



**RECRUITING STUDENTS AND COACHES  
TO YOUR ACADEMIC PROGRAM. HOW TO  
FIND OPPORTUNITIES AND MAKE  
SUCCESSSES POSSIBLE IN SMALLER  
PROGRAMS WITH LIMITED RESOURCES.**

**Robert Blain**

**(Houston) Aldine G. W. Carver Magnet HS**



# BEFORE WE GET STARTED

Register your attendance.

*Complete this form for each session  
you attend.*

Session numbers  
are in the program.

This one: Session 750.

CAP  
CON  
2024



Rosters

**QUICK CV ON  
THE  
PRESENTER  
(BECAUSE HE  
HATES  
TALKING  
ABOUT  
HIMSELF)**

**Native of Beaumont; UIL Academics competitor in middle and high school**

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**2nd-Career Educator (data analyst for Universal Computer Systems for ~5 years)**

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**Got into education in 2006; jumped to learn from great coaches both at Westfield and around the state... still learning and gleaning**

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**Coaching and working as UIL Coordinator for past decade**

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**Coached or served as Coordinator/Coach for state finalists in multiple events**

# **NOW THAT THAT IS OVER...LET'S GET DOWN TO BRASS TACKS**

**The main issues we all deal with- whether we're in a large or small school, whether we have a developed or developing program are:**

- **Committed coaches**
- **Committed students**
- **Stretching the dollar**
- **Campus community “buy-in”**
- **Your most valuable resource is the HUMAN resource.**
- **Any other overarching ones y'all have experienced?**

# **FULL DISCLOSURE**

**PARTS OF THIS PRESENTATION WERE  
CROWD-SOURCED FROM OTHER COACHES  
AND COORDINATORS BECAUSE HE KNOWS  
HE DOESN'T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS.**

**“A SMART MAN HAS ALL THE ANSWERS. A  
WISE MAN HAS ALL THE QUESTIONS.”**

# SO, LET'S TALK.



**It all starts with the people- the coaches and the students.**



**Understand your campus- each has its own challenges... whether a 6A HS with 3000 students or a 2A HS with 200... or a 6A HS with 700 students.**



**Smaller schools = Smaller pools of students**



**Larger schools = More programs to compete with for attention**

# **FIRST CHANCE TO PROGRAM BUILD → TALKING TO THE DECISION MAKERS**



**Talking to district staff about stipends for coaches**



**Talking to the campus principal about support for the program**

# **SO, LET'S GET OVER A HURDLE**

**We know Admin has their focus on items like:**

- **Not unwanted attention for test scores**
- **Getting positive publicity for the school**
- **The budget**

**Sell UIL Academics to Admin with points like:**

- **TEKS connections in UIL**
- **Opportunity for local media coverage**
- **Use UIL to ease class sizes**
- **... and yeah, all the stuff that Dr. Stevens mentioned in his session.**



**NOW, THAT  
YOU HAVE  
SOME IDEAS  
ON GETTING  
BUY-IN, IT'S  
TIME TO GET  
SOME  
COACHES!!!**

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**Recruit during inservice days.**

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**Pay attention to who the students are always talking about.**

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**Newer teachers are often looking for their niche.**

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**Never know- there may be a veteran teacher who never got asked. We have a ComSci sponsor NEXT YEAR because he saw "We never have anyone. I can at least get a positive score!"**

# TIME TO GET SOME STUDENTS



**To me, it's easier to find the committed students than coaches who believe they have the time.**



**I was a smart kid (though not dedicated enough to make it to UIL State)... but they're out there!**



**The problem being: they've got so much going on.**



**Talk to the middle school sponsors – great way to get the freshmen before they even show up.**



**Find the AcaDec students; 2/3 of teams are done in January (99% are done by March 1<sup>st</sup>). Great way to fill out the team to replace someone who had to drop.**

**TIME TO  
GET SOME  
STUDENTS –  
ACT 2  
IDEAS FOR  
RECRUITING  
STUDENTS**

- **If you feed them, they will come (both recruiting and for meetings)**
  - **Ice Cream Party (even get the principal to pay for it)**
  - **Punch, Chips, and Cookies**
  - **Literally put snacks on my Amazon Wish List.**
- **Talk up:**
  - **The travel**
  - **TILF Scholarships**
  - **Chance to be involved**
  - **Prove you're "smarter than the average bear"**
- **Talk to the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers about:**
  - **Who's doing well in September**
  - **Who did well the previous year for new recruits**
- **Special invites**
  - **"Your Teachers Nominated You" (everyone likes to feel special)**
- **Google Form. Just like the campus sends out updates and announcements about everything else, have them blast out a link to a Google Form, post a QR Code, make an announcement.**
- **Upperclassmen- well, we know their value.**

# **TIME TO GET SOME STUDENTS – THE FINALE (PROGRAM PROMOTION)**

**Success breeds success! Your current kids are your best recruiters.**

**Oh yeah! Take pictures of the fun stuff!**

## **Use in-house sources**

- **Morning Announcements**
- **Campus newspaper, if you have one**
- **“Team placed 6<sup>th</sup> at \_\_\_\_\_ Invitational” ← as Stevens would say, “No one needs to know there were only 6 schools there and Number Sense had a negative team score that time!”**

## **T-shirts also breed success!**

- **Great advertising for the program (esp. if the team designs it)**
- **Gets people talking**
- **Offer the shirts to the staff to help defray the per-unit cost**

**“BUT, ROBERT, MY CAMPUS IS SMALL LIKE YOURS. THEY’RE ALREADY IN BAND... AND THEATER... AND TAKE CARE OF SIBLINGS AFTER SCHOOL... AND EVEN WORK!”**

- **Thanks for asking!**
- **There’s no magic formula for this.**
  - **Remember: If they’re talented enough to excel while in other activities on/off campus, there’s a way to make it work!**
  - **Might mean having practice late (ooh, a day to get WSs printed, your next 2 tests into Eduphoria, and call that parent who never answers at 9:15AM)**
- **Again, success breeds success!**

# SUGGESTIONS FOR THOSE OVER- INVOLVED STUDENTS



**The dedicated class period.**



**Meeting them where they are.**



**Vary up where and when  
you meet.**

Literally, met at Starbucks, DQ,  
Whataburger Dunkin



**If possible, let them meet  
w/o you there. Can't be in  
the room when they test-  
let them work w/o you.**

Also: more time for yourself...  
draw the line somewhere!

They can use Google Docs,  
Google Meet, GroupMe w/o  
us.

# **SUGGESTIONS FOR THOSE OVER-INVOLVED STUDENTS**

## **Doubling up meetings**

- **AM & PM**
- **Right after school AND after another practice**

**Create a schedule where sponsors give students a day off.**

- **Students feel valued, respected, and empowered**
- **Other sponsors get better meetings**
- **We all enjoy autonomy**
- **Helps new coaches by letting them “just coach”**
- **Again, gives you as a coach some time to have a life.**



## **FINAL IDEAS ON LITTLE SUCCESSES**

- **Look at previous District/Region results for places where few entries occurred**
- **Anyone can coach- even outside their expertise**
- **Create achievable goals**
  - **If your district had 6 of the 10 WC teams (and you weren't one of them), shooting for Sweepstakes might be too lofty, but "fielding a full team for every event" can be.**



# NOW, TO THE LIMITED RESOURCES

You have the human resources... now, it's time to cultivate.

# **SUCCESS TIP #1**

## **FREE SCRIMMAGES**

- **Steal a page from athletics- scrimmage someone you don't compete against (especially in another classification)**
- **We created an online world during COVID- keep using it!**
- **Use old tests as practice material, when possible**
  - **Doesn't work as well with Lit Crit, Social Studies, CIE, etc.**

## **SUCCESS TIP #2 IN-PERSON INVITATIONALS**

**Attend them- UIL sponsors 2 sets of practice meets**

- **At minimum, you have more study material**
- **Offer to proctor, in exchange for a break on entry fees**
  - **They want the good proctor**
  - **You want the price break**

**Host your own invitational**

- **Frame it to Admin as a fundraiser (they may even absorb the custodial and security charges)**
- **Brings in revenue**
- **Consider hosting a MS meet for your ISD's schools for both scouting and recruiting**

**Keeps the program in the news**

**Great practice in the real testing setting**

# **SUCCESS TIP #3**

## **ONLINE PRACTICE MEETS**



**Can save a lot of time and money**

**No travel expenses**

**Often a flat fee regardless of the number of competitors**

**No giving up a Saturday- testing can be done during the day or after school**



**You create the “Day of District” experience in your own classroom... which can ease the stress of the real thing.**



**Some of the more notable ones:**

**Virtual Challenge Meets (flat fee for all events)**

**Best of Texas (charges by the event- so might be the better option, if only doing a few events to launch the program)**

# **ADDITIONAL CROWD-SOURCED TIPS**

- **“Insist the places you go for meets... is the same standards as State.”**
- **“Teachers who... make students believe they can be successful and show they care. That will forever be the main ingredient to success.”**
- **“There are a lot of UIL gurus out there willing to... (virtually or in person) workshop your kids as well. Give them tips and such. Also, get them to a Student Activities Conference if you can - it’s free and a great way to build that team spirit/camaraderie!  
Scheduled weekly practices and work sessions - these are not just for performance events (S&D, theater). And periodically have UIL Team fun days where the whole team does picnic, holiday or whatever fun stuff as a team.”**

# **SPEAKING OF STUDENT ACTIVITY CONFERENCES**

- **September 7<sup>th</sup> – Tyler Junior College (Tyler)**
- **September 14<sup>th</sup> – Lone Star College – North Harris (North Houston)**
- **October 5<sup>th</sup> – Texas Tech University (Lubbock)**
- **November 2<sup>nd</sup> – University Of Texas at Austin**
  
- **Great information and you'll get into an "usie" like this!!!**



# THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

Registration link,  
presentations and handouts  
are available on the website.

*Remember to register your  
attendance for each session.*

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Handouts & More



**RBlain@AldineISD.org**  
**281-687-9955**

**THAT'S IT!!!**  
**HAVE A**  
**GREAT**  
**SUMMER!!!**  
**OH YEAH,**  
**CONTACT**  
**INFO:**