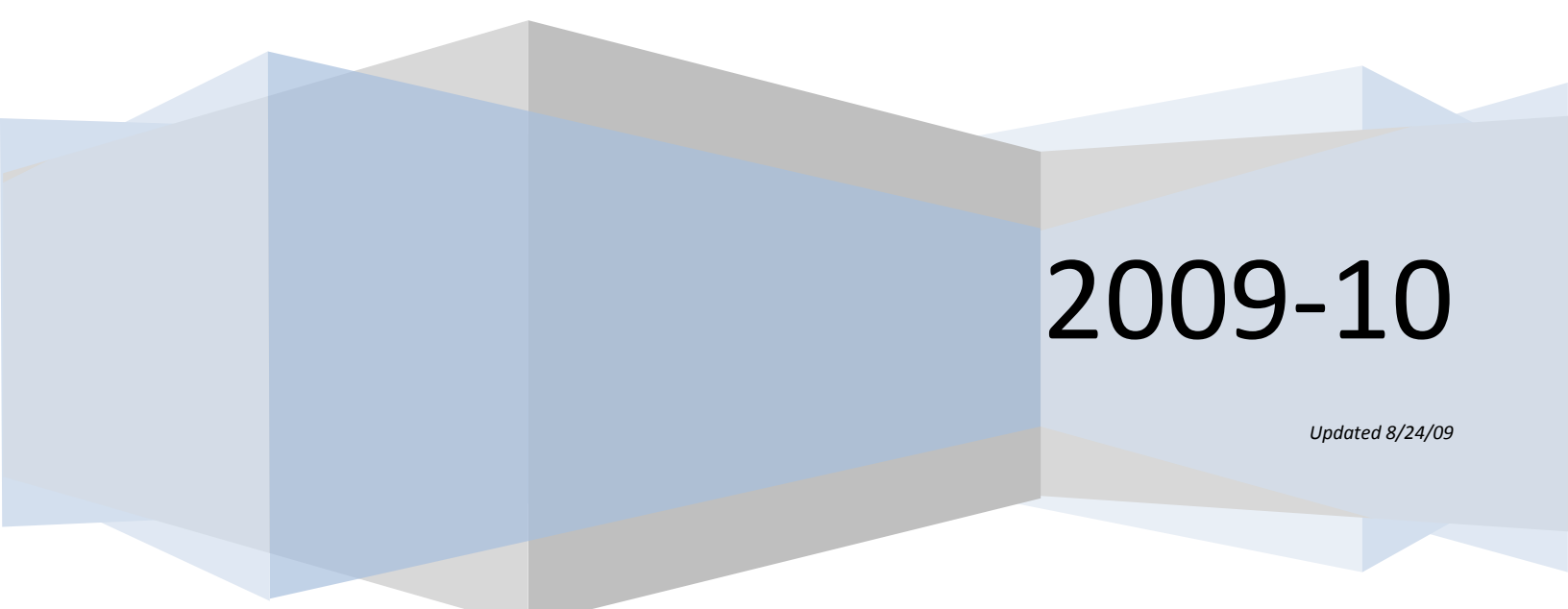


Saint Paul Public Schools

Recognition Tool Kit

For Employees and Supervisors

Provided by Human Resources



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INTRODUCTION

Overview

At the direction of the superintendent, a taskforce made up of SPPS Foundation and District representatives was created to come up with recommendations that support efforts to create a culture of appreciation and honor district employees for the exemplary work they do. It is the strongly held belief of senior leadership that SPPS employees are worthy of and deserve recognition. The recommendations were designed to support the “Belief Campaign” and keep employees engaged and passionate about their work supporting the academic excellence for children of SPPS.

The recommendation that resulted was a comprehensive staff recognition program that is effective and sustainable. Components of the staff recognition program include:

- ✓ An ongoing Staff Recognition Working Group to be an ongoing advocate for staff recognition activities, and continue to research best practices for staff recognition programs.
- ✓ An annual recognition calendar to guide the district’s formal recognition activities.
- ✓ A Recognition Tool Kit for employees and supervisors to provide resources and assistance in effectively recognizing employees on a day-to-day basis.
- ✓ An on-line recognition mechanism that allows for simple, frequent recognition of any employee by any employee.
- ✓ Employee discounts available to all SPPS staff.
- ✓ Board of Education Monthly Awards including certificates or plaques
- ✓ Regular Recognition Breakfasts hosted by the SPPS Foundation.
- ✓ Staff Appreciation Week with multiple events, activities, and communications
- ✓ Teacher/Staff Recognition Grants provided by the SPPS Foundation
- ✓ A reward program with certificates, prizes, and products provided (or secured) through the SPPS Foundation from community organizations.

The Tool Kit

The purpose of this tool kit is to compliment the rest of the recognition program and assist in fostering a culture of appreciation within SPPS that honors and acknowledges district employees for the extraordinary work they do. Benefits of utilizing the tool kit include building rapport with employees and co-workers, engaging them, and cultivating a positive climate that people enjoy being a part of. The tool kit is specifically designed to provide all SPPS employees with the tools necessary to recognize other SPPS employees effectively. It includes:

- ✓ Recognition Guidelines
- ✓ Tips for when and how to recognize employees
- ✓ Methods and resources available for recognizing employees
- ✓ Ideas for building/department level activities
- ✓ Sample wording for recognition messages and Thank You’s
- ✓ Additional ideas for supervisors to improve employee morale and job satisfaction

GETTING STARTED

Recognition Guidelines

- Be inclusive of all employee groups within your building.
- Be fair and be consistent. Do not play “favorites”.
- Work within existing guidelines of SPPS for purchasing items (i.e. prizes)
- Be cognizant of employee’s comfort level with public attention when recognizing them.

Tips for Recognizing Employees

- Find out how your employees or co-workers like to be recognized.
- Match the person to the reward. (i.e. Make sure the person celebrates birthdays before recognizing theirs. Or make sure a person is comfortable with public attention before putting on a big display.)
- Match the reward to the achievement. (A large display for a small achievement will seem insincere. Small achievements are usually served best by small, simple recognition.)
- Be timely. Recognize the worker promptly after the achievement.
- Follow through with what you promise.
- Be specific in your praise – use the employee’s name, why they are being recognized, why the accomplishment is important to you, etc. Specific information is much more meaningful than a generic “you’re doing a good job” comment.
- Use a staff roster and cross employees’ names off when you praise them. This will ensure you are reaching everyone.
- Establish a routine to recognize one of your employees each day. Either leave a voicemail message on your way home from work each day, or make your last task of the day to write a note to someone acknowledging their accomplishment.
- Be an obsessive observer. Look for the “extras” that people do.

When To Recognize an Employee

Opportunities are limitless. Just a few suggestions for when to recognize an employee include:

- For helping out or covering for a co-worker
- For helping you out with a task
- For volunteering to do a menial task that is undesirable or that no one else will do.
- For making a difference in a student's achievement, development, learning, attendance, etc.
- For suggesting an innovative idea
- For successfully handling a difficult situation with a student
- For successfully handling a difficult situation with a co-worker
- For achieving a specific goal (either personal or professional)
- For experiencing a life event (i.e. marriage, birth of child, etc.)
- To celebrate an event that is important to them (i.e. birthday, anniversary, etc.)
- For giving of themselves in some way out of the ordinary or above the norm

Where To Recognize an Employee

Physical location can vary based on the method of recognition and comfort level. Some suggestions for face to face recognition include:

- In the classroom – before or after school
- In the classroom – in front of students
- At a school assembly
- In a team/department meeting
- Walk out of work to the parking lot with the employee
- Stop over at the employee's desk
- Call the employee over to your desk, or into your office

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

Communication Methods

Recognize employees in a variety of ways based on their (and your) comfort level. Also, the method of recognition should match the achievement since some are more formal than others.

- Verbal – face to face
- Phone or voice-mail
- E-mail
- Letter or greeting card
- Certificate or Award
- E-connect
- School newsletter
- Staff bulletin board
- “Believe” Note

Sample Recognition Phrases

Recognition can be as simple as letting an employee know they did a good job on something. To be most effective, be specific with your praise. While a generic “You’re doing a great job” is commonly used, it can be more effective by qualifying it with what specifically caught your eye. Here are some suggested sentence starters to try:

- You really made a difference by.....
- I’m impressed with.....
- You got my attention with.....
- You’re doing top quality work on.....
- You’re right on the mark with.....
- One of the things I enjoy most about you is.....
- We couldn’t have done it without your.....
- What an effective way to.....
- You’ve made my day because of.....

Communication Tips:

- Use the person’s name and spell/pronounce it correctly.
- Be specific in describing why the person is being recognized, how they made a difference, etc.
- Speak from your heart – it will show genuine gratitude and/or appreciation

Sample Templates

Thank you notes don't have to be elaborate. They can be as simple as a couple of sentences that express what the employee did to deserve thanks and why you appreciate it. The following templates are basic samples to use as a starting point. They can easily be modified or enhanced to meet your specific needs:

- Thank you for your help today on the (name of project or directive). The (specific task) that you worked on will make a big difference in our efficiencies.
- I was really impressed today with how you handled (specify parent, child, or situation). Keeping calm and diffusing the situation was right on the mark, and the outcome was positive because of your actions.
- I've noticed that you are really making a difference with (specify child). His (behavior, reading skills, etc.) has really improved since you've (list something that was done). Thank you!
- Thank you for mentoring (specify new teacher or employee) and showing her how to (specify activity). Your extra efforts are helping to develop the skills of another team member and boosting our overall success.
- Thanks for picking up the slack and getting (list task) done. We wouldn't have met our deadline without you.
- Wow! You really went above all expectations with (name of project or directive). It's obvious that a lot of effort went into this, and as a result, we'll get a lot of use out of it too. Thanks for your work on it!
- Thanks for noticing that I was struggling yesterday and for checking in on me. Your support was just what I needed.
- Thanks for covering for me for (list situation). I wouldn't have been able to (list activity) without your help. Your willingness to help meant a lot to me.
- Thanks for your help in keeping our team meeting productive. The (list topic) topic was a difficult one and could have easily turned the meeting into a negative complaint-fest, but your input and comments during the meeting helped to keep things in perspective for others. I personally appreciated your positive attitude and support.
- Thanks for the great idea to (list idea). That change will help us (list positive outcome).

DISTRICT-WIDE RECOGNITION

Current Recognition Opportunities within SPPS

The following is a list of formal recognition opportunities for all SPPS employees. In addition to the list below, supervisors are encouraged to incorporate daily recognition of staff into their routine. Ideas are listed under the “Recognition Ideas for Individual Supervisors” section.

- **E-connect “Peer Praise Board”** – available for impromptu recognition electronically
 - To utilize this method, send your e-mail to Mandy Richie in Community Relations
- **Believe THANKS notes** – available in PDF version on line and paper note pads
 - THANKS note pads are available from the principal and lead clerk. Additional notepads are also available through HR – Total Rewards and Information Management.
 - The THANKS electronic form is also available on the Human Resources web page.
- **Board of Education Monthly Awards**
 - If you or someone you know received an external award, send an e-mail to Community Relations. Recognition is given at monthly board meetings in two categories: “Employee or Department” and “Schools or Programs”.
- **SPPS Foundation Quarterly Recognition Breakfast**
 - This recognition avenue is still in development at this time.
- **Staff Appreciation Week**
 - This occurs in May of each year, and activities may vary each year. Information about staff appreciation week is communicated about a month before it occurs.

BUILDING / DEPT / INDIVIDUAL RECOGNITION

Ideas and Suggestions

There are limitless ideas for recognizing employees, and many cost little or nothing. While some ideas listed below may work great for some employee groups, they may not be realistic for others. You know what will work best for your group – give a few of these a try, or use them to generate your own ideas.

- Bulletin Board in staff lounge to add random notes for employees/co-workers to thank, congratulate, and recognize each other for various things.
- Thank You cards for employees, acknowledging their efforts.
- E-mail employees about a job well done. Follow up with verbal acknowledgement too, if possible.
- Form a “lunch bunch” in which the supervisor/principal takes new workers in their building to lunch.
- Choose one worker each month to have lunch (or after work happy hour appetizers) with the principal or department head. This gives them access to communicate directly with a decision-maker and also improves communication.
- Have a traveling trophy that employees award to each other for helping someone out or going “above and beyond” their regular work. Or simply use paper certificates to award employees for a job well done. Either way, some possible trophy or certificate award ideas are:
 - A “Giraffe Award” to say “Thank you for sticking your neck out.”
 - A pack of Lifesavers to say “You are a lifesaver.”
 - A Payday candy bar to say “You deserve and extra payday.”
 - A “You Take the Cake Award” – the employee receives homemade cake or cookies.
 - A “Red Carpet Award” – a red mat under the person’s chair
 - A “Spray Bottle Award” for showering someone with exceptional service.
 - A “Light bulb Award” for a great idea
 - A “Footprint Award” for going the extra mile
- Hold a “Jackpot” for topics like safety, cost reductions, going green, new ideas, individual student progress, or whatever you’d like. The principal/manager distributes “lotto” cards to employees based on pre-set criteria from the topic and employees see how many points they’ve “won”. Points could accumulate or be redeemed for various rewards.
- Send a note to the employee’s family thanking them for their support when the employee is working an overabundance of time.
- Implement the “Not Invented Here” award where employees are given certificates if they “steal” ideas or best practices from other departments, schools, etc.
- Highlight the success of a staff member or team during department meetings.
- Show employees you care by recognizing events *that are important to them* (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.) (Make sure they are ok with having the event recognized first)

SUPERVISORS ONLY

Recognition By Supervisors

One of the most important things you can do to retain your quality employees is to recognize them for their efforts and achievements. No district-wide initiative or formal incentive program can have as much impact as genuine appreciation and recognition from a direct supervisor. No matter which jobs, levels, or positions you supervise, your actions have a direct effect on how motivated your employees are, and how satisfied they are in their jobs. People that are recognized and appreciated, try harder and achieve more. By making recognition and appreciation part of your daily routine, those around you will pick up on this and begin to do the same. Before long, it will become the culture of each team, department, and school, and that ultimately benefits the students of SPPS.

Managing and Motivating

In addition to effectively recognizing employees, there are proven techniques to help improve employee morale, make staff feel appreciated, increase productivity, and promote staff retention. A few of these suggestions are listed below:

- Show employees that their ideas count. Implement some of their suggestions.
- Integrate elements of fun into meetings, daily work, etc. whenever possible.
- Welcome new employees appropriately - studies have shown that workers typically decide within the first two days if they plan to stay.
- Arrange a group outing after work – invite all building/dept staff.
- Treat employees with respect. Simply put, treat them how you would want to be treated.
- Keep the communication lines open with employees. Actively promote communication by networking with them.
- Don't forget the little courtesies – “good morning”, “thank you” and “excuse me” can go a long way.
- Take a genuine interest in your employees on a personal level. Without prying, take time to learn about their hobbies, interests, etc.
- Ask new employees how they like to be recognized.
- Communicate with employees about the recognition program and encourage staff regularly to recognize each other.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Frequently Asked Questions

Since this is the first version of the Recognition Tool Kit, we are compiling a list of frequently asked questions as we receive them and will develop a FAQ section for future versions of the tool kit. If you currently have questions about the tool kit, feel free to contact Patty Norwig in Human Resources at 651-767-8210.

Additional Resources – Books

- **1001 Ways to Reward Employees**, Bob Nelson
- **The 1001 Rewards and Recognition Field Book: The Complete Guide**, Bob Nelson, Phil Spitzer, Dean Spitzer
- **CARE Packages for the Workplace: Dozens of Little Things You Can Do to Regenerate Spirit at Work**, Barbara Glanz
- **Managing With Carrots: Using Recognition to Attract and Retain the Best People**, Adrian Robert Gostick, Chester Elton
- **Rewarding and Recognizing Employees: Ideas for Individuals, Teams, and Managers**, Jaon P Klubnik
- **Encouraging the Heart: A Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others**, James M. Kouzes, Barry Z Posner
- **The Human Capital Edge**, Bruce Pfau and Ira Kay

Additional Resources – Websites

- National Assoc for Employee Recognition – www.recognition.org
- Baudville Recognition Resource Center - <http://www.baudville.com/Teacher-Appreciation-Ideas/teacher-appreciation-week-tips/rcarticle/76/7/44/45/46/0>
- National 4H Recognition Model - <http://www.ca4h.org/4hresource/ir/natmodel.asp>
- Education Foundation of Collier County – <http://www.educationforcollier.org/index.cfm?page=58>
- Park Hill School District Education Foundation – http://www.parkhillfoundation.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogsection&id=7&Itemid=29
- Wichita Public Schools – <http://www.usd259.com/news/awards/default.htm>
- California School Recognition Program – <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cs/>
- Frisco Rough Riders Teacher Recognition Program – <http://visitfrisco.travel/press/Pages/RoughRiders.aspx>
- Anchorage School District - <http://www.asd.k12.ak.us/recognition/>
- San Francisco Unified School District Employee Recognition Program - <http://portal.sfusd.edu/template/default.cfm?page=employees.recognition>
- South Carolina Dept of Education - <http://www.scteachers.org/Recog/index.cfm>