

11 Habits That Build a Culture Staff Don't Want to Leave

This resource is designed for immediate implementation. The habits below cost almost nothing but deliver maximum retention return by addressing the key reason educators leave: ***feeling unappreciated.***

Habit	Actionable Step
Praise	Say thank you often and specifically. Example: <i>"Thanks for how you handled that tough parent conversation this morning" is impactful.</i>
Connection	Ask how they're really doing and wait. Make space for something deeper than "fine."
Empowerment	Include them in decisions early. Don't just announce changes. Invite feedback first.
Feedback	Coach privately. Praise publicly. It's the simplest way to show respect and encourage growth.
Respect	Protect their time. Skip the late-night messages and last-minute asks. Let breaks be breaks.
Proactivity	Schedule regular 1:1 check-ins. Don't wait for a reason. Make space just to connect monthly.
Listening	Ask for honest feedback. Try questions like: <i>"What do you love about working here?" or "What's been frustrating lately?"</i>
Support	Celebrate effort, not just outcomes. Acknowledge the hard work even when things don't go perfectly.
Morale	Make space for small wins. Start meetings with shoutouts or moments of joy.
Motivation	Know their "why." Ask each team member what motivates them and protect it.
Integrity	Own Your Mistakes. Show vulnerability and accountability; trust begins to rebuild immediately.

Immediate Action Checklist-The 72-Hour Challenge

Before leaving your office today, commit to one of the following high-impact steps:

Focus Area	Reflection Prompt	Your Next Step (Commitment)
Visibility & Appreciation	When was the last time you gave a staff specific, authentic praise that wasn't tied to fixing a problem?	Implement the "Shout-Out" Board: Launch peer recognition this week by setting up a dedicated board or email channel.
Trust & Retention	Do staff come to you with small frustrations, or do they wait until they're ready to quit?	Schedule a "Stay Interview" Trial: Pick two staff members and ask only: "What keeps you here?" and "What would make you consider leaving?"