Newsletter
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ets, inc.
www.etsfl.com

Introduction

Welcome to the **Best Practices Florida – Education** monthly newsletter. As the official information source for the **Best Practices Florida – Education** website, the purpose of this newsletter is to provide useful performance improvement information to all Florida educators.

This past month, many of you emailed questions regarding how time can be made available to improve productivity, particularly since staffing cuts are being made each day. Following are some thoughts:

1. Don't think of productivity improvements as discrete events. Rather, think of them as part of an ongoing regimen much as you would good eating or living habits.
2. If you are not using habits which promote productivity, then chances are there is waste imbedded in your organization. Yes, I know, 65% of your budget is spent in the classroom. But there is probably waste in that, too.
3. Most waste is invisible. Actually, rework and defective or poorly executed services are not the "**big bars on the Pareto**" chart. The biggest forms of waste come from not knowing somebody else has a better approach. Suppose you had a process which was developed in-house for $100,000 last year, and was executed perfectly (per the standards) every time so that there were no defects. But what if another district developed the same process five years ago, and had refined it each year since? What if their process was recognized best in class, and cost a fraction of what yours did to operate? And if you had only asked, what if they would have given it to you at no cost? The point is, as long as you don't know the other process exists, you cannot recognize the waste.

Healthy people, like healthy organizations, have developed good habits. These include being aware of what's going on around you, setting achievable goals, and adopting the disciplines for achieving and sustaining excellence. That's what **Best Practices Florida** is about. Check it out, and share your success stories.

Regards,

Bob Seemer, President **ets, inc.** and Sterling Council Board Member

Contents This Issue:

More than 80 participants from 23 Florida school districts met at the Summit.

2010 Education Summit Presentation Overviews

Following are highlights from four (4) of the presenters during the one-day Education Summit (Click on the presenter's name to view the entire presentation):

Charter Schools USA - "Monitoring of Research-based Instructional Practices: CSUSA Site Visit."

This presentation focused on how schools can effectively monitor the use of research-based instructional practices to ensure increases in student learning and achievement. An historical perspective was shared which highlighted the evolution and refinement of the site visit process to its current state. Benefits to teachers included:

- Achievement goals and action plans are developed and communicated with all staff members.
- Teachers are given clear expectations of what is expected that aligns to their performance evaluations.
- Enhancement of professional development based on the site visit team recommendation.

Benefits to the organization included:

- Continuous improvement focused on student achievement.
- Structured walk-through process to improve dialog between administrators and teachers.
- Uniformity across the organization.

The presentation concluded with quantified results.

Florida Virtual School - "Increasing Learning Gains and Reducing Costs through Virtual Learning."

This presentation focused on the increasing importance of virtual learning in today's environment, and how FLVS is designing its approaches to coincide with the interests and meet the needs of its students. Results provided by Tax Watch suggest that FLVS is producing impressive results. Benefits for school districts included helping meet VIP requirements, expand curriculum offerings, fill gaps, provide a credit recovery tool, offer another way for students to accelerate, address class size, and provide summer school options.

Polk - "Interactive Data Evaluation Assessment Systems (IDEAS), from Data to Classroom Teacher."

This presentation demonstrated the capabilities of IDEAS, an in-house developed data management system. IDEAS provides student achievement data at multiple levels by all demographics and grade. Data can be displayed to facilitate interpretation using Point Charts, Bar Charts, and other tools. Another helpful feature is the color-coding of red, yellow and green to help pinpoint success and trouble areas requiring interventions.

***Volusia* - "STARTS: Skills, Tips, and Routines for Teacher Success."**

This presentation focused on the district's recruitment and retention initiative. Challenges prior to developing STARTS included:

- Constant training and retraining,
- Cost of training,
- Inconsistency of program, and
- Inability to build teams or relationships.

Critical success factors were also discussed which included:

- Buy-in at the top,
- Interdepartmental collaboration, and
- School-based communication.

Results have been impressive, including significant increases in retention of first year and ESE teachers, major issues faced by most districts.

Website Feature Focus

The **Best Practices Florida – Education** website contains hundreds of tools to help you improve performance in your school, district, or organization. Along with the growing inventory of best practices, the site contains a knowledge center of Performance Improvement methodologies. These tools are made available by ets, inc. through an exclusive open access agreement with the Sterling Council for the benefit of Florida's educators – private or public. Should you have any questions regarding usage, please refer to the "Terms of Use" hyperlink on the main landing page.

The tools provided on the site are proven to contribute to success, and have been used by the world's leading organizations. In following Newsletters, we will highlight one or more specific tools. In the meantime, scroll down the list of Performance Improvement tool categories and acquaint yourself with what's available. If you would like to learn more about a particular tool, let us know.

Florida's Education Initiative

Consider your district's most pressing issues. Now, imagine if you were provided outside expertise to help you work through one or more of those problems. Further, imagine if this resource were provided at no cost to the district. These are the basis of the Sterling Education Initiative.

Aligned with the Florida Department of Education's strategic vision, Sterling's Florida Education Initiative is a true business – government – not-for-profit collaboration designed to transcend short term initiatives and one-time stimulus funding boosts. Capitalizing on proven methodologies, technology, and non-traditional funding sources, as many as ten Florida school districts will embark on a systematic and facilitated process to create a foundation for long-term improvement built around the Baldrige-based Sterling Management System. Five key elements of the initiative include:

1. An organizational self-assessment to define prioritized strengths and gaps,
2. Strategic Planning,

3. Process Management and measures,
4. Data Analysis and Problem Solving, and
5. Documented Performance Results.

Pilot districts will utilize common tools but focus on different processes which are key to educational excellence. Improvement strategies proven effective will be documented on the **Best Practices Florida – Education** website for sharing, and replication by all of Florida's learning institutions. To learn more about Florida's Education Initiative, or to be considered as a pilot district, contact us at info@bestpracticesfl.com. There is no cost for any district to participate. To learn more about how Baldrige/Sterling and sound management tools can benefit a district, check out the following $5 million story: http://nist.typepad.com/baldrige_program/2010/08/the-compass-for-education.html.

Funders & Supporters

Best Practices Florida – Education is the result of a partnership spanning all sectors – public, private, and not-for-profit. The organizations below have contributed valuable resources to provide this service at no cost to all Florida Educators.

Florida Department of Education

Events

- **Best Practices Florida – Education** website demo webinar: 11:00 – 11:30 a.m. August 24, 2010. Invitation will be emailed by August 16.
- **Sterling Criteria Training** – One day workshop to understand the Sterling Management System in a classroom setting.
    - August 25th Tallahassee
    - August 26th Tampa
    - August 26th St. Augustine
    - August 31st Orlando
    - September 2nd Ft. Lauderdale

Go to http://www.floridasterling.com/traininganddevelopment_schedule.html to view the entire Sterling Training Schedule.

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