

2017-2018 U Got Brains Champion Schools Program

Faculty Advisor Survey Report

The Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey (BIANJ) is a recipient of a New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety (NJDHTS) Comprehensive Traffic Safety Grant. In 2010, to address the issue of teen driving safety, BIANJ created the *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program*. This statewide peer-to-peer program challenges teams of students, guided by a faculty advisor, to create a teen safe driving campaign in their school and community. The Champion Schools Program has been a part of the BIANJ Comprehensive Traffic Safety Grant since 2010 and has grown every year both in the number of participating schools as well as the number of corporate and non-profit sponsors.

In 2014, the fourth year of the program, BIANJ partnered with The Research Institute at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) to create a faculty advisor survey to help evaluate the effectiveness of the Champion Schools Program. CHOP conducted a series of telephone interviews with the advisors to evaluate the 2013-2014 program from their perspective. CHOP then analyzed the results of the survey and created a report of their findings.

For the 2017-2018 program, BIANJ used an amended version of the original faculty advisor survey to evaluate the effectiveness of this year's program from the perspective of the faculty advisors. BIANJ staff posted the survey online, tallied the results and wrote the following summary report of their findings: **(Complete tally results are included with this summary report)*

The 2017-2018 school year was the 8th year of the *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program*. 63 high schools (public, private and technical) from 18 counties participated in the program. As a prerequisite for being chosen, schools signed a participation agreement which stated that they would participate, to the best of their ability, in a survey of the Champion Schools Program. BIANJ Champion Schools technical support staff informed the faculty advisors of the survey at their technical support visits, in emails to the faculty advisors and during technical support conference calls. The online faculty advisor survey was posted in May, and emails went out to the faculty advisors in May and June reminding them to complete the survey.

Responses were received from faculty advisors of 47 participating schools (75%). A total of 63 faculty advisors responded to the survey-Buena Regional, Lenape Regional HS District, Immaculate Heart Academy, Manchester Regional Day Academy, Somerset Academy, Nottingham, Robbinsville, Jackson Liberty, Red Bank Catholic, and JFK Memorial each had two faculty advisors respond and Lindenwold, St. Joseph, and Oakcrest had responses from 3 faculty advisors. One respondent was anonymous. The survey consisted of 17 questions. A copy of the survey along with tally results from the respondents is attached.

Questions #1 asked for the name of their high school. 63 advisors answered this question. 1 respondent did not give the name of their school.

Question #2 of the survey asked the participants ***"to respond to the ease or difficulty a series of activities based on a scale from 1-7, with 1 being very hard and 7 being very easy"***. 63 advisors answered this question.

In response to the question, ***"communicating with the students about the project was..."*** a majority of the advisors (71%) found that was either *"easy"* or *"very easy"*, while 2 advisors (3%) found communicating with the students to be either *"hard"* or *"very hard"*.

In response to the question, ***"getting support from school administrators was..."*** a majority also stated that was either *"easy"* or *"very easy"* (76%), however 4 advisors or 6% stated that getting support from school administrators was either *"very hard"* or *"hard"*.

Schools seemed to have a more difficult time getting their communities involved, with only 41% of respondents stating that “**getting the community involved**” was either “easy” or “very easy” while 6% found that it was either “hard” or “very hard” to get support from the community.

Schools seemed to have an easier time managing their project finances, with a majority of respondents (73%) answering that it was either “easy” or “very easy” to “**manage the program’s finances**” while 5 advisors or 8% found that managing the finances was either “hard” or “very hard”.

Only 51% of respondents thought that it was either “easy” or “very easy” to “**find time to meet with student team members**”, while 4 advisors (6%) thought that it was either “hard” or “very hard” to find the time to meet with students.

The results were similar for the question that asked about “**getting student team members to take a leadership role**”, with only 52% of respondents stating that it was either “easy” or “very easy” while 2 respondents or 3% stating that it was “very hard”.

Results were similar for the question that asked about “**planning the program**”, with 56% of the respondents stating that it was either “easy” or “very easy” to plan the program and 3% stating that it was either “hard” or “very hard” to plan for the program.

A majority of the respondents (79%) thought that it was either “easy” or “very easy” to “**advise the students**”, while only 1 respondent (2%) thought that it was “very hard”.

Question #3 asked the participants to “**describe any advantages or ‘good things’ associated with having a Champion School Project at their school**”. 62 respondents answered, while one respondent skipped this question. Comments varied, but many respondents stated that having the opportunity to get students involved, getting the message out, and saving lives were advantages of the project. Several advisors stated that their projects brought their communities together and caused a heightened awareness about the issue of teen safe driving in both their schools and towns. One faculty advisor stated that the Champion Schools Program allowed them to host a *Share the Keys* program and gave their students the opportunity to speak to the Board of Education about their campaign and teen driving safety. Several faculty advisors stated that the cash stipend allowed them the resources to create meaningful campaigns that involved and impacted the whole community. Other respondents talked about how the program fostered student leadership and empowerment from the students involved and how it allowed the students to care for and help fellow students. It made the students understand how important it is to be a driver as well as a valued passenger. The students learned to work together for a common goal with community members. They formed a great relationship with the police, fire and EMTs. One advisor stated that the students were eager to participate and another stated that the program keeps driving issues in the news. One advisor stated that, “*THE TRAFFIC PATTERN AT OUR SCHOOL IS SAFER. THE STUDENTS ENJOYED THE WORK AND WORKED TOGETHER IN UNITY*”. One advisor reported that “*It brought the community into our initiative and enabled the students to become aware of the dangers of distracted driving. Having been involved with BIANJ and The Champion Schools Program for several years, our campaign continues to evolve each year and attract the attention of a new audience each time. This is the first year students were able to drive to and park on our school campus, and to date there are no accidents to report*”. Another advisor talked about the change of culture in their school and how “*Our principal now wants all student councils to do a program like U Got Brains in order to be more about raising awareness for important causes and not just about fundraising for senior year events!*”. Several advisors commented on how the high school students enjoyed visiting elementary and middle school classes and delivering the safety messages to younger children. “*This*

year, we helped with the Walking School Bus that was being utilized in the elementary schools. This was a great advantage because the younger kids are starting to find out about the program". A faculty advisor from a school that was new to the program stated, "This was the first opportunity that our student's had to participate in the program. Our students come from several districts and camaraderie is a skill we strive for. The major advantage for our students aside from learning about the cautions they should take on the road, was the introduction to civic engagement for our students. Students found their voices to become advocates for promoting an issue so important to their lives. They developed skills and learned to work with new technologies in order to complete the project". Another advisor stated, "The "U Got Brains" Program was a great compliment to our 3 part Comprehensive Driver Safety Program we have here in our three Hamilton Township Schools!! This program gave us the opportunity to get "ALL" of our students and teachers involved with driver safety issues outside of our driver education classroom, the hours spent in our state of the art simulators and the hours spent in the Behind the Wheel training in a car!! A great reminder for the students who have completed our program and an introduction for those who have not started the process!!" Another advisor stated, "I believe that peer to peer teaching and involvement is the best way to promote teen safety driver awareness. Having a friend or fellow student promoting a cause will have more of an impact on teens than a teacher/administrator". One faculty advisor stated that the crash rate of the upperclassmen had gone down based on their project research. Another faculty advisor commented, "At IHA we have seen a culture of safe driving develop with students, staff and parents. Every year more people are getting the message and changing driving behavior". One advisor reported, "The Champion Schools Program helps keep the message of safe driving alive and present among the students. When we first started this program 3 years ago the seatbelt use among student drivers was very low, around 60%. This year we had 98% seat belt compliance!" A faculty advisor from our "Student Ambassadors" team (Lenape Regional High School District has won the grand prize several times and no longer competes for prizes, but instead the students create materials to help promote The Champion Schools Program) commented that "The program gives our students a "real world" experience of what it is like to work with other professionals on a program that is seen throughout the entire state".

Question #4 asked the participants to "**describe any disadvantages or 'bad things' associated with having a Champion School Project at their school**". 60 advisors responded to this question and 3 advisors did not answer it. Twenty-one (35%) of the respondents said that there were no disadvantages to having a project at school; in fact one respondent replied that "There are no disadvantages, any time the students are hearing the message about not texting and driving it is a "win" situation!!" Fifteen of the respondents (25%) stated that not having enough time to meet with students was a disadvantage. They stated that "Getting the whole group together was difficult at times. Students are involved in so many things that we had to have several meetings to give the same information.". A few advisors said that they were from small schools and lacked resources to help spread their messages. Three advisors cited the lack of student involvement and one stated that "it was difficult to have students step up to take a leadership role and plan events." Some advisors commented that it was difficult to get the community involved. Others responded that it was hard to plan for events because their administrations did not like outside activities and rejected some of the team's ideas for events. Two advisors commented that their administration would not approve the trip to the Awards Showcase. Two respondents stated that it was difficult to stay within the budget, and a few advisors commented that it was difficult to access the funds from the schools. One advisor remarked that he/she would rather have a debit card to access the funds.

Question #5 asked the participants "**what kinds of things made it easier for you to have the program at your school?**" Fifty seven advisors (90%) responded to the question and 6 advisors did not answer.

According to the advisor responses, support seemed to be the biggest factor in helping to implement their programs. Almost 1/3 of the respondents stated that support for the program from their administration and other faculty members made it easier for them to have the program. Nearly a quarter of the respondents cited the support that they received from the staff of BIANJ and commented on how easy it was to communicate with them. Several advisors mentioned that the online application form was easy to complete, the program guidelines were clear and the website “toolkit” made it easy to find the program forms and contained many helpful resources. Advisors also mentioned support from the community and local police departments. Several advisors mentioned that the stipend given by BIANJ helped to defray the costs of their campaign and allowed them to purchase resources and materials. Others noted that the sponsors of the program gave support and provided guest speakers which enhanced their campaigns. Several respondents commented on the fact that they have access to technology or worked with the technology staff at school to help implement their program. Several advisors commented that their students were really great and they made it easier to implement their program. A few advisors reported that having a regular meeting time during class hours and the ability to work the program into their regular lesson plans helped to implement their program. One advisor noted that the program was easier to implement due to the safe driving climate at school. Schools who had participated in earlier years noted that they were now familiar with the program and it was easier to get the project completed. One advisor commented that all of the students were familiar with the program and it is now a “rite of passage” for sophomores.

Question #6 asked participants “*what kinds of things made it harder for you to have the program at your school?*” Fifty-four advisors answered the question (86%) and 9 did not answer. Ten advisors answered that there was nothing that made it harder to have the program at their school. Lack of time was the biggest factor noted by the advisors. Many commented that students and teachers are so busy and time is so limited that it is hard to schedule meetings. Several respondents noted that they are from small schools with limited resources and students. Many commented that the school year schedule with vacations and testing made it difficult to plan for the program and to attend the Award Showcase. One advisor noted that this year the weather was a factor in making it harder to implement the planned activities for the project. A few advisors reported that it was hard to get access to the stipend funds from their business office. Some cited the difficulty in finding the right students to help lead the project and a lack of commitment from students.

Question #7 asked, “*What aspects of the program worked really well and why?*” Fifty-eight advisors (92%) answered this question and 5 did not answer. Many respondents remarked on how well the program was run and structured. They commented that the general guidelines were really clear and having a timeline for the program was helpful. They liked having categories of topics to choose from and the flexibility that the program offered. Advisors noted that the technical support visits by BIANJ staff really helped the students understand the program and allowed them to brainstorm ideas for their projects while the ongoing support from BIANJ staff helped to answer any questions from the students. Advisors also cited the UGotBrains website that housed the application, midterm and final report forms and how easy it was to apply for and report on their projects. They also mentioned the videos and other resources that were on the website and how helpful they were to their students. The stipend and speakers provided by the program were also factors that helped to make the program run well. Many respondents remarked on the support and collaboration that they received from other teachers and some mentioned that they liked co-advising on the project. Other advisors remarked on the successful involvement of the students and their excitement for the program. Several advisors felt that the program was successful because it was a peer-to-peer program and it empowered the students to work together to create successful projects.

Question #8 asked participants, *“What aspects of the program did not work so well and why?”* Fifty-three advisors (84%) answered the question and 10 did not respond. Eighteen (32%) said that all aspects of the program went well and did not have any problems. Once again, lack of time was listed as the biggest factor in the program not working well. Advisors commented that there was not enough time in the day, that it was difficult to find the time to schedule meetings due to too many other activities that students were involved in, that the school calendar and state testing schedule hampered their ability to plan for events or meetings, and that lack of time impaired their ability to execute their ideas and spread their safety messages to the school and community. Other respondents commented on the difficulty they had with the student team members following up on and executing their great ideas. First year schools said that being new to the program made it hard and the lessons they learned in the first year would make it easier for them moving forward. A few advisors commented that it was difficult getting students interested in the program and keeping their interest for the entire year. Some commented that the venue and time of year for the Awards Showcase made it difficult to get approval from their administration to attend.

Question #9 asked participants, *“How did you get student members to participate in the program?”* Sixty-one advisors (97%) answered the question and 2 advisors did not answer. Advisors employed a variety of strategies to get students to participate in the program. Their students set up display tables to promote their program at lunch and after school; they promoted the program on morning announcements, in Google Classroom, with flyers, emails, posters, and sign-in sheets; and they spread the program by word of mouth. Advisors said that all they had to do was ask-the students were really excited to be a part of the program because the topic was relevant to them and they wanted to help keep their friends and themselves safer on the roads. They also wanted to be a part of a good cause. Other advisors said that students volunteered. Another advisor stated that their students recruited members and built their own teams. Some advisors talked about building on the success of the previous year’s project. It encouraged students to come back. Many of the advisors stated that recruitment was helped by making it a school-wide project involving many subjects-they collaborated with various other classes including Media/TV, Art, Civics, Graphic Design, English, Physical Education and Health. Advisors also promoted the program in the Driver Education classes and some made the campaign part of the curriculum or a class project. Some schools partnered with SADD students and advisors. Some promoted the program as a college resume builder and some gave extra credit or community service hours for students who participated. Several advisors stated that the end of the year Awards Showcase at Six Flags Great Adventure theme park was a great motivator.

Question #10 asked participants *“to rate your response to each statement using a scale from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree* (63 advisors answered these questions; 0 skips)

In response to the question, *“student team members worked cohesively together”*, a majority of the respondents (73%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement while 2 respondents (3%) *“strongly disagreed”*.

Thirty-six of the advisors (57%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement that *“student leaders held regular meetings that I attended”*, while 4 respondents (6%) either *“disagreed”* or *“strongly disagreed”* with that statement.

A majority of the respondents (73%) also either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement that “***students had all the materials and resources that they needed***” while three of the advisors (5%) either “*disagreed*” or “*strongly disagreed*” with that statement.

In response to the question, “***I had enough time to advise the students***”, 54% of the respondents either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement while 4 advisors (6%) either “*disagreed*” or “*strongly disagreed*”.

In response to the question, “***I felt supported by my school’s administration***”, 76% of the respondents either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, while 6% of the advisors either “*disagreed*” or “*strongly disagreed*”.

In response to the question, “***I felt supported by BIANJ staff***”, 87% of the respondents either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, while two advisors (3%) “*strongly disagreed*”.

A majority of the respondents (67%) either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, “***I felt supported by my fellow teachers***”, while 4 of respondents (6%) either “*disagreed*” or “*strongly disagreed*”.

A majority of the respondents (70%) either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, “***The program activities went as I had planned***”, while 5% either “*disagreed*” or “*strongly disagreed*” with the statement.

In response to the question, “***I collaborated on the mid-year report with my students***”, 59% of respondents either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, while 3% “*strongly disagreed*”.

A majority of respondents (67%) either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, “***I collaborated on the final report with my students***”, while 3% “*strongly disagreed*”.

76% of the respondents either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, “***Student team members were engaged with the program***”, while 3 respondents (5%) either “*disagreed*” or “*strongly disagreed*”.

Only 40% of respondents either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, “***The community was engaged with the program***”, while 13% either “*disagreed*” or “*strongly disagreed*”.

A larger number of respondents (60%) either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement that “***The student body was engaged with the program***”, while 5% either “*disagreed*” or “*strongly disagreed*”.

A large majority of the respondents (90%) either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, “***My interactions with student team members were positive***”, while 3% “*strongly disagreed*”.

Results were mixed with responses to the statement, “***Being an advisor helps my career***”, with 60% of respondents either “*agreeing*” or “*strongly agreeing*” with the statement, while 11% either “*disagreed*” or “*strongly disagreed*”.

A majority of respondents (81%) either “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, “**Overall, I’m happy with my advising experience this year**”, while 5% “*strongly disagreed*”.

Question #11, “What would make things better next year?” Forty-eight advisors (76%) answered the question and 15 advisors did not answer. Eight advisors (17%) that responded to the question stated that the program runs well now and does not need to be improved. Once again, the issue of time is key-with advisors stating that they wish they had applied earlier, had more time to get students involved, to organize and plan the campaign, to hold meetings and to plan for community events. Other advisors stated that getting more involvement and commitment from students would help to make things better. Some commented that increased support from the administration, the parents and the community would help make their programs better. Others reported that better communication between the school, community and parents would help. One first-year advisor stated that she will be better prepared next year because now she has experience with the program. Some advisors had advice for BIANJ to make the program better including: starting the application process earlier, increasing the stipend amount, adding more topic ideas, holding a Pre-Program Conference where schools could hear from last year’s winning schools, having access to winning schools to get advice on how to implement their program, creating midterm and final reports in Word or Google Docs so that multiple students can work on them, and recognizing schools for their hard work by awarding cash prizes to honorable mentions or schools that have been in the program for 5 or more continuous years.

Question #12 was a set of questions that asked respondents “**about how unhelpful or helpful certain resources are. Please rate each resource on a scale from (1) Extremely Unhelpful to (7) Extremely Helpful. If you did not use the resource please select ‘Did Not Use’**”. (63 advisors answered the questions, 0 skips)

In response to the question, “**my interactions with the BIANJ staff were...**” a large majority of the respondents (73%) stated that they were either “*very helpful or extremely helpful*”; 2 participants (3%) responded “*extremely unhelpful*”. Eleven respondents (17%) responded “*did not use*”.*

* (BIANJ staff had interactions with at least one advisor from all of the participating schools)

In response to the question, “**the technical assistance visit (where a representative from the Champion School Program presented information) was...**” a majority of the respondents (54%) stated that the visit was either “*very helpful or extremely helpful*”; 2 respondents (3%) replied that the visit was “*extremely unhelpful*”, while 24 (38%) responded “*did not use*”.*

* (Technical visits were made to all of the participating schools)

In response to the question, “**The technical assistance calls were...**” 16% stated the calls were either “*very helpful*” or “*extremely helpful*”, one school (2%) found the calls to be “*extremely unhelpful*”, while 79% responded, “*did not use*”.

In response to the question, “**JerseyDrives.com was...**” 65% stated that the website was either “*very helpful*” or “*extremely helpful*”, 2 of the respondents (3%) found the website to be either “*very unhelpful*” or “*extremely unhelpful*”, while 16% responded, “*did not use*”.

In response to the question, “**The JerseyDrives app was...**” 41% stated that the app was either “*very helpful*” or “*extremely helpful*”, 5 of the respondents (8%) found the website to be either “*very unhelpful*” or “*extremely unhelpful*”, while 37% responded, “*did not use*”.

Question #13 asked, *“How often did you visit the U Got Brains website to access the “Tools for Schools?”* 8% stated they accessed the website *“0 times”*, 32% responded *“1-2 times”*, 38% responded *“3-5 times”*, and 22% responded *“6+ times”*.

Question #14 asked, *“About how often did the student team members meet?”* 2% responded that they met *“0 times”*, 2% responded *“1 time”*, 2% responded *“2-3 times”*, 8% responded *“4 times”*, and 87% responded *“5+ times”*.

Question #15 asked, *“How often did the student team members meet with you?”* 2% responded *“0 times”*, 0% responded *“1 time”*, 10% responded *“2-3 times”*, 8% responded *“4 times”*, and 81% responded *“5+ times”*.

Question #16 asked, *“In general, do you think students are safer drivers because of your project of the U Got Brains Champion Schools Program? Please rate your response from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree.”* One advisor (2%) answered *“strongly disagree”*, 77% responded either *“agree”* or *“strongly agree”*.

Question #17 asked, *“In general, do you think students are safer passengers because of your project of the U Got Brains Champion Schools Program? Please rate your response from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree.”* One advisor (2%) answered *“strongly disagree”*, and 76% responded either *“agree”* or *“strongly agree”* with the statement.

General Conclusions from the Faculty Advisor Survey Evaluations:

Advantages of the Champion Schools Program

- A large majority of the faculty advisors think that their students are safer drivers and safer passengers because of their U Got Brains Champion Schools Project.
- Champion Schools Program brings the school and local community together around the issue of teen driving safety.
- Champion Schools Program offers the opportunity to discuss and promote safe driving practices.
- Champion Schools Program helps to get the message out and heighten awareness of teen driving safety.
- Champion Schools Program helps to bring about a change in both student and community behavior when it came to teen driving safety.
- Champion Schools Program is a student-centered and student driven peer-to-peer program.
- Students are given the opportunity to speak as advocates for teen driving safety.
- Students experience a sense of pride that comes from accomplishing something important.
- The End of the Year Showcase at Great Adventure was a great reward for students’ hard work.

Aspects of the Program that Worked Well

- Returning school advisors commented that it was easier to get students involved with their project because they knew the Champion Schools Program
- Cash stipend made it easier to fund the program
- Faculty advisors who felt supported by their administration, parents and local community stated that this support helped their project go well.
- Faculty advisors overwhelmingly felt supported by BIANJ technical support staff.

- A majority of faculty advisors felt that they were happy with their advising experience.

Challenges of the Champion Schools Program

- Finding the time to meet with students and plan for the program was challenging for many schools.
- Finding the time to fit the program into the existing school calendar was challenging for some schools. Many students were involved in multiple activities and the state testing schedule hindered meeting times.
- Lack of student involvement and getting students to follow-up on ideas was challenging for some schools.
- Getting the community involved was challenging for some schools.
- New Champion Schools struggle with the process of the program more than schools who are returning Champion Schools (although the process seems to be easier with each returning year).

Overall, the U Got Brains Champion Schools Program was found to be an effective tool to engage students to help raise awareness in their schools and communities about teen driving safety and to help change both teen driver and teen passenger behaviors. Feedback from the participating faculty advisors and students will help the Brain Injury Alliance of NJ to continually improve the *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program* and allows us to offer a proven, effective statewide peer-to-peer teen driving safety program. By partnering with the NJ Division of Highway Safety and our corporate sponsors, we can continue to help keep our roadways safer for New Jersey's newest drivers and their passengers.