

How to Boost Teacher Morale

November 16, 2020



Connecticut State Department of Education

Focus for the day...



- **What is Teacher Morale?**
- **Why is Teacher Morale Important to Prioritize?**
- **What Steps Can Leaders Take to Boost Teacher Morale?**
- **What Are Some of Your Peers Doing to Improve Teacher Morale?**



What is Teacher Morale?



Morale can be defined as the professional interest and enthusiasm a person displays towards the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation (Bentley & Rempel, 1980). When a healthy school environment exists and teacher morale is high, "teachers feel good about each other and, at the same time, feel a sense of accomplishment from their jobs" (Hoy and Miskel, 1987).



School Environment

Stress

WHY PRIORITIZE IT?

Parent Support

Teacher Health

Importance of Making Teacher Morale a Priority

All children deserve a high quality education, and a high quality education starts with an excellent teacher in every classroom. Children learn best through a passionate, skilled instructor. If you are to retain your best teachers performing at the highest level, they must feel satisfied with their jobs.

Teacher morale has dropped as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Surveys by EdWeek Research Center document the decline in teachers' spirits. In its March 25, 2020, survey, 63 percent of teachers reported that teacher morale was lower than before the pandemic. By April 8th it rose to 69 percent and by May 7th 72 percent.

According to the [National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\)](#), 8% of teachers leave the profession yearly and another 8% move to other schools, bringing the total annual turnover rate to 16%. That means that on average, a school will lose 3 out of every 20 teachers.





Efforts Leaders May Take to Show Teachers They are Valued

- **Be Joyful, Inspire and Praise:** Be joyful. It's infectious and can be a great stress reducer. Inspire to encourage perseverance and praise to validate teachers.
- **Emotional Support:** Make time for mindfulness. Create opportunities for self-reflection, self-care and to recognize signs.
- **Develop a School Culture Around Sharing:** Use sharing as a supportive practice to build the culture and develop a community of learners.



Efforts Leaders May Take To Empower Teachers To Do Their Jobs Effectively

- **Offer Flexible Scheduling:** Reserve time for teachers to plan, grade, conference with students and families, collaborate with co-workers and engage in professional learning. Be mindful of time commitments and energy levels.
- **Open Communication:** Participate in active listening, share personalized notes/feedback in a genuine way. Invite teachers to share in decision making.
- **Provide Professional Learning/Training:** Build competence and confidence in your teaching staff.



Ways to Support Staff

Derby Middle School



set
new goals

focus on
your dream

stay
positive

generate
new ideas

↳ Motivation

Are you really motivated?



- Survival kits to kickoff the year
- Keychain with Derby Mantra
- Welcome back sign on our front lawn
- Free school supply store sponsored by Dollar Tree
- Annual T-shirt
- Frequent mental health staff check-ins





- Ice cream truck during professional development
- Derby masks given to each staff member
- Dinner Raffle baskets
- DMS Rise up Award for staff monthly
- "Thank for Keeping us Afloat" - Root beer float cart
- Staff lead activities to begin staff meetings



Odyssey Community School

Staff Morale Ideas

Now more than ever, it is so important for staff to know that they are appreciated, and that the incredible work that they are doing is noticed. Included below are some of the ways that we have shown teachers that they are valued, heard, as well as some ways that we are having fun :). We have also included ways that we have boosted morale in the past, which could easily be adapted to maintain COVID safety.

Recognition and Gratitude



Thank You Notes

- Written thank you notes for all staff members for their work. Mailed to homes.
- Written thank you notes to emergency contacts (spouses, parents, children, of staff members) explaining how grateful we are for the work that the teacher/staff member is doing, and thanking them for their support.
- Short notes left on the windshields of cars so that staff have a message of gratitude when they arrive at their cars at the end of the day.

Describing Words - Choose a word that describes each staff member. Write a message explaining why you chose that word.

Positive Notes When Visiting Classrooms - Every time we are in a classroom this year, we leave a positive note for the teacher(s) in the room about something that we observed.

Staff Signs - During quarantine, we visited each staff member's home to deliver a lawn sign showing our appreciation!

Recognition and Gratitude

CIRCLE Awards - Each month, we hold awards ceremonies to honor students and staff who have exemplified our CIRCLE values (Courage, Integrity, Respect, Curiosity, Leadership, and Excellence). Students, families, and staff have the opportunity to nominate students and staff who they believe have demonstrated these values. Staff (and students!) receive a certificate and a t-shirt when they receive awards.



Recognition and Gratitude

Positive Pumpkin Patch - At the beginning of October, we purchased pumpkins and wrote a staff member's name on each pumpkin. We put the pumpkins in different areas around the school (close to different cohorts) and created "patches." Staff were asked to visit the pumpkin patches and write on the pumpkins, including words to describe the staff members, or messages. At the end of the week, each staff member had a positive pumpkin with words and messages from colleagues. Staff LOVED these, and this could easily be adapted for any season or holiday, and could be done on paper as well!

9 at 9 - Quick and free way to have fun! At 9:00 (or whatever time) announce a trivia question over the loudspeaker, and say that the 9th staff member to call admin extension with the answer wins a prize (in our case, it's a prime parking spot for the week).

Turkey Feather Hunt - Without telling staff, we hid turkey feathers all over the school (could be adjusted for COVID in cohort spaces, or teacher classrooms), split staff into teams, and then sent an email in the morning telling staff to find them and to tape them to their team turkey in the staff lounge. The team with the most feathers at the end of the week received a prize.

Recognition and Gratitude



FOOD

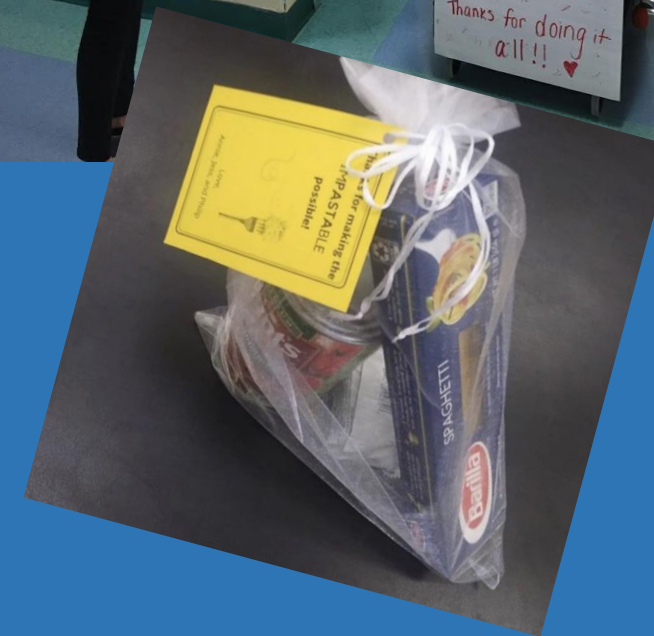
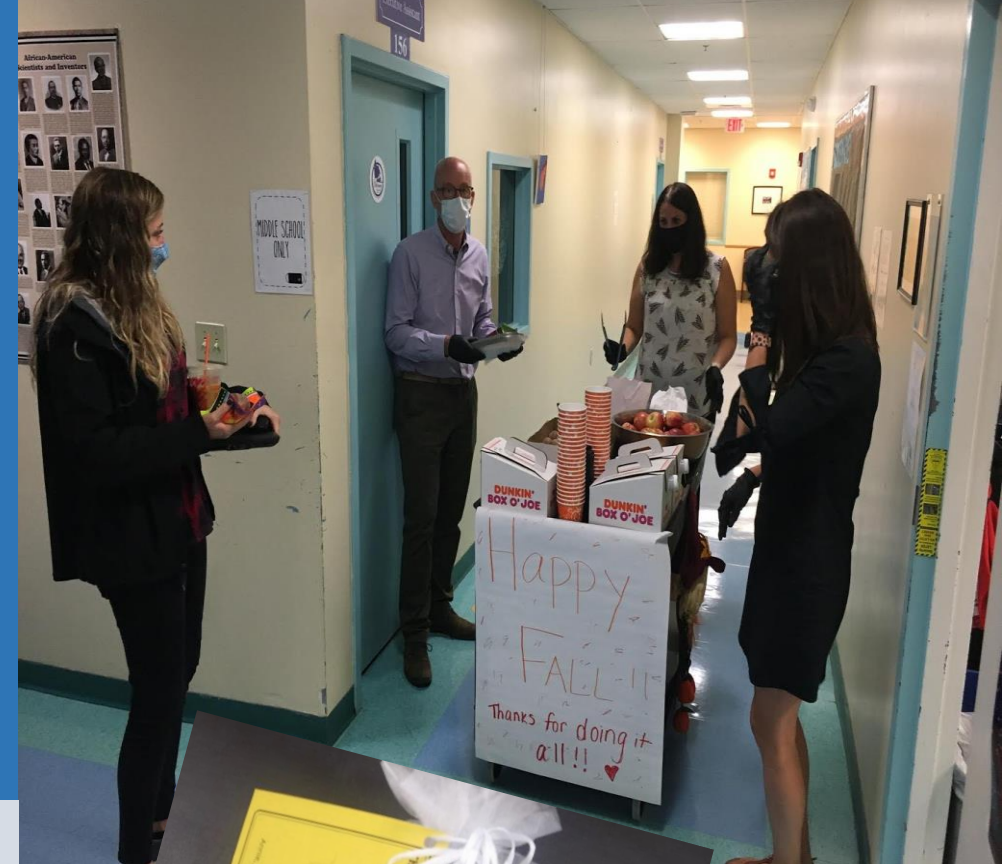
- **Food carts** - One a month, we surprise staff with a themed food cart and travel to each classroom so they can receive “room service.” This past month, our theme was “Happy Fall! Thanks for doing it all!” The cart included doughnuts and coffee, breakfast treats, apple cider, fruit, and candy.
- **Pasta Dinner Package** - To take something off of staff plates!

More Food Ideas:

Apple nacho bar - Bowl of apples, cutters, caramel, chocolate sauce, marshmallow, peanut butter, candy, nuts, etc to make nachos.

Stacking the freezer with ice cream sandwiches, bars, cups, pops

“Lunch is on us” days - Pizza, Panera, Moes, etc..



TIME

Time is what all teachers want most right now. We are trying to give as much time as we can to staff to plan to minimize the work that they have to take home.

- Cancelling staff meetings 1x per month on remote days to allow a block of time for teachers to use for planning.
- Limiting meetings, and using email to communicate information whenever possible.
- Administrators not responding to emails on weekends and encouraging teachers to do the same.

Other Ideas

- **Raffle** - Spin a wheel to win coverage for a duty, class, extra planning period, gift card, etc.
- **Holiday Card** - We started doing this last year, and it had such a positive impact on staff morale, and a positive response from our community! All families and other OCS partners received an Odyssey holiday card from staff. We will send these this year with Zoom pictures!



Contact Odyssey Community School

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Annie Busby – Principal

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This Facebook group is a fantastic resource for staff morale ideas!



*"Teachers teach because they care. Teaching young people is what they do best. It requires **long hours, patience, and care.**" – Horace Mann*

Appreciating Our Staff



Smalley School
New Britain





Teacher appreciation Wednesday!!



When Life
Gives You
Lemons You
Make
Lemonade!





Teachers are Tough Cookies!



Tough Cookies!!





Sometime We Need to COOL Off!

Cool Down!





Thanking Our Teacher for Keeping Us A Float!!





NO BIG WHOOP!



Hybrid Teaching is
NO big



when you work as a
team!





Don't Get It Twizzled!



Don't Get It Twizzled...
You will be alright...
SLOs will be a snap!



Teachers
PLANT THE SEEDS OF
KNOWLEDGE
THAT GROW FOREVER



Not Everything Is FUN FOOD!!

Sound Therapy

Thank You Mr. Young!



Healing Connection Recovery

Kelvin Young
Sound Healer

Bridge Healing Arts Center
304 Main St.
Farmington, CT 06032
860.951.6921

kyoung06457@gmail.com
www.kelvinbyoung.com





Increasing School Morale

The strength of a school family:

- During our school activities we come together to support each other!
- Care for each other
- Support each other
- Addressing staff needs
- Being attentive to staff needs





Let's Get Back to Normal~

This Months Upcoming Treats...



Contact Smalley Elementary School

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HOW TO BOOST TEACHER MORALE



Read

Read to learn more about this topic.

[How Principals and District Leaders Are Trying to Boost Lagging Teacher Morale During COVID-19](#)

Written by Catherine Gewertz | Education Week

[A Principal's Reflections: Reflections on teaching, learning, and leadership](#)

Posted by Eric Sheninger

[How Educators Can Boost Morale and Mental Health During the COVID-19 Crisis](#)

Written by Cross Country Education

Watch

Watch clips to learn more about this topic.

[Power of a Teacher](#) [Time 18:28 min.]

Dr. Adam Saenz / TEDxYale

[10 year old intellect, Dalton Sherman's keynote speech](#) [Time 8:55 min.]

Dallas Independent School District launch of the new school year / Dallas, TX

[How To Create a Fantastic Working Environment in Your School](#) [Time 11:46 min.]

John Nicholls | TED Talk

Listen

Listen to podcasts to learn more about this topic.

[Podcast: What's missing from your teacher engagement strategy](#) [Time 7:20 min.]

Podcast: With Dr. Shelby McIntosh, lead researcher on K12 Insight's first annual State of K-12 Customer Experience Report, Dr. David Blaiklock, head of research at K12 Insight, Dr. Gerald Dawkins, a former K-12 superintendent and senior vice president of district relations at K12 Insight, and Dana Schafer, public information officer at The School District of Osceola County in Florida.

[Teacher Morale Low, How Can it Be Lifted?](#) [Time 12 min.]

Podcast: Steve Anderson, Educator, #EdChat Co-Creator, Tom Whitby, contributing Editor at SmartBrief, founder of #EdChat, Twitter-Using Educators, and NYSCATE Network. Nancy Blair, school improvement consultant.

Reflect

Reflect on this topic using the following questions:

- What new awareness, questions, or ideas do you have after reviewing the resources?
- What resources do you already have to help you achieve the goal of boosting teacher morale in your district and/or school?
- What new resources will you need to achieve this goal?
- How will you transfer your new learning to your practice?



Additional Resources

[Building Relationships with Teachers](#)

[4 ways leaders are keeping teachers motivated through pandemic disruption](#)

[Teacher Appreciation Takes on New Meaning in COVID-19 Era and Beyond](#)

[Teachers Supporting Teachers](#)

[TOOLBOX: Check in Check out](#)

[5 Ingredients that Spark Joy and Productivity at Work](#)

[7 Ways to Have Fun While Getting Work Done - Virtual Teacher Happy Hour!](#)



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!



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