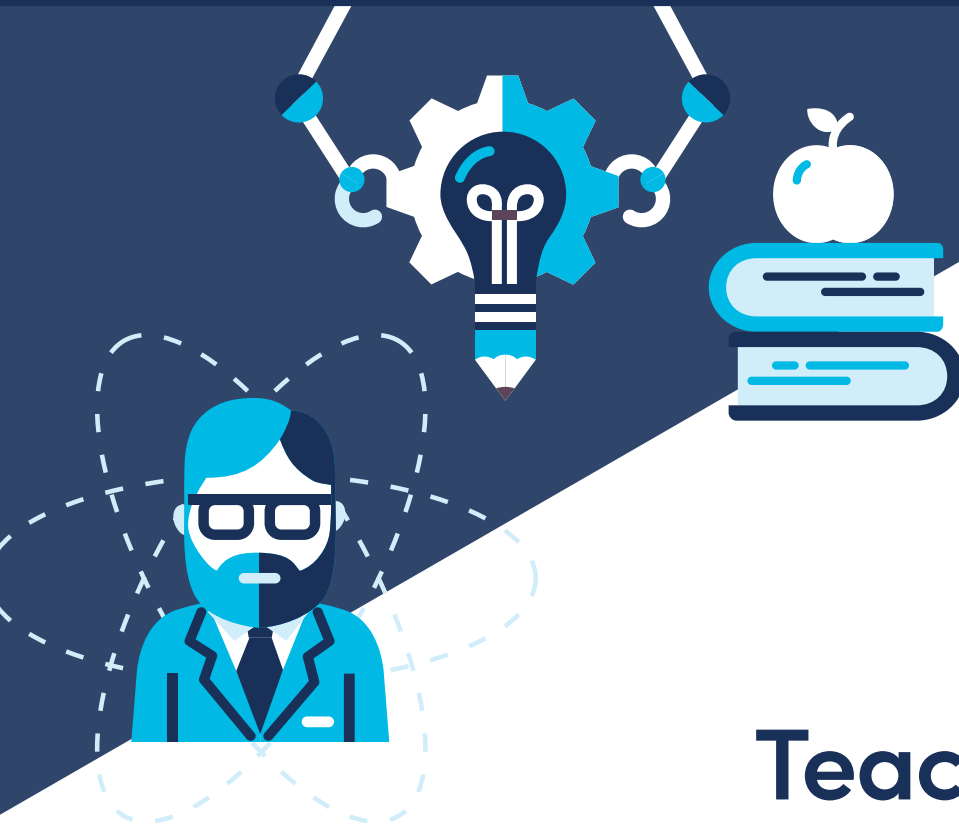




Reduce Teacher Turnover

HOW TO USE CAREER DEVELOPMENT TO DRIVE LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION

Teachers are the lifeblood of a district, your—and your community's—most valuable resource in ensuring the next generation's workers, leaders, and innovators are prepared to thrive.

Yet teacher attrition is at an all-time high, and according to the Learning Policy Institute, two-thirds of those who leave the profession *before* retirement are doing so because of a long list of unaddressed problems, both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers today are dissatisfied with a perceived lack of administrative support, static salaries, few opportunities for career advancement, and less than optimal working conditions.ⁱ

While this teacher exodus is detrimental to students, districts, and communities—higher teacher turnover is correlated with decreased student achievement—it also carries with it a painful financial burden. Research by the LPI shows that the cost of rehiring *just one teaching position* in an urban district can exceed \$20,000. Thus, a district losing 50 teachers a year, either through retirement or dissatisfaction, *will spend more than million dollars on managing turnover alone.*



1. Stemming attrition and increasing retention with learning

While addressing poor working conditions and less-than-optimal salaries—common teacher concerns—are crucial to creating a stable, engaged workforce, they *are* long-term projects, complex changes that require a more extended timeframe. *What can districts do now, outside of policy changes, to stem attrition?*

Low-cost, high-impact retention activities often demonstrate significant returns in a short amount of time. Research shows that one of the most cost-effective measures is providing teachers with meaningful, ongoing career development and planning opportunities. These opportunities not only increase teacher engagement and satisfaction scores, thereby boosting retention, but they also improve teaching skills, which directly translates to a more engaging experience in the classroom for students. Districts benefit directly, as well, through increased student achievement, lower turnover costs, and a more innovative, committed teaching staff.



How districts are already improving retention with career development opportunities

From Nashville to Pittsburgh to the United Kingdom, districts are changing how they engage and retain teachers:

- **When Metro Nashville Public Schools lost 400 teachers in a single year**, the district developed a new retention plan that included improving onboarding, creating a more supportive central office, and providing in-classroom career paths for high-performing educators.ⁱⁱ Instead of forcing great teachers to choose between doing what they love but remaining in a static role or leaving the classroom for an administrative job, the district offers high performers the opportunity to “earn and learn” by becoming multi-classroom instructors.

The multi-classroom instructor position comes with more responsibility, more pay, and, just as critically, the opportunity to continuously develop professional skills. Leads operate within multiple classrooms, overseeing small teams of teachers to provide mentorship and resources.ⁱⁱⁱ

In 2017, with the help of the nonprofit Opportunity Culture, more than 110 schools built opportunity cultures^{iv} to improve student achievement and teacher retention.

- **Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPD) created Career Ladder roles** to enable great teachers to take on leadership responsibilities and earn additional compensation, all without leaving the classroom environment.^v Teachers in Career Ladder roles support and mentor other teachers, facilitate collaboration, and increase the impact of excellent teachers *throughout* the district.^{vi}
- **Teacher attrition isn’t just a US challenge.** In the United Kingdom, the national schools commissioner recently proposed a 10-year career plan for new teachers. While the goal is to make each new teacher a senior leader by the age of 30, the plan’s immediate purpose is to address the UK’s staggering recruitment and retention crisis by providing new hires with a long-term, meaningful career path. The plan creates teaching “trusts” or “alliances” between schools with new teachers participating in growth activities year to year:

- o Years 1 and 2: Induction
- o Years 3 and 4: Working with other new teachers to develop their pedagogy together; leading pedagogy for their organisation
- o Years 5 and 6: Getting ready for a leadership role
- o Years 7 and 8: Start fulfilling leadership roles
- o Years 9 and 10: Take on senior leadership roles^{ix}



Getting Started: The four elements of an effective career planning and development program

While introducing a career development and planning program for teachers doesn't need to be overly complex, it must align with certain principles to be successful over time. To be effective, a district's career planning program must:

1. **ensure mentorship and coaching are readily accessible** to nurture accountability and create an atmosphere of support^x
2. **facilitate ongoing feedback**, as well as time to reflect on and implement that feedback, to ensure learning is not just district-driven but user-driven, as well
3. **integrate current classroom and educational trends** to ensure relevance and the opportunity to practice new skills on the job
4. **incorporate technology tools** that make it easier for teachers to be self-driven in finding and taking advantage of learning and career opportunities *and* enable administrators to more easily manage and reevaluate retention efforts via increased visibility and insight

i. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/teacher-turnover-report>

ii. <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2015/12/08/nashville-schools-unveil-teacher-retention-plan/76914714/>

iii. <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/03/27/395113707/stretching-one-great-teacher-across-many-classrooms>

iv. <http://opportunityculture.org/dashboard/>

v. <https://www.pghschools.org/Page/433>

vi. <https://www.pghschools.org/Page/4389>

vii. <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/severe-teacher-recruitment-crisis-hitting-pupils-results-heads-warn>

viii. <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/carter-plan-tackle-desperate-teacher-retention-problems>

ix. <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/carter-plan-tackle-desperate-teacher-retention-problems>

x. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/effective-teacher-professional-development-report>

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