

End of Year School and Staff Celebration Ideas

Spring 2020 brought unprecedented challenges to our Sonoma County schools. A transition to distance learning happened at lightning speed. Teachers, support staff and administrators came together to provide continued learning to our children with minimal interruption, while supporting their own families and communities.

While this experience has highlighted the innovation and resiliency of our school staff, it has also significantly changed the way the academic year will come to a close. Just as we work to provide opportunities for our students to celebrate and say goodbye, school staff will benefit from activities and events that recognize their great work and help them transition into a well-deserved summer break.

Below are ideas for you to bring back to your school. Not every suggestion will be feasible for every school; however, we hope they inspire you to identify ways to help dedicated school staff find closure at the end of a year like no other.

Saying Goodbye

- Using a platform like Flipgrid, staff can record goodbye videos for students and colleagues.
- Make a poster, write and read a letter, sing a song, or blow out a candle on a cupcake and make a wish for summer!
- Students can participate too! Reach out to a parent volunteer or even a student to collect recordings that can be assembled into a short video of favorite moments or memories during the year. Share these on your school website and social media to recognize staff publicly.
- Designate a Goodbye Parade at school. Designate an hour for each classroom where adults can drive kids to school to pick up remaining classroom items – and say goodbye to teachers and staff.

Celebrating

- Host a grade or department Zoom Happy Hour for staff to celebrate, commiserate, and connect.
- Give out funny distance learning awards (Funniest Thinking Face, Most Ingenious Use of Props, Best Pet Interruptions, etc.). Small gift cards go to the winner!
- Invite parents, students and community members to post their gratitude on the District social media pages – be sure to tag staff!
- Host a facilitated digital Wellness event – perhaps a yoga or meditation class to give staff skills to use during the summer.
- Give school staff a space and place to identify their successes – a virtual “pin board” or even a real one on campus for staff to contribute to when they come to clean out classrooms.
- Before they return to take down their classrooms or clean out their desks, leave staff a small plant or other gift and a note of gratitude.