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Rewarding Your Accelerated Readers: An Awards-Based Program with the Emphasis on Reading

Keith Kyker

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Rewarding Your Accelerated Readers is your ready-made blueprint for a dynamic reading rewards program that honors students who make a commitment to improving their reading skills through reading practice. Every student in the school, from the most accomplished reader to the student with emerging skills, has the opportunity to earn meaningful awards and receive recognition as an individual, and as part of a group. Many schools use quiz-based software programs – including Accelerated Reader and Scholastic Reading Counts – to manage their students' leisure reading progress. Students take brief quizzes about the books that they read, and amass points throughout the school year. As a way of encouraging reading practice and program participation, schools typically offer prizes for students who earn points. Some schools pass out candy bars and potato chips to students who pass quizzes. Other schools offer big-ticket items, such as iPods and video games to the students with the highest point totals. Sometimes the school principal will dye her hair blue, wear a silly outfit, or allow students to throw water balloons at her if the school earns a certain number of points. These "rewards" often leave educators and parents scratching their heads. Can't we come up more appropriate ways to recognize students? Aren't we really just bribing them to read? Rewarding Your Accelerated Readers is a complete plan designed to bring honor and prestige to students who develop their reading skills. Gone are the candy bars and dollar-store trinkets. Instead, students earn recognition for reading practice, and are presented with tangible rewards to commemorate their achievements. The program described in Rewarding Your Accelerated Readers gives every student in the school the opportunity to be recognized and rewarded for their reading practice efforts. Some rewards programs recognize only the highest achievers, creating one winner and dozens of losers. In this positive reinforcement system, every student has the opportunity to reach a level of achievement. Topics include: Guidelines for a Reading Rewards Program; Rewards for All Students; The Four-part Reward System; The Four-Part Rewards System Working Together; Answering Reading Rewards Program Questions; Media Center Organization. Rewarding Your Accelerated Readers contains more than 100 pages of information useful to library media specialists, principals, and teachers. After reading this book, you will be ready to implement this school-proven program in your school. From the author: "Several years ago as an elementary school library media specialist, I was challenged to design a reading rewards program that encouraged all of our students to read. I knew that we had to go beyond edible rewards and crazy school stunts. I wanted to build a culture of reading at our school. We had to establish reading as an honorable endeavor, not just a way to get a prize or a quick snack. "With the help of some great teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents, I designed the rewards system described in this book. Using this system, you'll give students at every grade level, with every reading ability, the opportunity to be recognized as an individual, and as a member of a group. This is a program that you, as a professional, can be proud of. This is the program that your students deserve."

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