

Soft Skills Fair

Partnership with Business



Fair Grove High School

Missouri

2017-2018



TABLE OF CONTENTS



Goals	2
Responsibilities	
Responsibilities of Business Partners	3-4
Responsibility of Chapter Leaders	4-6
Soft Skills Fair: Project Development	
What is the GO CAPS Program?	7
Strategic Steps for Partnership	7
Soft Skills Fair	8-9
Publicity	9-10
Benefits	10
Evaluation of the Project	
Student and FBLA Chapter Evaluation	11
Business Partner Evaluation	11
Changes for Future Partnership	12
Appendices	
Appendix A: Students Electronic Evaluation Survey Questions and Responses	13
Appendix B: Business Partner Evaluation Survey Questions and Responses	14-15



GOALS

The Soft Skills Fair at Fair Grove High School included 99 juniors and 77 seniors with the goal of each student visiting different stations ran by business partners and learning about soft skills. The FBLA chapter partnered with GO CAPS who provided the business leaders for all of the stations. There were eighteen businesses and eighteen different soft skills, each skill assigned to one station. The soft skills that were chosen came from actual businesses partners who explained specific soft skills that their own employees were lacking. The 176 students who had completed the Soft Skills Fair would be educated about soft skills and prepared for employment. The administration of the school asked that FBLA continue doing the Soft Skills Fair for many years to come. The goal is to have it every other year. To keep the Soft Skills Fair as updated as possible, the FBLA members will continue to do research on exactly what soft skills employees are missing.





RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility of the Business Partners

The business partners had the responsibility to engage students in hands on activities to experience and learn about soft skills. The businesses needed to provide any supplies needed for their station. To start off the Soft Skills Fair, Cal Johnson and Russell Winterberg from JMARK gave an intro to soft skills. They defined soft skills and explained why soft skills are important. Their presentation gave examples of how soft skills should be used during a job interview.

Each business partner had a specific soft skill they were assigned to teach the students. The students were divided up into small groups and would move around to each business partner's station. This gave the business partners the ability to create activities, so that the students could actually experience and realize the purpose of that specific soft skill while at that station. The business partners were responsible for interacting with each group of students for 15 minutes each. They also had the responsibility of answering questions from the students. They had to plan for about two minutes of questions at each station. Some of the businesses chose to play interactive games. Mikki Skinner from Preferred Employment Services played Interview Jenga at her booth. Stephanie Garland from the BBB set up a Kahoot about workplace ethics for the students to play. Many of the stations had the students interact and engage with each other to practice soft skills like Jordan Nelson from Mercy Hospital, Springfield MO. Melissa Bounous and Connie Jenkins also had the students interact with each other by dividing into partners and





practicing communication skills.

JMARK, Sgt. Brian Way FGPD, and

MO Jobs Center prepared board games.

There were stations, such as MO Jobs and Mizzou that challenged the students

to step out of their comfort zones. The

students played a cup stacking activity

and a game where the objective was to

move the marble through many different

pipes and try to get it from one end to another without losing the marble. They had to use

teamwork to complete each task. At the networking, feedback, and productivity stations the

business leaders spoke about their assigned soft skill to inform the students with useful

information specific to their soft skill.

Responsibility of Chapter Leaders

Partnering with the GO CAPS program gave the chapter a chance to grow in multiple

ways. Not only did the FBLA members learn skills they can start using to prepare and secure

their futures, but chapter leaders were given an opportunity to work directly with businesses and

get a firsthand experience with leadership and business in the real world. The idea was to set

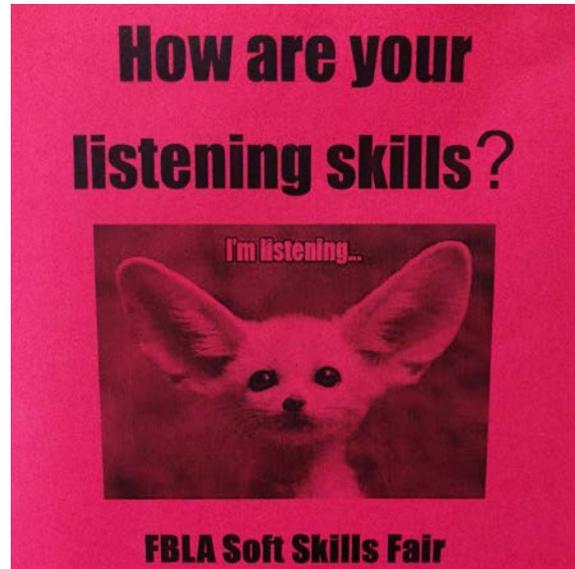
aside some time in the school day to inform and educate all juniors and seniors at Fair Grove

High School on the importance of soft skills. The FBLA chapter leaders and sponsors got in

touch with GO CAPS and came up with an interactive and informative way to teach their

students. The idea was established as the “Soft Skills Fair.”

Each FBLA chapter leader was partnered with a professional volunteer from a local business in Springfield, Missouri. The leader's job was to communicate all the needed information to their business partners and help manage any tasks that might be required. Leaders communicated over email and also met for a business luncheon hosted by the FBLA officers at a local restaurant to



discuss plans for the fair and get to know their partners. During this meeting FBLA officers went over the agenda and expectations for the event. The task at hand was to come up with a station for the fair that would be informative and interactive for the students. There were 18 stations, each with the goal of teaching a different skill that the juniors and seniors would use in their futures to get and keep their jobs. Business partners were encouraged to come up with an activity to accompany the lesson they were teaching, in order to help keep the students' attention and get positive results.

The stations, with their business partners, were as follows:

1. Interview Jenga- Nikki Skinner Preferred Employment Services
2. Soft Skills in Resume/Cover Letter/Application- Vickie Hicks
3. Listening Skills- Mercy Hospital Jordan Nelson
4. Time Management- Russell Winterberg- JMARK
5. Prioritize Tasks- Sgt. Brian Way- FGPD
6. Body Language/Facial Expressions/Small Talk/Handshake- Loni LeForce
7. Professional Use of Technology (cell phones, social media, email, voicemail)- Megan Short--Executive Director, Springfield Contractors Association
8. Emotional Intelligence- Carrie Carr

9. Teamwork-Cody Naeger, Nick Groves-Youth Department
10. How To Receive Feedback/Constructive Criticism- Bradley Daniels-Shelter Insurance
11. Initiative/Resourcefulness/Growth mindset/Self-starter- Pat Bauer
12. Communication Skills- How To Clearly Express Your Needs- Melissa Bounous and Connie Jenkins
13. Bored? Productivity Even In Monotony- Cal Johnson-JMARK
14. Networking for Students 101, Eye Contact and Remembering Names- Bill Smillie, Business Services Representative
15. Resume Writing/Interview Tips-TJ Panique, MO Job Center
16. Workplace Ethics- Stephanie Garland-Better Business Bureau
17. GO CAPS- Alex Greiwe and Karen Kunkel
18. GO CAPS Second Year Student Group- Mary Edgerton and Colleen Merrigan

Prior to the event, the FBLA chapter was responsible for promoting the Soft Skills Fair. News about the Soft Skills Fair was spread by word of mouth, posters, and leaders made announcements on the intercom. FBLA officers had a video produced by the digital communications class to encourage students to be the best versions of themselves and remind them of this important networking opportunity that was made for them. Fair Grove High School has a video every Friday that is shown in every classroom so no student was ill-informed. On the first Wednesday of every month, Fair Grove High School has a club day and during this time FBLA again informed the chapter of the upcoming event.

The FBLA chapter helped set up the event in the high school gym by putting out mats on the floor and setting up tables and stations. After the event, the chapter stayed afterward to help clean up and made thank you notes to each business member for participating in the event and for their help in furthering the knowledge of the Fair Grove junior and senior classes.



SOFT SKILLS FAIR: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

What is the GO CAPS Program?

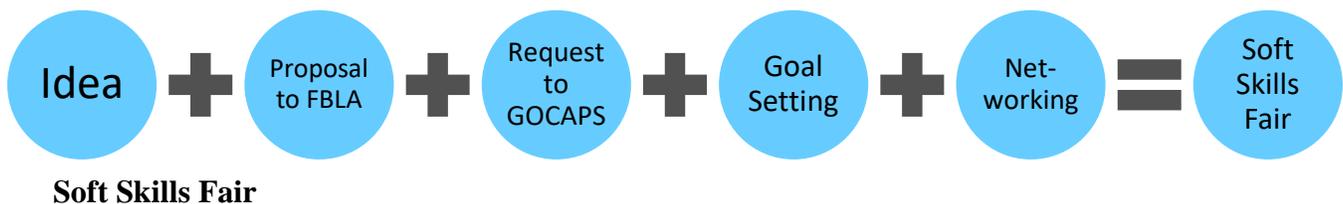
Centers for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) programs are nationally recognized, innovative high school programs. Students fast forward into their future and are fully immersed in a professional culture, solving real world problems, using industry standard tools, and are mentored by actual employers, all while receiving high school and college credit. CAPS is an example of how business, community and public education can partner to produce personalized learning experiences that educates the workforce of tomorrow, especially in high skill, high demand jobs. The program is open to high school juniors and seniors only.



Fair Grove High School focused on the business and entrepreneurship side of the GO CAPS program. Given the dynamic nature of idea and business start-up, there is no fixed curriculum in this strand, but rather a framework for unique learning experiences called “CAPSules” that introduce a new theme through targeted business projects and business partner engagement. Students will cover topics in innovation and entrepreneurship, finance, leadership and teamwork, market analysis, communication and technology, project and time management, and specifically soft skills. Through professional skill development students are opened to unique experiences allowing the students to cultivate transformative professional skills such as understanding expectations, time management and other essential business values. These skills are critical to providing students with a competitive advantage in their post-secondary education and professional careers.

Strategic Steps for Partnership

As many significant events begin, it started with a single idea from an encouraging teacher. Anatomy and Physiology teacher, Ms. Brannock spoke to the teachers sponsoring FBLA and the FBLA officers about her idea. It quickly grew into not just an idea, but a plan rolling into action. Then, Ms. Brannock communicated directly with a manager of the GO CAPS program, allowing her to partner with the MO Career Center. The MO Career Center provided the 18 business leaders for the stations in the Soft Skills Fair. With the plan approved by the sponsors and school administration, everything went into motion. A specific goal was set: infuse juniors and seniors of Fair Grove High School with the knowledge they will need to be successful in the future with getting and maintaining a job professionally and accurately. The final step was a responsibility for each FBLA chapter leader to network with their assigned business leaders to plan that leader's specific Soft Skill station. Once all of these steps were accomplished, the Soft Skills Fair was ready to make its first appearance.



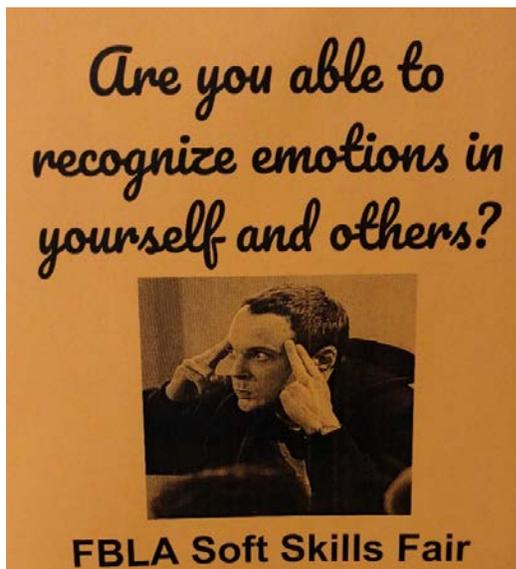
The students were given half of the school day to spend time learning about soft skills and the importance of being professional. They entered the gym and were greeted by Russell Winterburg and Cal Johnson, representatives from JMARK. They spoke to the students about the importance of soft skills and generally created excitement for the fair they were about to participate in. A humorous and informative video created by the FBLA officers was then shown exemplifying the *dos and don'ts* of job interviews.

Then the fair began. Students were broken into groups of 10 to 12 and would travel from station to station spending the same allotted 15 minute time limit at each. The stations were set up around the high school gym where men and women from businesses in Springfield, such as MO Job Center, Mercy, and Chamber of Commerce, would speak to the students, and the FBLA officers would help run whatever interactive activity the business partners had provided. After the groups had attended the stations they were called to sit back down where they could ask the business partners any questions they had, giving the students a chance to find out what interests them and prepare them for the interview process and application process of getting a job.



PUBLICITY

To create awareness of the Soft Skills Fair the FBLA students hung flyers around the high school. Each poster had a meme portraying a soft skill. This caught the students' attention and made them curious about soft skills. The FBLA officers also put a video in the Eagle Spotlight News. The Eagle Spotlight News is a video that is aired on Fridays. At the end of the news, was a clip from a soft skills video that was played for a couple of weeks every Friday before the Soft Skills Fair. Only part of the video was shown during the news and it would leave the students in suspense. Then on the week of



the Soft Skills Fair the whole video was shown in the Eagle Spotlight News.

Social media was one of our most effective ways of informing people about the Soft Skills Fair. The FBLA President, Logan Holliman, continued to put out updates and information on social media sites about the Soft Skills Fair that the public might need. One of the teachers, Ms. Brannock, created the Soft Skills Fair as her GO CAPS project. She took her project and presented it to all of the other teachers in the program. This allowed the other teachers to understand the idea of the Soft Skills Fair and create one at their schools. Next fall Ms. Brannock is planning to visit to Lake of the Ozarks to present to the Missouri State School Board Association. She will be presenting to school board members, in which she will inform them of the Soft Skills Fair and the impact it had on the students, faculty, and FBLA chapter at Fair Grove High School.



A benefit of the Soft Skills Fair to the students was becoming more employable by improving their soft skills. They were able to practice and learn about specific soft skills such as teamwork, communication, time management, etc. This enabled the students to experience the soft skills in a more fun and interactive way. It impacted the students and chapter leaders by helping them to become more aware of the importance of soft skills. The chapter leaders were able to network with the business leaders and make connections. It impacted the business leaders by being able to hopefully improve a student's life by making them more employable and teach them professional skills they will need in the future. Some of the skills they learned were how to receive constructive criticism, how to handle resume and interview processes, and how to better listening skills along with how to use appropriate facial expressions and body language.



EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Student and FBLA Chapter Evaluation

From the viewpoint of the teachers, business partners, and FBLA chapter officers the fair was a success. The goal was to reach the students and the only method to make sure that goal was reached was to ask the participants themselves. At the conclusion of the Soft Skills Fair all the students returned to the bleachers. They were asked to fill out an electronic survey evaluating the fair (see *Appendix A*). About 88% of students agreed that the fair was helpful. The students were asked how the Soft Skills Fair could be improved for the future. The students' constructive criticism was that they found a few stations not to be as engaging as they had hoped. The most common response was related to time at each station. The students wished for quicker transitions and time to attend every station.

Business Partner Evaluation

The business professionals conveyed how impressed they were with the formal communication from the FBLA chapter and appreciated the business attire and dress code followed during the fair. The business leaders were also encouraged to complete an electronic survey of their own (see *Appendix B*). This survey asked them to evaluate the fair, their assigned FBLA chapter leader, and how to improve the future Soft Skills Fairs. Their responses were parallel to the students. The business partners suggested a 15 minute break in the middle of the event and an extended period of time allowing them to interact with all groups to maximize exposure and practice for the students. One of the business partners was a representative from the local police department. He verbally expressed his gratitude for the professional thank you cards that each of the business leaders received.

Changes for Future Partnership

The FBLA chapter leaders took the responses from both the business leaders' and students' surveys into consideration. They then planned improvements for the future Soft Skills Fairs. They decided to begin the fair earlier in the school day to allow the students to attend all the stations. An intermission will also be added to the middle of the event to provide the students with time to communicate with each other, visit the restroom, and take a break. Another responsibility will be added to the FBLA chapter leaders. That responsibility will be that the leaders will help their business partners create an activity for their station and to make sure it is interactive and engaging for all of the students.

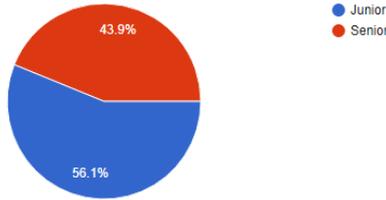


APPENDIX A

Students Electronic Evaluation Survey Questions and Results

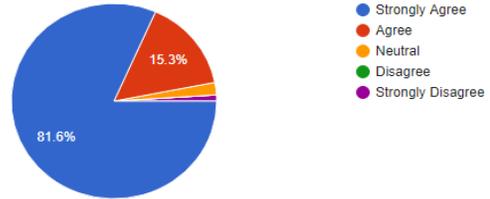
I am a:

98 responses



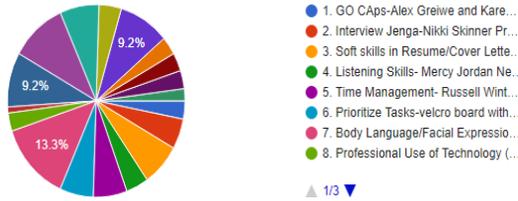
Soft skills are very important to succeed in a job.

98 responses



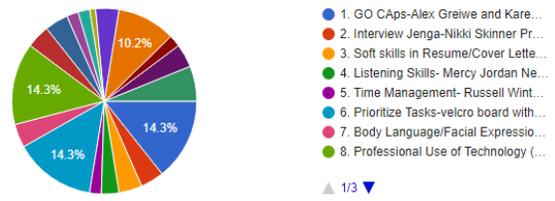
The MOST beneficial station was

98 responses



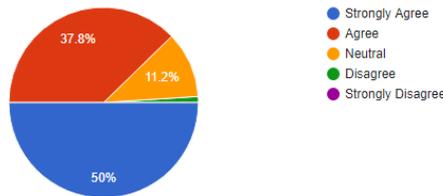
The LEAST beneficial station was

98 responses



Overall, today's content was helpful.

98 responses



Anything else you'd like to add about today's Soft Skills Fair?

74 responses

- No I'm good
- I'm glad that this is something the school is focusing on, I think it is very important for our future.
- I thought it was very informative and educational. I had to work with some people that I wasn't quite sure how I'd handle; however, we worked quite well as a team.
- All the speakers had great soft skills. They all made eye contact and gave me really good points that I will for sure use in the future.
- All the business leaders were amazing and each gave helpful advice for now and for the future.
- It was great
- Too much time for each station
- It was awesome, and thank you guys for making this happen. I think that it was very informational and helpful not just with looking into to college but also looking into what to do as a career. I think this even was amazing. Thank you
- It's was good
- All of the station leaders were really nice and helpful.

How could we make this event better in the future?

88 responses

- I dont know
- Allowing more time to the program
- Do more games to get people more involved
- Get to go to all the stations
- Give a little less time to each station so we can go to all of them
- Allow more time.
- Let us go to all of them
- Shorter stations.
- Start earlier in the day so students have chance to visit all stations.
- Make it better
- Make it to where everyone gets to go to all stations.
- I believe it really is the best it can, it's just up to us on how much we take from it and use from it.

APPENDIX B

Business Partners Evaluation Survey Questions and Results

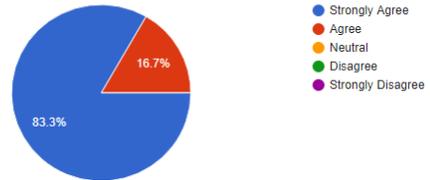
Overall, the Soft Skills Fair was worth my time and effort.

6 responses



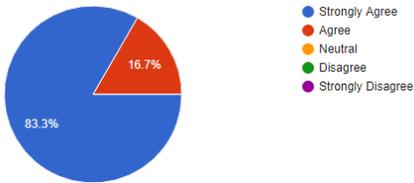
The FBLA officer assigned to my station communicated with me well PRIOR to the Fair.

6 responses



The students were engaged and respectful while participating in my station.

6 responses



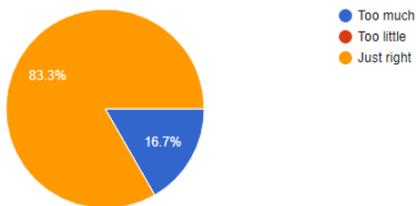
The FBLA officer assigned to my station was helpful DURING the Fair.

6 responses



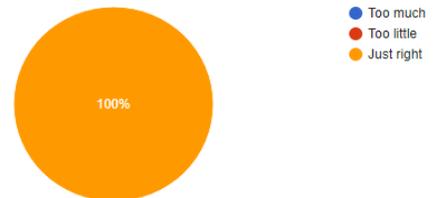
The time (15 minutes) per station was

6 responses



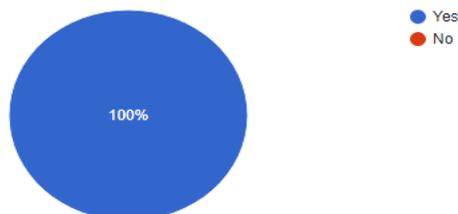
The amount of students per group was

6 responses



If we were to repeat this event, would you be willing to return?

6 responses



How can we improve the Soft Skills Fair?

4 responses

Extend the time to allow the students to experience all booths. I feel how soft skills build on each other, and are reinforced through practice and application, allowing students to allow booths would maximize exposure and practice.

Great event! Very impressed with Sarah Brannock!

Get to see all groups instead of just some.

Maybe a fifteen minute break in the middle.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

5 responses

I loved this event and was very innovative. I will use this as a model when approaching other schools in our area to reinforce these skill, as well as encourage other agencies to participate in the future.

At the Missouri Job Center we want to be your resource for information and training when it comes to preparing youth for the Workforce. On behalf of Mary Ann Rojas, Director of the Ozark Region and Workforce Development Board, and Sally Payne, Assistant Director of the Missouri Job Center, thanks for the opportunity to interact with Fair Grove Students who were very respectful and interested in the presentation I was facilitating.
Bill Smillie, Missouri Job Center, Business Services Representative.

no

Ryan was awesome as my FBLA rep. Excellent organization of the event. Extremely respectful students. Great job Sarah!

I loved having the students sit on the bleachers with the laptops. I felt they learned a lot and it was a productive opportunity. Thank you for extending the invitation to us.