**Exit Survey Example**

This document provides an example of an exit survey. Exit surveys can be a powerful tool in understanding the reasons staff are leaving your organization, and ultimately how to improve retention by addressing these challenges. All staff should be offered the chance to provide feedback on their experience working in your school/network, either via a survey or a one-on-one exit interview with a member of leadership or Talent/HR. The table below outlines sample questions for an exit survey. The questions could also be converted into an interview as an alternative option for staff. Schedule time at least annually to review and identify trends that help you identify root causes of staff turnover and aligned strategies to address them.

**How to Structure a “Stay/Career Conversation”**

1. **Acknowledge the staff member’s value to the organization.** Everyone wants to feel their performance and overall contributions to the school are acknowledged and valued. (For example: “You are one of our highest performing teachers at the school and you were critical in establishing a successful parent engagement program this year. We are so lucky to have you.”)
2. **Check in on how they are doing and ask for feedback.** Ask the staff member how they are doing and their thoughts on what could be done better. (For example: “How are things going? Where do you feel like things are going well? Where are there challenges? What feedback do you have for me and the leadership team?”)
3. **Be explicit and direct.** There is no sense in beating around the bush. If you know that you want someone to stay, say it. Then provide them the opportunity to commit or share any concerns that would prevent them from returning. (For example: “We would love for you to join us next year. What would we need to do to make that happen?”)

You can find a sample script below.

**Sample Stay-Conversation Script**

This is your moment. Once team members go home for the holidays, start talking with family and perusing Idealist at night, you’ve lost your opportunity. This is the time to cement in their heads that this is the place they need to be.

## *For Strong Performers*

**1. They need to know where they stand with you in unambiguous terms.**

Begin with a stamp of approval. It’s the sentence that they are going to go home and tell their significant other, their mother and repeat over and over in their head. It should be personal and state their impact. This is an example sentence that could be used for a high performing teacher who’s on a path to leadership or Distinguished/Master Teacher:

*Maria, I am so grateful for the work that you’ve done to drive the culture in your class and throughout our entire lower school. I’m really excited to be here tonight, because I want to talk about your long-term future at Achievement First, and the way that you are going to lead our school culture in the future.*

It should be unambiguous how you feel about them, what you need them to do and what you believe they are capable of doing. The whole conversation will come from this starting sentence.

Talk about what is possible at the school. Where do they fit in? Where does their interest and vision intersect with the school’s interest and vision? Imagine what could be possible in the future. ‘When I think about the future of our school and where we are going, you are an integral part of.... Imagine the impact that you could have on kids.’

**2. You’ll want to find out the person’s blue sky scenario.**

* ‘I’ve just shared with you what my vision is, and how I think you are XXX, and I want to hear from you and understand your blue sky, ideal, no-constraints scenario for your future.’
* ‘ What’s your blue sky scenario? What would be your ideal next 3-5 years?’ That gives people a lot of room to say things you may not expect (I really love the school, but I am interested in grad school). You can encourage them to get to a level of greater and greater detail.
* ‘If that’s your vision and that’s what you want your role and impact on kids to be, what could get in your way? I’d like to think through the barriers that you’ve just shared, and I want to think how achievable I think what you’ve outlined is given our work together.’

**3. Find out their certainty in returning next year.**

You want to transition smoothly - be direct with a smile. You don’t want to be intimidating after you've talked to them about a grand vision. Tell them why you need to know. “The kids you love may need a new teacher, and we want to find them the best possibility (knowing that we can't replace you!) ..."

* ‘How certain are you about returning next year?
* ‘If that percent is not 100%, why not?’
* ‘What’s the timeline for either being at 100% or letting me know that you are moving on?’ Set that date together.

**4. Make people feel valued, as they should, by getting their feedback on the school. You’ll also be able to learn about trends across your high performers. If there is something that a high performer is really concerned about, they see as a blind spot or as something on the horizon, that’s super important to know. Listen for any game-changing technical things that would shift their likelihood of staying (“If only I just prepped for literature and really focused on literature instruction”). You are listening for technical/instructional things that would increase the odds of the person staying.**

* “I also want your feedback on our overall approach. How do you feel like things are going at the school? What is one thing that we are getting right that should absolutely not change?”
* “ If you could change one thing about the school, big or small , without any constraints, what would that be?”
* (If retention has traditionally been a concern) “How can we make XXXX (School) a home for teachers?”

**5. Repeat back your one line – the one that you want them to remember and take home with them that states their impact.**

*Mid/Low – Performers with High Potential*

If you think they have potential, but their performance isn’t showing it, then say that and explain what they need to do to improve their performance. This is an example that you may use with a high potential Teacher –in-Residence who is struggling with performance:

*Maria, I want you to know that I believe you have great potential as a teacher and you have an incredible level of grittiness. I see you get knocked down and right back up. However, I also see that when you have the opportunity to lead a class, you struggle to build a culture of excellence. I deeply believe that you are capable of having an incredibly tight classroom culture, but right now your performance is not meeting your potential. If we can figure out a way to unlock XXXX, the impact you have with kids would be XXX. I really think you’d really start enjoying this work more and be better at it. Over the next four weeks, I want you to XXXXX, so thatwhen you are leading classes on your own XXXX. Imagine what would be possible for Josiah if his teacher was able to XXXX every day.*

Some leaders prefer to ask folks to self-evaluate before stating the performance/potential aspect:

a) How much effort do you feel like you are giving on a 1-5 scale?

b) How strong is your impact on a 1-5 scale?

c) How satisfied are you with your results on a scale of 1-5?

These leaders either respond by saying, ‘I agree’ or ‘I see it differently’ before explaining the difference between potential and performance using a statement similar to the one above.

*Low Performers/Low Potential*

If they are a low-performer and there is no evidence of potential, then this sentence may not come at the beginning of the conversation or towards the end. This is an example sentence that you may say to a low-performing, low-potential teacher:

*I care about you deeply, and I care a great deal about your happiness, but I can tell this role isn’t making you happy and you’re not feeling or being effective with your kids. Over the next four weeks, what you and I need to decide is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*