

# Motivation Matters!



## GRANT RECIPIENTS

Sandra Athans, Denise Devine, Donna Henry, Robin Parante, & Kimberly Sammon

Chittenango Central School District  
Bolivar Road Elementary School

[Athanss@ccs.cnyric.org](mailto:Athanss@ccs.cnyric.org)  
[Devined@ccs.cnyric.org](mailto:Devined@ccs.cnyric.org)  
[Henryd@ccs.cnyric.org](mailto:Henryd@ccs.cnyric.org)  
[Parenter@ccs.cnyric.org](mailto:Parenter@ccs.cnyric.org)  
[Sammonk@ccs.cnyric.org](mailto:Sammonk@ccs.cnyric.org)

## NYS STANDARD

ELA 1 – 3: Students will read and write for information and understanding, for literary response and expression, for critical analysis, and evaluation

## GRADE LEVEL

Grade 4

## STUDENTS SERVED

65 students

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this grant was to identify and evaluate effective methods of improving student motivation. We hoped to find ways to encourage and motivate all students to use their “best effort” on specific tasks that were linked to our small group, strategy-based approach to reading comprehension instruction. Based on a study last year, we determined that our guided-reading approach significantly improved students’ reading skills providing they actively participated in instruction. We also found that lack of motivation was a key barrier preventing students from achieving similar gains. We were particularly interested in affecting the highly unmotivated students. We first identified or created motivational activities to accompany our instruction: monthly 100% Effort Celebrations (where students were awarded for their effort), “Motivation Bins” (where students were provided with extension activities linked to our thematic reading units/small prizes were awarded as they completed activities), among other techniques and rewards. To evaluate the program, we analyzed student participation in our motivational activities and reviewed their performance on pre and post standardized comprehension assessment tests and benchmarks, among other activities. To implement the grant, we had prepared units of instruction & assessments, created motivational extension activities, and created monitoring devices. Additionally, we researched current motivational ideas from authorities & others.

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

Overall, we found that the motivational activities that were integrated into our instructional approach successfully motivated *most* students and encouraged their participation and best effort. Specifically, most students’ performance on post assessments improved in comparison to their pre assessment. However, the highly unmotivated segment, whose lack of motivation extended into other academic areas as well as social areas, needed a more pervasive system to encourage their best effort, including frequent monitoring, individually-tailored motivational rewards, teacher-parent teamwork, and negative consequences that extended beyond school-based routines, such as after school detention.