

Reading Odyssey

Odyssey Elementary School

Colorado Springs, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Formerly known as *One Book*, Reading Odyssey aims to promote family literacy and build a greater sense of community through the shared experience of reading books as a community. Odyssey Elementary's goal was to give each student their own book and to encourage reading at home.

Reading Odyssey began with a school wide kick-off assembly including a short skit and a message from the Odyssey principal. Upon dismissal, each student received a copy of the book and a bookmark with the reading schedule. The school used morning trivia as an incentive to read each night. Students received reading tickets for answering trivia correctly. At the end of each program, these tickets were entered into a drawing, and winners of the drawing were given new books (purchased with Book Fair Scholastic Dollars) to add to their home libraries.

Odyssey hosted two family literacy nights per book. Students and their families were invited to attend a relaxed evening with a reading, a small craft and snacks. Some of the nights offered three reading rooms: K-1, 2-3, and 4-5. This allowed teachers to model comprehension questions during read alouds that were appropriate for different reading levels. Parents gave positive feedback through surveys, stating their enjoyment of the relaxed atmosphere of the events and the time spent together with their children and other community members.

Planning the Reading Odyssey was truly a group effort. Odyssey's principal requested that the Library Paraprofessional facilitate the program. A committee was then formed to offer support, including one teacher from each grade level (K-5), one discovery teacher, a reading interventionist, and support from the administration team. This team spent time reading the book and developing ideas for promoting school and community involvement. Together, they planned a kick-off assembly for our students, shared ideas with other classroom teachers for tying the book in with classroom lessons, planned two family literacy nights per program, developed resources to share with families, and organized celebrations after completing the book as a community.

Odyssey's principal offers the following advice to those looking to start a similar initiative: "Take the jump! While the process of implementing a school and community wide book club is time consuming, you will reap the rewards of bringing your school community together. Parents, students, and teachers alike gained a renewed interest in our library program, have continued seeking books to read together, and have been passionate in their support of continuing the Reading Odyssey program in coming years. There has been such a buzz about the program that other schools within our district have reached out to our school for support adopting similar programs in the coming school year."