
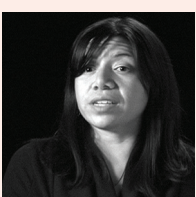





— WHAT KEEPS GOOD —  
**TEACHERS IN THE  
CLASSROOM**

MAKING A DIFFERENCE  
**SUPPORT** EXPERIENCE  
QUALITY OF WORK  
OPPORTUNITY CAREER GROWTH  
TEACHER'S VOICE **NETWORKS**

**This brochure gives you the direct voice of teachers,** as they offer their insight on what challenges they face in schools, what pressures threaten to push them out of the classroom, and what factors keep them in the classroom. This larger initiative – including a survey of 1200 teachers around the country, a research report, teacher interviews, and a documentary showcasing the voices of teachers – aims to help education decision makers at all levels think about what supports and measures need to be put in place to improve teacher retention, teacher quality, and ultimately student performance.

THEME	TEACHER'S VOICE	RESEARCH FINDINGS	SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS
<b>SUPPORTS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING</b>			
<p><b>Lack of Support from Administrators and Parents:</b>            Lack of administrative and/or parental support induces teachers to leave the classroom prematurely.</p>	<p>“Teacher training is incredibly inadequate. There’s the stereotype of the first-year teacher who goes home and cries. ‘This is going to be the worst year of your life,’ you tell these first-year teachers. Why does it have to be like that?”</p> <div>  <p><b>Garth Wolkoff</b>  <i>13 years; High School English; Brooklyn, NY</i></p> </div>	<p>In considering leaving the classroom, over 75% of teachers who left teaching cited lack of support from administrators as a contributing factor. Nearly 20% of these teachers cited lack of support from administrators as the most important factor causing them to leave the classroom. Teachers most often cited parents (71%) and administrators (60%) as those who only sometimes or rarely met their expectations of support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Structure teacher mentor programs for new teachers.</li> <li>▶ Encourage participation in parent–teacher organizations.</li> <li>▶ Involve parents and guardians in their children’s progress at school.</li> </ul>
<b>SUPPORTS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING</b>			
<p><b>Collegial Support:</b>            Many teachers do feel supported by other teachers. Thus, teachers help influence each other to remain in teaching.</p>	<p>“Have teachers mentor other teachers. We’ve just put in a buddy system where we have veteran teachers mentor other teachers who have just come in. It’s not coming from the bureaucracy; it’s not coming from outside – it’s coming from within. ...Nothing beats experience in the classroom.”</p> <div>  <p><b>Brenda González</b>  <i>5 years; Bilingual Special Education; Bronx, NY</i></p> </div>	<p>Almost 70% feel that there is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members. 85% have high expectations of other teachers which often get met. 74% of teachers turn to other teachers for help with teaching, and nearly 70% turn to other teachers for general support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Offer meaningful opportunities for ongoing professional development—by teachers, for teachers.</li> <li>▶ Explore opportunities for teacher participation in professional networks.</li> </ul>
<b>SUPPORTS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING</b>			
<p><b>Experience:</b>            Teachers who remain in the classroom cite experience as a key factor in mastering their craft, learning from other teachers, and ultimately keeping teachers in the classroom.</p>	<p>“I went in there; I was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, and I was thinking, ‘Oh these kids just need more love – that’s all they need.’ They looked at me, and I was like dinner. There’s nothing that can take the place of learning from and working with experienced teachers. Teachers need to be able to visit experienced teachers’ classrooms to learn firsthand how classrooms and schools can be structured so that all students can succeed.”</p> <div>  <p><b>Deborah Van Doren</b>  <i>5 years; Elementary School Music; Brooklyn, NY</i></p> </div>	<p>87% of teachers feel that experience leads to teacher quality. Studies show that where effective veteran teachers work in teams with less experienced teachers, the novices learn from their peers and improve their own instruction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Develop a structured mentor program that pairs new and veteran teachers.</li> <li>▶ Encourage reciprocal classroom visits between teachers.</li> </ul>

## THEME

## TEACHER'S VOICE

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

## SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

# RETAINING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### Lack of Supports for Effective Teaching:

Teachers surveyed describe their workloads as difficult and demanding, but rewarding.

"They lay the responsibility on the experienced teacher. I'm on four different committees at my school; plus I'm a member of the mentoring team – the professional growth team that mentors our new teachers. It's a lot on my plate."



**Peggy Gordon**  
over 28 years;  
Pre-Kindergarten;  
Miami, FL

95% of the teachers surveyed described teaching as hard, but rewarding work. 70% of teachers surveyed described the quantity of their work as too much. 51.6% work 40-60 hours per week, and 28% work over 60 hours per week. But for those who do stay, 76% of teachers stay in classrooms out of a sense of mission.

- ▶ Balance teacher administrative and extracurricular responsibilities with traditional classroom responsibilities.
- ▶ Limit class size to federally recognized standards: 22-25 students.
- ▶ Encourage regular, meaningful input from teachers at all levels of education decision-making—the teacher's voice—to help improve job satisfaction and performance.
- ▶ Provide teachers with the supports they need to keep them in the classroom.

## RETAINING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### Importance of Professional Respect:

Many schools lose quality teachers due to what teachers feel is more attractive work. More attractive work is not necessarily more rewarding work; rather, it is work that offers a higher salary and is treated as a full profession, with accompanying respect and supports—what we call "prestige."

"I think it's important to give significant weight to the idea that teachers are true professionals. When this happens, more people from Ivy League schools and people with aspirations for professional careers will be interested in going into and staying in teaching as a profession."



**Lyntonia Coston**  
6 years; High School  
Global History;  
Brooklyn, NY

Of those surveyed who are no longer teaching, 53.8% cited lack of job prestige as a reason for leaving; 61.4% cited a more attractive job opportunity as a reason for leaving the classroom; and nearly 30% cited a more attractive job opportunity as the most important reason for leaving the classroom.

- ▶ Engage teachers in decision-making about education policies.
- ▶ Consult teachers in designing curriculum.
- ▶ Ensure that teacher salaries are comparable to those of like professions.

## RETAINING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### Lack of Opportunities for Advancement:

Like most professionals, many teachers do not come into teaching with plans to remain at the same level (i.e., in the classroom), although many still plan to stay in education.

"I want teaching to be a career that has multiple steps in which teachers can continue to grow and get paid for what they do in different steps. If they choose to do something with more responsibility, they're compensated for it."



**Jane Fung**  
over 25 years;  
Kindergarten; Los Angeles, CA

68.5% of all teachers surveyed say that some kind of career in teaching will be their lifelong pursuit. Nearly 36% expect to remain in the classroom. 41% expect to remain in education, but not in the classroom; only 10% expect to leave the field of education entirely.

- ▶ Implement career ladders, with commensurate pay increases, that move teachers into administrative positions as well as those that keep teachers in classroom positions.



THEME	TEACHER'S VOICE	RESEARCH FINDINGS	SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS
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## RETAINING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### Value that Teachers Attach to Their Work:

Despite external devaluation, teachers stay in the classroom because of psychic reasons such as internal satisfaction, the feeling of making a difference, and other social and internal rewards.

"Teaching is the most intellectually challenging thing I've ever done. And it takes a lot of creativity. But that's also what I love about it. It's not just teaching the dates and the numbers and having students memorize facts. It's about teaching students how to think critically about what is happening in our country today and in our world."



**Daniel Abramowski**  
4 years;  
Government and Economics; New York City, NY

84% of the teachers surveyed feel that they have opportunities to learn new things in their jobs. 70% of all teachers are looking to grow intellectually and to make a difference.

- ▶ Recognize teachers as professionals.
- ▶ Provide opportunities to include *the teacher's voice* to inform education policy-making.
- ▶ Build structured collaborations among teachers – and whenever possible, do so within existing workloads and schedules.

## NETWORKS

### Networks:

Teacher networks make a huge difference in terms of keeping teachers in the classroom. They provide professional communities that are important for sharing ideas, and providing professional development and collegial support.

"Professional development is at the heart of education. Otherwise, it's very easy to be set in your ways and not to question what you are doing. And in education, it's very important to keep questioning – why are you doing what you're doing, and how can you do it better. It's the children who are at stake."



**Renny Fong**  
12 years; Elementary School Information Technology; New York, NY

64% of teachers surveyed joined a teacher network because they wanted a professional community; and as a result of network participation, 80% of the teachers surveyed have continued as classroom teachers, while 62% have become teacher-leaders.

A remarkable 90% feel that their network participation has improved their teaching, and 77% feel that their network participation has improved their school as well.

- ▶ Increase opportunities for teachers to participate in teacher networks.
- ▶ Create conditions under which teacher networks can exist and thrive.

## ABOUT TEACHERS NETWORK

**Teachers Network** is a non-profit organization—*by teachers, for teachers*—with a 29-year track record of success, dedicated to improving student learning in public schools. Using the power of our award-winning website, video, and print resources, we leverage the creativity and expertise of a national and international community of outstanding educators.

**Teachers Network** is unique in its focus on the teacher as key to improving student achievement in public schools. Through its leadership, Teachers Network empowers teachers to transform public schools into creative learning communities so every student will succeed and contribute to the public good. Over the years, we have directly impacted over 1.5 million teachers and nearly 40 million students.

For more information about the mission and work of Teachers Network, please visit us online at [www.teachersnetwork.org](http://www.teachersnetwork.org). Or call us at 212.966.5582.



Companion materials for What Keeps Good Teachers in the Classroom are available through:

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New York, NY 10013

Telephone: 212.966.5582

Fax: 212.941.1787

Email: [info@teachersnetwork.org](mailto:info@teachersnetwork.org)

You can download the study and join the conversation by visiting [www.teachersnetwork.org](http://www.teachersnetwork.org)

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Research findings cited in this brochure are from a Teachers Network survey. Subsequent reports and policy briefs are written by researchers from the **Center for Teaching Quality** as well as **West Ed**.

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