

# School Themes

<http://www.schoolthemes.org>  
email <[admin@schoolthemes.org](mailto:admin@schoolthemes.org)>

**Dear *Educator*:**

**Congratulations, and thank you for making the decision to purchase a winning School Theme production. We know you will find it one of the most valuable tools available for your staff, students and school community.**

**Introducing:**

- **School Wide Themes Purpose**
- **Theme Benefits**
- **Theme Creation Strategies**
- **Rewards**
- **Theme Timing**
- **Theme Kick-Off**
- **Community Involvement**

**You can participate in the personal and professional growth of all students. The theme process encourages school spirit and with each theme session, staff members will learn new strategies. See more details at our website <http://www.schoolthemes.org>.**

**Build School Spirit**

**After all ..... it's all about the kids**

**Thanks again and enjoy !**

# School Wide Themes

## Purpose

**The need for school wide themes !**

**What themes do for the staff and the leader of a building?**

School wide themes provide the principal with “*the glue that holds a staff together.*” Themes help evolve staff members into an education family; a family that works together to educate and recognize individual *student and staff* successes.

It’s all about attitude. Themes help keep the entire staff motivated and positive throughout the school year. A highly motivated staff maintains a positive attitude and students are inspired. The learning environment is super charged and great accomplishments prevail.

Themes let great things happen for everyone in the learning community !

## Theme Benefits

- Generate and set the stage for the upcoming year
- Create a positive environment
- Provide opportunities for individual recognition
- Develop winning attitudes
- Develop and foster relationships among people
- Develop a sense of togetherness (education family)
- Keep staffs motivated throughout the year
- Celebrate successes
- Reward positive behavior
- Build character among students and staff
- Generate excitement in the community
- Provide direction to the learning community
- Enable the administrator to support morale building events throughout the year

# Theme Selection

## Three Theme Creation Strategies

### **Method One: Principal**

The school principal creates or selects the theme. The selection process is often based on an assessment of school needs.

Example: The principal might determine that a theme supporting manners, teamwork, academics or community relations best serves the current school climate.

The principal may receive input from the education community (staff, students, parents, and patrons) however; the final decision rests with the principal. This “beginner’s method” is directive in nature and satisfies the principal’s immediate school needs assessment.

Specific theme support days can be established and theme shirts with logo’s may be worn.

### **Method Two: Community**

The principal solicits ideas for next year's theme from the staff, students, and community.

#### Popular methods:

- School newsletter to parents
- District publications
- School website
- Staff bulletins
- Staff meetings
- Classroom student meetings

The publications and meetings describe the criteria for the theme and establish a deadline for submissions.

Example: The theme must be presented in acronym form and support a positive learning environment. A word like HAPPY might be chosen and convert to - -

H.A.P.P.Y --- “Have A Positive Productive Year.”

Once the deadline has passed and all eligible entries are received, the selection process begins.

- All eligible entries are compiled into a ballot form
- The ballot is made available to the learning community, students, parents, staff, patrons, etc. Completed ballots may be received via mail or in person.
- If more than five different acronym theme entries are received, the first vote can narrow the theme selection to the top three. Then a re-vote may be conducted to select the winning theme for the following year.
- If the initial submissions reveal less than five separate acronym entries, then the most votes wins.

Once the winning theme is selected:

- The theme is publicized in all school and district publications
- The staff and students submit ideas for the theme logo that will be used for a wall mural and the theme shirts
- The staff and students choose the colors that will be used for the theme shirt
- The principal selects the theme logo from the input provided

### **Method Three: Staff**

This is a powerful method that focuses on staff unity and their buy in for the entire theme process. Your staff creates the theme for the next school year.

Staff requirements:

- Staff members may choose to work alone, in teams, or small groups
- Staff members submit as many different theme ideas as they can envision.

- All theme ideas are submitted to a selected office administrator by an established deadline.
- A ballot containing all submissions is created.
- A staff meeting is scheduled and staff members will present their theme ideas to fellow staff members. The presentation must include; ideas for decorating rooms, treats or ideas for theme related incentives, how the theme can be integrated in the educational program, theme logo and colors for the theme shirts, and anything else that provides support for their submission.
- Upon completion of all presentations the staff members receive the ballot and vote for the theme of their choice.
- The first vote usually narrows the choices to the top three theme ideas. A second vote may be required to break a tie and the winning theme is supported by the most votes. Save all material – these are competitive presentations made by your staff members and will prove invaluable for future theme selection processes.

#### Rewards

- Provides teamwork for staff members
- Encourages school spirit
- Supports staff buy in for school wide theme ideas
- Entertaining way to select themes and provides healthy competition
- Personalizes staff members ideas on how to implement the theme in their classrooms
- Generates laughter and creativity during staff presentations
- Provides positive staff morale

#### The winning entry can be rewarded:

- If the winning presentation is conducted by two staff members or less, a dinner for two might be offered.
  - If a team of teachers present the winning theme they may enjoy lunch together.

Suggestion: Video the theme contest. The video becomes priceless at teacher retirements or staff functions.

## **Theme Selection Timing**

### **When do I begin the theme selection process?**

This timeline is based upon on a school year that commences in the middle of August and ends in May.

- In early April the principal advertises it is time to come up with a theme idea for the following school year and a deadline is set for new theme submissions
- Middle of April - theme ballots are created and if using method three a date is set for the theme contest
- Last week in April the final vote is tallied and the theme is announced
- First of May - the theme shirt logo and colors are presented to the principal
- End of May - in conjunction with staff departure for the summer - they submit orders for their theme shirts
- First of June - theme shirt orders are placed with the T-shirt vendor.
- Staff reports in August - theme shirts are ready on the first day
- The theme begins for the new school year

## **Theme Kick Off for the Staff**

### **What is a theme kick off?**

A theme kick off is held at the beginning of each school year. This kick off is for the staff and their families. A cook out is held - new staff members and their families are introduced. This is also a great opportunity to thank families for their support to children and the entire education process.

Following the cookout the staff stays to decorate their rooms together. It provides a fun evening and great teamwork as the rooms are prepared for the students. During the evening, drawings and contests are held for staff members.

Prizes related to the school theme are given throughout the night's events. These might include decorations for bulletin boards; stickers, note pads, or larger gifts donated by local businesses.

It is a memorable evening and a fun way to start the school year.

## **Students, Parents and Community Members**

### **When do they get theme shirts?**

Theme shirt orders for students and parents are taken during student enrollment. Order forms for patrons are always available in the school office. All orders must be placed not later than the second week of September.

*This concludes the introduction... however, as you embark upon implementing the selected theme... it's likely you'll want to introduce it to students, staff and select community members. Therefore, we've included some of the introductory material in the theme process too !*

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Let's introduce your selected theme... and ... it's most important functions.

# C.H.A.M.P.I.O.N.S.

## Children with **H**appy **A**ttitudes **M**ake **P**ositive **I**nfluences **O**n **N**eighborhood **S**chools

Each of our themes is introduced in acronym form. Additional discussions may be found at our web site <http://www.schoolthemes.org/acronyms.html> This “play on words” can provide additional sessions for staff fun and creativity.

The name (acronym) selected for your school theme represents your first attempt at creativity. Whether you choose one of our “named” themes or create your own... the fun really begins here.

The name is not what’s important.

It’s your imagination and the methods you use to promote your School’s Spirit.

The word or words chosen may become your school’s slogan for perhaps a full year. Although you’ve selected our theme - **CHAMPIONS**, - you might chose to change the name to fit your school’s character or special needs.

Once you’ve seen our examples of theme implementation, you’ll know it’s ok to make changes to suit your style. In fact it’s encouraged. You’ll want to support lasting school spirit so be creative, inventive and have some fun with new concepts.

Once again, it’s likely your theme (**CHAMPIONS**) will be displayed on school correspondence, wall murals, lockers, etc. So have fun with step number one.

The bonding, staff unity, student participation and excitement commences now.

Next – we assume total staff participation and support. Without the commitment of the entire staff, themes are just *whispers in the wind*.

Like all good ideas – there is a “kick-off” session and each unique theme contains ideas related to that particular acronym. In your case – the theme **CHAMPIONS** has been selected and we’ve incorporated related ideas or “theme” content concepts.

Remember – *a key concept* - themes must contribute to a students’ learning success.

If not - why use them?

Your day is already filled with many other demanding tasks...

However, when you have staff buy in... school themes... become the catalysts that ignite the inspiration fuse. Excitement is contagious... effective school wide themes inspire, motivate, and excite staff and students.

### **Theme: C.H.A.M.P.I.O.N.S**

The **CHAMPIONS** theme offers a great opportunity to emphasize citizenship excellence in the classroom and school environment. It can also be used to promote strategies that influence or create competitions among students. Building decorations for the **champions** theme could capture and display Olympics moments, various sports personalities or even Horse racing **champions**.

*The Olympic motto is Citius—Altius—Fortius, which is Latin for "faster, higher, stronger." The intended meaning is that one's focus should be on bettering one's achievements, rather than on coming in first.*

The **champions** theme can emphasize good citizenship that encourages students to be **champions** of character in whatever they do. Explanations or definitions of **champion** characters can be displayed throughout the building. Specific character traits can be adopted for the school year.

The [champions](#) theme can be utilized in creative ways depending upon school needs and desired focus. An additional example might be to issue [champion](#) medals or declare students as [champions](#) of their class based on state assessment scores.

[Champion](#) teams might be formed based on selected scoring criteria. These analogies all support school spirit and contribute to a very positive learning environment. You're championing worthy causes with this theme and there are endless opportunities to recognize and promote student successes.

This list of [champions](#) is long... but not all-inclusive...

Jessie Owens Track & Field 2003  
Darrell Waltrip Auto Racing 2003  
San Antonio Spurs Basketball 2003  
Tampa Bay Football 2002  
Sarah Hughes Figure Skating 2002  
Cael Sanderson Wrestling 2002  
Emmitt Smith Football 2002  
Tiger Woods Golf 2001  
Barry Bonds Baseball 2001  
Jim Thorpe American Athlete 2001  
Walter Payton Football 2000  
Muhammad Ali Boxing 1999  
Brandi Chastain Women's Soccer 1999

Wayne Gretzky Hockey 2003 –  
Jack Nicklaus & Tiger Woods Golf 2003  
Joe Paterno Coaching Great 2003  
New England Patriots Football 2002  
Hank Aaron Baseball 2002  
Ozzie Smith Baseball 2002  
Althea Gibson Tennis 2001  
Dave Winfield/ Kirby Puckett Baseball 2001  
Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball 2001  
St. Louis Rams Football 2000  
Pete Sampras Tennis 2000  
Barry Sanders Football 1999  
Mia Hamm Women's Soccer 1999

Joe Torre Baseball 1999	Lance Armstrong Cycling 1999
Arnold Palmer Golf 1999	Denver Broncos Football 1998
Arizona Diamondbacks Baseball 1998	Brett Favre Football 1998
Mark McGwire Baseball 1998	Richard Petty Auto Racing 1998
U.S. Gold Medal Team Women's Hockey 1998	Tiger Woods Golf 1998
Arthur Ashe Tennis 1997	Franco Harris Football 1997
U.S. Gold Medal Team Men's Hockey 1997	Jackie Robinson Baseball 1996
Dale Earnhardt Auto Racing 1996	Steve Young Football 1996
U.S. Gold Medal Team Women's Gymnastics 1996	Michael Johnson Track 1996
Dan O'Brien Track & Field 1996	Amy Van Dyken Swimming 1996
Tom Dolan Swimming 1996	Roger Staubach Football 1996
Dan Marino Football 1995	Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball 1995
John Elway Football 1993	Barry Sanders Football 1992
Johnny Bench Baseball 1989	Jim Palmer Baseball 1989
Michael Jordan Basketball 1988	Steve Largent Football 1988
Chris Evert Tennis 1987	Walter Payton Football 1986
Mary Lou Retton Gymnastics 1984	Bruce Jenner Track & Field 1977
Bob Richards Track & Field 1969	Tom Matte Football 1968
Raymond Berry Football 1967	Joe Horlen Baseball 1967
Tim McCarver Baseball 1967	Bobby Richardson Baseball 1967
Lt. Billy Mills Track 1966	Bart Starr Football 1964
Tom Tresh Baseball 1964	Esther Williams Swimming 1959
Bob Cousy Basketball 1956	Bobby Layne Football 1956
Duke Snider Baseball 1956	Roy Campanella Baseball 1952
Glenn Davis Football 1952	Preacher Roe Baseball 1952

Bob Waterfield Football 1952  
Otto Graham Football 1951  
Bob Lemon Baseball 1951  
Ralph Kiner Baseball 1951  
Leo Durocher Baseball 1939  
Bob Feller Baseball 1938  
Lefty Grove Baseball 1938  
Carl Hubbell Baseball 1938  
Lefty Gomez Baseball 1937  
Mel Ott Baseball 1937  
Harold Trosky Baseball 1937  
Wilbur Shaw Auto Racing 1936  
Babe Didrikson Zaharias American Athlete 1935  
Jimmie Foxx Baseball 1934  
Ellsworth Vines Tennis 1934

Tom Fears Football 1951  
George Kell Baseball 1951  
Johnny Lujack Football 1951  
Hank Greenberg Baseball 1947  
Johnny Mize Baseball 1939  
Charles Gehringer Baseball 1938  
Billy Herman Baseball 1938  
Earl Averill Baseball 1937  
Bronko Nagurski Football 1937  
Cecil Travis Baseball 1937  
Kit Klein Speedskating 1936  
Dizzy Dean Baseball 1935  
Lou Gehrig Baseball 1934  
Elinor Smith Aviator 1934

## **Theme Kick Off: What is it?**

A theme kick off is held at the beginning of each school year. This kick off is a cookout... for the staff and their families. Often new staff members and their families are introduced at the same time the next years' THEME is introduced. It is also a great time to thank the families for their continuing support.

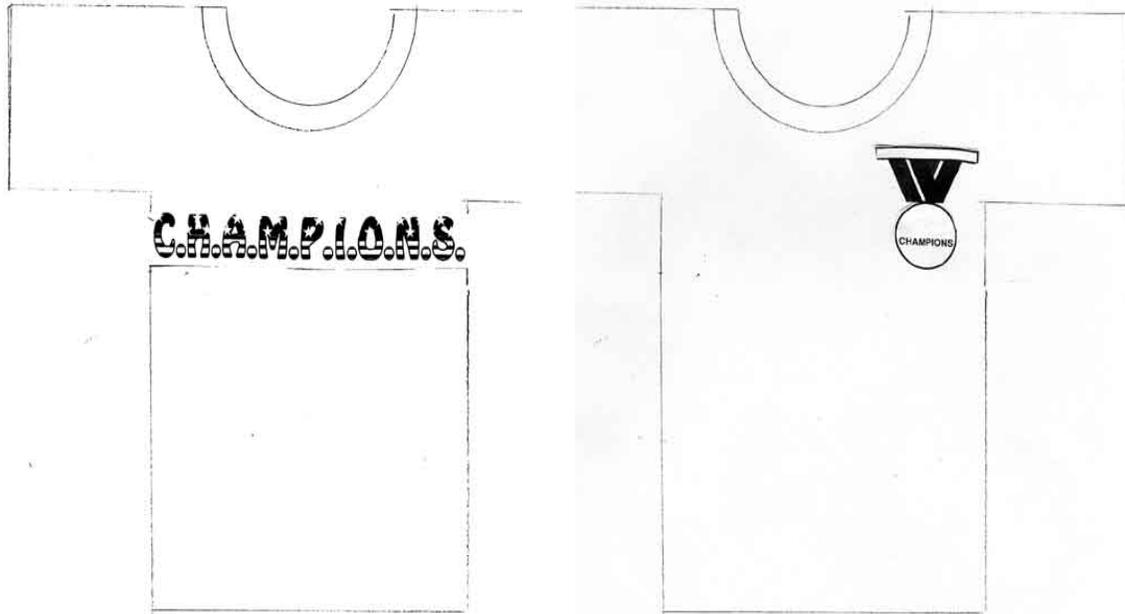
Following the cookout... the staff remains to begin decorating their classrooms. This is an evening demonstrating staff teamwork. Drawings and contests are held for the staff members and prizes related to the school theme are awarded. They might include decorations for bulletin boards, stickers, note pads, or even larger gifts that may be donated by local businesses.

This can be a memorable evening.

## **Theme shirts**

- Each staff member receives a theme shirt at the beginning of the school year. The kick off – cook out is often a good time to present the shirts.
- How do you provide shirts for your staff ? You may choose fund raisers, a business sponsor, parent/teacher organizations or individual staff members as a means to purchase shirts. Our web site provides links to top of the line vendors if you haven't selected a local resource for shirts. <http://www.schoolthemes.org>. The theme shirt is usually a short sleeve T-shirt however; long sleeve T-shirts, polo shirts, denim shirts or sweatshirts have also been selected.
- **C.H.A.M.P.I.O.N.S.** shirt: White shirt with the word **champions** spelled out on the back. The color of the letters can be selected to represent your school colors or typically red, white and blue are default colors. The front of the shirt displays a medal with your school name printed in the center.
- Theme shirts are typically worn on the first day of school, during monthly theme celebrations, staff dinners, district meetings, field trips and staff recognition days.

- Shirts are available for students, parents, and patrons to purchase during student enrollment. They provide symbols of staff unity and school teamwork for your education family.



### Decorating Ideas

- **C.H.A.M.P.I.O.N.S.** is displayed throughout the building accompanied by its various definitions: *“One that wins first place or first prize in a competition” ... “ One that is clearly superior or has the attributes of a winner” ... “An ardent defender or supporter of a cause or another person” ... “To fight for, to defend, or support as a **champion.**”*

- Pictures of current and historical **champions** are placed throughout the building. A brief explanation of their positive character traits accompanies each picture. Award walls exhibit various honors - such as Gold, Silver and Bronze medal student accomplishments. These achievements can be selected from Honor Roll, Test scores, Sports team wins, debate teams, most improved student recognition's, cheerleader performance or any education attribute deemed worthy of championship recognition.
- **C.H.A.M.P.I.O.N.S.** theme mural is painted on the wall where students are recognized for sportsmanship or good citizenship. The theme mural design matches the back of the theme shirts.
- Red, White, and Blue material is used - or match the colors selected for your theme shirt letters. Similar colors are used for office and classroom curtains.
- Medals, sports figures, ribbons, **Champion** spark plugs, box of Wheaties and Olympic rings can be used as symbols to recognize student successes.
- All communication documents such as parent newsletters, staff bulletins, front covers of student and staff handbooks, the school website, and school stationary, display the **CHAMPIONS** theme. Ideal names for the school newsletter: Gold Medal Events or Blue Ribbon News.

## Staff Incentives

First school year staff meeting: Banners are hung announcing - We are the **Champions**. The school year schedule or calendar can be itemized as in the form of Olympics Events. Olympic Rings are displayed and Hershey Stars are offered as meeting treats. Olympic rings are placed under staff chairs and teachers selecting those seats are awarded prizes. *[Each of the five Olympic rings is a different color. Together, they represent the five inhabited continents, although no particular ring is meant to represent any specific continent. (The Americas are treated as one continent.) The rings are interlaced to represent the idea that the Olympics are universal, bringing athletes from the entire world together.]*



- First Day of School: Theme related treats and a banner announcing the **CHAMPIONS** theme is placed in the lounge. Ideas for treats: Small boxes of Wheaties are placed in the lounge for the Breakfast of Champions.

----- Sidebar -----

Many schools have become more aware of the advantages and disadvantages of eating in certain ways. People are much more aware of the relationship between what they eat and how they feel. Along with a push to decrease junk and increase nutritional content in school lunch, many school districts also are placing limits on pre-packaged food and drink that have become a mainstay for some middle-and high-school-aged students.

It's all part of encouraging healthy lifestyle choices. Concentration and ability to learn can be affected by nutrition.

And what's in the food we eat ?

Here's a link to the Agriculture Department's food search tool. If reading this document offline, Copy the link URL, then paste in your browser window.

[http://199.133.10.140/codesearchwebapp/\(5rdkvyej0ukns5rpgmu15k55\)/codesearch.aspx](http://199.133.10.140/codesearchwebapp/(5rdkvyej0ukns5rpgmu15k55)/codesearch.aspx)

Alternatively, here's a link to additional food survey information.

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/Services/docs.htm?docid=7673> (click on food search tool)

-----Sidebar end -----

- Birthday Celebrations: Once a month we celebrate staff birthdays in conjunction with the [champions](#) theme. Staff members wear theme shirts and provide treats for the birthday celebrants. On these days Staff members may pick costume dress, i.e. golf, hockey uniforms, football jerseys, etc., that symbolize some well known [champion](#).
  
- Staff members sign up at the beginning of the year selecting the month they choose to be responsible for organizing the celebration and providing treats.
  
- Mailbox Treats:
  - ✓ Life savers to represent Olympic rings
  - ✓ USA notepads
  - ✓ Star magnets
  - ✓ Medals that can be worn around the neck
  - ✓ Key chains with different sports participating in the Olympics
  - ✓ Blank paper medals to write a note to a staff member

- Music: Theme day music is played over the intercom to get the day started. Music idea: *We are the Champions* by the group Queen.
- Staff Recognition: Principal places medal shaped notes in teacher mailboxes recognizing great teaching strategies. The notes are written to acknowledge quality teaching or other special classroom activities. This process can also be used to recognize state test standards being taught or any part of a building improvement plan that is currently focused.
- Paychecks: Theme related gifts can be attached to paychecks, such as:
  - ✓ Gift Certificate from McDonald's displaying the Golden Arches
  - ✓ Skor candy bar with a note saying you "Skor" big when it comes to working with kids."
  - ✓ Small box of Wheaties stating "You are a **Champion** when it comes to teaching."
  - ✓ Highlighter with a note that says "Effective teachers highlight a child's year."
  - ✓ Business cards for each staff member with a note stating "You are a true professional."
  - ✓ A Rose is given with a note stating "The staff at your school are appreciated."

Staff Development Ideas: Staff reads and discusses the book Gung Ho by Ken Blanchard. **Gung Ho!**-... an invaluable management tool that outlines foolproof ways to increase productivity by fostering excellent morale in the workplace. Through the inspirational story of business leaders, the revolutionary technique of **Gung Ho!** ...

Is revealed in three simple, yet amazingly powerful principles:

*The Spirit of the Squirrel:* Practice worthwhile work

*The Way of the Beaver:* Be in control of achieving the goal

*The Gift of the Goose:* Cheer each other

### **Student Incentives**

- Read a positive statement over the intercom each morning. A good source for these statements can be found at [www.pops.com](http://www.pops.com). Click on “attitude boosters.”
- A ribbon or medal stating “you are stepping toward success” is presented to deserving students. This lets others know the student is displaying good citizenship skills that will help them become successful.
- Give happy birthday pencils to students on their birthdays and announce their name over the intercom.
- Have different symbols from the Olympic games [*Flames, doves, oath, torches*] on the award certificates for students passing levels of academic achievements test.
- Give super bubble gum for student helpers. Students that help with a substitute, display good manners, help in the lunchroom or any behavior that the school might like to recognize.
- Display academic achievement awards on the **Champions** Award Wall or a designated area in your school building.

## **Building-Wide Academic Achievement Program**

Building-wide academic achievement programs can be focused around the theme. Examples include timed math tests, spelling, reading skills, keyboarding skills, or any area in which students master a skill level and move forward to the next. This method can be adapted to meet your own building needs.

### **Example of a Building-Wide Timed Math Test: Wall of Champions**

This test is administered weekly on basic facts in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division and is intended to help students improve these skills. Each student writes their name on the cut out of a **champion** athlete. As the student passes the timed test at each level their “**champion**” moves to the next event or level. Various Olympic events can be selected ... *Baseball, Handball, Archery, Fencing, Beach Volleyball, Volleyball, Triathlon, Cycling, Diving, Shooting, Weightlifting, Canoe-Kayak, Gymnastics, Badminton, Wrestling, Sailing, Table Tennis, Rowing, Basketball, Hockey, Boxing, Judo, Synchronized Swimming, Tennis, Pentathlon, Taekwondo, Swimming, Softball, Waterpolo, Football, Equestrian...* The wall is labeled the Wall of Success. The 5 Olympic Rings are displayed and 7 events are chosen. This display provides students a visual report of their progress as they pass each test level. The goal is to pass all seven selected events. A chart is placed in each classroom displaying the student successes.

Upon successfully completing each event students receive a certificate and a prize from the principal. Each certificate is printed to reflect the **champion** theme and includes the student’s name, date, level tested and the principal’s signature.

Classroom teacher aides help with grading the tests, keeping progress records, moving the **champion** cut outs and preparing tests for the next week. After the completion of all seven levels the student’s name is announced over the intercom.

## Examples of prizes and certificates

**Level 1-** Students receive a certificate award that says “You are off on the right foot.” A prize could be a pencil with the school theme printed on it.

**Level 2-** Students receive an award that says “Keep on moving.” A prize could be a key chain with different sports represented.

**Level 3-** Students receive an award that says “You are headed for the top” The prize could be a preferred seat at the top of the bleachers.

**Level 4-** Students receive an award that says “You are headed for the Gold” with a chocolate wrapped coin.

**Level 5-** Students receive an award stating “You have jumped through the hoops.” Prize could be a jump rope.

**Level 6-** Students receive an award that states “You are sneaking up on the final stop.” Prize could be a sneaker eraser.

**Level 7-** Students receive an award stating “You are the **Champion**” Those students are recognized with a trip to a local sporting event, i.e. baseball game, a bowling trip, soccer or hockey game depending on the area in which you live.

Note: This is an example of how a building-wide timed test was implemented. Other strategies may be adopted and we’d be happy to hear from you about how your school used the **Champions** theme. Please e-mail your stories to <[admin@schoolthemes.org](mailto:admin@schoolthemes.org)>

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Helping the teacher create a common vision or common goal has shown **tremendous** success. Staff members and students all respond to an enthusiastic school wide - **theme presentation**.

Presentation is the key... educators want school spirit to be high... they desire inspired learning and they know it helps to generate classroom excitement.

Students and their education family benefit from good, fun, creative and results oriented endeavors that support their school, their classmates and community.

We hope you have enjoyed the creative prospects we've shared as part of the **Champions** theme and would enjoy hearing from you. As you recognize by now there is room for additional creativity in both the presentation and execution of our themes. We have a lot of fun creating themes and may even arrange a personal presentation of the whole process if you choose.

Wishing you the best education successes,

<http://www.schoolthemes.org>

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