



Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate

Recognition

Employee recognition can reinforce an employee's behaviour or highlight the accomplishment of a work-related task (Mone et al., 2011). Individuals value a work environment that fosters collegiality and acknowledges their achievements (Pastore et al., 1996). Employee recognition is tied to identity formation, allowing workers to construct meaning from their work and advance personal development (Grawitch et al. 2006).

Why is it important?

- Regardless of profession or status, most employees have a need for recognition in the workplace (Saunderson, 2004).
- A lack of perceived recognition can lead to educators feeling underappreciated, resulting in higher levels of employee turnover (Sahl, 2017).
- By acknowledging effort and good work, organizations can increase employee motivation, job performance, and well-being (Brun & Dugas, 2008).



In Practice

Employees feel appreciated when their hard work is acknowledged. Accordingly, school leaders should recognize staff efforts and achievements through both formal and informal means.



What can schools do?

Make appreciation a part of workplace culture by regularly acknowledging the contributions of school staff. This can be achieved by:

- Using recognition to reinforce the values, behaviours, and attitudes expected of employees.
- Providing recognition based on individual preferences in terms of frequency and type of acknowledgment given.
- Ensuring that the recognition delivered is specific enough to be considered both authentic and meaningful to the recipient.
- Praising both individual and collective efforts and encouraging staff to follow suit in celebrating the achievements of their colleagues.
- Develop formal systems to solicit positive feedback from students, parents, and fellow colleagues and circulate this information internally when appropriate.



Leader Reflection

School leaders can celebrate successes attributable to both individual and collective staff efforts through the following actions:

- Clearly articulate how the efforts and accomplishments of school staff are making a difference.
- Tailor recognition to the preferences of your employees (e.g., public or private) by responding to cues provided by staff.
- Strike a balance between formal (e.g., awards events, luncheons) and informal (casual chats and e-mails) types of recognition.
- Consider acknowledging both personal and professional milestones, including birthdays, work anniversaries, and personal achievements.
- Demonstrate that you care about long-term career trajectories at the school by highlighting professional development opportunities.
- Acknowledge accomplishments through various rewards and perks. These can take many forms but focus on incentives appropriate to the staff and culture of the school.

References

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