



SUMMER MATTERS

Making Summer Matter for Every Child, Because Learning Happens Year Round

EXAMPLES OF CREATING A UNIQUE PROGRAM CULTURE

Weekly or Daily Rituals:

- Circles/ Community Meetings
- Snack- where you eat and how: have teams sit together on some days, have similar grades sit together on other days, have staff sit with certain students on some days, etc.
- Snack- have a conversation prompt at each table that is theme based e.g. for gardening theme students are asked: what plants do you see growing in your neighborhood?
- Weekly skits to introduce or close the week, based on theme
- Give each staff member a theme song to play whenever they address group
- Reinforce principles/ values by giving awards and giving students ways to award too
- Make progress transparent: if students on working on a project, getting points, etc. have a poster of individual, teams, program wide and where they are in their progress towards those goals
- Have calendar of program that is referred to regularly
- Each element of circle or rituals has a theme song
- Have student-only roles (agenda checker, supply distributor, circle set up, snack set up, decorator, etc.) and appoint students them in same public way on weekly/ daily basis

Group Identity:

- Team Chants, names, flags, symbols, etc.
- Program wide chants, names, symbols, language, etc.
- Team Pictures
- Program-wide Pictures
- Rename/ Decorate site every program season
- Team challenges (teams compete with other teams on a variety of activities)
- Students vs. Staff Challenges
- Have visual of theme and program wide goals
- Create novel experiences (field trips, dress up days, talent shows, goals, chant offs, etc.)
- Create a ritual for everything students do in front of each other: how to introduce yourself before you speak how to recognize / applaud, call & responses, etc.
- Program newsletter, "yearbook"
- End of year celebrations with traditions such as t-shirt signing, photos, award ceremonies, picnics, etc.
- Orientation week where rituals, expectations, and values rituals are explained slowly and intentionally



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Leadership Opportunities:

- Opportunities for students to speak in front of big group
- Opportunities for students to facilitate rituals/ traditions
- Opportunities for students to recognize/ reward each other
- Allow students to choose which projects to work on for program
- Student-run newsletter
- Opportunities for students to articulate learning
- Opportunities for students to choose types of activities (Friday clubs - students choose 3 topics they'd like to spend more time on music, sports, art, computers, games, etc., choose a staff member to supervise each club, student choose which clubs to attend and what happens in each
- Create a program student council
- Have different groups of students create & perform weekly skits or create new elements of circles/ meetings
- Allow students to decide on rules, consequences & rewards for program expectations/ behavior

Rites of Passage:

- Give badges or medals for each project completed (have a symbol or color connected to specific project e.g. blocks for building a roller coaster in engineering class)
- Have a color for the medal ribbon (where the medal hangs from neck) represent a year e.g. program student of 2014 get ribbon in red, they bring back that ribbon for 2015 programs where badges they win in 2015 where will be pinned to, new students in 2015 get green ribbons, etc.
- Have older and returning students be mentors for younger/ newer students
- Have older or returning students plan and co-facilitate orientation week
- Have older or returning students have special roles e.g. circle master, program "herder," transition lead, soundtrack producer, sound engineer (plays music for circle, rituals, etc.), 3rd grade hall monitor, family translator, site visit ambassador, advise program, themes and field for next year, student council, etc.
- Have opportunities for program alumni to visit, volunteer, support program in following years
- Graduation ceremony for students aging out of program- have them leave "words of wisdom" for remaining students

Special Events:

- Family Potlucks
- Student led fairs/ dances
- Talent Shows
- Awards ceremony at the end of the program season
- Student decided/ led special event
- Family Orientations
- Culminating event showcase
- Career fairs
- Visiting senior centers
- Oral family histories presentation
- Student presentations on topics of their choice
- Poetry slams

The Summer Matters Network is coordinated by the Partnership for Children & Youth and its partners, aimed at expanding summer learning opportunities for youth in California.

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