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NON-CERTIFICATED STAFF EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS  
THAT ARE MEANINGFUL AND PROMOTE  
IMPROVED JOB PERFORMANCE

by  
Doris J. Isaacs

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
at  
Rowan University  
April 23, 2002

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Professor

Date Approved May, 2002

## Abstract

Doris J. Isaacs

Non-certificated Staff Evaluations  
That Are Meaningful and Promote  
Improved Job Performance  
2002  
Dr. Ronald L. Capasso  
School Business Administrator

The purpose of this study was to examine development of an evaluation instrument for non-certificated staff. This instrument would clearly recognize the valuable contributions of this important and often overlooked group of employees and provide a tool to promote improved job performance.

Individuals participating in the study were the School Business Administrator, 86 non-certificated staff, three head custodians and three principals. Non-certificated employees were surveyed using a written questionnaire to determine their opinions of evaluations and job performance motivators. The head custodians and principals participated in informal interviews regarding existing practices. Five non-certificated staff participated in personal interviews about employee recognition programs, performance evaluations and general concerns about their role in the operation of the district. Responses were summarized to determine the types of items that non-certificated employees believed were important in their job evaluation and motivators to improve job performance.

Results of the study show that the evaluation instruments need improvement and an employee recognition program will motivate employees. The most significant finding was that this group of employees needs a process where they can communicate their

needs, concerns, recommendations and suggestions about their individual jobs without repercussions from their immediate supervisor.

## Mini Abstract

Doris J. Isaacs

Non-certificated Staff Evaluations  
That Are Meaningful and Promote  
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2002  
Dr. Ronald L. Capasso  
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The study examined development evaluation instruments for non-certificated staff that would recognize their contributions and to promote improved job performance.

Results of the study show the evaluation instruments need improvement; a recognition program will motivate employees and a process is needed where employees can communicate needs, concerns and suggestions.

### Acknowledgements

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The intern also wishes to extend thanks to her family and friends for their encouragement and especially their patience when the intern was absent from the fun activities, visits with her wonderful grandsons Michael and Nicholas and travel opportunities with Diane. Let the fun begin again!

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Focus of the Study

Staff evaluations, which are often called performance appraisals in much of the literature researched, began in the early 1900's by the military, governmental agencies and industry to assess the performance of hourly, low-level workers. A performance appraisal is defined by Goens and Jenkins' (2000) as "the process of evaluating or judging the way in which someone is functioning." The contract between the Ocean City Board of Education and the Ocean City Supportive Staff Association calls for an annual evaluation of all non-certificated staff although it was suspected that many employees in this group have not been evaluated on a consistent basis. A variety of evaluation instruments, including what was described by several supervisors as a narrative document, are used in the district. Most instruments used provide information about an individual with ratings of outstanding, excellent, good, satisfactory, fair or poor for seven categories of job performance including attendance, job knowledge, quality of work, ability to work with co-workers, accepts change/criticism, willing to try new suggestions/ideas and personal appearance. Little narrative explanation of the supervisor's concerns and expectations, recognition, commendations or recommendations for improvement have been included in these instruments and most annual evaluations did not include a face-to-face meeting with the supervisor and the employee to discuss the document. In addition to an ineffective evaluation process, it was believed that many

of these employees did not have a copy of their job descriptions, further hampering their ability to perform their job successfully.

As well as being the lowest paid employee group, non-certificated employees are sometimes the least respected or valued employees in a school district yet a school cannot function without their contributions. This lack of respect results in low morale and decreased motivation for employees to do their best. Without a process to appropriately recognize and effectively communicate with this group of employees, the quality and quantity of work suffers, low morale develops and an attitude that management cannot be trusted prevails.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose for development of a meaningful evaluation instrument for non-certificated staff was to clearly recognize the valuable contributions of this important and often overlooked group of employees and to provide a tool to promote improved job performance. Non-certificated employees have not received adequate respect and recognition for their work yet the school district cannot function without them. Competent, hardworking custodians, secretaries, aides and cafeteria workers are difficult to retain in an economy with low unemployment. In an environment with non-certificated employee contracts with low salary guides negotiated over many years by always changing board members, it is important that additional ways to improve employee retention, motivation and ultimately job performance must be developed. In contrast, a mechanism to generate a paper trail documenting unsatisfactory job performance was determined to be necessary because it is difficult to terminate non-

tenured employees without costly arbitration or litigation and it is nearly impossible to terminate tenured employees.

The need for a meaningful evaluation instrument for non-certificated staff is significant to the employee and the employer. The document should generate ongoing documentation of satisfactory and unsatisfactory job performance, provide feedback employees need for improved job performance, define a method to improve recognition of exemplary work and/or contribution and promote increased job satisfaction.

Improvement in the non-certificated staff evaluation process has the potential to reduce costs, especially the cost of hiring and training new personnel because of high staff turnover. Costs may also be reduced when arbitration or litigation is not an option for an employee that was terminated for unsatisfactory job performance because the ongoing paper trail created as a component of the evaluation instrument is adequate to defend the cause for dismissal.

#### Definitions

*Arbitration:* When a controversy arises between an employer and an employee which is not settled in conference or mediation, such controversy may, by agreement of the parties, be submitted to arbitration. The Public Employment Relations Commission, a State agency responsible for enforcing laws pertaining to New Jersey's public sector labor relations oversees the process. An appointed arbitrator or panel of arbitrators hear testimony, decide the dispute and issue an opinion and award which shall be final, binding and irreversible. The parties involved bear the costs of arbitration.

*Categorical Aid:* State aid given to all districts based on the number of students eligible for specific assistance for high cost programs such as special education, vocational education, bilingual education, at-risk and transportation.

*District Factor Grouping (DFG):* A New Jersey Department of Education classification system ranking school districts in accordance with their socioeconomic status, i.e. educational and occupational background of the district's population, per capita income; percent at or below poverty level; unemployment rate; population density, degree of urbanization and population mobility.

*Employee Contract:* Public employees who have more than a casual employment relationship with a public employer have the right to join a union in order to negotiate with a public employer to improve labor peace by bringing management and labor to the table. The result of these negotiations is the employee contract which is a document that defines the agreed upon terms and conditions of employment for a specified period of time.

*Foundation Aid:* State aid given to eligible local school districts in order to provide a spending level that the N. J. Department of Education contends will enable every district to implement the Core Curriculum Content Standards and promote equality of opportunity by providing revenues to districts with higher needs and lower property and income wealth.

*Local Levy:* Local levy is the sum of the districts actual tax levies for school budget revenues categories of current expense, capital outlay and debt service. Local levy for school budget purposes is funded by property taxes.

*NJEA:* The New Jersey Education Association is the union that represents the supportive staff association in bargaining and other activities involving contractual issues.

*Non-certificated Staff:* Staff employed by school districts in positions that do not require a teaching, supervisory or administrative certificate. This group of employees includes custodians, maintenance workers, secretaries, aides, bus drivers and cafeteria workers. These employees are usually members of a union. They are also called non-professional, non-certified staff or support staff.

*Non-tenured:* Status which permits dismissal of certain groups of non-certificated employees such as cafeteria workers, aides and under certain condition, janitors as well as secretaries employed less than three years and one day.

*Tenure:* Status granted to secretarial and under certain conditions, janitorial employees in a school district on the first day of the fourth year of continuous employment. This status prohibits summary dismissal of the employee.

*Type I School District:* A term that describes a district established in a city except where the district has changed its classification. The mayor or other chief executive officer of the municipality that constitutes the district appoints five, seven or nine board members for three-year terms.

*Type II School District:* A term that describes districts established in municipalities other than cities, except where the city has changed its classification, and all regional school districts. Unless pursuant to law, the number of board members is 3, 5, 7 or 9 members who are elected to three-year terms at annual school elections.

## Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on Ocean City Public Schools, a Type II school district located on a barrier island resort community located in northern Cape May County, New Jersey. The group studied includes 86 non-certificated employees who are employed by the Ocean City Board of Education, the governing body of the school district. This group of employees includes custodians, maintenance and grounds workers, secretaries, aides and cafeteria workers. Dependence on input from this small number of non-certificated employees may not have provided adequate contributions for development of a workable, meaningful document. Job satisfaction was believed to be high because of the location of the school district, the proximity of their homes to their place of employment and an excellent benefits package. It was believed that employee interest in an improved, meaningful evaluation instrument might not exist because of this level of job satisfaction. An unanticipated limitation of the study was the fact that the 2001-02 employee contract for this group had not yet been settled and willingness to cooperate with the intern was limited and their peers chastised those who did. Concern existed about the number of research sources available and whether or not the sources would be adequate and appropriate for non-certificated employees in a public school setting although it was not as great a concern after identifying the term performance appraisal rather than employee evaluation.

## Setting of the Study

In 1879, a group of Methodist clergymen formed an association that purchased much of the property on a one-mile wide and eight-mile long island known as Peck's Beach for the development of a religious resort as well as a profitable real estate venture.

The island was initially named New Brighton but within a few months, the name was changed to Ocean City, a decision that was influenced by the success of another religious seashore resort, Ocean Grove. The community was founded on three principles, a ban on the sale of alcoholic beverages, to serve as a family-oriented resort and a prohibition against commercialism on the Sabbath. Currently, commercialism is permitted on the Sabbath.

Public school education was introduced in 1881. The present 146,000 square foot high school, with an enrollment of approximately 1,250 students in grades 9-12 was constructed in 1924 with additions in 1965 and 1984. The recently State approved Long-Range Facilities Plan and a successful bond referendum includes plans to begin construction of a new 229,000 square foot high school building in June 2002. The 52,000 square foot primary school building houses approximately 425 students in kindergarten through third grade and the 96,000 square foot middle school houses approximately 650 students in grades four through eight. Both elementary buildings were built in 1965 with expansion at the primary school in 1990 and major renovations completed in 1999.

A 12-member Board of Education governs this Type II district. There is a sending/receiving relationship with three school districts, Sea Isle City and Upper Township that are located in Cape May County and Corbin City, which is located in Atlantic County. Under a 1996 State law, one of the three districts that send students to the high school, Upper Township, was entitled to one voting representative on the Board of Education. In 2000, enabling legislation was requested by both the Upper Township and Ocean City boards and approved by the legislature allowing two additional voting representatives. This request was made because the high school students sent from Upper

Township equal approximately 54% of the high school enrollment and a more equal representation was desired.

The average class size is 16 at the primary school, 22 at the middle school and 18 at the high school, which is lower than the state average of 21.4 at a primary school and 19.8 at a high school. The pupil/teacher ratio of 8.7:1 at the primary school is lower than the state average of 13.3:1; 9.1:1 at the middle school compared to a State average of 13.3:1 and 10.5:1 at the high school compared to the State average of 11.6:1. The 2001-02 district-wide budgeted cost per pupil of \$12,415 is the second highest cost of the 72 K-12 districts with an enrollment between 1,801 and 3,500 pupils and higher than the State average of \$9,544. The 2001-02 median teacher salary of \$74,361 is the highest median teacher salary in their K-12 District Factor Grouping. The District Factor Grouping is DE, comparable to southern New Jersey school districts such as Collingswood Boro, Bordentown Regional, West Deptford and Point Pleasant Boro.

The City of Ocean City is a resort community with approximately 20,000 full year residents and 120,000 summer residents. The principle of the founding fathers that the community would serve as family-oriented resort is still a major influence today in the City that is called "America's Greatest Family Resort". The significant number of homes that are not occupied during the school year and do not require public school services has resulted in a sizeable ratable base to support local levy for school purposes. The 2001 tax valuation on which school taxes were calculated was \$3,562,823,329. This means that it cost the local taxpayer \$ .01 per \$100 valuation for every \$356,282 raised in local levy for school purposes. The district receives State Categorical Aid for transportation, bilingual and special education purposes but is not eligible for Foundation Aid.



Approximately 65% of the 2001-02 school budget is funded by local levy yet the tax rate for school purposes in 2001 was only \$ .56 per \$100 valuation.

The governing body of the municipality is elected. It is comprised of four council representatives from four separate wards, three council at large representatives and a mayor. The school district and the municipality share a number of services and facilities. The municipality owns and maintains the football stadium, track, soccer and baseball fields and a community center with a swimming pool that are used by the school district for athletic and co-curricular programs. Purchasing is shared with joint bidding, the municipality employs crossing guards and City employees provide maintenance services such as welding and snow removal at no cost to the district.

#### Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study will be organized as follow, Chapter 2, Review of Literature; Chapter 3, Design of the Study; Chapter 4, Presentation of Research Findings and Chapter 5, Conclusions, Implications and Further Study. References and appendices are presented at the end of the document.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

A meaningful non-certificated staff evaluation process that recognizes the valuable contributions of this important and often overlooked group of employees was deemed necessary. Qualified, hardworking custodians, secretaries, aides and cafeteria workers have been difficult to retain in an economy with low unemployment. In contrast, a mechanism to generate a paper trail documenting job performance was determined to be necessary because it is difficult to terminate unsatisfactory employees without costly litigation or arbitration.

#### Review of the Problem

Existing non-certificated staff evaluation instruments currently used in the district do not provide sufficient information that can be used to promote improved employee performance, recognize exceptional work or to point out areas of unsatisfactory or unacceptable work. Existing evaluation instruments are inadequate and the process followed in the Ocean City School District was found to be inconsistent. A number of employees were not evaluated at all even though the negotiated contract calls for annual evaluations of all non-certificated employees. These employees do not always receive respect or recognition from the Board, the administration, teachers and students although a school district cannot function without them. This lack of recognition and respect sometimes results in anger, poor morale and/or distrust.

### Review on Major Concept Related to the Problem

Non-certified staff evaluations are required and necessary. The existing instruments reviewed by the intern are inadequate and useless for achieving the stated goals of improved job performance, increased employee retention and creation of ongoing documentation of satisfactory and unsatisfactory job performance.

Research on what constitutes a good performance appraisal suggested that information gathered for the purpose of evaluating an employee must be useful and must have purpose (Swan & Margulies, 1991). Guidelines described by Stone (1989) for gathering information for an evaluation recommended that written notes are made whenever something happens throughout the period to be evaluated and not to rely on recall to complete the evaluation instrument. It was recommended that these notes should be based on facts, not opinions and must be a result of direct observation of actions, not hearsay. The importance of the evaluator's ability to distinguish between information that is ineffective and effective was stressed.

F. McCarthy (2002) at a facilitated discussion group on the best practices in employee recognition, *Motivating Your People By Catching Them Doing Things Right*, noted that

Each person, regardless of their position in your organization, has an interest, talent, skill, or ability. Each person is unique and has limitless potential for personal growth and contribution to your organization. By expecting, encouraging, and recognizing achievements and contributions, we move towards achieving our potential as individual and organizations.

McCarthy (2002) promoted a program that stressed planned awards and employee recognition based on his belief that a desire to be appreciated is the deepest principle of human nature. His recommendations included a recognition kit that contained items such as greeting cards, certificates, lapel pins, books and other assorted trinkets to award to employees on special events or for special recognition.

Nelson (1994) stated, "Recognition of a job well done is the top motivator of employee performance." Nelson's book provides ideas for no-cost and low-cost employee incentives designed to reward, motivate and reinforce behavior that the supervisor wants repeated. Especially impressive was a relatively simple suggestion that supervisors develop a distinctive, recognizable notepaper to be used for writing personal notes to individual employees expressing appreciation, thanks or recognition for a job well done. It was stated that this note was often proudly displayed and/or shared with co-workers, which encouraged these co-workers to work better and harder in an effort to obtain the same recognition.

Coens and Jenkins (2000) suggested that performance appraisals should be abolished. They described the real goal as improving performance of the organization and suggested alternatives such as coaching and feedback that makes a difference. Since the negotiated contract requires the evaluations, abolishment is not possible but the alternatives described were viewed as potential components of the process developed.

Several items were identified as important aspects of designing the appraisal form and process. Margrave and Gorden (2001) noted that important components of an evaluation process are clearly identified performance standards, a definition of production and quantifiable measurements. They stressed that a well-written job

description should be the first consideration in developing the process. Also noted was the importance in recognizing individual differences in similar jobs and considering these differences in job descriptions and the evaluation instruments. It was suggested that the supervisor not rely on memory for completing a performance appraisal but to maintain a folder for each employee. The information collected in this folder throughout the year should include notes documenting when performance standards, quantifiable measurement and defined production was met or not met.

J. R. Ball (personal communication October 11, 2001) in a presentation on *How To Get People To Do What You Want Them To Do* described seven strategies to achieve this goal (Appendix A). If a supervisor can successfully implement these strategies, a subordinate's job performance should show measurable improvement. These strategies are worthwhile ideas that should be included in the preliminary training of supervisors in implementation of the newly developed non-certificated staff evaluation process.

It was suggested that individuals other than an immediate supervisor (F. Scott, personal communication, March 9, 2002) provide contributions on an employee's job performance. For example, development of a standardized checklist for completion by classroom teachers on the condition of their classroom each morning would document satisfactory or unsatisfactory completion of job responsibilities. It was noted that a "comments" box in a central location in the Ocean City Primary School provides staff, students and parents an opportunity to praise an employee for exemplary work. These comments are often shared with the school community in the Principal's weekly "TGIF" newsletter (G. Donahue, personal communication, February 21, 2002). This idea could be

implemented in each building and these comments could also be forwarded to the individual's immediate supervisor to be incorporated in their annual evaluation.

In a recent newspaper article, Ooms (April 2001) described a new trend in employee appraisals. Both the employee and the subordinate fill out the appraisal form separately and compare the results when they meet. It was noted that a clear job description and the performance appraisal are the very important components of successful job performance, suggesting that essential functions in the job description be incorporated in the appraisal instrument as measurable evaluation categories. Trends noted include development of performance appraisal methods with employee input, inclusion of goals of the organization in the appraisal system, ongoing communication about individual job performance with quarterly or mid-year reviews.

It was also determined that the initial focus on the development of an evaluation instrument was not sufficient. What was needed was the development of an ongoing process for employee assessment that emphasized supervisor/employee communication and concluded with a document that summarizes the results of an ongoing process for a specified period of time. This process should include methods to provide increased communication between the supervisor and the subordinate as well as a means to allow opportunity for board and/or administrative communication with support staff. It should also include a formal process and funding for employee recognition on special events, for work and non-work related achievements and for exemplary work.

It was determined that employee input was needed to develop what constitutes an accurate and effective job description and a fair and meaningful evaluation process from their perspective and in accordance with the negotiated agreement. Non-certificated

staff interviews and surveys conducted provided insight into what is wrong with the present method, what is desired and the possible merits of the information and suggestions in the literature reviewed.

Although a large number of sources were not available on the topic, the sources found were appropriate and useful for the development of a meaningful employee evaluation process. Training of supervisors in carrying out the proposed plan for an employee evaluation process that requires ongoing contributions and increased communication is anticipated to be the greatest challenge.

A single performance appraisal issue was common in all of the literature researched. The commonality was a perception that no one enjoys conducting or receiving a performance appraisal. The success of the process developed will be measured by its acceptance, positive and willing participation without apprehension, measurable results of improved job performance and increased employee retention. The success cannot be determined until the process is implemented and monitored for several years.

## Chapter 3

### Design of the Study

#### Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, non-certificated staff evaluations have often been instruments that note an individual's attendance record and rate job performance categories as poor, fair, good or excellent. Little narrative explanation of the supervisor's concerns and expectations, recognition, commendations or recommendations for improvement has been included in these instruments. The intern proposed development of an instrument that provides non-certificated staff a meaningful evaluation of their contributions to the successful operation of the school district. The instrument developed is intended to provide a mechanism to improve job performance, increase employee retention and create necessary documentation should the need arise to legally defend dismissal of an employee. The instrument and/or process designed should provide a consistent method for all supervisors of non-certificated staff to successfully and equally evaluate staff.

The research included study of literature regarding successful methods to evaluate non-certificated staff. Information obtained was used to develop an anonymous survey of non-certificated staff about their feelings about their jobs and the evaluation process. The survey was mailed to 86 non-certificated staff to voluntarily complete and return in a self-addressed stamped envelope. Invitations for individual interviews over breakfast, lunch or dinner at a restaurant of their choosing was included with the surveys sent to eight



randomly selected non-certificated staff employed in the school district for more than one year. Of the eight invitations sent, five individuals accepted

The survey and interview questions were developed from the various literatures reviewed. The intern developed questions that were thought to provide the best insight into the process currently followed and the survey also provided an opportunity for suggestions and comments. The non-certificated staff interview questions were not followed during the interviews because the lunch/dinner conversation carried the topics in various enlightening directions.

The survey form (Appendix B) included 10 questions and a list of nine items that were ranked in order of importance regarding factors that motivate the employee to do their best at work. The questions were not position specific; they were designed for all categories of non-certificated employees. The anonymous survey forms were mailed to every non-certificated staff person with a self-addressed, stamped envelope provided for returning the surveys. Invitations to participate in the personal interviews were mailed with the surveys to ten percent of the non-certificated staff employed by the district for more than one year with the intern's home, office and cell phone numbers for the employee to accept or decline the invitation. The survey forms responses were totaled to determine the highest and lowest response rate for the questions and to determine the high (important) and low (unimportant) ratings of factors that motivate the employee to do their best at work.

Informal discussions with supervisors responsible to evaluate non-certificated staff were conducted to determine the methods, instruments and processes currently used. The individual discussion with the supervisors took place by telephone at the supervisor's

convenience. The general discussion with supervisors included three specific areas: whether or not every subordinate was evaluated, whether or not a face-to-face meeting was held to discuss the evaluation and a request for a copy of the document presently used if applicable.

## Chapter 4

### Presentation of Research Findings

#### Introduction

Existing non-certificated staff evaluations in the Ocean City Public Schools have been instruments that lack narrative explanation of a supervisor's concerns and expectations, recognition, commendations or recommendation for improvement. The intern proposed development of an evaluation process that provides non-certificated staff a meaningful evaluation of their contributions to the successful operation of the school district. The instrument developed is intended to provide a mechanism to improve job performance, increase employee retention and create necessary documentation should the need arise to legally defend dismissal of an employee. The process designed by the intern shall provide a consistent method for all supervisors of non-certificated staff to successfully and equally evaluate staff.

#### Grand Tour Question

It was proposed that the intern would design a process for evaluation of non-certificated staff that would be meaningful and promote improved job performance, increase employee retention and create necessary documentation that would successfully defend dismissal of an unsatisfactory employee in arbitration or litigation.

The intern involved non-certificated staff and supervisory staff in providing background information about the existing practices for evaluating non-certificated staff in the Ocean City Public Schools. Through interviews and surveys, comments and factual information about the existing evaluation process was obtained. Supervisors

provided samples of forms presently used to evaluate non-certificated staff. The non-certificated employees were involved in providing input via a survey that included 10 questions and a list of nine items to rank in importance regarding factors that motivate the employee to do their best at work. Table 1 summarizes the responses to the 10 questions and Tables 2 and 3 summarize the responses to the ranking of nine factors that motivate employees to do their best at work. Only 29 of 86 employees returned completed surveys and five of nine employees invited for the personal interview accepted. The 34% return rate for the surveys was lower than anticipated until it was learned that a number of non-certificated employees strongly encouraged the group to decline participation. This group discouraged participation because their 2001-02 contract was not yet settled, they believed the intern would use information obtained against the group and the intern would obtain a pay increase when the Master's program was completed. This information was learned from the five employees who accepted the invitation for a personal interview as well as several other employees in the group. These individuals indicated that they felt strongly that the project was worthwhile and it would more than likely benefit the group and not result in problems. Although a few expressed initial apprehension about the one-on-one meeting, each individual was relaxed, open and willing to share their experiences, ideas, suggestions and concerns.

The intern developed ten questions for the survey. The first question was asked to establish whether or not performance evaluations were taking place in the district. The responses to the survey question indicated that 57% of the employees were receiving an annual evaluation, which is not in compliance with the negotiated agreement requiring annual evaluations of all non-certificated staff. A 21% positive response to the second

question, which asked those employees who did receive an annual evaluation whether or not their supervisor held a face-to-face meeting to review the evaluation, indicates that communication between the supervisor and employee is unsatisfactory. On a more personal level, the third question asked if the employee felt that an annual evaluation is important, 79% responded in the affirmative. Although much of the literature reviewed indicated that performance appraisals were not favored and most people actually were apprehensive about the process, 85% of the respondents indicated that they were not uncomfortable or nervous with the process. This interns' initial reaction to this response was surprise in that the subordinates were comfortable with their supervisor's evaluation but upon further thought, it was decided that the existing process contained nothing that would cause apprehension. The next three questions involved whether or not ongoing communication regarding job performance took place either verbally or in writing. 65% indicated that their supervisor did not communicate if the employee was doing a good or bad job, 93% indicated that they would be open to comments on their job performance and 48% favored these comments be in writing. Most surprising of the responses was the fact that 50% of these employees did not have copies of their job descriptions. 74% of these employees did express that they are satisfied with their job and 67% provided suggestions and comments on ways to improve their job.

Table 2 and 3 summarize the results of the survey questions regarding factors that motivate the employee to do their best job at work. The most important motivator at 62% was "money and benefits" although several surveys had money crossed out, leaving only benefits as the primary motivator. The second most important motivator at 38% was the category of "interesting job" with "working hours" ranked third at 32%. The category

of fear was ranked as the least important motivator at 79% with the other 5 categories ranked evenly in the middle. The comments and suggestions were interesting and provided insight into other motivators such as self-pride in job accomplished and wonderful working relationships with wonderful co-workers. The negative comments referred to a lack of respect and recognition by teachers, administrators and students and generally poor communications in all aspects of their work environment.

The interviews with the randomly selected non-certificated staff offered insight into more personal issues based on the participant's position. Three common areas of concern were noted in each interview. The first concern was tools and equipment that do not work, i.e. trashcan wheels that need replacement, printers that don't work and office furniture that is unsafe. The second area was the need for appropriate initial job training and opportunities to upgrade job skills. The third area was described as a lack of communication by administrative and/or supervisory staff. It was noted that these areas of concern contribute to employee frustration because there is little opportunity to adequately correct problems because of a lack of effective communication and what was perceived as outright dismissal of concerns as unimportant or uncorrectable because of a lack of funds.

The discussion with supervisors included three principals, a director of curriculum and technology, a director of special services, a food service director and three head custodians. This discussion included specific questions asking if every subordinate was evaluated, whether or not a face-to-face meeting was held to discuss the evaluation and a request for a copy of the document presently used if applicable. Contributions were solicited regarding their methods for motivating staff and suggestions for improvement of

the process. A frequent comment was the lack of time on the part of the supervisor to appropriately evaluate the large number of certificated and non-certificated staff under their supervision. Most of the supervisors indicated that they did not conduct a face-to-face review of the evaluation with their subordinates and some stated that they did not evaluate all of the non-certificated staff under their supervision. Most of the secretaries were provided narrative evaluations while custodians; aides and food service workers were evaluated using a checklist format. Several supervisors felt the process needed improvement.

Table 1

## Support Staff Performance Evaluation Survey Results

		Number Yes	Number No	Percent Yes	Percent No
1.	Are you provided an annual performance evaluation?	16	12	57%	43%
2.	Does your supervisor meet with you to review the evaluation?	5	19	21%	79%
3.	Do you think an annual evaluation is important?	22	6	79%	21%
4.	Does the evaluation process make you uncomfortable or nervous?	4	23	15%	85%
5.	Does your supervisor tell you, Throughout the year, if you are doing a good or bad job?	17	9	65%	35%
6.	If no, would you like your like your supervisor to let you know when you have done a good or bad job on something?	14	1	93%	7%
7.	If yes, would you like to be told in writing?	12	13	48%	52%
8.	Do you have a copy of your job description?	14	14	50%	50%
9.	Are you satisfied with your job?	20	7	74%	26%
10.	Can you think of a way or have suggestions that would improve your job? If yes, comments are welcome.	14	7	67%	33%



Table 2

## Survey Results

What Motivates You To Do Your Best At Work?

Ranked by Importance

	Most 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Least 9
Money/Benefits	16	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	0
Interesting Job	9	1	2	5	2	3	2	0	0
Working Hours	8	5	5	1	3	0	3	0	0
Job Security	5	4	3	2	5	1	3	0	0
Flexible Hours	3	1	2	5	3	4	2	3	0
Recognition	3	4	3	1	4	4	2	3	2
Communication/ Directions	1	5	1	2	4	3	1	3	2
Supervision	1	1	0	1	2	3	7	7	1
Fear	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	19

Table 3

Survey Results

What Motivates You to Do Your Best At Work?

Ranked by Percentage of Importance

	Most 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Least 9
Money/Benefits	62%	19%	12%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Interesting Job	38%	4%	8%	21%	8%	13%	8%	0%	0%
Working Hours	32%	20%	20%	4%	12%	0%	12%	0%	0%
Job Security	22%	17%	13%	9%	22%	4%	13%	0%	0%
Flexible Hours	13%	4%	9%	22%	13%	17%	9%	13%	0%
Recognition	12%	15%	12%	4%	15%	15%	8%	12%	8%
Communication/ Directions	5%	23%	5%	9%	18%	14%	5%	14%	9%
Supervision	4%	4%	0%	4%	9%	13%	30%	30%	4%
Fear	4%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	4%	8%	79%

## Chapter 5

### Presentation of Research Findings

#### Introduction

This study focused on what constitutes a meaningful non-certified employee evaluation from the perspective of both the employee and management. The goals to be achieved from an improved evaluation process were improved job performance, ongoing documentation of satisfactory and unsatisfactory job performance and increased staff retention. The findings of the research showed that the existing process for evaluation of non-certificated staff is inadequate. This often overlooked, low paid, and least respected group of employees deserves a greater opportunity for growth and improvement in their positions than is presently provided. This growth and job improvement cannot occur without increased communication and financial support of the school board and administration.

#### Grand Tour

The existing evaluation instrument and process do not establish clearly identified performance standards, a definition of production and quantifiable measurements. If the employee was one of the 50% who had a copy of their job description, it is unlikely that it would describe essential functions that are measurable for evaluation purposes. The intern's belief that development of a meaningful non-certificated evaluation process was needed if improved job performance was to occur was confirmed.

The survey project and results described in Chapter 4, Table 2 indicated that money and benefits are the primary motivator for most employees in this group. Unfortunately, this category is unlikely to change because of the history of the negotiated contract that has generated salary guides that are relatively low compared to other school districts. Although the survey results shown in Chapter 4, Tables 2 and 3 do not reflect a desire for better communication with supervisors regarding job performance, this issue was thoroughly discussed in the interviews. As a result of input from these individuals, the need for increased communication was determined to be a desirable component of the process developed. Survey responses to questions 5, 6 and 7 as shown in Table 1 note a need for supervisors to provide increased feedback to each employee regarding good and/or bad job performance, with a strong preference that this feedback be provided in writing.

From a management perspective and as a result of literature reviewed, it is important that specific instances of good and bad job performance are documented throughout the period evaluated so the annual evaluation can be completed accurately and without attempting to rely on recall. In addition, consistent and ongoing observation of employee behavior and job performance provides the supervisor an opportunity to recognize employees for exemplary work. The need for ongoing documentation of unsatisfactory job performance to successfully defend dismissal of an unsatisfactory employee in arbitration or litigation is absolutely necessary. In addition to a concern for expensive litigation, this documentation is critical because representatives of NJEA have implied that the employee's union is responsible to represent all dues paying members or expose the union itself to litigation.

## Implications of Study on Leadership Skills

The implications of this study on the intern's leadership skills are significant. As a former non-certificated employee, the intern's first position in education was as Senior Clerk Stenographer in the Salem County Office of Education at \$3.09 per hour. What the intern believed was a personal understanding of this group of employees and their treatment by the Board, administration and students was not supported in the experiences in the study. In the current position as School Business Administrator, the intern is usually requested to handle most issues involving the Supportive Staff Association. It was learned that this responsibility involves more than equal and fair enforcement of the negotiated agreement. This group of employees has more to offer than was apparent. The intern's goal of improved leadership skills with this group includes acceptance of greater responsibility for their needs, at times an advocate for their issues, i.e. better working conditions, needed tools and equipment and special job training opportunities. A component of this responsibility includes development of an ongoing evaluation process that provides increased recognition, improved communication, individual moral support and greater opportunity for growth through training and education. It is anticipated that improved job performance, employee retention and job satisfaction will result.

## Further Study

Further study needed includes a comprehensive review and possible re-write of existing non-certificated employee job descriptions. It is anticipated that this study will include input from the supervisors and employees responsible for the tasks defined in the job description.

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Appendix A  
Research Instruments



## Seven Strategies Summary

1. Context: Make sure they understand their importance, the importance of their job, and how they and their work fit into the overall picture.
2. Motivation: Give them something to do that is worthy of their pursuit, motivate them to act, hold them accountable, measure their performance, provide encouragement and performance feedback, and recognize and reward the action, behaviors and results that you desire.
3. Environment: Establish an environment for success, eliminate negativity, promote a service mentality, and demand excellence and continuous improvement.
4. Goals: make certain that your goals and their goals are laser-clear.
5. Guidance System: Show them exactly what you want them to do and exactly how you want them to do it, give them a systematic and repeatable step-by-step process to follow, train them how to follow it, and let them practice until they get it perfect.
6. Resources: Give them to tools, time, and resources they need to do their work effectively and properly.
7. Teamwork: Put them on a team that helps them grow and achieve their goals and personal potential.

Appendix B  
Survey Form

## SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY - PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Are you provided an annual performance evaluation?

If yes, is it a \_\_\_\_\_ Written Narrative \_\_\_\_\_ Checklist (fill in the blanks) or \_\_\_\_\_ Oral evaluation?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Does your supervisor meet with you to review your evaluation?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Do you think an annual evaluation is important?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Does the evaluation process make you uncomfortable or nervous?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Does your supervisor tell you throughout the year if you are doing a good or bad job?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If no, would you like your supervisor to let you know when you have done a really great job or a bad job on something?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, would like to be told in writing?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Do you have a copy of your job description?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Are you satisfied with your job?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Can you think of a way or have suggestions that would improve your job? If "Yes", comments are welcome.

What motivates you to do you best at work? Rank importance with number (1) one being the most important and number (9) nine, the least important.

\_\_\_\_\_ Money/Benefits

\_\_\_\_\_ Interesting Job

\_\_\_\_\_ Recognition

\_\_\_\_\_ Fear

\_\_\_\_\_ Supervision

\_\_\_\_\_ Working Hours

\_\_\_\_\_ Flexible Hours

\_\_\_\_\_ Job Security

\_\_\_\_\_ Clear Directions,  
Communication

Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If more space is needed, please continue on the back. Thank you.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.

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