

# Staff Acknowledgements & Celebrations

A digital one-pager



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

## **Purpose:**

Acknowledging staff members' hard work, effort, and accomplishments creates a positive school climate and can help build individual and collective efficacy. When adults in the building feel genuinely appreciated and regularly acknowledged, it nurtures a culture of respect, motivation, and collaboration that benefits the entire school community. Consider a variety of opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate with the staff as a whole, as well as recognizing individual accomplishments.

## **Why acknowledge & celebrate staff?**

- ✓ Create a supportive work environment
- ✓ Increase job satisfaction
- ✓ Increase motivation
- ✓ Reduce burnout and turnover

## **What are some opportunities to acknowledge individual staff?**

- ✦ Milestones - years of service
- ✦ Accomplishments - new degree or certification
- ✦ Leadership of a team, effort, flexibility, etc.
- ✦ Expertise in instructional skills
- ✦ Intentional focus on a school wide effort
- ✦ Community outreach
- ✦ Personal birthdays, life events, etc.

## **How might we recognize staff members?**

- Personal handwritten notes
- Small gift cards
- Covering a class period
- Shout out in the School News or website
- Leadership opportunities
- Professional Learning opportunities
- Walking around and handing out candy "hugs" just to say good morning, or thank you for being at your door or in the hallway monitoring students, etc.

## **What are some opportunities for whole staff celebrations?**

Staff celebrations may be planned to celebrate collective goals, special events or simply to build a sense of community and teamwork. Consider some of these opportunities to celebrate:

- ✓ Opening the school year, winter break, spring break
- ✓ 95% staff attendance for the month
- ✓ 80% evidence of use for an agreed upon evidence based practice, such as opportunities to respond
- ✓ Just because!

## **Additional Tips:**

- ✎ Create an annual *Staff Acknowledgement Plan*
- ✎ **Consider staff preferences**, for example, some individuals much prefer private acknowledgement
- ✎ Provide opportunities for fellow staff members, students, and even families to recognize staff
- ✎ **Recognize effort** and improvement in addition to excellence
- ✎ **Vary frequency** of acknowledgement – immediate, daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly
- ✎ Consider **opportunities for intermittent recognition** to maintain enthusiasm, such as randomly drawing the name of a staff member who meets a school goal that day (e.g. attendance)

## **Key Take-Aways:**

*A positive school culture recognizes staff members' individual and collective accomplishments!*

- ✓ Set staff goals around key priorities
- ✓ Create a plan for providing a variety of authentic ways to recognize staff throughout the year
- ✓ Plan "just because" opportunities to celebrate as a staff

**For additional resources** check out our blog @ <https://ttac.odu.edu/focus-areas/behavior/>

**Related Article:** Supporting Staff through Acknowledgment

For our entire **Acknowledgement and Celebration Systems Series**, [click here](#)

**References list** → [linked here](#)