



What Works in Urban Education

Teacher Retention

The Challenge: Roughly a third of teachers leave the profession in their first three years. Stressful working conditions, compensation, and lack of work/life balance are the top reasons.

Top Reasons Teachers Leave the Profession:



Stressful Working Conditions



Uncompetitive Salary



Hours Worked Outside School Day

Why Districts Should Take Action:



Replacing a **single teacher** can cost urban districts up to **\$20,000** in benefits and resources.



Losing a teacher during the school year is associated with a **loss** of between **32 and 72 instructional days**.

Source: RAND Teacher Well-Being and Intentions to Leave 2023, Learning Policy Institute 2017, Henry & Redding 2018

What Works: Districts leading in teacher retention meaningfully induct their teachers, consider a teacher's growth opportunities, and a focus diligently on school culture and support.

1 Teacher Induction Programs



Districts that properly induct early-career teachers through a comprehensive onboarding program are more likely to retain them. By providing novice teachers with district context, curriculum and instruction workshops, classroom management strategies, coaching, and school and district-based mentorship, districts are better positioned to retain early-career teachers as they navigate their new profession.

Example in Action: [Hamilton County \(TN\) Public Schools](#)

2 Culturally Sustaining Mentorships



Culturally sustaining mentorships aim to reduce attrition among teachers of color who may feel isolated within their school or department. The mentorship strategy pairs teachers of color with mentors who share their cultural background or experience, effecting a sense of belonging while providing professional development.

Example in Action: [Edifying Teachers](#)

3 Strategic Staffing Models



New staffing and development strategies like *Next Education Workforce* provide teachers opportunities for professional advancement within the classroom, transforming a 'flat' profession into a dynamic career. Districts that adopt these models create sustainable pathways for community members to enter the profession, advance, and specialize in their content area, honing and retaining top talent.

Roles within these strategic teams are differentiated by core and external teams of teachers. Training is grounded in collaboration and shared responsibility to maximize student learning. Teachers participating in these models have greater opportunities for growth and targeted support, incentivizing them to stay and advance within their schools or districts.

Example in Action: [Mesa \(AZ\) Public School District](#)

4 Positive School Climate



School leaders who do a good job retaining teachers know how to create a positive school culture that fosters communication, collaboration, and relationships. Establishing a welcoming and collaborative school culture is key to retaining teachers, especially teachers of color who are more likely to thrive and impact student achievement amid a shared sense of responsibility, values, hard work, and norms.

Example in Action: [Grapevine-Colleyville \(TX\) Independent School District](#)

5 Teacher Leadership

Districts that implement authentic teacher leadership roles can see improvements in retention as teachers have opportunities to grow while staying in the classroom. Teacher leaders are trained and compensated to take on additional instructional time and/or teacher coaching and mentoring.

Example in Action: [Opportunity Culture](#)

