

## STAY INTERVIEW

I attended a workshop regarding employee retention and got the idea to conduct “stay interviews.” These interviews are designed to help understand what motivates employees to stay and what their expectations are. The questions are designed to let the employee speak, to express the employers interest in hearing what they have to say. I interviewed 7 paras at the Winnebago site: 3 first year employees, 3 third year employees, 1 17 year employee

Rate each area: I asked each person to fill the rating scale out with me out of the room, when I came back we discussed if there were any alarming scores. I’ve created an average among the 7 to show you.

Area	Points Possible	Average Points Given
Did you receive the training you needed to perform your job?	25	18
Did you receive sufficient onboarding? (Paperwork and benefits explained, email, building info., Aesop/Veritime, payroll, policies)	25	17.6
How welcoming was the staff?	25	21.8
Was the job description clearly defined when you were offered the position?	25	17
<b>Personal Characteristics</b>		
Pride for the job you do	10	9.3
Life Balance (work, home, family, health)	10	7.7
Ability to work with others	10	8.7
Likelihood to stay long term	10	7.9
Motivation to come to work	10	8.9
Feel part of the Southern Plains Team	10	7.7
Technology skills	10	8.6
Feedback from supervisors	10	8.6
Workplace culture	10	8.3
Stress at work	10	8.6
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>159</b>

For this section I sat down with the employee and asked them these questions, and follow up conversations as needed. After each question, I've included a general synopsis of responses.

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions for Employees

1. Tell me specifically what factors cause you to enjoy your job?

Working with kids, making a difference, coworkers, student relationships, watching students succeed

2. Describe one of the best days at work you've had?

All responses revolved around student succeed, feeling like you've accomplished something with a student

3. What factors motivate you to do your best work?

Making school a good experience for students, knowing you're helping students, being part of a successful team, seeing students react to their progress

4. Do you feel your work makes a difference to your employer?

Teacher gives positive feedback, knowing they trust work I'm doing, progress we've made as a team, treated as the expert with students

5. Do your colleagues and teammates listen to you and do they value your ideas, and decisions?

Team atmosphere, collaborative, in classroom-yes, out of classroom-issues addressed differently, always have a voice, feel valued

6. Be honest, tell me about a frustration you have with your current job?

Other staff being absent, lack of consistency, building positive morale in tough classrooms, being paid similar to beginners

7. What professional development would make your job more satisfying?

STAR Program, Behavior Management, school crisis training, more special education paperwork understanding

8. What are the most challenging aspects of your job?

Dealing with behaviors, inconsistent expectations, not taking behaviors personally, charting

9. Give an example of recognition or acknowledgment you've received at work?

Compliments on work with students, classroom teacher bringing treats, positive reinforcement, positive feedback from parents, just "thank you"

10. What talents do you have that are not being used in your current role?

More academic knowledge, paperwork skills, bilingual, laughter

11. What might cause you to leave Southern Plains?

Stress from behaviors, personal family schedule, better pay and benefits, location

12. What keeps you working here?

Students, staff, good hours, breakthroughs with students, feel trusted and treated as an equal

13. What kind of resources from Southern Plains would help you achieve life balance?

Stress relief opportunities, increase wellness program awareness, mental health day

14. Do you feel like you're in the know when it comes to company information?

Good email communication, disconnect from admin office, hard deciphering all information

15. What's an idea you've had that you would like to implement at work?

Off campus activities (kids out to eat, volunteering), shadowing a veteran para, onboarding specifics, workout room, cash out sick leave

#### General Observations and Themes:

Motivation comes more from interpersonal relationships and student interaction more than financial incentives. While financial compensation is important, it isn't why they feel good about coming to work.

In terms of training/onboarding, most felt it was appropriate. We have restructured and improved our onboarding process in the last year.

Employees feel good about their classroom teams and coworker comradery. If they would improve anything it would be communication with the administrative office, which the administrative office would agree with, the physical location disconnect does have its restraints.

Some suggested improvements would be communication, pay and benefits, stress relief, training including school crisis, behavior, and generally a better understanding of the special education/alternative learning environment.

All employees responded that the level of intensity in the day to day student interaction can be overwhelming and stressful, but they all had creative, productive ideas for staff development opportunities or suggestions to help alleviate some of those struggles.

Overall, people are satisfied in their jobs and are happy to work for us. They are engaged in their jobs and working for what is best for students.