels of novice teacher onboarding, beginning at recruitment through induction. Moreso, strong induction programs are purposeful, highly interactive, consistent, and granular (Steer, 2013). Accordingly, the professional learning at induction included content based in best practice literature, such as defining expectations, roles, & responsibilities (Campbell, 2015; Derven, 2008; Nancheria, 2008) and curriculum, instructional frameworks, and district priorities (Kauffman et al., 2002; Valencia et al., 2006; Youngs et al., 2011). These opportunities, however, were designed to be universal rather than intended to meet the individualized needs of

each teacher or context. Some of the interview feedback (see Appendix J & K) suggests that pieces of the intervention improvements were not individualized enough, with statements such as “It was a lot of information and long days” (referring to induction) and “waste of time, people don’t want to be bothered” (referring to cultivation). This dissonance was likely most prevalent during the professional learning pieces of induction and does not demonstrate a balance between providing enough information for new hires to be effective without being overwhelmed with resources (Hacker, 2004; Koster, 2013).

One large component of service culture is collective trust between all school stakeholders, including district level supports (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Ford et al., 2020; Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). The novice teacher onboarding experience lacked intentional work around creating opportunities to build trust. High and low levels of trust are directly related to a participant’s willingness to be vulnerable (Ford, 2019; Kochanek, 2005). Novice teacher onboarding primarily prioritized low trust, and consequently low risk, activities such as added HR processes for getting your employee badge and low-lift PD content like strategies for lesson planning. Opportunities for organizational socialization and uncertainty reduction were present at induction, but those opportunities were limited in scope and depth and did not place a significant enough focus on peer socialization. Novice teachers had opportunities to interact with colleagues in small groups, but not necessarily or intentionally in groups that they will share a school site with in the Fall (see Appendix K). These pieces of onboarding prioritized job-related coursework to lessen newcomer uncertainty but may not necessarily meet the needs of the customer, which is a significant factor in perception of service culture (Schneider & Bowen, 1995).

## **Implications for Practice**

Creating assumptions and hypotheses about novice teacher onboarding is much easier than developing and implementing program improvements. The results of this study led to some lessons learned and guide some ongoing recommendations for future novice teacher onboarding practices.

The first recommendation for future practice is enhanced differentiation of professional learning to better meet the needs of novice teachers and specialized groups. As designed, the professional learning framework and components of induction were generalized for all novice teachers (see Appendix H). While based in best practice and district priorities, the learning outcomes, content modules, and method of delivery were the same for all participants. However, not all novice teachers were/are the same. In this urban, Midwestern district there were a wide variety of needs within the novice teachers each year. One example of varied needs was certification type. The District hires teachers who are traditionally certified, emergency certified, temporarily certified, apprentice status (which does not guarantee certification). More so, within these varied certification types are tracks within that type. For example, emergency certified teachers may be certified by the State or a different certifying body, like Teach for America or the District Teacher Corps, which means their teacher preparation beyond onboarding looks very different. Another differentiation would be individualized professional learning based on Fall placement, which could include content area, such as elementary education versus secondary fine arts, or academic setting, such as alternative versus traditional school sites. Interview feedback supports this recommendation, particularly from novice teachers and Instructional central office supports (see Appendix K).

The second recommendation is to continue to make ongoing adjustments and pivots to the novice teacher onboarding experience both during and after the process. The planning process to develop this initiative was robust, and implementation followed that plan relatively closely. However, there were times during implementation where some of the activities seemed better in theory than in action, but because so much time had been invested in the planning, the team saw those activities through. A more strategic way of thinking would be to have a more flexible approach to implementation and intervention, with mindsets and attitudes that lean toward pivoting strategies when real-time feedback suggests any improvements. Additionally, there should be structures in place to gather immediate feedback from novice teachers and district supports regarding their experience. Strong and effective novice teacher onboarding experiences include follow-up opportunities for new hires and candidates to solicit feedback on their experience with onboarding as well as their ongoing experiences in their organization (D'Aurizio, 2007; Odden & Kelly, 2008). In this intervention, there was no structure for immediate feedback from novice teachers, which could help to develop any adjustments of onboarding processes in the future.

The third recommendation for future practice is developing a partnership with district service culture initiatives and training. Parallel to the Novice Teacher Experience initiative was a different district priority, focused specifically on service culture. This initiative prioritized developing a service culture in the District; a culture of trust, communication, caring, and user-centric experiences. District office leaders and staff had opportunities to orient around a common service vision, service language, and high-quality specialized customer-focused training from external professionals. As these two initiatives were being developed simultaneously, they seemingly happened in siloes and there was little collaboration to leverage any overlap in goals

and intended outcomes. Moving forward, it makes sense for the service culture team to partner with talent management and teaching and learning supports to create a shared vision for novice teacher onboarding as it relates to service culture and adjust any interventions to better serve that vision. The goal of the novice teacher onboarding team was for new hires to feel safe, supported, valued, connected, and effective. This goal includes building a strong service culture beginning with the first step of onboarding, where central office teams should support new hires by responding to and meeting their needs, building stronger levels of collective trust, and working to lessen any organizational uncertainty.

The last and final recommendation is intentional and ongoing onboarding supports beyond induction. Beyond onboarding programs in the first few weeks of employment, there are numerous studies in support of mentorship programs for novice teachers, some of which consider extended mentorship to be a part of the onboarding process (Cawyer et al., 2002; Savage et al., 2004; Eisner, 2015; Jones et al., 2013; Sorcinelli, 1994). Mentorship programs are a form of organizational socialization because they create opportunities for new hires to build immediate relationships with a colleague, which decreases feelings of isolation (Bradt, 2010; Carver, 2003). While some mentorship and coaching supports exist in this urban, midwestern district, these supports are limited in scope and dependent on many variables such as certification type and site-level or regional needs. Another ongoing support could be building the capacity of school leaders to support novice teachers once they reach their school sites. School leaders who are actively involved, responsive to the needs of new hires, and focused on student learning promote high levels of teacher collaboration, often associated with key outcomes for novice teachers (Grossman & Thompson, 2004; Kardos et al., 2001; Youngs, 2007). This initiative did not extend beyond induction, which leaves a lot of opportunity for improvement at this phase.

## **Limitations**

As with most research, this study had several limitations. The first limitation is that this study is not generalizable. Since the study only examined one school district, specifically an urban, Midwestern district, it may not reflect other contexts such as rural or suburban districts. This urban, Midwestern district is large, occupying 173 square miles and consisting of 88 school sites. The size itself could be considered a limitation, since typically it is more challenging to implement district-wide programs in larger districts due to limited resources (people, time, and money), as well as increased school challenges such as chronic absenteeism, social emotional skills, and higher levels of disability.

The next limitation is, ultimately, what is “onboarding”? This dissertation is built on the following definition of onboarding: “formal and informal practices, programs, and policies enacted or engaged in by an organization or its agents to facilitate newcomer adjustment” (Klein & Polin, 2012, p. 268). However, definitions of onboarding for research, policy, and practice are widely varied and include multiple approaches in business and education. Some research sees onboarding as beginning with recruitment and extending through a new hires’ first year, while others see onboarding as just the administrative HR processes to “bring on” a new hire (Bauer, 2010; Bauer & Erdogan, 2011; Campbell, 2015; Doke, 2014; Frear, 2007; McNeill, 2012). The resulting limitation for this study is that, depending on your field of study, the definition of onboarding guiding this research may not be fully representative of all processes.

Another significant limitation of this study is that there was some inconsistency in data availability over time for the intended and measured outcomes of intent to stay, self-efficacy, and perception of service culture. All quantitative outcomes in this study were measured using the Panorama Teacher Perception Survey. The Teacher Perception Survey, developed by Panorama,

was first introduced to The District in 2017 and is currently administered to all teachers twice a year, in the Fall and Spring semesters. However, unknown to the research team, the Panorama Teacher Perception Survey was not necessarily consistent each semester and, intent to stay, for example was not present on the survey for all administrations. Additionally, the survey was not administered in 2020 due to the international COVID-19 pandemic.

A final limitation of this study was the timeframe to develop, launch, execute, and measure outcomes for the novice teacher onboarding experience. In January 2018, the district executive team put into action a collaborative strategy to conquer five bold initiatives within 24 months. This launch was based on a new strategic plan, developed in 2015 with input from administrators, staff, community members, teachers, families, and students. The onboarding initiative was given one fiscal year from point of design to point of evaluation. Due to the desire for the district to tackle these priorities quickly, the time truly needed to develop a robust onboarding program was underestimated. Building trust, self-efficacy, and connectedness to a district relies on sustained, positive interactions over time (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011) and intentional and significant strategies for these outcomes. However, due to the condensed timeline for development and implementation, it may not have been realistic to expect positive outcomes in just one year. This suggests an opportunity for future research, discussed below.

### **Opportunities for Future Research**

As was a limitation, this study only examined one school district, specifically an urban, midwestern district, so it may not reflect another context like rural or suburban. Conducting a replication study would be beneficial, especially in different educational contexts. Within that replication study I would recommend multiple and consistent points of data collection,

particularly including data collection at the point immediately following participation in novice teacher onboarding.

Another recommendation for future research is increasing the timeframe of the study, designing it as a longitudinal, multi-year study. Extending the timeframe would allow the support teams to make pivots and adjustments to the program based on feedback to better meet the needs of teachers and intended outcomes. Building perception of service culture, higher levels of self-efficacy, and increasing intent to stay takes time and future studies should consider building multiple years of time into their research.

I also recommend building curated data sources to better meet the needs of the study. This could mean including specially written items on a pre-existing survey or creating new measurements altogether. Drawing upon existing literature to develop survey and interview items that specifically address novice teacher experience with all components of onboarding would help to yield results that are more aligned to the intervention and intended outcomes. Using one source of quantitative data and one source of qualitative data is satisfactory, but enhanced design of the quantitative data would be preferred.

A final opportunity would be to expand the study to include different outcomes. If studies about novice teacher onboarding occur over multiple years and in varied educational contexts, then there would be space to increase the research to study multiple variables that are also related to the success of novice teachers, such as teacher levels of trust, perception of fit and connectedness to the district, or novice teacher psychological needs. Doing so would add to the thin, but growing, body of literature about novice teacher onboarding in K-12 education.



## **Conclusion**

One of the first opportunities that organizations have to create a space for individuals to acclimate to the organizational context and work environment is through employee onboarding. Creating strong employee onboarding, grounded in literature and best practice, helps new hires adjust to the social, operational, and performance aspects of their roles while building the individual tools necessary to contribute to larger organizational goals (Bauer, 2010), leading to an increase in organizational socialization and reduction in uncertainty for program participants.

The purpose of this study was to develop, implement, and evaluate an improvement to the employee onboarding program in a large, urban mid-western school district in Oklahoma. The novice teacher onboarding team believed that teachers would be more successful when their beliefs and practices were connected to a larger organizational vision and, beyond vision, certain skills for novice teachers were essential for their first 100 days of teaching. Through the development of efficient processes for administrative onboarding, opportunities for new hires to steep in organizational vision, core values, and district norms, and meaningful opportunities for new teachers to practice essential skills prior to day one in the classroom, we should see earlier successes for new teachers (self-efficacy), and increased investment in a career (intent to stay), because they feel safe, supported valued, connected, and effective (service culture).

When people become a part of an organization, they want to feel like they belong; they want to feel like they fit. This is especially true for novice teachers in their first years in the classroom. The interventions in this study failed to improve intent to stay and self-efficacy over the study period, with some evidence of improvement in service culture. Despite these mixed results, the District has undergone significant transformation with their novice teacher onboarding experience, taking important steps toward building a sense of organizational

belonging in novice teachers. Moving forward, there is increased room to draw upon this study to develop more strategic interventions to meet the needs of novice teachers to reinforce their sense of belonging in this urban, Midwestern school district.

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## Appendix A: Design Brief

<p><b>Project Description</b> <i>What is the problem or opportunity? (Difference between what we have and what we want.)</i> <i>What is the hypothesis to be tested?</i> <i>Describe the project in a few sentences, as you would in an elevator pitch.</i></p>	<p><b>Problem Statement:</b> Despite a strong overall human capital team and recent improvement, TPS faces significant issues with workforce instability and turnover, particularly in the district’s neediest schools and novice teacher attrition.</p> <p>Many teachers leave the profession in their first 5 years of teaching. Many teachers enter the profession feeling confident about their knowledge of subject matter and content, but unprepared to handle the other elements that are a part of being an effective educator such as: behavior management, scheduling, climate and culture, and individual human resource needs.</p> <p><b>Onboarding Definition:</b> Onboarding is a broad process, defined in terms of “... formal and informal practices, programs, and policies enacted or engaged in by an organization or its agents to facilitate newcomer adjustment” (Klein &amp; Polin, 2012, p. 268).</p> <p><b>Program Vision:</b> We will develop and retain masterful teachers who catalyze college and career ready students. We will accomplish this by providing world-class hiring, onboarding, and ongoing coaching and professional development aligned to and supported by the TPS Way for Teaching &amp; learning.</p> <p><b>Project Goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Design and implement a new teacher orientation- a formal, in-person introduction to TPS that incorporates activities and programming centered around who we are as a district and what it means to be an educator here, and includes opportunities for relevant systems access and technical support related to onboarding.</li><li>• Design and implement a new hire cultivation process- activities that maintain meaningful connections to reinforce novice teacher grounding in the “TPS Way” and provide technical support and associated preparation from end of orientation through induction.</li><li>• Design and implement a week-long pre-service teacher induction—intensive foundational training days designed to</li></ul>
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	<p>prepare teachers to develop supportive classroom cultures, and to deliver rigorous instruction on day one of school</p> <p><b>Hypothesis:</b> With an improved Novice Teacher Experience, which includes Onboarding and Induction, we will ensure new teachers have a foundation to realize early successes in the classroom while building their sense of belonging.</p>
<p><b>Scope</b> <i>What is within scope of the project and what is outside of it?</i></p>	<p>Our role in Talent Management is to attract, develop, and retain a workforce that can build on progress and bring the Vision for Learning to life in classrooms every day.</p> <p><b>In scope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Orientation: 1<sup>st</sup> formal, in-person introduction to TPS with activities and programming around who we are as a district, what it means to be an educator here and how we work, incorporating relevant systems access (possibly paired with/connected to new-hire processing activities).</li> <li>● New hire cultivation: activities that maintain meaningful connections to reinforce novice teacher grounding in TPS Way and associated preparation from end of orientation through induction.</li> <li>● Induction: intensive foundational training days to prepare teachers to deliver rigorous instruction on day one of school</li> </ul> <p><b>Out of Scope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Application &amp; Hiring</li> <li>● Certification Support</li> <li>● Ongoing Instructional Coaching/Mentors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Constraints</b> <i>What constraints do you need to work within?</i> <i>What requirements must a successful solution meet?</i></p>	<p><b>Constraints</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited resources</li> <li>● Limited funding</li> <li>● Competing operational priorities</li> </ul> <p><b>Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shifts in district office mindsets</li> <li>● Increased commitment to core values</li> <li>● Increased commitment to streamlining processes</li> <li>● Develop capacity to facilitate change</li> <li>● Teacher first vs. process first</li> </ul>

<p><b>Target Users</b>  <i>Who are you designing for?</i>  <i>Try to be as specific as possible.</i>  <i>Whom do you need to understand?</i>  <i>Why are they important?</i></p>	<p><b>Primary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Novice Teachers</li> <li>● District Office support staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Principals</li> <li>● Site-level support staff</li> <li>● District Partners (like TFA)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exploration Questions</b>  <i>What do you know (and can prove) about this opportunity/problem?</i>  <i>What do you believe (but can't prove)?</i>  <i>What do you doubt?</i>  <i>What do you suspect are outliers or "red herrings" (conflicting or misleading "facts" that are not relevant)?</i>  <i>What do we know about what has been done before?</i>  <i>Who has been involved?</i>  <i>What results did they generate?</i>  <i>What do we need to know about why this worked or didn't?</i></p>	<p><b>Know:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overall attrition rates for teachers rose from 16% to 22% from SY 15-16 to SY16-17 (TPS Talent Management Data)</li> <li>● Novice teacher retention fell from 76.8% in SY1516 to 67.7% in SY1617 (TPS Talent Management Data)</li> <li>● 58 % of new hire teachers are novices with one year or less experience in the classroom (TPS Talent Management Data)</li> <li>● 35% of new hire teachers have emergency certification (TPS Talent Management Data)</li> <li>● The most frequently cited reason for choosing to apply to TPS were open positions, desire to work with diverse populations, and belief in TPS mission (2017 Teacher Applicant Survey)</li> <li>● New hires report that they commit to TPS because of positive interactions with school leadership and colleagues (2017 Teacher Perception Survey)</li> <li>● The average number of days teachers spend in the "onboarding" pipeline on Applitrack is 13</li> <li>● The average number of days between a teacher being recommended to hire and completing their in-person onboarding requirements is 10</li> <li>● 43 new hire teachers took longer than 14 calendar days between being recommended to hire and completing their in-person onboarding requirements</li> <li>● On average each year, high poverty public schools, especially those in urban areas, lose 20% of their faculty (Ingersoll, 2004)</li> <li>● Many schools serving the neediest children lose over half of their teaching staff every five years</li> </ul>

(Allensworth, et al.,2009)

**Believe:**

- Teachers are more successful when their beliefs and practices are connected to a larger organizational vision
- Certain knowledge and skills are critical to new teacher success on Day 1
- Given the tools and capacity, district office staff are excited about this initiative

**Doubt:**

- The ability to have a *seamless* educator experience from pre-hire to post-hire

**Suspect:**

- Some district office staff will initially resist change
- Current lack of accountability- siloed teams think they don't have a problem, but collectively there is a problem

**What has been done before?:**

- Novice teachers are “onboarded” by TM staff 1:1 in person, which mostly consists of going over necessary human capital paperwork, badge access, and e-mail setup.
- Novice teachers participated in a 3 day Induction event prior to the start of school. Induction content included 1 day of NNN training, 1.5 days of content/curriculum training, and ½ day of SEL focused content
- Novice teachers were “cultivated” beginning in July by a random group of T&L staff, who may or may not have ultimately been the person to provide ongoing support.
- Pass-off to Novice teacher support team is not consistent outside of Spring/Summer hiring season.

**Who has been involved?:**

- Talent Management Support Staff
- Teaching & Learning Support Staff
- Site-Level Administration

**What results did they generate?:**

- No measurable results generated from these specific activities.
- Anecdotal teacher interview feedback sometimes provided.

**What do we know about why this worked or didn't?:**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not much at this time, but we do have access to Teacher Perception Data to take a closer look</li> </ul>
<p><b>Expected Outcomes</b>  <i>What outcomes would you like to see?</i>  <i>(Helps to bound scope.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Earlier success for new teachers (efficacy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ % of novice teachers exhibiting baseline instructional readiness at end of first 9 weeks</li> <li>○ % of novice teachers with growth mindset</li> <li>○ % apprentices certified in first year</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Teacher investment in a career (intent to stay) because they feel safe, supported, valued, connected, and effective (service culture) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ % Novice Teachers indicating plans to remain at TPS</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Success Metrics</b>  <i>How will you measure success?</i>  <i>(Helps to bound scope.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Panorama Teacher Perception Survey</li> <li>● Pulse Check Survey (quarterly)</li> <li>● Exit Survey Data</li> <li>● Inside TPS Analytics</li> <li>● Applitrack Analytics</li> <li>● Other surveys as defined and approved</li> <li>● Network support feedback channels</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: People Plan

### RAPID by Phase

	<b>1) Outcomes by Year</b>	<b>2) Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>3) Supports Audit</b>	<b>4) Supports Needed</b>	<b>5) Development Strategy</b>	<b>6) Priorities</b>
<b>Recommended</b>	Project Lead	Project Lead	Project Lead	Project Lead	Project Lead	Project Lead
<b>Agree</b>	Teaching & Learning, Professional Learning, Talent Management, ILDs	Teaching & Learning, Professional Learning, Talent Management, ILDs	Teaching & Learning, Professional Learning, Talent Management, ILDs	Teaching & Learning, Professional Learning, Talent Management, ILDs	Teaching & Learning, Professional Learning, Talent Management, ILDs	Teaching & Learning, Professional Learning, Talent Management, ILDs
<b>Perform</b>	Teaching & Learning, Talent Management, Selected Instructional Mentors	Selected Coordinators	Teaching & Learning, Talent Management, Selected Coordinators	Teaching & Learning, Talent Management, Selected Coordinators	Teaching & Learning, Talent Management, Selected Coordinators	Teaching & Learning, Talent Management, Selected Coordinators
<b>Input</b>	Instructional Mentors, Coordinators, TNTP	Instructional Mentors, Coordinators, School Leaders, Teaching & Learning, Talent Management, TNTP	Instructional Mentors, Coordinators, School Leaders, Teaching & Learning, Talent Management,	Instructional Mentors, Coordinators, School Leaders, Teaching & Learning, Talent Management,	Instructional Mentors, Coordinators, School Leaders, Teaching & Learning, Talent Management, TNTP, NTE Team	Instructional Mentors, Coordinators, School Leaders, Teaching & Learning, Talent Management,

			TNTP, NTE Team	TNTP, NTE Team		TNTP, NTE Team
<b>Decide</b>	Chief Talent Management Officer; Chief Learning Officer	Chief Talent Management Officer; Chief Learning Officer	Chief Talent Management Officer; Chief Learning Officer	Chief Talent Management Officer; Chief Learning Officer	Chief Talent Management Officer; Chief Learning Officer	Chief Talent Management Officer; Chief Learning Officer

**Governance Structure**

<b>Team Structure</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Team Members</b>	<b>Meeting Facilitator</b>	<b>Meeting Cadence</b>
Executive Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify and guide project vision</li> <li>• Provide critical feedback on / approve deliverables</li> <li>• Flag key organizational risks / dependencies</li> <li>• Remove barriers</li> <li>• Make key decisions in timely manner</li> <li>• Communicate importance of work across organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Talent Management Officer</li> <li>• Chief Learning Officer</li> <li>• Talent Management Executives</li> <li>• Teaching &amp; Learning Executives</li> <li>• TNTP</li> </ul>	Project Lead	Monthly

Core Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage to project plan</li> <li>• Complete deliverables on time and with high quality</li> <li>• Make day-to-day decisions to move project forward</li> <li>• Identify and mitigate risks and dependencies</li> <li>• Engage key stakeholders throughout the process as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Lead</li> <li>• Talent Management Managers</li> <li>• Teaching &amp; Learning Managers</li> <li>• Selected Coordinators</li> <li>• Selected IMs</li> </ul>	Project Lead	Weekly
Novice Teacher Experience Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help communicate key project messages to other stakeholders</li> <li>• Join work as contributors and consultants as needed</li> <li>• Help pressure test and provide input on deliverables</li> </ul>	Cross-functional NTE Team (Talent, T&L, Finance, etc.)	Project Lead	Bi-Monthly



## Appendix C: Program Focus

### OUR DESTINATION EXCELLENCE GOAL OF FOCUS

Our mission is to inspire and prepare every student to love learning, achieve ambitious goals, and make positive contributions to our world.

*To accomplish this mission, we developed a five-part strategy:*

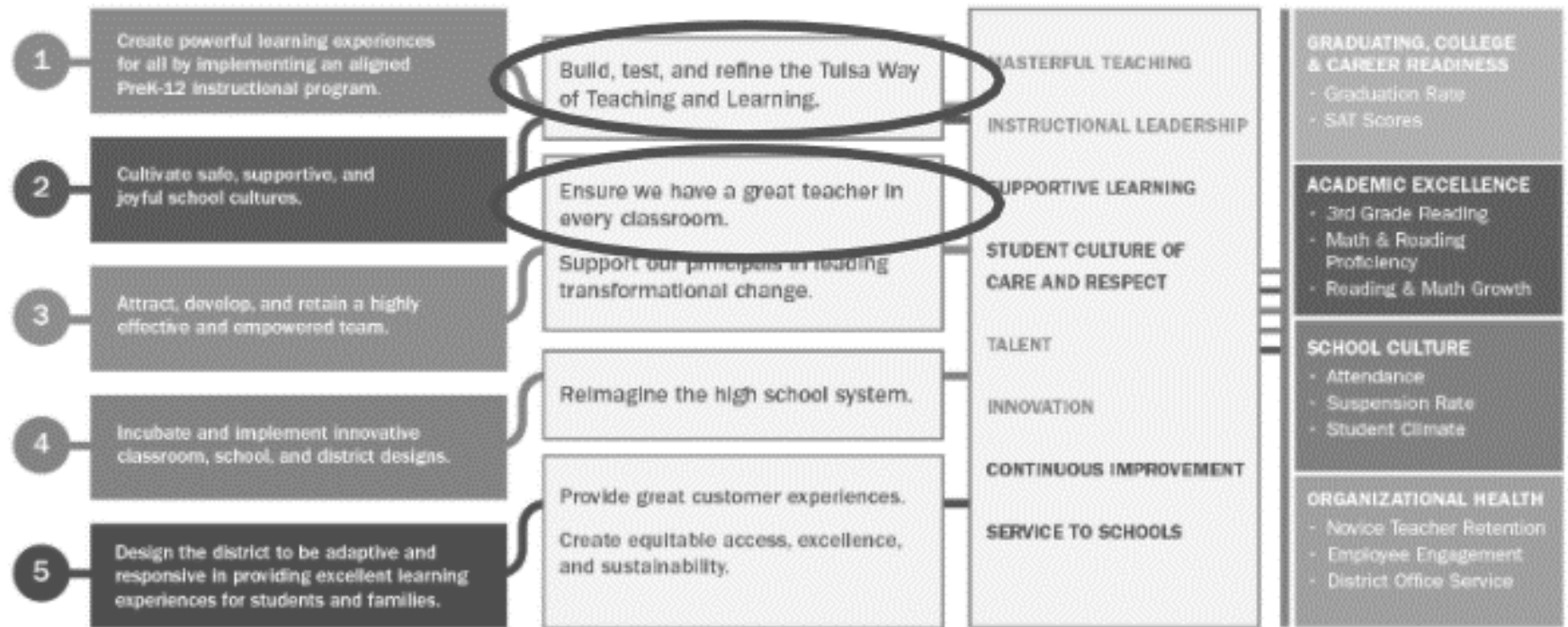


**STRATEGIES**















**SY18/19 PRIORITIES**

**DESTINATION EXCELLENCE GOALS**

**OUTCOMES**



# Novice Teacher Experience – Where We’re Going

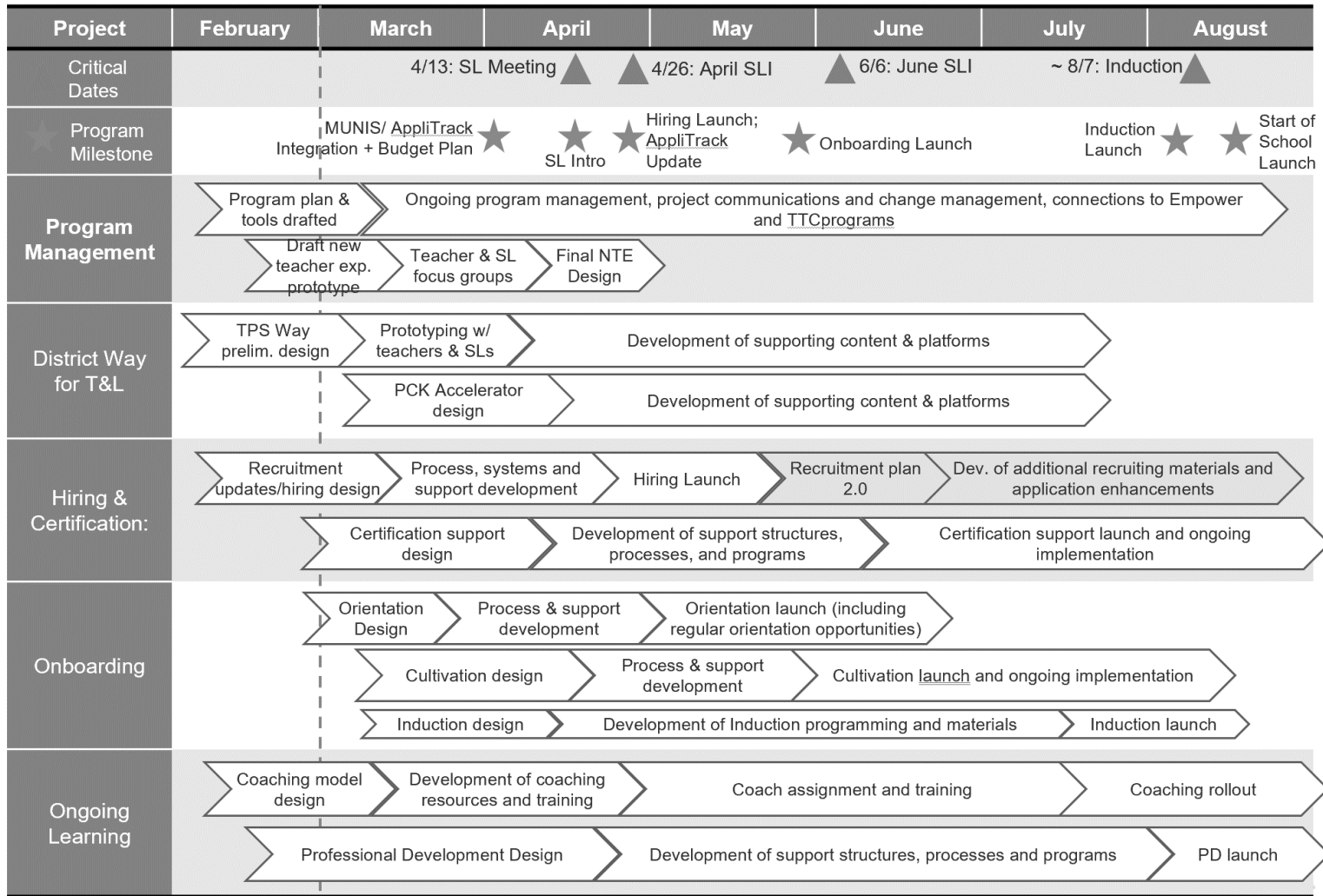
	<b>Tulsa Way for Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	<b>Hiring &amp; Certification</b>	<b>Onboarding</b>	<b>Ongoing Learning</b>
<b>Where are we going?</b>	We will show current and prospective educators what great teaching and learning in Tulsa looks like.	We will increase the number, quality and diversity of teacher applicants and optimize hiring decisions.	We will ensure new teachers have a foundation to realize early successes in the classroom while building their sense of belonging.	We will provide novice teachers with targeted coaching and powerful professional learning to ensure the right supports arrive at the right times.
<b>'18-19 Focus Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Introduction of Tulsa Way 1.0 website</li> <li> Year-long iterative design &amp; learning process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Applicant experience improvement</li> <li> TM Bank</li> <li> Certification supports</li> <li> Enhanced Pre-hire Cultivation Approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Orientation</li> <li> Enhanced Post-hire Cultivation Approach</li> <li> Induction Reloaded</li> <li> Tulsa Teacher Corps</li> <li> Planning Accelerator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Targeted Coaching for all Novice Teachers</li> <li> Novice Teacher Arc of Professional Learning</li> </ul>
<b>Measures of Success in '18-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % NTs satisfied with Tulsa experience</li> <li>• % NTs with growth mindset</li> <li>• % NTs indicating desire to build career in Tulsa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # applications</li> <li>• % NTs hired prior to Induction</li> <li>• % apprentice NTs certified in year 1</li> <li>• NT retention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % NTs exhibiting baseline instructional readiness at end of first 9 weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NT PD attendance</li> <li>• % NTs satisfied with supports available</li> <li>• % NT classrooms exhibiting Rigor, Relevance, Relationships</li> </ul>

## **Appendix D: Interview Protocol Questions**

1. What was your onboarding process like? Describe your experience.
2. Tell me about how you got adjusted. Where did you have help? Where did you not have help?
3. What were the most challenging parts of your first days teaching?
4. What were some easy, enjoyable aspects?
5. How were you introduced to the mission, core values, and norms of the District?
6. What would you describe as “basic needs” that a new teacher would need prior to day 1 of teaching? Did you receive these things during your onboarding?
7. Did you have opportunities to practice new skills before day 1 of teaching?
8. Are there things that you needed before beginning teaching that you did not receive?
9. Did you have opportunities to build relationships with colleagues during your onboarding?  
Describe these opportunities.
10. Were there any operational processes that you found frustrating?
11. Do you have an experience that stands out from onboarding to share?
12. Do you have an experience from your first days of teaching that you would consider a “turning point”? What were the contributing factors during that time?
13. Do you plan to continue teaching in this district? If yes, why? If not, why not?

## Appendix E: Novice Teacher Experience Program Roadmap

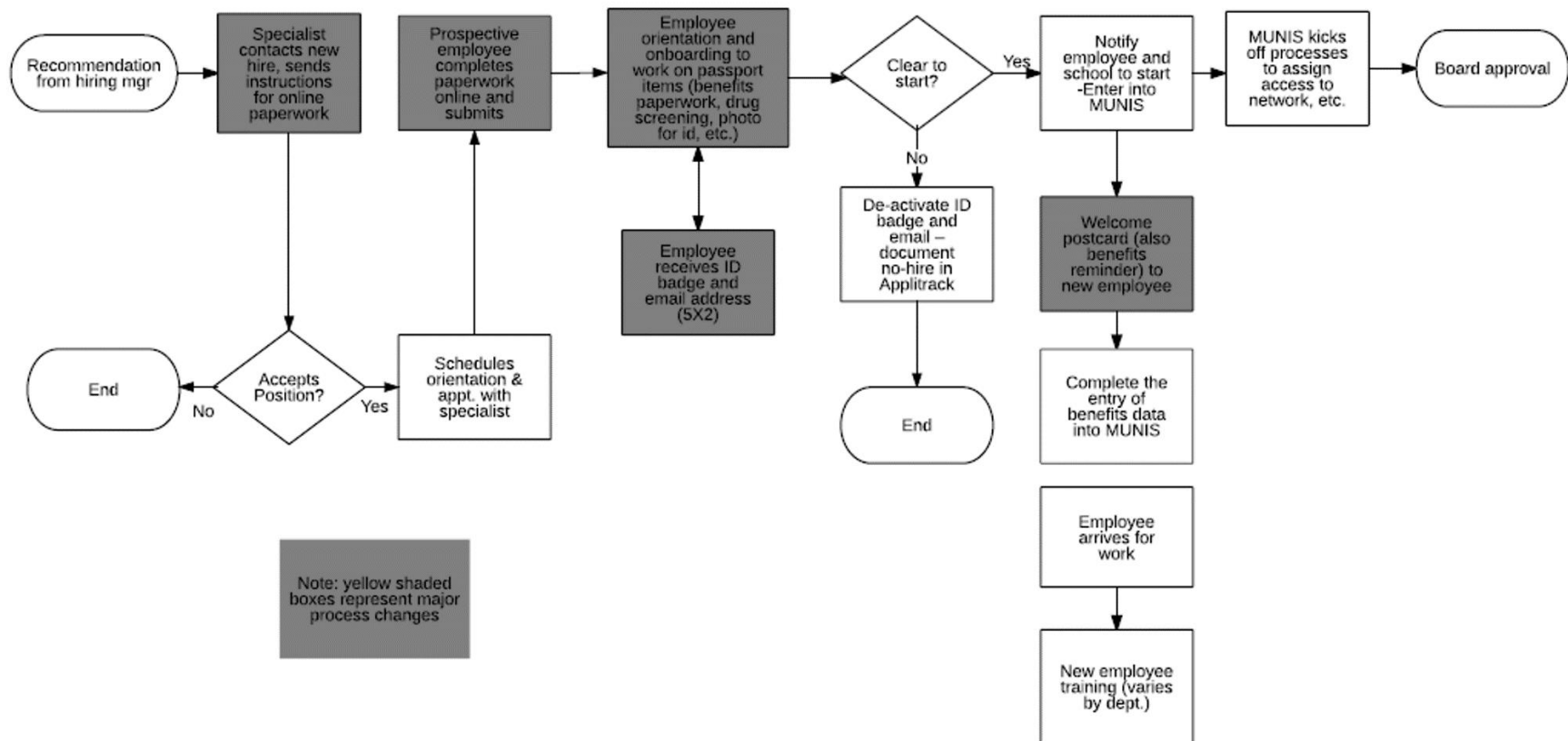
# Novice Teacher Experience Program Roadmap





# Future State

## Novice Teacher Onboarding Process



## Appendix F: Novice Teacher Experience Program Performance Scorecard

### Novice Teacher Experience Program Performance Scorecard

Essential Question	Primary Project Owner(s)	Success Measure	Data Source	Frequency Reviewed
<b>Do NTs want to build a career at TPS?</b>	Hiring, Onboarding	% NTs indicating plans to remain at TPS	Panorama and Pulse Check survey (quarterly) - add / change question: "At this point in time, how likely are you to remain at TPS?"	Semi-annual (Oct/Nov and April/May)
	All Owners	NT Net Promoter Score	Panorama and Pulse Check survey (quarterly) - "I would recommend working at Tulsa Public Schools to my friends and/or family."	Semi-annual
<b>Do NTs have the right supports to be successful?</b>	Ongoing Learning	% 1st and 2nd year Ts attending Saturday PD	PD facilitators	Quarterly
		% 1st and 2nd year Ts visited by a coach weekly	T&L team	Quarterly
		% 1st and 2nd year Ts satisfied with coaching and PD supports available	Adjusted questions to Panorama + Pulse Check Questions: -How often do you receive feedback on your teaching from your Instructional Mentor? -How often do you apply feedback on your teaching from your Instructional Mentor?	Quarterly
<b>Have NTs internalized the Tulsa Way?</b>	Tulsa Way for T&L, Ongoing Learning	Avg. # weekly NT visitors to Tulsa Way site	InsideTPS analytics	Quarterly
		% NTs with growth mindset	-How possible do you think it is for your students to change their intelligence? -To what extent can teachers increase how much their most difficult students learn from them? -How easily can teachers change their teaching style to match the needs of a particular class? -Do you believe feedback on teaching is helpful in improving instruction? (to be added to Panorama)	Quarterly
		% high perception of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)	-How well equipped are you to teach high quality content to a diverse group of students? (to be added to Panorama) -To what extent can teachers improve their implementation of different teaching strategies? (Panorama and Quarterly Pulse Check)	Semi-annual
		% 1st and 2nd year Ts meeting growth targets based on coaching evaluations	Observe random sampling of classrooms; consider having independent evaluator (someone other than direct coach)	Quarterly
<b>Do NTs stay at TPS?</b>	All Owners	NT retention by race/ethnicity	Data team to take lead on working to define metric in May (with TFA and without TFA)	Quarterly
<b>Are NTs growing ALL students?</b>	Ongoing Learning	% students in NT classrooms exceeding growth goals	Fall, Winter, and Spring MAP Growth	Semi-annual
<b>Are we attracting more high quality, diverse teacher candidates?</b>	Hiring	Ratio of applicants per vacancy	AppliTrack	Annual
		% minority candidates	AppliTrack	Annual
		% apprentices certified in first year	AppliTrack	Annual

### Appendix G: Onboarding Milestone Update

Key Milestones	Related Activities and Deliverables	Target Comp. Dates	Status	Comments
<b>Application &amp; Hiring</b>				
Category Deep Dive	Recruiting, Interview, Selection (Tal. Mgmt. Bank)	6/30	Not Started	
	Communication Strategy with Stakeholders	6/25	Not Started	
	Applitrack and Munis	6/30	Not Started	
	Website and District Image	11/30	Not Started	
	Administrative Onboarding Process	7/31	Not Started	
	Teacher Profile and Composition	6/30	Not Started	
<b>Orientation</b>				
Initial orientation design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine orientation outcomes</li> <li>• Identify internal and external partnerships and orientation facilitators</li> <li>• Identify funding/budget needs</li> <li>• Establish orientation cadence throughout summer and into the school year</li> </ul>	4/13	Not Started	



Arc of Learning Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design PL Framework</li> <li>• Sequence Arc of Learning for content/pedagogy PL</li> <li>• Sequence Arc of Learning for technical/compliance</li> </ul>	4/13	Not Started	
Development of orientation programming and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design orientation training plan and accompanying resources/materials</li> <li>• Finalize dates, times, locations</li> <li>• Marketing and communication</li> <li>• Train team of orientation facilitators</li> </ul>	5/31	Not Started	
Orientation launch		6/1	Not Started	
<b>Cultivation</b>				
Cultivation design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine cultivation outcomes</li> <li>• Identify cultivation team</li> <li>• Identify funding/budget needs</li> </ul>	4/30	Not Started	
Cultivation process development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish communication process with Talent Management</li> <li>• Develop cultivation processes/handbook</li> <li>• Train Cultivation Team</li> </ul>	5/31	Not Started	
Cultivation launch		6/1	Not Started	
<b>Induction</b>				
Initial induction design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine induction outcomes</li> <li>• Identify internal and external partnerships and induction facilitators</li> <li>• Identify funding/budget needs</li> </ul>	4/30	Not Started	

Development of induction programming and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design induction training plan and accompanying resources/materials</li> <li>• Finalize dates, times, locations</li> <li>• Marketing and communication</li> <li>• Train team of induction facilitators</li> <li>• Establish plan for ongoing induction opportunities throughout the school year</li> </ul>	8/3	Not Started	
Induction launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>	8/6	Not Started	

## Appendix H: Learning Outcomes for Novice Teacher Induction

Day 1 Outcomes		Day 2 Outcomes	Aug 7	Day 3 Outcomes	Aug 8	Day 4 Outcomes	Aug 9	Day 5 Outcomes	Aug 10
Teachers will develop strategies for creating a classroom community and investment plan: building relationships; rituals, routines, and procedures; 3 key signature SEL strategies		Teachers will develop four foundational strategies for supporting and maintaining classroom community and investment.		Teachers will build understanding of TPS Learning Expectations and the Curricular resources that support the expectations.		Teachers will understand how strategies for developing classroom community and investment work in conjunction with curricular resources to inform effective instruction and cycles of teaching and learning		Teachers will recognize challenges of teaching and understand strategies for managing difficult situations, including root causes, de-escalation strategies, self-care and awareness, and working with colleagues.	
Potential Content	TNTP Modules	Potential Content	TNTP Modules	Potential Content	TNTP Modules	Potential Content	TNTP Modules	Potential Content	TNTP Modules
Student SEL Strategies (3 Key Signature Practices)		No Nonsense Nurturing (CT3 Led)		Vision for Excellent Instruction		Content/Curriculum sessions continued (AM)		Diverse learner needs	
Learning Partnerships 1: Warm Demanders and No-Nonsense Nurturer (CRT and the Brain, NNN)				Using TPS Curricular resources		TPS Learning Expectations (High Level Introduction)		Resp to Challenging Behavior 1: Understanding Student Behavior in the Context of Student Development	
Learning Partnerships 2: Neuroscience of Connection				Eureka Math		Culturally Responsive Teaching		Resp to Challenging Behavior 2: Stop, Observe, Detach, Awaken (CRT and the Brain)	
Norms & Routines 1: Strong Start (TLaC)				CKLA		Using the Accelerator		Habits for success	
Norms and Routines 2: Engineer Efficiency (TLaC)				Amplify				Know Yourself Part 1: Emotional Self-Awareness	

		Secondary Curricular Resources		Know Yourself Part 2: Emotional Self-Management
Would like to facilitate in cohort groups of 2-3 cohorts facilitated by their supporting IMs.	Facilitated in 4 grade level clustered sessions: PK-3, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12	*Certification session for emergency and alternatively certified teachers		Would like to facilitate in cohort groups of 2-3 cohorts facilitated by their supporting IMs.
		Self-Contained Autism, Multiple Disabilities and Intellectual Disabilities teachers will participate in specific planning for their individual classrooms day 3 and 4, mild-moderate/resource teachers will participate in content sessions with regular ed teacher	Self-Contained Autism, Multiple Disabilities and Intellectual Disabilities teachers will participate in specific planning for their individual classrooms day 3 and 4, mild-moderate/resource teachers will participate in content sessions with regular ed teacher	
		ELD teachers will be in a differentiated groups	ELD teachers will be in a differentiated groups	
		Differentiated Groups:	Differentiated Groups:	
		Counselors/Social Services	Counselors/Social Services	
		World Languages/Dual Language	World Languages/Dual Language	
		Fine Arts	Fine Arts	
		School Psychs	School Psychs	
		Read180/S44	Read180/S44	
		GT	GT	
		Career Tech/Advanced Learning	Career Tech/Advanced Learning	

## Content to move to Ongoing Learning Arc

Identify High Leverage Concepts by Grade and Subject Area

Building Content Across Lessons

Identify Confusion with Content

Dependent and Independent Learner

Students do the Thinking

"Learning Happens in the Struggle"

How to communicate with parents/families - How to use language line, etc.

Get Better Faster Strategies for Rigor

Classroom pacing and opportunities for kids to do the heavy lift

Intellectual Prep - planning, internalizing, annotating lesson plans

Adult SEL Strategies

Identity - Who am I? Who are my students? How does who I am impact my students?

History of Tulsa - neighborhood you serve

Implicit bias in education - role on outcomes

Tiered behavior management techniques

Behavior Response Plan

De-escalation plans/MANDT

How to use formative assessment to drive daily instruction

MAP

<b>Induction Week 1</b>		
<b>FA1: Ensuring students feel valued, respected, and safe to activate their brains for learning</b>	<b>FA3: Practice, plan, and implement lessons that help students grapple joyfully and productively with complex ideas, texts and tasks</b>	<b>FA5: Develop a habit of constant learning and self-reflection</b>
Learning Partnerships 1: Warm Demanders and No-Nonsense Nurturer (CRT and the Brain, NNN)	Vision for Excellent Instruction	Habits for success
Learning Partnerships 2: Neuroscience of Connection	Dependent and Independent Learner	Intro to Coaching
Norms & Routines 1: Strong Start (TLaC)	Students do the Thinking	Seeking Feedback
Norms and Routines 2: Engineer Efficiency (TLaC)	"Learning Happens in the Struggle"	Performance and Evaluation
Norms & Routines 3: Precise Directions (TLaC, NNN)	Lesson Planning 1: Begin with the End (TLaC)	Critical Assessment Techniques
Norms & Routines 4: Positive Narrations (TLaC, NNN)	Lesson Planning 2: Double the Plan (TLaC)	Cultural Reference Points
Resp to Challenging Behavior 1: Understanding Student Behavior in the Context of Student Development	Lesson Planning 3: Leading Educator Planning Templates	Know Yourself Part 1: Emotional Self-Awareness
Resp to Challenging Behavior 2: Stop, Observe, Detach, Awaken (CRT and the Brain)		Know Yourself Part 2: Emotional Self-Management
<b>FA2: Deeply understand subject matter for high leverage concepts</b>	<b>FA4: Assessing student learning in a variety of ways</b>	
Introduction to CKLA	Intro to Student Data (MAP assessments)	
Identify High Leverage Concepts by Grade and Subject Area	Thinking Routines	
TPS Learning Expectations	Exit Tickets	
Building Content Across Lessons		
Identify Confusion with Content		

## Appendix I: Panorama Teacher Perception Survey Items & Associated Variables

### Intent to Stay:

- I am highly committed to Tulsa Public Schools. **(Intent to Stay 1)**
- I would recommend working at Tulsa Public Schools to my friends and / or family. **(Intent to Stay 2)**
- I am likely to remain working at Tulsa Public Schools beyond the current school year. **(Intent to Stay 3)**
  - 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Somewhat disagree; 4: Somewhat agree; 5: Agree; 6: Strongly Agree

### Self-Efficacy:

- How clearly can you explain the most complicated content to your students? **(Self Efficacy 1)**
  - 1: Not clearly at all; 2: Slightly clearly; 3: Somewhat clearly; 4: Quite clearly; 5: Extremely clearly
- How confident are you that you can move through material at a pace that works well for each of your students? **(Self Efficacy 2)**
- How confident are you that you can help your school's most challenging students to learn? **(Self Efficacy 3)**
- How confident are you that you can engage students who typically are not motivated? **(Self Efficacy 8)**
- How confident are you that you can meet the learning needs of your most advanced students? **(Self-Efficacy 6)**
  - 1: Not confident at all; 2: Slightly confident; 3: Somewhat confident; 4: Quite confident; 5: Extremely confident
- How thoroughly do you feel that you know all the content you need to teach? **(Self Efficacy 4)**
  - 1: Not thoroughly at all; 2: Slightly thoroughly; 3: Somewhat thoroughly; 4: Quite thoroughly; 5: Extremely thoroughly
- How effective do you think you are at managing particularly disruptive classes? **(Self Efficacy 5)**
  - 1: Not effective at all; 2: Slightly effective; 3: Somewhat effective; 4: Quite effective; 5: Extremely effective
- How knowledgeable are you regarding where to find resources for working with students who have unique learning needs? **(Self Efficacy 9)**
  - 1: Not knowledgeable at all; 2: Slightly knowledgeable; 3: Somewhat knowledgeable; 4: Quite knowledgeable; 5: Extremely knowledgeable
- When one of your teaching strategies fails to work for a group of students, how easily can you think of another approach to try? **(Self Efficacy 7)**
  - 1: Not easily at all; 2: Slightly easily; 3: Somewhat easily; 4: Quite easily; 5: Extremely easily

## Perception of Service Culture

- Teamwork is practiced in Tulsa Public Schools. **(Culture 1)**
- I have a good understanding of the mission and goals of the district. **(Culture 2)**
- District office teams are focused on serving teachers, school leaders, students and families. **(Culture 3)**
- Our superintendent and senior leadership communicate well with the rest of the organization. **(Culture 7)**
  - 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Somewhat disagree; 4: Somewhat agree; 5: Agree; 6: Strongly agree
- District office personnel are empathetic toward my concerns or issues. **(Culture 4)**
- District office personnel attempt to fully understand my concerns or issues. **(Culture 5)**
- It is clear that the district office cares about the welfare of teachers and students. **(Culture 6)**
  - 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Agree; 4: Strongly agree

## Supportive Leadership Practice:

- How friendly are your school leaders toward you? **(Supportive Leadership 1)**
  - 1: Not friendly at all; 2: Slightly friendly; 3: Somewhat friendly; 4: Quite friendly; 5: Extremely friendly
- How much trust exists between school leaders and faculty? **(Supportive Leadership 2)**
  - 1: Almost no trust; 2: A little bit of trust; 3: Some trust; 4: Quite a bit of trust; 5: A tremendous amount of trust
- When you face challenges at work, how supportive are your school leaders? **(Supportive Leadership 3)**
  - 1: Not at all supportive; 2: Slightly supportive; 3: Somewhat supportive; 4: Quite supportive; 5: Extremely supportive
- How much do your school leaders care about you as an individual? **(Supportive Leadership 4)**
  - 1: Do not care at all; 2: Care a little bit; 3: Care somewhat; 4: Care quite a bit; 5: Care a tremendous amount
- How respectful are your school leaders towards you? **(Supportive Leadership 5)**
  - 1: Not respectful at all; 2: Slightly respectful; 3: Somewhat respectful; 4: Quite respectful; 5: Extremely respectful
  - When challenges arise in your personal life, how understanding are your school leaders? **(Supportive Leadership 6)**
    - 1: Not understanding at all; 2: Slightly understanding; 3: Somewhat understanding; 4: Quite understanding; 5: Extremely understanding



### Appendix J: Effects Matrix: Novice Teacher Experience

New Strategy	User Assessment	Intervention Experience	Short-Term Effects	Longer-Term Implications	Researcher Explanations
<b>Recruitment</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">++</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+--</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Easy application, communicated electronically</li> <li>2. Uses new pipeline pathways through Applitrack daily</li> <li>3. Like access to platform, still difficult to navigate without training</li> <li>4. Easy to apply and track progress &amp; updates</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District was obvious choice</li> <li>2. Quicker processing</li> <li>3. Cut-out middle man</li> <li>4. Hired at District</li> </ol>	<p>Peer recruitment, improved customer service, Improved HR operation procedures, increased applicant pool, ease of use for consumer, ease of use for District supports</p>	<p>Enhanced online recruitment and application platforms show greater ease of use for candidates and District supports</p>
<b>Administrative Onboarding</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+--</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+--</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Materials provided electronically, could complete onboarding remotely</li> <li>2. Like not meeting 1:1 anymore; can onboard in groups. Still need in-person documents sometimes (UA, certification)</li> <li>3. Process was fine. Questions about benefits couldn't be clearly answered.</li> <li>4. Straightforward &amp; Easy. A necessary</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased flexibility for extenuating circumstances</li> <li>2. Freed capacity of District supports for other work</li> <li>3. Remaining questions; need for follow-up</li> </ol>	<p>Possibility for fully electronic onboarding; no need to visit central office prior to orientation. Enhanced customer service experience</p>	<p>Onboarding processes moved from in-person 1:1 meetings to partially electronic which saves time, frees capacity, and allows for better customer service</p>

		evil to work somewhere, but was fairly painless.			
<b>Cultivation</b>	++  --  +  +-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Someone called after onboarding to answer any questions; never experienced that before in a workplace</li> <li>Waste of time, people don't want to be bothered</li> <li>Good to follow-up and build relationships</li> <li>Like following up just in case, but takes a lot of time and often people don't need a follow-up</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactive vs. reactive communication</li> <li>Capacity freed from enhanced onboarding is re-purposed for cultivation</li> </ol>	Decreased attrition between onboarding and Day 1 (intent to stay)	Cultivation leads to greater organizational socialization but is also time-intensive. Insufficient data for effects of cultivation.
<b>Induction (Professional Learning)</b>	++  ++  +--	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learned about mission, vision, and values which helped to ground in the new job and learn about the "why"</li> <li>Introduced essential skills likely not taught in teacher education programs like strategies for classroom management</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial grounding in district vision to create a through-line for learning (perception of fit and service culture)</li> <li>Enhanced understanding of district priorities</li> <li>Opportunity to practice essential skills prior to Day 1 in classroom (efficacy)</li> </ol>	Opportunity to build out plan for ongoing learning based on induction & novice teacher cohorts	High value in professional learning opportunities, specifically learning that was not a part of traditional teacher training programs

	+	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Left induction with a better idea of what is important in teaching and what is not as important right now. It was a lot of information.</li> <li>Helped teachers understand how they are evaluated, which aligns with teaching &amp; learning priorities and the “[District] Way”</li> </ol>			
<b>Induction (HR Processes)</b>	<p>+-</p> <p>--</p> <p>+</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had a chance to set up e-mail and get badge. Not enough time to learn about online software.</li> <li>Already signed up for benefits at onboarding. This was not necessary.</li> <li>Able to do this all in one day instead of having people come in on their own time to get a badge and set up their network access</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to elaborate on anything missed during onboarding</li> <li>Saves time and travel for novice teachers to visit central office for things like badge, etc.</li> </ol>	No information	Adding opportunities for task-like processes at induction is a stronger customer service experience
<b>Induction</b>	+-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were chances to interact in small groups, but awkward</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreased isolation at induction</li> </ol>	Grounding in District Mission & Vision early in	Induction is district-level, so most peer

<b>(Peer &amp; Organizational Socialization)</b>	+-	when you don't know anyone.	2. Initial grounding in district mission & vision	hiring for better internalization long-term. Opportunities for development with peer socialization at the site-level.	socialization at this time will happen between teachers who will not be at the same school site
	+	2. Nice to meet people but will not be at the same school in the Fall 3. The mission & vision are socialization to the organization. This was smart to do early in hiring.			

**Legend**

++ = very effective; + = effective; +- = mixed effective; -- = ineffective

**Appendix K: Explanatory Effects Matrix: Novice Teacher Experience**

<b>User Group</b>	<b>User Assessment</b>	<b>Intervention Involvement</b>	<b>Short-Term Effects (“State” of User)</b>	<b>Long-Term Effects (Able/Unable to do)</b>	<b>Researcher Explanation</b>
<b>Superintendent</b>	0	None	No Information	Build or expand program	Supt manages District but is not directly involved with program
<b>Chief Talent Management/Learning Officer</b>	0	Approver of new intervention processes; ultimately accountable for success	Approved interventions; implies satisfaction with plans.  No feedback for implementation.	Build or expand program	Administrator is ultimate approver of the program, but is not directly involved in development
<b>Novice Teacher</b>	+--	Customer for all interventions.  Receives services for recruitment, cultivation, and HR onboarding.  Participates in Novice Teacher Induction.	“I learned a lot”  “Doing everything online was really easy”  “It was a lot of information and long days”  “I felt more ready to be a teacher than I did before”	More opportunities to build essential skills (efficacy)  Less time/separate events for completing administrative tasks  Investment in District and career	Liked increased opportunities for professional learning but there was a lot of content condensed into a short amount of time

			“I know things now that I didn’t before, but I also felt overwhelmed by it all”	(Intent to stay, perception of service culture)	
<b>Talent Management Supports</b>	+	Supervise Recruitment Processes Support New Hire Cultivation Manage Administrative Onboarding Processes Contribute to Induction (HR content)	“A huge improvement” “Some things take less time, but others take more now. I guess it evens out and is better” “I am so glad we moved to electronic forms. There is so much less literal paperwork!”	Individualized support for new hires Leverage capacity for alternative district priorities	TM supports spent significant time on new hire paperwork and onboarding. Transitioning to electronic forms frees this capacity  New hire cultivation in a new initiative that adds additional scope to the role of TM Specialist
<b>Instructional Coach/Mentor (Teaching &amp; Learning)</b>	+	Lead novice teacher induction professional learning opportunities	“I’m so glad we’re doing this now” “I had people tell me they learned more in that week than in a year of college classes” “There is a lot of space to think about	Design professional learning content to meet the individual needs of novice teacher cohorts Pressure test novice teacher experiences to anticipate learning	First year for instructional coaches to be involved in district-level novice teacher onboarding.  A lot of room for learning.

			how we make an intentional plan for ongoing PD based on the induction programs”	needs moving forward	
--	--	--	---	----------------------	--

**Legend**

++ = very effective; + = effective; +-- = mixed effective; -- = ineffective