



Personal Excellence Committee Meeting Agenda

Collaboration Room 1
Central Administration Building
128 Soo Line Drive

September 8, 2026
5:30 p.m.

- I. Convene – 5:30 p.m.
- II. Committee Purpose & Strategic Alignment
- III. Workforce, Recruitment, and Retention Report
- IV. Herzberg’s Two-Factor Motivation Theory
- V. Committee Discussion & Member Perspectives
- VI. Action Planning: 2026-2027 Timeline
- VII. Adjourn – 6:30 p.m.

CURRENT LITERATURE AND RESEARCH ON TEACHER RETENTION

TEACHER RETENTION

Hanover Research. (2019, July 22). *Tackle the top drivers of teacher attrition.*

<https://www.hanoverresearch.com/insights/tackle-the-top-drivers-of-teacher-attrition/>

Major Findings:

1. Key Drivers of Teacher Attrition
 - a. **Burnout and Stress:** Excessive workloads and emotional exhaustion.
 - b. **Lack of Support:** Insufficient administrative support and leadership.
 - c. **Compensation:** Inadequate salary and benefits, leading to over 50% of teachers citing it as a significant factor for leaving.
 - d. **Working Conditions:** Challenging student behavior and lack of classroom autonomy.
 - e. **Administrative/Leadership Issues:** Poor school culture and top-down decision-making.
 2. Strategies for Retention
 - a. **Data-Driven Monitoring:** Using exit interviews and surveys to understand *why* teachers leave.
 - b. **Administrative Support:** Fostering a supportive, collaborative school environment.
 - c. **Professional Growth:** Providing relevant, high-quality development opportunities.
 - d. **Recognition:** Offering compensation, incentives, and recognition.
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Unruh, Sam (2024). *ND K-12 Teacher Retention Study*, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

Major Findings:

1. From 2006-07 to the 2022-23 school year, the **median years of experience** until leaving the profession has been **steadily decreasing**. In **2006-07**, half of teachers leaving the profession had **23 years of experience or less** and in **2022-23**, half of teachers leaving the profession had **9 years of experience or less**.
2. An analysis of three age groups was conducted (2007-09, 2014-16 and 2021-23). All **three groups of years** showed a **sizable number of departing teachers**. The first two year groups, 2007-09 and 2014-16, show that if newer teachers made it past the first few difficult years of teaching, 30-45 year olds were not terribly likely to leave teaching. However, in the **2021-23 group**, a **larger percentage of departers** were made up of these **30-45 year olds**.

3. In regard to the **percentage of teachers who leave teaching** for each age group, the percentage of teachers leaving teaching is **changing over time**. Teachers in their 20s (new teachers) and 60s (retiring teachers) were the most common to leave teaching. However, there is a general upward trend, even prior to the pandemic, across all age groups, **indicating an increase in teacher departures over time**.
 4. In regard to what **subject areas** are more **prone to loss of teachers**, the study found **Business, Agriculture, and Science teachers** all **had an increase** following the pandemic to **Music and Mathematics teachers**, who showed no change through the pandemic (while continuing a slight upward trend). It should be noted that elementary education teachers were not categorized in the subject area data.
 5. In this **study wages for departing teachers** who had four quarters of wages in their last year of teaching were compared to their wages for the following year with the sample size being 550 teachers. The median wage change for these 550 teachers was a **loss of \$3,216** compared with their income during their last year of teaching. However, **more of the teachers** in this study (326) **took a pay cut** than **increased their wages** (224).
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North Dakota United (2024). *Data Shows Teacher Retention is Major Issue*. North Dakota United.
<https://ndunited.org/news-media-center/united-voices/publications/past-issues/united-voices-march-2024>

Major Findings:

1. **Retention plans have dropped sharply:** When first hired, **93%** of educators said they planned to stay in the profession until retirement. Today, only **40%** say they are most likely to retire in education.
 2. **Younger educators are leaving at higher rates:** **19%** of those under 30 plan to retire in education and **24%** of those aged 30–39 plan to retire in education. This is a steep decline from the 85–94% who said the same when they entered the profession.
 3. **Statewide issue:** The problem is not limited to rural or urban areas; it affects all regions, genders, and building types.
 4. **Active consideration to leave:** Many educators are actively thinking about leaving, and the survey found no meaningful progress on retention efforts over the past two years.
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Taie, S., & Lewis, L. (2023, December). *Teacher attrition and mobility: Results from the 2021–22 teacher follow-up survey to the National Teacher and Principal Survey (First Look)*. National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/use-work/resource-library/report/first-look-ed-tab/teacher-attrition-and-mobility-results-2021-22-teacher-follow-survey-national-teacher-and-principal>

Major Findings:

1. **Overall Attrition Rate**

- a. About **8% of public school teachers left the profession** after the 2021–22 school year.
- b. Rates vary by school type, location, and teacher demographics.

2. Reasons for Leaving

- a. **Workload and Stress:** Heavy teaching loads, long hours, and burnout were commonly cited.
- b. **Compensation Issues:** Salary dissatisfaction influenced decisions, but less than working conditions.
- c. **Career Change or Retirement:** A significant portion left due to retirement or pursuing other careers.
- d. **School Conditions:** Lack of administrative support and challenging school environments contributed to attrition.

3. Teacher Mobility

- a. **Within-School Transfers:** Roughly 4% of teachers moved to a different school within the same district.
- b. **Cross-District Moves:** Smaller percentage moved to another district.
- c. **Private/Public Transitions:** Some public school teachers left for private schools or non-education careers.

4. Attrition by Teacher Characteristics

- a. **Early-Career Teachers:** Higher attrition among teachers with 1–5 years of experience.
- b. **Subject Area Differences:** STEM and special education teachers had slightly higher mobility rates.
- c. **Demographics:** Attrition varied by age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

5. School-Level Factors

- a. Teachers were more likely to **leave** high-poverty schools or schools with **higher proportions of students with special needs**.
- b. Schools with **strong leadership, supportive colleagues, and professional development** saw **lower attrition rates**.

6. Implications

- a. Teacher retention strategies should **focus on**:
 - **Reducing workload and stress**
 - **Improving administrative support**
 - **Targeted support for early-career teachers**
 - **Enhancing school climate and working conditions**

- 7. **Bottom Line - Teacher attrition is influenced more by working conditions, support, and career stage than by pay alone.** Addressing these factors is critical for maintaining teacher stability and improving student outcomes.

RAND Corporation. (2022). *Teaching for tomorrow: Educators on the future of their profession*.

RAND Corporation.

<https://static.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/97/17/e8f383b841f6a68ba5a6f6dca7c5/gallup-walton-family-foundation-teaching-for-tomorrow-report.pdf>

Major Findings:

1. Nearly one in five teachers **do not plan to return** to their classroom (5%) or are unsure whether they will (13%).
2. Just under one in three teachers (30%) say they **do not have the opportunity to do what they do best every day**. Teachers who have the opportunity to do what they do best every day are over 50 percentage points more likely to be satisfied with their jobs than those who do not (82% to 31%).
3. Teachers are 23 percentage points more likely to be extremely satisfied at work (40% vs. 17%) if they **report regularly collaborating with their peers** about best practices, resources and curriculum implementation.
4. Nearly four in 10 teachers (38%) **do not agree their students are on track to succeed** in school, and 40% are not satisfied with their students' academic achievement.
5. Some 19% of high school teachers say their **college-bound students are not prepared for college**, and 35% say their students who plan to enter the workforce are not prepared to do so.
6. About one in three teachers say their **students are not excited about what they are learning in their classes** (34%). Research indicates students' excitement is closely tied to that of their teachers, just under one in three teachers (31%) strongly agree they are excited about what they are teaching.

Marks, D., & Esdal, L. (2023, August). *Understanding teacher retention at teacher-powered schools*. Education Evolving.

<https://www.educationevolving.org/resources/understanding-teacher-retention-at-teacher-powered-schools>

Major Findings:

1. **Lower Teacher Departure Rates**
 - a. Teacher-powered schools reported an **average annual departure rate of 9.2%**
 - b. This is **significantly lower** than the commonly cited **national average of approximately 16%**
2. **Retention Is Not Driven by Student Demographics**
 - a. Unlike national trends, **student poverty levels were not strongly associated with teacher turnover** in teacher-powered schools.

- b. This finding challenges the common assumption that high-poverty school contexts inevitably lead to higher teacher attrition.
- c. The authors suggest that **school design and professional culture** can mitigate factors that typically contribute to turnover.

3. **Teachers Stay Because of Mission and Autonomy**

- a. Interviewed teachers consistently cited:
 - **Strong alignment with school mission**
 - **Professional autonomy and trust**
 - **Collective leadership and collaboration**
 - **Deeper relationships with students and families**

These conditions foster a sense of ownership and long-term commitment that is often absent in more hierarchical school models.

4. **Leadership Structure Matters** - the report reinforces existing research showing that:

- a. **Expanded teacher leadership roles**
- b. **Authentic participation in decision-making** are associated with **lower burnout, greater job satisfaction, and higher institutional loyalty**—all of which contribute to retention.

EFFECT OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHER RETENTION

Kruse, J. (2024). *Teacher perceptions on the effects of school leadership on teacher retention* (Doctoral dissertation, William Woods University). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Major Findings:

Teachers identified **five themes** as especially valuable for school leaders in retaining staff:

1. **Leadership Flexibility** – Adapting leadership style to meet the needs of different situations and staff.
 2. **Building Strong Relationships** – Developing trust and rapport with teachers and other staff.
 3. **Empathy and Understanding** – Showing genuine concern for teachers' personal and professional challenges.
 4. **Building and Sustaining a Positive Culture** – Fostering a supportive, collaborative, and respectful school environment.
 5. **Fostering Accountability and Trust** – Encouraging mutual responsibility and transparency between leaders and staff.
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Lochmiller, C. R., Perrone, F., & Finley, C. (2024). Understanding school leadership's influence on teacher retention in high-poverty settings: An exploratory study in the U.S. *Education Sciences*, 14(5), 545. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14050545>

Major Findings:

1. **Reaffirming the School's Mission:** The principal emphasized the importance of "mission work" in serving high-poverty students that fostered a shared belief among teachers that these students could succeed academically despite their challenging circumstances. This commitment motivated teachers to stay and work in the school.
2. **Establishing a Culture of Professional Relationships:** The principal rebuilt trust and collaboration among teachers and connected with teachers on a personal level, and encouraged self-care, which improved teacher morale and retention.
3. **Recognizing Teachers' Work:** The principal prioritized recognizing and affirming teachers' contributions. She provided supportive feedback, encouraged peer observations, and deployed her leadership team to offer differentiated support, creating a culture where teachers felt valued and supported.
4. **Assisting with Student Behavior Management:** The principal implemented a school-wide behavior management system (Well-Managed Schools model) to address extreme and disruptive student behaviors. This system provided consistency, reduced classroom disruptions, and improved working conditions for teachers.
5. **Strengthening Relationships with Families:** The principal and her team worked to build relationships with parents and families, addressing complex challenges such as parents'

own negative school experiences and competing personal demands. These efforts helped reduce student behavioral issues and fostered a supportive school environment.

6. **Improved Working Conditions:** The principal's leadership actions, including creating systems to minimize disruptions, providing disciplinary support, and fostering a sense of connection to the school's mission, contributed to improved working conditions and teacher retention.
 7. In **summary**, the study highlights the importance of emphasizing the need for principals to focus on **building relationships, supporting teachers, addressing student behavior, and fostering a shared commitment to the school's mission**. These actions were found to **significantly improve teacher retention** in challenging school environments.
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Sulit, A. (2020). Leadership can't stand alone: Why school districts need policy to increase teacher retention. *eJournal of Education Policy*, 21(2).

<https://doi.org/10.37803/ejepF2008>

Major Findings:

1. **Leadership Matters** — Especially Distributive Leadership. Teacher retention improves when leadership responsibilities are shared across staff, not centralized in one administrator. Teachers feel more valued when they have voice and influence in decision-making.
 2. **Policy Is Required to Sustain Leadership Practices.** Informal leadership practices disappear with leadership turnover and district policies ensure consistency across schools and overtime.
 3. **Extra Work Can Undermine Retention.** Leadership opportunities sometimes increase workload without adequate support and without safeguards, distributive leadership can unintentionally drive burnout.
 4. **Leadership Turnover Harms Teacher Stability.** Frequent changes in principals or administrators negatively affect teachers' ability to succeed and stability in leadership supports retention.
 5. **Strong Preparation and Mentoring Systems Are Critical.** Retention improves when districts invest in high-quality teacher preparation programs, structured mentoring, experienced teachers serving in leadership roles and ongoing support for early-career teachers
 6. **Partnerships Enhance Retention Supports.** Collaboration with universities and external organizations can provide: Long-term professional support, research-based initiatives, and classroom-embedded assistance.
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Key, S. N. (n.d.). *Leading to stay: The role of principal leadership in urban teacher retention* (ERIC Document No. ED672440). ERIC

Major Findings:

1. **Principal Leadership Is the Strongest School-Based Retention Factor.** Teachers are more likely to stay when principals demonstrate effective, supportive leadership. Leadership quality often outweighs salary or student demographics as a predictor of retention.
 2. **Supportive Relationships Reduce Turnover.** Teachers remain when principals build trust, show respect, and maintain open communication. Feeling valued and heard increases job satisfaction and commitment.
 3. **Instructional Leadership Matters.** Principals who actively support teaching and learning improve retention and the key practices are meaningful feedback and coaching, classroom support and professional growth opportunities.
 4. **Working Conditions Are Shaped by Leadership .** Principals strongly influence school climate, workload expectations, and staff morale. Positive environments reduce burnout, especially in high-needs urban schools.
 5. **Shared Decision-Making Encourages Commitment.** Teachers are more likely to stay when involved in school decisions. Collaborative leadership builds ownership and professional agency.
 6. **Support for New and Early-Career Teachers Is Critical.** Mentoring, induction programs, and principal accessibility reduce early attrition. Urban schools often lose teachers within the first 3–5 years without strong support.
 7. **Recognition and Appreciation Increase Retention.** Simple acknowledgment of teacher effort contributes to morale and long-term commitment.
 8. **Lack of Administrative Support Is a Primary Reason for Leaving.** Teachers frequently cite ineffective or unsupportive leadership as a reason for departure—more than student behavior or workload alone.
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Frahm, M., & Cianca, M. (n.d.). Will they stay or will they go? Leadership behaviors that increase teacher retention in rural schools. *The Rural Educator*, 42(3).

<https://doi.org/10.35608/ruraled.v42i3.1151>

Major Findings:

1. **Administrative support is the single most influential factor in rural teacher retention.** Teachers consistently identified supportive leadership behaviors—rather than salary or location alone—as central to their decision to stay in rural schools.
2. **Rural schools must be more intentional and proactive in retaining new teachers.** Due to geographic isolation, limited resources, and professional constraints, rural districts must exert greater and more deliberate effort than non-rural schools to retain educators.
3. **Teacher support must be a collective responsibility, not solely the principal's role.** Retention improves when superintendents, principals, and colleagues share responsibility for mentoring and supporting new teachers, creating a unified culture of support.

4. **Structural supports significantly increase retention.**
Formal systems such as mentoring programs, clear onboarding processes, and instructional guidance help new teachers feel competent and supported, increasing their likelihood of staying.
 5. **Ongoing affirmation and encouragement are critical leadership behaviors.**
Leaders who regularly recognize teachers' efforts, provide positive feedback, and affirm professional value strengthen teachers' sense of belonging and commitment to the school.
 6. **Strong relationships between leaders and teachers are foundational.**
Purposeful relationship-building—characterized by trust, visibility, and open communication—emerged as essential for retaining novice teachers in rural contexts.
 7. **Leadership behaviors can be intentionally leveraged to retain talent.**
The study confirms that rural school leaders can directly influence retention outcomes by adopting specific, research-informed leadership practices rather than viewing turnover as unavoidable.
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Ball, D. (2025). What Action Steps Can Schools Take to Improve Teacher Retention?.

<https://theadac.com/what-action-steps-can-schools-take-to-improve-teacher-retention/>

Major Findings:

1. **Build a Positive School Climate**

A supportive, collaborative culture is essential. Teachers are more likely to stay in environments where they feel valued, respected, and connected to colleagues.

Action steps:

- a. Conduct **annual school climate surveys** to identify concerns and track progress.
- b. Foster **collaboration, mutual respect, and professional support** through team-building activities and recognition programs.
- c. Celebrate successes and address issues promptly to maintain morale.

2. **Reduce Teacher Workload and Burnout**

High workloads and burnout are the top reasons for leaving the profession.

Action steps:

- a. Review and streamline schedules to reduce administrative burdens.
- b. Provide **adequate planning time** and integrate parent volunteer engagement to lighten daily duties.
- c. Use faculty meetings to discuss workload strategies and share resources.

3. **Strengthen Leadership and Trust**

Strong, instructional leadership builds trust and engagement.

Action steps:

- a. Seek **teacher input** when planning professional development, showing respect for their expertise.
- b. Communicate openly and involve teachers in decision-making processes.
- c. Lead by example, demonstrating commitment to student success and staff well-being.

4. **Support Professional Growth**

Teachers who feel their skills are valued are more likely to stay.

Action steps:

- a. Offer **relevant, timely professional development** aligned with teacher needs.
- b. Create opportunities for **collaborative learning** and peer mentoring.
- c. Recognize and reward contributions to both teaching and school culture.

5. **Address Systemic and Structural Issues**

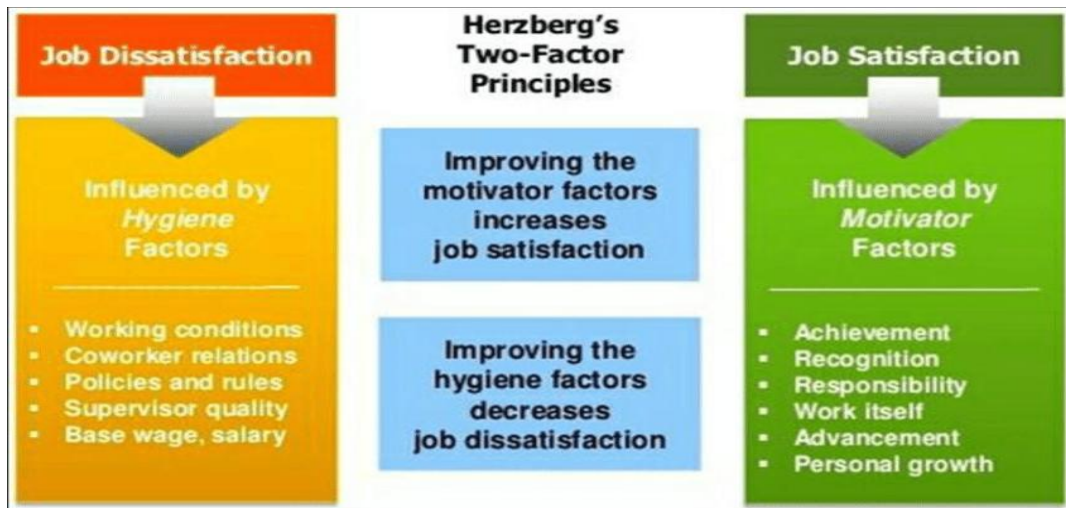
Retention is not just about individual actions—it requires systemic change.

Action steps:

- a. Align school policies with teacher well-being and workload reduction.
- b. Invest in **mental health resources** and stress management programs.
- c. Ensure equitable distribution of responsibilities and resources.

Bottom line: Retention is about creating a **culture where teachers feel supported, respected, and empowered**. By focusing on climate, workload, leadership, and growth, schools can build environments that keep educators engaged and committed.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory



Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory suggests that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction arise from different factors: motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators, such as achievement and recognition, enhance satisfaction, while hygiene factors, like salary and work conditions, prevent dissatisfaction but do not contribute to long-term

This theory distinguishes between factors that influence job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

- **Motivators** – These are intrinsic factors like achievement, recognition, and the nature of the work itself that lead to higher job satisfaction.
- **Hygiene Factors** – These are extrinsic factors such as salary, company policies, and working conditions that prevent dissatisfaction but do not enhance satisfaction.
- **Independence of Factors** – Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not opposites; improving hygiene factors does not necessarily increase satisfaction.
- **Application** – Understanding these factors helps managers create a more motivating work environment by addressing both motivators and hygiene factors.