

Schedule and plan an “advancement” event

Celebrating all students’ advancement to the next grade

“In our small school, the markers for achievement are somewhat blurred by the multi-grade setting. When stuck in the same classroom, with the same teacher, for several years, it becomes fun to celebrate advancement through each grade. We know classrooms hum because we take time for positive reinforcement on a daily basis-- why not afford the time to celebrate yearly progress with each student? Even if you don't have eighth graders graduating, you still have something to celebrate.”

Brad Ludwig, Principal
Adventist Christian School of Yuba City

In small schools you may not have any graduating eighth graders in any given year. Or you may have a shy eighth grader who isn’t excited about being the center of attention for a whole graduation ceremony. Brad uses his graduation ceremony as a time to celebrate all students “graduating” to the next class as well as highlighting successes and recognizing everyone’s achievements each year.

Put this on your calendar now

Whether you start having an “advancement” ceremony this spring or next spring depends on how your local parents respond to additions to the school calendar. Either way, choose a date and time, and put it on this and/or next year’s calendar.

Celebrate all students, but focus on eighth grade and kindergarten

“We do this with all the kids, but obviously focus on our eighth graders if we have them,” says Brad. The names of all students and the grades they are moving up to are listed in their program. Use the back of the program to outline two or three of your school’s best selling points. See “Research and write your school’s talking points” behind the June tab in your binder.

Encourage your families to invite other great families

This is a wonderful opportunity to share the good news about your school with other families. Certainly you should invite any families who have indicated interest in your school during this or prior years. But also put a note in your school’s newsletter (each week for at least three weeks before the event) asking parents to invite their friends.

Find a volunteer photographer

Post photos from this event to your school's website and Facebook page, making sure to not use photos of kids who do not have a signed photo release. Brad has said he will share pictures from his event this spring which I will post on the Marketing Corner website so you can see what he does at Yuba City.

Delegating:

You should help set the date (likely the evening just before or on the last day of school), integrate your school's talking points onto the back of the printed program, and use personal conversations and your school newsletter to encourage parents to invite friends. But you could ask your school board chair to promote the event through church announcements and delegate everything else to a volunteer and/or your home and school leader.

Credits:

Brad Ludwig, thank you for sharing this great idea.

Binder tab: February

School size: Schools with multi-grade classrooms