Charters as Employers

Elisa A. Falco, *VP of School Services*

efalco@gacharters.org

GCSA
Georgia Charter Schools Association

Your advocate for better schools.

How Much Does Good Hiring Impact Student Achievement?

#1 factor influencing student achievement is the quality of the teacher.

(Marzano, 2005)

#2 factor influencing student achievement is the quality of the leader.

(Hallinger and Heck, 1996)

Principal's role in selecting the right people includes both instructional and non-instructional staff.

(Portin and colleagues, 2003)

Some General Statistics

- Research (National Center on School Choice, 2010) says…

  - **Charter school teachers have a significantly higher turn over rates**
    - 130% greater for leaving the profession
    - 76% greater for moving schools

  - **Start up charters have higher turn over than conversions**
    - 2x higher
    - EMO vs. non-EMO no significant difference
    - New schools versus schools 3+ years no significant difference

Some General Statistics

- **Teacher characteristics play the largest role in turn-over rates in charters. More often than not, charter teachers are:**

  - Younger
  - Less experienced
    Part-timers (2x likelier to leave)
  - Uncertified (200% greater likelihood of leaving)
  - Strong academic backgrounds more likely to leave the profession…presumably skill set is transferrable to other professions
  - New teachers the most likely to leave…and most likely to be replaced with other new teachers…cycle continues.

Some General Statistics

- **Dissatisfaction with working conditions also play an important role ("teachers voting with their feet.")**
  - Dissatisfied with school (teachers may be as dissatisfied with additional work in charters)
  - Dissatisfaction with work conditions
  - Lack of administrative support

- **Involuntary attrition is higher in charters**
  - Charters have greater flexibility with personnel policies
  - Underperforming staff or staff not meeting ESEA requirements

Why Does It Matter?

- Attrition impacts many things in your school….

    - Staff morale
    - Trust
    - Instructional cohesion
    - Sustaining student enrollment
    - Sustaining financial operations
    - **Program implementation**

The Leader's Role

- Effectively….

    - Hire (board must ratify all hiring decisions)
    - Support
    - Monitor
    - Evaluate
    - Create positive working conditions/culture

- Success in these will lead to higher staff satisfaction, retention and student achievement.

Hiring Quality Teachers and Staff

- Agree or disagree? Why?

People are your most important asset.

Selecting Quality Teachers and Non-instructional Employees

- Is this any closer to truth?

The **<u>RIGHT</u>** people are your most important asset.

Considerations in Hiring…

- Pre-work
  - Expected outcomes for the position
  - Job description and additional duties
  - Requisite education, training, and experience
    - Highly Qualified? (*must be HQ*)
    - Certification? (*new PSC requirements*)
  - Dispositional / "Fit"
    - Age/grade
    - Demographics
    - Team and school culture/disposition
  - Compensation

Considerations in Hiring…

- Interview and Selection

  - Credentials (Minimal training, education, experience)
  - Recommendations
    - Who's important?
    - Who does a candidate NOT want you to talk to?
    - Red flags?
  - Screening
    - Takes place after credential screening
    - 15-30 min.
    - General questions on qualities of effective teachers
    - Determines if interview should be invited to building level interview.

Considerations in Hiring…

- Interview and Selection

 - Building Level Interviews
    - 45 min. – 1 hour (teams)
    - Asks in-depth, probing questions geared at determining qualitative value of judgment, level of competency, and application of skills (see CLASS Keys)
    - Questions are targeted….*You're looking for specific types of responses that match the expectations for the position or the type of candidate*
      - How…Why…
      - Describe a time…
      - Give an example…
    - Evaluates 3 critical areas:
      - 1. Training and experience
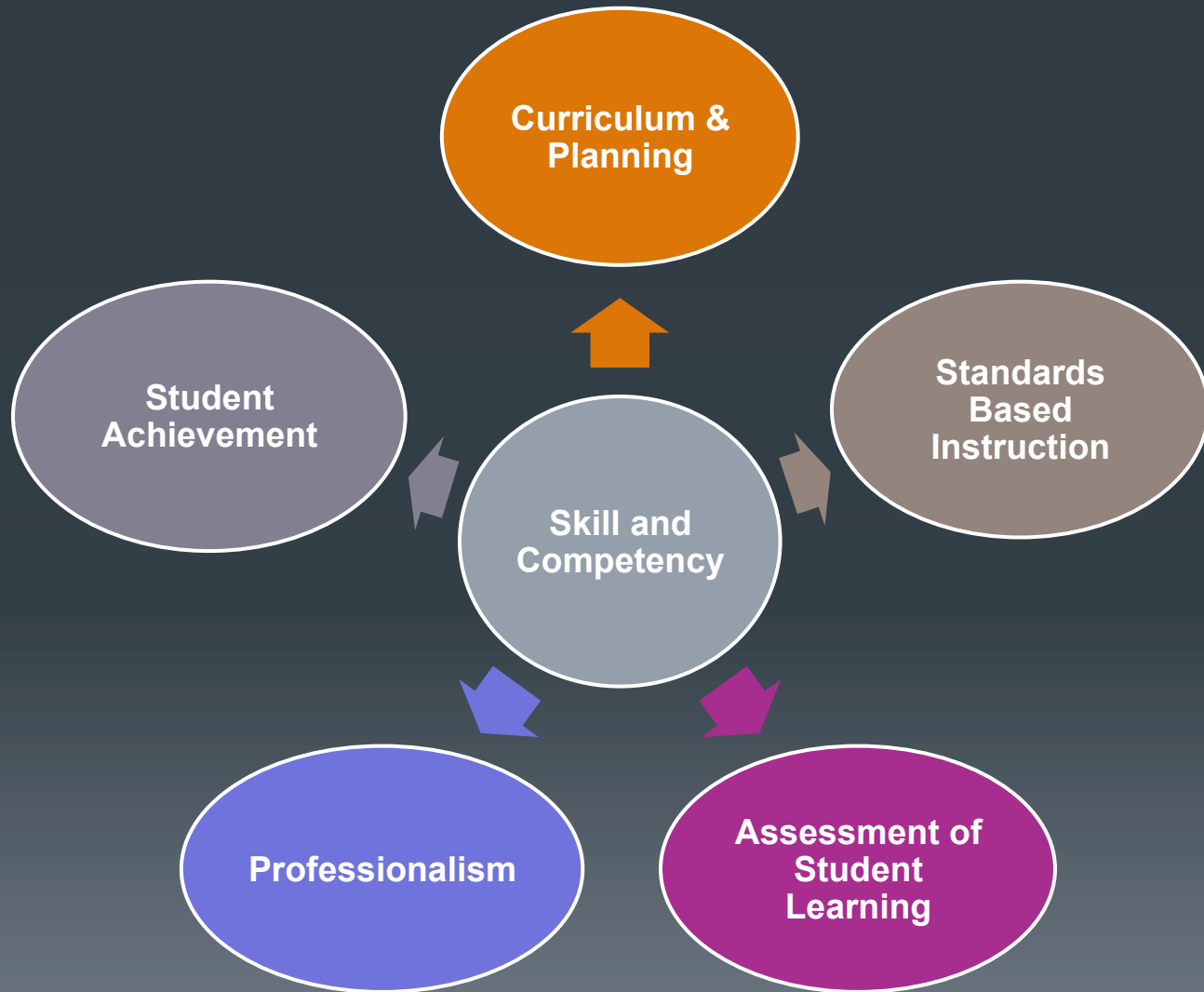   - 2. Skills and competencies
      - 3. Disposition

Activity

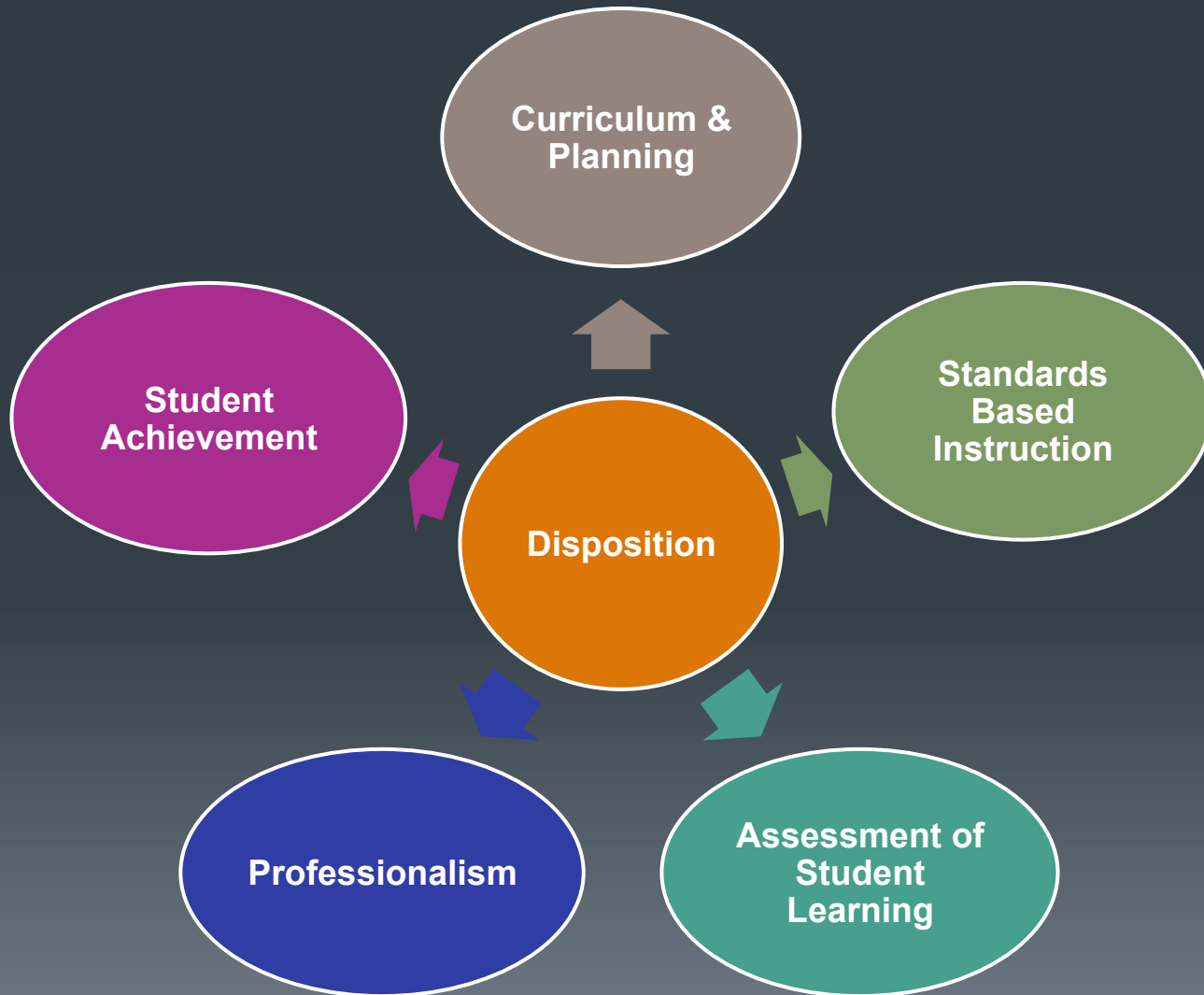- Practice
Next 3 Slides

Practice…
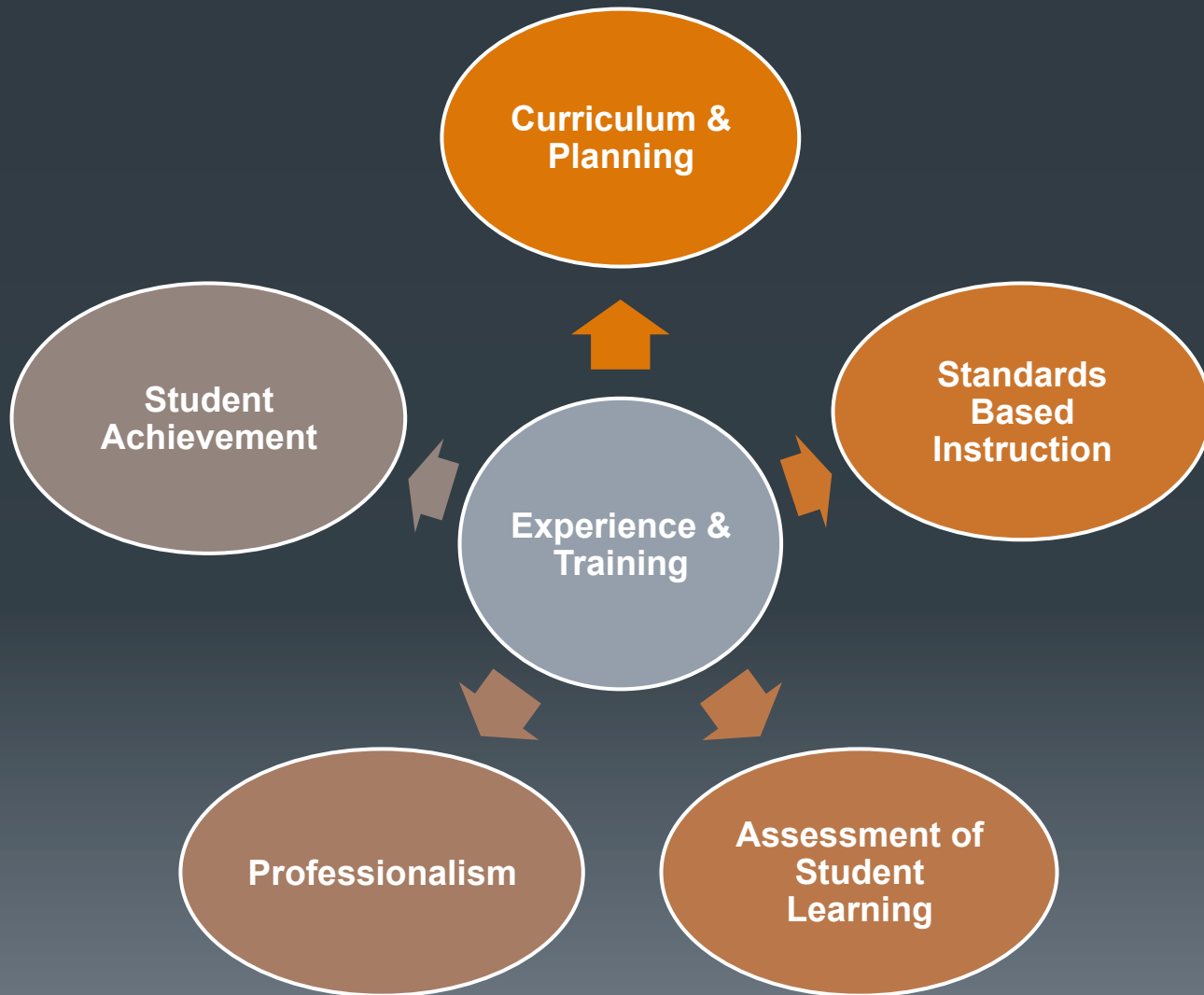
Practice …

Practice …

Common Mistakes School Leaders Make

Untrained interviewers (illegal or unskilled questioning)

Improper hiring criteria

Failure to adequately assess qualitative attributes (skill, impact)

Over-reliance on interviews (credentials, recommendations under emphasized or unchecked)

Interviewer prejudices left unchecked

The Importance of Induction and Support of New Teachers…

New to the Profession

- 1/3 of new teachers leave the profession during their 1st 3 years of teaching
- Almost ½ leave within 5 years
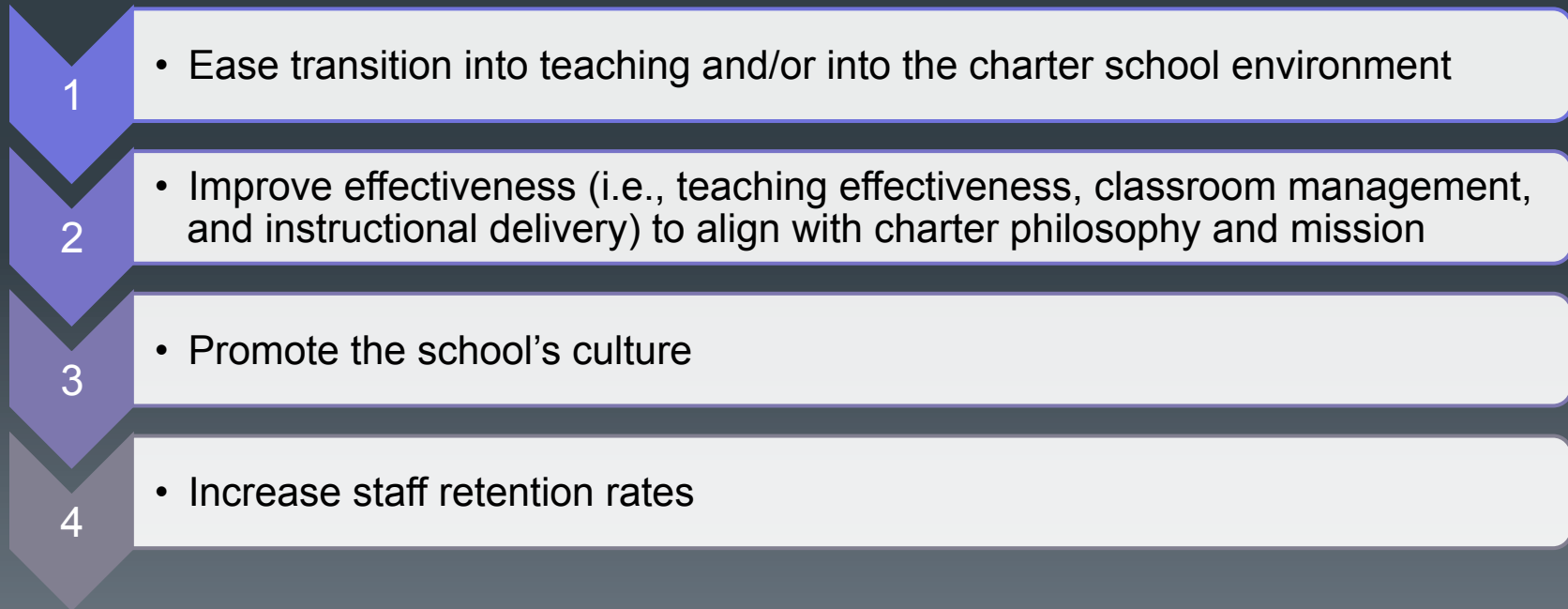- Specialized fields like SPED have even higher rates of attrition

New to the Charter School

- In charters….
  - 130% great chance of leaving the profession
  - 76% greater for moving schools

What is Induction and Why Is It Needed?

- An <u>active</u>, 2-3 year systematic training and supporting process focused on 4 key objectives:

1	• Ease transition into teaching and/or into the charter school environment
2	• Improve effectiveness (i.e., teaching effectiveness, classroom management, and instructional delivery) to align with charter philosophy and mission
3	• Promote the school's culture
4	• Increase staff retention rates

Mentoring/Supporting Novice Teachers

- Process – 1-3 years
- Requires <u>sustained support and guidance</u> from veteran teachers or principal
- Focus on:
  - Instructional planning and delivery
  - *Classroom management*
  - Administrative efficiency and effective processes
  - Learning the ropes
- Risk free – opportunity to share failures, question, and to vent frustration…in return for suggestions and resources, answers, a listening ear, another perspective
- Considerations:
  - "Match" of skills and dispositions
  - Time commitment
  - Expectations and accountability to fidelity of the program

Phases of First Year Teaching

ANTICIPATION

ANTICIPATION

REFLECTION

SURVIVAL

REJUVENATION

DISILLUSIONMENT
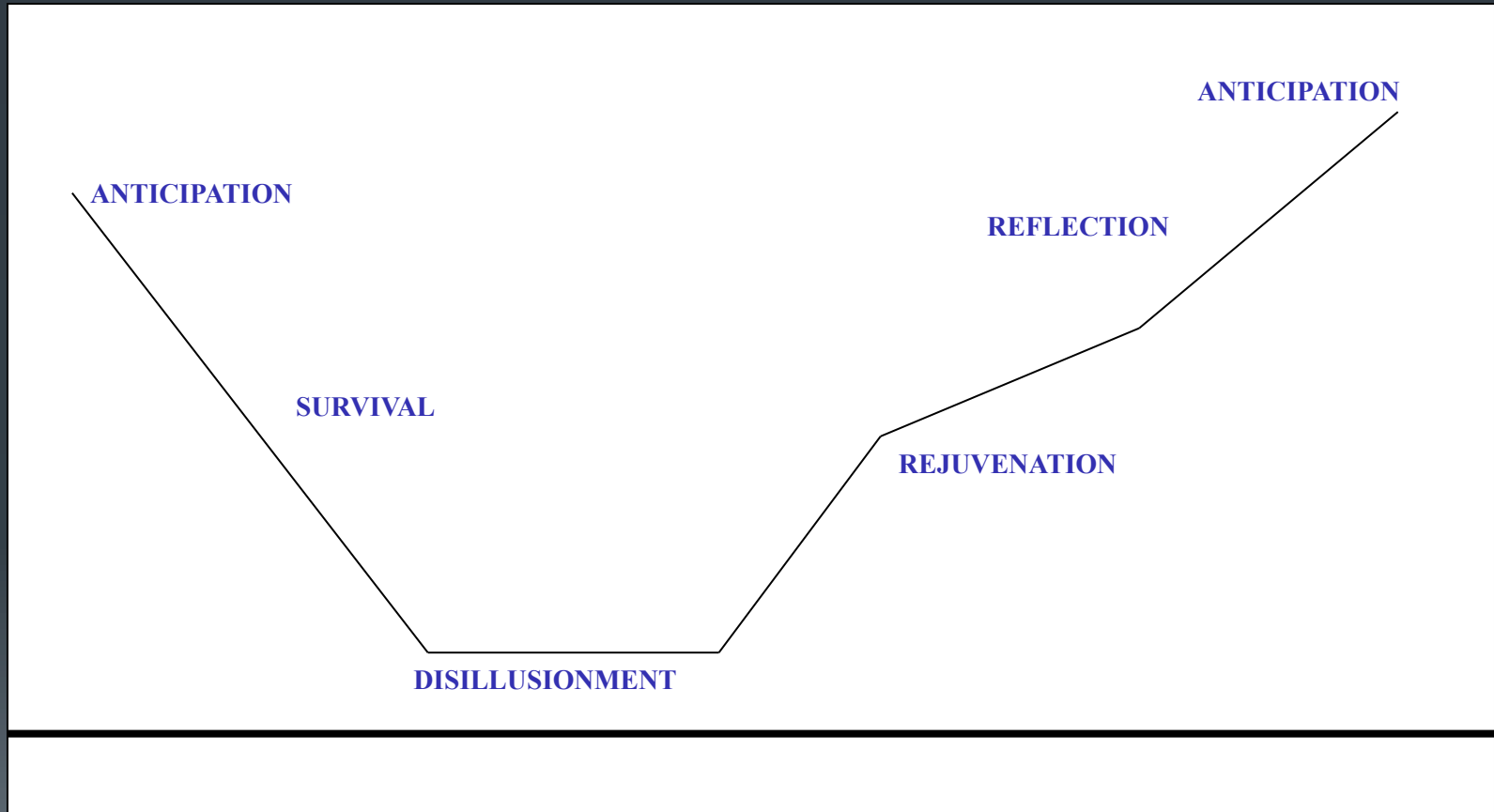
Source: Lipton & Wellman (2003)

Mentoring Teachers New to the Charter School

- Process – at least 1 year
- Requires <u>sustained support and guidance</u> from teachers who have been at the school and share the vision and philosophy
- Focus on:
  - Understanding the school's culture
  - Implementing the school's instructional philosophy and practices into the classroom
  - Learning the ropes
- Risk free – opportunity to share concerns, question, and to vent frustration…in return for suggestions and resources, answers, a listening ear, another perspective
- Considerations:
  - "Match" of skills and dispositions
  - Time commitment
  - Expectations and accountability to fidelity of the program

Effective Leaders Create the Environment

- Leaders must <u>explicitly</u> show their values to influence the values of the organization:
  - Expect professional development of everyone in the building (including themselves)
  - Make time in schedules, agendas, school calendars
  - Share (frequently) latest theories, trends, research, strategies, reports, articles, etc.
  - Engage themselves in professional development (that means sometimes leaving the building!)
  - Recognize completion and achievement of individuals, groups, and the school in professional development
  - Provide essential resources to support growth of staff
  - Support peer collaboration, observation, discussion
  - Encourage reflection
  - Support opportunities to share best practices among the experts in your building
  - Organize study groups, have shared readings, discussion
  - Find the funds to support training and procurement of key resources

Professional Development - Building Individual and Institutional Capacity
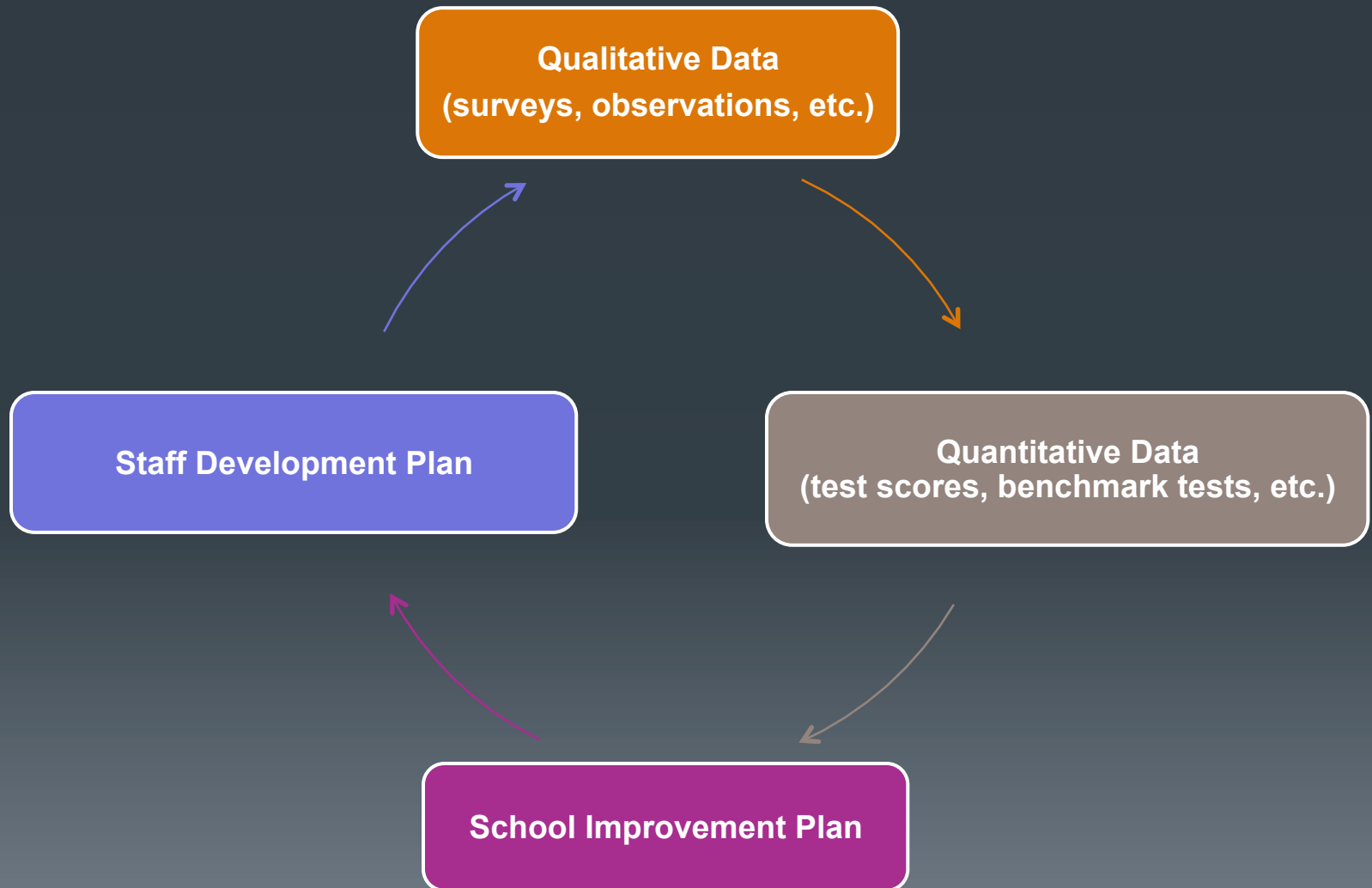
Professional Development - Building Individual and Institutional Capacity

- Professional development planning should be a collaborative effort involving ……
  - Leader
  - Leadership Team
  - Individual Employee Input
  - Academic Committee of the Board
  - Buy-in, commitment, and support from <u>ALL</u>

Professional Development - Building Individual and Institutional Capacity

- Professional development plan should include all facets of your school
  - Board
  - Leadership
  - Certified Employees (teachers, paras, resource)
  - Classified Employees (office administration, custodial, etc.)
  - You may even want to extend development to parents and other stakeholders that directly impact student achievement.

Professional Development - Building Individual and Institutional Capacity

- Professional development should be *budgeted*.
  - Use expertise in your building or with peer schools
  - Negotiate with your district (if appropriate)
  - RESA
  - GCSA
  - Charter Schools Conference (state and national)
  - Book studies
  - Subscribe to professional journals

Professional Development - Building Individual and Institutional Capacity

- Professional development should not contribute to Initiative Fatigue…just another training or program to manage, document, track. In the early years, focus on:

    - Mission
    - Vision
    - Academic Goals
    - Achievement
    - Classroom Management
    - Building School Culture

Policy Considerations and Common Mistakes

HR Policy Considerations…

- **Employment Law and Labor Relations**
  - Wage and Hour-Fair Labor Standards Act
  - Family and Medical Leave Act
  - Equal Employment and Prohibition Against Discrimination
  - Sexual Harassment
  - **Child Labor**
  - Drug Free Workplace
  - Workers Compensation
  - Privacy
  - Wage Garnishment
  - Jury Duty
  - Military Leave
  - Employee Handbooks
- **Hiring Practices**
  - Employment Status
  - Interviewing
  - Offer Letters
  - Documentation
  - Orientation
  - Termination and Exit Interviews
- **Ethical Matters**
  - Risk Management
  - Training, Motivation and Retention
  - Staff Development
  - Mentor Programs

HR Policy Considerations…

- FMLA Policy and Exhibits
- Equal Employment Policy
- Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use Policy
- Harassment Policy Judicial, Military Duty and Religious Leave Policy
- Employment Status Policy and Exhibits
- Professional Personnel Hiring and Recruitment Policy
- Employee Time Schedule Policy
- Professional Personnel Compensation Policy
- Professional Personnel Vacation Policy
- Professional Personnel Duties and Responsibilities Policy
- Personnel Assignment Policy
- Personnel Evaluations Policy
- Personnel Reduction in Force Policy
- Classified Personnel Overtime Pay Policy

HR Policy Considerations…

- Employee Dress Code Policy
- Professional Organization and Labor Union Policy
- Possession of Weapons by Employees Policy
- Professional Duty Free Lunch Policy
- Professional Personnel Staff Meetings Policy
- Professional Personnel Additional Duties Policy
- Sick Leave Bank Policy
- Salary Deductions Policy
- Staff Development Policy
- Staff Complaints and Grievance Policy

- Personal Leave Policy
- Substitute Teachers Policy
- Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy
- Nepotism Policy
- Mandatory Reporting of Employee Crimes Policy
- Communicable Diseases Policy
- Employees Seeking or Holding Political Office Policy
- Fundraising and Solicitation Policy
- Gifts to Staff Policy
- Staff Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Criminal Background Check and Fingerprint Policy
- Professional Personnel Ethics Policy
- Employment Application

Illegal Interview Questions

Employers should not ask about any of the following unless it specifically relates to the job requirements, because to not hire a candidate because of any one of them is discriminatory:

- Race
- Color
- Sex
- Religion
- National origin
- Birthplace
- Age
- Disability
- Marital/family status

"At will" Employment

- How do you define "at will" ?
- What does this mean for charter schools as employers?

Common Employer Mistakes

- Insufficiently vetting candidates
  - Use local connections
- Lack of focus on differences between traditional and charter schools as workplaces
- Lack of understanding of budgeting, compensation models
- Not considering hiring when planning school schedule
  - When will teachers be available?
- Insufficient focus on mission and vision, school culture
- Not creating a palpably supportive opportunity culture
- No plan for dealing with terminations, non-renewals, suspensions, PSC ethics violations……

Common PD Mistakes

- Insufficiently strong feedback loop/lack of continuous improvement model

- Not sufficiently prepared for start-up year induction training

- Lack of clear focus on school (accountability) goals in training

- Insufficient budgeting for PD

- PD not aligned with mission, vision, goals

Elisa A. Falco

efalco@gacharters.org

(404) 550-9401

Thank you!