

### The Retention Challenge



The retention of teachers has been a global concern for decades. Prior to COVID-19, only 41% of Australian teachers intended staying in the profession long-term, citing workload as the main reason for wanting to leave. This Literature Review Summary identifies common approaches to improving teacher retention including strategies being considered to mitigate workforce challenges.

#### Mentoring and other school support

Recent studies reveal that cultures of collegiality, support and trust can mitigate challenging school environments. For instance, a staff mentoring system and a school-wide approach to discipline are effective practices for teacher retention.

Teacher satisfaction improves when they are included in the school's decision-making processes and have adequate time to plan and collaborate.

To be effective:

- schools can support early career teachers with professional learning and a well-planned transition into the profession
- sustainable and impactful mentoring programs require a holistic approach that prioritise capacity-building of both mentors and mentees
- capacity-building requires support, training and adequate compensation for mentors
- mentoring must be systematic and embedded in the school culture.

To encourage experienced teachers to become mentors, incentives including time and resources can be made available.

#### Alignment between academic training and practice

It is important to provide opportunities for prospective teachers to gain experiences in school environments similar to where they are likely to be employed. Increased collaboration between course providers and communities can help bridge the divide between theory and practice, providing greater confidence which enhances the possibility of long-term retention.



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### Positive and supportive school culture

One of the most significant contributing factors to teacher attrition is misalignment with their school's culture. A positive school culture is likely to improve the retention of teachers, and this can be supported through:

- mentoring and other forms of support for early career educators
- opportunities for forming and nurturing collegial relationships
- provision of professional learning and communities of practice.

### Supportive leadership

Like culture, teacher satisfaction is significantly dependent on the school's leadership. Teachers benefit from school leader support and being actively involved in decision-making processes at their school.

Wyatt-Smith, C., Holloway, J., Alexander, C., Harris, L., Day, C., & Marcy, A. (2022). *Reviewing the Evidence Base: Attraction, Pathways and Retention - A Focus on Teacher Retention*. Sydney, Australia. Association of Independent Schools New South Wales and Australian Catholic University.



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Mentoring and other school support

Alignment between academic training and practice

Positive and supportive school culture

Supportive leadership