

2021-2022 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 (NJDHST) 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 steadily 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 2021-2022 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 2021-2022 school year was the 12th year of the *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program*. 49 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 from 33 of the 49 participating schools (67%). A total of 42 faculty advisors responded to the survey. Lenape Regional HS District had 4 faculty advisors respond and Long Branch High School had 3 advisors respond. Atlantic Christian HS, Marlboro HS, Nottingham HS, and Robbinsville HS each had 2 advisors respond. Bound Brook HS, Bridgewater-Raritan HS, CharterTech HS for the Performing Arts, Clearview Regional HS, Colts Neck HS, Columbia HS, Delaware Valley Regional HS, Indian Hills HS, Immaculate Heart Academy, Kearny HS, Kittatinny Regional HS, Lakeland Regional HS, Manchester Regional Day School, Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Sciences (MATES), Mary Help of Christian Academy, Matawan Regional HS, Middletown HS South, Neptune HS, Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering, Rae Kushner Yeshiva HS, Red Bank Catholic HS, Red Bank Regional HS, Riverside HS, Scotch Plains-Fanwood HS, South Brunswick HS, South Plainfield HS, and Westwood Regional HS each had one response from a faculty advisor. 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. 42 advisors answered this question.

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"*. 42 advisors answered this question.

In response to the question, *"communicating with the students about the project was..."* almost 3/4 of the advisors (74%) found that was either *"easy"* or *"very easy"*, while 1 advisor (2%) found communicating with the students to be *"very hard"*.

In response to the question, **“getting support from school administrators was...”** Over three-fourths of the advisors also stated that it was either *“easy”* or *“very easy”* (76%), while 1 advisor or 2% stated that getting support from school administrators was *“hard”* and 1 advisor (2%) stated that it was *“somewhat hard”*.

Schools seemed to have a more difficult time getting their communities involved, with only 29% of respondents stating that **“getting the community involved”** was either *“easy”* or *“very easy”* while 6 respondents (14%) stated that it was *“hard”* to get support from the community and 4 advisors (10%) stated that it was *“somewhat hard”*.

Schools seemed to have an easier time managing their project finances, with a large majority of respondents (90%) answering that it was either *“easy”* or *“very easy”* to **“manage the program’s finances”** while 1 advisor or 2% found that managing the finances was *“hard”*.

Half of the respondents (50%) thought that it was either *“easy”* or *“very easy”* to **“find time to meet with student team members”**, while 2 advisors (5%) thought that it was either *“hard”* or *“very hard”* to find the time to meet with students.

Respondents had a more difficult time with the question that asked about **“getting student team members to take a leadership role,”** with only 38% of respondents stating that it was either *“easy”* or *“very easy”* while 5 respondents or 12% stating that it was *“hard”*.

Respondents had an easier time **“planning the program,”** with almost half (48%) of the respondents stating that it was either *“easy”* or *“very easy”* to plan the program and 0 respondents, or 0%, stating that it was either *“hard”* or *“very hard”* to plan for the program.

A large majority of the respondents (71%) thought that it was either *“easy”* or *“very easy”* to **“advise the students”**, with 0 respondents (0%) thought that it was either *“hard”* or *“very hard”*.

Question #3 asked the participants to **“describe any advantages or ‘good things’ associated with having a Champion School Project at their school”**. 40 respondents answered 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. 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. According to one advisor, *“It got students involved in something positive for our school. It was a good way for students that wouldn’t usually be grouped together to work with one another towards common goals.”* Another advisor commented, *“I think this is a great program to help teach leadership and advocacy. The program is straightforward and easy to help the students feel accomplished.”*

Many advisors talked about the advantages of peer-to-peer learning that allow the students to work together as a team where they create and control the project while the teacher guides and assists them. Several respondents talked about how the program gave them the opportunity to work together on an extremely important topic with students they do not normally get to teach. One advisor stated, *“Some advantages to this program was seeing the students collaborate again after a long 2-year pandemic. In addition, having students partake in creating a public service message to their peers and community members that sends a powerful message,”* while another stated, *“This program is always a worthwhile effort because it is aimed at such an important topic. It does get the students thinking about their own*

driving habits, and I think it does open their eyes to some of the things that they may be doing wrong when driving. I also think it's beneficial because it is students talking to students, and I think that always carries more weight in getting the message across."

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 advisor stated, *"The community has been more adapt to the programs we have created. Now when we post things online the residents share the info more, which in turn allows us to spread our message further. The community gives us good feedback about the program as well."* Another advisor commented about the program that *"It allows all high school students to be reminded of and encouraged to engage in safe driving and safe pedestrian practices. It also allows students to take direct ownership of outreach to their peers and to create messaging and initiatives that they feel will best impact fellow students and community members,"* while another stated, *"It Promotes Save Driving within my school and community."*

Other respondents talked about the support they received from their administration and the technical assistance they received from the Brain Injury Alliance of NJ. *"We appreciate the help and support the staff at BIANJ/U Got Brains offers us each year as we plan what specific issue or topic we would like to address."* and another advisor commented, *"So much good always comes from participating in the U Got Brains that it's hard come up with just a few good things. Without this program I don't think we would have the same success that we have each year. We couldn't do this without the support of U Got Brains."*

Question #4 asked the participants to ***"describe any disadvantages or 'bad things' associated with having a Champion School Project at their school"***. 36 advisors responded to this question. Eleven (31%) of the respondents said that there were no disadvantages to having a project at school; in fact, one respondent replied that *"There are no bad things at all; it is a great program!!"* According to the advisors, the biggest disadvantage to the program this year was time management. One advisor stated, *"It is always difficult to get students to meetings because many of them are involved in multiple extra-curricular activities and sports."*

Question #5 asked the participants ***"what kinds of things made it easier for you to have the program at your school?"*** 41 advisors responded to the question. According to the advisor responses, support was the biggest factor in helping to implement their programs. Almost half (41%) 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. Five (12%) 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 stipend given by BIANJ helped to defray the costs of their campaign and allowed them to purchase resources and materials. Several advisors commented that their students were great, and they made it easier to implement their program. 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, *"Things such as student motivation, administration support, and local resources all made it easier for us to have the program at our school. Students that have participated in our project work in the past feel passionately about the project and were not only eager to continue their work this year but also to encourage others to join their efforts. We are fortunate enough to have a school administration that promotes creativity and positive awareness efforts that allows us to conduct our many project initiatives. Finally, local businesses are very supportive of the school and therefore are always willing to share our project materials with their customers and patrons!"*

Question #6 asked participants ***"what kinds of things made it harder for you to have the program at your school?"*** 40 advisors answered the question. 23% of the advisors answered that there was nothing

that made it harder to have the program at their school. However, several of the advisors stated that COVID-19, and the disruption to the school schedules that it continued to have, made it a challenge to overcome in implementing and completing their campaigns. Some commented that students and teachers are so busy, and time is so limited that it is hard to schedule meetings. One advisor noted, *"Finding time for activities has been especially challenging over the last few years with the various and changing restrictions"*

Question #7 asked, *"What aspects of the program worked really well and why?"* 41 advisors answered this question. Most of the respondents stated that the PSA and social media aspects of the campaign worked well. A few advisors also commented on how the virtual visits from BIANJ staff worked well. Advisors liked having categories of topics to choose from and the flexibility that the program offered. Many of the respondents commented on how having freedom of choice for the topics and having the program led by the students made the program easier. The stipend provided by the program was another factor that helped to make the program run well. Some advisors remarked that their students enjoyed working on their PSAs and the Share the Road Pledge Contest as side projects and these helped to keep the students engaged.

Question #8 asked participants, *"What aspects of the program did not work so well and why?"* 35 advisors answered the question. 29% of respondents said that all aspects of the program went well and did not have any problems. Advisors also commented that there was not enough time in the day, and that it was difficult to engage students due to too many other activities that students were involved in.

Question #9 asked participants, *"How did you get student members to participate in the program?"* 41 advisors answered the question. Advisors employed a variety of strategies to get students to participate in the program. Several respondents said that their students recruited the members. They promoted the program digitally and on social media. They spread the word on morning announcements, in Google Classroom, with flyers, emails, and sign-in sheets; and they spread the program by word of mouth. Other advisors said that students volunteered. Some schools offered incentives to students who joined their team, such as gift cards, community service and extra credit for their classes. 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 collaborating across subjects. 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' advisors said that they have participated in the program for many years, and it is now part of the school culture. New students look forward to participating in the teen safe driving campaign.

Question #10 asked participants *"to rate your response to each statement using a scale from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree* (42 advisors answered these questions)

In response to the question, *"student team members worked cohesively together,"* most of the respondents (69%) either *"agreed"* or *"strongly agreed"* with the statement with 0 respondents either *"disagreed"* or *"strongly disagreed."*

Twenty-three of the advisors (55%) either *"agreed"* or *"strongly agreed"* with the statement that *"student leaders held regular meetings that I attended"*, while 3 respondents (7%) *"disagreed"* with that statement.

Over 3/4 of the respondents (79%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement that ***“students had all the materials and resources that they needed”*** while none of the advisors (0%) either *“disagreed”* or *“strongly disagreed”* with that statement.

In response to the question, ***“I had enough time to advise the students,”*** 62% of the respondents either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement while 4 advisors (10%) 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 none of the advisors either *“disagreed”* or *strongly disagreed”*.

In response to the question, ***“I felt supported by BIANJ staff,”*** an overwhelming majority (93%) of the respondents either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, while 0 advisors (0%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly disagreed”*.

A large majority of respondents (62%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“I felt supported by my fellow teachers”***, while none of respondent (0%) either *“disagreed”* or *“strongly disagreed”*.

A little more than half of the respondents (52%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“The program activities went as I had planned”***, while 7% *“disagreed”* with the statement.

In response to the question, ***“I collaborated on the mid-year report with my students,”*** 71% of respondents either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, while 5% *“disagreed”*.

Most respondents (74%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“I collaborated on the final report with my students”***, while 0% either *“disagreed”* or *“strongly disagreed”*.

68% of the respondents either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“Student team members were engaged with the program”***, while 1 respondent (2%) *“disagreed”*.

50% of respondents either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“The community was engaged with the program”***, while 19% either *“disagreed”* or *“strongly disagreed”*.

A larger number of respondents (64%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement that ***“The student body was engaged with the program”***, while 3 respondents (7%) *“disagreed”*.

Almost all the respondents (88%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“My interactions with student team members were positive”***, while 0% either *“disagreed”* or *“strongly disagreed”*.

Most respondents (62%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“Being an advisor helps my career”***, while 7% either *“disagreed”* or *“strongly disagreed”*.

A large majority of respondents (83%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“Overall, I’m happy with my advising experience this year”***, while 2 respondents (5%) *“disagreed”*.

Question #11, “What would make things better next year?” Thirty-one advisors answered the question. Several of the advisors that responded to the question stated that the program runs well now and does not need to be improved. Once again, the issue of the disruption of the school year and the pandemic was listed by many of the advisors as the main challenge facing the teams. One advisor stated, “*The program is great, having a year without COVID restrictions would allow us to return to more “normal” activities.*” 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, and to hold meetings. Some advisors stated that it was great to be back to the in-person Awards Showcase at Six Flags, but suggested changes such as re-arranging the tables in a U shape at the networking pavilion to better facilitate networking and to allow the schools to purchase meal vouchers. Some advisors had advice for BIANJ to make the program better including starting the application process earlier, stipulating that students could not film in moving cars, or streamlining the process and organizing all forms into one place. One advisor stated, “*Maybe a simple website that we can use and go to for reminders and to keep everything in one place- emails get lost too easily.*” (Note: BIANJ hosts Jersey Drives.com, a website where all the forms and resources that advisors need are kept).

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’.**” (42 advisors answered the questions, 0 skips)

In response to the question, “**my interactions with the BIANJ staff were...**” a large majority of the respondents (76%) stated that they were either “*very helpful or extremely helpful*”; 2 participants (5%) responded either “*unhelpful*” or “*extremely unhelpful*”, while 6 (14%) responded “*did not use*”. *
*(BIANJ staff had interactions with all schools)

In response to the question, “**the technical assistance visit (where a representative from the Champion School Program presented information) was...**” almost half of the respondents (43%) stated that the visit was either “*very helpful or extremely helpful*”; 2 respondents (5%) replied that the visit was “*extremely unhelpful*”, while 19 respondents (45%) responded “*did not use*”. *
*(Technical visits were made to all participating schools)

In response to the question, “**The technical assistance calls were...**” 29% stated the calls were either “*very helpful*” or “*extremely helpful*”, 1 respondent (2%) found the calls to be either “*unhelpful*” or “*extremely unhelpful*”, while 62% responded, “*did not use*”.

In response to the question, “**JerseyDrives.com was...**” 69% stated that the website was either “*very helpful*” or “*extremely helpful*”, 3 respondents (7%) found the website to be either “*unhelpful*” or “*extremely unhelpful*”, while 14% responded, “*did not use*”.

Question #13 asked, “**How often did you visit the U Got Brains website to access the “Tools for Schools?”**” 5% stated they accessed the website “*0 times*”, 12% responded “*1-2 times*”, 48% responded “*3-5 times*”, and 36% responded “*6+ times*”.

Question #14 asked, “**About how often did the student team members meet?**” 2% responded that they met “*0 times*”, 0% responded “*1 time*”, 0% responded “*2-3 times*”, 2% responded “*4 times*”, and 95% responded “*5+ times*”.

Question #15 asked, *“How often did the student team members meet with you?”* 0% responded “0 times”, 0% responded “1 time”, 5% responded “2-3 times”, 5% responded “4 times”, and 95% 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.”* 81% responded either “agree” or “strongly agree”; 0% responded either “disagree” or “strongly disagree”.

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.”* 83% responded either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement; 0% responded either “disagree” or “strongly disagree”.

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.

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.
- Most faculty advisors felt that they were happy with their advising experience.

Challenges of the Champion Schools Program

- The continued disruption of the school schedule due to the pandemic was once again the biggest challenge to the program this year.
- 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.

- 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 is 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.