Starting Your Own CmPS Team

A presentation by Laura Gary and Michelle Vecchio-Weinmeister
Who Are We?

Goals for this session:
Empower you to begin your own CmPS team
Provide you with helpful resources
Build connections
Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPI) provides the tools and strategies students need to face the challenges of today and the future. What better way to prepare students for their future than by teaching them to think systematically about problematic situations, to gather information to understand the situation, and to evaluate multiple solutions in order to best address the situation?

Students involved in Community Problem Solving (CmPS) learn powerful lessons about creating change, about dealing with local authorities and organizations, and about making a positive impact.

-From Future Problem Solving Program International http://www.fpspi.org/cmps.html
The Road Less Traveled...Where Are We Going?

- Training
- Obtaining Administrative Support
- Team Formation
- Timeline Management/ Organization of Schedule
- Establishing Team Roles/ Building Group Dynamics
- Warm Ups/ Facilitating Creative Thinking
- Challenges
- Resources
Training: Do I or Don’t I?

FPS training is held every fall. Consult the website www.georgiafpsp.org to find current dates, or contact Argen Hicks, our state FPS coordinator.

CmPS coaches can jump in without training! Training usually covers the six-step process and Global Issues, another competition sponsored by FPSP. About an hour is devoted to CmPS.

Whether or not you attend a training, plan to order the Community Problem Solving Project Information for Coaches and Students manual from FPSPI.

Link to FPSPI Mart Page for CmPS. Combo #6 provides good resources.
Obtaining Administrative Support

Why This First?

- You’re not going to be able to address any aspect of establishing a CmPS team without your Admin support!
  - Come to Admin knowing how much registration is- Currently $75 per team
  - Be prepared with a short presentation that addresses the benefits of CmPS
  - Be ready to offer scheduling suggestions (more on this later!) What schedule is feasible for execution at your school?
  - Spell out probable challenges: Access to students, training recommendations, fundraising opportunities, scheduling a time to meet, additional help and support from faculty members
- Go here for sample CmPS intro presentation
How Do I Recruit a Team?

● Hold a CmPS Orientation meeting early in the year (August ideally)
  ○ Provide a brief presentation: explain the CmPS philosophy, show examples of finished projects from the fpsp site http://www.georgiafpsp.org, allow for questions and answers CmPS Sample Orientation Presentation
  ○ Push out a Google Form or Survey Monkey asking students to explain their level of interest in solving community problems. CmPS Student Interest Form
  ○ Interview students if necessary
  ○ Hold a follow up meeting for the purpose of brainstorming community problems
  ○ **It is better for student participants to fit the following characteristics:**
    ▪ Ideally on same grade level (logistically makes sense but not required)
    ▪ Ideally interested in similar project ideas
    ▪ Ideally work well together
    ▪ Ideally are equally work focused

● Reach out to fellow teachers for names to increase list of candidates
Does Your School Have a Morning News Program?

Consider creating a commercial to recruit team members.
Recruitment Considerations

● Decide whether or not you want to manage ONE team or MULTIPLE teams

● Decide how many members (and what combination of members, genders, etc. will result in a functional, productive group?)

● What are your scheduling options?

● Fundraising now or later?
  ○ International requires cash
Delivery Model Options

○ **Before or After School**
  ■ Student transportation issues
  ■ Personal conflicts; extracurricular obligations

○ **During School as a distinct class- Extended Learning Time**
  ■ Provides consistent blocks of project time
  ■ Allows for grading which better ensures quality and accountability
  ■ Not always an option

○ **Pull Out or Embedded in Class**
  ■ Advisement Class

○ **Lunch Bunch**
  ■ Time constraints
  ■ Messy

○ **Independent Time**
  ■ Requires autonomous learners
  ■ Consistent check-ins are a must
Timeline

- Try to get your team going as early in the year as possible
- If the 6-step problem-solving process is new to students, you must make time to teach that first.
- Don’t wait until you plan to register your team to contact FPS. They can provide resources.
- Registration deadline is around Feb. 1
- Finished projects due around April 1
- It goes quickly! Larger projects can easily take two years to complete, so don’t let that discourage you.
Establishing Effective Teams

● Important to support group(s) without taking over/ Problem must be owned by students

● Encourage and support research
  ○ Research takes time, so expect to be more hands on in this part of the process
  ○ Essential to establishing an area of concern, challenges identified, and the underlying problem
  ○ Ensure students know the difference between community problem solving and community service
Establishing Effective Teams

- Keep students informed of project requirements
  - Frequent electronic reminders
  - Access to exemplars
  - Consistent feedback on progress (TAG: Tell something positive, Ask a question, Give constructive feedback)

Establish a good communication system with your team and insist they use it!
Ongoing Communication is Key

Consider Using Google Classroom as a communication tool for your CmPS team.
Building Positive Group Dynamics

- Group Dynamics: Take opportunities to build trust within larger groups
  - Trust Falls
  - Random Questions
  - Wall Jump
  - Bonding/Trust Experiences (karaoke, rope walls, dancing, etc.)
  - * Cell Phone Swap- **Student contributed!**
  - SCAMPER posters
  - Newspaper tower
Trust Fall Video
Creative Exercises: Keeping Project Stamina Alive

- Pose Warm Ups or Creative Challenges
  - Increases motivation
  - Supports collaboration
  - Stimulates problem solving skills and thinking
  - Ted Talks
    - Chaos to Order: We're Wired to Solve
      - Reactions to this Ted Talk?
      - Would you like time to explore?

- Puzzles
- Open-ended prompts and questions
- Tinkering Exercises
  - CmPS Work Session Slides 2016 (Just a few examples!)
CmPS Challenges

- Scheduling/Time
- Buy In/ Commitment
- Negotiating Adolescent Drama
- Equity of Workload
- International: What happens if you win at state?
  - Cost of attendance
  - Additional Requirements
- Coaching Roles- Assisting student groups
  - How much facilitation?
  - Maintaining Project Autonomy
- Fundraising
Past and Current Projects
Top 5 areas of concern:

- More crosswalks
- Need for more greenspace
- Lack of honoring veterans
- Food for kids who have free lunch - In summer time!

Climate change - “heat island” effect
A parting thought...

When deciding whether you are up to the challenge of beginning a CmPS team, consider this: success should not be measured by whether or not your team’s final project is a winner. Instead, consider how you will engage students in the important process of looking creatively and critically at how they might solve problems in their school or local community. A winning project is a bonus.

Finally, don’t expect your first year to be perfect! We are all learners in CmPS!
Resources

Argen Hicks: argenhicks@gmail.com

CmPS Commerical for Informational Meeting

Sample Google Slide Presentation to introduce CmPS to administrators

Sample invitation for select students to attend information session

FPSP Intel  materials for CmPS--Combo #6 provides detailed overview as well as sample projects for teams to study

Other resources embedded throughout presentation

Would you like a copy of this presentation? Please e-mail Michelle Vecchio-Weinmeister at vecchiom@clarke.k12.ga.us or Laura Gary at lgary@csdecatur.net
Google Classroom, Anyone

Join our Google Classroom for this session by opening your Google Drive and clicking on Google Classroom.

Classroom code: 327 v v g
Q & A
How else can we help you get ready to start your own Community Problem Solving team at YOUR school?
Please give us feedback

Survey:  http://goo.gl/forms/f2E3nzAJuH

This survey is also posted in our Google Classroom.

Thank you!