

Tips for Celebrating a Successful School Year

All year, principals, vice-principals and teachers work hard to create a positive learning environment for students. With so many things going on in a school on a regular basis, it can often be difficult to find time to celebrate the successes. Here are some ways to celebrate the end of the school year and your school's achievements:

Elementary Schools:

- Encourage students to prepare a "safety booklet" with tips and safety suggestions for around the home, recreation area and outdoors during the summer. Have them share their tips with their classmates or with the whole school during an assembly.
- Invite a firefighter, police officer, ambulance worker or nurse to talk to the students about safety during the summer months. Encourage parents to attend.
- During the last weeks, allow children to decorate sidewalks and pathways with sidewalk chalk. It will only last until the next rainfall and students will love leaving their mark at school.
- Collect 25 cents from each student, buy Popsicles or Freezies, and have a celebration recess. Or consider asking your school council to donate funds for this.

All:

- Make a time capsule and include memorabilia from the year (both school related and from the world) and a scroll with all the students' signatures. Bury it in the schoolyard or in a safe-place in the school. Include a date when students can come back and open it.
- Have a school-wide, or grade level art fair that involves all students. Students create an art piece and hang it around the school. Encourage parents to drop in and view the work.
- Create a "Thank you" poster and hang it out front to thank your community, neighbours and local merchants for the role they play in your school.
- In groups, let the students make gifts or cards to thank all the people who helped make the school year successful – crossing guards, bus drivers, custodians, secretaries, hall monitors, cafeteria workers, parent volunteers.
- Create a summary of all the achievements from the year – both student and staff – and display it outside the office. Provide extra pages for students to fill in their suggestions.
- Develop a letter-to-the-editor or op-ed piece highlighting the achievements of your students and staff and send it to your local newspaper. Consider having a student from the student council or yearbook committee write this on the school's behalf.
- For your year-end assembly, encourage each class or grade level to make a presentation in any way they want (song, poem, skit, dance) that highlights their favourite activities from the year.
- Arrange for an end-of-the-year school picnic. Invite parents to bring a picnic basket and blanket and join the students on the grass outside.
- Hold a book fair or book swap to encourage summer reading.

- Create a summary booklet of the most important themes and concepts that students learned during the year. Include activities that can be done during the summer to help them practice the skills they learned this year.
- Donate unclaimed clothing left at the school to a shelter or other family support agency.

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