

## 2022-2023 U Got Brains Champion Schools Program

### Student 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 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 student survey to help evaluate the effectiveness of the Champion Schools Program. BIANJ posted the student survey online and gave the link to the student faculty advisors for distribution within their school. CHOP then analyzed the results of the completed surveys and created a report of their findings.

For the 2022-2023 program, BIANJ used an amended version of the CHOP student survey to evaluate the effectiveness of this year's program from the perspective of the student team members. 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 2022-2023 school year was the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program*. 58 high schools (public, private and technical) from 18 counties of the state participated in the program. As a prerequisite for participating, 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 student survey was posted in April, and emails went out to the faculty advisors in May and June reminding them to ask their student team members to complete the survey.

Respondents from 26 schools out of the 58 participating schools completed the online survey (45%). Of the 26 schools that responded, a total of 230 students completed the survey (Dumont HS-28; Immaculate Heart Academy-28; Indian Hills HS-18; Kittatinny Regional HS-17; Bordentown HS-15; Hammonton HS-14; Burlington County Alternative School-14; Robbinsville HS-11; Westwood Regional HS-9; Marlboro HS-8; Delaware Valley Regional HS-6; West Milford HS-6; CharterTech HS for the Performing Arts-6; Clearview Regional HS-6; Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES)-6; South Plainfield HS-5; Lenape Regional HS District -5; Colts Neck HS-6; Lindenwold HS-5; Lakeland Regional HS-4; Middletown HS South-4; Neptune HS-4; Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering-3; Nottingham HS-3; Lawrence HS-2; Mary Help of Christians Academy-1; Washington Twp. HS-1). **5% of the respondents were in 9<sup>th</sup> grade; 26% in tenth grade; 45% were in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and 23% were in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.** The original survey consisted of 10 questions regarding the Champion Schools Program and 3 demographic questions. This year, we added 6 new questions to the survey-2 about using cannabis/drugs while driving; 2 on safe walking habits; and 2 on what the students felt were the biggest transportation safety issues in their communities and the best way to address these issues. Below is a summary of the findings of the student surveys. For complete results, a copy of the survey along with the tallied answers from the respondents is attached.

### General Conclusions from the Student Survey Evaluations:

#### Advantages of the Champion Schools Program

- An overwhelming majority of the students agree that **they and their friends are safer drivers (Strongly Agree=60%; Agree=28%, Somewhat Agree=7%=95% Total)** because of their U Got Brains Champion Schools Project.

- An almost equally large majority of the students think that **they and their friends are safer passengers (Strongly Agree=66%; Agree=22%; Somewhat Agree=6%=94% Total)** because of their U Got Brains Champion Schools Project.
- Champion Schools Program offers students the opportunity to talk about the **importance of safe driving** in their schools and promote safe driving practices. **(94% of the students agree with this statement)**
- The Champion Schools Program has a significant impact on the safe driving behavior of the students:
  - **Using the phone while driving (talk, text, search, games, music): (Never-80%)** after the program vs. **(Never-47%)** before the program. **Impact of the Champion Schools Program: 70% increase in the safe driving behavior of students who say they never use their phone while driving.**
  - **Driving focused by always keeping eyes on the road: (Always-65%)** after the program vs. **(Always-41%)** before the program. **Impact of the Champion Schools Program: 59% increase in the safe driving behavior of students who say they always drive focused.**
  - **Driving over the speed limit: (Never-51%)** after the program vs. **(Never-24%)** before the program. **Impact of the Champion Schools Program: 113% increase in the safe driving behavior of students who say they never drive over the speed limit.**
  - **Following NJ Laws for new drivers: (Always-78%)** after the program vs. **(Always-59%)** before the program. **Impact of the Champion Schools Program: 32% increase in the safe driving behavior of students who say they always follow the NJ laws for new drivers.**
  - **Wearing their seatbelts when driving: (Always-83%)** after the program vs. **(Always-77%)** before the program. **Impact of the Champion Schools Program: 8% increase in the safe driving behavior of students who say they always wear their seatbelt when driving.**
  - **Wearing their seatbelts when a passenger: (Always-83%)** after the program vs. **(Always-69%)** before the program. **Impact of the Champion Schools Program: 20% increase in the safe driving behavior of students who say they always wear their seatbelt when a passenger.**
  - **Driving with one passenger in the car (when there is no adult in the car): (Always-54%)** after the program vs. **(Always-40%)** before the program. **Impact of the Champion Schools Program: 35% increase in the safe driving behavior of students who say they always drive with only one passenger in the car.**
  - **Thinking it's ok to use cannabis while driving: (Never-93%)** after the program vs. **(Never-90%)** before the program. **Impact of the Champion Schools Program: 3% increase in students who think it's not ok to use cannabis while driving.**
  - **Driving while using cannabis: (Never-94%)** after the program vs. **(Never-93%)** before the program. **Impact of the Champion Schools Program: 1% increase in students who never drive while using cannabis.**
  - **Safe walking habits (crossing at intersections/crosswalks, not walking distracted or impaired): (Always-70%)** after the program vs. **(Always-47%)** before the program. **Impact of the Champion Schools Program: 49% increase in the safe walking habits of students.**
  - **Stop for pedestrians in crosswalks: (Always-83%)** after the program vs. **(Always-70%)** before the program. **Impact of the Champion Schools Program: 19% increase in students who stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.**

- **When asked what the biggest transportation safety issues were in their community, an overwhelming majority of the students said Distracted Driving (196 responses) was their biggest issue. Other responses included: seatbelt use (76 responses), Impaired driving (58 responses), infrastructure issues (48 responses), and other issues (12 responses).**
- **When asked for the best way to address these issues, most respondents said Education programs (147 responses). Other responses included: More police enforcement (27 responses), policy changes/interventions (27 responses), redesign unsafe areas in town or intersections (22 responses), lower speed limits (4 responses), and other options (3 responses).**
- The Champion Schools Program helps to bring about a change in both student and community behavior when it comes to teen driving safety.
- The 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.

Overall, the U Got Brains Champion Schools Program proves 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.