

## 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. Meeting with the leadership of more than 30 Florida School Districts in the past six months, it is clear all share some common issues, such as;

- The need to increase student achievement,
- The need to do more with less,
- The need to improve community partner collaboration,
- The need to improve every facet of operations,
- The inability to hire external experts to help us do all of the above.

Having been engaged with the Florida Sterling Council since 1992, it is clear to me that a complete and proven management system exists as defined by the [Sterling Criteria for Performance Excellence](#). It is also evident that there are hundreds of best practices in place in various school districts which address every element of the Criteria; however, not any one school district has all of the best practices in place for each Sterling Criteria element. **But imagine if they did!** School districts could

be systematically improving performance using a standardized rubric which is recognized throughout the world as the standard of leadership and management excellence. It is from this idea that the **Best Practices Florida – Education** website was developed – to provide a common knowledge resource center which can be used to contribute and obtain useful information for improving performance in any area of education. This newsletter will keep you informed of the website's status, and alert you to other information, tools, examples, and events you may find useful as you strive to improve the quality of education in your classroom, school, department or district.

Regards,

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

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## The Value of Best Practices

When coupled with other methodologies, the adoption of best practices can lead to distinct competitive or strategic advantage. At the micro or process level, best practices are applicable when used in conjunction with commonly used problem-solving or continuous improvement methodologies such as PDSA, PDCA, DMAIC, QIC Story, or the Kepner-Tregoe Problem Solving and Decision Model.

Standard continuous improvement models promote the use of data to confirm the causes of a problem. This sets the stage for the selection of solutions based on a set of facts. Solutions can be created from scratch or adopted from another organization. Therefore, the most effective application for a best practice is in a situation when it can be proven to address a root cause confirmed with data. For example, if a child is not learning, it may be for one of many reasons. To select the best strategy, we must first understand why the student is not learning.

Best practices are also applicable at the macro level such as in the Baldrige, Deming, ISO, SACS, or Sterling organizational frameworks. Each model represents a rubric of 50-100 factors known to drive results in 6-10 major areas. Most organizations may excel in 10-20% of those factors; however, few excel in all. The basic premise behind all of these models is that to achieve and sustain excellence, the more factors with excellent approaches in place is key. The adoption of best practices for these factors is one way to efficiently accelerate organizational improvement.

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## Identifying Best Practices

With 67 districts plus the Florida Virtual School, the School for the Deaf and Blind, Charter Schools, and Independent and Private Schools, Florida's education system contains a wealth of knowledge and likely a superior approach for almost every situation. Unique approaches often arise when an organization develops an innovative solution to a problem. Over time, that solution may evolve to become the best kept secret in the State as other organizations create similar solutions to address similar problems. To identify potential best practices in your district, consider the following as sources:

1. A process that has produced sustained exemplary results in any area.
2. A process that was created to address a unique operating characteristic.
3. A process that makes any aspect of your district a leader.

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## Top Contributors

To date 15 school districts have submitted 42 best practices, 22 of which have been reviewed and published on the **Best Practices Florida – Education** website. Each best practice submission undergoes a quality control review by a statewide panel to ensure it meets the submission criteria. Following are the top contributors through May 15, 2010:

| School District   | Posted Submissions | Superintendents |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brevard</li></ul> | 8                  | B. Binggeli     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Volusia</li></ul> | 8                  | M. Smith        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lee</li></ul>     | 2                  | J. Browder      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Polk</li></ul>    | 2                  | G. McKinzie     |

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## Statistics

Following are some statistics which indicate the degree of interest and participation in the **Best Practices Florida – Education** website:

- 33 School Districts Participating
- 138 Best Practices Committed
- 50 Best Practices Targeted to be Submitted by June 1, 2010
- 42 Best Practices Submitted
- 22 Best Practices Currently Available on the **Best Practices Florida - Education** Website
- 85% of Education Areas Addressed by Available Best Practices
- 90% of Baldrige/ Sterling Management System Criteria Areas Addressed by Available Best Practices

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## Get Connected

There are several ways to get connected and add or derive value from **Best Practices Florida - Education**, including;

1. Find a best practice using:
  - a. The Process Architecture.
  - b. The Baldrige / Sterling Criteria.
  - c. The Search Engine.
  - d. The Forum or Discussion Board.
2. Submit a best practice using the standardized template.
3. Submit comments or topics for the **Best Practices Florida – Education** Newsletter.
4. Participate in the Sterling Process.
5. Attend the June 1 Education Summit and the Annual Sterling Conference, June 2-4, 2010.

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## 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 to all Florida Educators.



Florida Department  
of Education



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## Events

- Education Summit – June 1, 2010 Orlando Marriott Grand Lakes \$250 per person  
<[Agenda](#)>  
<Learn More>
- Annual Governor's Sterling Conference – June 2-4, 2010  
<[Conference Proceedings](#)>
- Florida to Submit Race to the Top Application – June 1, 2010

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## Contact Us

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- [Florida Sterling Council](#)
- [ets, inc.](#)

18th Annual Sterling Conference

FLORIDA'S EDUCATION SUMMIT

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