Strategies to Cultivate New Hires

Goals for New Hire Cultivation

- Keep the new hires engaged and build excitement to ensure that new hires begin teaching despite competition from other schools or personal challenges. (This can also help you predict and plan for any potential last-minute vacancies.)
- Start to set expectations with new hires around your vision of effective teaching and other school expectations so that new hires arrive feeling informed and prepared for the first few weeks of school.
- Build new hires’ investment in school culture and philosophy to show your commitment to them from the time of hire to when the school year starts.
- Connect new hires with a strong buddy or mentor to start the year feeling supported.

Red Flags that a New Hire May Not Show

- Does not reply to your e-mails or phone calls
- Delays relocation or does not have a clear plan for their move to the area
- Does not attend the orientation or new teacher training
- Does not complete pre-employment processing (fingerprinting, contract signing, etc.)

When should you cultivate new hires?

You should begin to cultivate when you first interview a teacher—whether that’s January or July. Cultivation should continue at least monthly after an offer is accepted, and cultivation should end when the teacher starts at your school for orientation.

What should you include in cultivation messages?

Logistics

- Schedule for orientation and the first week of school, including typical day structure and any special training sessions
- A time to visit and set up their classroom—as early as possible
- Location of parking, bathrooms, lunchroom, and mailboxes
- Important staff members—who to see for what

Instructional Support

- List of professional development opportunities, such as summer workshops and the yearly schedule
- Information about systems for providing instructional feedback
- List of assigned students with parent and contact information, as well as IEPs if applicable

School Leader Expectations

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

Tip: Candidates expect some form of communication in the period between an offer and the start of school, and we’ve found one of the easiest strategies is communication by email.
Example Resources

Emails

Emails are quick and easy, can be delegated, and create a dialogue for questions and concerns.

• Gather all updated contact information when a candidate accepts an offer.
• Have a clear goal or message for each email.
• Emails should be concise and require a response to maintain and create an open line of communication.

Sample email
Hello. Welcome to Terrebonne High School’s staff! In order to prepare for the beginning of the school year, I’d like to invite you to attend a school orientation session in August.

Also, please write a four-sentence introduction of yourself that I can share with your colleagues prior to our first staff meeting. I’d appreciate it if you could return this to me by July 24.

Personal Outreach from Staff Members

New hires may appreciate a call or email from a returning teacher who is successful and excited about working at your school. Some schools tap one returning teacher to lead up this outreach for all new candidates, while others have returning teachers of the same content area or grade level conduct the outreach. This informal contact helps the new hire feel valued and committed to your school, and new hires can ask colleagues questions about their experiences in local housing, transportation, etc.

• Have a clear goal or message for each call.
• Telephone calls are meant to be short, inspiring, and informative.
• Calls should be no more than 10-15 minutes.
• Make 2-3 phone calls to each new hire over the course of the summer.
• When you delegate calls to other staff, give the caller a synopsis of the new hire’s background and the strengths you saw in the interview so they can personalize the call.

Sample phone call introduction
Hi, my name is Christine, and I am calling from Davis Junior High School. I currently teach 7th grade Math. I’d like to welcome you to our staff and see if I can answer any questions.

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

This strategy allows teachers to review reading material aligned to your school philosophy or approach to teaching (e.g., Teach Like a Champion). It also allows teachers to internalize culture and performance expectations before orientation.

• Assignments should not be onerous or discouraging.
• Expectations for participation should be clear in advance.
• Discussion can be online or by phone if people are relocating.
• Group debriefs are a way to create feeling of camaraderie and commitment.
• Non-participation is an early warning sign.
Social Media

Some schools create groups or discussion forums for new hires. If you are hiring a large number of new teachers, this can help them connect about housing and relocation logistics. Teachers can also begin to create connections to the school community. Positive leaders in your school community can monitor and contribute to the discussion.

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

Invite New Hires to End-of-Year School Events

End-of-year events may offer opportunities to connect with students and parents. Additionally, some end-of-year events—such as awards nights—may be inspirational.

Happy Hours or Coffee Chats

Hosting a social gathering is a great way to let new and returning staff members build camaraderie in an informal setting. These events can also be used to reward existing staff for their hard work.

“Save the Date” Postcards

Send a “save the date” postcard with information on teacher orientation.