

Chapter 1

Group Recognition Formal Activities

YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS

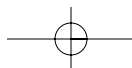


Being a “veteran” employee gives certain bragging rights. With experience comes wisdom (as well as gray hair and wrinkles), and most employees welcome a symbol or recognition of years of service.

Not so long ago people worked for one employer for a lifetime, but for the most part, those days are gone. The prediction now is that people will change careers (not jobs) seven to twelve times. If that’s true, having multiple years of service in an organization may become even more noteworthy in the future.

In an informal survey I conducted, the most common award given to acknowledge years of service was a company logo pin with the number of years noted. Other organizations chose these gifts, which carried the organization’s logo:

- A sweatshirt
- A briefcase
- A watch or clock
- A pen and pencil set
- An acrylic paperweight
- A plaque
- A set of beverage glasses
- A beach cooler
- A beach towel
- A golden apple.





These awards are often given at a special recognition dinner, a beginning-of-the-year breakfast, or an all-employee professional development activity. Publish the names of the recipients in the staff newsletter, on the local cable television channel, etc.

Rose Boutonnieres

Another way to recognize years of service was suggested by a high school in which the principal gives the staff members rose boutonnieres during a designated week. On Monday, he visits the most senior staff members' work areas, welcomes them, and gives them their flower. Each day a new group of staff members receive their flowers (one to five years, six to fifteen years, etc.) until the newest staff members are given theirs on Friday.

Name Badges

Have name badges made for the staff that include the number of years of service/experience they have earned.

Employee Calendar

Make an annual employee calendar that showcases employees who have twenty-five or more years of service. (*Fulton County Schools, Atlanta, GA*)



ATTENDANCE AWARDS

Absenteeism is a universal problem for organizations. Even if you are able to get a substitute no one can replace the absent employee with 100 percent effectiveness. Awards for excellent attendance should be public and published. List the names of the recipients in the community newsletter, submit them to the cable channel, send certificates home with students indicating that their teacher had

perfect attendance, etc. Define the attendance level to be recognized. Will it be based on perfect attendance? One day of absence? Other possibilities are employees who miss no more than a half-day of work during the academic year (*Clarkston Community Schools, Clarkston, MI*) or employees who have not used personal illness days during the year. (*Lapeer Community Schools, Lapeer, MI*)

Employee Attendance Recognition (EAR) Program

One school chose to implement an EAR program. Each semester, staff members are given attendance awards. Those who qualify may select the incentive award of their choice. The awards include:

- A letter of commendation from the principal for their personnel file
- Two weeks of casual dress
- A 45-minute lunch period any five days
- A reserved parking space of their choice for one semester
- Three days of early work leave
- A \$50 warehouse order
- Three days of exemption from bus and/or lunch duty
- Exemption from two after-school or evening “special events.” (*Fulton County Schools, Atlanta, GA*)

Other awards could be:

- A cash award for one day of sick pay or the cost of a substitute
- A gift certificate to an area restaurant
- Logo merchandise
 - First year—Stadium blanket
 - Second year—Golf umbrella
 - Third year—Sweater
 - Fourth year—Jacket.

*Those who qualify may select the incentive award of **their** choice.*

Staff Calendar

Create a staff calendar each month featuring a picture of a staff member who was recognized for his or her attendance the previous year.

Portfolio Page

Create a portfolio page for the recognized staff members to put in their Professional Portfolios. Include a certificate and description of the criteria for receiving the award. The Portfolio can be used in a performance review or as a self-esteem builder. It's great to review it on days when you wonder why you ever chose this profession. Then you realize what a difference you have made.

Attendance Recognition Banner

Hang a banner displaying the names of the people who were recognized for outstanding attendance in a location that has a lot of traffic. (*American Airlines, Dallas, TX*)

When I was in the airport in Dallas I observed a huge banner listing the names of employees who had perfect attendance for five-plus years strung across the terminal for all passengers to see.



RECOGNITION FROM THE BOSS



Being recognized and appreciated by those in the “head shed” is a nice bonus for staff members. It opens lines of communication and provides an opportunity to share success.

In-Touch Lottery

Have you ever found yourself saying, *I wish my boss would do my job for one day—just one day! Then he or she would appreciate me, or My boss has no clue what it takes to do my job!* Likely, we’ve all said something to that effect during our careers. Give some of the staff an opportunity to have their supervisors share their jobs through an “In-Touch Lottery.”

“The farther you are from the front lines, the more you think everything is OK.”
—Tom Peters



How It Works. At an event or meeting when *all* staff members are present, hold a lottery in which all supervisors’ names are put in one container and all other staff members’

names are put in another. Select one name from the management container and one from non-management. The administrator selected spends a day (or half-day) assisting the staff person whose name was drawn in doing his or her job functions. For example, the superintendent may spend a day in the school cafeteria, with a teacher in a classroom, ride a school bus, work on the lawn maintenance, etc. Continue the drawing process until all of the names in the management container have been drawn.

Then do the reverse. Select staff members to spend a day with a manager to gain appreciation for what that job entails. Put the names of the bosses back into the container. Match the names of the managers with a new set of randomly selected staff members.

After the day together, have participants write what they learned about the other person's job, and publish their comments in the staff newsletter. This activity gives all employees a new perspective on how the organization operates.

*Sue Conklin, Administrator, Paw Paw, MI,
and Diane Hodges,
Author*

Principal for a Day

In conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce or other community organization, have various members of the business community serve as Principal for a Day to see the challenges that educators face. Participation in this activity also encourages the business community to contribute ideas and resources to address some of the needs observed.



Super Breakfast

Each year the superintendent ("Super") and administrators prepare and serve breakfast for the staff.

“Champagne” Breakfast

Customize the labels of sparkling juices with a motivating message. Have a “champagne” breakfast with the bottles on the tables for the staff to enjoy. You will find that many of them will keep the bottles as a symbol of appreciation.

Frozen Staff Meeting

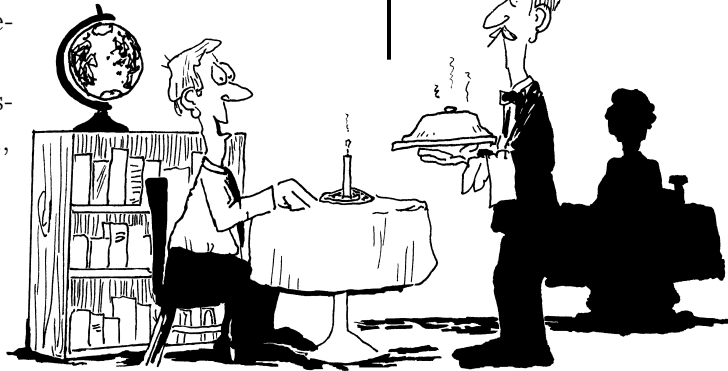
One supervisor entered the staff meeting wearing an apron and carting a blender, frozen daiquiri mix, and plastic glasses. He made non-alcoholic daiquiris for the staff and thanked them for all their extra efforts.

“This Bud’s for You”

Give each staff member a flower bud with a note attached. The note reads, *This bud’s for you. Thank you for all your hard work.*

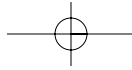
Library Lunches

Educators don’t often have opportunities to go out to lunch, so one principal brought the restaurant environment to the staff. Arrangements were made for business representatives to cover the classrooms from 11:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., and the principal monitored all the rooms. The library tables were set up with candles and tablecloths, and a harpist was brought in to play relaxing music. What a wonderful change of pace for educators!



“Anything Goes” Meeting

Set a time when employees can meet with management in small groups to discuss *anything*. Urge the staff to be



open with their concerns. Questions may be submitted in advance if desired. When the meeting occurs, ask questions that can't be answered with a simple *yes* or *no*. Make it clear that there is no penalty for candid comments and that honesty is welcomed. This is a time for management to express appreciation for the efforts made, too.



APPRECIATION EVENTS & AWARDS

Organizations have found a variety of ways to recognize and honor staff members, including:

- Holding a recognition breakfast with administrators where gifts are given
- Holding an appreciation event where hors d'oeuvres are served and gifts are given (*Sparta Area Schools, Sparta, MI*)
- Giving an award for an exemplary job at an all-staff meeting (*Allegan Public Schools, Allegan, MI*)
- Sponsoring an annual reception or dinner in the local area to express the business community's admiration for the people who help shape the minds of the students.

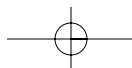


END-OF-THE-YEAR APPRECIATION

Had a “challenging” year—lots of changes, adjustments, etc.? Thanking staff members for their efforts is a good thing to do. Here are some ideas:

Chair Massages

During finals week or at the end of a project, have massage therapists come to the workplace. Schedule staff members



to receive fifteen-minute shoulder and neck massages. Check with massage therapy schools to see if they have students who would be able to participate. One district used the profits from the vending machines to sponsor this activity. (W.B. Travis High School, Austin, TX)

Certificates of Appreciation

End a challenge-filled year with a gesture of appreciation. Make certificates for each staff member and present them at the last staff meeting of the year. Each certificate is personalized on the bottom by listing a “Random Act of Kindness.” Recipients are encouraged to implement that activity to spread cheer to someone and to re-energize themselves. Examples include “Call someone you haven’t talked to in years” and “Send a card to someone for no special reason.”





TEACHER RECOGNITION

New Teacher of the Year

The district selects a first-year teacher to recognize. In addition to a plaque, the recipient receives a plastic pancake. The first year of teaching is much like the first pancake you make—you don't serve it to company. The second one always turns out better.

Master Teacher Awards

Each year, up to five instructional staff persons with a minimum of seven years of service are selected for this award. The program identifies teachers who are recognized by their peers and the community as truly outstanding in their work with students and in their commitment to the district's philosophy. Recipients receive a stipend to use for conferences, educational travel, or curriculum supplies.



Distinguished Educator Award

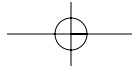
Current staff members with three continuous years of service are eligible; two to five awards are given annually. The criteria used are:

- Professional skills
- Personal qualities
- Educational expertise and involvement
- Other service to schools and students
- Active and useful role outside of education.

(Lapeer Community Schools, Lapeer, MI)

Teacher of the Year

Recipients are selected by their peers to represent their schools. A formal luncheon is held in the fall to honor these educators. Honorees receive a *Teacher of the Year* license



plate, canvas bag, plaque, and a glass etching. (*Fulton County Schools, Atlanta, GA*)

Board Recognition

Each month the Board of Education acknowledges employees and schools that have received regional, state, or national recognition. They are first on the agenda and receive Certificates of Appreciation. (*Fulton County Schools, Atlanta, GA*)

Sabbatical Leave

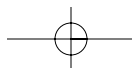
Each year a full-paid sabbatical leave is provided to a member of the instructional staff who has a minimum of seven years in the district. The purpose of the leave is for professional growth and sharing of experiences and learning upon returning to the district.

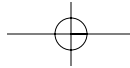
ABOVE & BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY



Extra Miler Award

In one school district, the Board of Education recognizes employees who do their share—and then go the “extra mile.” Staff members nominate their colleagues for an Extra Miler Award on a nomination form that lists the names of all the previous award winners who are currently working for the district. Winners receive a framed copy of the Extra Miler resolution approved by the Board of Education, a cloisonné pin of the Flag of Learning and Liberty, and a gift certificate donated by a local restaurant. In addition, an article about the individual is submitted to the newspaper for publication. (*Plymouth-Canton Community Schools, Plymouth, MI*) **Note:** You could also make this the “Extra Kilometer Award.”





A.B.C.D. Award

Staff members are honored with an A.B.C.D. Award for performing *Above & Beyond the Call of Duty*. Individuals are asked to identify the activities in which they're involved.

A.B.C.D.

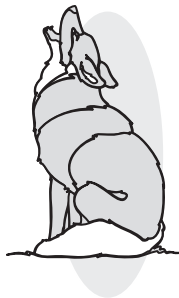
Above & Beyond the Call of Duty

Staff Volunteer Service Recognition

The A.B.C.D. Award honors staff who volunteer to perform Above & Beyond the Call of Duty. Jobs and duties that carry a stipend (monetary or compensatory time) and extra duties directly related to paid jobs *do not* qualify for consideration.

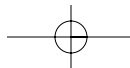
Please check any of the following district activities in which you currently participate.

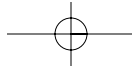
- _____ Curriculum Coordinating Committee
- _____ Computer Curriculum Committee
- _____ Gifted/Talented Committee
- _____ Writing Curriculum Committee
- _____ Reading Curriculum Committee
- _____ Substance Abuse Awareness Committee
- _____ Community Education Advisory Committee
- _____ School Improvement Team
- _____ Public Relations Committee
- _____ Other: _____



Timber Wolf Award

This is a weekly recognition of any staff member who has performed an A.B.C.D. act. Staff members nominate their colleagues by submitting a description of the noteworthy





effort. An article about the winner is included in the daily staff e-mail bulletin and he or she receives a half-dozen huge chocolate chip cookies to share with colleagues. (*Traverse City Area Public Schools, Traverse City, MI*)

Red Apple Award

An award is given twice a year to employees who have contributed beyond what is considered to be their job. Award winners are selected by the superintendent, principals, and/or directors. They're given a "Red Apple" pin and are featured in a newsletter article.



Superintendent's Award

A plaque is presented to a staff member for outstanding contributions in the area of community-school relations. (*Marshall Public Schools, Marshall, MI*)

"Power of One" Award

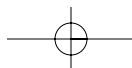
An award is given to a staff person for making a difference in someone's life. For example, while I was giving a presentation for the Lake County, Illinois, Education-to-Careers program, the custodian told me he was a volunteer firefighter and had recently saved the life of a three-month-old child. If that district had had this award, I'm sure he would have been a recipient.

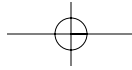
NON-EMPLOYEE AWARDS

There are many people other than those who work for the organization who deserve recognition.

Tea for Substitute Teachers & Temps

Substitute teachers are in such demand that recognizing and appreciating them is meaningful. One way to do this is by having a tea in their honor. (*Fraser Public Schools,*





Fraser, MI) Make them feel welcome and part of the team so they put your school on the top of their list.

Citizenship Award

An annual recognition is given at a Back-to-School community breakfast to a citizen who has provided exemplary service in support of a school district program. The recipient is given an engraved Golden Apple Award. (*Marshall Public Schools, Marshall, MI*)

VIPS Awards— Volunteers in Public Schools

The Board of Education and the “I Care Committee” congratulate volunteers who make a difference in the schools. They recognize those who are positive and pleasant, communicate well with staff and children, represent the district, are self-motivated, helpful, and consistently give a “100 percent plus” effort. Those recognized receive a framed copy of a resolution approved by the Board, a volunteer pin, and a gift certificate donated by an area restaurant. (*Plymouth-Canton Community Schools, Plymouth, MI*)

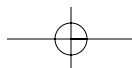
Outstanding Service Award

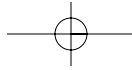
An annual Outstanding Service Award recognizes community members who have given superior service to a project(s). One individual is recognized from each school and receives the award at a Board of Education meeting. (*Clarkston Community Schools, Clarkston, MI*)



School Bell Award

Although the School Bell Award may be received by employees, it typically goes to non-employees who have rendered support and service to the district. (*Allegan Public Schools, Allegan, MI*)





Senior Citizen Appreciation

Senior citizens add so much to the community. Holding Senior Citizen Appreciation events for them is fun. Host a banquet to recognize seniors' contributions (*Fraser Public Schools, Fraser, MI*) or a high school "No Generation Gap" dance where senior citizens and high school students party together. (*Paw Paw High School, Paw Paw, MI*)

TEAM AWARDS

"Recognizing Our Success" Program

Employee teams are recognized with a plaque at Board meetings for activities that support the Focus Area of the district's strategic plan. Each month teams are recognized in one of the five areas, such as:

- Quality
- Diversity
- Mastery of Curriculum
- Student Learning Plans
- Community Involvement.

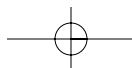
Weekly Team Awards

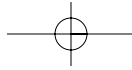
A small token award is given at each staff meeting to a group that has demonstrated team spirit. (*Traverse City Area Public Schools, Traverse City, MI*)

STAFF APPRECIATION DAY OR WEEK

"Everything Under the Stars" Luncheon

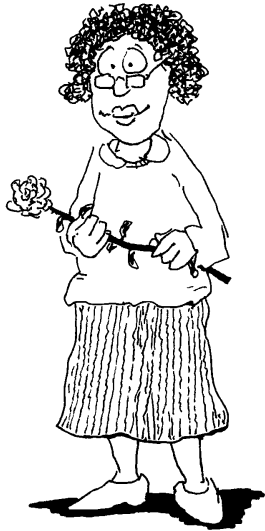
Hold a luncheon where the staff members dine under glittering stars suspended from the ceiling. Each star has a staff member's name imprinted on it in gold. (*Del Mar Union School District, Del Mar, CA*)





A Week of Celebrations

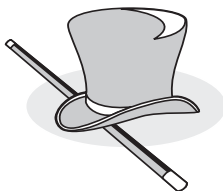
Hold special events to celebrate Staff Appreciation Week. Plans and preparations might include:



- Decorating the building with balloons and banners
- Giving flowers to each staff member
- Greeting the bus drivers at the curb with hot coffee, juice, and pastries
- Having a luncheon with music and culinary delights provided by parents and served by the students (*Del Mar Heights Elementary School, Del Mar, CA*)
- Sending a fruit tray or snack to each school with a token gift and a note from Board members (*Okemos Public Schools, Okemos, MI*)
- Giving out little “treats” each day of the week to celebrate the hard work and dedication of all the employees (*L’Anse Creuse Public Schools, Harrison Township, MI*)
- Giving a notepad and pen or other small gift to each staff member and preparing fruit and cheese trays for each school and worksite (*Kelloggsville Public Schools, Grand Rapids, MI*)
- Inviting a guest speaker to provide a motivational presentation to the staff. (*West Ottawa Public Schools, Holland, MI*)

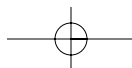
Parent-Teacher Conferences Dinner

The itinerant staff caters dinner for the teaching staff during the week of conferences. The dinner is complemented by grape juice served in wineglasses. (*Traverse City Area Public Schools, Traverse City, MI*)



“Our Staff Is Magical”

At one school the theme of the week was “Our Staff Is Magical” and a magic show was presented as part of the celebration. Other events included an ice cream



social, luncheon, and “magical” awards. (*Del Mar Hills Elementary School, Del Mar, CA*)

Board of Education Resolution

The Board approves a Staff Appreciation Day Resolution at its meeting. A copy of the resolution is sent to each employee with a cover letter of appreciation. (*Kelloggsville Public Schools, Grand Rapids, MI*)

Kelloggsville Board of Education Resolution

STAFF APPRECIATION DAY

WHEREAS, Kelloggsville staff are committed to the philosophy that all students can learn; *and*

WHEREAS, Kelloggsville staff support that philosophy by encouraging, motivating, and inspiring all students to achieve their very best; *and*

WHEREAS, Kelloggsville staff support each other in sharing their expertise and their interest in their students; *and*

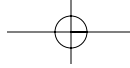
WHEREAS, Kelloggsville staff support open communication among administrators, parents, teachers, and students to promote education in the district; *and*

WHEREAS, Kelloggsville staff prepare students for a global perspective in our rapidly changing world; *and*

WHEREAS, Kelloggsville staff are involved in solving educational problems that will lead to reform in education; *and*

WHEREAS, Kelloggsville staff actively participate in their communities; now, therefore, *be it*

WHEREAS, that the Kelloggsville Board of Education designates *date* as Staff Appreciation Day and calls on the citizens and educators in the Kelloggsville community to initiate appropriate activities to honor this important segment of our society.



*Sample Resolution
Cover Letter:
Use letterhead and
attach a message
such as this to the
resolution.*



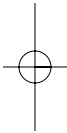
School District Letterhead

Dear Staff:

Thank you for your loyal and dedicated service. Kelloggsville is a better place to work and learn because of YOU! You are an important member of our staff, and your interest in providing the best for our students is appreciated.

Sincerely,

The Board of Education and Administrators



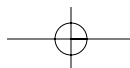
Business-Sponsored Reception

Have businesses in the area sponsor a reception for teachers in the district to express their admiration and appreciation for the educators' work.

Catered Luncheon IOU

As an American Education Week gift for the staff, invite them to a luncheon. The meal is catered during one of the records days so staff members have time to enjoy it.

(Traverse Heights Elementary School, Traverse City, MI)



STAFF NEWSLETTER



Communication is the number one problem in most organizations. It's difficult to know everyone in an organization and be up-to-date on current events. Developing and distributing staff newsletters is an effective tool to acknowledge and show appreciation for the staff.

Intra-View

A one-page newsletter called "Intra-View" is published for school employees and provides information about birthdays, achievements, and current staff news. The reverse side of the page is called "The Flip Side" and serves as a communication tool for information from Board meetings and the central office. (*Marcellus High School, Marcellus, MI*)

Rapport

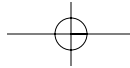
A monthly newsletter called "Rapport" highlights employees' travels, activities, awards, classroom teaching, special programs, and innovative ideas.

(*Fulton County Schools, Atlanta, GA*) **Note:** Add the names of recent retirees to the mailing list for the staff newsletters. They'll love reading about what their working friends are doing.

The Coffee Break

A clever way to distribute your newsletter is to call it "The Coffee Break" and attach a tea bag or a small bag of coffee to it, which invites employees to have coffee while they read the current staff news.





Both the person submitting the name and the person cited have their names entered into a drawing. At the end of the month, one person's name is drawn to receive a gift certificate.

“Paycheck News”

An effective and inexpensive means of getting a communication to all staff is to include it in their paychecks. In my district we developed a brief newsletter called “Paycheck News” that is included in biweekly paychecks. It gives information on new staff, resignations, upcoming events, etc. There are sections for “Kudos” and “Did You Know That . . . ?” The newsletter provides an opportunity for staff to get to know each other better or extend thanks to others. Staff members submit information regarding their colleagues, e.g., *Did you know that _____ golfed a hole-in-one this summer? or A special thanks to _____ (a custodian) for having the rooms look so great for the start of the year.*

Paycheck News

Our staff members have many talents, skills, and accomplishments that we often don't know about. To increase our awareness, this section will be part of the “Paycheck News.” This will give you a chance to tell us about yourself or colleagues.

Kudos . . .

Your name _____
Name of person you're acknowledging _____
Recognition _____

Did You Know That . . . ?

Your name _____
Information to share _____

