

Grow Leaders, Keep Teachers: Leadership Development as a Staffing Strategy



August 11, 2026

Agenda

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- 01 Welcome & Introductions
 - 02 Teacher & Leader Turnover: The Current Picture
 - 03 The Leadership-Retention Link
 - 04 The Leadership Development Gap
 - 05 Growing Leaders from Within: OCPS
 - 06 Q&A + Takeaways



Today's Presenters



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Opening Poll

How do you currently track retention?

A

HR software solution

C

We don't track

B

Digital Spreadsheet (Excel/Google)

E

Other (tell us in the comments)



Reported shortages fell almost everywhere. Six roles moved the other way.

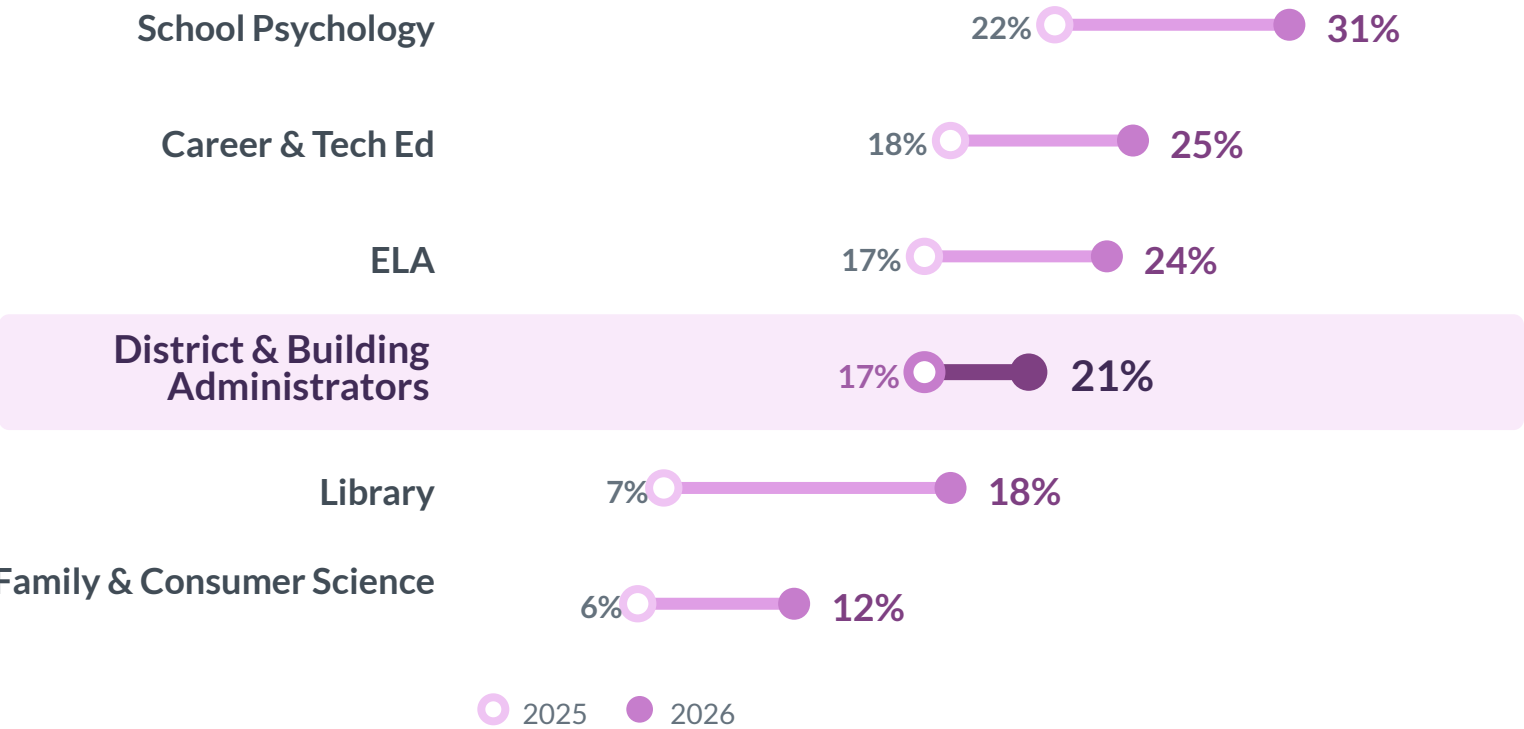
8 roles

saw reported shortages fall
down 4 to 31 percentage points

Substitutes	53 → 22%
Special Education	54 → 36%
Paraprofessionals	45 → 29%
Bus Drivers	48 → 35%
ESL	23 → 10%
Elementary	37 → 25%
Math	39 → 34%
Science	29 → 25%

Includes the roles districts have found hardest to fill for years.

6 roles saw reported shortages rise



BY ABSENCE-COVERAGE
PRACTICE

30% vs. 16%

Administrator shortages and admin-covered absences travel together: 30% of districts that use administrators for coverage report a shortage, compared with 16% of districts that use teachers.

Turnover Is Down From the Peak – Still Elevated

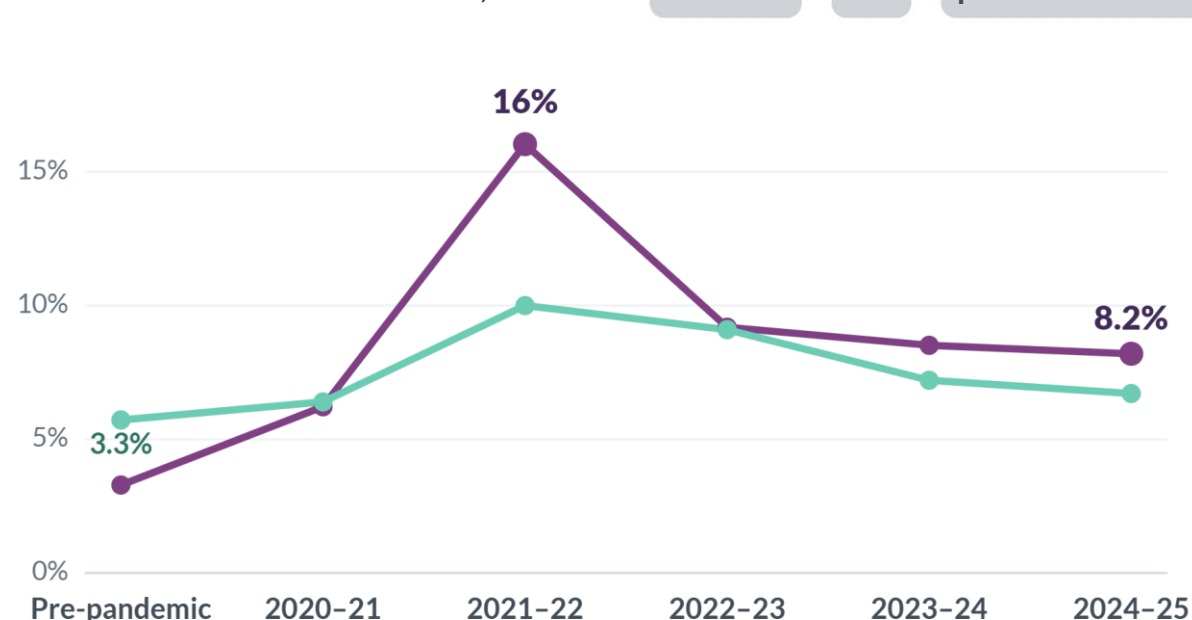
16% → 8.2%

National principal turnover has fallen substantially from its pandemic peak, but remains well above the roughly 3% rate districts reported before the pandemic.

Teachers show the same arc

Teacher turnover peaked near 10% during the pandemic and has since eased to about 6.7% – still above the prepandemic rate of 5.7%.

REPORTED TURNOVER RATE, BY SCHOOL YEAR



MIKE, a Black male science teacher, returned to his childhood school system to teach middle school. Workplace conditions and poor administrative support contributed to the decision to move:

With inflation, I had to pick up a second job. I had to start doing DoorDash at my previous school. I **may have made that work** if it felt we were really dedicated to the work we were doing. I'm a true believer in what I do. I **probably would've allowed the suffering if there was hope that we were doing something meaningful.**

Why Principals Matter for Retention



Supporting Effective Instruction

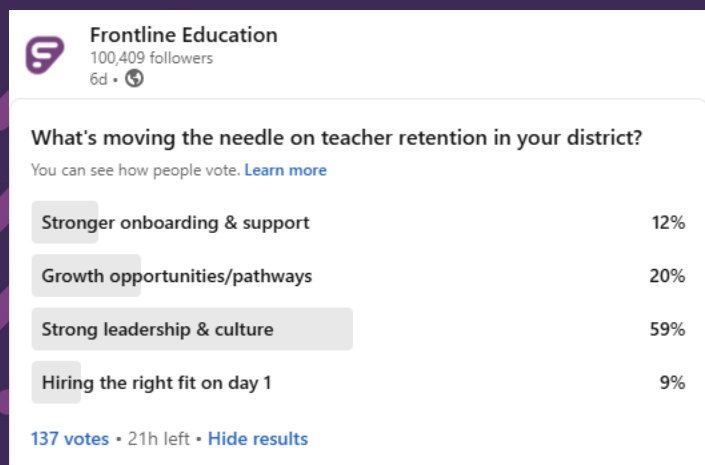
Principals orchestrate coaching, feedback, and collaboration that help teachers strengthen their practice.

Retaining Teachers

Teachers who experience effective, supportive leadership are less likely to leave — especially in high-need schools.

Creating a Positive Climate

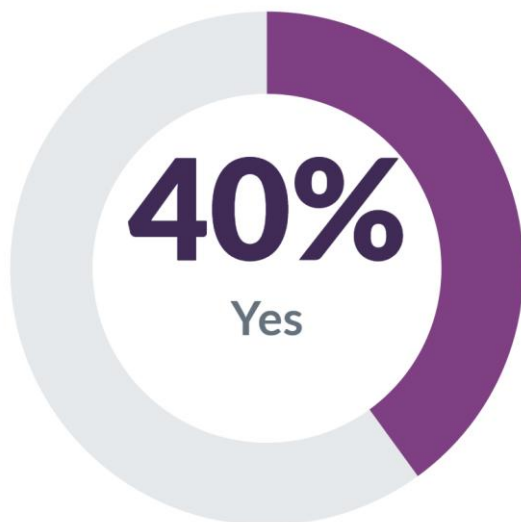
Principals shape a school culture of belonging and support that benefits students and staff alike.



Because principals touch all three, leadership investment is one of a district's highest-leverage moves — and it shows up in two connected levers: everyday leadership practices, and the internal growth opportunities that keep teachers and aspiring leaders in the district.

Quality Preparation Is Still the Exception

HAD A HIGH-QUALITY INTERNSHIP
DURING PREPARATION



■ Yes • 40% ■ No • 60%

Access is uneven by poverty level

Principals in high-poverty schools are less than half as likely as those in low-poverty schools to have an on-the-job mentor or coach.

Quality preparation is linked to outcomes

In a California study, overall preparation quality was linked to stronger teacher retention, and principals with higher-quality internships saw significantly greater student learning gains in English language arts.

What leadership development opportunities exist in your district?

You can see how people vote. [Learn more](#)

\$ for courses/PD	25%
In-district internships	2%
Coaching or PL sessions	32%
Nothing structured	41%

63 votes • 4d left • [Hide results](#)



ANGELA –Started in middle school and now a math dept chair.
Talks about her growth as a continuum of professional learning ...

When I look at myself, with the admin internship and then going back to teaching, one would say: "You kind of reversed the traditional trajectory of admin intern, then assistant principal, then principal." But **at that chapter in my life**, I didn't need 3 years to realize, I don't really like this.

However, I was never the same teacher. That experience is irrevocable. Then, without me knowing, maybe a better department head. Talking about this out loud, that's another thing. You go back with more experience. **It's a win-win.**

MATTHEW - The charter school was open a year or two before I got there. After about three years, I got a little disillusioned. It was just **too scripted, too focused on passing the test. I didn't have a lot of autonomy** to do a lot of things.

My current position opened where I was **able to do robotics and computer science**. You know, I was able to **develop the curriculum myself**. I was able to run some programs here for African American boys. Myself and a colleague are **taking the kids to several colleges**. And we do STEM activities and math activities and reading.

Questions?

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Thank You