

Individual Student Acknowledgement

A digital one-pager



Virginia Department of Education's
**Training & Technical
Assistance Center**
at Old Dominion University

Purpose:

Building school and classroom communities with a culture of celebrating growth is supported by significant educational research. "According to John Hattie (2009), feedback has an effect size of 0.70, which is well above the average (.40), meaning it has a substantial impact on learning." Classroom Instruction that Works (Marzano, 2003) includes "reinforcing effort and providing recognition" as one of the nine high yield strategies that have a significant impact on student achievement. Some benefits of celebrating students' growth include:

- ✓ Enhances classroom culture
- ✓ Promotes goal setting and ownership
- ✓ Creates sense of belonging
- ✓ Increases intrinsic motivation & self-efficacy
- ✓ Builds & improves teacher-student relationships

Ways to celebrate individual students:

- ✦ Behavior specific praise
- ✦ Written notes to students & families
- ✦ Positive phone call home
- ✦ Classroom displays
- ✦ Progress portfolios/progress trackers
- ✦ Certificates of achievement, improvement, attainment of goal, etc.
- ✦ Awards Assemblies to recognize student achievements and growth
- ✦ Recognize student efforts and success across domains: Math Whiz, Reading Rockstar, Improved Attendance, Citizenship and Leadership Awards, Kindness Champions, etc.
- ✦ Students write celebratory notes to each other

Why celebrate every student?

All students are learning and growing, hence should be making progress to celebrate along the way. If a student is not making progress, that is a signal to the teacher to collect some data, reflect, and intervene.

Considerations:

- ✦ Brainstorm the many ways you can celebrate students **throughout the year**. Consider different categories so all students' strengths can be celebrated (e.g. academic goal attained, behavior milestone, attendance progress)
- ✦ Ask students how **they prefer** to be recognized
- ✦ Remember that students attain mastery and goals **at different rates**, so be aware of how each student's progress is being celebrated
- ✦ Consider ways that **students can celebrate one another**
- ✦ Recognize **effort, improvement, and engagement** in addition to excellence
- ✦ **Vary frequency** of acknowledgement – immediate, daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly
- ✦ Consider opportunities for **intermittent recognition** to maintain enthusiasm, such as drawing a student name to shout out goal attainment

Key Take-Aways:

- ✓ Support behavior through positive recognition and error correction rather than by removing earned acknowledgement
- ✓ Create a culture where growth and learning are celebrated!
- ✓ Engage students in goal setting and monitoring their progress.
- ✓ A positive classroom culture includes and celebrates **EVERY** student, building a sense of belonging and motivation for **ALL**!

For additional information:

Center on PBIS: pbis.org

Association for Positive Behavior Support: apbs.org

National Center on RtI: mtss4success.org

[13 Ways to Celebrate Students' Small Wins and Build Motivation](#)

References list [linked here](#)