

FOSTER AN EMPOWERING CULTURE



A positive school culture plays a critical role in teacher retention. Educators are more likely to remain in schools where they feel respected, supported, connected to their colleagues, and valued as professionals. By fostering trust, recognition, professional growth, and meaningful opportunities for input, districts can create environments where teachers want to stay and thrive.

Support Professional Growth

Align professional learning opportunities with teacher interests, career goals, and identified needs. Educators are more likely to remain in environments that invest in their development. Check out [TNTP's Teacher Professional Development Toolbox](#) for more ideas.

Celebrate Success and Purpose

Regularly highlight student successes, educator impact stories, and district achievements to reinforce the meaningful nature of the work and strengthen staff commitment to the profession. [Research from Breathe for Change](#) shows that recognized educators are twice as likely to stay.

Monitor Staff Climate and Engagement

Support high participation in the [Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey](#) and use the results to drive meaningful improvements in working conditions. Engage educators in reviewing school- and district-level data, identifying priorities, and developing action plans that address areas of concern. Regularly communicate progress so staff can see how their feedback informs decision-making and workplace improvements.

Leadership Moves That Strengthen School Climate

The GoTeachKY team developed [The Principal Playbook: Leadership Moves That Strengthen School Climate](#) to offer practical strategies and tools that help school leaders create supportive school environments where educators feel valued, connected, and empowered to succeed. By focusing on the factors that most influence teacher satisfaction and retention, the playbook shares stories from successful Kentucky schools to help principals turn research into action.

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP RETAIN EDUCATORS

Shared Decision-Making

Involve educators in school-level decision-making processes and curriculum choices to build agency and pride.

Resource: [Innovative Ways to Create A Positive School \(and District\) Culture | New Leaders Blog](#)

Leadership Transparency

Build trust by communicating openly about decisions, priorities, and challenges while providing opportunities for meaningful educator feedback. When teachers understand the "why" behind decisions and feel their voices are heard, they are more likely to feel valued, engaged, and committed to the school community.

Resource: [6 Tips for Building Trust Between Teachers and Administrators as a School Leader](#)

Strengthen New Teacher Belonging

Strengthen New Teacher Belonging: Intentionally connect new educators with colleagues, mentors, and school traditions to build relationships and reduce feelings of isolation during the critical first years.

Resource: [TNTP's New Teacher Onboarding and Cultivation Guide](#).

Prioritize Psychological Safety

Cultivate a culture where educators feel comfortable taking risks, sharing ideas, admitting mistakes, and engaging in productive dialogue focused on improvement.

Resource: [New Leaders, Creating Safe and Brave Spaces: Fostering Psychological Safety in Schools](#).

Conduct Stay Interviews

Don't wait until a staff member leaves to conduct an exit survey-- by then it is too late! Regularly ask staff what is working, what challenges they face, and what factors influence their decision to remain in the district. Use findings to drive continuous improvement.

Resource: GoTeachKY has developed a [Stay Interview Quick Start Guide](#) to help administrators implement these.