

Strengthening Education Policy Through Teacher Insight



CLIENT QUOTE

"Teachers have such vast experience and knowledge of how our schools and classrooms work day-to-day and what our students need. **Engaging them in dialogue** helped us recast the fundamental issue from discipline and punishment to one of supporting students to develop problem solving skills and respect and embrace the rich diversity of our schools."



TO READ A COMPLETE REPORT ON THIS VIVA IDEA EXCHANGE, go to: http://vivateachers.org/ wp-content/uploads/2013/11/VIVA-Minneapolis_Final_Revised_web. pdf

3023 N Clark Street #763 Chicago, IL 60657 thevivaproject.com info@thevivaproject.com @theVIVAproject



Connections for Learning: Unifying the Social and Academic Curriculum in Minneapolis Public Schools

CASE STUDY

In 2013, the Minneapolis Public School District and the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers invited teachers to examine and recommend the most effective strategies to build a positive learning environment in classrooms and schools. Powered by an innovative online platform and expert facilitation, teachers used their expertise and creativity to hone their vision and address a critical need in the district by developing actionable recommendations centered on:

- adopting a comprehensive, researchbased social and academic curriculum that reflected the needs of the students
- creating a healthy, non-toxic learning environment in all schools

THE NUMBERS

Partner: Minneapolis Public School District and Minneapolis Federation of Teachers

Geographic Reach: Minneapolis, MN

Idea Exchange Participants:286Timeframe Start to Finish:27 daysNumber of Recommendations:8

AS A RESULT:

The recommendations generated by the VIVA Idea Exchange were presented to the Minneapolis School Board. Informed by these recommendations, the school board adopted a new discipline policy that focused on positive problem-solving rather than discipline and punishment.

VIVA IDEA EXCHANGE DISCUSSION QUESTION

The VIVA Project's Idea Exchange process and carefully crafted question were designed to inspire teachers' creativity while focusing their discussion on strategies for creating a positive learning environment in classrooms and schools:

What are the most effective strategies you've used that have had a positive impact on student behavior? What would best help students who grapple with behavior issues? What changes need to be made at the building level? What kind of support or professional development should the district provide so individual teachers can build a positive learning environment in their classroom?

KEY OUTCOMES

The VIVA Idea Exchange provided teachers with a platform for addressing important needs -- discipline and school and classroom climate -- by redefining the issue and focusing on the roots of the problem in a positive, more comprehensive way:

- Educators were sought out by the school district to weigh in as professionals.
- K-12 educators from different schools throughout district were engaged in the process that helped eliminate silos and bring people together.
- Challenges were made into opportunities to improve school discipline and create a more positive school culture.
- Issues of diversity in the district were explored and educators thoughtfully identified ways to welcome and meet the needs of all students.
- Strategies to help students develop problem-solving skills were identified to address the root causes of behavioral issues.