



Quick-Start PD Checklist for Improved Teacher Retention

If you're ready to take action but don't know where to start, this checklist can help you quickly assess and strengthen your approach. These actionable steps support stronger teacher retention strategies by aligning your PD systems to what teachers value and need at different career stages.

Phase 1: Assessment & Foundation (Month 1)

Understand your current state and teacher needs

✓ Audit your existing PD offerings

- Review the last 6 months of professional development sessions
- Identify what percentage is teacher-led vs. administrator-led
- Assess whether PD is sustained over time or in one-time workshops
- Determine if current offerings are differentiated by experience level

✓ Survey teachers about retention factors

- Ask: "What professional support would make you more likely to stay at this school?"
- Identify the top 3 PD topics teachers want to explore
- Find out preferred learning formats (peer collaboration, video reflection, coaching, etc.)
- Discover which veteran teachers are interested in leadership roles

✓ Map teacher career stages

- Categorize staff into novice (0-3 years), mid-career (4-10 years), and veteran (10+ years)
- Identify high-performing teachers at risk of leaving
- Note the teachers who are currently seeking leadership opportunities

Phase 2: Quick Wins (Month 2-3)

Implement immediately actionable changes

✓ Transform one existing meeting monthly

- Convert 30 minutes of a faculty meeting into teacher-led sharing
- Use protocols like "2 successes, 1 challenge, 1 resource needed."
- Rotate facilitation among willing teachers

✓ Launch peer learning partnerships

- Pair teachers for monthly classroom visits (non-evaluative)
- Provide simple observation protocols focused on specific strategies



- Schedule 15-minute debrief conversations after observations

✓ **Create visible growth recognition**

- Dedicate 10 minutes in staff meetings to highlight teacher innovations
- Start a "Strategy Spotlight" email featuring teachers applying new learning
- Display evidence of student impact tied to teacher professional growth

✓ **Pilot differentiated PD tracks**

- Offer 2-3 different session options at your next PD day
- Let teachers choose based on their experience level and interests
- Gather feedback on which format was most valuable

Phase 3: Systematic Implementation (Month 4-6)

Build sustainable systems and structures

✓ **Establish personalized growth pathways**

- Create written descriptions of advancement opportunities within teaching
- Design micro-credentials or recognition levels that teachers can work toward
- Connect PD completion to leadership roles and additional responsibilities

✓ **Formalize teacher voice in PD decisions**

- Form a teacher-led PD committee with rotating membership
- Give teachers budget authority to choose conference attendance or bring in speakers
- Implement quarterly "PD request" forms where teachers propose session topics

✓ **Implement reflection and coaching tools**

- Introduce video-based reflection for willing participants (start with volunteers)
- Train teacher leaders to provide instructional coaching to peers
- Create structured reflection protocols tied to specific teaching goals

✓ **Develop recognition and celebration systems**

- Institute quarterly "PD goal achievement" recognition
- Create teacher learning portfolios that document growth over time
- Establish pathways for teachers to present their learning at district events



Phase 4: Measurement & Refinement (Ongoing)

Track impact and adjust systems

✓ Monitor engagement metrics beyond attendance

- Track teacher participation rates in voluntary PD opportunities
- Survey teachers quarterly about PD satisfaction and relevance
- Document retention rates among teachers engaged in differentiated PD

✓ Measure teacher voice and autonomy

- Ask teachers to rate their influence on PD decisions (1-10 scale)
- Track how many teacher-generated PD ideas are implemented
- Monitor whether teachers feel their expertise is recognized and utilized

✓ Assess career pathway effectiveness

- Count how many teachers advance through your internal growth system
- Track retention rates among teachers with leadership opportunities
- Document whether high-performing teachers see clear advancement options

✓ Evaluate teacher-led learning impact

- Measure participation in peer learning communities
- Track whether teachers report feeling more connected to colleagues
- Assess if collaborative learning time translates to classroom improvements



Red Flags to Address Immediately

If you discover any of these issues, prioritize fixing them:

- ✗ Teachers report feeling their time is wasted in PD sessions
- ✗ The same teachers always volunteer, while others consistently opt out
- ✗ Veteran teachers feel ignored or undervalued in professional learning
- ✗ PD topics are chosen without any teacher input
- ✗ Teachers complete learning but have no opportunities to share or apply it
- ✗ High-performing teachers express no interest in leadership within your school

Getting Started This Week

Choose 2-3 items from Phase 1 to complete within the next 7 days and consider:

1. Sending a brief survey asking teachers what PD support they need most
2. Identifying 3-5 teachers interested in leading peer learning
3. Reserving 15 minutes of your next team meeting for teacher-led sharing

You don't need to overhaul everything overnight. Start with understanding what teachers value, then build systems that deliver that value consistently. Even modest shifts can create momentum when they're rooted in teacher voice and designed for their actual career needs.