



CLIENT QUOTE

“Principals play a critical role in the success of our schools and our students. They wear many hats –instructional leader, professional developer, financial manager and communicator-in-chief, to name a few – and must do so while keeping up on advances in educational policy and practice and ensuring the acceleration of student achievement. As a result, we owe principals an evaluation system that is authentic, thorough and fair and gives them the information and support they need to be successful.”



360 Degree Leadership: Evaluating Minnesota Principals

CASE STUDY

In 2012, the Minnesota Department of Education needed to develop a new principal evaluation system but was short on time and money. They invited teachers from across the state to consider the ways a principal should support both students and teachers and how those efforts should best be measured. To recruit and retain effective principals, it is necessary to have an effective principal evaluation protocol that ensures a positive school climate, collaborative relationships among all stakeholders and professional practices based on best practices for all students. Powered by an innovative online platform and expert facilitation, teachers from around the state developed recommendations focused on five core areas that build good leaders and foster student achievement:

- instructional leadership
- building a positive school climate
- fiscal and labor management
- quality collaboration and leadership
- striving for equity

THE NUMBERS

Partner: Minnesota Department of Education

Geographic Reach: Minnesota

Idea Exchange Participants: 502

Timeframe Start to Finish: 15 days

Number of Recommendations: 10

AS A RESULT:

The work done by the teachers was presented to Governor Mark Dayton and Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius. State leaders had hoped for recommendations on the state’s principal evaluation system but, thanks to the insights and leadership of the teachers and VIVA Idea Exchange process, they ended up with a comprehensive principal evaluation process that called for multiple measures collected via engagement of multiple stakeholders.

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 what principal effectiveness means, what it looks like and how to measure it:

Every year teachers face new requirements, curriculums or ‘public wisdom’ about what should be happening in their classroom. What are the four or five most important ways a principal should support both students and teachers? How can those be measured?

KEY OUTCOMES

The VIVA Idea Exchange provided teachers with a platform to quickly yet thoroughly unpack what it means to be an effective principal and how to measure success:

- State education leadership recognized and tapped the experience, expertise and professionalism of teachers to better understand the role of principals to lead and support the best outcomes for students.
- Teachers provided capacity, in addition to insightful counsel, to work on the state’s principal evaluation system at a time when state financial resources were extremely limited.
- Teachers recommended a thoughtful, robust principal evaluation that included surveys, observations and principal reflections.
- Teachers called for a principal evaluation that would allow a principal to improve his or her practice, enhance staff relationships, strengthen the climate within a school and, ultimately, improve student learning.

TO READ A COMPLETE REPORT ON THIS VIVA IDEA EXCHANGE, go to: http://vivateachers.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/VIVAMNReport_Final_accessible.pdf

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