Program Coordination

Section 2: Program Coordination

The information listed in the following pages helps those involved with coordinating the Pre-Professional Teacher Practicum by providing guidance on key tasks involved as well as sample documents and suggestions for use.

NOTE: Despite being separate functions, program coordination and practicum instruction are typically jointly performed by one or two individuals.

Coordinators work to set up and manage the Pre-Professional Teacher Practicum. Key responsibilities include:

- **Scheduling** — Coordinating program components will require working closely with the district's requirements as well as allowing for student conflicts and supervising teacher needs.

- **Marketing** — Communicating program goals and objectives to your target audience requires developing key marketing messages and using effective marketing tactics to ensure program success.

- **Utilizing an Advisory Committee** — Once established, the volunteer advisory committee can provides effective insight, guidance, and assistance for making the Pre-Professional Teacher Practicum an ongoing success.

- **Directing the Application Process** — The application process involves reviewing the student's completed application form and essay, conducting an interview, and providing followup response on program acceptance and placement.

- **Placing Participants in Assigned Schools** — Placement is an important aspect for a successful program both from the perspective of the participants and the supervising teachers. It is important to work within the culture of the district and ensure appropriate communication and that district-required documentation has been completed.

- **Administering the Technical Skills Assessment** — A required Technical Skills Assessment (e.g., NOCTI or AAFCS) will need to be administered to those considered a "program completer" in this practicum experience.

- **Enforcing Discipline** — Occasionally, a participant may fail to meet the standards set forth for classroom expectations. It is important to have a discipline process in place appropriate to the infraction.

- **Observing Participants in Assigned Schools** — Observations simulate the teacher evaluation process every district is required to complete for teachers. Moreover, observing participants in the assigned school setting ensures they are obtaining experience working with students and interacting with both the supervising teachers and students in the classroom.

- **Implementing Student Organization Programs** — The opportunity to participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) and develop leadership and career skills not only sets the stage for participants' success, but also is an effective marketing tool for the program.

SCHEDULING

Scheduling will be determined based on the school district's policies; coordinators will need to adapt their program management to the district's scheduling requirements. For example, if your district requires a block schedule, you might meet one day a week in the classroom and have participants spend the other days in their assigned classroom setting. If, however, your district requires a daily schedule, conflicts might arise for some students in Advanced Placement classes. The amount of time a participant spends each week or semester in each setting will vary; ask your district advisory committee to help determine the best option for your program. The Pre-Professional Teacher Practicum course typically includes:

- **Regular Instruction** — Students meet with the practicum teacher/coordinator for classroom instruction and reflection (usually at least two hours/week)

- **"In-Service" Training** — Students meet with the practicum teacher/coordinator to learn course expectations, dress code requirements, transportation requirements, technology usage, and professional classroom expectations (can vary between 4-10 hours/week for the first two weeks of each semester)

- **On-site Internship** — Participants work with a certified teacher in the classroom (usually 8-12 hours/week)

Schedules may be modified to facilitate the most useful content delivery. When scheduling the course time, it is best to avoid conflicts associated with Advanced Placement courses, single-section offerings, school lunch schedules, specials, and teacher plan time. Plan to administer the Technical Skills Assessment as late in the second semester as possible to offer students the full benefit of their classroom experience (see page 37).

MARKETING

To effectively market the Pre-Professional Teacher Practicum, you will first need to develop a clear set of objectives for the program that can be communicated to a variety of audiences: school administrators and staff, students, parents, training organziations, and advisory committee members. A good way to do this is to create a "key message" for each program objective. For example, one goal of the program is to allow students to explore oppportunities in education before entering a teaching program at the university level. The "key messages" associated with this goal might be:

- "Experience what it's really like to be a teacher in today's classroom."

- "Start college ahead of the rest: Know what it means to teach in today's classroom."

Marketing the program can be accomplished in several ways. The enrollment process at each district is different, so a practicum coordinator will need to work within the limitations of the district enrollment process. It is important that school principals at all levels and the district board of education understand the objectives and goals of the program.

Next, you will need to develop specific marketing tactics for the program that communicate the key messages you initially developed and provide detailed information about how the program operates via brochures, slide presentations, and other materials (see **Sample Brochure** and **Sample PowerPoint™ Presentation** for ideas). These tactics could include:

- Meeting with principals at their district level meeting to promote and address questions about the program

Sample Brochure

Sample Presentation
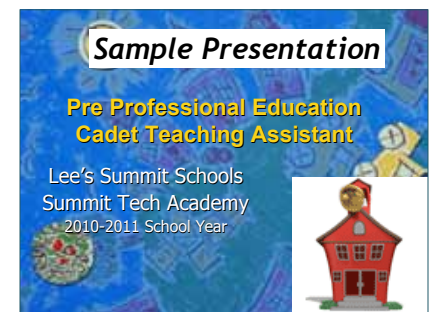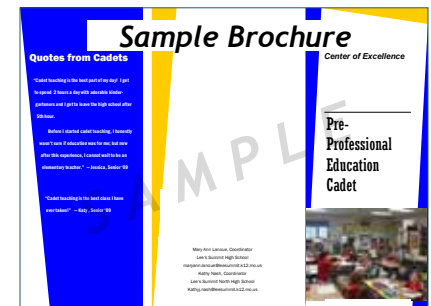
- Being the featured program at a board of education meeting to share accomplishments and educate board members

- Addressing counselors, students, and teachers about program requirements and application processes through school career advisor/advisee programs and career fairs. Some high schools offer career fairs as part of the enrollment process.

- Sending individual letters with applications to high school students interested in the education field. You can contact advisors and counselors for a list of interested students (see **Sample Program Promotion Letter**).

Utilizing an Advisory Committee

An advisory committee consists of volunteers who agree to provide advice on skills, knowledge, and attitudes required for the Pre-Professional Teaching Practicum. Members may include former practicum teachers, guidance counselors, K-12 teachers and administrators, and post-secondary instructors and administrators. Committee members should have a genuine interest in the program and students involved.
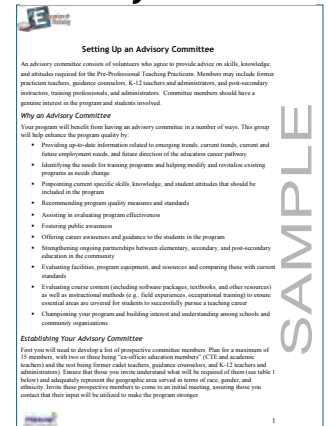
When meeting with your advisory committee, keep in mind that their recommendations are advisory only, but can carry weight in ongoing program development. To ensure that your advisory committee meetings are as effective as possible, be sure to:

- Plan meetings well and only hold them if there is work to be accomplished (typically at least twice per year)

- Require committee members to invest minimal time

- Schedule and announce upcoming meetings one month prior; busy professionals need advance notice to coordinate diverse time commitments

- Include each advisory committee member in the discussion and allow for an open, free discussion on strong and weak areas of the program

- Take meeting minutes that clearly identify action items for the next meeting as well as follow-up activities determined at yearly meetings (minutes should be distributed to each member within a reasonable time after each meeting)

For more information on advisory committees, review the document entitled, **Setting Up an Advisory Committee**.

Advisory committees assist practicum coordinators by providing imput on:

- How learning objectives are met by course content

- Ways to infuse rigor and relevance into course content

- How to enhance coordination and promotion with other school districts

Sample Promo Letter

Sample Setting Up an Advisory Committee

Directing the Application Process

To begin the application process, interested students would need to complete the application packet, which includes:

■ **Student Application Letter** — This letter serves as the directions for the application process to the Pre-Professional Teacher Practicum. It should be included with the application packet and used in the enrollment process for the next school year.

■ **Pre-Professional Teacher Practicum Application** — This application is a four-part document:

— **Part 1:** This section covers basic information about criteria used for admittance to the program (e.g., information about completed course pre-requisites, attendance, grade point average, and test scores). Practicum prerequisites are Child Development/Human Development and Career Pathways for the Teaching Profession; however, a district might also require coursework in Child and Adolescent Psychology, and/or Algebra I with a C. District programs might want to require a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or better, since many colleges require a specific GPA before being admitted to a teacher education program.

— **Part 2:** This section asks for information the practicum coordinator will need in order to place the participant, including personal information if contact needs to be made with the student. The application form should allow a student to list a grade-level preference, school preference, and perhaps even list a teacher preference. Although students are not guaranteed their preferences,

this information can be used in conjunction with teacher availability and schedule to optimize placement (see next section for information on participant placement).

— **Part 3:** This section provides a recommendation form; teacher recommendations help determine how a student will handle responsibility and self motivation. Applicants should seek recommendaitons from three teachers, asking them to complete the form and them return it to the practicum co-ordinator. This is done prior to acceptance in the program.

— **Part 4:** This section typically offers directions for an applicant to complete an essay about their qualifications for and interest in the program. Writing is an important skill for any teacher, so an essay or other type of writing sample helps analyze writing skills, thought processes, ability to communicate succinctly, and attention to detail. The writing sample provides the coordinator with valuable information.

Give application forms to students any time prior to the start of the school year, preferably as a packet during spring enrollment.

Once a coordinator has had an opportunity to review the completed applications, participant interviews can be conducted. During the interview, be sure to ask students their reasons for applying to the program and clarify expectations.

Following the interviews, send letters congratulating those students who are accepted and reiterating information about the placement process. Participants are typically anxious to know whether or not they have been accepted prior to receiving their schedule for the next year.

Attendance of 95 percent or better is a good indicator of a student's level of responsibility and dedication, important especially because supervising teachers come to rely on the participants when working with students.

Sample Application Letter

Sample Application Packet

A letter could also be sent to the participant's parents with the same information concerning placement and teacher contact. Be sure to caution parents not to contact the supervising teacher or placement school principal; the practicum coordinator should always be the first contact regarding placement questions or other parental concerns.

PLACING PARTICIPANTS IN ASSIGNED SCHOOLS

Participant placement can be done as:

- **Grade-level Placement** — This format involves placing students in the preferred grade level for the year, offering observations in other grade-level classrooms. Grade-level placement allows participants the opportunity to see the grade level/subject area they are most interested in teaching. Participants may be placed at pre-K, elementary level, or secondary level in all subject areas. There are some issues in placing students interested in high-school level subject areas that must be considered. Confidentiality is a major obstacle at the high-school level when placing pariticipants. Participants interested in high school are often better placed in the subject area in the middle school/junior high. Participants are often provided more experiences working with small groups of students at the middle-school level as opposed to the high-school level.

- **Semester-based Placement** — Another format would be to allow participants to change at nine weeks or at the end of each semester. This format seems to work best when participants can stay in a classroom for at least a semester, thus allowing time to form relationships with students and the supervising teacher. Journal reflections are deeper and the participant can observe long-term change.

- **Adult Training Placement** — In businesses and communities offering adult training opportunities, the supervising teacher role may be filled by a training director or other member of a training/human resources staff. This type of experience will help the participant differentiate between child and adult learning styles and explore career opportunities in training organizations.

Available placement locations will vary depending on the size of the district/community. In larger districts with more than one high school, it is best to stay within the feeder schools for the participant's high school. Regardless of district/organization size, essential communication with host school principals or business/community leaders must:

- Communicate a basic understanding of the program.

- Ensure that host principals/business people are comfortable having students working with students in their facilities.

- Establish that host principals/assistant principals (or training personnel) are the first contacts, followed by the supervising teachers/trainers, when placing participants.

- Stress that the practicum coordinator will be the first contact regarding placement questions or other parental concerns; parents should never contact principals, host businesses. or supervising teachers directly.

- Provide guidelines for making the experience better for supervising teachers/trainers as well as the practicum coordinator, such as refraining from placing students in a building with relatives (which creates issues if problems occur with placement) or with a student teacher (which may limit the participant's level of classroom experience compared to working directly with a supervising teacher).

As part of the placement process, the practicum coordinator needs to collec district-required documentation from each participant. This documentation typically covers transportation, field trip permissions, technology use, photo release, and student medical information.

Table 2.1, at right, provides recommendations for each area; check for district-specific requirements and adapt the samples included to meet your situation.

TABLE 2.1. Sample Coordination Forms

FORM NAME	DESCRIPTION/PURPOSE	WHEN TO DISTRIBUTE/ COLLECT
Permanent Driving Permit	Each district has their own policy about students driving and a release form that reflects that policy must be signed before a student can leave campus to drive to an assigned location.	First week of practicum
Field Trip Permission Slip	Once or twice a year, the participant is typically allowed to attend a field trip sponsored by the assigned school. This allows the participant to see students at a different time of the day as well as to observe the different schedules for the various age groups and why they are scheduled in a particular manner.	Send out two weeks prior to trip; must be returned by day of trip
Technology Acceptable Use Policy	Due to the use of computers for the class, districts may require students to sign a district-specific Acceptable Use Policy.	At enrollment or first day of school semester
Photo Release Form	Parents must sign a photo release form allowing pictures of their child to be displayed in the classroom, halls, newspaper, or Internet.	At enrollment or first-day of school semester
Student Medical Information Form	The medical information form is important since the student is offsite for part of the school day. Providing information to the supervising teachers is especially important if a student has a medical issue. The coordinator should make a copy and send to the supervising teacher.	First week of practicum

Sample Permit

Sample Slip

Sample Policy

Sample Release

Sample Med Form

Enforcing Discipline

A practicum coordinator will need to have a process in place to address unacceptable behavior should a participant fail to meet expectations. Communication among the supervising teacher, practicum coordinator, and participant is vital. The following discipline processes can be utilized depending on the infraction:

■ *Standard procedure format*, where there are specific guidelines for first, second, and third offenses with final outcome left to the coordinator's discretion. An example of this would be:

First Offense:

1. Supervising teacher contacts coordinator with discipline issues (attendance, dress, inappropriate speech and interaction with students)

2. Practicum coordinator meets with participant

3. Call to parent

Second Offense: Meeting with high school principal, coordinator, parent, and participant

Third Offense: Program discretion (based on district policies; consult with appropriate administration)

■ *Teacher evaluation and growth plan format*, where a practicum coordinator, following communication from the supervising teacher and talking with the participant, would complete a follow-up observation in the classroom. This could be scheduled with the supervising teacher and may or may not be communicated with the participant.

The Coordinator would complete an evaluation (see **Sample Participant Evaluations)** and discuss the results the participant. A plan would be developed by the coordinator and the participant to address issues from the observation, and the student would be given a set time frame to improve the behavior with the understanding the coordinator will complete an unscheduled follow-up observation for verification. At the time of that unscheduled follow up, a failure to improve the target behavior would result in the coordinator needing to determine either to assign the participant to a new placement or to enforce dismissal from the program (based on conversations with the supervising teacher and the appropriate administrator).

A meeting with the coordinator, participant, parents, and principal should follow with the recommendation and explanation for dismissal from the program.

Administering the Technical Skills Assessment

Pre-Professional Teacher Practicum is the class in which a required Technical Skills Assessment will need to be administered to those completing three (3) credit hours and who are considered program completers. NOCTI and AAFCS both offer Technical Skills Assessments; the coordinator or district personnel in charge of testing will need to determine which is most applicable to the district.

To offer students the full benefit of their experience in the classroom, schedule the Technical Skills Assessment as late in the second semester as possible.

Sample Evaluations

Observing Participants in Assigned Schools

Observations by coordinators should be scheduled three to four times in a year-long course. Because observations can be disruptive to the assigned classroom (depending on the age group), the coordinator may need to:

- Limit the number of visits and rely on supervising teacher evaluations

- Schedule observations to ensure that the supervising teacher will be in the classroom rather than a substitute

- Debrief and discuss what was observed in the classroom with the practicum participant

Coordinators and instructors in the Pre-Professional Teaching Practicum can use the **Sample Participant Evaluations** during each of the three observations described below. Use these forms and the recommendations below as a guide, adapting the process to the specific practicum environment in your district. For example, forms may need to be significantly adapted for participants working in a business/community training environment.

- **Observation 1:** The first observation should be scheduled with the participant and supervising teacher and should be a non-threatening observation, such as observation of the bulletin board the participant completes during the first semester. By scheduling the observation and grading of the bulletin board, the student knows specifically what is being observed. With the first observation, the coordinator can also identify the classroom set up, rules, procedures, and teacher style that can enrich classroom discussions with students.

- **Observation 2:** The second observation can involve specific work the participant is doing in the classroom, such as working with a small group of students, directing calendar time, or performing other routine daily classroom activities. This allows the participant an opportunity to be observed and debriefed before the observation of the actual lesson they will deliver.

- **Observation 3:** The third observation should involve observation and evaluation of the required lesson plan the participant delivers in the supervising teacher's classroom. This observation should be completed near the end of the course to provide the student with a number of opportunities to be in front of a small group or the entire class.

Implementing Student Organizations

No matter the size of your program, an integrated, co-curricular Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) will enhance your program and help put learning into action for your students. Having an integrated CTSO chapter means that FCCLA, FEA, or FTA activities are part of the written curriculum for your students, and the activities associated with those chapters are part of classroom instruction and activities. CTSO advisors act as classroom instructors in the Education and Training program.

Students who are enrolled in your Education and Training program are eligible for membership in your CTSO. While membership eligibility may vary between FCCLA, FEA ,and FTA, for purposes of this manual, the assumption is that members are currently enrolled and participating in the Education and Training program. The advisor/classroom teacher is responsible for setting the stage for success with CTSOs in any education and training program.

Sample Evaluations

Having a successful CTSO chapter requires these five, basic components:

1. **Membership:** Students in the program meet eligibility requirements for established FCCLA chapters, and must be affiliated with all levels of the organization – local, regional/district, state, and national — to hold leadership positions, attend meetings and conferences, receive state and national recognition, and participate in competitive events.

2. **Advisor:** Program teacher(s) are the CTSO advisors. They may serve as co-advisors with other family and consumer sciences teachers in FCCLA chapters. Since CTSOs are integrated into the classroom, each teacher is an advisor, and should be integrating CTSO leadership opportunities and content within the curriculum.

3. **Leadership:** While leadership development can take place throughout CTSO programs and activities, it is important that the CTSO have a set of student leaders willing to work with the advisor to develop programs and activities that benefit the members, chapter, school, and community.

4. **Meetings:** Chapter meetings are important for planning the chapter's program of work and keeping members involved. Chapter leaders should work with the advisor to plan for productive and interesting meetings. Opportunities are available for members to attend regional/district, state, and national meetings and conferences.

5. **Projects:** Chapter projects should be closely related to the Education and Training curriculum and coursework and include a variety of projects and activities that meet the needs of the chapter members as well as benefiting the school and community. Projects allow for additional leadership opportunities (in the form of committees), but can also be individual or team projects, such as competitive events. Project work may take place during designated class activities or may be completed outside of the class or school day.

While some chapters may focus on certain projects or events more than others, none of these five components can be ignored.

FCCLA Programs

FCCLA provides a number of program ideas that can be integrated into the Education and Training program with intentional planning. **Sample integration ideas for programs and practicums include those shown in table 2.2 on the following page (for a full list, visit state and national FCCLA Web sites via www.fcclainc.org).**

Grade these practicum assignments using established rubrics or work with the students to develop appropriate rubrics. These assignments can now be used as part of the chapter competitive events. For information on these events as well as more ideas and resources, including lesson plans, visit www.fcclainc.org. Each of these programs incorporate the use of the FCCLA planning process, a five-step tool for decision making and project planning. Be sure to familiarize your students with the FCCLA Planning Process prior to beginning any of these programs or projects.

For more information on implementing the five basic components of chapters, obtain "The Handbook to Ultimate Leadership" from FCCLA, Inc. (www.fcclainc.org), which also provides meeting templates, suggested activities, and other helpful resources for FCCLA chapters.

Table 2.2. Ideas for CTSO Intercurricular Activities

CORE COMPETENCY TEACHING AND TRAINING PATHWAY ALIGNMENT	FCCLA PROGRAM	ASSOCIATED PRACTICUM ASSIGNMENT
Identify career opportunities at the local, state, and national levels to plan for a career in education and training. *EDC09.01* Explore educational teaching pathways (i.e., pre-school, elementary school, middle school, high school, special education, and career-technical education).*EDC09.01* Identify specific requirements to become a certified teacher or a paraprofessional in a chosen area and level of education. *EDC09.01* Identify and explain the benefits of participating in professional organizations. *EDC09.01* Generate a plan for personal and professional learning. *EDC09.01* Establish a professional work portfolio documenting technical knowledge, skills, and leadership activities. *EDC09.01*	**Career Connection** — A six-unit program that helps members develop, plan, carry out, and evaluate projects focusing on different aspects of career development.	Within an assigned career cluster, participants research, create, and teach lessons about the cluster and possible careers, relating these to their placement. Assignments are graded according to established program rubrics and standards.
	Community Service – Students can use this program to give back to their communities, helping them further refine their career goals as well as develop and utilize leadership skills necessary for scholarship and college eligibility. One of the best ways to implement community service projects is through service learning opportunities targeted to any topic area relevant to curriculum and learning activities (from book drives to health fairs). Service learning differs from community service in that service learning has a direct connection to the curriculum and learning activities. Community service can be done on an individual basis or by the class as a whole.	Using the FCCLA planning process, students brainstorm community needs or concerns relation to education and training. As a group, they choose a project and determine individual responsibilities. For example, if the chapter chose to create activity kits for children staying in a shelter, students would need to research needs, choose age-appropriate activities to meet grade-level expectations, create or collect needed supplies, and write instructions (lesson plans) for parents to follow when using the kits.
	Power of One – This FCCLA program empowers leadership and personal growth through individualized projects that target improving personal traits and family relationships; exploring work options, preparing for a career, or sharpening business skills; developing leadership qualities; and telling others about the opportunities through FCCLA. Power of One's five units are easily integrated into any curriculum; students can apply skills learned as well as work on personal traits they will need to become successful as teachers or trainers, completing any number units. State and national recognition is given to students who complete all five units.	Using the list of core competencies for the Education and Training program, students assess their communication skills and follow the five-step FCCLA planning process to set a goal related to one of the Communications core competencies. For example, if students identified a need to strengthen presentation delivery skills, they could develop a plan for practicing and refining these skills.
	STOP the Violence (Students Taking on Prevention) – This FCCLA program is a peer-to-peer outreach initiative that encourages members to recognize, report, and reduce the potential for youth violence. Using peer education, members can increase youth awareness of violence prevention issues (e.g., bullying, cyber-safety, and stress management), include the school, family, and community in violence prevention efforts, and help promote conflict-resolution strategies. Participants can develop competencies for utilizing conflict resolution strategies and exhibiting professionalism in the education and training setting that can be important in maintaining harmony in the classroom.	Based on a presentation by an administrator, guidance counselor, school social worker, or school safety officer on school safety issues, students use the five-step FCCLA planning process to identify a violence prevention topic or concern in an elementary or secondary classroom. In groups, students develop a motivational poster, display, game, or other resource for use in a violence-prevention lesson.

FCCLA Competitive Events

FCCLA has a large number of state and national competitive events that can provide opportunities for students to exhibit mastery of the skills learned through the Education and Training program. These events, called STAR Events (Students Taking Action with Recognition), are competitive events in which students are recognized for proficiency and achievement in chapter and individual projects, leadership skills, and career preparation. Each event has its own rules and guidelines, and it is very important that advisors stay abreast of any changes in event rules and policies.

Some of the best events for Education and Training students include (but are not limited to):

- Advocacy
- Applied Technology
- Career Investigation
- Chapter Web site*
- Digital Stories for Change*
- Early Childhood
- Entrepreneurship
- Focus on Children
- Illustrated Talk

- Impromptu Speaking*
- Interpersonal Communications
- Job Interview
- Leadership
- Plan and Teach*
- STEM Integration*
- Subject to Debate*
- Teach and Train

* Missouri State Level Event ONLY; these do not offer opportunities to advance to national competition.

For individual program information, visit www.fcclainc.org.

Follow these steps to ensure success with STAR Events as part of your Education and Training program:

1. Ensure that your chapter membership dues are paid to the state/national organization by the designated deadline. Double check your membership roster so that no students are inadvertently left off the list.

2. Read and follow the guidelines as listed in the National STAR Events Manual and the Missouri Guide to State and National STAR Events.

3. Verify student eligibility for their chosen competitive event.

4. Obtain student participation approval from the school and parents.

5. Review the event rules and requirements with the student. You may need to contact the state or national organization for clarification. Ask questions!

6. Follow rules for dimensions, page numbers, or supplies. Don't make substitutions.

7. With the students, set goals and benchmark dates for project progress.

8. Encourage students to present their projects locally before advancing to regional or state competition. Invite advisory committee members, faculty, or parents to serve as judges.

9. Fix problems when you find them.

10. Follow the deadlines set by the regional, state, or national association. Missed deadlines may mean a student cannot compete.

11. Follow the dress code for competition.

12. Provide recognition for students whether they win or just participate. Make sure the school knows of their hard work and success!