



Education E-Newsletter



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Plan, Act, Evaluate, Improve

By Michelle Sears, Director of Client Relations



As a school administrator it is critical to be able to understand both teachers and students to make decisions that will benefit the district as a whole. Creating an environment with a healthy balance and understanding between students and teachers is fundamental to the success of the district. Most districts spend a lot of time evaluating the students' performance and less time focusing on teachers' teaching effectiveness. For this reason, evaluation and testing for teachers and the effectiveness of those tests has caught the attention of the American

Federation of Teachers in a recent study.

"Drive On to Improve Evaluation Systems for Teachers," by Bess Keller, reports that a multiple measure approach is the most effective design for teacher evaluation. If school districts could gear teacher evaluations toward helping the teachers improve, and not focus on punishing teachers, the system will be motivating and not be seen as a reprimand. "Evaluations should be centered on teachers' classroom performance and student learning, which would open the way to compensation systems more closely linked to effectiveness than the vast majority of those now in place," said Keller.

Through the development of a strategic planning model specifically for educators you will help your district determine what learning objectives you want educators to accomplish and how you plan to evaluate teacher effectiveness. A great starting point to understanding teacher effectiveness, is conducting benchmarking research. By conducting a student or staff survey, your district will receive insight about concerns facing your district from the eyes of the teachers and students. You'll discover what concerns both the educators and the students have about the district's educational goals and be able to determine what is working and what programs could use improvement.

Once you obtain benchmarking research your district can begin to make constructive decisions to improve the educational experience for both teachers and

Featured Article

[Taking Measure: Map out Evaluation Goals](#)

When you launch a major professional development evaluation, regardless of the project's scope, you may quickly find yourself on a slippery, often rocky road, with twists and unexpected turns.

By Robby Champion

Useful Links

[The Teachers Network: Action Research Projects](#)

A nonprofit effort to connect exemplary teachers, post research studies conducted by classroom teachers on a variety of professional development and student-improving initiatives.

[Curriculum Associates: Topics in Education](#)

Host a free professional development site for teachers.

[SERVE Center](#)

An education-research organization based at the University of North Carolina

Did You Know?

students. If your district is facing a situation where a student or staff survey would allow you to make more informed and effective decisions, or would like assistance creating a strategic plan, please give us a call at (800) 724-9994 or visit our website at www.perspec.com. We would be pleased to discuss how our experiences working with other school districts can be of benefit to your district.

Online Blogs: A More Efficient Way to Communicate with Parents

By Katie Smith, Research Intern



Whether it is in the workplace, school, on a cell phone, or at home, the population that has access to the Internet amounts to over 75% of all Americans. Through high-speed, Wi-Fi, and mobile Internet connections, more and more people are using the Internet, and schools are beginning to take advantage of this trend through the use of blogs.

In the article "What are we Blogging About?" by Frank Catalino, the question "What makes a good blog?" arises. Catalino follows up the question with an obvious answer, "One that gets read". Schools have a greater opportunity than most organizations to make a "good blog" because they already have an audience that constantly looks to them for up-to-date information. Blogging is all about communication, and communication is a necessity for schools and teachers to keep parents informed.

Bloggging allows for a more cost-effective, timely way for administrators and teachers to update parents than the traditional communication tools that have been used in the past. Catalino suggests using blogs over the following communication methods:

- Snail Mail- Many schools utilize newsletters and choose to distribute them to the parents by mail. It is not only time consuming to address, stuff, and send envelopes, but also expensive to send out with today's high mailing costs.
- Carrier Pigeons- Schools may choose not to send the newsletters through the mail due to cost and time issues, and instead give the newsletter to the student expecting they will hand them directly to mom or dad once they arrive at home. But as we all know, students are not necessarily the most reliable resource to get information from school to home.
- E-mail Newsletters- Although this is a timely and effective way to get news directly home to the parents, e-newsletters also have a major downfall. According to a recent study, due to spam filtering systems, over 59% of e-mails never make it to the intended recipients. This study was done with people that actually subscribe to these newsletters. Parents may sign up for the school's e-newsletter, but it is possible that it will never make it to their inbox.

In addition, blogs increase the level of interactivity between schools and parents by making it possible to publicize immediate messages and obtain

• In a recent report of high school counselors, they reported spending 30 percent of their time "absorbed in administration and paperwork"

• 29 percent of their time was spent working on college plans with students and their families



• 25 percent of their time responding to incidents and the immediate needs of students

• The survey concluded that student caseloads are higher for counselors in public schools than they are for counselors in private schools

Source: The 2008 Michigan High School Counselor Survey, [click here](#) for the full report

Featured Blog

direct feedback.

Blogs may be a beneficial communication tool for many schools, but it is important to make sure that the majority of the parent population trying to be reached has access to a computer and the Internet. At Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc. we can conduct parent surveys to find out if the majority of your school's parent population has access to the Internet, if they would be interested in a school blog site, and any additional information you would like to know about this specific audience. For more information, please visit our website at www.perspec.com, or e-mail Michelle Sears at msears@perspec.com.

Sources:

"Internet Statistics." National Cable & Telecommunications Association. Sept. 2007.

Catalino, Frank. "What are we Blogging About?" The Public Manager Journal.

[Plans that Make a Difference](#)



By Jordan Sparks

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Education CD-ROM



A resource developed for educational institutions. The CD-ROM includes all the information about Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc.: who we are, and what we do. Request a copy of our Education CD-ROM by emailing info@perspec.com or call (800) 724-9994.

"Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance. "

-Will Durant

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