



Acknowledging Expected Behavior Resource Pack

Purpose of the Acknowledging Expected Behavior Resource Pack

As one of the essential components of RTI²-A + RTI²-B, Instruction and Intervention includes establishing an environment for learning that ensures all learners can access and benefit from high-quality educational programming. The *Acknowledging Expected Behavior Resource Pack* includes materials for educators to acknowledge their students for demonstrating expected behaviors. This resource pack uses a continuum of strategies to promote student independence, academic engagement, and behaviors that align with schoolwide expectations.

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Acknowledgement System Tip Sheet

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Acknowledgement System Tip Sheet

What is an acknowledgement system?

An acknowledgement system is an organized and consistent way to recognize students who meet your school's behavioral expectations. The purpose of an acknowledgement system is to prompt adults to respond positively when a student engages in the behavioral expectations.

Reinforcing students' appropriate behavior increases the likelihood that it will happen again, and it allows staff to connect with more students. Highlighting what students are doing well helps build relationships as adults and students positively interact. Handing out tickets to students who display the expected behavior is one example of an acknowledgement system, but there are multiple options for acknowledging behavior.



Why should we use an acknowledgement system?

Behavior can be taught. Acknowledging the behaviors you want to see repeated teaches students to engage in that behavior. Acknowledgement systems are a structured way to use behavior-specific praise to help students understand exactly what they did that was appropriate. When using behavior-specific praise, it is important to name the specific behavior that was observed along with the expectation that was displayed so students know exactly what they did well. Using praise to acknowledge appropriate behavior can lead to more frequent appropriate behavior in classrooms (Spilt, Leflot, Onghena, & Coplin, 2016; Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008).

How can we use an acknowledgement system?

Acknowledgement systems serve as a prompt to praise students. Schools should implement an acknowledgement system that meets the needs of their students and staff. Student populations who need more frequent and individualized reinforcement benefit from individual systems such as tickets or points. Other student populations may need to focus on teamwork and building a sense of unity, so class-wide or grade level systems that emphasize students working together to achieve a goal could be more effective. Acknowledgement systems should be used across all settings in the school. All staff should be aware of the acknowledgement system and how they can use it with students. As an example, Bramble Elementary created "Bramble Bucks" for all teachers, administrators, cafeteria workers, and janitorial staff to distribute to students when they engage in expected behaviors. Motivating incentives are a critical part of the acknowledgement system. The RTI²-B team can gather input from students on potential school-wide or classroom rewards through a brief survey or classroom discussions.

Types of Acknowledgement Systems and Strategies

Tickets	Many schools develop a school-wide acknowledgement system using tickets (as well as a lottery or school-wide store). School staff (e.g., administrators, teachers, custodians, food services, bus drivers, paraprofessionals) give tickets to students who engage in expected behaviors. Students can turn in those tickets to receive rewards.
Points	Similar to tickets, a point system can be used to reward students who engage in expected behaviors. Once students earn a predetermined amount of points, they can redeem them for special items or activities.

Types of Rewards

Classroom Incentives	Students can earn rewards as a group. The teacher can choose a behavior as a focus for the entire class. The students then work together toward that goal. When they meet their goal, they can celebrate together (e.g., popcorn party). Students can also earn group rewards with their classmates for engaging in expected behavior in specific settings (e.g., earning the silver spoon for their table in the cafeteria).
Classroom Store	Students can redeem tickets or points within the classroom. The teacher can have a selection of small tangible items (e.g., stickers or erasers) or privileges (e.g., 10 minutes of quiet reading or lunch with a preferred staff member).
School Store	Students can redeem their tickets or points at the school store to purchase rewards. Schools should start the “prices” of items low, so students become familiar with the system. Once students learn the value of the tickets, school staff can increase the “prices” so that students are motivated to work for a higher number of tickets. It is important to have a variety of exciting, age-appropriate items in the school store as well as non-tangible certificates that represent something desirable. Students can redeem certificates for something special (e.g., sit in a teacher’s chair for a day).
Raffle	Students can enter their tickets into a drawing for the chance to win a desired item (e.g., donated gift card, a desired parking spot, ticket to a school event).
Classroom Party	Teachers can track the amount of tickets or points earned by students in their class. When they reach a predetermined number, they can have a classroom party.
Grade-level Celebration	Grade levels of students can be rewarded for appropriate behavior by tracking ticket or point goals. Appropriate behavior can be rewarded by having a celebration such as a dance party, lunch outside, or a kickball game.
Privileges	Privileges can be used as incentives across any setting of the school. Students can earn a privilege such as lunch with a favorite teacher, being a helper in the classroom (e.g., line leader, bringing materials to the office, board eraser), or getting recognized as student of the week.

What is a staff acknowledgement system?

In addition to reinforcing student behavior, schools can create a staff acknowledgement system. This can be used to (a) recognize staff members who are performing their jobs well, (b) boost morale, and (c) acknowledge staff for following the school's RTI²-B plan. For example, school staff can earn tickets for teaching expectations and acknowledging students. They can be given tickets by administrators, the RTI²-B team members, or other staff. For schools who have a raffle for students, the teacher's name on the winning student ticket can also earn a reward. Raffleing student tickets and acknowledging the teacher who gave that student the ticket is a way to reward staff for handing out tickets.

For schools who track the number of points or tickets earned by students, the teacher or grade level of teachers who give out the most points or tickets can earn a reward. Staff members deserve recognition, so RTI²-B teams should develop a system that would be meaningful to everyone in their building. As a way to ensure the system has value, the RTI²-B team can gather input from staff on potential rewards through a brief survey or votes during a staff meeting.



Example staff acknowledgement incentives:

- Extra planning period
- Relief of daily duties (e.g., cafeteria duties, bus duty)
- A pass to wear jeans to work
- Recognition in morning announcements, on the school website, or on bulletin boards
- Raffle or drawings
- Cart that travels to teachers' classrooms to distribute treats
- Special parking spot
- Teachers' lounge named after honored teacher for a month
- Teacher of the Month and Staff Member of the Month
- Donated gift cards
- "Shout-Out Board" with compliments displayed for all to see
- Family tailgate for all staff at a high school football game

For Further Reading

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Using an Acknowledgement System to Shape Student Behavior

Acknowledgment systems are designed to provide immediate and positive feedback to students when they engage in behaviors that are consistent with schoolwide expectations. The goal of offering such feedback is to strengthen expected or desired behavior over time. Research has shown that acknowledging students' appropriate behavior can serve as a teaching tool and positively impact future behavior (George, 2021). Highlighting what students are doing well not only strengthens those behaviors but counteracts negative peer influences and helps build relationships among teachers, students, and families (Simonsen & Myers, 2015). For these reasons, a school's Tier I team should determine how to acknowledge students for appropriate behavior. Any system that the school chooses should be linked to behavioral expectations that are explicitly taught with an understanding of how students are acknowledged for meeting those expectations (Simonsen & Myers, 2015).

Establish and Support Behavioral Expectations

One important function of an acknowledgment system is to prompt school staff to consistently recognize student behaviors that align with schoolwide expectations. But for these behaviors to occur, they must first be taught. Here are five elements of effectively teaching behavioral expectations (Reinke, 2022):

1. Define behavioral expectations to be developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive, positively stated, specific, and observable.
2. Make behavioral expectations relevant and important to students by explaining the purpose behind each expectation.
3. Explicitly teach and review behavioral expectations.
4. Practice the behavioral expectations.
5. Regularly acknowledge students for meeting behavioral expectations.

Reinforcers

Reinforcers are one way to acknowledge students for engaging in appropriate behavior and should always be paired with behavior-specific praise. Behavior-specific praise is any verbal feedback that expresses approval and names the behavior (George, 2021). For example, saying, "Felicia, thanks for being safe and putting on goggles before beginning your experiment" points out what the student is doing well and how it relates to the expectation. Research suggests that students should receive at least four positive responses for each corrective response (Sugai & Horner 2002).

In a schoolwide acknowledgment system, students are offered reinforcers such as tokens, tickets, or points that are later traded in for desired rewards. This exchange encourages students to engage in appropriate behavior. Students can exchange the points or tokens they earn for tangible or non-tangible rewards. Tangible or material rewards offer access to something that students can touch or consume. Examples of tangible rewards include candy, stickers, toys, and other items offered in a typical school store. Non-tangible rewards include social opportunities, activities, or special privileges that do not require purchasing or exchanging material items. Social opportunities offer access to time with teachers or peers such as lunch with the teacher or the ability to sit near a friend. Earning time for an activity could include listening to music during independent work time, using the computer, or adding 15 minutes of recess time. Special privileges might include homework passes, a day out of uniform, or access to a special parking space.

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Responses to Common Objections to the Use of Reinforcement

Rewarding children for good behavior is “bribery.”

Most definitions of bribery include the idea of using money or other considerations to influence the judgment or conduct of a person in a position of trust or authority. Bribes are intended to encourage an immoral, illegal, or corrupt activity (e.g., bribing a judge). The object of incentive programs for children, however, is to promote positive, productive, appropriate behavior. Further, unlike bribes, which are typically provided *before* the desired behavior occurs, tangible reinforcers are always provided *after* the behavior is completed (e.g., “Eat your carrots, then you get your dessert”).

While some still may consider it bribery to give a child a reward for completing schoolwork or chores, almost no one views their own paycheck as a bribe. Likewise, adults who are opposed to giving candy or trinkets as incentives for superior effort or achievement most likely regard merit increases in their own salaries as legitimate, appropriate, and deserved.

Children shouldn’t have to be rewarded for things that are requirements of everyday life.

According to this view, “responsibility” and “duty” should be sufficient motivators of child behavior. Thus, children should not be rewarded for cleaning their rooms, reading, or making their beds because these are normal, responsible things to do. However, children are not born with an understanding of these concepts. For many children, appeals to “responsibility” are insufficient to promote behavior change. If the child in question had already learned to do his or her “duty,” there would be no reason for additional interventions. For children who are too young to understand or appreciate the idea of “responsibility” or who have not responded to it, rewards may serve as a temporary, and more easily understood, support for learning.

Once again, consider paychecks. People aren’t paid only when they do something extraordinary or creative. We earn paychecks for performing the routine responsibilities of the job. In fact, when special achievement does occur, we often earn a “bonus” or some other special recognition.

The author of a book on a very successful employee motivation program based on inexpensive tangible rewards put it this way:

Saying “Thank you” and “You’re welcome” is bedrock communication. In my experience, if someone says, “Thank you” often enough, it’s pretty hard not to say, “You’re welcome.” If the objective were to say thank you as often as possible, it seemed we should design a way of saying “Thank you” to employees who did, day-in, day-out what they were supposed to do: “Thank you for coming to work.” “Thank you for not being late.” (Boyle, 1995).

In the classroom, this might be translated to: “Thank you for having your materials ready.” “Thank you for being in your seats.” “Thank you for completing your work on time.” At home, this might mean: “Thank you for putting the milk away.” “Thank you for being ready to go on time.” “Thank you for doing, day-in and day-out, the things you are supposed to do.” If reliable, productive, routine behavior is what we want, reliable, productive, routine behavior should be rewarded, not ignored.

Children should engage in activities because of intrinsic—not extrinsic—rewards.

This objection assumes that children will (or at least should) engage in tasks because of the personal satisfaction that comes from a job well done. For many children, however, working on or completing some tasks is simply not satisfying. For individuals who find some activities only minimally enjoyable, or even unpleasant, rewards can help build motivation. Reinforcers can be used to encourage the child to engage in

activities that previously had been avoided. In this way, the child gets the opportunity to experience firsthand the satisfaction of working at or completing the task. Skills that are developed with support from reinforcers may later be maintained by social approval or personal satisfaction. The alternative is to adopt a “wait and hope” approach with the expectation that the child will somehow develop intrinsic motivation on their own. But if the child never has the opportunity to “sample” rewarding outcomes, there is little chance that further motivation will develop.

Children who are given rewards will expect to be rewarded for everything.

Perhaps so. However, as children become more successful, they begin to respond more to natural reinforcers in the environment. This is a big part of the reason that delivery of tangible reinforcers is always accompanied by social reinforcement (e.g., praise, high fives, positive notes sent home) and why the use of natural reinforcers or eventual transfer of control to natural reinforcers is a goal of most incentive programs.

Rewarding children for being good will teach them to be bad.

There is no evidence to suggest that this is true. However, if reinforcers are repeatedly given after inappropriate behavior has occurred (e.g., buying the toy in the grocery aisle when the child starts to tantrum), the child may well learn that “bad” behavior leads to rewards and be more likely to engage in inappropriate actions. The problem here may also be that the person who controls the reinforcers is “rewarded” by avoiding or escaping the child’s challenging behavior in the moment (tantrum stops). This might make the adult more likely to use a similar tactic in the future, and the cycle of rewarding inappropriate behavior continues.

Good behavior will go away as soon as the rewards are withdrawn.

Quite possibly. How many of us would continue to show up for work every day if we were no longer paid to do so? Any behavior that is unsupported by some form of reinforcement will eventually stop happening. Once again, the goal is to transfer control from the tangible reinforcers to naturally occurring reinforcers. If a child successfully learns adaptive and appropriate skills, he or she is much more likely to gain access to social and material rewards that are already present in the environment.

Many children struggle behaviorally due to things that are happening at home. As a teacher, I can’t control what happens at home.

There are two important points here. First, nearly all children are capable of distinguishing what rules and expectations are in effect in different environments. Even though it may not be possible to exert influence in the home environment, the teacher has enormous control over his or her own environment and has the opportunity to teach both academic and social skills. Second, if the home situation *is* difficult, the teacher’s role becomes even more important as the child may have few opportunities to learn appropriate and adaptive skills outside the classroom.

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Designing an Acknowledgement System – Example Template

Description: This table shows a template for designing acknowledgement systems, with brief descriptions of what information belongs in each cell.

Type of Acknowledgement	Description	When (frequency)	Where (location)	Who (distributors)
Individual Tickets or Points	<p>What: Every student earns a ticket or point based on their own behavior</p> <p>How: Tickets or points can be redeemed for individual rewards from a raffle or school store or collected with other students' tickets (class, grade level, or schoolwide) to earn a group celebration.</p>	If students are earning tickets or points, then they should be earning them daily.	Tickets or points should be given out in all locations of the school.	All faculty and staff are responsible for giving students tickets or points.
Class wide	<p>What: Acknowledges appropriate behavior of the whole class.</p> <p>How: The class sets a goal and works together on showing behavioral expectations to earn the reward.</p>	Classes should earn their reward weekly, monthly, or quarterly. The timing depends on the type of acknowledgement.	Location depends on the type of acknowledgement (e.g., classroom or cafeteria).	Person responsible depends on type of acknowledgement (e.g., classroom teacher, cafeteria monitor).
Grade Level	<p>What: Acknowledges appropriate behavior of the whole grade.</p> <p>How: All students in the grade work towards a common goal to earn a reward.</p>	Grade levels should earn their reward weekly, monthly, or quarterly. The timing depends on the type of acknowledgement.	Location depends on the type of acknowledgement (e.g., classroom or cafeteria).	Person responsible depends on type of acknowledgement (e.g., classroom teacher, cafeteria monitor).
Schoolwide	<p>What: Acknowledges appropriate behavior and effort of the whole school (school parties, celebrations, pep rallies).</p> <p>How: Students earn an event based on a collective number of combined tickets. All students attend the event. Another option is for all students to attend the event and students can redeem tickets/points for additional experiences at the event.</p>	Schoolwide acknowledgements should occur monthly, quarterly, or each semester.	Location depends on the type of acknowledgement (e.g., gym, hallway).	Person responsible depends on type of acknowledgement (e.g., Administrators, School leadership team).

Designing an Acknowledgment System – Rolling Hills School Example

Description: This is an example from Rolling Hills School. The school mascot is a rocket, and their tickets are called Blast Bucks.

Name and Type of Acknowledgement	Reason for Selection	Description	When (frequency)	Where (location)	Who (distributors)
Individual: Blast Bucks	The team felt students needed to be recognized individually so they know when they do something well.	<p>What: Blast Bucks are tickets that will be given out to students who exhibit the Rolling Hills Rockets Behaviors (safe, respectful, and responsible).</p> <p>How: The student's name and teacher should be written on the Blast Buck. Every Friday the classroom teacher should document how many Blast Bucks each student has received.</p>	Daily	All locations	All faculty and staff
Class wide: The Astronaut Helmet	The team felt that the cafeteria was an area to target. Classes can work together to improve behavior and more students can be reached at once.	<p>What: The astronaut helmet will be given out to the table of students who exhibit the most respectful, responsible, and safe behaviors for a week.</p> <p>How: The astronaut helmet will remain on that class's table for the week. Cafeteria monitors will determine the winning class each Monday and the astronaut helmet will remain on their table the rest of the week.</p>	Weekly	Cafeteria	Cafeteria monitors will name the winner of the astronaut helmet every Monday.
Grade Level: The Rocket	The team wanted to encourage teamwork within, and competition between, each grade level. They wanted students' individual tickets to also go toward grade-level rewards, to help students work toward a collective goal.	<p>What: A large rocket will be posted on the main wall of the building for each grade level. As students earn Blast Bucks, they will then staple them on their grade's rocket. When the rocket is full, the whole grade earns a dance party.</p> <p>How: Blast Bucks can be stapled on the wall every Friday after students and teachers document how many Blast Bucks were earned that week. Teachers can determine if they want their students to staple them on the rocket or if they want to do it after school.</p>	Add Blast Bucks weekly	Front hallway (by main office)	<p>Classroom teachers add Blast Bucks to the Rocket.</p> <p>School Leadership Team determines when the rocket is full.</p>

Designing an Acknowledgment System – Rolling Hills School Example (continued)

Name and Type of Acknowledgement	Reason for Selection	Description	When (frequency)	Where (location)	Who (distributors)
Schoolwide: Blast Bash	The team wanted to improve morale so all students can join the excitement. They wanted students' individual tickets to be used for extra items at a schoolwide event.	<p>What: Each quarter the school will have a Blast Bash.</p> <p>How: All students will be able to participate in the event, but they will need to use the number of Blast Bucks earned to purchase games to play and snacks to eat at the event. Each teacher has a spreadsheet of how many Blast Bucks their students earned.</p>	Quarterly	Gym or Field	School Leadership Team plans events and food available at the celebration.

Designing an Acknowledgement System – Sandy Creek School

Example

Purpose: This is an example from Sandy Creek School. The school mascot is a shark, and their tickets are called Shark Teeth.

Daily Recognition/Incentives

- Verbal affirmations from staff or administrators
- Positive phone calls home or social media posts from staff or administrators
- Use of the student's name, with eye contact, while giving behavior-specific praise
- Individualized greetings
- Currency of Shark Teeth (staff should give out at least 1 per class period/5 per day)
- Compliment Cards

Weekly Recognition/Incentive Drawings

- Minimum of 1 Shark Tooth to enter and 5 names are pulled each week
- Drawing ideas:
 - Pass to the front of the lunch line
 - Coupon for free cookie
 - Assistant scorekeeper at the week's sporting events
 - Discount coupon for concession stand item at school events
 - Recognition on announcements

Monthly Recognition/Incentive Drawings

- Minimum of 10 Shark Teeth to enter and 5 names are pulled each month
- Drawing ideas:
 - Breakfast with staff member or administrator
 - Lunch with staff member or administrator
 - One-on-one tutoring session with volunteer teacher
 - Free school or club t-shirt
 - VIP parking for the next month
 - Credit to cafeteria account
 - Name and picture on the hallway TV monitors and social media
 - Student Ambassador for visitors and new students
 - Gift card from local business
 - "Teacher for a Day" for volunteer teacher

Quarterly Recognition/Incentive Drawings

- Minimum of 15 Shark Teeth to enter and 5 names pulled each quarter
- Drawing ideas:
 - Golf cart ride with escort in between classes for a week
 - Personal training/weight-lifting session with volunteer P.E. teacher
 - Golf cart ride to and from parking lot for a week
 - Valet parking for one day
 - Car wash by staff
 - Free school dance ticket
 - Mascot for one sporting event
 - Lunch for student with three friends in the teacher dining room
 - Gift card from local business
 - VIP seating at sporting event/assembly/play/concert

Semester Recognition/Incentive Drawings

- Minimum of 25 Shark Teeth to enter and 5 names pulled each semester
- Drawing ideas:
 - Free or reduce-price parking pass
 - “Principal for a Day”
 - Donut/Pizza party for class of your choice
 - Lunch with local celebrity/business owner
 - One-on-one basketball game with volunteer staff member or administrator
 - Name on marquee in front of school with picture on social media
 - Tuxedo or dress discount
 - Florist discount for corsage and boutonnieres

Annual Recognitions/Incentive Drawings

- Minimum of 50 Shark Teeth to enter and 5 names pulled each year
- Drawing ideas:
 - Free Prom tickets
 - Free tux rental
 - Free Prom corsage or boutonniere
 - Free yearbook
 - AP test fees paid
 - SAT/ACT test fees paid

Acknowledgements

This resource is adapted from:
Nicolet High School PBIS

Student Incentives and Rewards (Across Grade Levels)

Description: This is a list of example student incentives and rewards that can be used for all ages. This list is organized by specific categories.

Special Privileges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accompany another student to a fun activity Be a class manager Be the scout (goes ahead of class to tell Related Arts teacher they are on the way) Borrow a paperback book from the teacher's personal library to take home to read Borrow the principal's chair for the day Complete only half of an assignment Dance to favorite music in the classroom Design a class/school bulletin board Draw on a small whiteboard at desk Early release or late start pass Extended assignment due date for one day or homework pass Feed, sit next to, or have the class pet on desk for day First one in line for breakfast/snack/lunch/recess/bus/dismissal Free choice time at the end of the day Free pass or front row seat to a school event (dance, theater performance, or sports game) Get a special cushion on chair Get to dance in class (older students teach younger students how to dance) Keep a stuffed animal at desk Listen to music while working Listen with a headset to an audio book Provide a coupon for free test answer (like phone a friend on Who Wants to be a Millionaire) Read in a special place Receive a job recommendation from a staff member Sit at the teacher's desk for the day or a set amount of time Sit in the rocking chair during story time Spend time (with appropriate supervision) on the internet on pre-approved sites Take a class animal home for school vacation time Take off shoes in class or wear slippers for the day Tardy removal Use the computer for typing or voice-recording instead of writing assignments Waive club dues for a semester Walk with a peer in the hall instead of with an adult Watch a video instead of attending recess Write with a new or special utensil for the day (marker, special pen or pencil) Use colored chalk
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<p>Special Privileges: Gaining Attention</p>	<p>Take a 5-minute chat break at the end of the class Dictate a story that someone types and prints for you to then illustrate Draw pictures on the chalkboard while the teacher reads to the class (illustrating story read) Free tutoring time from the teacher (spelling secrets, math secrets, writing secrets) Help younger students in another class Invite an adult “reading buddy” to classroom to read with or to read to the class Play assistant at the board for the teacher (write what the teacher tells student to write) Read a book to the class or to a younger class Run the smart board for the teacher Select a friend as a “study buddy” on an in-class work assignment Select an older student to come to your class and read to you Show the class a picture or video of something you have done Show the class a special talent Sit near the teacher all day Walk with a teacher during lunch Write a story for a younger grade and read it to the class or put the story in the library</p>
<p>Helper</p>	<p>Help in the office for a week (sorting mail, stuffing envelopes, etc.) Help the custodian Help with morning announcements Be a teacher's helper for the day Lead the pledge Make deliveries to the office Pass out materials for the teacher Show a new student around the school Work as the principal’s apprentice for 20 minutes Work in the lunchroom</p>
<p>Choices</p>	<p>Choose a book for the teacher to read aloud to the class Choose any class job for the week Choose music for the class to hear Choose the game during physical education Choose from a menu of homework assignments for the class Choose the order of assignments for the day Choose to share a story or joke with the entire class Choose which homework problem the teacher will model for the class Pick seat for the day (in class, cafeteria, or bus)</p>
<p>First Pick</p>	<p>First pick for playtime for a day First pick of station during center time First pick of work materials (scissors, markers, crayons, etc.)</p>

<p>Special Activities or Games</p>	<p>Ask teacher to share a special skill (e.g., sings to class) Duct tape the principal to the wall during lunch or an assembly Lead a class game or activity Pick a game at recess that everyone plays including the teacher Play a computer game Play a favorite game or puzzle Play a game with a friend or preferred adult Play dress up at lunchtime and sit at special table (suits, dresses, hats, etc.) Play Wii Fit with a friend Select a fun activity from the “Activity Shelf” (stocked with play materials, board games, puzzles, and craft materials) Select a fun class activity from a list of choices (Heads-Up 7-Up) Take home a class game for a night Teach the class a favorite game</p>
<p>Positive Public Recognition</p>	<p>Add name to scrolling marquee with a specific message such as, “Emily Jones says smile and eat your veggies.” Become featured on a photo recognition board Be interviewed for the school newspaper Be recognized during morning announcements Earn the “Couch Potato” prize for the next athletic event. This allows students to sit on a couch that is placed on the sideline at center court with free popcorn and drink. Students are able to bring a friend. Guest DJ for one song at the school dance Have sidewalk art displayed at school entrance as “Monet for the Day” Post drawings or artwork in a public place Post sign of appreciation in student’s front yard such as “This student has excellent behavior” Post writings in a public place Receive a round of applause from the entire class at the end of the day Receive verbal praise (privately or in front of the class) Submit picture for the school paper, public place in the school, or social media Wear a crown or cape Wear badge of acknowledgement such as “Special Student of the Day” Write name and accomplishment on a poster or banner to display in the school</p>
<p>Positive Private Recognition</p>	<p>Earn note of recognition from the teacher or principal Earn trophy, plaque, ribbon, or certificate Email parent to share accomplishments Engage in positive visit with the principal Listen as teacher makes a positive phone call home Receive verbal praise (privately or in front of the class)</p>

<p>Extras</p>	<p>Earn extra art/music/gym time Earn extra computer time Earn extra credit Earn extra hallway pass Earn extra music and reading time in class Earn extra recess Earn extra story time for the class Earn extra time at preferred station/center</p>
<p>Token System and Prizes</p>	<p>Complete raffle ticket to be entered for a prize Create and order a free pack 250 business cards Earn a trip to the treasure box filled with non-food items such as stickers, key chains, temporary tattoos, yo-yos, bubbles, spider rings, charms, and pencil toppers Earn points for good behavior to “buy” unique rewards from the school store (e.g., autographed items with special meaning or lunch with the teacher) Enter a drawing for donated prizes among students who meet certain grade standards Receive free concession pass Help in the school store Receive free yearbook Receive gift certificate to the school store or book fair Receive seeds and a pot to grow your own plant Use toy money for privileges or to “purchase” items from the school store</p>
<p>Food</p>	<p>Earn a candy bag Earn a free school lunch Eat lunch with a friend in a reserved section of the lunchroom Eat lunch with a friend in the classroom (with the teacher) Eat lunch with a teacher or principal Eat lunch with an invited adult (grandparent, aunt, uncle) Enjoy longer lunch period</p>
<p>Higher Cost/ Donated Items</p>	<p>Earn a “Mystery pack” (gift-wrapped items such as a notepad, folder, puzzle, sports cards, etc.) Receive college gear or school gear (t-shirt, blanket, water bottle, etc.) Receive coupons for items such as a movie theater tickets, concessions, or pizza delivery Receive fitness-related item such as a frisbee, hula hoop, jump rope, paddleball, or sidewalk chalk Receive pass to a community activity such as bowling, mini-golf, fair/carnival, class, sporting event, museum, zoo, or aquarium Receive special art supplies, coloring books, glitter, bookmarks, rulers, stencils, stamps, pens, pencils, erasers, and other school supplies Select a gift card</p>

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Florida Positive Behavior Support Project. *Motivating Your Staff: How to Get Staff Excited about PBS, Again!* (PowerPoint slides). Retrieved from <http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu>

Riffel, L. A. (2011). *Free or Inexpensive Rewards for Students and Staff*. Retrieved from <http://behaviordoctor.org>

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Staff Acknowledgement and Morale Boosters

Purpose: This is a list of examples of ways to acknowledge school staff and ways to boost morale among the staff. Options are organized by cost.

Methods to acknowledge school staff:

- Teachers and staff members nominate other teachers and staff members.
- Students nominate teachers and staff members.
- School Leadership Team or a subcommittee nominates teachers and staff members.

Acknowledgments

Free Options

- Allow the Administrator to take over morning or afternoon duty.
- Have the Administrator teach the class.
- Ask the office supply store to consider donating their clearance items to the school and have a “store” for all of the staff members to come and “purchase” office supplies with school tokens they have received.
- Ask families to send in praise via email. At the end of the day, do a David Letterman’s Mail Bag and read the kudos that came in about staff members. Give kudos to the family who shared by sending a handwritten note.
- Create a menu of disliked duties (bus duty, lunch duty, etc.), and allow staff to “purchase” the opportunity to skip that duty using school tokens they have earned. For example, if Mrs. Green doesn’t like bus duty, she can use her school tokens to “purchase” the chance to skip it. Have the School Leadership Team cover these duties.
- Highlight something noteworthy that an adult in the building did and share why it was meaningful during morning announcements.
- Have members of the School Leadership Team spend ten minutes looking for someone doing something that furthers the goals of the framework to support behavior each day. Give out special “Gotchas” that can be redeemed to leave school 10 minutes early on a day of choice.
- Leave flowers on the desk from someone’s garden (with permission).
- Give out GOBL (Get Out of Bed Late) Passes which allow staff members to come in 30 minutes later in the morning on a Monday while the principal covers their duties.
- Give out GOOSE (Get Out of School Early) Passes which allow staff members to leave at the end of the day without staying for the 30 minutes after school while Principal covers their duties.
- Invite a staff member to the next school board meeting and compliment their achievement to the school board.
- Schedule Jeans Day(s).
- Provide a limo ride to school and home for the Staff of the Day. Local businesses sometimes provide this service for free if they are not using the cars that day.
- Make a deal with the staff by saying, “If we have 100% attendance for TCAP Testing, then the team will wash everyone’s cars.”
- Name the conference room after an employee each week. Base the choice on someone who has received a lot of school tokens that week Make a sign for the conference room with the person’s name on it.
- Designate a special parking spot.
- Grant permission to leave the building for lunch off campus.
- Pick the topic for a faculty meeting.
- Schedule a day for Principal and staff member to trade jobs.
- Pick up a class after PE or recess and take them somewhere else in the school for 20 minutes. Send a message to the teacher telling him or her to put their feet up for 20 minutes while the principal teaches a lesson to the class on something of interest to him/her (American History, Art, etc.).
- Write lesson plans for the teacher for one period.
- Scrape the ice off of the windshield of the Staff of the Day’s car.

- Trade chairs with the principal for the day.
- Add a staff member name and a description of their positive contribution to the Teacher Shout Out Board.
- Assign an older student to be an assistant for a period.
- Provide valet parking on a cold day.

Inexpensive Options

- Earn a free pass to a school event (sporting event, theater production, etc.).
- Earn a pass to a community activity (bowling, movie, mini-golf, fair/carnival, class, sporting event, museum, etc.).
- Send home a postcard detailing something admired about the teacher.
- Take an old real estate sign and paint it with white enamel paint or chalkboard paint. Have the School Leadership Team write a special thank you to one staff member for something outstanding each day. Post it in the parking lot for staff to see when they drive in each day.

Higher Cost Options – Consider asking for donations!

- Give out a gift card.
- Fill a minifridge with favorite drinks and place it in the staff member's office area for a week.
- Plan an invite-only party.

Morale Boosters

Free Options

- Ask a high school choir to change the words to a popular song and serenade the staff with a “kudos song” in the morning.
- Show a video montage at Family Night highlighting all of the staff.
- Highlight “staff of the day” on bulletin board showing treasures provided by their family or friends as a surprise.
- Call each other by name, especially in front of the students. “Good morning, Mrs. Green.” And Mrs. Green says, “Good morning, Mr. Smith.”
- Celebrate individual staff members by writing down reasons you appreciate a specific person.
- Create an instruction manual based on strategies used by team members in the school and include beginning of the year tips from the “experts.” Take a picture of each staff member with their words of wisdom and provide a book to all staff. Consider reviewing it with new staff and substitute teachers.
- Encourage employees to post their values in a conspicuous place in their respective rooms.
- Get a donation of a shopping cart to keep at the school for adults bringing in huge loads of supplies.
- Get a parent volunteer to be at the door in the morning dressed in a tuxedo. Greet each staff member as they enter the building. They could say something like, “Cheerio! We have been anticipating your arrival, Mrs. Smith.”
- Give out one handwritten note each day to a staff member who has done something exceptionally well.
- Hand out “Gotchas.” These work for school personnel, but only if everyone remembers. To help remember this practice, put three coins in your left pocket in the morning. As you compliment different adults in the building, move a coin from your left pocket to your right pocket. At the end of the day, all three coins should be in your right pocket (you move from left to right to help you remember you are doing the “right” thing).
- Have your School Leadership Team go online and post positive statements about each one of the staff members on the school website. For example, write, “We love the way Mr. Jones is always at the front door to greet students.”
- Have your School Leadership Team read books that support teachers’ instructional practices and create “Cliffs Notes” on those books for the staff. Send it out in a weekly newsletter. One book idea is Marzano’s *What Works in School*.
- Highlight staff strengths in the family newsletter. Let families know the strengths of each staff member throughout the year.
- Provide corrective feedback respectfully. Instead of criticizing an employee who has behaviors you would like to “target” for change, express to the employee what needs to change and end with a statement affirming, “I have confidence in you that you can get this done.”
- Organize a lunchtime game that everyone can watch. For example, set up a Jeopardy game (or Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, or Price Is Right, etc.) in the staff lounge and challenge two contestants during lunch to play while others watch.
- Plan a big faculty meeting or in-service at someone’s house with comfortable seating, a pool, or a grill where it is more enjoyable than sitting on the little seats in the cafeteria.
- Poll your staff and find out what they desire for professional development. Then have your School Leadership Team plan professional development opportunities.
- Post goals in the teachers’ lounge and graph results. For example, when thinking about positive phone contacts home, shoot for 2 times the number of students in the school. Set the goal of 200% in 6 weeks. Graph phone calls, post cards, emails, notes, etc.
- Leaves kind notes on staff members’ desks.
- Design “4 roses to every thorn” lanyards to help staff remember to give four comments of praise for each corrective comment.
- Sneak into the school over the weekend and write a note on each classroom whiteboard telling them to “Have a great week!”
- Place a special table outdoors for teachers to enjoy sunshine during lunch.
- Ask students to write “compliment” cards for staff.

- Think about each employee's strength and ask them to share that strength with others. This could be done through faculty meetings, one-on-one mentoring, or through some other medium. Make sure that when the employee is asked to share that they are told why they were chosen. Think about what made them stand out as an exemplar in this area.
- Welcome new employees, including substitutes, by planning a small celebration. Make an intercom announcement welcoming the substitute and ask everyone to make them feel welcome.

Inexpensive Options

- At the beginning of the year have staff fill out a questionnaire with their birthday and the birthday of their spouse and children. Make a happy birthday announcement to the staff member in the morning before students arrive. Send birthday cards from the school to spouses and children. Recognizing that staff members have lives outside the school is very important.
- Give out blank thank you cards to all staff members and ask them to write one a week to someone on the staff. Ask them to write to different people each week.
- Have faculty names placed in a hat. Everyone draws a name and has to decorate a "medal" (e.g., paper plate, certificate) for that person.
- Pass out plastic goblets at the next staff meeting and toast each other. Keep going until everyone has received a toast.
- Supply a box of birthday cards to each staff member. On birthdays, encourage each staff member to fill out a birthday card and do a drive-by carding by hiding birthday cards all over the person's area throughout the day. For example, the birthday person might find a card taped to the staff restroom mirror, the coffee pot, or the white board, etc.

Higher Cost Options – Consider asking for donations!

- Ask the cafeteria to bake some special cookies. After a particularly difficult day, invite all of the staff down for cookies in the cafeteria.
- Call in an ice cream truck or a food truck for teachers to access during their lunch or at the end of the day.
- Bring in donuts for Donut Day.
- Have breakfast for the staff.
- Have the entire staff fill out a sheet answering this question: "Name something about yourself that no one else would ever guess." Each morning, read one clue and give everyone an answer sheet. Each day they are to guess who the mystery person is based on the clue read that morning. After all of the clues have been read, invite the whole staff to a pizza party. Read the entire list of clues and have people guess aloud; then have the real mystery person confess their secret identity. Have a prize for the person who got the most correct guesses on their answer sheet.
- Hire a celebrity impersonator to come to the school and visit classrooms. For example, Abraham Lincoln visits the school and comes in each classroom giving a small history lesson tying something special about the adults in each room to the history lesson. For example, "I was the only president to ever own a patent. I designed a special idea that helped boats float over sand bars. I was good at floating boats and Mrs. Smith has designed a special chair that lets students get their wiggles out."
- Schedule an ice cream or snow cone truck for the last day of benchmark testing. Have the truck show up after all the students are gone and invite all the staff to have an ice cream. Tell them they are, "Way Cool, the way they accomplished all the testing this week!"
- Identify what each staff member does best and have an "Academy Awards" ceremony with statues for each person. Invite families to attend the award ceremony.
- Invite families to a catered dinner at night staff have an event late at school.
- Host an ice cream social with a "sister" – "brother" school once a month. Alternate schools each month and let teachers tour the school to gather ideas from each other's lesson plans, bulletin boards, etc.
- Order business cards for each staff member. Pick a design that fits each person's personality.
- Order enough flowers for each staff member to get one. Stand at the door, and as each person enters, give them a flower and tell them you appreciate the way they help students "bloom" in this building.
- Stock a fridge in the staff lounge with drinks and snacks.
- Plan a group outing with the staff to a movie, restaurant, or BBQ at someone's house.

- Purchase small plants for each of the staff members and place them on their desks. Leave a note saying, “I know you’ll nurture this plant to full beauty because of the way you nurture children.”
- Surprise staff by greeting them at the door with a cup of coffee or their favorite soda and say, “We are so glad you are here today.”
- Surprise the staff with a scavenger hunt all over the school. As each person enters the building have him/her see a sign that says, “Immediately check your box.” In their boxes have a candy bar that says, “Your next clue is awaiting you at the coldest water fountain in the school.” When the staff members get to the coldest water fountain, one of the School Leadership Team members will be waiting with a bottle of water that has the next clue taped on it. This will go on and end up in the cafeteria where the team meets up again and has breakfast ready for all of the staff members.
- Take a survey of the staff on their favorite magazines. Then purchase some subscriptions to put out in the staff lounge.
- Use a staff survey to find out everyone’s favorite snack or candy. Stock the staff lounge with snacks one day a week.

Reference:

Riffel, L. (n.d.). *Positive rewards for adults*. Retrieved from: <http://behaviordoctor.org/material-download/>

Horseshoe Awards

School staff nominate their peers for this award. These appreciation awards are announced at faculty meetings.

Horseshoe Award



I would like to nominate _____ for the Horseshoe Award, because _____
_____.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Notes from Students

Students give kind notes to staff to show their appreciation.

Pride Paw

The Pride Paw is for _____ because _____
_____.

From: _____

