



Recognizing Our Staff

Amphitheater Unified School District
Governing Board Meeting of March 23, 2021

Background

A Year Like No other

A Tradition of Recognition

- Governing Board has long recognized the contributions of employees through resolutions.
- Each year at about this time.
- Adoptions coincide with “National Administrative Professionals Day”, that occurs in April, and “National Teacher Day”, that occurs in May.
- The Board’s recognition has always extended to broader groups of employees.
- This year, the essential nature of our employees has been highlighted and made even more visible by our worldwide pandemic.

National Trend: Educators Leaving in the Pandemic

- “Stress, more so than low pay, is the main reason public school teachers quit. And now the coronavirus pandemic has increased the pressures put on teachers.”
- Newly released data from the RAND Corporation from survey of nearly 1,000 former public school teachers.
- Of those surveyed, 55 percent quit in the two school years leading up to the pandemic, while 45 percent left after March 2020.
- In both groups, most of the teachers either resigned, retired early, or took an unpaid leave of absence.
- Forty-three percent of all the teachers who left voluntarily and before their scheduled retirement said they did so because the stresses and disappointments of teaching weren’t worth it—nearly twice as many as those who said the pay wasn’t sufficient.
- Among teachers who left primarily because of the pandemic, 64 percent said “they weren’t paid enough to merit the risks or stress of teaching.”

“Teachers Are Stressed Out, and It’s Causing Some to Quit,” Education Weekly, February 21, 2021

Our Own District Experience

We Lost Staff

- Some individuals have reported deciding to retire earlier due to the pandemic.
- Others have left public education to seek work that does not require them to interact with the public (including full time remote work).
- Since March 2020, more than 360 employees have left the District: teachers, educational professionals, teaching assistants, library assistants, bus drivers, custodians, and food service employees.
- Number of employees who have left mid-year has nearly doubled from last school year.
- Significant increase in the number of contract breaches this year.

Most Dedicated Employees Persevered

- Transportation workers supervised students in classrooms and provided increased cleaning and custodial services.
- Teachers transitioned multiple times between remote, hybrid and in-person learning; they subbed for each other due to absences and quarantines; they provided increased interventions for students.
- School administrators, nurses, and health assistants sometimes worked 7-days a week and late evenings to support county health department contract tracing.
- Food service workers distributed 1.2 million+ meals to children in our community in addition to students at school, sometimes working over holidays or in inclement weather.
- Social workers, counselors, administrators and other staff went door-to-door to locate children who were not in school and provide support to those staying home.
- Staff called families at all hours to ensure they knew options available for students, to provide technical support, and to assist with transitions between learning modalities.

Recognition Richly Deserved

Like Never Before

Content of Character; Spirit of Service

- Amphitheater employees have gone above and beyond to serve students this year in new and different ways.
- They have been loyal, open, and devoted public servants.
- Remarkable at any time, but particularly at a time when educators continue to leave public service in significant numbers due to significant salary differentials available in the private sector, the stresses of the job, and the burdens of unfunded mandates.
- Some districts have had different experiences: greater employee resignations, retirements, or even “sick-out”/strike activities. To the credit of our staff, we have not.
- Our employees richly deserve to be honored for their extraordinary service through this unprecedented pandemic.

The Recommended Resolutions

- They serve the important purpose of setting aside specific days of recognition for our staff member groups.
- Although the contributions of school employees should always be appreciated, and perhaps are more so these days than ever before, setting aside these days of celebration of their efforts can crystalize and focus that appreciation.
- We **NEED** our employees. We need them to see through the important work we do in this community.
- We depend upon our employees as our community depends upon us all.
- We should recognize, thank, and encourage them for all they have done and have yet to do.
- The work ahead is great, important, and essential. We must be successful for the sake of our students. We need our incredible people for the incredible task that lies ahead.

Greater Recognition

For a Staff Community Like No Other After a Year Like No Other



An Opportunity

- District employees have done so much more this year.
- They still have so much more to do.
- We can do much more for them.

An Opportunity

- Federal ESSER and Related Funds – funding for next year beyond state funding increases.
- Funds may only be used for limited purposes.
- Pursuant to long-standing prohibitions, district employees cannot be paid “extra” for work they have already agreed to do for previously agreed rates of pay.
- In addition, per the ADE, funds cannot be used for “bonuses” for employees absent inapplicable circumstances.
- However, school districts may use local ESSER funds to provide employees with additional pay to address recruitment or retention challenges in light of the pandemic.
- After consultation with Governing Board leadership, as well as my administrative team, I believe we not only can provide incentive to our dedicated employees to continue their service with us, but in these difficult times of retention, I believe we should.
- I thank the Board, as always, for their genuine care about the people who work in Amphi.