

News Utrust

Employee Development Seminar Brings School Districts Together

Representatives from school districts across the state got the chance to meet up at Utrust's Employee Development Seminars held in Morristown, Cookeville and Jackson. Topics ranged from benefit eligibility and employer liability to the five standards of employee management and everything in between.

Speakers included representatives from the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Utrust Attorney Dewey Branstetter, Jr. as well as Utrust Director of Finance & Administration Kristi Coleman and Utrust Administrator Dan Tollett. Participants learned about appealing claims, how school districts can limit their liability for unemployment benefits, the five standards of employee management and how Utrust's Employee Appreciation Program helps to create a positive working environment.

Participants received a packet of materials for an appreciation day and got a first-hand look at how the Utrust Make A Difference Program works. This new program gives the school board and administrators all the materials needed to recognize and celebrate the dedicated work of school employees. Many benefits come with participating in this program, including creating an environment that helps employees thrive, produce quality work and ultimately improves the learning environment for the children in our schools. **More information about topics discussed at the seminar can be found on our website at www.tnuct.com**



Making A Difference

Jackson County central office staff recently submitted Mr. Joe Barlow as a person who makes a difference. Here is what they had to say...

Mr. Barlow's door is never closed to students, parents or teachers. If he were paid by the hour, he probably wouldn't even receive minimum wage. He always arrives early, and leaves late. Despite his many commitments, Mr. Barlow is noted for his caring compassion for students. Whether he is reading to a group of Pre-K students, cheering on the high school football team, observing a science experiment in a middle school class, or lobbying lawmakers for more support for education, Mr. Barlow always puts the children of Jackson County first. He is also a vocal supporter for teachers and staff, and never misses an opportunity to show them that they are appreciated. His caring example encourages his employees to be the best they can be.

FIND MORE STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR SCHOOL SYSTEM AT: www.tnuct.com/differencemakers

A Time of Thanks for School Professionals

School professionals play a vital role in each student's education. You may not think of them as school professionals, but rather the school nurse, school resource officer, guidance counselor, or speech therapist. While their training background may not be in education, without them, education would not be at the level it is today. To celebrate these important employees, school districts across the state took time on March 19th to say "thank you".

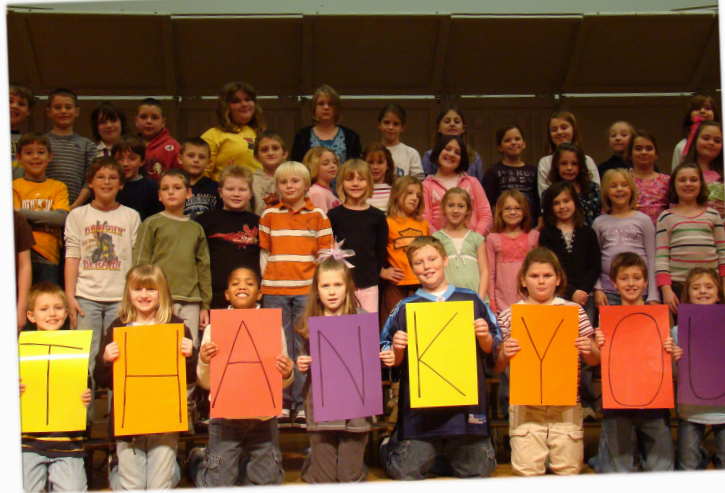
Rogersville City School third graders put on a special presentation for all of their professional service staff. Students sang songs and made up fun phrases about each staff member.

Some school districts had to move the appreciation date due to Spring Break, but still found time to honor its employees. Be sure to read about how

other school systems celebrated "Professional Services Appreciation Day" in the special edition newsletter.

A big thank you to all the schools that participated!

IN ACTION



Third graders at Rogersville City School give a big "Thank You" to all the professionals who help them in a time of need.

UP NEXT: INSTRUCTIONAL & ADMIN. DAY

They are the faces and backbone of the school system. Administrators & instructional staff do everything from answering phone calls to greeting students & visitors to assisting teachers in the classroom.

April 16th is a day to salute these support staff members which include teacher aides, secretaries, administrative assistants, bookkeepers and operators. "The time school boards and administrators spend honoring instructional and administrative staff will pay for itself ten times over in commitment and

productivity" said Utrust Administrator Dan Tollett.

Without these employees, the productive flow of any school system would greatly diminish. Take time on April 16th, to show your support staff how much you appreciate their hard work and dedication.

Don't forget to share your stories of celebration with Utrust, and take plenty of pictures. By participating in this appreciation day, you truly make a difference in your school system.

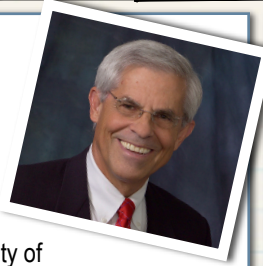
"The time school boards and administrators spend honoring instructional and administrative support staff will pay for itself ten times over in commitment and productivity."

-Dan Tollett

RE M I N D E R

Nomination forms for Utrust Board Trustees must be submitted by April 15th.

From The Administrator



In March each year, school principals and superintendents begin to consider which non-tenured teachers should be non-renewed (The process of providing written notice to a teacher without tenure that his/her contract will not be renewed). School districts that have done a good job of selecting new teachers will want to continue the employment of an overwhelming majority of them.

However, some superintendents notify all probationary teachers before April 15 that their contracts will not be renewed for another year. The reason usually given for such action is that if budgets or enrollment are not sufficient, the school board will be stuck with more teachers than they have funds or students. Following are reasons why non-renewal of all probationary teachers is a bad idea.

It adversely affects morale and the quality of teaching. What do you think happens to the attitude of excellent teachers who receive notice of employment contract non-renewal? Could you expect such a teacher not to be disappointed and somewhat less enthusiastic about teaching in your school district?

Good teachers will seek employment elsewhere. Even those teachers who are perfectly satisfied teaching in your district are likely to seek employment in a different district when they are notified that they will not be re-employed. They have little choice but to do so if they plan to continue to teach. Many good teachers are likely to be lost to your school district as a result.

Non-renewed teachers are eligible for unemployment. Teachers who have not been re-employed for the next school year are eligible to draw unemployment all summer at the expense of your school district. Teachers who have been re-employed for the next year may not draw unemployment during the summer.

It will result in bad legislation. Legislators tend to be hostile toward non-renewal of non-tenured teachers who have received satisfactory or better evaluations. Legislation to prohibit such a practice has previously been introduced in our state before. If the practice becomes widespread, legislation unpopular with school boards and school administrators can be expected as a result.

A good practice is to ensure that before mid-March each non-tenured teacher receives at least one written evaluation including an explanation of weaknesses and suggestions for improvement. This allows the teacher at least a month to improve before April 15, the deadline for non-renewal notices. Reasons for non-renewal are not required as part of the notice of non-renewal but each probationary teacher has previously been apprised of weaknesses and provided an opportunity for improvement.

Abolition of position. If all good probationary teachers contracts are renewed as they should be and there is either a subsequent lack of either funds or students, state law provides a legal way out for school systems. The board may provide a written notice to a teacher that his or her position is being abolished because of insufficient funds or insufficient enrollment. This provision applies to tenured as well as non-tenured teacher's positions.

School boards and administrators are responsible both to ensure that teachers are treated fairly and that every student has an excellent teacher. Fulfilling that responsibility requires the board and administrators to express appreciation to excellent probationary teachers for the job they have done, telling them how much you want them to return next year and promptly offering them contracts for the coming school year rather than trampling on their morale with dreaded non-renewal. Treat them as the valuable professionals they are. It makes a big difference!

TRUSTEES

David Jones, Chairman
*Hancock County
East Tennessee*

Don Weathers, V-Chairman
*Wilson County
Middle Tennessee*

Joey Cooper
*Benton County
West Tennessee*

Perry Dykes
*Hawkins County
East Tennessee*

Roger Greene
*Hamblen County
East Tennessee*

Jasper Taylor
*Crockett County
West Tennessee*

Regina Waller
*Trousdale County
Middle Tennessee*

STAFF

Dr. Dan Tollett
Trust Administrator

Kristi Coleman
*Director of Finance &
Administration*

Kelli Pendleton
*Media & Communications
Specialist*

**1525 Hunt Club Blvd, Suite
300
Gallatin, TN 37066
www.tnuct.com
615-452-7761**



Committed to helping our
members create a climate where
employees thrive, produce high
quality work, enjoy the job, feel
appreciated and want to remain.