

TEACHER RETENTION DIAGNOSTIC TOOLKIT



**Proven Tools for
School Leaders to
Identify & Address
Retention Challenges &
Keep Their Best Teachers**

Grace Stevens

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INTRODUCTION

Dear School Leader,

In your hands is more than just a workbook—it's **a lifeline** for one of education's most pressing challenges: retaining excellent teachers.

Every time a quality teacher leaves your school, it disrupts student learning, weakens school culture, and wastes thousands of dollars in recruitment and retraining costs.

The emotional costs are potentially greater than the financial ones. Constant turnover causes you a lot of stress and can undermine your reputation with other staff, parents, and the school board..

But it doesn't have to be this way.

This toolkit provides a **systematic approach** to addressing teacher retention that goes beyond generic advice and quick fixes.

These proven tools will help you:

Diagnose the specific retention challenges unique to your school environment.

Identify the teachers most at risk of leaving—before they hand in their resignation.

Implement targeted strategies that address the root causes, not just symptoms.

Track your progress with clear metrics that demonstrate real improvement.

Discover professional development that provides teachers with the emotional intelligence and resiliency skills they need to avoid burnout and thrive in today's schools.



INTRODUCTION

Each section contains practical worksheets, data collection templates, and action planning guides designed to move you from insight to implementation.

This isn't about adding more to your already full plate—it's about focusing your efforts where they'll have the most significant impact.

Your school's greatest asset is its teachers.

The time, energy, and resources you invest in keeping your best educators will yield returns far beyond what any other improvement initiative can offer.

Congratulations! Downloading this guide is the first step toward building the stable, thriving faculty your students deserve.

There is a LOT of information in this toolkit. Don't get overwhelmed!

In Section 7, I provide a proposed **one-year implementation timeline**. Retention improvement is a long-term endeavor requiring consistent attention and adjustment. **Even small improvements compound over time to create significant culture change.**

Let's get started!

First, you will take a self-assessment to see what your instinct tells you about your school's retention risks based on key categories.



SECTION ONE

Retention Risk Assessment

Self-Assessment: Identifying Your School's Retention Risk Factors

Rate each statement on a scale of 1-5, where:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Somewhat Disagree

3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree

4 = Somewhat Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Workload & Resources

- ☐ Teachers regularly work significantly beyond contracted hours to meet basic job expectations
- ☐ Staff frequently express concerns about lack of planning time
- ☐ Teachers routinely handle responsibilities that could be managed by support staff
- ☐ New initiatives are added without removing existing responsibilities
- ☐ Teachers lack adequate materials or resources to perform effectively

Total Score for Section:

Leadership & Communication

- ☐ Decisions affecting teachers are made without meaningful teacher input
- ☐ Staff meetings primarily focus on information dissemination rather than collaboration
- ☐ Teachers express hesitation about bringing concerns to administration
- ☐ Leadership response to feedback is perceived as defensive or dismissive
- ☐ Communication tends to be one-way (administration to teachers)

Total Score for Section:

SECTION ONE

Recognition & Growth

- ☐ Teacher accomplishments are rarely highlighted or celebrated
- ☐ Professional development is standardized rather than differentiated
- ☐ Career enhancement opportunities within the school are limited
- ☐ Teacher expertise is underutilized in school improvement efforts
- ☐ Individual strengths and contributions aren't visibly valued

Total Score for Section:

School Culture & Belonging

- ☐ Teachers rarely collaborate outside required meetings
- ☐ Staff social events have low participation
- ☐ Subgroups or cliques create division among staff
- ☐ New teachers struggle to integrate into the school community
- ☐ Teachers rarely engage in non-required school events or activities

Total Score for Section:

Emotional Support & Wellbeing

- ☐ Signs of teacher stress or burnout are not addressed proactively
- ☐ Discussion of emotional challenges is discouraged or minimized
- ☐ Wellness initiatives focus on superficial activities rather than structural support
- ☐ Teachers frequently take sick days directly before or after weekends/breaks
- ☐ Staff members appear visibly exhausted or emotionally withdrawn

Total Score for Section:

SECTION ONE

Identifying Your School's Retention Risk Factors

Scoring Guide:

20-35 points in any section: **Critical risk** area requiring immediate intervention

36-60 points in any section: **Moderate risk** requiring targeted improvement

61-75 points in any section: **Low risk** area with opportunity for enhancement

76-100 points overall: **Significant retention risk across multiple dimensions**

SECTION TWO

Retention Metrics Dashboard

Now, you will ensure that you have a system for effectively tracking data to help identify trends. If you do not have a current system, I recommend tracking the following metrics on a Google sheet or an Excel spreadsheet.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO TRACK ANNUALLY

Metric	Current Year	Previous Year	3-Year Average	Target
Overall teacher retention rate				
Retention rate of high-performing teachers				
Retention rate of teachers with 1-3 years experience				
Retention rate of teachers with 4-7 years experience				
Retention rate of teachers with 8+ years experience				
Retention rate by department/grade level				
Percentage of teachers who considered leaving but stayed				
Average interview score of new teacher candidates				

SECTION TWO

Retention Metrics Dashboard

LEADING INDICATORS TO TRACK QUARTERLY

Metric	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Trend
Teacher attendance rate					
Staff meeting attendance					
Optional PD participation					
School event participation					
Number of teacher-initiated innovations					
Teacher satisfaction survey results					
Average teacher planning time utilized					

SECTION TWO

Retention Metrics Dashboard

EXIT INTERVIEW DATA

Section 6 will provide more information and questions for a thorough exit interview.

Add a section to your retention metrics that categorizes turnover based on the areas below:

REASONS FOR DEPARTURE:

Career advancement: _ _ _%

Work-life balance: _ _ _%

School culture issues: _ _ _%

Leadership concerns: _ _ _%

Compensation: _ _ _%

Personal/family reasons: _ _ _%

Relocation: _ _ _%

Other (specify): _ _ _%

SECTION TWO

Retention Metrics Dashboard

Dashboard Implementation Guide

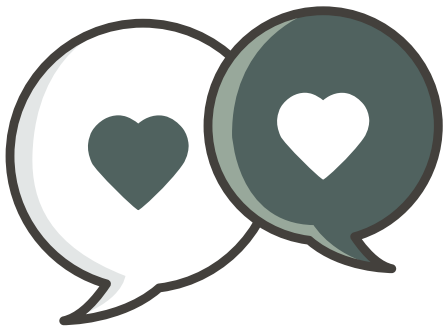
Collect Baseline Data: Gather historical retention information before implementing changes

Set Realistic Targets: Aim for 5-10% improvement in critical areas within first year

Share Selectively: Communicate non-sensitive metrics with staff to build shared ownership

Review Quarterly: Schedule regular dashboard reviews with leadership team

Connect to Action: Each problematic metric should trigger specific intervention strategies



A quick mindset “check-in”
from the toolkit creator...
Grace Stevens

Dear Administrator, I’m checking in with YOU quickly.

I know your staff is made of passionate people with full lives, goals, and complexities. It can be disheartening to plot them as “data” and see underlying concerning trends.

Remember, this data is meant to EMPOWER you to make positive changes. It’s not about assigning blame, feeling guilty, or feeling overwhelmed. The data can make you AWARE of trends. With awareness comes choice.

Remember, you may be reading this guide in one sitting. Section 7 plots out a one-year implementation timeline. This is not all something you need to achieve this week!

The fact that you have taken the time to consider the ideas in this toolkit tells me that you are an administrator who CARES about your staff. Job dissatisfaction, burnout, and retaining great teachers are system-wide issues. They are not unique to your campus and your leadership.

Again, I'd like to point out that the next section on reflection and action steps is here to empower you. Great leaders learn and grow. I’m sending you a virtual fist-bump and reminding you that teaching may be tough, but so are we.

I’m here to support you in any way I can!

Grace

Now back to the Toolkit

SECTION THREE

Reflection Prompts & Actions By Risk Area

Now that you have some baseline data, it's time to reflect and come up with specific action items and timelines to address these issues.

Workload & Resources

What tasks are teachers currently doing that don't directly impact student learning?

How might we restructure the school day to provide more adequate planning time?

What resources do teachers most frequently request or mention needing?

SECTION THREE

How could we better distribute responsibilities across staff to prevent overload?

What's one requirement we could eliminate to create immediate relief?

Workload & Resources

Action Planning Space:

Immediate action (within 2 weeks):

Short-term improvement (within 3 months):

Systemic change (within 1 year):

SECTION THREE

Leadership & Communication

When was the last time I solicited anonymous feedback about my leadership?

How do I typically respond when teachers bring concerns to me?

What decision-making processes could benefit from more teacher input?

How might our communication systems be redesigned to be more collaborative?

What leadership behaviors might be unintentionally suppressing teacher voice?

SECTION THREE

Leadership & Communication

Action Planning Space:

Immediate action (within 2 weeks):

Short-term improvement (within 3 months):

Systemic change (within 1 year):

SECTION THREE

Recognition & Growth

How do we currently identify and acknowledge individual teacher strengths?

What opportunities exist for teachers to share expertise with colleagues?

How might we create more differentiated professional growth pathways?

What leadership opportunities could we develop for teachers who want to grow?

How do we celebrate both large and small victories within our school?

SECTION THREE

Recognition & Growth

Action Planning Space:

Immediate action (within 2 weeks):

Short-term improvement (within 3 months):

Systemic change (within 1 year):

SECTION THREE

School Culture & Belonging

How do new teachers learn about and integrate into our school culture?

What divides or silos exist within our staff community?

How might we create more meaningful collaboration opportunities?

What traditions or rituals could strengthen our sense of community?

How do we address behaviors that undermine our desired culture?

SECTION THREE

School Culture & Belonging

Action Planning Space:

Immediate action (within 2 weeks):

Short-term improvement (within 3 months):

Systemic change (within 1 year):

SECTION THREE

Emotional Support & Wellbeing

How comfortable do teachers seem discussing struggles or challenges?

What structural changes could better support teacher wellbeing?

How do I model healthy work-life boundaries as a leader?

What systems exist to identify teachers experiencing burnout?

How might we destigmatize emotional support in our professional context?

SECTION THREE

Emotional Support & Wellbeing

Action Planning Space:

Immediate action (within 2 weeks):

Short-term improvement (within 3 months):

Systemic change (within 1 year):

SECTION FOUR

Stay Interview Strategy

Stay interviews proactively identify retention risks before teachers decide to leave. Unlike exit interviews, they provide actionable information while you can still make changes. The “stay interview” protocol is most effective when it is a regular part of your leadership practice, not just a “one off” when turnover and staff dissatisfaction seem high.

Implementation Guidelines

Conduct with all teachers annually, prioritizing high performers and those at transition points (3-5 years, 7-10 years).

Schedule 30-45 minutes in a private, comfortable setting.

Begin by explaining the purpose is to learn how to better support them, **not evaluate**.

Listen more than you speak; take notes on key points.

Follow up with specific actions based on feedback within 2 weeks.

SECTION FOUR

Stay Interview Strategy

Core Questions

Engagement Measures

- What aspects of your work give you the most energy and satisfaction?
- When was the last time you felt excited about something at work?
- What makes for a "good day" for you in this school?

Retention Risks

- What factors, if any, have made you consider leaving in the past year?
- What keeps you working here despite those challenges?
- If you were to leave for another school, what might that school offer that we don't?

Growth & Development

- How well are you able to use your greatest strengths in your current role?
- What skills or capabilities would you like to develop further?
- What type of recognition or feedback is most meaningful to you?

SECTION FOUR

Stay Interview Strategy

Core Questions

Leadership Support

- How can I (as your administrator) better support your work?
- What obstacles can I help remove to make your job more manageable?
- How would you describe the quality of feedback you receive?

School Culture

- How connected do you feel to your colleagues and our school community?
- Where do you see misalignment between our stated values and day-to-day reality?
- What changes would make this a place where educators want to stay long-term?

SECTION FOUR

RESPONSE TRACKING TEMPLATE

TEACHER NAME:

DATE:

Question Area	Key Responses	Follow-up Needed?	Action Items
Engagement			
Retention Risks			
Growth & Development			
Leadership Support			
School Culture			

SECTION FOUR

RESPONSE TRACKING TEMPLATE

TEACHER NAME:

DATE:

Summary of Key Insights:

Priority Action Items:

Follow-up Date:

SECTION FIVE

Early Warning Signs of Staff Retention Risks

Staff don't suddenly decide to leave - there are usually warning signs. Watch for these behavioral changes that often precede departure decisions:

INDIVIDUAL WARNING SIGNS

Engagement Shifts

- Decreased voluntary participation in school activities
- Reduced contributions in meetings
- Less interaction with colleagues
- Withdrawal from leadership roles

Performance Patterns

- Doing minimum requirements versus previous initiative
- Decreased investment in long-term projects
- Reduced responsiveness to emails/communications
- Changes in attendance patterns (increased absences, strict adherence to hours)

Communication Signals

- Language shifts from "we" to "you" when referring to school
- Decreased sharing of ideas or suggestions
- Increased complaints or criticism
- References to how other schools handle situations

SECTION FIVE

INDIVIDUAL WARNING SIGNS. CONTINUED

Professional Development Indicators

- Sudden interest in transferable credentials or certifications
- Decreased commitment to school-specific initiatives
- Requests for recommendation letters
- Schedule adjustments for "appointments" or "personal time"

GROUP WARNING SIGNS

These patterns may indicate broader retention concerns:

- Department or grade-level clusters of resignations
- Decreased teacher-initiated social gatherings
- Reduced volunteering for committees or extra duties
- Increased sidebar conversations that stop when administrators approach
- Higher rates of transfer requests to other departments/grades
- Patterns of complaints about similar issues

INTERVENTION RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

Level 1: Individual Concerns

- Schedule informal check-in conversation
- Provide targeted support in specific challenge areas
- Create customized growth or leadership opportunity
- Adjust responsibilities to better align with strengths
- Document concerns and actions for follow-up

Level 2: Small Group Concerns

- Facilitate focused listening session with affected group
- Implement targeted team-building activities
- Address specific resource or support needs
- Create collaborative problem-solving opportunity
- Follow up with group-specific stay interviews

Level 3: School-Wide Concerns

- Conduct comprehensive culture assessment
- Implement structured feedback gathering system
- Prioritize 1-2 immediate culture improvement initiatives
- Create teacher-led task force to address systemic issues
- Develop transparent communication about challenges and actions

Exit Interview Framework

While exit interviews occur too late to retain the departing teacher, they provide invaluable insights about systemic issues affecting retention. These interviews help identify patterns, validate concerns observed in stay interviews, and provide specific improvement opportunities.

Implementation Guidelines

1. Schedule 45-60 minutes in a neutral, private location
2. Consider having someone other than the direct supervisor conduct the interview
3. Explain how the information will be used to improve the school
4. Assure confidentiality of specific feedback
5. Send questions in advance to allow for thoughtful reflection
6. Allow time for open-ended responses
7. Thank them for their contributions and maintain the relationship

Core Exit Interview Questions

1. Decision Process

- What primarily led to your decision to leave our school?
- When did you first begin considering leaving? Was there a specific incident or moment?
- What, if anything, could have been done earlier that might have changed your decision?
- Were there any last-minute factors that confirmed your decision to leave?

2. Role Satisfaction

- How well did your position utilize your skills and abilities?
- Did you feel your contributions were valued and recognized appropriately?
- Were your professional growth needs being met?
- Did you have the resources and support necessary to perform effectively?
- How manageable was your workload?

3. Leadership & Communication

- How would you describe the quality of communication from leadership?
- Did you feel heard and understood when bringing concerns forward?
- Did you receive helpful feedback and guidance on your performance?
- How would you describe the effectiveness of decision-making processes?
- What could leadership have done differently to better support you?

Core Exit Interview Questions

4. School Culture

- How would you describe the culture of our school to an outsider?
- Did you feel a sense of belonging and connection with colleagues?
- How effectively did the school manage change and new initiatives?
- Were there unwritten rules or expectations that caused stress or confusion?
- What aspects of our culture need the most immediate attention?

5. Future-Focused Insights

- What specific changes would make this a better place to work?
- What should we make sure never changes about this school?
- What advice would you give to the person who replaces you?
- What qualities should we look for in candidates for your position?
- Is there anything else you think would be valuable for us to know?

SECTION SIX

Exit Interview Documentation Template

Teacher Name:

Position:

Years at School:

Interview Date:

New Position/School (if known):

Interviewer:

Question Area	Key Responses	Follow-up Questions	Action Items
Decision Process			
Role Satisfaction			
Leadership & Communication			
School Culture			
Future-Focused Insights			

Summary of Key Insights:

SECTION SIX

Exit Interview Documentation Template (continued)

Teacher Name:

Summary of Key Insights:

Patterns Consistent with Other Exit/Stay Interviews:

Priority Action Items based on this exit interview:

Exit Interview Data Analysis Framework

Use this tool to track aggregate responses across exit interviews to identify patterns:

Departure Factor	Frequency Mentioned	Specific Examples	Potential Solutions
Workload			
Leadership concerns			
Growth opportunities			
Recognition			
Compensation			
School culture			
Work-life balance			
Resource limitations			
Other			

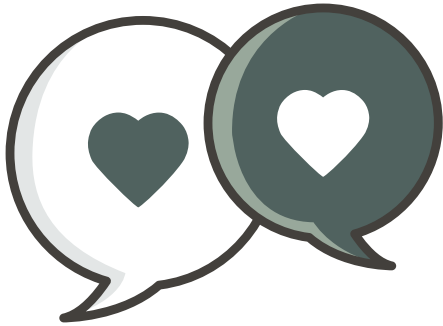
Exit Interview Data Analysis Framework

Quarterly Review Process for Exit Interviews:

1. Analyze exit interview data for patterns.
2. Compare with stay interview insights.
3. Identify 1-3 highest-priority improvement areas.
4. Develop specific action plans for each area.
5. Communicate relevant (non-confidential) insights with leadership team.
6. Track the implementation of recommended changes.

Retention Toolkit

Implementation Timeline



DON'T STRESS! A quick
“check-in” from Grace

Remember: Retention improvement is a long-term project requiring consistent attention and fine-tuning. You will unlikely have the time and energy for a complete campus overhaul. **Focus on the minor improvements** that compound over time, and you will be able to create a significant culture change and accomplish your dream of a school where teachers are thriving and excited to work together.

Implementing these tools and encouraging challenging conversations may take you **out of your comfort zone**. However, avoiding conversations and ignoring warning signs have the potential to be far more painful in the long run.

Do not stress! After you digest the suggested implementation guidelines, you will have a brief introduction to what I consider to be **the “magic wand” solution** to many of your concerns. It’s easy to implement, and you likely already have designated funds in your budget to help.

Help is as close as an e-mail or a click!

www.gracestevens.com/admins

Retention Toolkit

Implementation Timeline

Month 1: Assessment & Baseline

1. Complete the Retention Risk Assessment
2. Collect historical retention data for the dashboard
3. Schedule initial stay interviews with key staff
4. Identify highest priority risk areas

Month 2-3: Initial Interventions

1. Implement 2-3 quick wins based on assessment
2. Begin tracking leading indicators
3. Complete the first round of stay interviews
4. Develop action plans for priority risk areas

Month 3: Exit Interview Implementation

1. Develop a standardized exit interview process
2. Train appropriate staff on conducting effective exit interviews
3. Create a system for documenting and analyzing exit interview data
4. Begin conducting exit interviews with all departing staff

Month 4-6: Systems Development

1. Create a regular retention data review process
2. Implement an early warning monitoring system
3. Develop a communication plan around retention efforts
4. Begin implementing structural changes in the highest risk areas

Month 7-12: Culture Transformation

1. Reassess using Retention Risk Assessment
2. Update dashboard with new data
3. Evaluate effectiveness of interventions
4. Adjust strategies based on leading indicators
5. Compare exit interview data with stay interview insights
6. Celebrate early wins and progress



Reveraging PD to Give Teachers the Skills They Need to Avoid Burnout

Identifying issues causing staff burnout is easier than finding specific resources to help them. Of course, you have a responsibility to ensure that school policies and culture support teacher success.

However, much of teacher dissatisfaction is driven by being overwhelmed and the fact that they were never taught skills and strategies that fall less under “professional development” and more under “personal development.”

Skills such as:

- emotional regulation & stress management
- proactively anticipating and handling tensions and conflict
- recognizing and managing multiple priorities
- setting healthy boundaries and limits with co-workers, parents & students
- feeling more empowered by focusing on things they can control
- investing in true school/life balance
- understanding how to “leave school at school” physically, mentally, and emotionally to truly recharge
- navigating negativity with professionalism and grace

These are not skills they were taught in teacher training college, and few districts invest in hiring experts in these fields to coach teachers in these areas during traditional PD Days.

Having spent over 20 years sitting through traditional teacher PD myself, I know there is an incredible opportunity to give teachers practical skills that is not being met. When surveyed about the PD they receive, most teachers indicate that 75- 80 percent of it is “a waste of time” and that they often dread PD days as they leave trainings with “more things on our plate to do instead of less.”

Again, there IS a better way.



Reveraging PD to Give Teachers the Skills They Need to Avoid Burnout

What if **you** could be the hero who transformed teacher PD from a “check off item” that teachers dread into a truly welcomed and transformative experience that provides tangible tools to help them thrive?

What if it was as easy for you as pressing a button?

And what if you paid once and had lifetime access to the training and material - just in case that PD budget disappears?

Maybe I can help.

My name is Grace Stevens, and I’m an author and **the Teacher Retention & Empowerment Coach for schools that want to stop the burnout cycle that causes their best teachers to leave**. I specialize in personal development for educators—think mindset training, emotional intelligence, and leadership EQ. My resources help teachers feel seen, supported, and emotionally equipped to lead inside and outside the classroom.

Having worked as a corporate VP, a public school teacher, and a mindset and EQ coach, I have a unique perspective and skill set. I understand the pressures of leadership, the realities of the classroom, and the **HARD SCIENCE** behind what helps people thrive.

If you’re tired of high turnover and low morale, I invite you to learn about my offerings. They are guaranteed to be the most popular, productive, and cost-effective PD you have ever provided your teachers.

Teachers love me because my PD is real-world, relatable, and relevant. I taught full-time until the end of 2022 and am still in classrooms weekly on a part-time basis.

Administrators love me because I don’t just provide a pep-talk, but science-backed strategies that are easy and free to implement. And I make them look like the hero for finding me.



Reveraging PD to Give Teachers the Skills They Need to Avoid Burnout

To learn more about how I can help you improve teacher retention and provide your staff with the skills they need to thrive, visit:

www.gracestevens.com/admin

Short on time? [To watch a 5-minute introductory video, click here](#)

To book a [complimentary 15-minute PD consultation, click here](#)

(I promise there will be zero sales pitch. You will speak with me, and I'm a delight!)

Or click below to explore specific areas of interest:

Book Studies (with or without Zoom author kick-off)

Keynote Presentations

Instant Impact On-Demand Training Modules

Plug and play PD that you facilitate on your schedule or assign to teachers during their PLC/prep time. Pay once and get lifetime access! These are also excellent resources for new hire orientation.

A year-long program to support teacher well-being based on my best-selling [Positive Mindset Habits for Teachers](#). Teachers love the short video format and habit trackers!

There is something for every budget.

I wish you the best of luck in implementing the Teacher Retention Diagnostic Toolkit and hope this is just the beginning of our journey together.

Grace

About Your Coach



A former corporate girl, Grace quit VP life to pursue her dream job as a public school teacher. After 20 years in the classroom, she now focuses full-time on helping educators have a more positive teaching experience.

Grace combines her signature mantra, "Your energy teaches more than your lesson plans," with two decades of study in behavioral therapy, positive psychology, and NLP to create science-based habits for overwhelmed educators.

She is the author of the best-selling Positive Mindset Habits for Teachers and four other books for teachers. She also hosts the Teacher Self-Care and Life Balance podcast.

Grace is **the** Teacher Retention & Empowerment Coach for schools that want to stop the burnout cycle that causes their best teachers to leave.

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