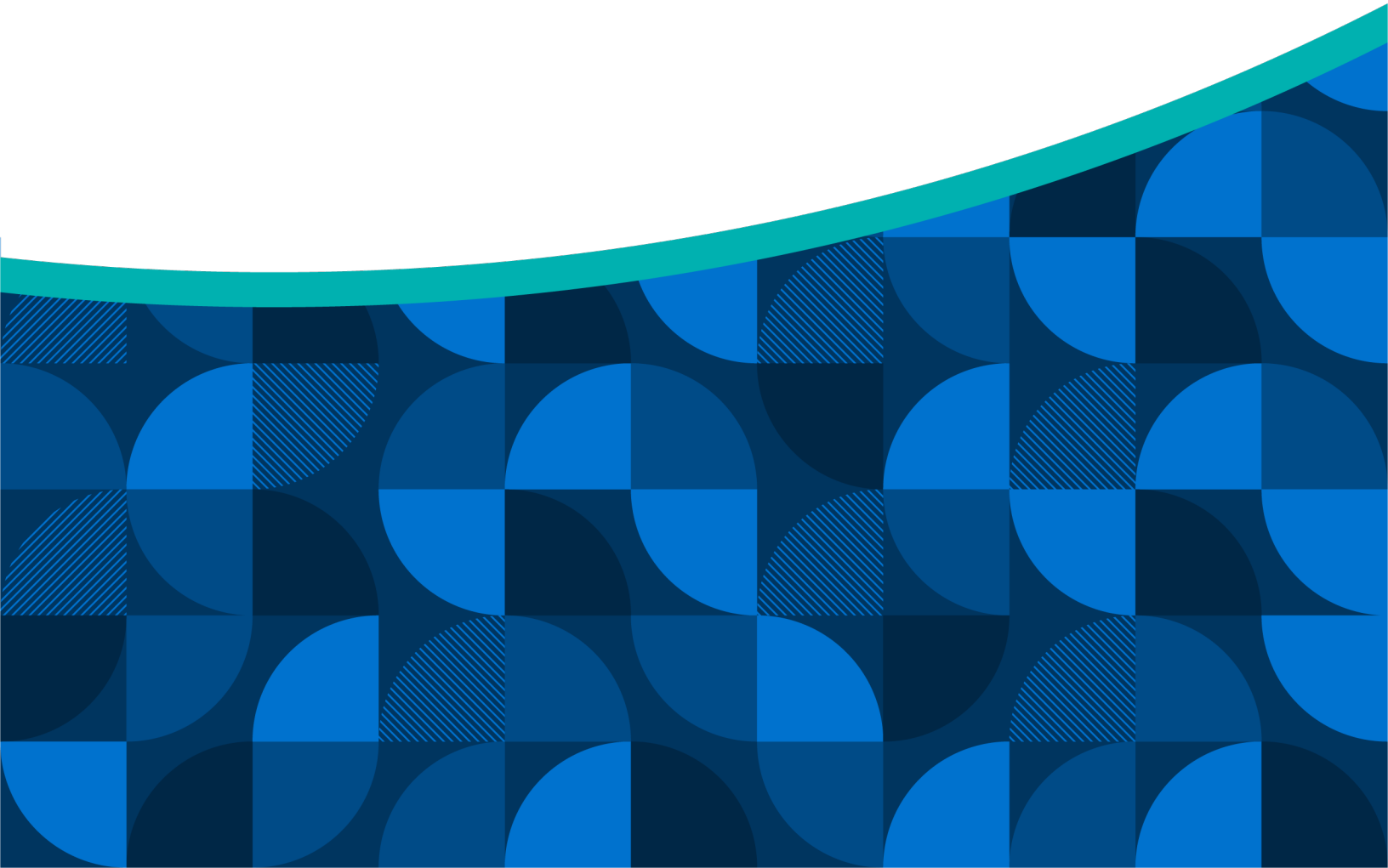




MORALE-BOOSTER COMPENDIUM

# Professional Growth

This resource includes strategies to address morale concerns in the Professional Growth threat area. Use these templates and resources as a starting place to co-design solutions with teachers to address their morale challenges.



# District Leadership Forum

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## Provide Growth Opportunities Inside & Outside Classroom

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Research shows teachers' morale increases when they have opportunities to grow in their roles and their careers.<sup>1</sup> Too often, district leaders think that professional growth opportunities must be targeted at teachers who aim to ultimately leave the classroom. However, districts can and should consider ways to design growth opportunities both for teachers who wish to leave the classroom and those who wish to remain. The following strategies provide leaders with tools to better support teachers' professional growth both inside and outside of the classroom.

### Benefits of Professional Growth Inside the Classroom

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#### Keeps Strong Teachers Engaged in the Classroom

Districts can keep strong teachers engaged by providing opportunities for them to feel like they can grow their careers while remaining in the classroom.



#### Cultivates More Impactful Teachers

Giving teachers opportunities to grow while remaining a classroom teacher not only keeps teachers engaged but develops their skills and provides districts with continuously improving teachers.

### Benefits of Professional Growth Outside of the Classroom

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#### Motivates Teachers Who May Wish to Change Careers

Some teachers want to continue to be involved in education, but desire to grow as professionals outside of teaching. Professionals exploring a career change can remain engaged and motivated in their current roles if they are guided to resources and pathways that could help them successfully transition roles in the future.



#### Generates Internal Leadership Talent

By providing high-quality and robust programming for teachers who may wish to become school leaders or ascend to other roles within the district, districts improve their pipeline of talent to lead their schools and district in the future.

1) Perrachione et al. "[Why Do They Stay? Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of Job Satisfaction and Retention](#)". Professional Educator. 2008.

Sources: Patton et al. "[Helping Teachers Help Themselves: Professional Development That Makes a Difference](#)". Sage Journals. 2015; Ippolito et al. "A Principal's Guide to Supporting Instructional Coaching". ACSO. 2019; Gallup, "[How to Improve Wellbeing in Education](#)". 2020; EAB interviews and analysis.

## Professional Growth Strategies

Strategy	Capsule Description	Problem Addressed	Profiled Institution
<p><b>5-Minute Career Conversation Guide</b></p> <p><b>Who?</b> Building Leaders</p>	<p>Distribute this guide to principals to remind and support them in engaging in career conversations with teachers. Principals should use this guide to incorporate career goal and planning conversations into formal and informal teacher conversations several times a year.</p>	<p>Teachers feel they do not get support from their direct supervisor on their career aspirations and goals, but direct supervisors often feel they do not have the time or are unsure how to support teachers. This tool provides principals with an easy-to-use guide to provide teachers with career guidance and support.</p>	<p><b>Small Independent School, South</b></p> <p>See page 8 for a career conversations guide and sample questions.</p> <p><b>Complexity</b></p> <p>Low</p>
<p><b>Core Competency-Focused Teacher-to-Principal Pathway</b></p> <p><b>Who?</b> Building Leaders and District Leaders</p>	<p>Design a more effective principal pipeline program for teachers interested in becoming principals by ensuring the program emphasizes proven competencies that make effective school leaders: strategic and analytical thinking; and interpersonal skills. For example, embed trainings like root-cause and data analysis into pathway programs to help prepare principal candidates to develop strategic and analytical skills.</p>	<p>The district does not provide, provides limited, or provides ineffective opportunities for teachers to pursue professional growth opportunities that prepare them to be strong and effective building leader candidates. This strategy provides district leaders with a guide to develop a teacher-to-principal pathway program tailored to address the core problems of their district.</p>	<p><b>Mansfield ISD<sup>1</sup>, Mansfield, TX</b></p> <p><i>Coming Soon: A guide on how districts can design a more effective pathway program.</i></p> <p><b>Complexity</b></p> <p>Medium</p>

1) As previously profiled in EAB's Study: "[Preparing Principals to Lead: Best Practices for Equipping Principals with Essential Leadership Skills](#)".

Sources: Wahlstrom et al. (2020). "[Preparing Principals to Lead: Best Practices for Equipping Principals with Essential Leadership Skills](#)". EAB; EAB interviews and analysis.

## Professional Growth Strategies

Strategy	Capsule Description	Problem Addressed	Profiled Institution
<p><b>Excellence in Teaching Program</b></p> <p><b>Who?</b> Building Leaders and District Leaders</p>	<p>The program allows teachers that have been with the district for at least two years to participate in a training program specifically designed to increase their impact in the classroom. Teachers who excel in the program take on additional responsibilities for their schools, earn prestigious titles, and increase their annual compensation, while remaining a classroom teacher. This program continues to grow as over 30% of participating teachers have enrolled in the program with 95% retention. Teachers are drawn to the program because of the impact their training has on their students and the growth they can achieve as educators.</p>	<p><b>Primary Problem:</b> District provides opportunities, but they are not what teachers' want/need. This strategy provides teachers with opportunities to develop in multiple areas that matter to them: personal teaching efficacy, career growth, and overall impact on students.</p> <p><b>Secondary Problem:</b> A path for professional growth exists, but it requires teachers to leave the classroom. This strategy provides teachers an opportunity to grow their careers and expand the impact they have on students while remaining classroom teachers.</p>	<p><b>Large School District Southwest</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #00a651; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p><i>Coming soon: Details on how the district structures the program.</i></p> </div> <div style="background-color: #003366; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p><b>Complexity</b></p> </div> <p>High</p>

## Professional Growth Strategies

Strategy	Capsule Description	Problem Addressed	Profiled Institution
<p><b>Speed Mentoring</b></p> <p><b>Who?</b> District Leaders</p>	<p>Gather leaders from your district for a 90-minute mentoring session. Teachers should meet with each leader for 5-10 minutes to discuss potential long-term career paths for teachers. This strategy exposes teachers to several career options in a short amount of time and enables them to get advice from more experienced colleagues.</p>	<p>Teachers have limited time and capacity to participate in professional growth opportunities. This strategy exposes teachers to several career opportunities in one, contained session.</p>	<p><b>Small-sized hospital</b> Midwest</p> <p>See pages 9-10 for a template for school districts to design and facilitate a speed mentoring event with teachers and district leaders.</p> <p><b>Complexity</b></p> <p>Medium</p>
<p><b>Stretch Opportunity Picklist</b></p> <p><b>Who?</b> Building Leaders</p>	<p>Develop a list of professional growth opportunities that are available to teachers in the district. This list should be organized by competency to guide teachers to relevant opportunities for growth. Use this list during career conversations and to help teachers form a professional development plan.</p>	<p><b>Primary Problem:</b> Teachers are unaware of many of the professional opportunities outside of the classroom in the district. This strategy helps expose them to a wider breadth of options.</p> <p><b>Secondary Problem:</b> Supervisors try to support teachers' professional growth, but don't have the resources or skills to do this well. This strategy gives teacher supervisors an easy tool to offer teachers.</p>	<p><b>Medium-sized hospital,</b> East Coast</p> <p>See pages 11-12 for an example of a stretch opportunity picklist school districts could easily adapt to use with their teachers.</p> <p><b>Complexity</b></p> <p>Low</p>

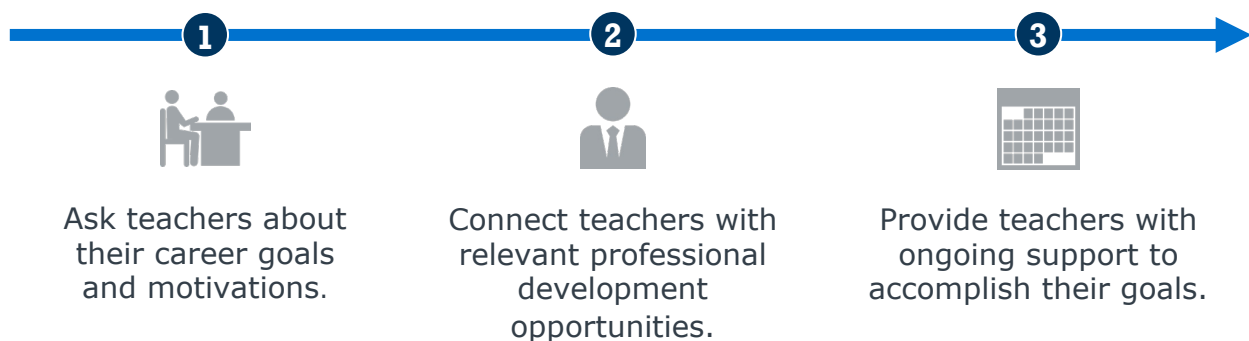
## 5-Minute Career Conversation Guide

Principals should use this guide to facilitate 5–10-minute career conversations with their teachers 1-3 times a year. These questions are based on the [Pivot Method](#), which provides a guide for leaders to structure career conversations to retain employees and keep them engaged in their professional growth. The questions asked during these conversations are aimed at helping leadership understand the values and professional goals of their teachers so leaders can connect them with personalized professional development opportunities and support.

### When and How to Use this Guide

- Touch base with your teachers using these questions 1-3 times a year.
- These conversations can last as little as 5 minutes.
- Principals can use these questions during formal or informal conversations with teachers.
- Notify your teachers 1 week in advance so they can prepare for these conversations.

### Three Steps for Impactful Career Conversations with Teachers



### Career Conversation Questions

- 1) What are your career goals for the next 2 years? 10 years? What steps are you taking to achieve these goals?
- 2) How do you see your teaching career developing within the school or district? Are there any additional roles or responsibilities that you are interested in?  
*Tip: Use a picklist of professional growth opportunities like the list profiled on pages 29-30.*
- 3) Are there any specific skills you would like to develop or professional development opportunities you are excited about pursuing?
- 4) What accomplishments or moments have made you the proudest in the last year?



## Speed Mentoring Template

Use this template to host a 90-minute speed mentoring session for teachers and district leaders. Teachers should meet with each leader for 5-10 minutes to discuss potential long-term career paths and gain advice from more experienced colleagues. Examples of district leaders include principals, directors of HR, superintendents, or other administrators. Collect bios for all leaders who are going to participate and distribute them to participating teachers ahead of time.

### Tips for a Successful Speed Mentoring Discussion:

- Have teachers start these conversations with a 30 second elevator pitch about their experience and goals. This will help leaders provide targeted answers for each teacher.
- Teachers should ask 2-4 questions from the below discussion prompts.
- Participants should exchange contact information so teachers can follow-up.

### Speed Mentoring Discussion Prompts

 <b>Career Guidance</b>	 <b>Professional Development</b>	 <b>Leadership Skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have you built your professional network over the years?</li> <li>• What is the best thing that you did early in your career? What is one thing you wish you had done, but didn't?</li> <li>• Can you recommend any books, blogs, or articles that will help me broaden my skills as a professional or inspire me to reach my highest potential?</li> <li>• What's the best piece of professional advice you ever received?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given my career goals, what skills do you think are most important I work on developing?</li> <li>• What qualities do you look for in the people you hire?</li> <li>• If you were me, what questions would you ask your mentor?</li> <li>• How have you put your performance reviews to use in the past?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?</li> <li>• What's the biggest professional risk you ever took—and what was the outcome?</li> <li>• What are the resources you would recommend to someone looking to gain insight into becoming a better leader?</li> <li>• What is the one behavior or trait that you have seen derail leaders' careers?</li> </ul>

# Speed Mentoring Introduction Template

This template introduces teachers to speed mentoring, providing them with details of the event and bios for district leaders.

## Speed Mentoring

### Event Details

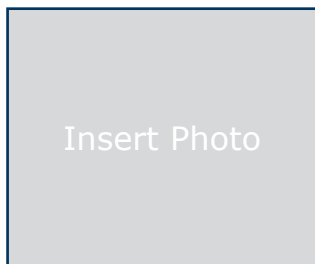
- **What:** Join teachers and district leaders for a “speed dating” style career pathing event
- **Who:** YOU and various leaders from across the district
- **When** [FILL IN DATE]
- **Where:** [FILL IN LOCATION]
- **How:** Signup by emailing [HOST EMAIL]

*Tip: Develop a 30 second personal career elevator pitch and review the provided discussion prompts to prepare.*

### Benefits for Teachers:

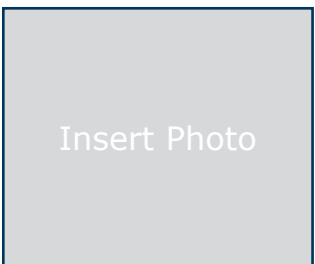
- Network with district leaders
- Learn about career options
- Get tips for learning new skills
- Reflect on your strengths

## District Leaders



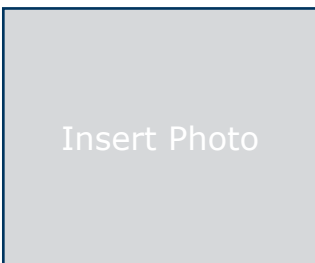
### Laura Vanderbilt, EdD

- Current Role: Superintendent
- Previous Roles: Elementary School Teacher, Vice Principal
- Interesting Fact: One of the founding members of the District’s Teacher Union



### Benny Smith, BA, M.ED.

- Current Role: Vice Principal
- Previous Roles: Middle School Teacher
- Interesting Fact: Recently led a workshop for middle school teachers interested in becoming principals.



### Rosa Dominguez, MBA,

- Current Role: Director of HR
- Previous Roles: [FILL IN DETAILS AS APPROPRIATE]
- Interesting Fact: Has taught at elementary, middle, and high schools.

## Stretch Opportunities Picklist

Use this resource as an example to build a comprehensive list of professional growth opportunities available to teachers in the district. A few things to consider:

- This chart gives teachers a baseline of professional development opportunities recognized by the district that can help them form a professional development plan.
- At first glance, teachers might not view this list as professional growth opportunities. However, when building and district leaders encourage the utilization of this resource, they acknowledge that these options are viable growth opportunities.
- When leaders connect teachers to targeted growth opportunities, they show teachers that leadership cares about their development.

### Example Picklist

Competency	Picklist of Options
<b>Building Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite a colleague in another department to go out for coffee and learn more about their role</li> <li>• Serve on a cross-departmental committee</li> <li>• Serve as a mentor for a new hire or (either through a formal mentoring program or informally)</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present a new idea or initiative at a staff meeting</li> <li>• Research a trend impacting the education industry and share your findings at a faculty or team meeting</li> <li>• Lead a faculty meeting</li> <li>• Participate in a public speaking workshop</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an informational interview with a building or district leader to learn more about their role and the experiences they found most helpful to develop their leadership skills</li> <li>• Lead a training session on a particular skill or content area for colleagues</li> <li>• Identify a department/team improvement opportunity and initiate a process improvement project</li> <li>• Simulate conflict resolution scenarios with other teachers</li> </ul>

## Stretch Opportunities Picklist (Continued)

Use this resource as an example to build a comprehensive list of professional growth opportunities available to teachers in the district.

### Example Picklist (continued)

Competency	Picklist of Options
<b>Analytical Thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify pros and cons of possible options for a decision and present to a supervisor with a recommended course of action</li> <li>• Identify an improvement opportunity and conduct a root cause analysis to understand what's driving the problem. Share your results with your supervisor</li> </ul>
<b>Industry Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign up for a regular digest of education news (such as the EAB's Daily Briefing email) to keep up with industry trends</li> <li>• Attend a web conference on a topic relevant to your work and discuss the content with your team and supervisor</li> <li>• Attend an open school board meeting</li> <li>• Review your state's Department of Education website to better understand educational policy goals and priorities</li> <li>• Listen to podcasts made by other educators to learn about their pressing issues and proposed solutions</li> </ul>



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