



THE FLUSHING INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL



Student-Led School Improvement Campaign

Challenge:
Student Engagement

Related Elements of Student Voice
Encouraging Participation
Peer Support Opportunities
Supportive Staff

1. What's the Problem?

- Only 60% of 9th and 10th graders feel that school offers classes that they are interested in. Most students want different classes, ex: music class and computer class (survey)
- Many students struggle to do school work/activities after school because they have work and sometimes get distracted, ex: video games, etc. (interviews)
- Our school has a "team period." While over 90% of students in all grades think a team period is necessary, 40% want to use the team period time differently. (survey)

2. What's at the Root?

Element #1: Encouraging Participation

Students want to participate in classes where they get to do what they are interested in. (interviews)

Element #2: Peer Support Opportunities

Seniors are interested in helping other students that are new to school. (interviews)

Element #3: Supportive Staff

Teachers have offered to sit in and supervise student-led classes. (interviews)

3. What's Already Being Done About It

- The school already has clubs that help engage students with interests other than traditional classes. However, it hasn't worked because many students don't want to or cannot stay after school.
- We have elective classes where students can choose non-traditional classes, however, it is a problem because 9th and 10th grade don't have electives – only 11th and 12th graders do.

4. What Students Think We Should Do About It

While having a discussion with Action Team members they said they think we should...

- Create more classes
- Create a library / get more resources
- Work on developing a warmer community
- Bring back clubs that have disappeared

II. Action Plan Outline

1. Name Your Campaign: Personal Interest Projects

2. The BIG Idea

The program will take place in one of the 9-10th grade Teams with 15 students participating. Students in the program will come up with a project of their own interest and they will meet together one period per week. (examples: writing songs, designing clothes, creating a club, etc.) Students will be supported by senior students and teachers. We believe that by allowing students an opportunity to pursue their interests this will make them more engaged in learning overall. And it will create a greater sense of community in our school between the seniors and younger students.

3. How Campaign Will Strengthen Student Voice

Element #1: Encouraging Participation

To continue with this project we need students to get along and participate in the program, which will encourage the 9th and 10th grade students to work.

Element #2: Peer Supports

Seniors will help the 9th and 10th grade student with their project.

Element #3: Supportive Staff

There will be teachers in the room helping to keep students on the right track. Other teachers will help by giving supplies to students, depending on what they are interested in doing.

4. How Campaign Will Learn From/Build On What's Already Been Done

We can use activities students enjoy that they are doing in existing clubs and electives.

5. How We Measure Progress

Key Indicators:

Student engagement
Participation
Peer Support
Supportive Staff

How You Will Measure:

Surveys and observations of meetings
Attendance and academic grades
Surveys and observations of meetings
Surveys and observations of meetings

6. Steps to LAUNCH the Campaign

- 1.) Prepare for class (recruit students, prepare lessons, collect materials)
- 2.) Help 9th and 10th grade students select and work on getting their projects started
- 3.) Get support and materials from seniors and staff
- 4.) Hold an opening meeting/trip for participating students (mentors and mentees).

7. Steps to ORBIT the Campaign

- 1.) Every Monday go to the program class to help the 9th and 10th grade students
- 2.) Observe how they have been working every week; track progress
- 3.) Get help from seniors and staff as needed
- 4.) Make sure there are enough materials and that they are being used properly

III. OUTCOMES

1.) Tracking Progress

Measuring: student engagement, participation, peer support, supportive staff

Snapshot #1: Observation

- Students stick with their groups and learn from the seniors mentors
- Some students have gotten lost and don't know what to do
- Once a while, a few students work on their homework when they should be working on their project with their mentors

Snapshot #2: Interviews

- One of the students said she learned shading and sketching bodies from her senior mentor
- Other students said they learned how to read sheet music and play piano with both hands.
- Some students shared that they want to continue learning to paint and playing guitar and piano
- Some also want to practice rapping with guitar and piano

Snapshot #3: Survey

- In a survey of 10 students, 100% were satisfied (4 said it was "ok" and 6 said they "liked" it)
- Some students said they want to continue with the campaign next year and may want to create a full-time club
- Some said they are interested to learn other new things such as sports, new languages, etc.

2. Reflections

What worked

- Students got to do what they were interested in
- Each day students learn something new (though not a lot/too much)

What didn't work

- Hard to schedule meetings between the 9th, 10th and 12th grade (they have different lunch times, which is hard to manage)
- When we met every Monday we didn't have enough time to work (only 25-30 minutes)

3.) Next Steps

- In order to continue this campaign next year, we need to find another time for students to meet.
- Start the campaign earlier in the year so that the students will have more time to work, meet new friends, and get to know them
- We need to plan better develop set guidelines for mentors to work with their mentees
- We have to survey more 9th/10th/11th grade students to find out what are their interests are and survey more 12th students to find out who is interested in serving as a mentor and what they can teach