

Our retiree tribute video series was revived after a brief hiatus to provide our retiring employees with a heartfelt and meaningful send-off. The series, available on our social media channels and presented at our end-of-year celebration, was designed to celebrate their years of service and the lasting impact they've made within District 21. Each retiree was honored through 2-3 hand-picked employees, along with the building's administrator (usually a principal), who shared reflections on the retiree's career, their contributions to the district, and what will be missed most about them. The process of bringing this series to life required a great deal of planning and coordination. For the retiring class of 2023-2024, this meant shooting and editing close to 40 interviews to capture the stories and tributes from colleagues and administrators. Despite the extensive effort, the results were worth it, as each video became a personalized and meaningful tribute to those who had given so much to the district. Participation in the video series was optional (for this class, 12 of 17 employees consented to a video), allowing retirees the freedom to choose who they wanted to speak on their behalf. This thoughtful approach ensured the videos felt authentic and personal, reflecting the unique relationships that defined each retiree's career in District 21. The series not only celebrated the retiree's professional accomplishments but also highlighted the personal connections they fostered throughout their careers. It gave colleagues and administrators a chance to express their appreciation and gratitude, making sure these dedicated professionals were honored in a meaningful way as they transitioned into retirement. In addition to being a tribute to each retiree, the video series underscored the profound influence that educators and staff have on their schools and the broader district community. It was a warm, personal way to thank them for their years of service and ensure that their impact would never be forgotten.