



Teacher Retention

A Resource for Charter School Leaders

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DR. CHARLOTTE PULLINS

Charter School Capital is in service to charter schools, helping charter school leaders get where they want to go. CSC provides money and resources to charter schools with the mission of giving every kid a nourishing school environment where they can flourish.

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What can charter leaders do to create lasting relationships with their educators and provide the support they need to return next year—and then year after year?



DR. CHARLOTTE PULLINS
Founder of ELC Training and Consulting LLC.

Teachers are leaving the profession in great numbers. The implications of this shift are alarming: teachers are the heartbeat of nourishing learning environments and have the most significant and direct impact on students.

This guide will cover best practices from Dr. Charlotte Pullins, who researches teacher turnover and is the co-founder of a non-profit organization that helps educate underserved children. She is also the founder and lead consultant of ELC Training and Consulting LLC and a certified DEI specialist. Read on for her insightful tips on building lasting relationships with your teachers, which will lead to a flourishing school culture, higher job satisfaction, and better outcomes for the kids you serve.

BEST PRACTICE #1: INSTILL VALUE

Teachers need to feel valued in their roles. Feeling valued stems from belonging, support, recognition, and appreciation. Connect your newest teachers with veteran teachers and plan activities that encourage bonding among your team of educators—teacher lunches, pancakes with the principal, and staff game days. Also, find ways to recognize your teachers meaningfully. Knowing what they do matters can make all the difference.

TIP

Highlight one of your teachers in a special post on your blog or social media. It's a great way to recognize and showcase the difference your teachers are making at your school. Publishing anecdotes of existing teachers also helps you recruit other talented educators!

BEST PRACTICE #2: PROMOTE GROWTH AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Develop or create ways for teachers to grow their skills and ways to be promoted to other school positions. A lack of visible and reachable opportunities can actually discourage teachers from seeking more professional growth, and lead to their seeking a job elsewhere.

Schools can also employ a distributive leadership model. This model ties in to Best Practice #1, because it means administrators recognize that teachers are experts—with insights and skills that can contribute to school your school’s mission. Empower teachers to act as leaders in their classrooms, subject areas, or grade levels, and encourage them to contribute to the broader goals of your school.

TIP

Teacher-led professional development allows teachers ownership and pride in their profession and creativity and showcases their skills to peers and administration, stimulating pride and teacher self-efficacy.

BEST PRACTICE #3: SUPPORT TEACHER WELLNESS

You want your school to be where teachers feel trusted, safe, respected, seen, and encouraged—all of which contribute to belonging. Focusing on social and emotional well-being as a core value for your school leads to a school culture that is safe mentally and physically. Even small things like more prep time, extra sick days, and more time off can create more work-life balance at your school. You’ll want to prioritize your teachers’ mental health by allowing mental breaks and mental health days and, if possible, free counseling.

TIP

Incorporate outside resources and programs that promote work-life balance to prevent teacher burnout.

BEST PRACTICE #4: ENCOURAGE AUTONOMY

Fostering teacher autonomy means allowing teachers to be creative. This doesn’t mean letting teachers have complete reign over their classrooms without guidelines or curriculum—but being open to innovative and new ideas for how the curriculum is delivered.

TIP

Keeping the big picture in mind can be helpful as you encourage autonomy in the classroom: student learning is the ultimate goal.



BEST PRACTICE #5: GIVE TEACHERS A VOICE

Teacher self-efficacy increases when an administration values their input and feedback. Do what's necessary to ensure teacher voices are heard, predominantly minority teachers. Include everyone in discussions, ask teachers for their opinions, voice concerns, and give recommendations when appropriate. When teachers can contribute to the decisions, they are more likely to buy into the school culture, curriculum, and mission.

“The best teachers are the ones you grow at your school.”

DR. CHARLOTTE PULLINS

You can support emerging educators and foster talent at your school by taking on students, teachers, and interns and recruiting from nearby fraternities and sororities.

TIP

Practices to encourage sharing in group settings: sticky notes with no names, anonymous surveys, polls, and voting.

Tips for Recruiting and Retaining Teachers of Color

Teachers of color bring diverse perspectives, cultural knowledge, and lived experiences to your school. They can provide culturally affirming instruction, build strong relationships with students, and implement effective strategies to address the unique needs and challenges faced by the students they serve. By actively recruiting teachers of color, schools can work towards creating a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive school environment that benefits all.

1. PROTECT PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

When recruiting and retaining teachers of color, schools, first and foremost, have a responsibility to protect their psychological safety. Ensuring psychological safety allows teachers of color to feel protected and cared for. Understanding the social and emotional needs of teachers of color will help create a work environment full of support.

TIP: *Ask teachers how they are doing after a social crisis that impacts their communities.*

2. CREATE ALLIES AND MENTORS

While many schools pair student and first-year teachers with mentors, veterans are usually not assigned one. Allies are people who stand against injustice that may happen in the workplace. An ally to teachers of color who may not have a voice is essential to their teacher self-efficacy.

TIP: *Be or assign allies or mentors to teachers of color.*

3. PEOPLE OF COLOR IN ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

Teachers of color add to diversity in thought, teaching styles, and approaches. Schools with more people of color who are lead teachers, coaches, instructional staff, and administrators help project the opportunities for others to reach those levels.

TIP: *Ensuring diverse interviewing and hiring committees creates equal representation opportunities for everyone.*

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

Learning about how diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging affect a school's work environment is critical in times of social crisis. Staff training components focus on belonging and how it affects others. A lack of a sense of belonging is one of the key reasons teachers of color leave schools.

TIP: *Create professional development modules around cultural competency.*

Recruitment of Teachers of Color Process Plan

1

STEP 1: RECOGNIZE

- Pinpoint the areas that lack representation
- Prioritize your school needs
- Be specific

2

STEP 2: ANALYZE AND IDENTIFY

- Determine the source of the problem (pipeline or lack of resumés from teachers of color)
- Analyze the hiring

3

STEP 3: REDESIGN

- Redesign your process of hiring and recruiting
- Engage teams member and ensure everyone is on board
- Create questions that show the value of diversity

4

STEP 4: IMPLEMENT

- Assign someone specifically for teacher of color recruitment
- Set clear and realistic expectations

5

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE

- Be transparent in the process, especially with the needs of the school and student population
- Detail the expectations to the hiring committee

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STEP 6: MONITOR AND REVIEW

- See if the new process is executed as intended
- Be ready to iterate and continuously improve to get the redesign to stick



Charter School Retention Strategy Action Plan

Complete the following questions with your team/administration below:

FUNDAMENTAL RETENTION PROBLEM

Identify the critical retention problems (grade, school-wide staff, administration, and district level) you want to work on or the retention problem you would like to improve. What is your charter school trying to achieve?

STRATEGIES

List the strategies and any recommendations that show the best practices you plan to implement or have implemented.

STEPS

Be specific and list any steps your school thinks are essential toward what you will do differently.

TIMELINE

Create a timeline to track your tasks or implementation plans. Identify what you plan to do within the next semester or school year.

MEASUREMENT/RESULTS

Identify the desired results and the specific ways you will measure them. Create a strategy or plan outline and list it here.

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Dr. Charlotte Pullins has spent over a decade in education. She is the co-founder of a non-profit that educates underserved children. She is also the founder and lead consultant of ELC Training and Consulting LLC and a certified DEI specialist. Learn more about her work at ELC Training and Consulting at **elctac.com**.

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