

News U Trust

APPRECIATING, DEVELOPING, AND SUPPORTING SCHOOL STAFF



FIVE STAR BOARD? WHY NOT?

By: Dan Tollett

Utrust's seven member board of Trustees has identified five standards of excellence in employee management and established a Five Star Award to recognize those boards that achieve all five. The board has also determined that future financial incentives from Utrust to member boards will be tied to achievement of the award.

The Five Star Award is not a competitive award. Rather, it is available to each Utrust member board. When your board has met the five standards, your superintendent simply goes on the Utrust website and certifies that each standard has been met.

Every board that meets all standards will receive the Utrust Five Star School

Award presented at your local board meeting by a trustee.

Consider the [standards](#) and see if your school district could achieve all five. If you do, Utrust will certify to your community that your system has achieved excellence in employee management. Can you see a benefit to that?

Has Your Board Prepared for Snow Days?

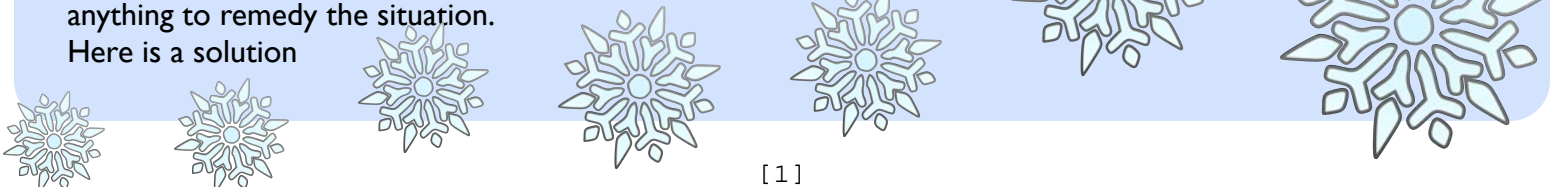
By: Dan Tollett

In an overwhelming number of school districts in Tennessee the lowest paid employees have no income when interruptions such as snow days come along. Most of these employees live from paycheck to paycheck so they are left with little income to feed their families. They are forced to file for unemployment but still they go through some tough times.

Board members and superintendents in Tennessee are not pleased with such a situation but few have done anything to remedy the situation. Here is a solution

that not only provides a steady income for your lowest paid employees and improves morale but also actually saves your school system significant dollars in the process.

Click [here](#) to read an article about how to create a win/win situation and find a [contract](#) already drawn to make it easy for your board to accomplish this.





BRIGHTEST STAR WINNERS- CAFETERIA CARNIVAL

The Brightest Star Competition kicked off with Food Service cafeteria decorations. Congratulations to Briarwood School in Benton County and Mt. Carmel in Hawkins County for having the best carnival-decorated cafeterias in the State! Briarwood filled their cafeteria walls with thank you boards for each worker and thank you notes from the entire student body. Clown faces, balloons, interviews and brightly colored signs were everywhere you looked in their "carnival".

Mt. Carmel did an outstanding job transforming their cafeteria into a carnival by using real and paper balloons to decorate everywhere. They created signs using creative slogans such as "Thank you 'Snow' much" with paper snow cones and "Hot Diggity Dog We Are Crazy About You" using paper corn dogs. Each worker was given a designated place on the cafeteria wall for thank you notes from all the grades.

Because it was hard to choose between the two, Briarwood and Mt. Carmel tied and each wins \$100 for their A-Team. Way to go!

To view more pictures, visit the [Utrust Coordinators Network](#).



**Best School
Employee
Appreciation
Program Award!**

Be the first to win a \$1000 prize for your appreciation program! After the last appreciation day in May, we will begin accepting your entries for this contest. Start now to get your information organized so that you will be in the running. Check out the criteria for winning [here](#) and may the best program win!

COMING UP

Walking the Plank for Principals-
Principal Appreciation Day
February 9

Brightest Star Challenge-
Principal Appreciation Day
Yo Ho Song

Special Services Packets Go
Online-**Mystery Theme**
January 26

It's time to show some appreciation to the captains of our ships -- our principals. **Principal Appreciation Day** is Thursday, February 9th. We're walking the plank for principals celebrating the day with the Pirates of the Caribbean theme.

The Brightest Star Competition is performance of the Yo Ho song. Submit your video for a chance to win \$100 for your A-Team. To make your video stand out, create a Smilebox. Click [here](#) for more information.





Under the big top at schools across the state, Food Service Appreciation Day was a success in showing our hard-working cafeteria staff they are loved more than funnel cakes and sno cones! The carnival theme was creatively used in cafeteria decorations, thank you notes, popcorn buckets, videos, cheers, PA announcements, school marquees.

Keplar Elementary used a real clown to present popcorn buckets to their food service workers. Camden Elementary wanted to get to know their workers better so they created interview questions for them. After the students interviewed each worker, they posted them on the walls of the cafeteria for everyone to read. Rutledge Middle School and St.

Clair Elementary gave each of their food service workers an apron with their name on it. Gladeville Elementary made the cutest popcorn bucket ever and students wrote thank you notes on each of the "popcorn". The bucket was spilling over with thanks.

We had a number of photos submitted to document outstanding efforts to creatively and genuinely express appreciation to food service staff members. Thank you to all for the work you put into transforming your cafeterias into carnivals to honor your food service staff.

We look forward to seeing what you will do for future appreciation days!

Dodson Branch Elementary really got into the spirit of Food Service Appreciation Day with A-Team members dressing up in carnival attire. One of the A-team members clad in clown apparel escorted the food service workers into the cafeteria for the celebrations. Each worker was treated to dinner from a local restaurant.

At the end of the appreciation day, a cafeteria staff member made an announcement over the intercom thanking the staff and students for their special day. Principal Tammy Woolbright said, "Knowing Ms. Rhonda and knowing how quiet she is and to hear her make that announcement with such sincerity was priceless".





KRISTI'S KILLER KUDOS

Churchill Elementary gets my kudos for going the extra mile and making a video. By recording your appreciation, you allow the honorees to enjoy their special day over and over. Great Job!

DAMERON'S DELIGHTFUL DISTINCTION

My distinction goes out to Harrelson for the adorable decorations. I was impressed with how you involved the entire student body and for using the daily announcements. Way to go Harrelson--Keep it Up!

RACHEL'S RADICAL RECOGNITION

Hawkins Elementary earns my regard for their very creative cheer. By personalizing your appreciation, you made it even more special.
Big shout out to you!

DAN'S DANDY DOOZY

To Grainger County for their originality in their schools. I applaud you for taking the theme and making it your own. Appreciation combined with originality creates excitement!

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The Trustee Spotlight is on



Don Weathers

Since 2006 Utrust has benefited from the leadership of Don Weathers on our board of trustees. Weathers is one of two members of the Utrust Board of Trustees elected by the school boards in Middle Tennessee to represent them. His second three year term expires on June 30.

Utrust is fortunate to have Don Weathers as a trustee," said Dr. Dan Tollett, Utrust Administrator. "He is intelligent and has significant experience in business, finance and education. He understands the issues of importance to Utrust and he has excellent judgment and a pleasant personality. We could not ask for a better trustee."

Weathers is a former educator and coach, having taught in the Wilson County School System prior to going into business for himself. He has served two

terms on the Wilson County Board and is currently its chairman.

Wilson County Superintendent James Davis also complimented Weathers for the knowledge and experience he brings to the board table: "Mr. Weathers has an extensive background in the business world and is very knowledgeable in the area of financial issues and has been a tremendous asset to the school board in the process of developing budgets and identifying efficient use of resources available to the Wilson County School System. He has experience as a businessman and his understanding of the policy making process has helped guide the Wilson County Board of Education through some difficult financial times."

Thank you Don Weathers for your excellent service to both boards.