

Promotion Ideas for SSYRA Program

Voting and Promoting

In our county, the voting procedure has recently been changed from the old lever booths to electronic touch screen voting. The Supervisor of Elections was giving away the old voting booths. I was fortunate enough to receive one of these pieces of history. What a difference it is being able to vote on a real voting machine. The kids are anxious to read at least three Sunshine State books just to be able to use the voting machine. If you cannot get your own voting booth, consider calling the Supervisor of Elections in your county to see about setting up a voting machine in your school.

It is essential to get your teachers on board to help you promote your program. I give each teacher in grades 3-5 a copy of the Sunshine State Master list of titles before the end of the school year so that they can read the books over the summer. I always make sure to have plenty of SSYRA books available to purchase at my fall book fair. I encourage parents to buy a SSYRA book and then pass it on to the classroom library. Make sure SSYRA books are clearly marked at your book fair.

At the beginning of the school year, I like to hold a meeting for teachers to give them an overview of my program. I explain the record keeping and the reward system I have in place for the students. I introduce the books with short book talks. I also distribute a copy of the master list with the AR levels indicated and a copy of the book annotations. I make certain to discuss the *Accelerated Reader* (AR) levels and remind teachers that sometimes it is acceptable if students read out of their ZPD range. I remind teachers that students **do not** have to pass an AR test to receive credit for reading a SSYRA book. Books read aloud to students by teachers, parents and/or other students count in this program. I even get my extended day staff to read SSYRA books aloud to the students in the after school program.

Be sure to discuss the books that are better to read aloud to the classes in each grade level meeting. For the third grade, I try to steer the teachers toward reading the more difficult books aloud. For the fourth grade, I choose the books that may be a little longer to read aloud. For the fifth grade, I try to encourage teachers to read aloud the easier books that may be below most of their students' ZPD range. In this way, a variety of books are read aloud to students and, therefore, more students qualify to vote.

Remember to reward teachers who help promote the SSYRA program by reading books aloud to their class. Recognize these teachers on the morning news program and give them a small token of appreciation. Make sure to invite all teachers involved in the Sunshine State Program to your end of the year celebration!

Palm City Elementary
Martin County Public Schools

Smiley Faces Promotion Ideas

Our SSYRA theme was Smiley Faces, students had a booklet with a page for each book read with spaces for title, author, setting, characters and plot. Each student who reads five books receives a prize from the treasure box. Students who read eight and ten books also receive prizes. Students who read all fifteen books are invited to an ice cream party. As each student

reads a book, a star is placed in the main hallway with their name and the book title on it. These are called our shining stars. Adrian Fogelin visited our school and spoke with the students who had read her book. Additionally, sixth grade classes were organized into book clubs to discuss the books; administrators, parents, and community leaders led the book discussions.

Lakeland Highlands Middle School
Polk County Public Schools

Sunshine Club Promotional

Every 3-5 graders have an opportunity to join the Sunshine Club. We provide custom-made bookmarks for every club member to keep track of their progress. We booktalk the books to get the students excited about reading the books. Students who read three or more titles may vote for their favorite book. Students who read eight or more titles are also invited to a huge celebration in the library media center in May. Parents of these students are also invited. Additional awards and prizes are provided as follows: 8-10 titles read students receive a custom T-shirt, certificate and goodies; 11-14 titles read students receive a T-shirt, pendant, and certificate; 15 titles read students receive a T-shirt, certificate, and a trophy! We order Sunshine pull-apart cakes from the grocery store and celebrate our club members hardwork.

Mariposa Elementary
St. Lucie County Public Schools

Promotion and Recognition

I begin promoting my program with the teachers. Each intermediate teacher is given a pencil with a note attached. The note states "Read a Sunshine State book to your class and receive a \$5.00 gift certificate for each book up to three books." The certificate is redeemable at the spring book fair. I also give each intermediate teacher a free Sunshine State book from the fall book fair. When each teacher completes reading one of the books, their class is given recognition on the morning news program. I also give each teacher a copy of the curriculum connections to use with the books.

Students love recognition. As soon as a student reads three books, I display their name on a yellow die-cut star on the Sunshine Wall. For each book a student reads after three, they get a star sticker to place on their star on the wall. Then the race is on to see who can get the most stars on the name star first. I also encourage student reading by offering a variety of prizes each time they reach a certain level of books. For example, 3 books earns a star with their name, 5 books earns a bag of gummies, eight = bookmark, 10 = Star pencil (from Highsmith), 11 = eraser, 12 = gel pen, 13 = ice cream from cafeteria, 14 = free book from spring book fair, and 15 = an invitation to a sleepover at the school. Students who read all 15 books are recognized on the morning news show along with a larger sign with their name printed on it and placed next to all the stars on the Sunshine Wall.

Our local supervisor of elections offers an educational program for schools. I contact them early in the school year and arrange for them to visit my school for the voting. They create a ballot and do a quick demonstration on secret ballots and how to use the machines. They also provide "I voted" stickers for each student.

Trinity Elementary School
Pasco County Public Schools

“Total Read” Graph

I keep a “total read” display on our main hallway in the school. There are pictures of all the nominated titles, a sun with the words. “How many have YOU read?”, and graphs for each grade noting how many students in each class have read 1, 2, 3, 4, or 4+ books. The students are constantly checking the board to see how their classes are doing!

Gator Run Elementary School
Broward County Public Schools

Leading by Example!

The single most important thing I do to promote our program is to read all twenty five of the SSYRA program nominated titles. This enables me to really “sell” the books to match the readers with the material. Last year 92% of our students qualified to vote and three students, a third, fourth, and fifth grader, read all twenty five novels individually. The more you read, the more your students will read.

Gulliver Academy
Miami-Dade County

Promoting SSYRA

Before I introduce the books to the students, I have a coffee and donut get together for the teachers in grades 3-5. I give them a special bookmark and the annotated list of books. I briefly review the goals of the program and the rules for voting.

I videotaped a brief book talk of the titles to show to the students. I found this was more consistent and stayed “fresh.” When I would give the book talk “live,” I found that after several classes my presentation got a little flat.

If a teacher reads a book to her class, I run off a class set of the puzzle that goes with that book. I also give each teacher who reads one of the SSYRA titles a free Sunshine book from the Book Fair for their classroom.

At voting time, I borrow voting booths from the Supervisor of Elections. It seems to make the voting process special.

Stanton-Weirsdale Elementary School
Marion County Public Schools

Enlightening Ideas for SSYRA Success

I have several ways to motivate my students to read the Sunshine State Young Reader’s Award books. First, I make sure to have plenty of copies of every title. I hold booktalks with every class to get students interested in the stories. I display the Sunshine State books in a separate display so that they are always easily accessible. When I hold my fall book fair, I make sure that plenty of Sunshine State titles are available for students, teachers and parents to purchase.

I display the names of students who have read at least three Sunshine State books on a bulletin board that promotes my Sunshine State Ice Cream Sundae party. Students who read at least three Sunshine State books are eligible to attend the party. The more books students read the more ice cream and toppings they earn. This is a great motivator. Students love to see their name displayed on the bulletin board and work to earn huge ice cream sundaes!

Record keeping is essential for a successful program. Each student has a ticket which is stamped for every book on the list they finish reading. The library media center keeps a list of student's names and books they have read. Since the program is designed to get students motivated to read, I accept the following items as proof a student has read a Sunshine State book: an *Accelerated Reader* (AR) program test with grade of 70% or higher, a note from a teacher or parent stating the child read the book, or a teacher-graded book report. Some students may be reading books out of their ZPD for the Sunshine State program and I do not wish to penalize them for a low grade on a comprehension test. Remember the program is trying to encourage children to read quality, current literature. Allow them to take the AR tests even if the book is read aloud. I make certain that everyone gets credit for reading the book even if they fail the AR test.

I also hold a Sunshine State Mystery Object Contest each year. I collect realia from each book and display it in a case along with a number. As students finish reading the books, they write the number of the mystery object next to the title of the book it is from on their Sunshine State bookmark. The student with the most correct answers at the end of the program wins a \$25.00 Barnes and Nobles' gift certificate.

Don't forget to recognize teachers who help promote the program in their classrooms. I make sure all teachers get an ice cream sundae after our party. I also like to announce the names of teachers who read Sunshine State books aloud to their classes on our morning news show. It is often helpful to hold a meeting to introduce the Sunshine State Program and the year's titles to the teachers at the beginning of the school year. Make sure to serve sunny foods to help everyone get into the Sunshine State spirit of things.

Palm City Elementary School
Martin County Public Schools

Television News and ESE Success

Make a poster out of the list of SSYRA titles and student names and display on an easel near the books. Have students sign their name after reading a title and add a sticker for each title read.

Assign a booktalk to each person in your television news crew. Have them type it into a *PowerPoint* slide show and hookup the computer to a television near the camera so they do not have to memorize the booktalk. If they wear sunglasses (for the Sunshine State Young Readers), it is difficult to tell they are reading the script. Using the chromakey on the titlemaker, have the cover of the book as your background with the student standing to the side giving the booktalk. It looks just like Reading Rainbow!

I collaborated with the teacher of a full time ESE class of fifth grade boys at beginning reading level and who were major discipline problems. The teacher read eight SSYRA titles to his class. I printed out the Reading Counts quiz for him to review with the students before they took their quiz and he used the activity packet of information for each book. The whole class was invited to The Make-Your-Own Ice Cream Sundae Party at the end of the year. Students in his class averaged a lexile gain of 145 points. I received a thank-you note from each student after the party.

West Riveria Magnet School
Palm Beach County Public Schools



Make Voting Special

Call your county elections office and ask if they will run a “book election” for your school, or even for all of the schools in your county that participate in SSYRA. This involves their printing up ballots for the 15 books, then bringing the voting machines to your school on the designated voting day so students may use the real voting machines to vote for their favorite book. This does take advance planning, and your school may have to pay for the cost of printing the ballots, but, if you get this in place early and advertise it well, you will have many students make the effort to read at least three books so they can participate in the voting. The elections office may even include a presentation about the voting process to all students on the voting day. A nice perk is that the tabulation machine will count all the votes for you and give you a print-out of results within minutes of the end of voting.

Lawton Chiles Elementary School
Orange County Public Schools

Sunshine State Lunch Bunch

Students who read at least one title may join the SSYRA Lunch Bunch during their lunch period once a week in the library media center. The group will discuss the book(s) they have read and recommend titles to others. Students must pick up a pass from the library media center the morning of their scheduled SSYRA Lunch Bunch.

Students who read ten or more books receive Book Fair Bucks for the spring book fair.

Adams Middle School
Hillsborough County Public Schools

Library/Reading Club

Our school media center has a Library/Reading Club that is very active in promoting and reading school library books. The students are trained in techniques and skills on book talking and storytelling. Consequently, during the SSYRA program the members of the club read all recommended titles and then share their opinions with other club members, the library media specialist, and the reading leader. After the reading process is completed by all sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, the Library/Reading Club prepare short edited promotional commercials in the broadcasting studio. These commercials are broadcasted for morning announcements and also before the “thirty-minutes-of-reading” in our school each week. The reading commercials are presented in book talk and storytelling formats and also display the books at the same time. The student population is very receptive to these types of morning announcements and this is reflected in our library circulation statistics.

The Library/Reading Club not only participates in videorecording reading promotional commercials, but they also visit different classes each week promoting the love for reading. It is great advertising to have students promoting and motivating other students to read. Every time a student returns a book to the library media center, they fill out a participation coupon with their name, title of the book, and Language Arts teacher’s name and drop it in a pencil money box. The coupons are then collected and tallied. The best readers are identified. They receive prizes and rewards that are presented to them by the administrators during televised morning announcements.

Jose Marti Middle School
Miami-Dade County Public Schools

“Name That Book”

Play the “Name That Book” game at your celebration. Students compete either as individuals or on teams to be the first to name the book title as one or two sentences from the books are read aloud.

Surfside Middle School
Bay County Public Schools