

School Board Assessment Tool: Creating a Culture of Staff Retention Through Board Leadership

Assess how board policies and leadership climate influence teacher and staff retention, morale, and stability.

How to use: As a board (or board + superintendent/HR), rate each indicator using the scale below. Capture evidence, then select 3 priorities to improve in the next 90 days.

1 - Not in place	2 - Inconsistent	3 - Mostly in place	4 - Fully embedded
No clear practice or policy; staff experience is unpredictable.	Exists in parts of the district or depends on who is in charge.	Practice is common; gaps still show up in some schools/teams.	Consistent district-wide; monitored, improved, and reinforced.

Assessment indicators

Indicator (board policy + leadership practice)	1	2	3	4
Board Climate & Meeting Culture				
Board meetings model respect for staff, families, and each other (no public shaming or sarcasm).				
Board avoids surprises and last-minute policy pivots that create instability for schools.				
Board communications reinforce trust: clear decisions, rationale, and constraints (no blame shifting).				
Policy Conditions That Matter to Staff				
Policies protect time: planning time expectations, duty limits, and predictable schedules where possible.				
Policies support safety and student behavior responses that protect staff dignity and physical safety.				
Policies ensure fairness: consistent evaluation, transfers, assignments, and grievance pathways.				
Leadership Accountability & Support				
Principal/supervisor expectations include climate and retention (not just academics/compliance).				
Board ensures leaders receive development/coaching to improve culture, feedback, and supervision skills.				
Board uses data to identify hotspots (schools/roles) and supports targeted interventions.				
HR Systems & Retention Practices				
Onboarding/mentoring is resourced and protected with time (especially for years 0-3).				
Career pathways exist (teacher leader roles, stipends, growth options) to keep talent.				
Hiring and HR processes are streamlined to reduce vacancies and administrative burden on schools.				
Monitoring & Decision Hygiene				
Board receives a quarterly retention dashboard (turnover, vacancies, exit themes, early-career attrition).				

Indicator (board policy + leadership practice)	1	2	3	4
Board asks helpful monitoring questions (patterns, barriers, actions, progress) rather than personalizing blame.				
Board protects confidentiality in personnel matters and follows due process consistently.				

Board reflection prompts

- What did we rate lowest - and what is the most likely staff experience driving that score?
- Which of our decisions in the last 6-12 months helped morale? Which unintentionally hurt it?
- Where is practice inconsistent across schools - and what policy/expectation would create consistency?
- If we fix only one barrier this semester, what would have the biggest effect on teacher and staff workload?
- What will staff notice on Monday morning if we follow through on our priorities?

Commitment: We will communicate one clear message to staff: what we heard, what we’re changing, and how we’ll measure progress.

Evidence and next steps

Top strengths (what we should protect/scale)	Evidence (data, examples, feedback)
1.	
2.	
3.	

Select 3 priorities for the next 90 days:

Priority (policy or leadership practice)	First action step (who/what)	By when	How we'll measure
1.			
2.			
3.			

Tip: If you disagree on ratings, keep both scores and discuss what staff experience differs across schools. The gap is the work.