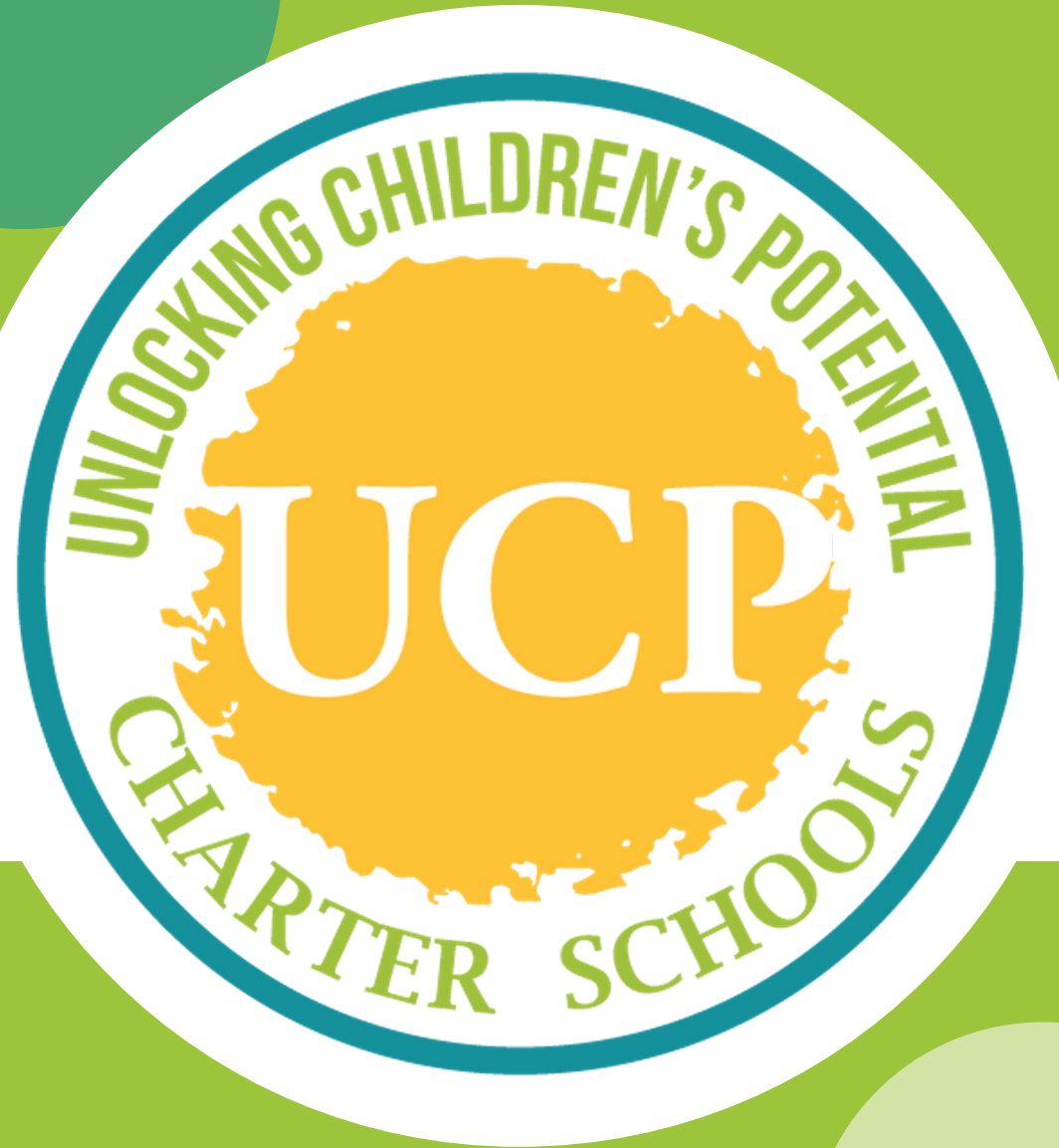


**BUILT ON
COMPASSION**



**POWERED
BY
POTENTIAL**

Stay Conversations That Matter: Boosting Teacher Retention in Charter Schools



Introductions

Presenters:

- Dr. Ilene Wilkins, Superintendent UCP Charter Schools
- Amanda Maxwell, Project Director, UCP Charter Schools - Project ELEVATE
- Mellissa Killian, Vice President of Human Resources, UCP Charter Schools
- Lora Fish, Consultant, C-Suite Analytics

UCP Charter Schools – Network of 8 charter schools focusing on making an impact for students with and without disabilities.

Project ELEVATE - Elevating Learning by Empowering and Valuing Advancement of Teachers and other Educators

Objectives for Today

- **Understand Stay Interviews** – Define Stay Interviews and explain their role in improving educator retention.
- **Analyze Real-World Insights** – Examine lessons learned from UCP Charter Schools' experience with Stay Interviews.
- **Develop Practical Skills** – Learn and practice effective Stay Interview techniques.
- **Interpret Stay Data** – Engage with mock Stay Interview data sets to identify trends and key insights.
- **Plan for Action** – Begin creating an action plan to implement Stay Interviews and improve retention at your school.

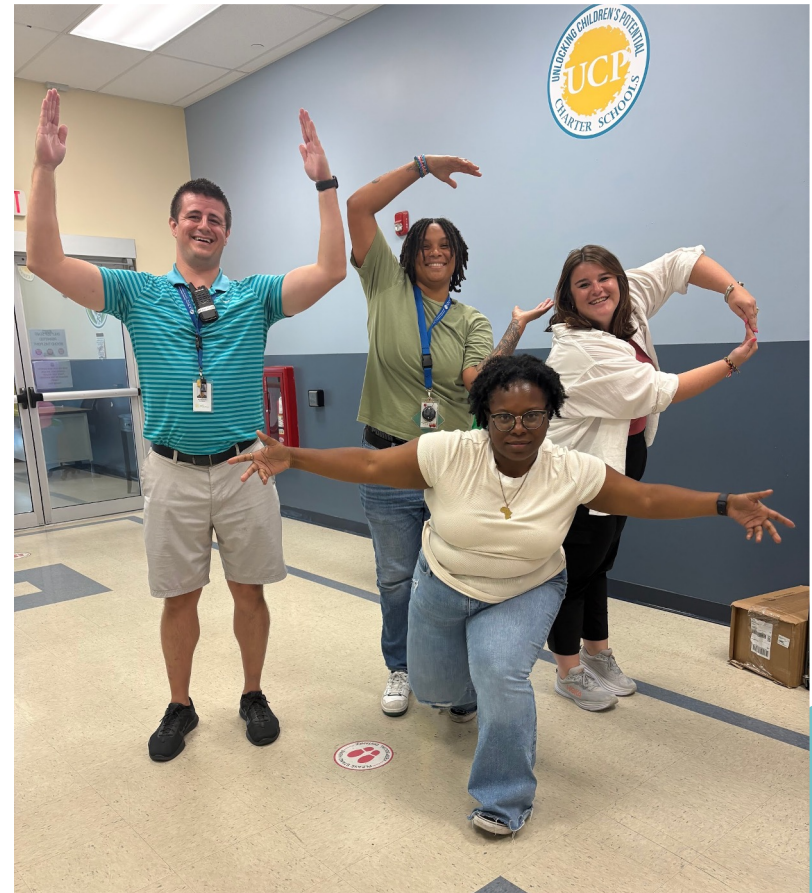
Staying Makes a Difference

**What's one reason you
STAY in your role?**



Why Retaining Educators is Critical

- **Teacher shortages are increasing.**
- **Retaining staff reduces recruitment costs and strengthens school culture.**
- **Students thrive with consistent, experienced educators.**



UCP Charter Schools: Journey to Improve Retention



- **Unique Challenges:** High ESE population and extensive education support staff
- **Past Efforts:** Prior initiatives to improve retention
- **Project ELEVATE:** Launch of Stay Interviews to engage and retain staff
- **Impact:** Early results and lessons learned

What is a Stay Interview?



- **Different from an Exit Interview:** Conducted **before** staff leave, not after.
- **Proactive Approach:** Conversations designed to understand why staff stay and what might prompt them to leave.
- **Benefits:** Acts as an early warning system, builds relationship and trust, and uncovers key engagement drivers.

Retention Solution

FINNEGAN'S ARROW®



**Reduce Cost
of Turnover**



**Improve Employee
Engagement**



**Improve Revenue
& Profitability**

(Finnegan, n.d.)

UCP Stay Process Outcomes

	School Year 2022-2023	School Year 2023-2024	School Year 2024-2025
New Hire Termination Rate	50.79%	42.06%	31.82%
New Hire Retention Rate	49.21%	57.81%	68.18%

Principal Testimonials:

- “The hiring checklist and stay interview questions gave me something concrete to work from, so I didn’t have to make it up as I went.”
- “Using the dashboard to track stay interviews and exits made it easier to see where we needed to focus.”
- “Building relationships first, before trying to change things, helped staff buy in to my vision.”
- “Being transparent about what I could and couldn’t change, and following through on small requests, helped build trust.”
- “Sharing data and being honest about our challenges made staff feel more included and respected.”

Stay Interview Process

Step	Action
1. Identify Retention Needs & Priorities	Select key or at-risk employees; schedule stay interviews.
2. Conduct One-on-One Stay Interviews	Use 5 key questions; create a safe, open environment.
3. Record Responses & Forecast	Capture reasons to stay/leave; classify Green, Yellow, or Red.
4. Develop a Stay Plan	Create plans for Yellow/Red; focus on actionable items (training, coaching, workload).
5. Implement Stay Plan	Follow through on commitments; check in and monitor progress.
6. Conduct Follow-Up Interview	Reassess impact of the stay plan; adjust strategies as needed.

Stay Interview Questions

Key Questions:

1. When you travel to work each day, what things do you look forward too?
2. What are you learning here?
3. Why do you stay here?
4. When was the last time you thought about leaving our team? What prompted it?
5. What can I do to make your experience at work better for you?

Stay Interview Guide

Stay Interview For: _____ Facilitated By: _____
Date: _____

Opening the meeting...

THINGS TO SAY:

"My primary interest for our time today is to learn what I personally can do to make this a great place for you to work."
"I hope we work together here for a long time and you are fully engaged in your work."
"As you know, our agency – like all agencies– has policies that I can make recommendations for but don't have the authority to change...things like pay, benefits, and the like. I still want you to tell me what is important to you regardless of whether I can change it, but I'm going to be listening especially for things I can control, things that I can do something about."

Stay Interview: Questions and Probes

QUESTION 1: When you travel to work each day, what things do you look forward to?

Probe as needed...

↳ What do you like most about working here?
↳ What is the single best part about your job that you like?

↳ Who do you look forward to working with the most?
↳ Who do you enjoy working with?

QUESTION 2: What are you learning here?

Probe as needed...

↳ What else would you like to learn here?
↳ How do you learn best? Doing? Observing? Training?

↳ Tell me about your career aspirations.
↳ Do you feel like you can advance your career here if you want to?

(Finnegan, n.d.)

Stay Process Lessons Learned

- **Start Early & Structured:** Interviews by Sept/Oct; two-week check-ins for new hires
 - **Prioritize New Hires:** Focus on first 90 days when most turnover occurs
 - **Realistic Job Previews:** Honest communication about challenges & rewards
 - **Improved Hiring Processes:** Stronger recruiter–principal collaboration
 - **Leadership Accountability:** Leaders responsible for interviews & follow-up
 - **Data-Driven Adjustments:** Use exit/retention data to refine strategies
 - **Targeted Support:** Extra focus on high-turnover roles/environments
- 

Stay Interview Best Practices

Do	Don't
Hold the conversation in a private, safe setting	Get defensive or take feedback personally
Listen actively and let the staff member share openly	Promise things you can't deliver
Express appreciation for their contributions	
Follow up with action based on what you learn	Treat it as a one-off HR exercise or incorporate it into performance evaluations or coaching
Have the immediate supervisor complete interview	

Practice Makes Progress

Instructions:

1. Pair up and choose roles: one leader, one educator.
2. Choose **one question** from the Stay Interview questions.
3. Conduct the mini-interview, then **switch roles**.
4. After both interviews, reflect:
 - What felt natural?
 - What was challenging?

Time: 5 minutes



Developing a Stay Plan

Purpose: Turn insights from stay interviews into concrete action.

Focus: Employees forecasted **Yellow or Red** on stay interviews.

Key Principle: Address reasons you **can influence** to improve engagement and retention.

Examples of Actionable Support:

- Training, coaching, or mentorship opportunities
- Adjustments to workload, responsibilities, or schedules
- Connection to growth or career development resources

Reasons You Cannot Control:

Salary limits, commute, personal life choices



Turning Insights Into Action

Guiding Questions:

1. What trends do you notice in the data?
2. What actions should leadership take based on these insights?

Name	Position	Stay Interview Priority			Total Interviewed to Date	Top 3 Reasons to stay	Top 3 Reasons to Leave	2 Week Check In Forecast (New Hires Only)	Stay Interview Completed (Date)	Interview Facilitated by:	Stay Plan Completed	Forecast	Termination Date (if applicable)
		New Hire	Ed Support	> Year									
Rubeus Hagrid	Para		X			Customers	Benefit		11/22/2024	Principal Dolores Umbridge	No	Green	
						Work Environ...	Immediate M...						
						Coworkers	Training Opp...						
						Work Environ...	Commute						
Sybill Trelawney	Teacher					Customers	Career Oppo...		1/6/2025	Principal Dolores Umbridge	No	Yellow	
						Immediate Ma...	Training Opp...						
						Work Environ...	Benefit						
Argus Filch	Para		X			Coworkers	Work/Life bal...		1/15/2025	Principal Dolores Umbridge	No	Green	
						Training Oppo...	Workload						
						Work Environ...	Training Opp...						
Charity Burbage	Teacher					Coworkers	Top Manage...		12/6/2024	Principal Dolores Umbridge	No	Green	
						Customers	Commute						
						Career Opport...	Immediate M...						
Obi-Wan Kenobi	Teacher					Immediate Ma...	Workload		11/18/2024	Principal Dolores Umbridge	Yes	Yellow	
						Work Environ...	Pay						
						Work Environ...	Training Opp...						
Doctor Dillamond	Teacher			X		Coworkers	Company Dir...		1/6/2025	Principal Dolores Umbridge	No	Green	
						Team Member...	Immediate M...						
						Coworkers	Training Opp...						
Alastor "Mad-Eye" Moody	Teacher	X				Work Environ...	Location	Yellow	1/6/2025	Principal Dolores Umbridge	Yes	Red	
						Customers	Benefit						
						Work Environ...	Immediate M...						
						Coworkers	Training Opp...						
Gilderoy Lockhart	Teacher					Benefit	Commute		1/29/2025	Principal Dolores Umbridge	Yes	Yellow	
						Customers	Career Oppo...						
						Coworkers	Training Opp...						
Irma Pince	Para		X			Work Environ...	Benefit	Green	1/6/2025	Principal Dolores Umbridge	No	Green	

Building Your Plan

Goal: Determine how you will apply what you learned to your school context.

Prompts to Consider:

- How will you introduce the stay process to your team?
- What steps will you take to make it actionable in your school?
- How will you track progress and measure impact?
- Who might you collaborate with or involve in the process?



Resources

UCP Charter School Contacts:

- Dr. Ilene Wilkins- iwilkins@ucpcfl.org
- Amanda Maxwell- amanda.maxwell@ucpcfl.org
- Lora Fish- lorafish@c-suiteanalytics.com

Books:

- The Stay Interview By: Richard P. Finnegan
- The Power of Stay Interviews By: Richard P. Finnegan

Online:

<https://c-suiteanalytics.com/solutions/stay-interviews/>

Thank you!

Retention is about relationships.....not programs!

