

NASEF Y4 Research: Staff Survey Report

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In addition to the general survey on student outcomes and attitudes toward NASEF this year, we also conducted a survey of NASEF staff to understand in greater detail program implementation across sites and staff attitudes toward and evaluation of the program and its features. The survey instrument was integrated directly into the NASEF registration system in order for it to serve as an annual data gathering tool for internal program data for evaluation and development. A subset of data were then used in our larger study of student outcomes to investigate the impact of variations in program implementation on student outcomes. Here, we summarize findings in terms of four program evaluation questions.

Program Evaluation Questions

Four questions drove this additional investigation.

1. How is the NASEF program implemented across diverse sites, particularly in terms of:
 - a. club size
 - b. game titles played and sought
 - c. club composition (student roles filled)
 - d. educational materials and resources used

2. How satisfied are staff with:
 - a. key elements of the NASEF program, including: GM, coach, resources, events, comms, awards, championships
 - b. NASEF's communication about activities and events as well as student needs
 - c. Their home organization's facilities and leadership support

3. What are staff perceptions of program value *generally* (overall value, student enjoyment, ability to meet students' social, academic, and wellness needs) and *specifically* in terms of student outcome variables measured as part of the larger survey study:
 - a. Communication
 - b. Relationships
 - c. Constructive Mindset
 - d. Wellness
 - e. School Engagement
 - f. Self-Regulation
 - g. School Attendance
 - h. GPA
 - i. STEM Interest

The instrument also included open fields for staff input on what NASEF is doing well, what we might improve upon, resources or other forms of support needed, whether they plan to

continue participating, and if not why. Such data, if gathered annually, can help NASEF leadership formatively evaluate online student and staff engagement.

Sample

A total of n=93 staff responded to the survey, which was administered at the end of the academic year (immediately after the spring league's end). The overwhelming majority 98% of respondents were general managers, with many respondents serving in multiple roles (Figure 1).

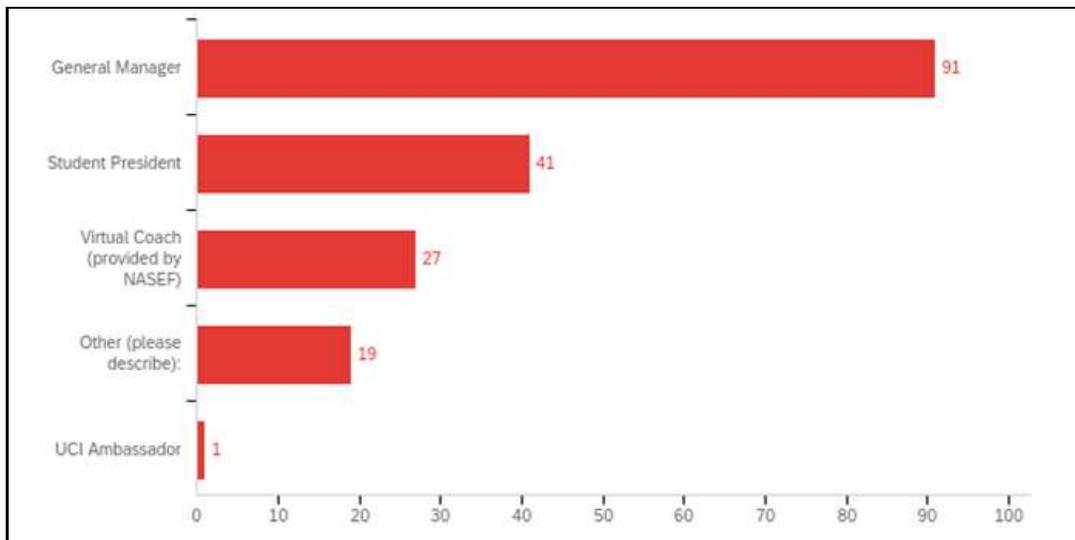


Figure 1. Sample overview by leadership role.

NASEF Program Implementation

Club Size & Composition

The average number of students in NASEF clubs is n=26 and the average number of students on the team roster is n=14 although the range of club size is broad (Figure 2).

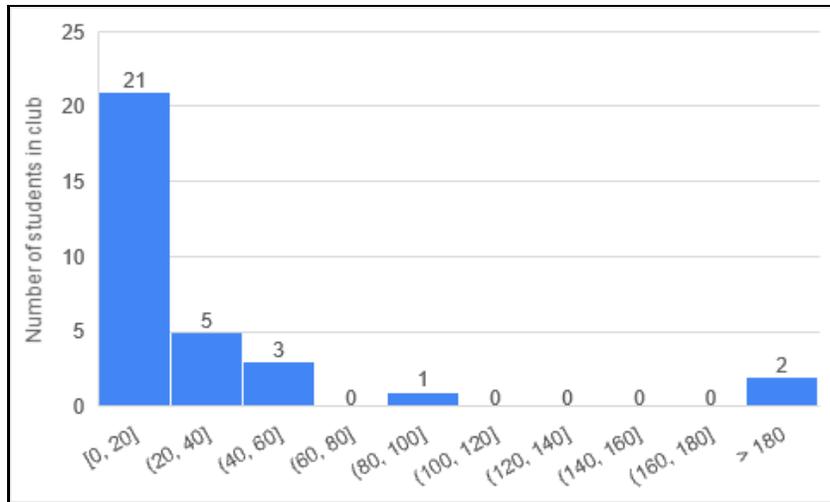


Figure 2. Club size frequency counts.

All clubs include at least one competitive team, with students who compete on teams frequently serving in other club roles as well, including streamers (40%), coaches (34%), graphic designers (31%), shoutcasters (30%), and social media managers (27%). Staff report spending an average of 5.09 hours per week on NASEF club activities overall.

Game Titles

Staff report that students in their clubs this season played *Rocket League* (65%), *Overwatch* (49%), *Smash Ultimate* (37%), *Valorant* (25%), and *Minecraft* (25%) (Figure 3).

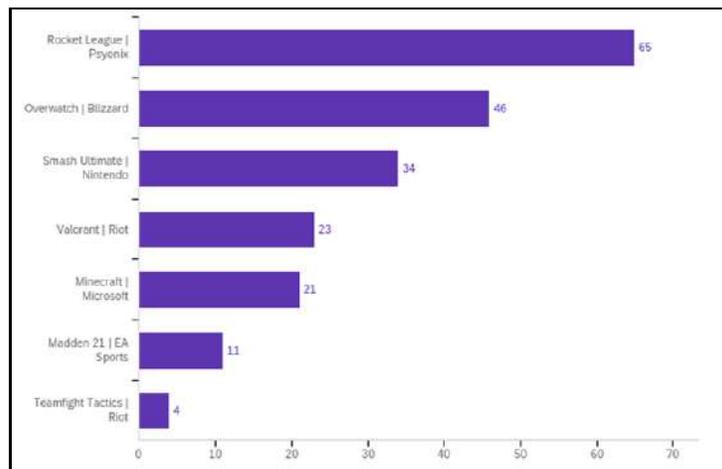


Figure 3. Most common game titles played in 2020-2021.

More than three fourths of respondents (76%) also report that students would most like to play *League of Legends* in the future, followed by *Fortnite*, *Apex Legends*, *Call of Duty*, and *CS:GO* (Figure 4).

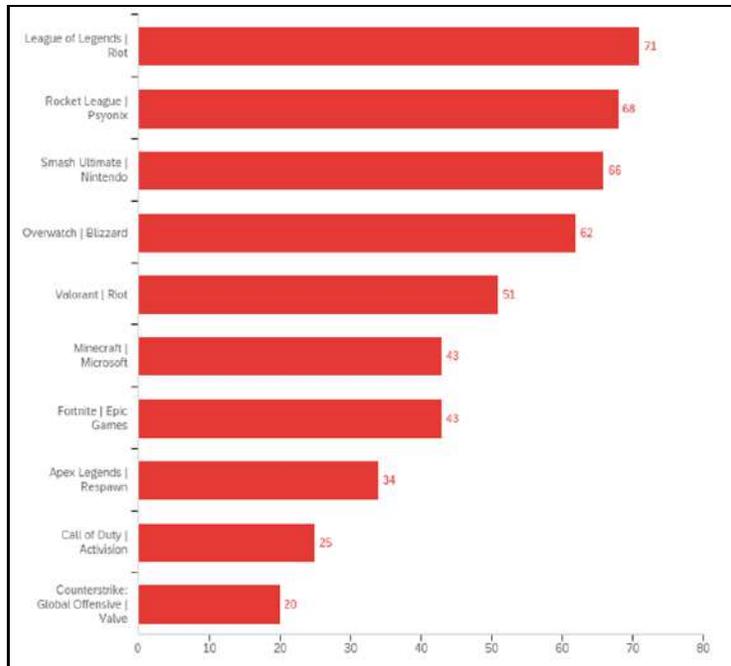


Figure 4. Most common game titles students in NASEF hope to play in future NASEF seasons.

Educational Materials and Resources Used

Among the educational materials and resources that were provided by NASEF, the most commonly used by staffers included Information at Webinars (used by 25% of staff respondents) followed by digital toolkits (20%), the CTE curriculum (17%), online workshops/academies (16%), and the ELA curriculum (6%) (Figure 5). Surprisingly, however more than half of staffers (52%) report using *no* NASEF educational materials whatsoever.

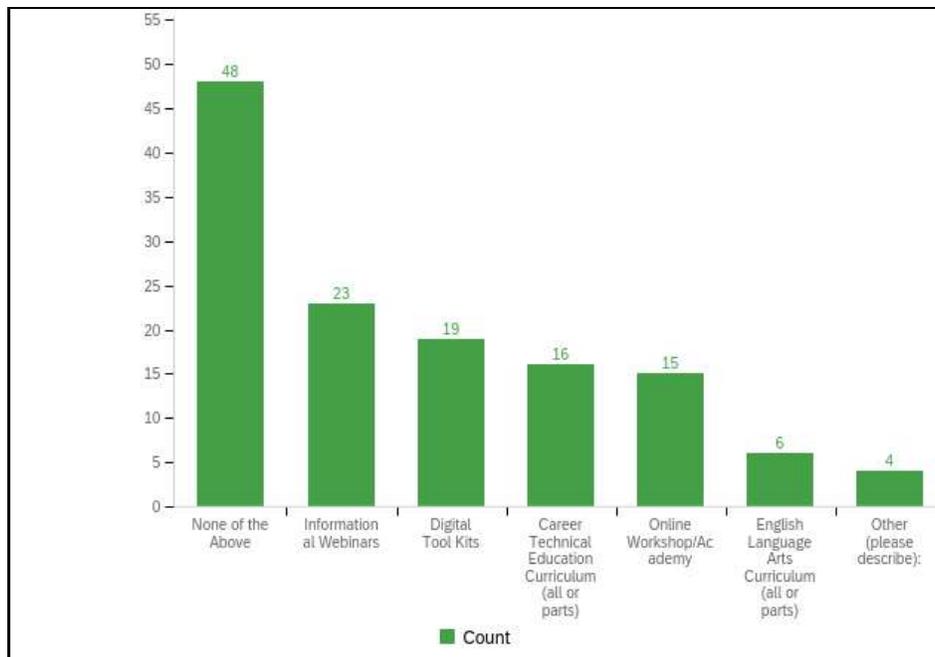


Figure 5. Frequency of use of NASEF materials and resources.

Staff Satisfaction with NASEF Program

Five-point Likert scale items were used to measure staff satisfaction on variables of interest, with 3 the midpoint or neutral (1 negative and 5 positive).

Staff Satisfaction with Key Program Elements

Respondents rated all 7 aspects of the program positively (Figure 6 below) with the GMs (M=3.90, SD=0.90) and Coaches (M=3.90, SD=10.1) equally rated highest. Club resources and materials (M=3.80, SD=1.01) were also relatively highly regarded, despite evidence suggesting that many staffers do not use them (discussed above). League events (M=3.50, SD=1.02), communication (M=3.40, SD=1.11), championships (M=3.40, SD=0.88), and league awards (M=3.30, SD=0.98) ranked lower in term of staff satisfaction, approaching neutral. No club aspect fell below the midpoint “neutral” in terms of staff satisfaction.

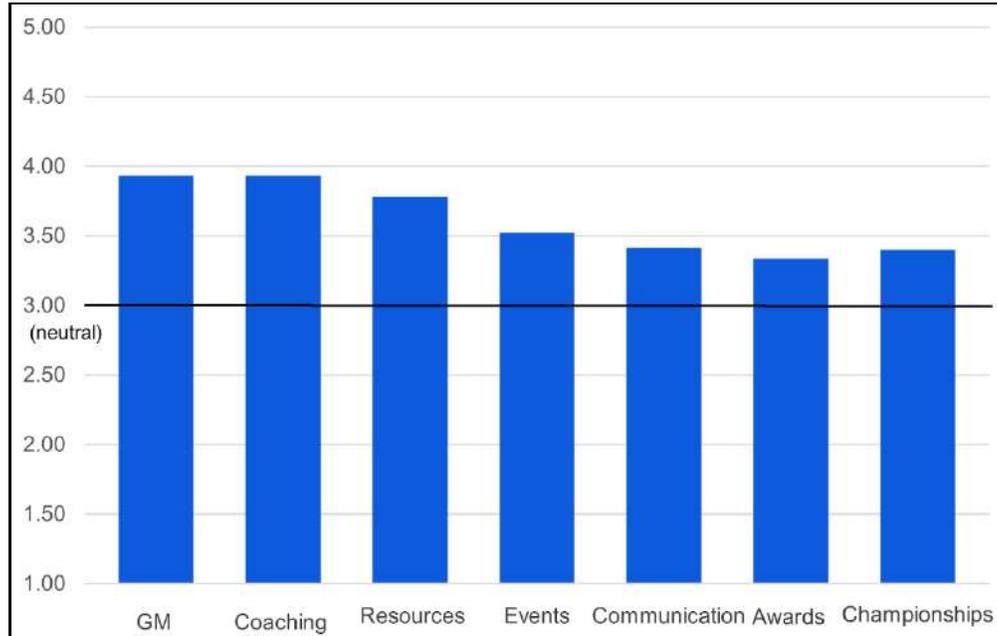


Figure 6. Staff satisfaction in key program elements.

Staff Satisfaction with NASEF Communication

Staff report general satisfaction with NASEF’s efforts to inform them about upcoming events and program changes (M=3.80, SD=1.109), although a few did mention specific issues regarding tournament schedules and other logistics (detailed later under “Qualitative Feedback”). They were less positive towards NASEF’s communication regarding students’ specific needs and behaviors (M=3.26, SD=1.166). Such lukewarm responses are likely to reflect the fact that NASEF has little new information to provide about individual students except, perhaps, in rare cases in which a student in a tournament or other event has some noteworthy accomplishment, for example, or violates the code of conduct.

Staff Satisfaction with Home Institutional Support

The majority of respondents reported that their home organization does a good job supporting the needs of their club (M=3.99, SD=0.927). However, respondents were slightly less confident that their organization's facilities are adequate (M=3.43, SD=1.255). A more detailed investigation into the number of implementation sites lacking sufficient facilities and equipment and how this lack impacts student outcomes – particularly in terms of exacerbating known digital inequities, would be of high value to the goals of NASEF, enabling us to ensure that schools and organizations can participate equally across socioeconomic lines. As it now stands, without proper school infrastructure and equipment, we risk creating another space in which the haves, by default, win out over the have-nots. Children from wealthier families can be presumed to have computers and peripherals in the home where they can freely practice; children from less privileged families do not have such easy access. Leveling the playing field by infusing school (and, possibly, community gaming centers, see the Diversity Report) may be a goal worth pursuing given NASEF's reach and goals.

Staff Perceptions of the Value of NASEF for Students

Staff Perceptions of Overall Value

Respondents largely agreed that the NASEF program as a whole is worthwhile (M=4.23, SD=0.861) and that students enjoy participating in it (M=4.0, SD=1.038). Staff generally felt that NASEF was indeed meeting students' social (M=3.92, SD=0.875), wellness (M=3.78, SD=0.870), and academic (M=3.58, SD=0.970) needs, but in order of decreasing conviction: Staff report moderately good social benefits from the program but are more lukewarm about the program's academic benefits.

Staff Perceptions of Student Outcomes

This emphasis on social benefits from the program over academic ones is echoed in staff perceptions of student outcomes specific to NASEF goals. Table 1 below shows the overall mean and standard deviation of staff ratings of NASEF impacts on the 9 main student outcome variables. Staff agree that NASEF improves students' *communication* (M=4.09, SD=0.88) and *social relationships* (M=4.02, SD=0.838) but are again lukewarm as to its academic benefits such as *GPA* (M=3.61, SD=0.885) or *STEM Interest* (M=3.56, SD=0.890).

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Communication	93	1	5	4.09	0.880
Relationships	92	2	5	4.02	0.838
Constructive Mindset	93	1	5	3.87	0.797
Wellness	93	2	5	3.82	0.820
School engagement	93	1	5	3.81	0.992
Self-Regulation	93	2	5	3.75	0.855
School Attendance	93	1	5	3.73	0.886
GPA	93	1	5	3.61	0.885
STEM Interest	93	1	5	3.56	0.890

Qualitative Feedback From Staff

In written feedback, many of the staff members praised the fact that NASEF provides accessible tournaments, resources, and competitive opportunities that may not normally be available to all high school students. Respondents especially appreciated the *free coaching* made available to clubs, particularly when they themselves had less experience with esports and gaming. Several comments also lauded the program for hosting online events and activities for students during the pandemic.

However, some also pointed to certain areas in need of improvement. *Communication* between NASEF and club staff is an issue, particularly regarding season schedules, tournament timelines, and distribution of tournament rewards. Many respondents asked for a more streamlined *registration process* and interface for new clubs and players. Above all, respondents mirror players in their call for *new game titles* with cross-platform options to make the league more accessible.

When asked what other types of support that staff might value in future league seasons, participants most frequently requested *game-specific coaching* and support for teams, broadening the *range of games* in which students can participate, and *administrative support* while onboarding students into the NASEF system and verifying their eligibility. Also requested was an increase in the depth of accompanying educational material to league activities – ironic given how many staffers admit never using the educational materials at all. But they also asked for more professional development in the forms of workshops to help them familiarize them with the system. Together, this suggests that staff who use our materials want more and those who do not use them need assistance figuring out where to begin.

Staff requested support in *providing equipment* to their players, with one commenting that multiple students had to share a single machine while practicing. They also requested not only more communication with NASEF staff but also with other local participating schools, and tech support. Increasing the effectiveness of NASEF's discord servers may be an effective way to meet these multiple communication needs all at once (see the "Discord Report" for more details on how). Finally, staffers would like to see more opportunities for students to take leadership roles across the NASEF community and help with fundraising (or, perhaps more sustainably, help learning how to fundraise in their local communities themselves).

Staff Churn

Of the 92 club staff members who responded to the survey, 9 indicated that they would not be returning for future seasons (10.2%). Of those nine, five listed issues with NASEF as their main reason for leaving, with specific problems mentioned including poor communication with the league, difficulty navigating materials on the website, and disappointment with the lack of game titles being offered. Two stated that they would be switching to regionally-based leagues, one felt that the focus on education did not fit with their organization's expertise, and one declined to comment.