

research in brief

Students' Rewards

A study by home economics teachers and other staff members of the Dallas (Texas) Independent School District compared the types of recognition valued by students with the types that teachers thought students preferred. .

Each staff member talked with her/his students about what recognition and awards are, and how they preferred to be recognized. From a list of rewards valued most by the students,

a 15-item opinionnaire of most frequently mentioned rewards was prepared. The sample included 218 high school students who were enrolled in either consumer/homemaking or home economics. There were about equal numbers of boys and girls from a cross-section of geographic and economic areas.

The opinionnaire was administered to this same group plus 125 other high school students in similar types of classes and asked them to rank the 15 different types of recognition. It was also administered to 60 high school consumer/homemaking or home economics occupation teachers and to 80 high school teachers from other disciplines. The teachers were asked to rank the items in the order that they thought the students would choose.

Correlation between the rankings by the students and by the teachers was $-.19$. . . indicating that the items rated high by the students tended to be rated low by the teachers. In general, students ranked personal types of recognition high, while teachers ranked tangible sources of recognition high. Surprisingly, the students' top two types of recognition (*reaching a personal goal* and *scholarships for school*) were ranked 14th and 15th (last) by the teachers.

Teachers and students agreed that peer recognition is important, with teachers ranking it second and students third.

Winning—both through contests and elective office—fell into the lower ranks of ways students wish to be recognized. Two other often used rewards, *party, picnic, trips, and banquets* and *money for accomplishments*, also appeared in the lower third.

The researcher concluded that the four most valued awards and recognition (reaching a personal goal, scholarships, compliments and encouragement from friends, and being accepted as a person/seeking my opinion) are difficult for a teacher or school system to implement—but the students suggested some ways this could be done.

Editor's Note

We certainly can't assume that these students in the Dallas Independent School District are representative of 4-H members across the country. On the other hand, this study should encourage us to ask questions about our 4-H Awards and Recognition programs at all levels and determine if we're assuming the wrong things to be important to 4-Hers as rewards.

"What Rewards Do Students Want?" Barbara Ann Ware. *Phi Delta Kappan*, LIX (January, 1978), 355-56.

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