

# Why You Should Participate in the Five Star Program

The Utrust Board of Trustees has implemented a Five Star Award Program to recognize school boards that practice excellence in employee management. In order to achieve the award, a school board must meet five standards of excellence that few boards in Tennessee currently meet. The standards were established by the Utrust Board of Trustees in an effort to encourage member boards to adopt high standards for employee management and hold administrators accountable for achieving them. Two primary issues have caused the trustees great concern and have provided the stimulus for the trustees to establish the award.

## Non-Renewal of Probationary Teachers

Several Tennessee school boards have made it a practice to non-renew all probationary teachers each year. Now that the Tennessee teacher tenure law has changed the probationary period from three to five years, such a practice will result in at least a 40% increase in unemployment compensation costs. Only teachers who have not measured up to the standards used in by a school should ever be non-renewed. There is no justification in non-renewing teachers because the school budget has not been approved and funds may not be available the next school. In such an event, Tennessee law allows for a teacher's position to be abolished.



## Interruptions for Snow and Flooding



Some school systems use employment practices that have caused non-certificated employees to have no income when unplanned interruptions such as snow or flooding occurs during the school year. Not only do such practices create low morale, they also are expensive because these employees, the system's lowest paid employees often living from hand to mouth, have little choice except to file for unemployment compensation. Utrust members have wasted millions of dollars for unemployment compensation benefits which would be entirely eliminated if the system followed Utrust's recommended employee management procedures and earned the Five Star Award for Excellence in Employee Management.



- Standard 1** The system bases non-renewal decisions on performance and does not non-renew all probationary teachers.
- Standard 2** The system establishes written contracts with non-certificated employees for a specific number of days or has a policy or practice so that employees receive paychecks for snow days or other emergency closings.
- Standard 3** The system works with each employee to set performance standards and provide supervision and help in achieving them.
- Standard 4** The system requires annual performance evaluation based upon the employee's job description and the performance standards.
- Standard 5** The system recognizes and expresses appreciation for all school employees at least annually.

To achieve the award, the superintendent simply goes on the Utrust website and completes a short form certifying that the school system has met each standard. Each board that meets all standards will be designated as a Utrust 5 Star School System. An award presented to the board by a trustee at a local board meeting and a news release will be sent by Utrust to the local media.



**Monetary Awards.** Systems that practice excellence in employee management sufficient to qualify for a Utrust Five Star Award will receive an additional 25% to any annual distribution of funds through Utrust mini-grants.

Click [here](#) for self reporting form to become a Five Star Board.