

Teacher Morale

1 Teacher morale has been defined by Bentley and Rempel (1980) as “the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation” (p. 2). They discuss 2 morale as being the interaction between individual needs and the organization’s goals. 3 Thus, a high morale would result only when the process of achieving the organization’s goals also reaches the individual’s needs. 4 Morale is an internal feeling a person possesses free from the perceived reality of others. 5 Morale is not an observable trait; rather it is an internal feeling or set of thoughts. 6 Low staff morale results from professional lives that have little meaning; from frustration and the inability to change what is happening” (Wentworth, 1990, p. 1).

Factors that Affect Teacher Morale

7 There are many researchers who have studied teacher morale and the effects of certain factors on teacher morale. 8 Cook (1979) discussed five major areas that effect teacher morale. 9 In the first area, Administrative Leadership, a positive morale is reached when teachers feel their administrator is competent. Next, 10 Administrative Concern deals with the teacher’s need to feel appreciated. 11 Personal Interaction is the need for individuals to communicate and have support from other teachers and the administrators. 12 Opportunity for Input recognizes the teachers’ needs to be a part of decisions affecting them. 13 Lastly, Professional Growth deals with teachers’ needs to continue their education or professional development.

14 Tye and O’Brien (2002) surveyed several teachers who had left the profession. 15 Respondents gave the following rank of reasons why they had become dissatisfied with

teaching and changed professions: accountability, increased paperwork, student attitudes, lack of parent support, unresponsive administration, low professional status, and salary.

¹⁶ Hardy (1999) stated the following as the reasons teacher are leaving the profession: low pay, poor professional status, interactions with students, and relationship with

administrators.¹⁷ Liu and Meyer (2005) list student discipline as the number one factor leading to a low teacher morale and salary as the number two factor.

¹⁸ Wentworth (1990) listed the following as the essential factors that determine teacher morale:

- Input into decision-making that directly affects curriculum, instruction, and school climate.
 - Recognition and appreciation of teacher and student achievement.
 - A school climate that reflects a feeling of unity, pride, cooperation, acceptance of differences, and security.
 - Good communication.
 - Opportunities for meaningful professional growth.
 - Clear, shared goals.
 - Strong, supportive leadership.
 - Quality time for collegial interaction: planning, educational dialog, decision-making, problem solving.
 - Well-maintained physical environment.
 - Good human relations, both within school and between school and community.
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- Encouragement and reward for risk taking, innovation, and good teaching.
 - Attention to professional needs such as salary, benefits, etc.
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- Attention to personal needs such as stress management, good health, and social interaction.

A - B - C - D - E - F - G - H - I - J - K - L - M - N - O - P - Q - R - S - T - U - V - W - X - Y - Z