

Teacher Retention Conversation Guide for Leaders

Retention conversations should happen before a resignation letter.

BEFORE

What do I know already? What assumptions am I bringing into this conversation?

ASK

Ask before defending: Tell me what is making the work feel unsustainable.

What still feels meaningful? • What is hardest? • What support is missing?

Where do you feel trusted? • Where do you feel overcontrolled or unsupported?

What responsibility drains more than its value? • What change would have the greatest impact?

What would make staying sustainable?

LISTEN FOR

☐ Workload

☐ Behavior support

☐ Autonomy / trust

☐ Leadership / follow-through

☐ Team issues

☐ Role clarity

☐ Time / planning

☐ Professional growth

☐ Recognition / trust

☐ Boundaries

☐ Other: _____

RESPOND

One thing I can act on

One thing I need to investigate

One thing I need to communicate honestly about

FOLLOW-UP — Next check-in:

Date / time: _____

What will we look for to know whether support actually happened or conditions improved?

FINAL LEADER QUESTION

What would help you continue doing excellent work here?

Start with listening, distinguish coaching from micromanagement, be honest about what can and cannot change, and follow up. Not every retention problem is a personal resilience problem.