



SUMMARY REPORT
Participation Nation
Evaluation Report
September 2014

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

PO Box 21041, St, John's, NL A1A 5B2
www.flowconsult.ca



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the past decade, School Sports Newfoundland and Labrador (SSNL) has been delivering Participation Nation (PN) through the province's school system. PN has been designed as a non-competitive recreational sport and physical activity program that encourages active and healthy living among all students and compliments the province's physical education and health curriculum. PN aims to create a safe and enjoyable sport environment free from criticism and judgment of athletic availability. Through PN, students are exposed to a variety of traditional and non-traditional sports where the focus is on having fun and not keeping score. Overall, PN encourages students who would normally only take part in the required physical education curriculum to be more physically active and feel good about their participation. PN is made possible through funding provided by the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (TCR), Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and the Federal government through Sport Canada.

PN is accomplishing its mission of helping students establish active and healthy lifestyle habits that they will hopefully maintain throughout their lives. It is enabling students to enjoy the benefits associated with being physically active and is also positively contributing to their self-confidence and sense of self-worth, most notably in students who are not necessarily naturally athletic.

Going forward, it is important that both elementary and junior high schools be encouraged to offer PN on a regular and consistent basis. The evaluation reveals that the level of commitment and dedication of the physical education teacher to PN directly influences its success. Often times physical education teachers have considerable workloads and may feel too overwhelmed to commit to PN or if they do so can only manage to coordinate one activity a year. In contrast, both students and parents would like to see PN offered once or twice a week. Identifying what additional resources physical education teachers require to increase the frequency of PN offerings and the possibility of involving community based groups, such as Community Youth Networks, 4H Clubs or municipal recreation staff to help reduce the coordination and/or administrative requirements should be explored in greater detail.

Similarly, PN Unplugged is providing high school students who enjoy being physically active with the leadership skills they require to serve as volunteers and positive role models for PN Elementary. However, there is no opportunity for high school students themselves to be physically active in a non-competitive environment. Consideration should be given to expanding the PN program to high school students to help address this programming gap.

Overall, PN is having a positive impact on those students who have had the opportunity to be involved with the program and its continuance is important to the establishment of healthy



lifestyle habits. It is important to share PN's accomplishments with school administrators and other key stakeholders to ensure its continued success.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
1 INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Program Overview	4
1.2 Purpose of Evaluation	5
2 METHODOLOGY	5
3 DETAILED FINDINGS.....	8
3.1 Focus Groups: PN Junior High & Elementary.....	8
3.2 Focus Groups: Teachers.....	14
3.3 Parents	12
3.4 PN Unplugged Survey Findings.....	16
3.5 Database Analysis	24
4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	30

- Appendix I: Student Focus Group Guides
- Appendix II: Teacher Focus Group Guide
- Appendix III: Parent Interview Guide
- Appendix IV: Unplugged Survey
- Appendix V: Unplugged Survey Tables



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Program Overview

For the past decade, School Sports Newfoundland and Labrador (SSNL) has been delivering Participation Nation (PN) through the province's school system. PN has been designed as a non-competitive recreational sport and physical activity program that encourages active and healthy living among all students and compliments the province's physical education and health curriculum. PN aims to create a safe and enjoyable sport environment free from criticism and judgment of athletic availability. Through PN, students are exposed to a variety of traditional and non-traditional sports where the focus is on having fun and not keeping score. Overall, PN encourages students who would normally only take part in the required physical education curriculum to be more physically active and feel good about their participation. PN is made possible through funding provided by the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (TCR), Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and the Federal Government through Sport Canada.

PN consists of three offerings:

PN Junior High: PN's first introduction into the school system was the "pin program" for grades seven to nine. PN Junior High consists of a variety of events such as in-house events, friendly between school events, sports festivals and jamborees that involve three or more schools. All participating students receive a pennant and earn a pin for their involvement in specific activities and sport events. In total, there are 73 pin designs that represent 34 sports and activities that are free from body images. The most popular sports and activities have multiple designs so students can earn different pins for the same sport or activity over the course of three years. There are also specialty pins that can be earned by participating in sport festivals and jamborees. To date, 119 schools have participated in the PN Junior High.

PN Elementary: In 2009, the PN Program expanded to include students in grades four to six. PN Elementary is a "certificate and label achievement program" that occurs during lunch and/or after school. Similar to the junior high program, students receive a certificate and can earn stickers from their participation in specific activities and sporting events. Students can earn up to 27 stickers. In total, 137 schools have participated in PN Elementary.

PN Unplugged: In 2010 PN launched an after school leadership program called "PN Unplugged". This is a leadership program that has been designed to train senior high school students to serve as volunteers in the PN Elementary Program. This program also includes a teacher supervising and nutrition component. PN Unplugged has been offered in 14 sites across the province and 233 high school students have received training.



1.2 Purpose of Evaluation

The mission of PN is, *“to promote active and healthy living in the provincial student body by developing and organizing non-competitive sport events that encourage mass participation and fun.”*

To ensure PN is realizing its mission and having its desired effect, an evaluation of PN’s processes and the associated activities was commissioned. The evaluation has been designed to address the following questions:

- Has PN provided elementary and junior high students with an opportunity to participate in sport activities and events in a non-competitive environment?
- What are stakeholders’ perceptions of PN?
- What are the positive outcomes of PN?
- What are the challenges PN has faced and how have they been overcome?
- What is required to ensure PN’s sustainability?

This evaluation documents the outcomes of the activities undertaken to advance PN’s ultimate goals and provides further direction for PN’s continued growth, sustainability and success.

2 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation process used both qualitative (focus groups and interviews) and quantitative (online survey and database analysis) research methods.

2.1 Focus Groups:

Focus groups were conducted with students who participated in PN Junior High and PN Elementary. Each focus group was approximately one hour in duration. To encourage participation, all students who participated in the focus groups had their name entered in a draw for one of six Ipod Shuffles.

Table 1 provides a summary of student focus groups by location. The focus group moderator’s guide can be found in Appendix I.



Table 1: Number and Location of Focus Groups by PN Program

Stakeholder Group	Number of Focus Groups	Location
Junior High PN Participants	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ St. Thomas Aquinas, Port au Port ▪ St. Paul’s Junior High, St. John’s ▪ Valmont Academy, King’s Point ▪ Indian River Academy, Springdale
Elementary PN Participants	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Templeton Academy, Meadows ▪ Holy Cross School, Eastport

Two focus groups were also conducted with teachers involved with PN. One focus group was conducted with teachers working in various parts of Labrador using conference call technology. The second focus group was conducted in St. John’s and its timing coincided with SSNL’s Annual General Meeting (AGM). Teachers who have been involved with PN and were attending the AGM were invited to participate in the focus group. Both teacher focus groups were approximately one hour in duration. The teacher focus group moderator’s guide can be found in Appendix II.

2.2 Parent Interviews:

In one location the evaluators had an opportunity to meet with four parents whose children have been involved with PN. These interviews ranged between 30-45 minutes in duration. These findings are not intended to be representative of the total parent population, but should be taken as qualitative direction from a small set of respondents. The parent interview protocol can be found in Appendix III.

2.3 PN Unplugged Participant Online Survey:

An online survey was designed and administered to high school students who participated in the PN Unplugged Program. The purpose of this online survey was to obtain feedback from PN Unplugged participant’s regarding their views and impressions of the program and suggestions for improvement.

SSNL provided Flow Consulting’s partner, Corporate Research Associates NL (CRA-NL), with 163 email addresses of students who participated in PN Unplugged since 2010. CRA-NL sent a unique survey link to each of these students. Of the 163 emails sent, 36 bounced back. All students with a valid email address (127 students) received three reminder emails to encourage



their participation¹. In total 29 students participated in the online survey for a response rate of 23 percent.

Appended to this report is the survey questionnaire (Appendix IV) and full detailed tabular results (Appendix V). Unless noted, all results are presented in percentages and have been rounded to the nearest whole number (in some cases, the total percentage may not add up exactly to 100 per cent). In the Tabular Results section, the line marked “Sample” at the bottom of each table indicates the number of persons who responded to that particular survey question.

2.4 Database Review:

SSNL provided CRA-NL with an Excel Database that housed the raw data that has been collected for PN Junior High and Elementary since 2008. The information contained in the database included:

- Number and type of sports played
- Number of participating schools
- Number of schools participating in core sports
- Number of events

CRA-NL reviewed and compared this data year over year for both PN Junior High and Elementary. The findings of this analysis are presented in this report.

¹ Students who completed the online survey had their names entered into the draw for the six iPod shuffles with those students who participated in the focus groups.



3 DETAILED FINDINGS

3.1 Focus Groups: PN Junior High & Elementary

Remaining Active and Healthy

There are several barriers that are making it challenging for youth to remain active and healthy.

As might be expected, both elementary and junior high students are involved in a variety of extracurricular activities. Some of the most frequently identified activities include:

- Basketball
- Swimming
- Hockey
- Skating
- Volleyball
- Soccer
- Skiing (downhill and cross country)
- Music
- Dance
- Trampoline
- Driving dirt bikes
- Canoeing/kayaking
- Youth group
- Playing video games/technology

In some instances, students are participating in these activities competitively (most notably hockey, basketball and soccer), while others are just playing for fun (music, dance, dirt bikes).

Some students like to spend time outdoors in the woods, hunting and fishing and all enjoy “hanging out” with their friends.

Students identify the following nine obstacles as making it difficult for them to remain active and healthy:

Peer Pressure. Some students find it difficult to remain active and healthy because their friends are not interested in playing sports or being physically active. In smaller communities students report it is difficult to engage in certain sports because there are not enough young people interested in playing a particular sport and/or activity to create teams.

Lack of Motivation. Students believe some of their peers lack the motivation to improve their athletic skills. It was felt that these individuals are just not willing to put the time and/or effort into an activity to improve their performance or to be physically active.

Technology/Media. Many students like to play video games, watch TV or use social media in their spare time as opposed to engaging in physical activity.

Unhealthy Eating Habits. Some students and/or their friends are developing poor eating habits and like to eat junk food even though they know it is bad for them. This is seen as compromising the overall health of youth.



Temptations. Junior high school students report that some of their peers are experimenting with drugs, which is having a negative impact on their health, well-being and physical activity levels.

School Work. Some junior high students feel they have a significant amount of homework and assignments, leaving little time for physical activity.

Competition. Students suggest that competition is discouraging some of their peers' interest in getting involved in sports. Many sports are seen as being extremely competitive and students are afraid to get involved with organized sports because they do not feel they are good enough and/or their peers will make fun of their skill level. It is believed there are limited opportunities for youth who just want to play for fun.

Cost. Some students identify the registration fees for certain activities and/or the cost of sports equipment, such as hockey, as a barrier for some youth.

Accessibility. Some junior high students report they rely on their parents to drive them to and from activities. This is sometimes not possible as parents may be working and do not have the flexibility to provide transportation. In addition, others noted that some communities have limited recreational facilities and/or offerings making it difficult to remain active.

When asked, "what would make it easier for people your age to remain active and healthy", students provide the following suggestions:

- **Promotion.** When friends are interested and involved in activities, it makes it easier for others to get involved. Promoting being active through a variety of mediums, especially social media, is seen as important in encouraging youth to become more active.
- **Less Competition.** Students suggest providing more opportunities for youth to become involved with activities for fun as opposed to competitively. Offering non-competitive recreational activities through the school system as well as having more gym classes were frequently cited suggestions.
- **Provide Transportation.** Provide transportation, such as offering more late buses, to students who want to participate in after school activities.
- **More Fruits and Vegetables.** Provide a variety of healthy food choices in the school setting.

PN Strengths

PN's focus on inclusion, having fun and not keeping score are considered to be the program's strongest assets.

Students like the fact that everyone is welcome to participate in PN regardless of their ability or skill level and there are no tryouts. They enjoy being able to play with their friends and appreciate that teams are created to ensure there is a mix of skill level on each team. Students also enjoy participating in the PN jamborees and meeting students from other communities.



"You don't have to be great at a sport. It's not competitive. It's just fun to be able to go there and have a game with your friends."

"You don't have to worry about being good at a certain sport. All you have to worry about is having fun with your friends."

"They don't turn you down at the door, they let you play."

"Everyone can get involved, no cutting of teams so no one feels let down, no championship games so people can't brag."

"I like playing sports and getting to play, meet and become friends with people my own age from other schools."

"I got to meet new people and do fun activities."

PN's emphasis on having fun and being active and not keeping score is seen as an important feature and serves to create an atmosphere of good sportsmanship. PN is also exposing students to a variety of traditional (ball hockey, volleyball) and non-traditional (omnikin ball, capture the chicken) sports. This is considered especially beneficial by those students who live in communities where there are limited opportunities to engage in recreational activities outside of the school hours. It is also interesting to note that some students observed that the skills taught in gym class are being reinforced through their involvement with PN.

"There is no scoreboard."

"Some good players will pass to the beginner so the guy will score. That is nice."

"I like that there are lots of different sports."

"You get to do fun sports and it keeps your body healthy."

"There are different sports and lots of activities that make you more healthy in many ways."

"It gets us physically active. They do a lot of fun things with us."

All students like to receive the PN t-shirts, ball hats and other prizes. Similarly, the junior high students enjoy collecting the pins associated with the sports they play. Some students also made reference to the healthy snacks (milk, granola bars and fruit) they receive while



participating in PN. Finally, a few students mentioned there was no fee or payment required, which made PN accessible to all students.

PN Limitations

While PN's strengths outweigh its limitations, lack of participation, frequency of events and rule modification are the three areas where students express criticism.

Students were asked to share what they liked least about PN. While many students found it difficult to identify any shortcomings, the following three areas were identified:

Lack of Participation. In some areas the interest in PN was low, making it difficult to participate in certain sports. Students who express such comments suggest more should be done to encourage youth to become involved in PN. Similarly, others would like to see more schools get involved as this would allow more jamborees to take place.

Frequency. There is variation in the frequency of PN, with some students reporting PN occurs weekly, while others report it occurs only once a year. Regardless of this variation, students would like to see PN offered more frequently, such as a couple of times a week or more than once a year. Others would like to see PN continue in the summer months as they report there is little for them to do sport wise in their area when school is closed.

Changing the Rules. Some students didn't like that the rules were modified. These students feel the sports should be played according to the original rules.

"There's not really much I don't like about PN."

"Not many people get involved and not many schools get together and play."

"I wish more schools would get involved."

"Make the sports last longer throughout the year and throughout summer."

"I think for the sports they do they probably should stick to the actual game and rules. It doesn't need to be competitive."

Improvements

There is an opportunity to enhance PN by seeking more student input, encouraging more students and schools to become involved and increasing the frequency of events.

Students' input was sought on how to improve PN. Once again, many students believe PN is a great program and no improvements are required. However, some students suggest that at each school, students themselves have a say in what sports are played and that an effort be



made to encourage both more students and schools to become involved with PN. As previously mentioned, students would also like to see PN be offered more often.

“Have more say in the sports that we play.”

“Have a choice in what sports we do every year.”

“Add more sports that people like to play.”

“Make it more than one day a week.”

“Make it more often, like a couple of times a month.”

“Have it more often with more schools.”

“I would like to have more opportunities to play.”

3.2 Parents

Parents hold PN in high regard and would like to see it offered to high school students.

Parents were asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction with the PN using a 10-point scale, where ‘1’ was ‘completely dissatisfied’ and ‘10’ was ‘completely’ satisfied. Parents provide extremely favourable ratings, with all assigning a score of ‘10’. PN is credited with not only providing an opportunity for children to be physically active, but also enabling children to socialize and interact with their peers. Involvement with PN is seen as helping to build self-confidence, most notably in children that are not naturally athletically inclined.

“Even though my daughter was involved with PN more, I think my son got more from it. Sports were her thing and not his thing. I think he was more proud of his award than she was.”

“The coaches build them up and make them more confident.”

“My child’s confidence is through the roof since he has become involved with PN.”

“It is great for physical activity and socializing.”

“It is a great way to get initiated into sports, to get involved and get physically active. Some kids would never get involved otherwise.”



Consistent with the views expressed by students, parents also like that PN has adopted an inclusive and non-competitive approach and all students are encouraged to play, regardless of their skills and abilities. PN is also commended for providing students with the opportunity to meet, socialize and play with students from neighbouring schools. In addition, the fact that there are no awards based on athletic skill and that everyone has a chance to win a prize is considered a positive feature of PN. Similarly, the earning of pins is also seen as a strong motivator for junior high students and is a good recognition of their accomplishments.

“PN is a constant reminder of the fun side of sports.”

“Everyone gets a chance to touch the ball.”

Parents also referenced the importance of having “late buses” for those students who do not live within walking distance of the school and/or have working parents that do not have the ability to pick-up their children before the end of the workday. Transportation is an important consideration and if not provided, can potentially act as a barrier to participation.

Finally, parents acknowledge that most times there are costs and fees associated with their children’s involvement in sports. These costs can be a barrier for some families. Once again, PN is seen as providing all children with an opportunity to be involved as there is no fee or cost associated with participation. This is considered an important feature of PN.

PN is seen as meeting the needs of elementary and junior high students, but parents question why PN is not in place at the high school level. The transition from junior to senior high school, especially if students have to physically move to a new school, can be challenging for some students, especially if not all their friends are in the same school. In this new environment, they may feel intimidated and afraid to try out for teams and play competitively. Parents expressing such opinions believe there is a need to continue to provide non-competitive sport offerings for high school students and would like to see PN expanded to include high school.

It is also interesting to note that some parents feel high school teachers are only engaged in competitive sport activities and few coaches are willing to volunteer their time to organize and coordinate non-competitive events. Overall, it is believed that high school students do not get the same level of support and encouragement from their teachers to remain active and participate in sports purely for fun.



Given their strong endorsement of PN, it is not surprising to learn that parents found it difficult to identify areas where PN requires improvement. Parents acknowledge the level of commitment that some teachers have given to PN has positively contributed to its overall success. Moving forward, parents suggest attention be given towards encouraging other teachers/coaches to become involved with PN to increase its reach and ensure its sustainability.

3.3 Focus Groups: Teachers

Teachers are supportive of PN.

Consistent with the opinions expressed by students, teachers identify student's preoccupation with technology and a lack of interest in sports as barriers to their being active and engaging in healthy activities. Similarly, students are also seen as carrying heavy workloads and are involved in multiple extracurricular activities, which is limiting the amount of time they have to being active.

Teachers also believe that declining student enrolment, especially in remote areas of the province, means there are oftentimes not enough students to create teams. It also means that there are limited opportunities for students to gather informally to hang out and just play for fun. Overall, today's youth are seen as spending less time outdoors and are losing their creativity when it comes to finding ways to entertain themselves in a physically active and health way.

Like parents, teachers were asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction with the PN using a 10-point scale, where '1' was 'completely dissatisfied' and '10' was 'completely' satisfied. Consistent with the parent ratings, teachers provide ratings of '9' or higher. These high ratings are based on the teacher's positive experiences with PN and the support and direction they have received from SSNL staff overseeing PN. Their scores are also based on the fact that PN's philosophy and what it is trying to achieve aligns with their own personal beliefs.

"SSNL are very knowledgeable and helpful."

"SSNL staff do not push it (PN) down your throat, but they are there to support you and provide resources whenever needed."

"A lot of support is offered. Great philosophy behind it."

Some teachers also consider the non-competitive nature of PN an asset, as it enables students who are not interested in competitive sports the ability to be active and develop healthy habits. Teachers feel PN's inclusiveness and the equal distribution of skill level among teams is providing a good introduction to a variety of sports and is instilling good sportsmanship



among all students. Despite this finding, some teachers report their students have opted not to be involved with PN because they prefer to be in competitive sports as opposed to playing for fun.

PN is also considered to have a strong social component and is helping students become more confident and secure. The jamborees are allowing children in the region to get to know one another in a friendly and non-competitive manner. The jamborees are also seen as enhancing the pride of the host community. Most notably, in small communities, parents, teachers and students are all involved in the jamboree preparations and residents come out to the events. Through their involvement they are seeing that their schools are not all about competitive sports. This is seen as sending a positive message about the importance of adopting healthy behaviours and habits to the community at large.

“Most times when students do travel to other schools it is for organized competitive sports, and they are rivals. PN creates the opportunity to travel to other schools and meet others with the goal of playing sports engaging in activities for fun, not in a competitive way.”

Teachers acknowledge a significant amount of time and effort is required to organize PN, especially the jamborees. For the most part, the physical education teachers are taking the lead in coordinating PN in their schools and liaising with SSNL. While some teachers feel the physical education teachers should continue to occupy this role, others suggest the physical education teachers are the busiest teachers in the school. The idea a community group such as the Community Youth Networks, 4H Clubs or the recreation community staff, assuming responsibility for PN was proposed by some teachers and received mixed reviews. Those not in favour in the change in leadership for PN, feel PN falls within the domain and expertise of the physical education teacher and that is where it should remain.

Teachers also identify educating administrators and parents on the impact PN is having on students both physically and socially as an important area requiring action. School calendars fill-up quickly and gym time is often at a premium. Ensuring PN is given the same priority as competitive sports in terms of scheduling and gym time is important to its sustainability. In keeping with this finding, it was suggested that consideration be given to declaring a “PN Week” to raise the program’s profile and to ensure that it does not become a one-off event. Devoting a whole week to PN would also help to raise awareness of the program amongst school administrators and other teachers. This is an area that merits further exploration.

Some teachers report there are cost implications associated with hosting jamborees. In some small communities where the gym is not large enough to host the neighboring schools, alternate venues have to be secured. The host school also provides healthy snacks and beverages for



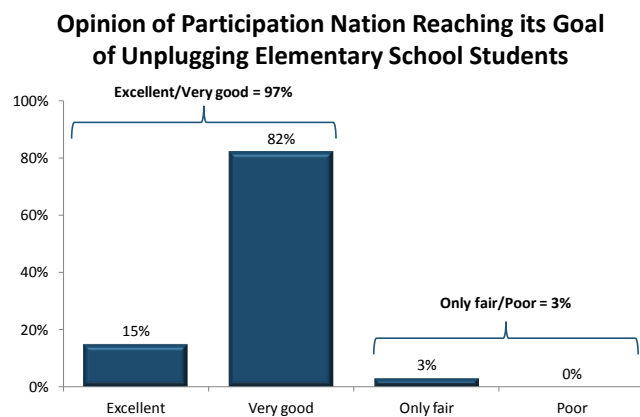
jamboree participants. While SSNL does provide some financial assistance to the host school, some teachers feel this amount needs to be revisited.

3.4 PN Unplugged Survey Findings²

The PN Unplugged training is equipping high school students with the skills they require to successfully volunteer with PN Elementary. However, there is a perception that PN Unplugged is not having an impact on high school students' use of electronics after school.

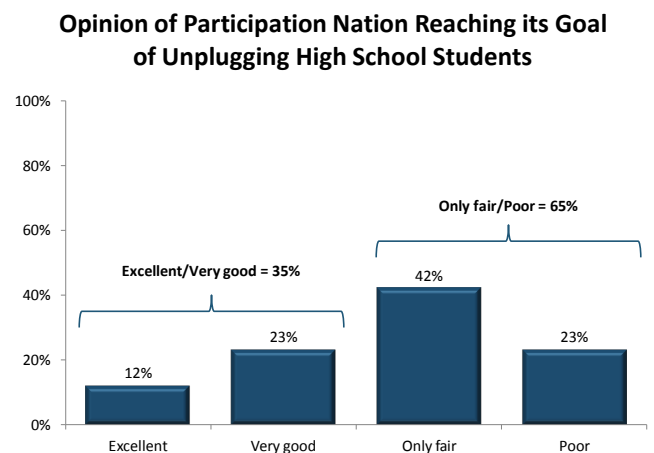
One of the objectives of PN Unplugged is for both elementary (grades 4-6) and high school (grades 10-12) to “unplug” from electronics in the after school hours. The vast majority (97%) of PN Unplugged students believe PN is doing an “excellent” or “very good” job at achieving this objective, with respect to *elementary students*. In contrast, the program is not seen as having the same effect with the high school students. Indeed, only one-third (35%) believe PN is doing an “excellent” or “very good” job at achieving this objective with *high school students*. (Figures 1 & 2)

Figure 1



Q.1: The goal of Participation Nation Unplugged is to “unplug” elementary (grades 4-6) and high school students (grades 10-12) from electronics in the after school hours. Overall, how well is Participation Nation doing in reaching this goal for the elementary school students? (n=29*) *Caution: Small sample size.

Figure 2



Q.2: And how about for the high school students? (n=29*) *Caution: Small sample size.

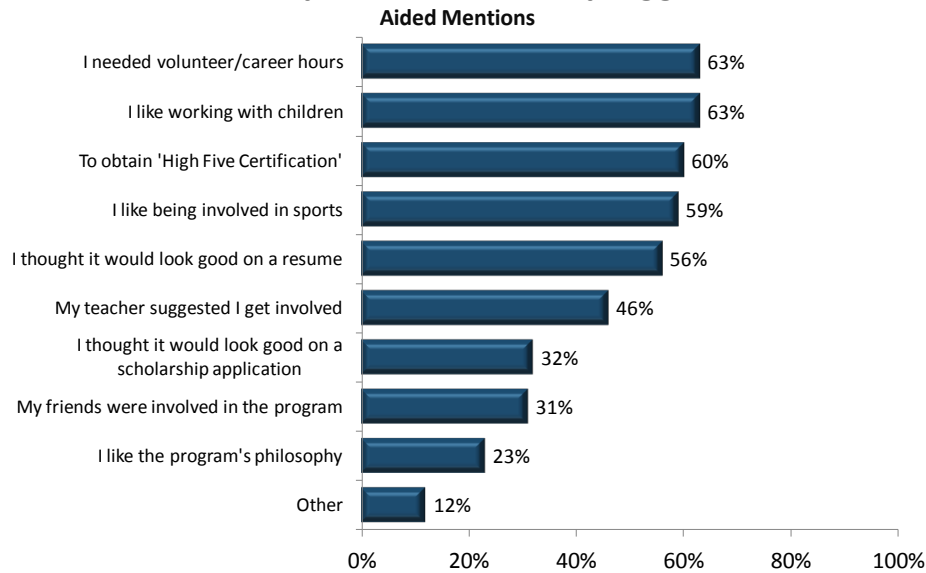
High school students became involved with PN Unplugged for a variety of reasons, including because they required volunteer hours, they enjoy working with children, to obtain “High Five Certification”, because they enjoy sports and/or to improve their resume. (Figure 3)

Figure 3

² Due to the small sample size, n=29, the findings from the PN Unplugged survey should be interpreted with caution and should be considered directional in nature.



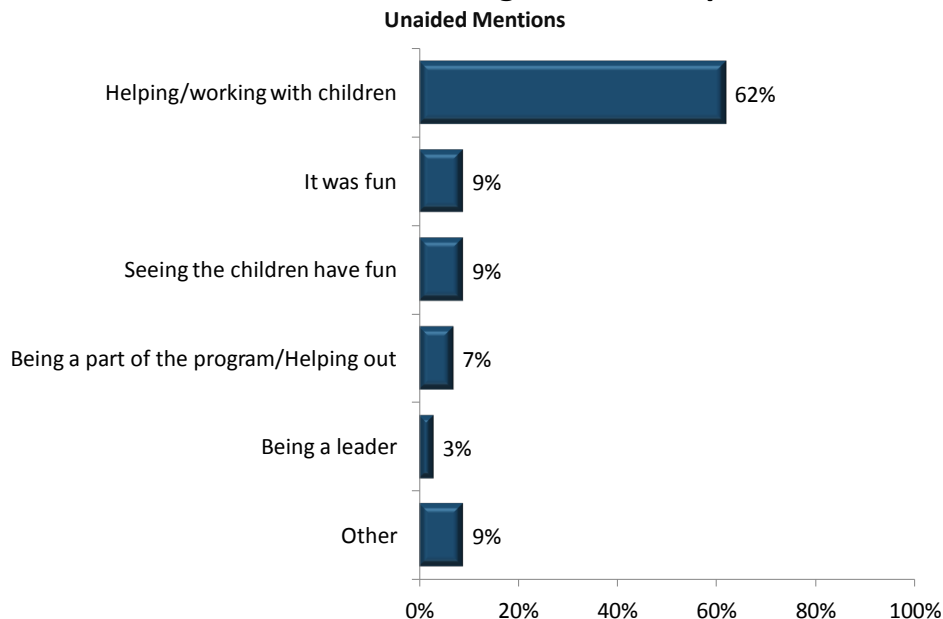
Reasons for Becoming Involved with Participation Nation Unplugged



Q.3: Why did you become involved with Participation Nation Unplugged? (n=29*) *Caution: Small sample size.

For the most part, students report *helping/working with children* as the aspect they like most about volunteering with PN Elementary, followed distantly by having fun, seeing the children have fun, being part of the program and being a leader. (Figure 4

Most Liked About Volunteering with Participation Nation



Q.10: What did/do you like most about volunteering with Participation Nation? (n=29*) *Caution: Small sample size.



Prior to becoming involved with PN Unplugged, seven in ten students believe they had an “excellent” or “very good” level of sport/physical activity knowledge, while the remaining three in ten feel their knowledge in this regard was “only fair”. (Figure 5)

Figure 5

Level of Sport/Physical Activity Knowledge Prior to Becoming Involved with Participation Nation Unplugged

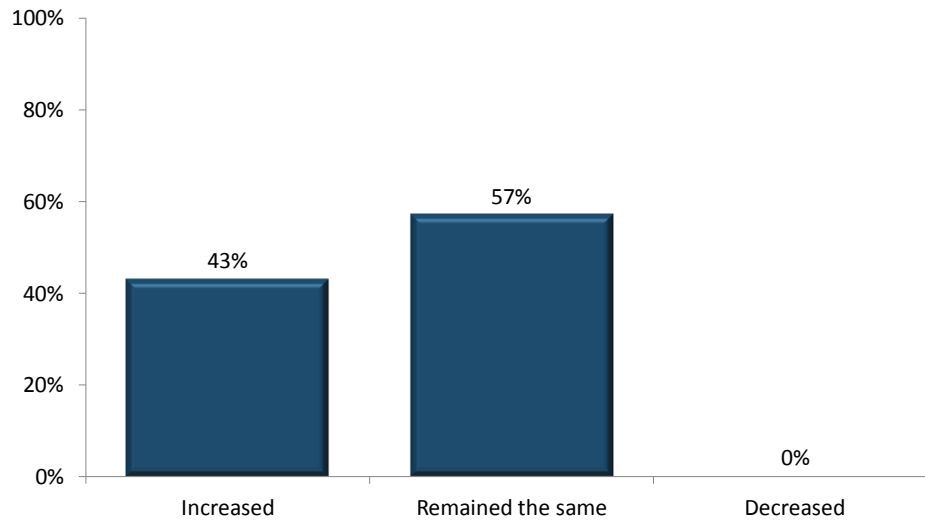


Q.4: Prior to becoming involved with Participation Nation Unplugged, how would describe your level of sport/physical activity knowledge? (n=29*) **Caution: Small sample size.*

Students’ involvement with PN Unplugged has resulted in either an increase (43%) or no change (57%) in their own personal physical activity levels. (Figure 6)



Figure 6
**Impact of Involvement with Participation Nation
Unplugged Has Had on Your Level of Physical Activity**



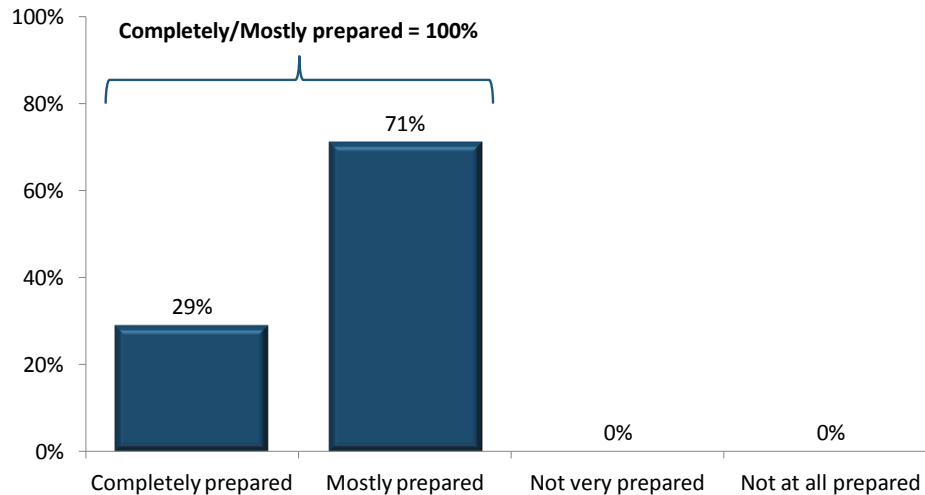
Q.5: And what impact has your involvement with Participation Nation Unplugged had on your own physical activity level?
(n=29*) **Caution: Small sample size.*

All students report the PN Unplugged training they received “completely” or “mostly” prepared them for their involvement with the program. No students believe the Unplugged training did not prepared them for this role. (Figure 7)



Figure 7

How Well Did the Training Received Prepare You to be a Volunteer with Participation Nation?



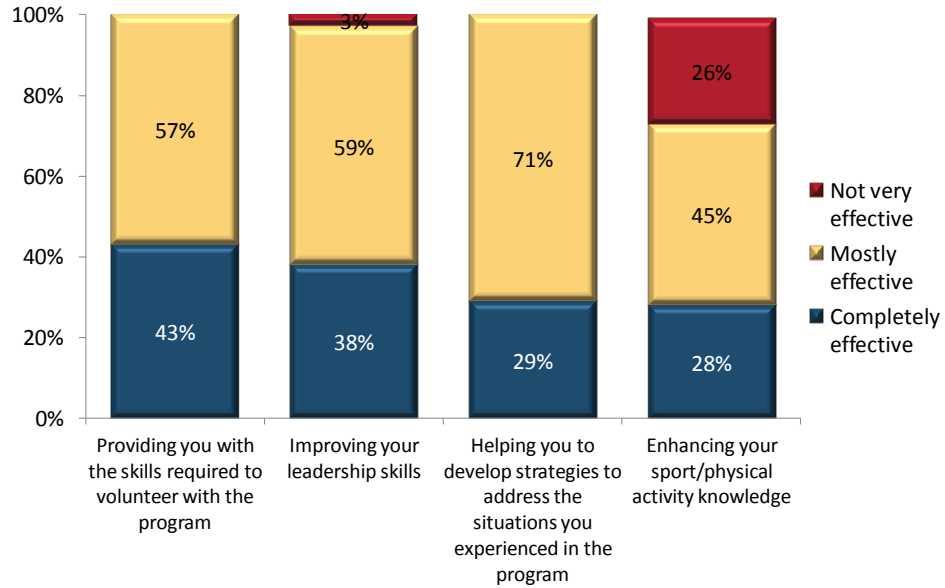
Q.6: Overall, how well did the training you receive prepare you to be a volunteer with Participation Nation? After the training in your opinion where you completely prepared, mostly prepared, not very prepared, nor not at all prepared? (n=29*) **Caution: Small sample size.*

Students were asked to rate the effectiveness of their training in terms of four areas; providing the skills to volunteer with the program, improving leadership, providing strategies to address situations experienced in the program and enhancing sport/physical activity knowledge. While the training provided is seen as being effective across all four elements, PN Unplugged receives top marks for *providing students with the skills required to volunteer with the program*, helping *develop strategies to address the situations experienced in the program* and *improving leadership skills*. Relatively speaking, one-quarter (26%) report training was “not very effective” in enhancing their sport/physical activity knowledge, while the remaining three-quarters report the training was effective in this regard. (Figure 8)



Figure 8

Effectiveness of the Training in...

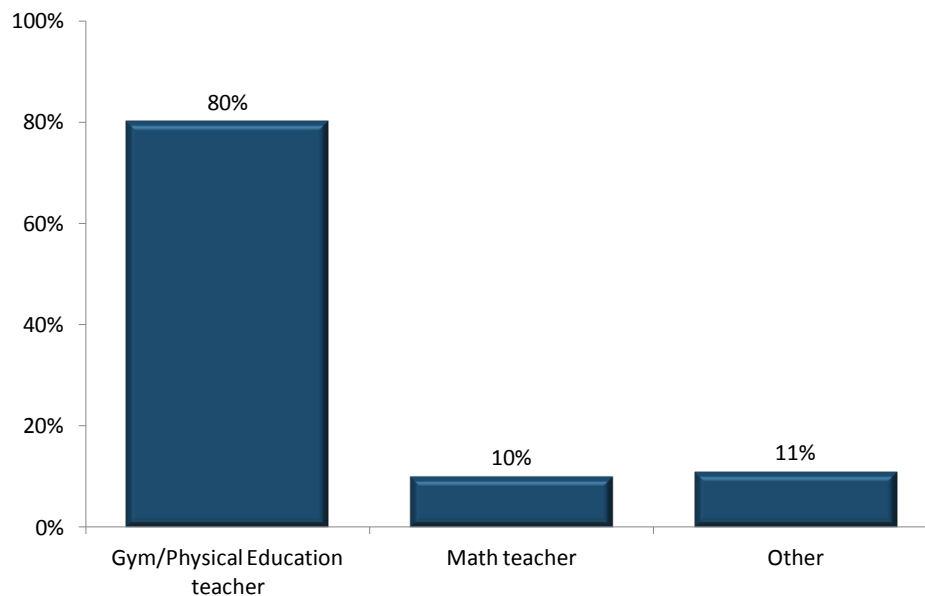


Q.7a-d: And how effective was the training in ...? (n=29*) **Caution: Small sample size.*

As might be expected, the physical education teacher (80%) is identified as the individual that delivered the program, while the remaining two in ten (21%) report another teacher other than the physical education teacher was involved. (Figure 9)

Figure 9

Teacher who Helped You Run the Program



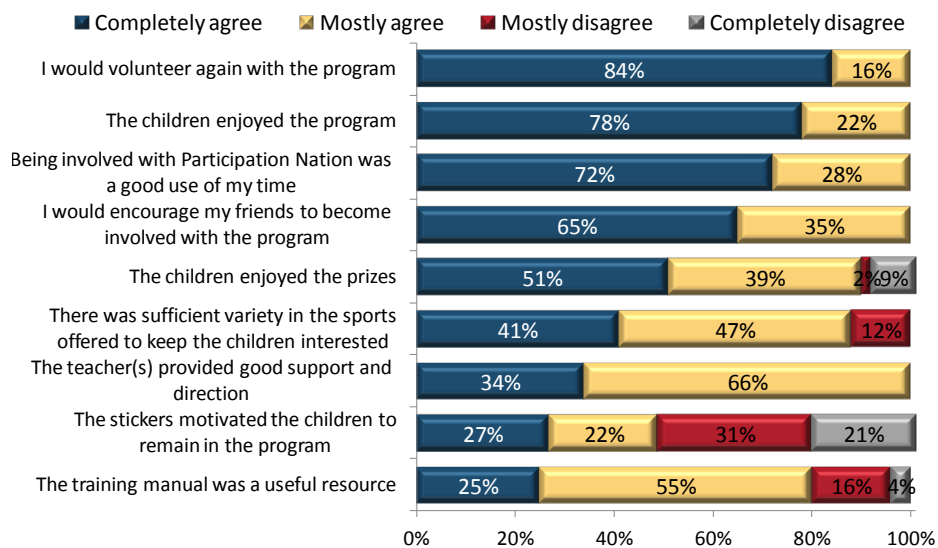
Q.8: Who was the teacher that helped you run the program? (n=29*) **Caution: Small sample size.*



All students agree the elementary school students involved with PN enjoy the program and the majority also agree the children like the prizes (89%) and there is sufficient variety in sports offered to keep their interest (88%). However, students express divergent views with respect to the use of stickers as a motivator to keep children's' interest, with five in ten (49%) seeing the stickers as a motivator while the remaining five in ten (50%) expressing disagreement with this statement. (Figure 10)

Figure 10

Opinion of Statements About the Participation Nation Elementary Program



Q.9a-i: Based on your personal experience(s) with the Participation Nation Elementary Program, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following. (n=29*) **Caution: Small sample size.*

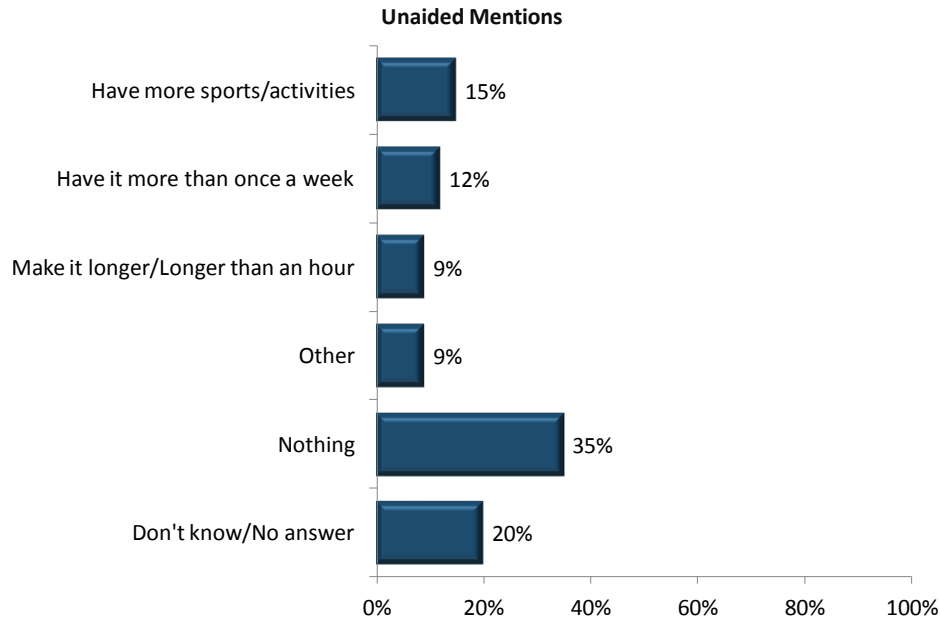
All students agree their involvement with PN Elementary was a good use of their time, that they would do it again and they would encourage their friends to become involved. Similarly, all report the teacher in charge provided good support and direction. In addition, eight in ten (80%) indicate the resource manual was a useful resource, while the remaining two in ten (20%) express disagreement with this statement. (Tables 9d-9i)

Students were given an opportunity to identify one thing they would change about PN Unplugged. Over one-third (35%) report they would change nothing, while another two in ten (20%) were unable to provide a definite response to this question. Just over one in ten (15%) recommend adding more sports/activities or offering PN Elementary (12%) more than once a week. Similarly, one in ten (9%) suggest making PN Elementary longer than one hour. (Figure 11)



Figure 11

Change One Thing About the Unplugged Program



Q.11: If you could change one thing about the Unplugged Program what would it be? (n=29*) **Caution: Small sample size.*

The table below provides the demographic profile of the students who responded to online survey:

Table 2: Demographic Profile of PN Unplugged Survey Respondents (n=29)

Characteristic	%
PN Volunteer Status:	
▪ Current Volunteer	39
▪ Former Volunteer	61
Age:	
▪ 16	31
▪ 17	21
▪ 18	32
▪ 19	8
▪ 20	8
Gender:	
▪ Male	52
▪ Female	48



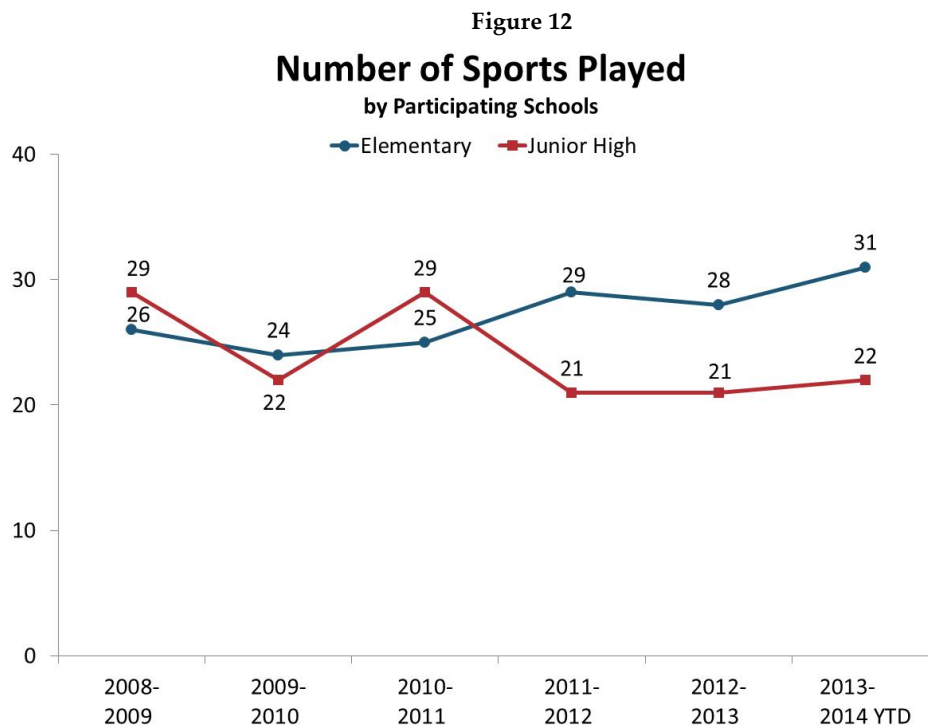
3.5 Database Analysis

SSNL has developed a database to track the following:

- Number and type of sports played
- Number of participating schools
- Number of schools participating in core sports
- Number of events

This section of the report provides an overview of the analysis of the information contained in the database from 2008 to 2014.

Both the PN Elementary and Junior High programs consist of 34 sports such as floor hockey, badminton, basketball handball and ultimate Frisbee. As can be seen in Figure 12, while the number of sports played in both programs has fluctuated, it has remained relatively strong and stable since 2011-2012.



Core sports consist of those sports where a participant can earn a sticker or pin. As can be seen in Figure 13, the number of PN Elementary participants participating in core sports has remained stable and strong since 2009-2010. While PN Junior High experienced a decline in



participation rates since 2009-2010, it merits highlighting that an increase was observed in this school year.

Figure 13
Number of Participants for Core Sports

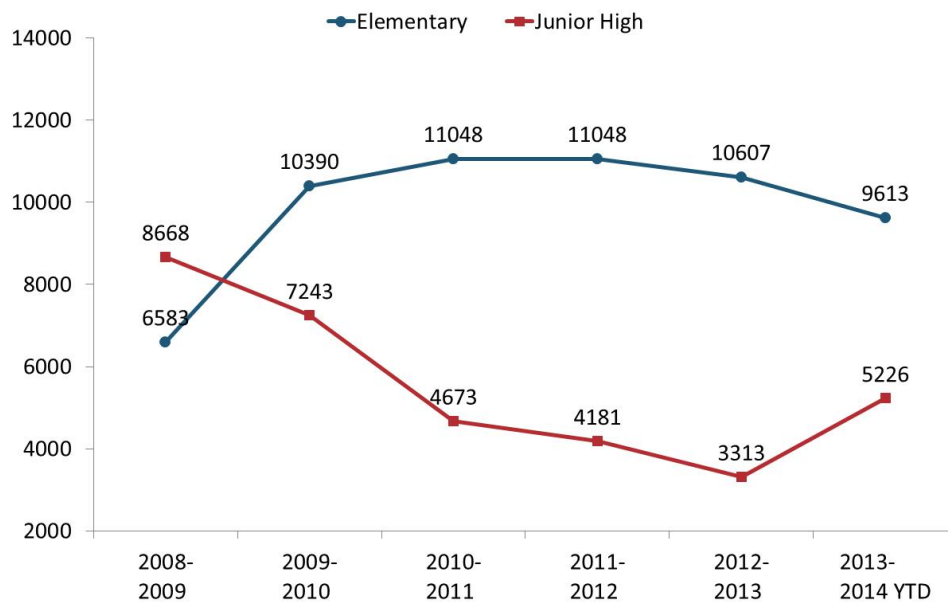
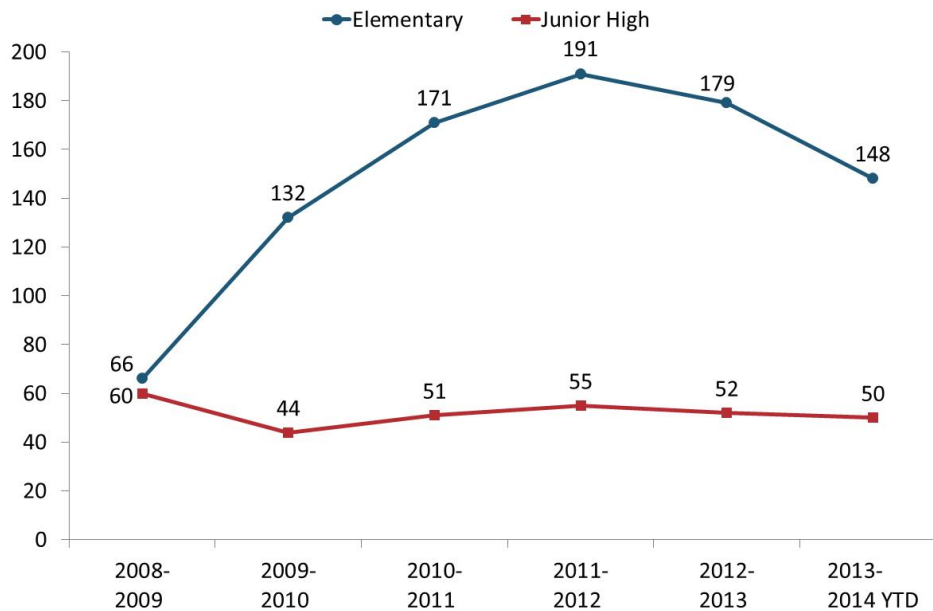


Figure 14 below outlines the number of core events for both the Elementary and Junior Program. When interpreting this Figure, it is important to note that the format of core sporting events differs between the two programs. More specifically, PN Junior High events are predominately large-scale events (Festivals of Sport and Jamborees) that require a significant amount of time and resources and typically occur annually or semi-annually. In contrast, PN Elementary events are usually held in-house during lunch or after-school and typically occur once or twice a week.



Overall, the number of core sporting events in PN Elementary has increased considerably since 2008-2009. In contrast, PN Junior High core sporting events have remained relatively stable since 2010-2011 and is perhaps a function of the resources and supports required to host and/or participate in Festivals of Sport and Jamborees.

Figure 14
Number of Core Sport Events

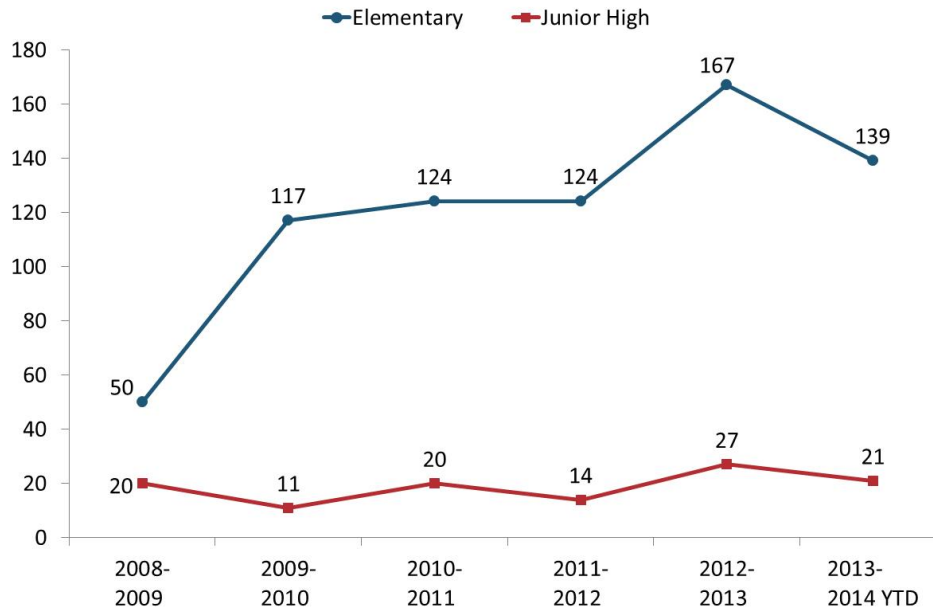


As can be seen in Figure 15, participating elementary schools are more likely to engage in in-house events than participating junior high schools.



Figure 15

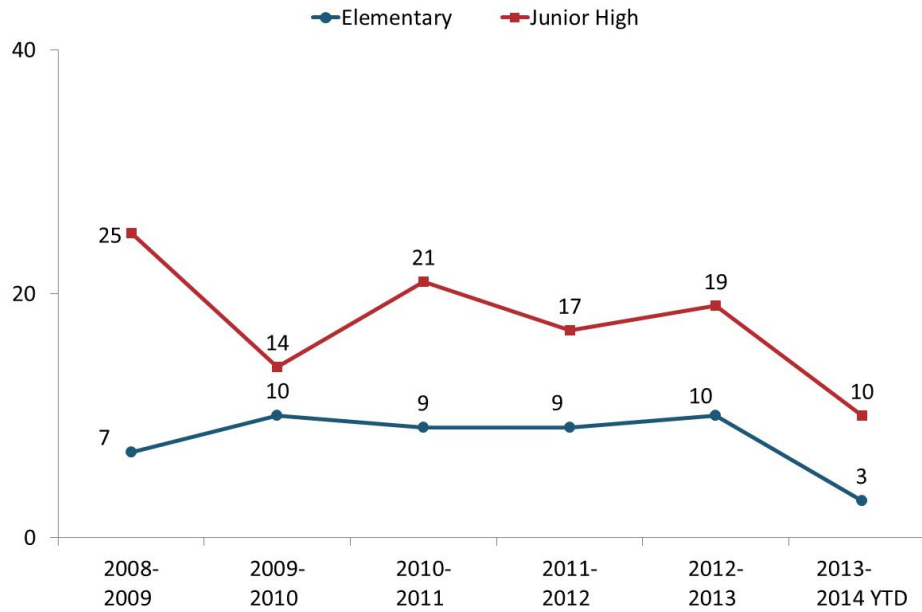
Type of Events Played – In-House



Although both programs have experienced a decline in the frequency of Festival of Sports events since 2008, junior high schools tend to participate more often in this type of event than elementary schools (Figure 16).



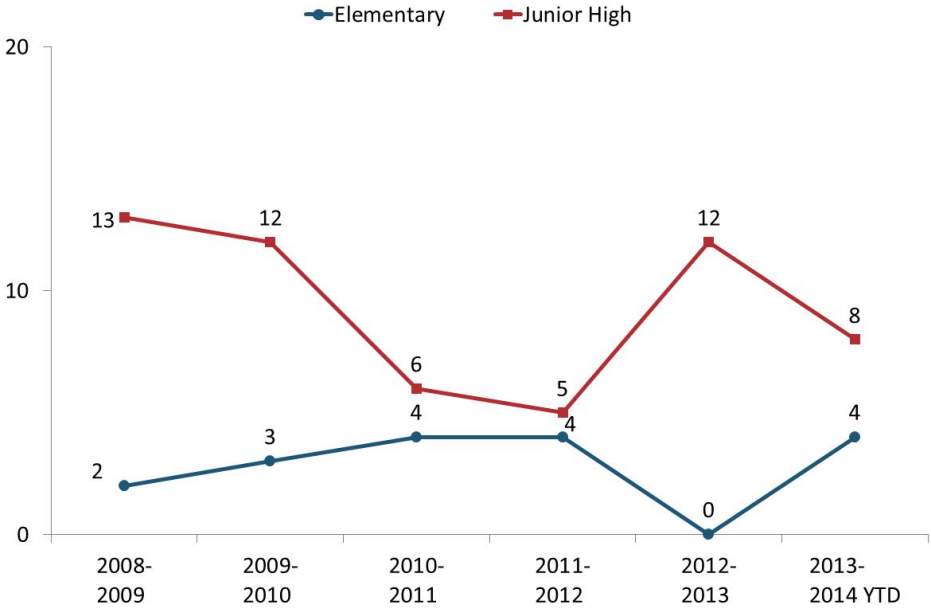
Figure 16
Type of Events Played – Festival



Finally, participating junior high schools are more likely to host and/or attend jamborees than participating elementary schools.



Figure 17
Type of Events Played – Jamboree





4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Students report, and their parents and teachers agree, PN is having a positive impact on those who are participating in the program. PN is fulfilling a programming gap and providing an alternative for students who want to be involved in sports, but not competitively. PN is creating an environment whereby students from grades three to nine have the opportunity to socialize and interact with their peers while being physically active purely for fun. In addition, it is helping to instill confidence and a strong sense of self-worth among participating students. These effects are even more pronounced in those students who are not naturally athletically inclined.

Overall, PN's is accomplishing its mission and helping students establish active and healthy lifestyle habits that they will hopefully maintain over the course of their lifespan.

Based on the evaluation findings, the following recommendations are provided for consideration:

Focus on maintaining and encouraging participation among students and schools.

While many schools are offering PN, it is important to ensure that students are made aware of these offerings and are getting involved. This is especially true in areas where the population is in decline and there are limited opportunities for students to be involved in non-competitive activities. Without a critical mass of consistent participants, it is difficult to organize certain sports and activities and may result in disappointment and disinterest among some students. The use of various promotion methods such as social media, local media, word of mouth and testimonials/endorsements from students should be explored in greater detail to encourage attendance and share PN successes.

Students also show an interest in having input into what activities and sports are included within PN. Moving forward, it is recommended that teachers consult with students to explore what activities might be undertaken each year. While it might not be possible to accommodate all students' requests, it is important to obtain their input and share with them the rationale behind the activities selected. Having this input may increase students' interest and commitment to PN.

Consideration should also be given to developing a strategy to encourage schools to become involved with PN. As part of this strategy's development, it will be important to consult with those schools that are currently not offering PN to identify the barriers to implementation and how they can be overcome.



The evaluation findings suggest that transportation could be potential barrier to participation. Many schools have addressed this issue by making arrangements for late buses on those days when PN is offered. This practice is working well and needs to be supported and continued.

Provide additional support to physical education teachers to increase the frequency of PN offerings.

The evaluation findings reveal there is variation in terms of how often PN is delivered. More specifically, some schools are holding in-house, weekly activities, while others are just participating in annual jamborees. Despite this variation, there is a strong desire among students to increase the frequency of PN events.

It is understood that physical education teachers have busy schedules and they are the individuals responsible for PN within their schools. Consideration should be given to identifying what additional supports and/or resources are required to assist these individuals offer more PN events. As part of this process, the possibility of involving community-based groups such as Community Youth Networks and municipal recreational staff in the delivery of PN, especially during the summer months, should reviewed.

xpand PN to include a high school component.

Based on the findings from the parent interviews, the possibility of developing a PN High School program should be explored. While the target audience for PN Unplugged is high school students, the focus of PN Unplugged is on building leadership skills, not providing students with an opportunity to engage in non-competitive sports and activities. There is a need to provide high school students who are not interested in competitive sports and avenue to be physically active and interact with their peers for fun. This is a programming gap that needs to be addressed.

Ensure PN's sustainability.

Based on the evaluation results, it is clear that PN is having a positive impact on students, both physically and socially, and its continuance is essential to the development and maintenance of healthy lifestyle habits. Moving forward, it is important to share with school administrators and funders the positive impact PN is having on the growth and development of students to ensure its sustainability and further development.