



The Educator Retention Crisis

Why Great Teachers Are Leaving and How We Keep Them

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Executive Summary

Texas is losing its teachers. In the 2022–2023 school year, educator attrition in Texas reached a historic high of 13.5%, with the 2024–2025 school year reporting a rate of 12.9% well above pre-pandemic levels. Nationally, nearly one in four teachers reports intentions to leave the profession. The classrooms hit hardest are those serving students who can least afford the disruption: low-income communities, students of color, and English language learners.

This is not a pipeline problem. Enough people enter teaching. The crisis is that too many leave too soon not because of students, but because of inadequate support, weak leadership development, and systems that ask educators to give endlessly without investing in their growth.

The research is unambiguous: personalized, sustained coaching improves instructional practice, strengthens school culture, and directly reduces educator attrition. A landmark meta-analysis across 60 studies found coaching produced effect sizes of 0.49 standard deviations on instruction and 0.18 standard deviations on student achievement (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018). Teachers who are coached stay longer. Schools where educators are developed retain their best people.

EverNorth Education was founded to deliver exactly this intervention. This white paper presents the evidence base for educator retention, explores the root causes of attrition, and makes the case for coaching-centered solutions.

I. The Scale of the Crisis

National Trends

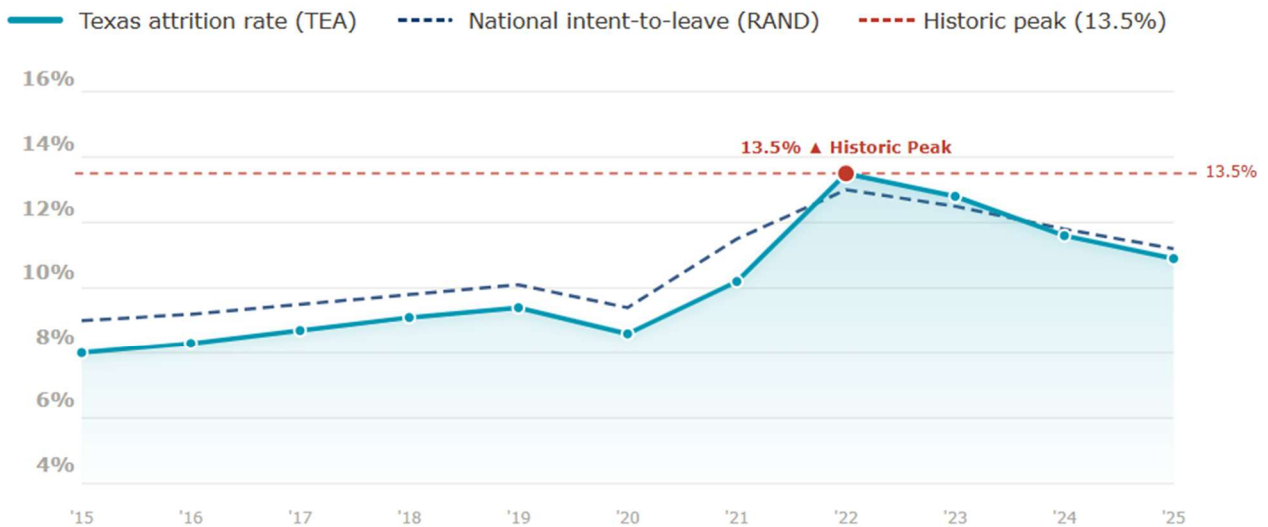
The United States has been sounding alarms about educator attrition for more than a decade. The 2024 State of the American Teacher Survey, conducted annually by RAND Corporation, found that 22% of teachers nationwide reported intentions to leave their jobs and 17% intended to leave the profession entirely (Doan, Steiner, & Pandey, 2024). This level of intent-to-leave represents a system under significant strain.

Education Resource Strategies (2025) found that on average 23% of teachers left their school in the 2022–2023 school year a much higher rate than pandemic-era levels and only a modest decline from the immediate post-pandemic spike. The instability this creates is not abstract: a student attending a high-turnover school is unlikely to encounter a teacher who recognizes them, and even less likely to have a teacher who has already built a relationship with their family.

Texas Teacher Attrition Rate, 2015–2025

Compared to national intent-to-leave benchmark

"Students in high-turnover schools are less likely to have a teacher who has already built a relationship with their family."

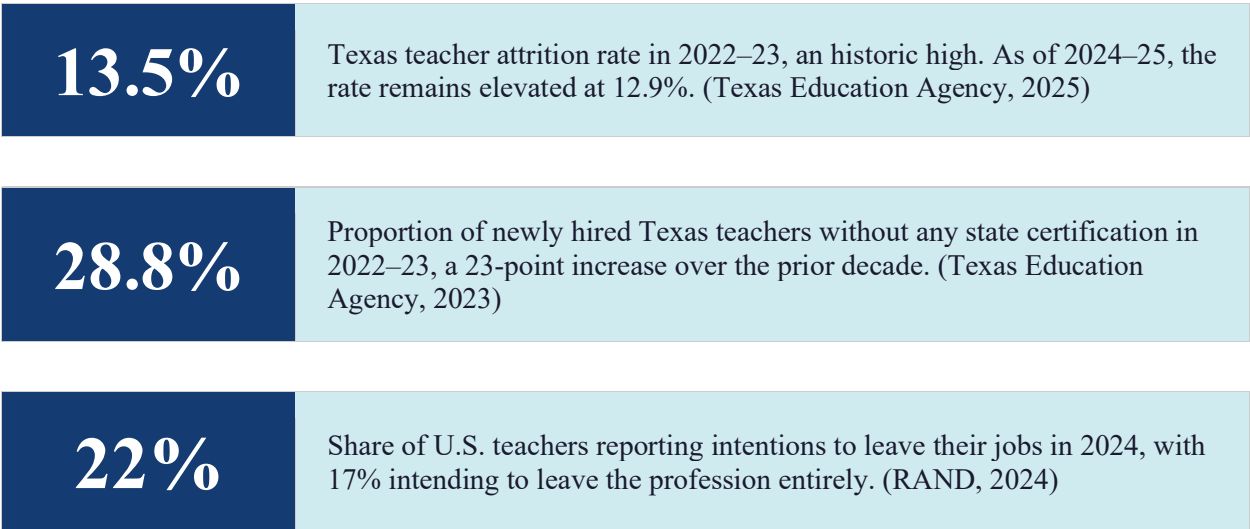


Sources: Texas Education Agency, *Employed Teacher Attrition and New Hires, PEIMS Database* (2025); Doan, Steiner & Pandey, *2024 State of the American Teacher Survey*, RAND Corporation (2024).

The Texas Picture

In Texas, the numbers are equally alarming. According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), teacher attrition reached a historic high of 13.5% in the 2022–2023 school year. The proportion of newly hired teachers entering classrooms without any Texas certification or permit rose to a historic high of 28.8% during that same period a 10-percentage point increase from the prior year and a 23-percentage point increase from a decade earlier (TEA, 2023).

The most recent TEA data, published in April 2025 and covering the 2024–2025 school year, shows attrition at 12.9%, still significantly elevated above the pre-pandemic norm of roughly 9 to 10%. The Governor’s Teacher Vacancy Task Force, established in March 2022, identified systemic challenges in teacher retention and recruitment as among the most urgent issues facing Texas schools (TEA, 2023).



Who Bears the Burden

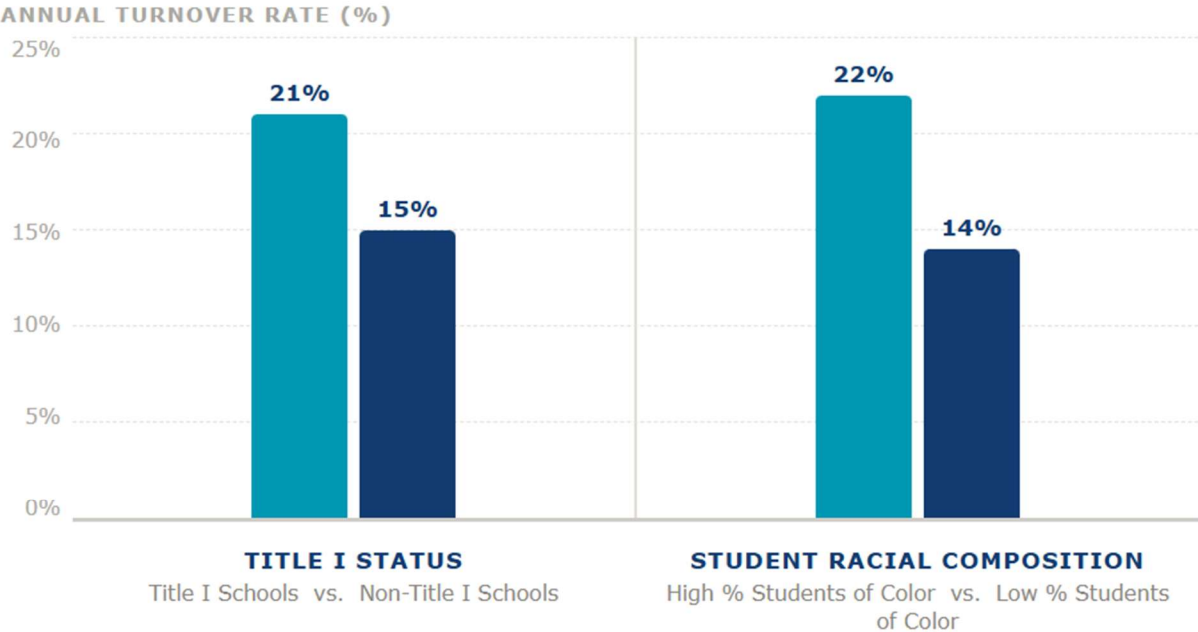
Teacher turnover is not distributed evenly. Research consistently shows students in under-resourced schools experience the sharpest instability. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) found turnover rates were 50% greater in Title I schools than non-Title I schools and 70% greater in schools serving higher percentages of students of color. High-turnover schools in Harris County are often the schools serving the community’s most vulnerable learners.

This inequity compounds over time. When high-turnover schools hire uncertified or underqualified teachers to fill vacancies, those teachers are themselves more likely to leave creating a cycle of instability that researchers have described as “a vicious cycle of disruptions” (Hanushek, Rivkin, & Shiman, 2016).

Annual Teacher Turnover Rate by School Demographics

Percentage of teachers who left their school between school years, by Title I status and student racial composition

Higher-Need Schools Lower-Need Schools



Source: Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2019). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it*. Learning Policy Institute.

II. Why Teachers Are Leaving

Understanding the causes of educator attrition is essential to designing solutions that work. The research points to a consistent set of factors and notably, most of them are not about students.

1. Inadequate Support and Professional Development

The most persistent finding in retention research is the relationship between support and staying. Teachers who feel unsupported by their leaders and unseen as professionals leave at dramatically higher rates. Basileo and Lyons (2024) found that teachers who feel supported by their leaders are more likely to successfully adopt innovations that positively impact students. Without that support, the inverse is equally true.

Traditional professional development one-time workshops, sit-and-get trainings consistently fails to move the needle. Yoon and Goddard (2023) confirmed that professional development programs incorporating sustained duration, active learning, coherence, and collective participation significantly predict both teacher self-efficacy and instructional effectiveness. When development is episodic and generic, it signals to teachers that their growth is not a priority.

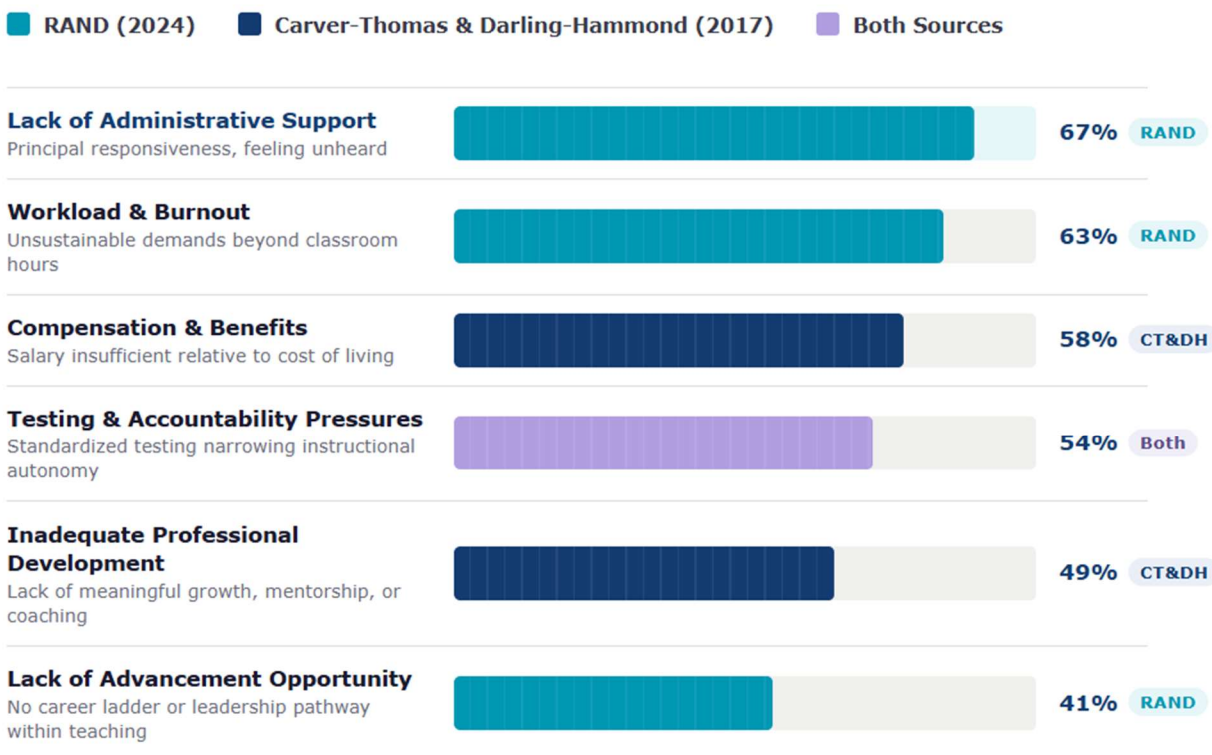
2. Burnout and Unmanageable Workload

The 2024 RAND survey identified job-related stress as the leading driver of intention to leave. Teachers report overwhelming demands from testing and accountability mandates, administrative paperwork, student behavioral challenges, and an expansion of responsibilities beyond instructional work. This is particularly acute in the years immediately following the pandemic, when student social-emotional needs increased significantly while educator supports did not keep pace (Doan, Steiner, & Pandey, 2024).

Morton and Maresh (2024) found this crisis is projected to result in nearly 300,000 teachers leaving the field each year through 2026. Teachers in their early careers are especially vulnerable: research indicates that a significant share intend to leave the profession within their first three years (Shillingford-Butler et al., 2012). Early attrition is both the costliest and the most preventable form of turnover.

Top Reasons Teachers Report Leaving the Profession

Percentage of departing or at-risk teachers citing each factor as a primary or significant reason for leaving



† Percentages reflect share of surveyed teachers citing each factor as a primary or major contributor to attrition intent or actual departure. Values are representative of published findings; exact figures vary by sub-sample and year.

Sources: Doan, Steiner & Pandey, *2024 State of the American Teacher Survey*, RAND Corporation (2024); Carver-Thomas, D. & Darling-Hammond, L., *Teacher Turnover: Why It Matters and What We Can Do About It*, Learning Policy Institute (2017).

3. Lack of Administrative Support and Leadership

Studies consistently identify weak or unsupportive school leadership as a primary driver of teacher departure. When principals cannot provide meaningful feedback, fail to protect instructional time, or do not create cultures of trust and collaboration, teachers lose confidence that their work can be sustainable. Kraft, Blazar, and Hogan (2018) demonstrated that coaching embedded in schools with supportive leadership produces far greater gains than coaching in schools without it.

Research on school leader retention mirrors these findings. High principal turnover itself an increasingly significant problem cascades directly into teacher instability. A campus that loses its principal often loses its most effective teachers within one to two years (Knight et al., 2023).

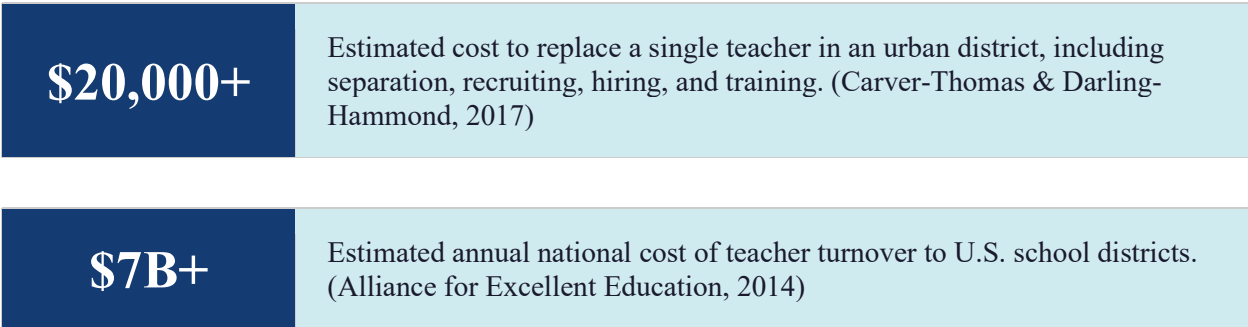
4. Compensation and the Teacher Wage Penalty

Teacher compensation in the United States lags substantially behind salaries of college graduates in comparable fields a phenomenon researchers call the “teacher wage penalty” (Allegretto & Mishel, 2020). While compensation is a real and legitimate concern, research is careful to note that pay alone is not sufficient to retain teachers. Edwards et al. (2024) found that raising pay and improving working conditions are both necessary components of a retention strategy; addressing one without the other produces limited results.

5. The Financial Cost of Inaction

Teacher turnover is not only an educational crisis it is a financial one. Research by Darling-Hammond and colleagues at the Learning Policy Institute estimates the cost of replacing a single teacher in an urban district at more than \$20,000 when accounting for separation, recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and early-career training (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). At a national level, teacher turnover costs districts an estimated \$7 billion or more annually (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014).

For a district like Houston ISD, which employs thousands of teachers across hundreds of campuses, even modest improvements in retention produce significant financial savings, savings that can be reinvested in the classrooms and programs students need.



III. What the Research Tells Us About Keeping Great Educators

The picture painted by the retention research is serious, but it is not hopeless. An equally robust body of literature identifies specific, evidence-based interventions that meaningfully reduce educator's attrition and strengthen school quality. At the center of that evidence is coaching.

The Case for Coaching

No intervention in the professional development literature has a stronger evidence base than individualized instructional coaching. In the most comprehensive meta-analysis of its kind, Kraft, Blazar, and Hogan (2018) synthesized results from 60 studies using causal research designs and found pooled effect sizes of 0.49 standard deviations on instructional practice and 0.18 standard deviations on student achievement. To put the instructional effect in perspective: Kraft and Blazar (2022) noted that with coaching, the quality of a teacher's instruction can improve by as much as, or more than, the difference in effectiveness between a novice and a teacher with five to ten years of experience.

Critically, the research also links coaching directly to retention. Teachers who receive meaningful, ongoing coaching are more likely to stay in the profession, reducing costly turnover and creating stable learning environments for students (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018). This is the core insight behind EverNorth's model: investment in educator development is simultaneously an investment in educator retention.

The Coaching Effect

Research shows coaching drives measurable gains in teacher instruction and student achievement, surpassing what experience alone produces.

PANEL A · EFFECT SIZE DATA

Coaching moves the needle and it shows

0.49^{SD}

Impact on Instruction

Coaches improve observed instructional practice at a level considered large by education research standards

0.2 SD threshold

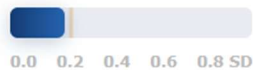


0.18^{SD}

Impact on Achievement

Coaches produce measurable student outcome gains comparable to reducing class size by 7 students

0.2 SD threshold



Kraft, Blazar & Hogan (2018) · Meta-analysis of 44 studies

PANEL B · COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

Coaching delivers years of growth in months

Instructional Coaching (1 year) Coaching

+0.49 SD instruction

Advances a teacher from the 50th to the 69th percentile of effectiveness

VS.

Experience Alone: 5 Years Experience

+0.20–0.25 SD

Effectiveness gains plateau after year 3–5 without structured feedback

Experience Alone: 10 Years Experience

+0.30–0.35 SD

A full decade yields only modest additional gains beyond year 5

The Bottom Line

One year of structured coaching produces instructional gains surpassing what most teachers achieve in a full decade of experience alone, making it among the highest-leverage investments in teacher quality available.

Sources: Kraft, M.A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the causal evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(4), 547–588. | Rivkin, S.G., Hanushek, E.A., & Kain, J.F. (2005). Teachers, schools, and academic achievement. *Econometrica*, 73(2), 417–458 (experience-curve reference).

What Effective Coaching Looks Like

Not all coaching is equal. The research is clear that episodic or superficial coaching does not produce the same outcomes as sustained, personalized, relationship-driven coaching. The

following characteristics consistently distinguish effective coaching from ineffective professional development:

- Sustained duration and frequency, not one-time sessions (Yoon & Goddard, 2023)
- Individualization to the teacher’s specific goals, context, and student population (Kraft & Blazar, 2017)
- Trust-based relationships between coach and educator (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018)
- Active learning and reflection embedded in the coaching cycle, not passive delivery (Frontiers in Education, 2025)
- Alignment to instructional frameworks and observable classroom outcomes (Basileo & Lyons, 2024)
- Supportive school leadership as the organizational container for coaching to take effect (Knight et al., 2023)

EverNorth’s coaching model is built around all six of these elements. Our coaches work within International Coaches Federation frameworks, build long-term partnerships with educators, and engage in ongoing cycles of observation, feedback, and growth planning tailored to each individual.

Leadership Development as a Retention Strategy

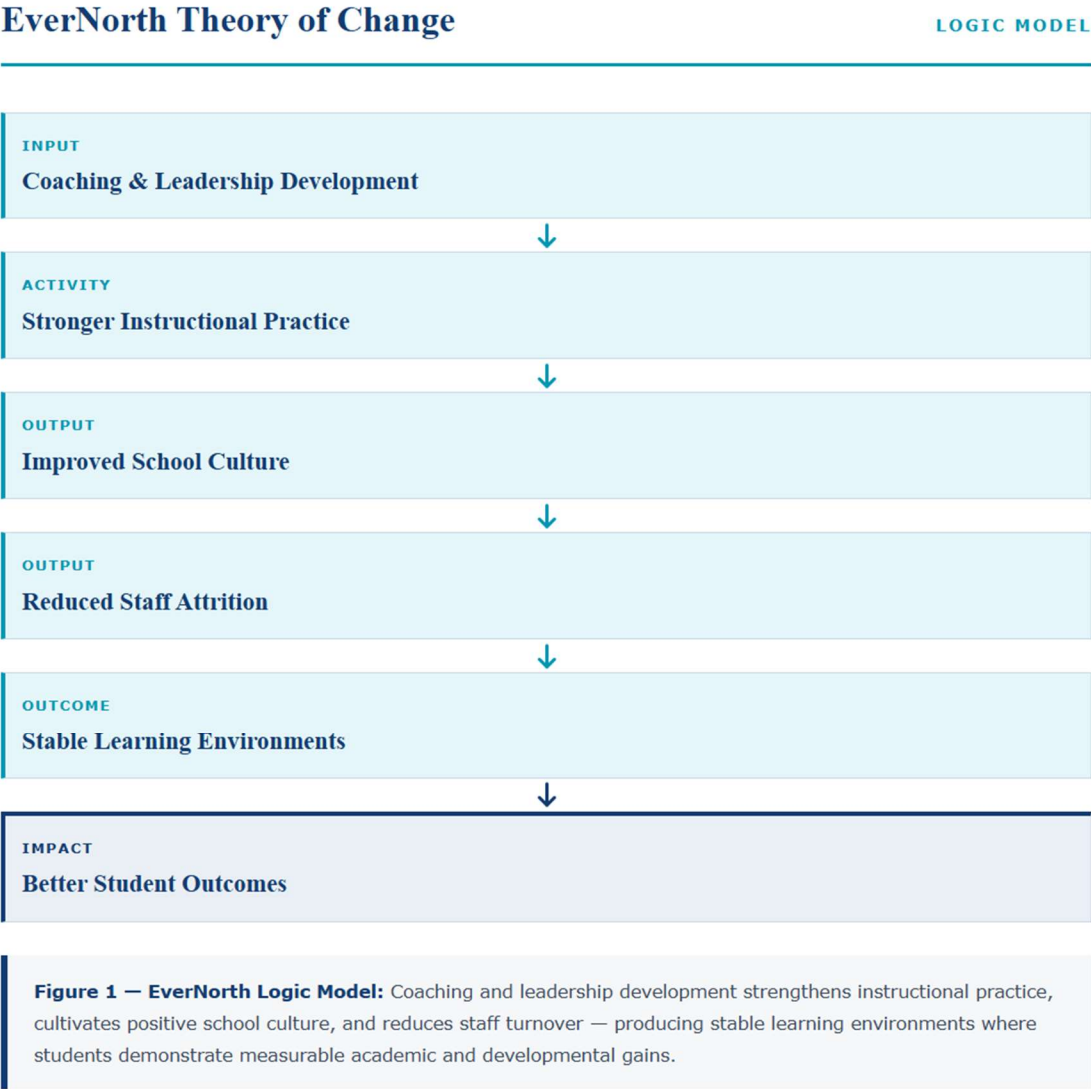
Teachers do not leave schools they leave systems. When school and district leaders are themselves underdeveloped, they cannot create the conditions that retain talented educators. A systematic review of coaching for school leaders, published in *Frontiers in Education* (2025) and covering peer-reviewed studies from 2014 to 2024, found that leadership coaching is strongly associated with alleviating workplace stress, building relational capacity, and improving instructional culture across a campus.

This is why EverNorth serves not only classroom teachers but also instructional coaches, principals, and district administrators. Retention is a leadership problem as much as it is an individual one. Developing the leaders who create the conditions for educators to thrive is among the highest-leverage investments a school system can make.

Professional Learning Communities and Collaborative Structures

Research on professional learning communities (PLCs) shows that when teachers function as collaborative learners, they report higher job satisfaction and greater likelihood of staying in the profession. A 2024 doctoral study from St. John Fisher University found that teachers who participated meaningfully in PLCs described improved work lives, stronger collegial relationships, and greater sense of professional purpose all of which correlate with retention.

EverNorth’s Collaborative Coaching model and Leadership Institutes are designed to create exactly these structures: opportunities for educators to learn together, reflect together, and build the professional community that makes the work sustainable.



IV. EverNorth's Response: Coaching-Centered Retention

EverNorth Education was founded in Houston, Texas to address the educator retention crisis at its root. We are not a recruiting organization. We are not a professional development vendor. We are a coaching organization and the distinction matters.

Our work rests on a simple, research-backed premise: educators stay when they are developed, trusted, and supported by strong instructional and organizational systems. EverNorth builds those systems, one educator and one school at a time.

Our Approach

EverNorth delivers three interconnected service models, all grounded in International Coaches Federation frameworks:

- **Personalized 1-on-1 Coaching:** Individualized coaching engagements for teachers, instructional leaders, and school administrators. Each engagement is tailored to the educator's specific goals, campus context, and student population.
- **Collaborative Team Coaching:** Coaching for school leadership teams and instructional communities, designed to build collective capacity, strengthen team culture, and align organizational systems around educator and student success.
- **EverNorth Leadership Institutes:** Intensive learning experiences drawing on proven professional development frameworks. Institutes focus on communication, data-driven practice, and content development core competencies for educators who lead and those who aspire to.

Our Results

At Escamilla Elementary School in Houston, our coaching engagement produced measurable gains in classroom engagement, improved student assessment performance, and a stronger schoolwide culture of learning within a single school year. Campus Instructional Coach Stephanie Gonzalez described the change as “truly transformative,” noting that coaching conversations with teachers

were established, real growth in practice was visible, and the overall culture of learning was strengthened.

Our Founding Partner, Dr. Monique Lewis, has a documented record of dramatic school turnaround. Attorney Anthony P. Brown of the Galveston Board of Trustees described her work moving a campus from an “F” to a “B” state accountability rating in a single year as delivering “instruction that lands and a culture that made learning inevitable.”

V. Recommendations for Schools, Districts, and Funders

The research presented in this paper leads to a clear set of recommendations for school systems, policymakers, and philanthropic investors committed to solving the educator retention crisis in Harris County and across Texas.

For Schools and Districts

- Invest in sustained, individualized coaching for all educators, not one-time professional development events.
- Prioritize coaching for school leaders as well as classroom teachers. Principal stability is the foundation of teacher stability.
- Create formal structures for professional learning communities where educators reflect, collaborate, and grow together.
- Measure retention as an organizational outcome alongside student achievement data.
- Partner with coaching organizations like EverNorth to build internal coaching capacity over time.

For Philanthropic Funders

- Fund coaching-based retention programs in Harris County schools, with priority to campuses serving students furthest from opportunity.
- Support multi-year investments. The research is clear: sustained coaching outperforms episodic intervention. One-year funding horizons constrain impact.
- Treat educator retention as a prerequisite for student outcomes. No curriculum, no program, no initiative achieves its goals in a school where teachers leave every year.
- Invest in organizations with a proven, replicable model, experienced leadership, and deep community roots organizations like EverNorth.

Conclusion

Texas is at an inflection point. The educator retention crisis will not resolve itself. It will not be solved by recruitment campaigns alone, by salary increases alone, or by policy mandates alone. It will be solved by investing seriously and consistently in the development, support, and leadership of the people who walk into classrooms every day.

The research is unambiguous and the need is urgent. Personalized coaching works. Leadership development works. Sustained investment in educators produces retained educators, which produces stable schools, which produces better outcomes for students. This is not aspiration — it is evidence.

EverNorth Education exists to make this investment a reality for Harris County schools. We are not waiting for the problem to be solved from above. We are already inside classrooms and schools, building coaching relationships and leadership structures that change what it means to be an educator in Houston.

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