



Student-Led School Improvement Campaign Action Plan

Baruch College Campus High School

Challenges:

Morale & Communication

Related Elements of Student Voice:

- Communication and Culture of listening
- Appealing to students' lives and interests
- Community Building

I.) Student Voice School Review

1. The Problem

- 81 out of 131 (62%) students said one important way to increase morale is to have more trips and school wide events. (source: SVC survey)
- 50 out of 131 (38%) students said a second way to promote morale is to have a variety of extracurricular activities that appeal to student interests. (source: SVC survey)
- Students shared that because academic work takes up so much of their lives, they miss out on meaningful social-emotional learning with a diverse range of peers. "I feel that all we do at Baruch is study, and I want more engaging activities that would unite us, possibly some nerdy games since we are so academic." (source: focus group)
- Students lack initiative in the 10-min exchange; the same people keep leading the conversation. While conducting an observation during one of our ten minute exchanges, we realized that there are a small group of students that actually care about the discussion and who were willing to give suggestions (roughly 30%). According to one of her fellow advisees, "There is a lack of community and spirit, only a couple people really care about what is going on." (source: observation)

2. Root Causes

Element #1: Community Building

- Below average: 59 out of 131 (45%) students feel there is a strong community bond among students at Baruch. (source: SVC survey)

Element #2: Communication

- Somewhat weak: 10-min exchange is the only way students can give their input. (source: focus group)

Element #3: Appealing to Students' Lives and Interests

- Somewhat weak: students say there are not enough engaging trips and extracurricular activities. (source: focus group)

3. What's Already Being Done About It

- Advisory allows different groups of students to come together and bond. However, people still tend to sit within their own social cliques.
- The 10-minute exchange was created last year in order to increase communication. However, not all student government reps turn in their results.
- There are some bonding activities: pep rallies, dances, and freshman and senior trips. However, the feeling of community and bonding is not long lasting due to the fact that many of these activities tend to focus on a group of people and those who are not necessarily interest in these activities feel left out

4. What Students Think We Should Do About It

- Sister advisories: We connect with another advisory from another grade and do activities with them
- Activities in grades or mixed grades: to tighten the community
- Team building trips and activities: earlier in the year so people can get to know each other better
- Community service field trips: so we can develop a passion for community service rather than simply meet the required 20 hours. It can also allow students to understand how they can make an impact on their community.
- More pep rallies
- Create a program where we turn the advisories into teams that compete against one another: throughout the year through various challenges/activities. Tally and share scores to increase morale throughout student body.

II.) Action Plan Outline

1. Name of Campaign: Color War

2. The BIG Idea

Baruch is a rigorous learning environment where the vast majority of students works hard and achieves. As a result, the student body feels that their social aspect of Baruch is lacking. The benefits of social interaction are important to the growth of character and social skills that will be needed on a professional setting. We decided to focus on increasing student morale and communication. We plan to conduct color war throughout the year to improve our school community. Community building will also help ensure Baruch's core values are understood and appreciated. We will use our grant money to fund some of these events and to buy materials that can be used for future events.

3. How the Campaign Will Strengthen Related Elements of Student Voice

Element #1: Communication

- We will use the 10-minute exchange in order to share/collect ideas from students regarding the Color War.

Element #2: Appealing to Students' Lives and Interests

- The student body wants more meaningful events, so we will create competitions to bring students and advisories together.

Element #3: Community

- We want to help create a feeling of community across advisories – bringing together students to kindle new friendships.

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

- We will continue to implement the 10 minute exchange program, which relates to the element of communication and use it in order to support the Color War campaign.
- We will continue to hold pep rallies, academic activities, and field days (relates to community bonding and appealing to students' interest).
- We will continue to encourage diversity, mixing, and new friendships across groups of students

5. What Research Tell Us Works

Source: <http://blogs.missouristate.edu/sga/the-importance-of-school-pride>

“School spirit translates into higher expectations of one’s self and surroundings, pushing for positive changes at the university and abroad. The students are undeniably an important part of the school community, when there is a great sense of school spirit, the students are able to work together to achieve great things.”

(Adrienne Burns, Director of University Advancement)

Source: <http://clairbourn.org/b2evolution/index.php/2013/04/19/the-importance-of-school-spirit>

- “Students who feel good about themselves often gain those feeling from their environment. School communities reflect the individuals in them. When they feel positively about themselves, it's contagious. Soon the entire school is feeling uplifted and happy. The students are the ones who reflect the school community and when students feel like there is a sense of community, it spreads throughout the school.”
- “It is at times like these, that fun, lighthearted activities that encourage school spirit can play an important part in the life of the school.”
- “Working together, whether in serious or silly activities, we can accomplish more than we might otherwise.”
(Dr. Robert W. Nafie, Headmaster of Clairbourn School)

Source: http://www.nspra.org/files/docs/Strong_Communication_Students_School_Success.pdf

- “Communication is the heart of education. School communication is a dynamic part of education success. Effective two-way communication is cited as a necessary trait for success at all levels of education, from school board to superintendent to principal, administrator and teacher” It is important that all members of the school community – principal, superintendent, teachers, and students – be on the same page because they all play an important role in deciding what is best for the students.
- “Communication is the foundation of effective partnerships. To build effective partnerships with families and the community that will enhance student achievement, schools must first talk to — and listen to...all with a stake in student learning. Any strategy must accommodate the diverse language, cultural needs, lifestyles and schedules of all parties.”
- Freiberg and Stein (1999) described school climate as the heart and soul of the school and the essence of the school that draws teachers and students to love the school and to want to be a part of it. Without a sense of community, students and teachers, to put it simply, won’t feel at ease.
- “Without proper morale, nothing else matters. There's no way to even start building up motivation, momentum, and marketability.” (Philip Guo, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, University of Rochester)
This quote states that without school spirit it will be difficult to motivate the students to achieve change and work as a community.

6. How Plan Integrates What Research Says Works

- Color War shares same goals as we find in research: improving student relationships and community as a whole.
- Our plan brings out the unique sides of the contestants which was one of our main goals. We did this through unique and silly games which brought the advisories together in a meaningful way which boosted the sense of community.

7. How We Measured Progress

What We Looked to Improve	How We Measured	How Often We Measured
<p><i>The Challenge:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Community § Communication <p><i>Elements of Student Voice:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Communication/Listening § Appealing to Student Interests § Community-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § School Survey § Focus Groups § Observational studies § Personal Feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Beginning and end of year (survey) § Periodically (focus groups and observations)

8. Steps to LAUNCH Campaign Off the Ground

- 1.) Sent out survey to school to assess how well our elements of student voice were being addressed.
- 2.) Sent out 10-min exchange through student government to find out what games would interest students
- 3.) Had each advisory make own unique flag to represent themselves in various competitions
- 4.) Decorated a bulletin board to display places the advisories were in for the color war
- 5.) Launched first color war competition as a pep rally where we got advisories to compete in various sports (European handball, pillow polo, and basketball)
- 6.) Developed schedule of future events and created scoring system to engage students in the campaign

9. Monthly Routine to ORBIT Campaign

Time	Work Plan
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Broadcasted findings of student voice school review in student government, advisories, and School Leadership Team ● Solicited campaign feedback/participation (from student government, advisories, and SLT) ● Drafted action plan (revised 10-Min Exchange + monthly events/challenges) based on feedback
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revised 10-Min Exchange protocol (to encourage more mixing and voices heard) in order to plan first monthly event/challenge
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Created point system for color war ● Collected possible monthly events/challenges through 10-Min Exchange
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Launched Color War in Pep Rally ● Reflected on event with student government executive board and planned monthly event #2 through 10-Min Exchange
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducted academic competitions (Geography/History, Spanish, Spelling, Lyrics)
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prepared for year-end presentations (one in school, one with SVC)
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Field day and Awards

III. Outcomes

1. Tracking Progress

Some Feedback Collected:

March 20th, 2015

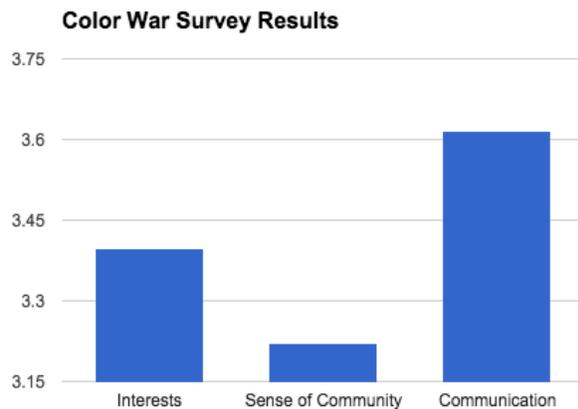
- We held a focus group after our first event (Pep Rally) and reached the conclusion that students want more well-rounded events; they want to show off their athletic side while also showing off their nerdy side.

May 8th, 2015

- Conducted survey: majority of students felt that Color War brought advisories together in a meaningful way

Final Survey Questions:

- How well did the Color War activities and Pep Rallies appeal to your interests? On a scale of (1-5).
- How well did the Color War and Pep Rallies boost the sense of community in your advisory? On a scale of (1-5).
- How well did your advisory representatives and student government communicate information regarding the events? On a scale of (1-5).



2. Reflections

- It is difficult to meet everyone's needs. If we satisfy a majority, we should be glad
- Organization is key
- We must make sure that everyone is informed of what is going to take place
- In order to make our campaign successful we had to delegate tasks and form a Color War committee through student government

3. Next Steps

- Link advisories together through sister/brother advisories: connect advisories from different grades so that they can work together and be able to interact with kids from other grades.
- Kick off Color War with the beginning of the school year
- In the lobby we will get a large monitor to share information and display advisory rankings