

# Proven ideas from Jostens Renaissance



## While You Were Out!

Submitted by: Michele Hill & Heidi Salerno

With the growing popularity of reality shows, our Renaissance students came up with a great idea after a presentation given by a Jostens speaker. The speaker stressed the importance of creating a positive school climate, including the physical climate of a school. The atmosphere of the building should be aesthetically appealing to all groups within the school. This ensures that all students and staff feel welcome. The students got excited ... and so did we! We came up with the idea to combine the popular reality show "While You Were Out," with the desire to make our building more attractive. We asked teachers to fill out an application with favorite color, themes, subjects taught, etc. Then, while they were out, we'd sneak in and give the room a makeover. The students and staff have very warmly received the idea. The students love that they are a part of improving the building and that they get to actually paint, stencil, etc. Our first makeover was the faculty room and it gave our staff such a boost in morale! Now we pick a room once a month and make it unique! This activity lends itself to creativity, and students love to be creative. There is a great sense of pride in producing something that all can admire. I cannot tell you how many non-traditional Renaissance kids come out for this activity. What an impact this activity has had on our school!

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## Movie Day

Submitted by: Jason Naucke

As a culmination of a long school year, a way to highlight our state mandated tests (MAP), and motivation to persevere through the late winter/early spring school calendar, Hancock High School Renaissance offers this exciting opportunity to our students:

Any student with a 95% attendance rate or above in the six weeks prior to our MAP tests and who also demonstrates self-motivation and effort during the testing period is treated to a day trip to the movies on the Friday at the conclusion of testing week. We set our attendance number at 95% so that a student with an early absence still has motivation to attend. (95% attendance allows each student to miss 1.5 days during those six weeks.) HHS Renaissance went out and partnered with a community movie theatre that agreed to open early and charge the school a reduced rate for both the movies and concessions. We then promoted the MOVIE DAY through signs in our hallways, daily school announcements, and pep talks by our Renaissance students during advisory (home room).

We have approximately 450 students in our high school. In the past three years we have had 127 (2002-03), 240 (2003-04), and 334 (2004-05) students qualify to attend MOVIE DAY. We are anxiously awaiting next year as our Renaissance goal is to have 100% of students qualify for this promotion. (We were at 75% in 2005!!!)

This promotion has increased attendance, decreased discipline, and improved effort on our state tests.

For more information, please contact:

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One of the most powerful aspects of Jostens Renaissance is the collection of great ideas that are shared by schools like yours. Here are a few of the best ideas Jostens Renaissance schools have recently shared. For more ideas like this and a wealth of other Jostens Renaissance resources, contact your Jostens representative or visit [Jostens.com/educatorservices](http://Jostens.com/educatorservices).

## **Eighth Grade Renaissance Leadership Camp**

Submitted by: Frank Rudnesky

One of our best ideas is our 8th grade Renaissance Leadership Camp. In order to “juice” our incoming 8th graders (they are our oldest students) we promote a one day camp for all 8th graders and their parents. The parents are a key component because they are the missing link. They can reinforce what we teach, and we get an early start on signups for parent committees.

By including parents as much as possible, we maintain our link to the community and it creates an “US” attitude instead of “we versus them.” This collaboration is truly the spirit of Renaissance.

At the end of the school year we send a letter home to all seventh graders that will be entering the eighth grade inviting them and their parents to attend the one day camp. The date is usually two weeks prior to the start of school. We need about five teachers and the principal to pull it off. We also have parents in attendance so they help out when needed.

We start with a welcome continental breakfast where teachers and parents can introduce themselves and students can get reacquainted. This is also a great welcoming for any new students.

The camp is based on the *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* and the Renaissance principles. We have been using this curriculum for years and Jostens recently came out with a supporting booklet available at corporate headquarters.

We spend the morning in a series of team building exercises facilitated by our teachers and students that recently graduated. They are all thrilled to be a part of this activity. Our principal facilitates a multimedia presentation of the first three habits with exercises, PowerPoint slides, music, and personal experiences.

The day culminates with a pizza party and games. This “Renaissance Leadership Camp” component has increased our parental involvement right from the start of the school year. This has given us advantages over other years because we start the year running with the support we need from the community.

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