

# UTRUST

## Employee Appreciation Program



The Utrust Employee Appreciation Program was designed to help schools and their communities to recognize and show appreciation to school employees who make a difference in the lives of their students each day. Utrust provides a model for schools and school districts to use to recognize and celebrate employees. The model divides employees into eight groups and establishes an appreciation day for each group spread over the school year.

The program seeks to use student leadership to plan and conduct each of the appreciation days and to promote involvement of both the student body and the community at large. The Utrust model recognizes that school administrators and teachers have more to do than they can get done. Little additional work is required from the superintendent, principal or teachers.

*I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought; and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder. ~G.K. Chesterton*

**Packets Provided by Utrust.** Utrust provides a packet of information specifically designed for elementary, middle and high schools for each appreciation day throughout the school year. A basic packet is provided for schools that want to celebrate each appreciation day but are just beginning the process. A



more involved packet is provided for schools that wish to use student leadership and themes to celebrate.

Utrust also provides a packet for use at the board and system level. This packet always includes a resolution, a news release, a message and artwork for the system website, posters for the central office and an announcement about the appreciation day for the local radio station.



**What Does the Program Do?**

The Employee Appreciation Program results in schools becoming better places for students to grow and learn. Schools are better because of what happens for employees and students. The culture of schools is changed as the program is implemented.

**1. Makes Employees Feel Appreciated.** School employees receive surprisingly little praise. It has not been uncommon to hear an employee say something like, "I have been driving a school bus for 25 years and this is the first time that anyone has ever taken the time to say thank

you." Employees want and need to feel appreciated and the Utrust Employee Appreciation Program's model does it in several ways for each of the eight days. It is not the gifts that make employees cry. It is the genuine expressions of appreciation.

**2. Improves Morale.** School employees are traditionally underpaid and under appreciated. This program does not specifically seek to change their pay but by being certain that employees know that they are appreciated has resulted in changed attitudes in employees from bus drivers to principals. The best way to improve employee

morale is to respect what they do and make them feel appreciated.

**3. Motivates Employees to Do Their Best.** Appreciated employees tend to give that little extra that makes a big difference. Employees in schools participating in the Utrust Employee Appreciation have frequently made statements such as, "I try to do a good job every day but knowing that I am appreciated like I've been today makes me want to do even better."



Bus Drivers-Sept 15  
 Custodians-Oct 13  
 Superintendents-Nov 17  
 Food Service - Jan 12

Principals-Feb 9  
 Special Services Staff-Mar 8  
 Admin & Instr. Support Staff-Apr 5  
 Teachers- May 8