

Running Head: PROGRAM EVALUATION ACTIVITY FAIR

Program Evaluation: Red Devil Activity Fair,

Hunterdon Central Regional High School

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Overview of the Program Evaluation

Title of Program

Red Devil Activity Fair

Client

The Supervisor of Student Activities (SSA) would be primarily responsible for organizing this event, with input from the principal, vice-principals, and athletic director.

Relevant Stakeholders

Hunterdon Central students, as well rising freshmen from the middle schools, stand to benefit most directly from exposure to the variety of activities at HCRHS. The various extracurricular clubs, teams, and organizations stand to benefit from increased membership and the skills and perspectives each new member brings. The student body benefits as a whole from the increased sense of community, school spirit, and interpersonal relationships engendered as a result of the fair.

Organization

The activity fair to be evaluated would take place at Hunterdon Central Regional High School (HCRHS, or HC) in Flemington, NJ. HCRHS is a large, suburban high school with approximately 3,000 students. The school has a District Factor Group rating of "I" with the New Jersey Department of Education, which means that the general socio-economic status of the area among the highest in the state.

Program Evaluation Needs and Relevant Context

What does the client want to know? The client wants to know if the Red Devil Activity Fair has boosted club enrollment and contributed in any way to the overall sense of school spirit at Hunterdon Central. What overall benefits does the Activity Fair provide to the Hunterdon Central community?

Why does the client want a program evaluation? There exists a body of literature that suggests a high degree of correlation between extracurricular involvement and a number of positive academic and social outcomes, including improved academic performance, improved SAT scores, lower dropout rates, and the formation of positive social relationships and self-image. As the Activity Fair is a costly and time-consuming endeavor, the client wants to ensure that some benefits are being reaped.

What contextual factors are relevant to the program evaluation task, as assessed using A VICTORY approach?

Ability – HCRHS has funds allocated to continue the Red Devil Activity Fair, should the evaluation find it to be financially worthwhile to do so.

Values – The administration, faculty, staff, and students value school spirit and academic and athletic success highly.

Ideas – The majority of extracurricular activities are under-advertised and under-promoted, while a majority of popular activities (e.g., football team, drama club) are promoted most heavily.

Circumstances – Improving school spirit is a professional improvement Plan item of our principal.

Timing – Due to the new principal's commitment to improving school spirit, as well as the recent hiring of a full-time administrative-level Supervisor of Student Activities, the time is right to implement and evaluate the Red Devil Activity Fair.

Obligation – The Fair is staffed by faculty, staff, and student volunteers who clearly share the Fair's goals of increasing student enrollment in extracurricular activities.

Resistance – No resistance is anticipated at this time. Financial and logistical problems may arise with regard to the location and time of the Fair (e.g., will it take place during the school day or in the evening?)

Yield – The benefits of student involvement in extracurricular activities, as supported by empirical evidence, are outlined in the previous section.

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Description of the Program to be Evaluated

Target Population Served by the Program

Students at HCRHS, especially those who a) do not currently participate in extracurricular activities, and/or b) have little to no knowledge of the range of extracurricular activities available at the school.

Purpose of the Program

Positive correlations have been established between participation in extracurricular activities and improved academic performance & self-esteem, as well as reduced dropout rates. For these academic, emotional, and social benefits, this project aims to increase involvement in extracurricular activities through active recruiting of students.

Program Components, Phases, and Sequence of Program Activities

- Interest evaluation – SSA and AD assess level of interest among coaches/advisors and ask for volunteers to staff tables
- Individual group representatives plan demonstration, handouts, promotional materials
- Fair open to general student population; may be held during school hours (less likely) or in evening (more likely)

Program personnel

- Supervisor of Student Activities
- Athletic Director
- Volunteers (student and faculty/staff) from participating teams and clubs

Program site

Hunterdon Central Regional High School, Flemington, NJ

Outcome Goals of the Program

This program involves goals that are educational, social, and behavioral in nature. The timeline for goal attainment is one academic year (September – June).

Goal 1: Educational

New activity participants will raise their cumulative GPAs.

Goal 2: Behavioral

School-wide daily attendance rates will improve by 5%.

Goal 3: Behavioral/Social

Student enrollment in extracurricular clubs and activities will increase by 5%.

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Program Evaluation Questions & Methods

Is the Activity Fair well-attended enough to warrant continuation?

Discussion

Student interest and participation is the crux of the fair. If students do not attend in significant numbers, the outlay of time and money cannot be justified.

Method of Data Collection

Student attendees will be asked to swipe their ID cards upon entering the fair. The magnetic stripe on the card will provide the number of students in attendance, as well as demographic data for disaggregation (e.g., gender, grade level) in order to fine-tune the advertising focus of future fairs, if they continue to be held. An initial goal number cannot be assigned until we determine how many students do not currently participate in extracurricular activities.

Are advisors, coaches, and students invested in the event?

Discussion

Advisors, coaches, and student volunteers are the ones who provide fair attendees with information about each group and “sell” students on the merits of each program. If club representatives do not attend, students will not be exposed to full complement of available activities.

Method of Data Collection

The SSA will contact a faculty representative of each club and keep a record of how many clubs are interested in taking part in at the fair. At the fair, she will take an official count of how many groups are actually represented by faculty and/or students, and compare that to the total number of clubs. Club participation should be at least 70-75% in order to provide a wide variety to interested students.

Is there an appreciable increase in club/team enrollment?

Discussion

As one of the stated goals of the fair, increased activity enrollment is one of the primary indicators of program success.

Method of Data Collection

Each organization will be asked to report their membership numbers from the end of last school year or sport season. As each season (or the school year) ends, advisors/coaches will be asked to report new final membership numbers to SSA, who will maintain an Excel spreadsheet with membership information for each group. At the end of the school year when the first fair is held, membership numbers pre- and post-fair will be compared to identify a gain in membership. Overall membership is the guiding factor, and should increase by a minimum of 5% in order to consider this program a success.

Have the GPAs of “new joiners” increased in the last year?

Discussion

Sports eligibility often provides an extrinsic motivator for students to keep their grades up. While it is not currently a requirement of other clubs, the research indicates that there is a connection between extracurricular participation and improvements in grades; this is a desired outcome of this project.

Method of Data Collection

Advisors will keep a list of new members of their organization. At the end of the season or school year, the advisor will be responsible for looking up each new member's GPA in our school network database (readily available to all faculty) and identifying an increase, decrease, or maintenance. GPA changes will be reported to the SSA.

Has daily attendance rate improved in the last year?

Discussion

Improved attendance is another empirically-supported benefit of extracurricular involvement. The stated goal is to observe a 5% increase in daily attendance rate over the previous school year

Method of Data Collection

Daily attendance records are easy to obtain with HCRHS's online attendance database. Attendance rates for entire school years can very easily be compared by the SSA, and data could even be disaggregated by the various sports seasons to determine if one sport or group of sports encourages attendance more than another.

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