



Developing Student Recognition Programs for Historically Underserved Students

Student recognition programs can limit growth for historically underserved students by not addressing student needs.

Historically Underserved students today are not the same students of yesterday. In the 1960's we embraced our new found freedom in schools that resulted from the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. During that time most student recognition programs did not focus on historically underserved students. As we moved to the present many student recognition programs focus on redirecting social and academic behaviors of students.

While many student recognition programs have successfully motivated some students it seems that most students are not serviced.

The fallacy with student recognition programs is in the initial design. Normally the process involves identifying the student needs and then

developing student recognition programs that will help overcome those needs. The program design is facilitated by either teachers, administrators, or some other adult stakeholder. The initial process does not include appropriate student feedback nor does it include students in the design process.

The design of a student recognition program should begin with an assessment process. Interviews are a great way to begin. If it is a high school then interview students who are in the twelfth grade. If it is a middle school then interview students from the graduating class. Make sure to select students who have challenges and those who don't. Interviews will reveal additional information if conducted by a school counselor.

Next survey your students and teachers. It is best to use a survey where they check off their answer rather than fill in

the blank. Using a check off type of assessment instrument will also increase the number of persons who complete the survey. In this survey you should also gauge the type of reward system that best fits the culture of your school. The final phase of the assessment process is to evaluate school data for trends and patterns.

In the next step develop a focus group that includes teachers and students. Students may only feel comfortable in the presence of school counselors. Some of the questions that you may want the group to consider are: How can we improve our present program(s)? What is a good reward system for students? How can we increase the amount of students who benefit from the program?

Finally, develop an assessment process to ensure program goals are accomplished.