

Future Problem Solving Fact Sheet

Why do students who participated in the Future Problem Solving Program make outstanding college candidates?

Students who have participated in the Future Problem Solving Program have learned how to think, not what to think. These students are able to apply the skills they learned through FPSP across multiple disciplines. Research has proven former FPSers are more confident in their ability to solve problems, think critically and create a positive future.

What is the Future Problem Solving Program?

The Future Problem Solving Program (FPSP) is a nonprofit educational corporation administering creative problem solving activities for students grades K-12. Spanning a variety of disciplines and content areas, FPSP consistently demonstrates its validity in education as an integral part of a school's curriculum and as an academic extracurricular activity. FPS provides opportunities to students in both content and skill areas. FPSP meets standards for curriculum and instruction, language arts, social studies, science, the arts, math, geography, civics, technology, life skills and behavioral studies. FPSP provides opportunities for students to develop and exercise the skills necessary to meet and exceed these standards through research and investigation of student selected topic areas relevant to their world. Each year FPS topics are selected from three strands: business and economics; science and technology; and social and political issues.

What qualities do FPSP participants possess?

Through the Future Problem Solving Program, students have worked to:

- Develop creative thinking abilities
- Increase awareness of and interest in the future
- Learn and employ problem-solving strategies
- Develop team work skills
- Improve oral and written communication
- Exercise critical and analytical thought
- Engage in real-life problem solving
- Extend perceptions of the real world
- Explore complex societal issues
- Develop, utilize and improve research techniques

How does the program work?

The Future Problem Solving Program charters affiliate programs throughout the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Korea. Affiliate programs, under the direction of an affiliate director, administer FPSP activities within a geographic area.

The Future Problem Solving Program features several curricular as well as co-curricular opportunities to engage students in problem solving. Students or teams participate in one of three divisions in competitive FPSP components: junior division – grades 4-6, middle division – grades 7-9, and senior division – grades 10-12; or age-level equivalents (ages 9-19).



The FPSP six-step model serves as the foundation to building dynamic, creative thinking processes and includes:

- 1.** Identify Challenges Related to the Topic or Future Scene
- 2.** Select an Underlying Problem
- 3.** Produce Solution Ideas to the Underlying Problem
- 4.** Generate and Select Criteria to Evaluate Solution Ideas
- 5.** Evaluate Solution Ideas to Determine the Better Action Plan
- 6.** Develop the Action Plan



What kind of problem solving activities does FPSP offer?

FPSP offers the following problem-solving components:

Team Problem Solving

Four-member teams research and apply the six-step FPS process to at least three different topics annually. A future scene, an imagined future, prompts students to tackle social, scientific, political, economic or technological issues. Under the guidance of a trained coach, students master the FPSP six-step model.

Teams explore challenges as they refine their critical and creative thinking skills, focus on one problem area to solve, produce solution ideas, generate criteria to evaluate their solution ideas and determine the best action plan. Students develop generating and focusing skills while working cooperatively and collaboratively in groups.

Community Problem Solving (CmPS)

CmPS focuses on real community problems. Teams explore local issues and select a CmPS project from environmental concerns, human services, civic/cultural issues or health concerns.

A team of middle grade students in Texas focused on relieving the boredom and depression of adolescent hospital patients by creating and delivering “Boredom Buster Kits” to four Houston-area hospitals as well as three hospitals in Eastern Europe.

Scenario Writing

Encouraging creativity, scenario writing allows an individual writer to create a futuristic short story based on one of the five FPSP topics. Students develop and polish their creative writing skills. FPSP scenarios are limited to 1500 words and must be placed 20 years in the future.

For more information:

To learn more about FPSP, contact the Future Problem Solving Program.

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