

Leadership Opportunities for Recognition

Ensure that each celebration ritual follows the four critical components in the following list to ensure that leadership teams avoid developing celebratory rituals that are vague in the purpose, appear completely arbitrary, or could only be achieved by a few individuals.

1. Explicitly state the purpose of celebration.
2. Make celebration everyone's responsibility.
3. Establish a clear link between the recognition and the behavior or commitment you are attempting to encourage and reinforce.
4. Create opportunities for many winners. (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010, p. 9)

Peer-to-Peer Opportunities for Recognition

The following recognition ideas can be easily implemented at the end of every quarter or semester.

You Totally Rock

Purpose: Identify the people who are living the priorities.

Process: Bring two to three decorated rocks to every meeting to give out as awards to teachers who "totally rock." The leader should remind staff members of the purpose of the award and allow time for staff members to be the first one to recognize a colleague and give them a "You Totally Rock" award.

Tip: Note the reason for the rock as well as the date it was awarded. For example, a leadership team can hand out a rock with the following inscription: *Collaboration 3/9/14*. A gift certificate can be added to the award as an additional token of appreciation.

You Bowl Me Over

Purpose: Celebrate a creative idea for a tough or challenging issue (for example, a new intervention, teaching strategy, or parent engagement).

Process: At the beginning or end of a faculty meeting, a member from the leadership team should explain the purpose of the award as well as the importance of recognizing individuals who are working hard to live the school's vision or goals. The leadership team member then presents a bowling pin to a deserving teacher or staff member and details the reason for special recognition. The person who receives the award is in charge of recognizing another staff member at a subsequent meeting and keeps the award until the next ceremony. The bowling pin itself and the name of the award serve purely to recognize individuals' hard work and dedication to the school's effort. The bowling pin is also relatively inexpensive and serves as a great conversation starter since it is a unique award. Just like a football helmet sticker, the actual award is less important than the process of public recognition.

Tip: Take a picture and post it in a prominent location.

The Rose Ceremony

Purpose: Recognize individuals within a PLC who are making a difference.

Process: A member of the administration brings six to eight roses to every monthly meeting. The principal then reminds staff members of the purpose of the award, and models the process by being the first one to recognize a staff member and give him or her a single rose. Subsequent staff members are then encouraged to step to the front of the room and recognize another staff member. It does not take the staff very long to have staff members jump at the opportunity to recognize others.

Tip: Ensure that one or two members are ready to present a rose.

ABCD (Above and Beyond the Call of Duty) Award

Purpose: Showcase outstanding passion and commitment to the PLC process.

Process: The principal should explain the importance of recognizing individuals committed to the school's vision as well as the recognition process and announce that every staff member is encouraged to complete a brief nomination form prior to every staff meeting. The leadership team will pick one or two of the most compelling nominations. At the end of a staff meeting, the principal should then ask the person who nominated the recipient or team to read the nomination form out loud. The form should only contain a few questions in order to encourage many staff members to participate. A leadership team may simply want to use the following two fill-in-the-blank statements to help keep the form short and easy to complete.

1. (Staff member's name) embodied our efforts to continuously enhance our school culture by . . .
2. (Staff member's name)'s actions left an indelible impression because . . .

Tip: Stay committed to recognizing individuals or teams on a regular basis.

Leadership Opportunities for Recognition

Leadership awards are another way to recognize staff members in a more formal manner than the peer-to-peer opportunities. The following examples may take a bit more coordination and effort, but, once again, it is critical to continuously recognize the individuals doing the hard work every day.

Milestone Bricks and Tiles

Purpose: Recognize teams who have significantly contributed to the school's priorities.

Process: A member from the leadership team is responsible for identifying a team who has significantly contributed to the school's SMART goal (for example, passing rate above 92 percent, average reading level above the school's goal, and so on). A commemorative brick or tile is then placed in a prominent location, highlighting the team's contribution toward the school's ultimate goal.

The key: Work with staff members to develop the recognition criteria and communicate the school's goals frequently.

Wall of Fame

Purpose: Celebrate the extraordinary achievements of a specific team.

Process: Staff members as well as community members nominate outstanding individuals, utilizing nominations forms that are quick and simple to complete. A small committee of staff members review the applications, come to consensus on the award winners, and send congratulatory letters to both winners and nominees. The team's achievement is memorialized in the form of a picture in the district office along with other past winners.

The key: Develop a variety of categories (for example, grade level, department, and so on).

Recognition Letter

Purpose: Acknowledge the work of team members who are following the PLC parameters.

Process: Team leaders and administrators identify teams and forward the selection to the superintendent. The superintendent individualizes each letter to the individual staff member or team and makes sure the board of education has a copy, and places a copy of the letter in the individual's personnel file. A copy of the letter can also be framed by the district office and given to the teacher as yet another way to make this staff member feel valued.

Tip: Ensure unanimity of the PLC parameters and publish the guidelines widely.

Spotlight Award

Purpose: Recognize teams who have achieved extraordinary student results.

Process: Administrators and Board members nominate staff members or teams for their extraordinary contributions and efforts. The district team then holds a vote to select the winners and presents a small token of their appreciation at the following board meeting or public event.

Tip: Ensure that this award is one of many that spotlight the achievements of both faculty members and teams.