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## **What Teachers Really Want for Teacher Appreciation Week**

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The first week of May marks Teacher Appreciation Week. This is a time for parents, community members and school administrators to be intentional about bestowing praise, accolades and tokens of appreciation on our amazing teachers who serve our students.

Let's pause and reflect on just what makes teachers feel appreciated, particularly given our complicated and sometimes polarizing environment. What really keeps teachers going, year after year, when education, and sometimes teachers themselves become the target of criticism and blame? Let's take a look at what teachers really appreciate:

### **1. Teachers appreciate when they hear how their teaching connects with their students' lives.**

There is great fulfillment and satisfaction for teachers when they know that, because of their planning and efforts, a new passion and interest is ignited within a student.

### **2. Teachers appreciate when their former students contact them.**

It's always exciting and gratifying for a teacher to hear from students about how they were positively affected by the experiences in their classroom. Years after students have left a teacher's classroom, the teacher wonders what they've pursued in life – both personally and professionally.

### **3. Teachers appreciate acknowledgement regarding the many challenges and constraints they face every day.**

It's helpful when parents and the public are aware of critical issues of time, resources and diverse student needs. Teachers appreciate when the public advocates for the learning conditions that allow them to meet the needs of all students.

### **4. Teachers feel appreciated and can thrive when they feel respected and trusted.**

Teachers are service-oriented professionals who want to be respected and acknowledged for the values they bring to students' lives and positive impact they have on those in their care.

### **5. Teachers feel appreciated when their extracurricular work helps students succeed in areas beyond the classroom.**

Teachers love to help their students bring home a state championship, have a great opening night for a play, win a competition, or perform beautifully at a concert. Help teachers feel appreciated by attending one of our many school events. Our students (and teachers) deserve a round of applause.

So, in the coming days, take the time to send a note, email, call or text those special teachers in your life. Express how you appreciate their service to our students, families and community. Even if it's been years since your son or daughter was in school, it's not too late to send a note of appreciation.