

In the wake of the pandemic, the pressing issue of teacher retention and sustainability has become a focal point for educational leaders nationwide. **In order to better understand how charter leaders have worked to address these vulnerabilities, we conducted a series of interviews with CEOs and talent leaders from fourteen top teacher retaining charter school networks across the Charter School Growth Fund (CSGF) portfolio to dig deeper into their practices and lessons learned around teacher retention and sustainability.**

Teacher Retention & Sustainability: Five Key Lessons

The ultimate takeaway across these organizations was that investing in foundational culture and talent practices within your organization is critical before investing in innovative talent strategies (e.g. redesigning school day or compensation overhaul).



Start with Executive Team Culture

In high-retaining charter networks, the executive team embraces and models team accountability for their impact on culture throughout the organization. As a team, they push themselves to build and sustain the healthy, honest, collaborative culture they want to see in schools and in the organization as a whole.



Build Structures to Routinize Listening & Understanding

High-retaining charter networks have a strong pulse on what aspects of their Employee Value Proposition (EVP) no longer resonate with staff. They routinely collect and analyze multiple sources of input data, in order to be responsive to changing priorities in their staff without jumping from one band-aid solution to the next.



Model and Teach Change Management

Retention initiatives can unintentionally become the catalyst for staff departures if they reveal larger gaps in leadership, listening, and culture when it comes to change management. Leaders in high-retaining charter networks described change management strategy centered on consistent, planned communication and intentional leadership development in change management.



Invest in Principal Development & Retention to Keep your Best Teachers

Principal leadership was consistently rated as the top influencer of whether or not teachers choose to stay at a school. Therefore, charter school organizations need to have a robust principal development and retention strategy to ensure principals have the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary to create the conditions for teachers to grow and thrive.



Insist on a High Bar for Teacher Hires and Invest Heavily in the First Two Years

Leaders consistently described retention work as part of a larger talent cycle that begins with intentional hiring practices. Hiring teams must be incredibly clear and aligned on what non-negotiables they are looking for in teaching candidates and then consistently uphold that bar. Leaders described prioritizing new teacher coaching and support through the first year and beyond as a key to retention and sustainability.