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ABSTRACT

Since there are few extrinsic rewards available to teachers, school boards should enhance intrinsic rewards in order to increase teacher motivation. Studies indicate that classroom interaction, feelings of personal achievement, and pride in workmanship are primary motivators for teachers. Absenteeism may be reduced through strong community support and teacher agreement with district policies. Furthermore, the organizational structure of a school affects motivation. In an environment in which rewards and privileges are distributed evenly and social relations are not highly stratified, teachers are highly motivated. School boards can intensify job satisfaction by creating an environment that enhances teacher self-confidence and achievement. Trust and encouragement are very important: teachers need to feel that problems will be solved in a non-threatening manner and that praise and acknowledgement are more than token gestures. The school board can promote community support through press releases and public relations campaigns informing people of teachers' positive accomplishments. Minigrants may be awarded to teachers for the implementation of a new idea, or reimbursement may be offered for inservice activities. Finally, teachers may be involved in the decision-making process, working for their own goals as well as for the school's. A sense of influence and achievement are critical in motivating teachers. (JK)

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Teacher Motivation

What can school boards do to improve the performance of their teaching staff? Challenged by the need to increase academic learning and tighten the budget, school boards recently have begun to ask questions about teacher motivation. What motivates teachers? What can school board members do to help?

Often money seems to be the only method of motivating teachers available at the district level. Yet other factors are often more important than simple monetary rewards. An examination of current motivation theory and research offers insights into other ways board members can aid teacher motivation.

Motivation Theories

Early organizational theorists held a rather mechanistic view of human nature. Because people are unwilling to take on responsibility, these theorists said, they must be controlled and coerced into working for organizational goals. Stated practically, employees will work harder if offered a desired reward such as a raise, bonus, or promotion to a more prestigious position.

More recent theorists have argued that this view of the organization as machine is too simplistic. Humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow delineated a hierarchy of needs in everyone, ranging from basic physiological needs of hunger and thirst, to safety and security needs, social needs, ego needs of esteem and status, and, finally, self-actualization or the need to fulfill one's potential. Once a lower-level need is satiated, a person is free to satisfy the next one. When the lower need is threatened, it reverts to being the top priority, until again satisfied.

This tension between different needs helps to explain the paradox of teachers' professionalism and unionism. As professionals, teachers desire to fulfill their own higher needs. The militancy of teachers' unions, on the other hand, reflects concern with the more basic needs of salary and working conditions.

Several hypotheses can be derived from Maslow's theory. First, a person will actively seek responsibility, not just passively accept it, to acquire esteem and to self-actualize. Second, if an employee can achieve his or her own goals, or self-actualize, while working for the success of an organization, that organization stands to profit.

Rewards that result from job content are known as "intrinsic rewards." Those that arise from outside job content, or from job context, are known as "extrinsic rewards." Deci has theorized that in "intrinsic systems, people motivate themselves out of ego-involvement and a desire to perform competently." In extrinsic systems (where rewards may or may not relate to performance) people motivate themselves out of a desire for the reward. Both Deci and Meyer have argued that the danger of an extrinsic system is that the employee becomes dependent on the reward and loses intrinsic motivation.

Teachers have very few extrinsic rewards available to them. Salaries are based on education and seniority, not

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performance. Nor can they be promoted to a more prestigious position, except administration, and many teachers are unwilling to make such a change in roles.

Instead, teachers have always been forced to turn to intrinsic rewards. What are the intrinsic rewards for teachers? In a monograph on teacher motivation, Thompson, citing the results of two studies, reports simply, "Rewards that count for teachers come from interaction with students in the classroom." Getting through to students—the process of teaching—is what counts for teachers. Feelings of personal achievement and pride in workmanship are prime motivators for teachers.

Three independent studies substantiate this progressive theory of motivation and offer some further insights into what motivates teachers.

What Motivates Teachers?

Spuck sought to find a relationship between how teachers are rewarded and how easy it is to attract new teachers, how often they are absent, and their turnover. As a means of studying the reward structures in public high schools, Spuck developed the Teacher Reward and Satisfaction Scales (TRASS). Rewards are divided into eight major categories, which are then classified as extrinsic, intrinsic, or environmental.

Spuck based his study on the idea that the rewards that first attract teachers to the school are extrinsic whereas intrinsic rewards improve job performance, reduce absenteeism, and enhance effectiveness in the classroom.

Although Spuck had predicted that extrinsic rewards were important factors in recruiting teachers, his findings indicated just the opposite. He found that ease of teacher recruitment was affected by three intrinsic motivators: "high levels of community support, pride of workmanship, and social interaction with peers." Spuck notes, however, that these results may reflect that his subjects were not new teachers but rather employees who had been around long enough to perceive a high level of intrinsic rewards. These teachers may have been projecting that the intrinsic rewards made the school a desirable place for others to work.

For the variables of absenteeism and turnover—indicators of teachers' desire to remain within the system—Spuck obtained even more significant results. He found that strong community support and teacher agreement with district goals and policies appeared to prevent teacher absenteeism. Where teachers were supported by the community and where they were in accord with district goals, rates of absenteeism were low. Similarly, pride of workmanship and positive social interactions—both intrinsic—contribute to low turnover. Teachers tended to stay in their jobs longer in schools where they experienced pride of workmanship and where social interaction was pleasant.

Spuck somewhat conservatively concluded that extrinsic rewards, such as raises, fringe benefits, and promotional opportunities, which act as incentives in production-oriented situations, may not be motivators in the same way

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for employees in professional service-oriented occupations. Overall, Spuck found that intrinsic rewards contribute to teachers' desire to enter and remain in the system. These rewards include pride of workmanship, community support, positive social interactions, and agreement with district goals.

Herrick carries the analysis further. He sought to determine if a school's organizational structure affects motivation. To find out, he studied structural differences between multiunit schools (MUS) and nonmultiunit schools (NMUS). Using a list of motivators based on Spuck's TRASS, Herrick found that the decentralized authority structure of the MUS was significant in motivating teachers. In the MUS, this decentralized structure took the form of independent teams, each led by a teacher.

Also, Herrick found a de-stratified reward structure to be an important motivator. In a highly stratified system, rewards are distributed to only a small number of teachers. These few tend to become more powerful, helping make decisions that affect the whole school. Social relations develop that reflect the desire of the other teachers to gain prestige and power. This stratified structure, more typical of nonmultiunit schools, had a negative effect on motivation. In contrast, the social relations in a multiunit school are more open. Because rewards and privileges are distributed more evenly, social relations are less stratified. Power and prestige are not limited to just a few; many can contribute to school decisions.

A third study examined the relationship of teacher reward systems to pupil achievement in twenty Eastern schools. Asking teachers first how they were actually rewarded and then how valuable those rewards were, Kimball correlated these answers with standardized test scores. He found that teachers in high achieving schools more frequently reported the use of intrinsic rewards. Low achieving schools more often reported the use of formal, extrinsic rewards. "For all teachers, an (intrinsic) sense of personal achievement and self-confidence appear to be the best incentives to improve teaching."

Significantly, Kimball believes his findings also suggest that "administrative indifference" to teacher performance, characterized by "failure to respond" to various types of teacher behavior "in any recognizable manner," is more common in low achieving schools than in high.

Implications

These studies have all clearly shown the importance of intrinsic rewards as teacher motivators. Yet the findings are not helpful to school board members unless these rewards can actually be used to motivate teachers.

The question becomes, then, how can intrinsic rewards be used to motivate teachers if the rewards come from the process of teaching? A helpful way to begin answering this question is to view intrinsic rewards as "job satisfaction." Job satisfaction can be intensified by creating an environment that enhances teacher self-confidence and achievement.

Creating such an atmosphere is the task of the adminis-

tration and school board. Several possibilities are open to school boards in particular. The studies cited here show that community and administrative support is a strong motivator for teachers. The first recommendation for school boards is, then, support.

Support for teachers can be shown in a variety of ways. First and foremost is trust: trust in teachers and trust in administrators. One way to promote trust is through open communication between board and principals and teachers. Thompson quotes one teacher as desiring honesty and understanding from principals, who should try to "confront problems without creating threats." Principals (and boards) "can let teachers know where they stand in an atmosphere of trust, so teachers need not fear that anything lies hidden."

This desire for openness and trust relates back to the need for safety and security in Maslow's hierarchy. Job security is basic; after that, the security that new ideas will not be summarily rejected is important. Teachers need to feel that when problems arise, attempts will be made to solve them in a nonthreatening manner, without blaming anyone.

Another facet of administrative and community support is encouragement. Board members should liberally praise and recognize quality work and acknowledge a job well done. The purpose of encouragement, remember, is to aid teachers in perceiving some of the intrinsic rewards of teaching itself. For this reason praise and acknowledgment should not become empty, token gestures. Of course, principals are in a better position to praise teachers on a day-to-day basis than board members are.

School board members do, however, have a prime role in promoting community support. The school board is the communications link between the community and the schools. Board members carry the opinions of their constituencies to school people and the news of what goes on in the schools back to the community. Through press releases and public relations campaigns, the school board can do a lot to inform people about the positive accomplishments of the schools and individual teachers. By means of such tactics, community support for teachers will grow and the public praise will help teachers to feel they have community support.

Another way school districts can encourage teachers is the minigrant, awarded to a teacher to take advantage of a one-time event or to implement a new idea. Thompson reports the benefits of minigrants are great because "they enable districts to respond quickly to new ideas, encourage teachers' creativity, and reward teachers with a chance to realize their classroom ambitions in practice." Minigrant programs need not be large. Budgets can be as small as \$2,000, with grants ranging from \$75 to \$250.

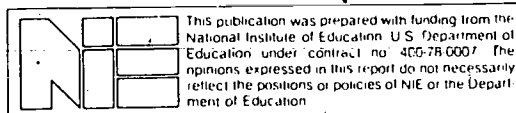
Both Spuck and Kimball indicate that taking pride in one's work and feeling a sense of achievement are important motivators for teachers. Staff development and inservice training activities are ways to help teachers do a better job and feel a greater sense of achievement. Kimball suggests reimbursement for inservice courses as a way of supporting teachers' efforts. Also, Spuck cites positive

social interaction as a means of motivation; conferences and workshops help promote such teacher interaction.

The other major recommendation made by the researchers cited here is the inclusion of teachers in the decision-making process of the school (or district). Herrick recommends decentralization of the authority structure and destratification of the rewards. He is quick to point out that these changes need not cost any money. By helping to make policy decisions, teachers exert more control over their own work. Being involved in the educational process from beginning to end—from inception to implementation—allows teachers to work for both their own goals and the school's, satisfying their personal needs and teaching requirements at the same time.

Teachers can be allowed to participate in decision-making in a variety of ways. Although teachers may not vote at board meetings, they can sit on committees, make recommendations, and research proposals. Districts can also actively solicit teachers' opinions and ideas on issues before they come to a vote before the board.

Thus school boards can do much to enhance the intrinsic rewards that are a part of teaching. They can support, praise, and encourage their teachers, they can heighten teachers' sense of achievement, and they can give teachers a feeling of real influence over their jobs and school.



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