



## Always the Right Time for Employee Appreciation

### What Does Appreciation Mean and Look Like to You?

By Kendra Moreno, Project Lead

Employee Appreciation Day (March 4th) is a day when employers make an extra effort to recognize their staff's contributions and dedication. This year the internet was filled with ideas for inexpensive gifts and other recognition ideas. But it's important to note that people feel and express appreciation in different ways. Deonna Smith, a teacher and founder of the Educational Justice Working group, conducted a poll to ask teachers about this very thing. With Teacher Appreciation Week coming soon in May, she asked teachers what they wanted from their administration. Resoundingly, folks asked for the gift of time. Here were some of their ideas:



### Effective Evidence Collection & Use in Classroom Observations

There is a new playlist in the Learning Library designed to support school leaders to effectively capture details from classroom observations, evaluate instruction fairly, and provide precise feedback to teachers. The playlist includes three self-led PDs: Effective Evidence Collection, Analysis of Evidence, and Using Evidence. Engage in all them or just the one(s) you need to brush up on specific skills. Expect to find tips from expert evaluators and practice opportunities to help you conduct your most successful conferences yet.



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*Take my class out for recess, even just for 30 minutes.*

*Cover my class by taking the opportunity to read a book, lead a game or an art project, and connect with my students.*

*Provide coverage for me to come late or leave early one day.*

*Help new teachers reduce their grading burden by learning to assign less homework.*

*Honor our time by planning targeted, differentiated PD that isn't one size fits all.*

*Plan a "no meeting week" and tell teachers ahead of time so that they can plan accordingly to use the time to meet their needs.*

*Provide authentic and specific acknowledgments.*

*Build relationships with us like we see great teachers do with their students.*

*Take the time to individually validate and affirm our efforts.*

*Show an act of service like washing everyone's cars.*

*Taco truck!*

So maybe not all of those are feasible, but now is a good time to talk to your teachers. What does appreciation mean and look like to them? Consider checking out the book *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace* by Gary Chapman and Paul White for tips on how to not only identify the five languages of appreciation but to find ways to express genuine appreciation in ways that are meaningful to your teachers.

For further info, please contact Kendra ([kendra.moreno@maricopa.gov](mailto:kendra.moreno@maricopa.gov)).

## Reflecting on REIL-Extend Opportunity Culture

By Grayson Cooper, Consulting Manager at Public Impact

Five years ago, the REIL-Extend alliance's first cohort of Opportunity Culture (OC) schools completed their design sessions. Intermingled with the excitement of possibility, there was also the nagging trepidation about finding just the right folks to take on these new roles and responsibilities. All that melted away with the first summer training when the new OC staff came together as school teams for the first time. Five years later, I'm proud to recognize here just a fraction of progress that these excellent educators and school teams have made!

At Magnet Traditional School, Principal Adrian Walker has always had an outsized dedication to OC and even reoriented his own role towards discipline after dropping the LEIS position from his campus to fund the MCL positions. He empowers his MCLs through intentional development with coaching. MCLs Michael Covarrubias and Trini Arce have grown into strong coaches and team leaders, working independently and as one.

At Whittier School, MCL Carson Lewis began as an individual contributor and EIT leading a dynamic classroom and developed into an MCL that leads his classroom, his team, and the broader school. Principal Amy Rendon stepped into her first principalship to lead Whittier as an OC school and has refined the focus and clarity of her leadership.

At Garfield School, Principal Sylvia Bernal built a strong culture on her campus, taking great efforts to communicate OC through her commitment to developing her MCLs. MCL Sonia Prieto's strong mentorship of RAs, particularly those pursuing their teaching degrees, has created a pipeline of teaching talent to Garfield.

Desert Oasis Elementary School produced two leaders across the OC initiative who have been recognized nationwide. MCL Christina Ross served as an Opportunity Culture Fellow and RA Victoria Kent served as a guest facilitator for new Reach Associates for multiple years.

Jordan Osinki, who previously served on the design team for Desert Oasis Elementary School and as an instructional coach alongside MCL Christina Ross, transitioned to Nadaburg Elementary School as an MCL. There he focused the impact of the coaching skills he honed in his previous role to leading a small team of teachers. After two years with much success in the RA role, Mackenzie Olson decided to pursue a teaching degree.

The final two schools demonstrate that, with careful thought, OC can thrive in even the most unlikely of places. Valentine, perhaps the smallest OC school nationwide, has seen Principal Cliff Angle and MCL Courtney Radcliffe form a strong leadership team for the campus. This includes cultivating new talent in the form of Courtney's Instructional Assistant, Lisa Blanton, who is currently in a teacher prep program.

Durango has the distinction of being the first Opportunity Culture juvenile detention facility. The effort and patience they put into their design sessions prior to implementing paid off, using creative scheduling to achieve a campus of 100% OC roles including MCL, EITs, and RAs. MCL Kevin Malakowsky has refined his focus to bring excellent instruction and innovative curricula to a traditionally underserved and overlooked population.



## What the Peer Evaluators are saying about their time with you:

The relationships I have built are invaluable; they have been positive, and I appreciate the openness and communication we have shared. These collaborative relationships have allowed us to learn and grow together. - Alma Vital-Abers

Over the years, I've seen a tremendous amount of growth in teachers with the elements of Relationships, Monitor and Adjust, and the planning component of Task Analysis. They've gone above and beyond to advocate for their students academically, socially, and emotionally. - Christina Valenciano

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The greatest joy is when a teacher shares success with implementing the next steps they articulated during our post-conference. - Rebecca Surls

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What I will miss most are the collaborative relationships built on trust and rapport and supporting a genuine desire to be one's best for students. Each interaction is an opportunity to support teachers and to highlight competencies that are positively impacting students while respectfully identifying areas of growth. - Sara Reimer

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I love to see teachers nailing elements in the Learner Engagement Rubric after working hard on just the right activities and questions to pose to their students. It is great fun to listen to them debrief in the post-conference and explain how their students grew. I walk away feeling humbled to be a witness to what they are able to do for children. - Nancy Feiring

THANK YOU

I have seen a shift in lesson preparation resulting in intentional instruction with carefully planned objectives, sub-objectives, and real-time assessments. Teachers understand the importance of planning for individual and sub-group adjustments in their lessons and the importance of differentiating instruction based on data. - Marla Chamberlain

Feedback is one of the elements where I have seen the most growth. Over time, teachers have made an intentional change in the feedback they provide students, resulting in a positive impact on student learning. The feedback I see now is academic, precise, specific to the learner, and references where students are in the learning process. - Karla Gutierrez-Whitmire

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It has been rewarding to facilitate tailored professional development and provide feedback on implementation of gleaned strategies and collaborate on student understandings to inform next steps. It has been equally rewarding to build systems which leverage leadership, expertise, and communication. - Theresa Hulihan

I will miss being a part of the diverse culture of each school district/site and providing service that truly supported forward progress in the best interest of teachers and students. - Traci Price

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## Setting and Communicating Direction in Leader Evaluation

By Kendra Moreno, Project Lead

### SETTING AND COMMUNICATING DIRECTION IN THE LEADER OBSERVATION PROCESS

There is a great deal of flexibility in how districts implement Leading Observation Instrument (LdOI) observations and conferences. Principal supervisors work with principals to determine the best way to schedule and implement the process. This flexibility increases the responsibility of the principal supervisor, however, to offer clarity and guidance regarding how and when the observations and conferences will be conducted. A well-communicated and executed plan provides the right combination of positive pressure and support to ensure principals' growth and capacity to lead school improvement efforts. This infographic offers suggestions for how to think through and determine an evaluation process that will be equitable and transparent, reasonable to schedule, and job-embedded to maximize opportunities for feedback, support, and growth.



Richard DuFour, renowned education author and researcher, wrote, "Educational leaders must provide both pressure and support if they are to play a role in improving their schools and districts." The word pressure is an interesting word choice, but it doesn't have to take on a negative connotation. In this case, DuFour was suggesting that the key to school improvement and increased student achievement is ensuring schools are "doing the right work" by actively building the capacity of leaders and holding them accountable for student learning. Like a diamond, applying the right positive pressure can have beautiful results!

A well-developed and intentionally implemented principal evaluation process is an opportunity for school leaders to receive encouragement, support, and feedback they need. The elements and processes associated with the Leading Observation Instrument (LdOI) provide principal supervisors with a framework to conduct meaningful observations and conferences. But it's important that the procedures are communicated early in the school year. The "Setting and Communicating Direction in the Leader Observation Process" infographic was created to help principal supervisors offer clear guidance and expectations. It reminds the supervisor to share the frequency and way evidence will be collected at observations, from surveys, and from other documentation. It prompts supervisors to communicate any initiatives or areas of key focus that will inform how school systems are evaluated. In addition to the LdOI handbook, this infographic is available on the Learning Library.

For further information, here's a link to [Richard Dufour's article](#).

## "Inspiring Every Child for 150 Years" Video Makes Its Debut!

Peter Sharbaugh and Kim St. Clair, our REIL video production team, just wrapped production on a video for PESD celebrating the district's 150th anniversary. Although there is a nod to the district's rich and diverse history, the video celebrates PESD's current 15 schools. Their stories are told through the lens of deep community ties, the ability to merge tradition with innovation, and the "heart" work at the center of each school. Kim and Peter are honored to have captured principals, students, teachers, staff members, and community partners telling their tales of why PESD has inspired every child for 150 years. The video premiered at a celebration picnic on March 26, 2022, and can be found on the PESD website.



**REIL-Extend Goals**  
**Goal 1:** Attract, place, retain, and sustain effective educators through implementation of a high-quality, LEA-wide human capital management system focused on expanding leadership and cultivating an engaged workforce.  
**Goal 2:** Redesign high-need schools to accelerate access to effective educators by extending the reach of excellent teachers.