Retaining High Performers

How recognition, rewards and growth opportunities can help schools keep their best teachers.
For schools to thrive over time, they must retain top teachers and put their skills to use.

Teacher Talent Toolbox

A high-performing teaching team

School-tested strategies for growing great teaching teams
Contents of the Retaining High Performers Toolkit

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

- How are high performing teachers recognized and rewarded?
- What career growth opportunities are given to high performers?
- How do schools encourage long-term retention of high performers?

**TOOLS**

- Monetary rewards
- Non-monetary forms of recognition
- Teacher leadership development programs
- Innovative career path models

Read TNTP’s latest report, *The Irreplaceables*, to further examine the real teacher retention crisis: not only a failure to retain enough teachers, but a failure to retain the right teachers.
School leaders and teachers agree that retaining high performing teachers is a challenge.

“The biggest obstacle to student success is retaining staff; our turnover rate has been between 60-80% both of my years at the school. As a beginning third year teacher, I am tied for second most tenure at the school.”

– Survey response, 3rd year high school math teacher

72 percent of administrators responded that they have lost one or more highly effective teachers in the past 3 years...

... and 36 percent have lost 3 or more.

TNTP Benchmark Survey 2010
TNTP surveys show that schools with weak instructional cultures lose twice as many of their best teachers as schools with strong cultures.

For more information on definitions of strong vs. weak instructional cultures, see the Methodology page.

50+ survey questions on school instructional culture

11,000 teachers surveyed to date

300 schools applying the results to develop and retain great teachers
Identifying high performers to focus retention efforts on depends on an effective evaluation system.

**Memphis City Schools**

- Redefined what effective teaching means and created the “Teacher Effectiveness Measure” (TEM).
- The TEM evaluates teachers based on student achievement, classroom observations, stakeholder surveys and knowledge of teaching.

**Achievement First**

- Created a new “Teaching Excellence Framework” to drive a new career track.
- The framework includes student achievement data, student surveys, parent surveys, lesson observations, portfolio review, peer surveys and overall principal assessment.

**Houston Independent School District**

- Created a new “Teacher Appraisal and Development System” that includes multiple measures of student performance, regular feedback and individualized support.

Refer to the *Evaluation* toolkit to learn more about effective evaluation systems.
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<th>Promising Practices for Retaining High Performing Teachers</th>
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## Promising Practices in Action

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<th>PROMISING PRACTICES IN ACTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Offer monetary rewards</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Denver Public Schools</strong>’ ProComp system allows teachers several opportunities to build upon and supplement their base salary based on student achievement and professional accomplishments.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Provide non-monetary recognition</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D.C. Public Schools</strong> holds an annual awards ceremony and formal reception to recognize excellent teachers.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Manage workload</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Citizens Academy</strong> supports teachers by providing one Instructional Assistant per grade and volunteer tutors to give students one-on-one attention.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Provide career growth opportunities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rocketship</strong> offers a teacher-leader development program for high performers to move into school leadership positions.</td>
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<td><strong>Learn from experience</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Memphis City Schools</strong> created the Teacher Ambassador program that allows teachers to take on a leadership role within their school and receive a stipend while remaining in the classroom.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>YES Prep</strong> tracks attrition data and uses surveys to solicit teachers’ retention plans.</td>
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Monetary rewards can take many forms.

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<tr>
<th><strong>D.C. Public Schools</strong></th>
<th><strong>Noble Street</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Performance Pay</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individual Bonuses</strong></td>
<td><strong>Grade-Level Bonuses</strong></td>
<td><strong>Salary Supplements</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Links performance-based pay system, IMPACT plus, to evaluation. Teachers can potentially earn over $130,000 if they are rated as Highly Effective.</td>
<td>Pay for performance system provides budgetary discretion for principals to reward performance up to 25% of salary. Bonus plan varies based on the specific student outcome goals for each campus.</td>
<td>Awards grade-level bonuses that are based on a tiered framework for meeting or exceeding student achievement goals set at the beginning of the year.</td>
<td>Each year, teachers can supplement their base salary in several ways, including exceeding district expectations for student growth on the state assessment ($+2,403) and teaching in a designated “Hard-to-Serve” school ($+2,403).</td>
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</table>
Performance-based awards can be based on a summative evaluation rating or account for other areas of achievement.

D.C. Public Schools

Summative Evaluation Rating

• Teachers who achieve the highest rating receive a bonus; receiving the highest rating two years in a row results in an increase in base salary.

• If a teacher is in a group where student achievement data counts for 50 percent of the rating, he/she can receive an additional bonus for being rated highly effective.

• Teaching in a school with a high percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch or in a high need subject areas will increase a teacher's bonus.

Denver Public Schools

Rating Plus Other Achievements

• Teachers can increase their base pay depending on their summative evaluation rating.

• Other opportunities for monetary rewards include, but are not limited to:
  
  o Pursuing additional professional development can increase base pay.

  o Bonuses are available for teaching in a school with a high percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch and in roles that are hard to staff.
Performance bonuses appear to modestly affect planned retention.

Percent of teachers who plan to remain in their schools for four or more years

- No performance bonus offered: 33%
- Bonus offered, has not received one: 44%
- Bonus offered, received one: 46%

68 percent of bonuses self-reported by teachers were between $1,000 and $3,000
Non-monetary forms of recognition have a significant impact on planned retention.

Percent of teachers who “Agree” or “Strongly agree” that “I feel appreciated for my hard work at my school” by length of planned retention.

- 24% of teachers plan to stay at their school until the end of this school year.
- 55% plan to stay for 2 or 3 more years.
- 74% plan to stay for 4 or more years.

“I just love getting shout-outs in our newsletter and at our meetings... it is simply satisfying intrinsically.”
- 4th year elementary teacher

 “[I appreciate] recognition of contributions through staff awards or notes of praise all of which are felt to be sincere and are appreciated.”
- 6th year English teacher

“My administrators tell me I'm a star all the time. Positive reinforcement works with teachers, too!”
- 2nd year English teacher
Schools where high performance is recognized and rewarded see higher planned retention of their teachers.

Percent of teachers who “Agree” or “Strongly agree” that “Teachers’ accomplishments are regularly recognized and celebrated” by length of planned retention.

![Bar graph showing percentages of teachers who plan to stay at their school until the end of the school year, 2 or 3 more years, or 4 or more years.](attachment:bar_graph.png)

- 30% plan to stay until the end of the school year
- 61% plan to stay for 2 or 3 more years
- 77% plan to stay for 4 or more years

Refer to the *Building a Professional Culture* toolkit for more information on creating a healthy culture for all teachers.

TNTP Benchmark Survey 2010
A key reason for attrition is workload.

The top four reasons for leaving among teachers at all schools who plan to leave within two years.*

- Workload: 14%
- Student conduct/culture of school: 12%
- Dissatisfied with leadership: 10%
- Financial compensation: 7%

*Not including “Personal Reasons.”

“The current amount of work that we have to do on a daily basis is more than expected, and honestly, more than I have time for. If we did not have so much extra work to do outside of school, I would not be considering leaving.”

– 4th year math teacher

“The school is not as committed to teacher success as it is to student success. The workload for teachers is far too demanding and not all tasks are necessary.”

– 1st year teacher

TNTP Instructional Culture Insight Survey 2011

TNTP Benchmark Survey 2010
Provide additional support and set aside time to plan.

Rocketship Education

- Developed scope and sequence and unit plans for every course.
- Created homework binders with assignments for every state standard.
- Catalogued lessons and resources online for teachers.
- Uses substitute teachers to administer and score interim assessments.
- Staffs silent reading center with non-certified personnel.
- Uses college students to conduct supplemental tutoring.
- Interns shadow teachers to record how hours are spent and identify additional efficiencies.

Refer to the Building a Professional Culture toolkit to learn more about how to manage work loads and other ways of creating a healthy culture for teachers.
The ability to influence students and grow professionally are among the top reasons that teachers stay in their schools long-term.

Top reasons for staying, among teachers planning to remain in their schools for four or more years*

36% Impact on student outcomes
29% Financial compensation
24% Opportunities to develop
21% Student conduct/culture of school
19% Possible future roles within organization

*Reasons listed among top two

TNTP Benchmark Survey 2010
Use instructional support positions to give teachers the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities and grow professionally.

**Friendship Public Charter Schools**

*Instructional Performance Coach* is a full-time position. Coaches work with the school’s administration to give instructional support to teachers across all subject areas.

**Brownsburg Community School Corporation**

*Instructional Coach* is a full-time position at a school. Coaches assist teachers who are not meeting expectations on multiple measures. They also facilitate professional development opportunities and Professional Learning Communities.

**West Denver Prep**

*Specialists* are full-time teachers who receive a stipend to assume one period daily, four days a week, to support students and teachers in reaching instructional goals in one particular subject area.

**Memphis City Schools**

*Teacher Ambassadors* are full-time teachers who receive a stipend to serve as a school’s communication liaison between teachers and the district. They work to effectively communicate and advocate for reform efforts.
Develop administration and teaching pathways to provide varied career options for high performing teachers.

Q: “Are there … ways excellence is recognized that contribute to your desire to continue to teach at your school?”

A: “Definitely! My school and my charter network have a Career Pathways program for teachers that helps them hone their teaching ability, identify their areas of interest and pursue opportunities in that area. For me, as a first year teacher, I'm excited to fill out my professional growth plan and have assistance figuring out what my professional goals are for the next 3-5 years and over the long term.”

- First year elementary teacher

A: “Excellence should be highly valued professionally, and evidenced by more personal time, money, growth and development opportunities.”

- 7th Year Social Science teacher
Implement leadership development programs to prepare teachers for school leadership roles. (1 of 2)

**Rocketship Education**

Offers a leadership training program to all teachers, which it uses to target individuals for school leadership positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1: Embedded Leadership</th>
<th>Year 2: Full-time Training</th>
<th>Year 3: In-job Training</th>
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<tr>
<td>All teachers participate in staff-wide program to develop leadership skills.</td>
<td>Teachers identified in staff-wide program as having key traits that will allow them to be an effective leader are selected into training program.</td>
<td>In Year 2, candidates who meet rigorous selection criteria move into roles as Principals-in-Training or Deans-in-Training.</td>
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<td>Year 3 involves the ongoing professional development and support of Principals and Deans once they move into their roles.</td>
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Implement leadership development programs to prepare teachers for school leadership roles. (2 of 2)

**Teacher Leadership Development Program**

- Teachers apply to the program based on student achievement data, past leadership experience and administrator recommendation.
- Participants are trained over the summer and during the year to teach and coach adults.
- Participants facilitate several teacher professional development events over the course of the year.

**Administrator-in-Residence (AIR) Program**

- Participants complete a year-long residency program:
  - Gain hands-on experience in schools under mentor principals (4 days/week).
  - Complete special projects at the network office and receive individualized professional development (1 day/week).
- Program completers are considered for assistant principal or principal roles with Green Dot schools.

“Our biggest challenge right now is the school leadership pipeline. We created an internal residency program because it was hard to find principals who can come in and take over a school right away.”

– Green Dot Leadership Team Member
Use career pathways that allow high performing teachers to stay in the classroom and maximize student achievement.

Goals for a teaching career pathway:

D.C. Public Schools

• Provide a clearer career path for high performing teachers.
• Use the district’s rigorous annual evaluation system to drive teacher movement up the pathway.
• Organize a diverse array of opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles while remaining in the classroom.

YES Prep

• Provide a leadership pathway that does not remove high performers from the classroom.
• Create incentives for high performing individuals to teach at YES Prep and to remain with the organization longer.
• Enable YES Prep to target resources to maximize student achievement.
Create robust teaching pathways to provide development and recognition in addition to increased compensation.

- **Increased Compensation**: Higher salary based on performance level.

- **Team Incentives and Recognition with School-wide Bonuses**: All team members in a school have an opportunity to earn a bonus of up to 10 percent of their salary based on the overall success of the school.

- **Robust Learning Opportunities**: Top teachers get self-directed professional development budget and access to leadership and professional development opportunities.

- **More Feedback/More Sources**: All teachers will have new parent, student and peer feedback included in their evaluations.

- **Consistent Recognition**: Network-wide publication of top tier teachers and video of teaching used as exemplar in professional development.
Build in time and multiple opportunities for teacher input to refine and enhance pathway design. (1 of 3)

From September 2010 to March 2011, Houston ISD engaged teachers in several ways on the design of a new Teacher Appraisal and Development System:

- Created a public website to share materials on the design process. (www.hisdeffectiveteachers.org)
- Sent teachers and principals biweekly email updates on the design of the new system.
- Organized working groups, including teachers and principals, that met weekly to develop the rubrics for the system.
- Created an online survey of the draft proposal that was completed by 2,655 teachers and 282 appraisers.
- Conducted focus groups with 40 teachers and 18 principals to elicit feedback on particular parts of the new system.
- Field tested the Instructional Practice Rubric in several schools before implementing the new system district-wide.
Build in time and multiple opportunities for teacher input to refine and enhance pathway design. (2 of 3)

- Solicited input from teachers over the course of two years.
- Input groups developed initial drafts of a new career pathway and provided ongoing feedback on improvements.
- Network co-CEOs visited every school to introduce the pathway to every teacher and to receive their additional feedback.

**Achievement First**

<table>
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<th>Pathway Creation</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Small-scale Pilot</th>
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<td>Spring 2009</td>
<td>Spring 2009-Spring 2010</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
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Teachers chose a career pathway over a one-time teacher award, kicking off development of a new teacher career pathway.

Held 10 teacher input groups to develop initial drafts of the new career pathway.

Held pilot with 30 teachers to test the initial tools and logistics.
**Build in time and multiple opportunities for teacher input to refine and enhance pathway design. (3 of 3)**

### Full-scale Pathway Introduction and Pilot
**Sept – Dec 2010**
- **Sept 2010:** Meeting with principal cohorts to introduce comprehensive model and gather feedback
- **Oct 2010:** Meeting with all teachers at every school to introduce comprehensive model and gather feedback
- **Nov 2010:** Observation training/ norming for all coaches
- **Nov 2010:** Lesson observations began

### On-Going Evaluation and Feedback
**Dec 2010 – Aug 2011**
- **Dec 2010 – Jan 2011:** Professional Growth Plan (PGP)
- **March – May 2011:** Parent survey, peer survey, student survey, principal planning assessment
- **April 2011:** Feedback from teachers on Pathway as part of Network Support Survey
- **May – June 2011:** Teachers received comprehensive report and feedback from coach (TBD)
- **June – Aug 2011:** Feedback and revisions to model from principal feedback and input groups

### Continued Evaluation and Advancement
**Sept 2011 – Sept 2012**
- **2011 – 2012 School Year:** All evaluation and feedback continues for a second year
- **2012 School Year:** Continued feedback from teachers and leaders
- **Sept 2012:** Teachers are placed in a stage based on two prior years of data. Compensation increases based on their stage
Career pathways may require innovative funding solutions.

**Pittsburgh Public Schools**

- Applied for significant external funding from private foundations and several federal programs to fund new career ladders with differentiated compensation.
- Received funding from a private foundation and a federal program.

**Achievement First**

- Projects long-term cost for career pathway along with ways to increase funding and maximize current resources.
- These costs could be made up by combination of:
  - Increased per pupil allocations from the state
  - Philanthropy (only to be used in the short term)
  - Reducing non-personnel costs
  - Managing school staffing and hiring to ensure a mix of teachers at each stage in each school
  - Slightly reducing, through natural attrition, the total number of teachers
  - Adding slightly more students per school
Gather data on attrition to drive targeted retention programs.

**YES Prep**

Uses surveys to track teachers’ current retention plans and differentiate “regrettable” attrition

<table>
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<th>Metrics Tracked*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rate of teacher attrition out of YES Prep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of teacher attrition YES Prep considers “regrettable”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of teachers leaving YES Prep categorized as “regrettable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of “regrettable” leavers categorized as “avoidable” – that is, those who left for graduate school or to pursue employment elsewhere (rather than those who married, left the state, or chose to leave YES Prep to care for children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of “reluctant hires” YES Prep has made due to low numbers of outstanding candidates in key areas (especially math, science, foreign language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers who have left the classroom to become administrators at YES Prep</td>
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*Data are tracked over time, reflecting the past five years
Explore additional tools for this Toolkit on the Full Toolbox page. Also, be sure to access the five other Toolkits of the Teacher Talent Toolbox to craft a complete talent management strategy.

Teacher Talent Toolbox

A high-performing teaching team

School-tested strategies for growing great teaching teams

- Recruitment & Hiring
- Evaluation
- Accountability
- Professional Culture
- Development
- Retention

Explore additional tools for this Toolkit on the Full Toolbox page. Also, be sure to access the five other Toolkits of the Teacher Talent Toolbox to craft a complete talent management strategy.