



District is Proactive to Create a Best Place to Work Environment

The District

The Santa Rosa County District Schools is committed to creating a great place for students to learn, teachers to teach, staff to work, and for parents to know that their child is receiving a great education. The district enrolls 26,150 students; it employs 2,580 teachers and staff, and 91 administrators; this includes 92 National Board Certified teachers. The school system includes 17 elementary, 8 middle, and 7 high schools; a pre-kindergarten center; a technical center; an adult school; a community schools program; an adult literacy program; and a variety of alternative programs.

The Challenge

Santa Rosa has earned an “A” grade from the Florida Department of Education each school year since 2004; it’s one of only five school districts within the state to do so. It consistently ranks as one of the top districts in Florida for student achievement and performance. In 2014, the district ranked third among all districts in the state’s Grade 3 Reading assessment (73% passing); and tenth in the state’s Grade 3 Mathematics assessment (71% passing; nine districts achieving between 72% and 86% passing). Between 2005 and 2009 the district’s graduation rate was 87.4% or higher. These student performance measures show that Santa Rosa County is a great school district. The district’s challenge is sustaining its tradition of excellence, improving employee engagement and district support services, and creating a best place to work environment.

The Solution

To build on its commitment to excellence, the leadership of the Santa Rosa County District Schools (SRCDS) established a partnership with Studer Education, the education division of Studer Group, in 2010. Studer Education worked in partnership with the leaders in the SRCDS system to apply the Evidence-Based LeadershipSM framework. The framework drives systems improvement and performance by structuring focus on aligned goals, aligned behaviors, and aligned processes.

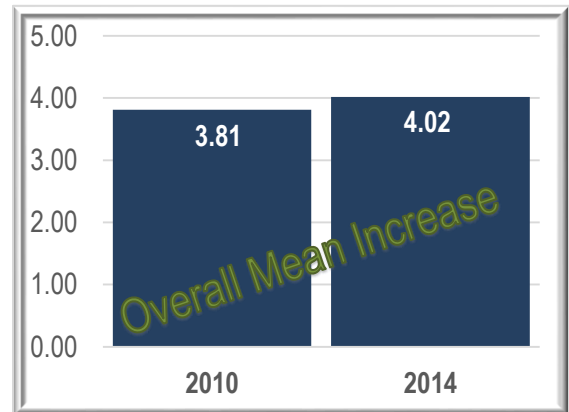
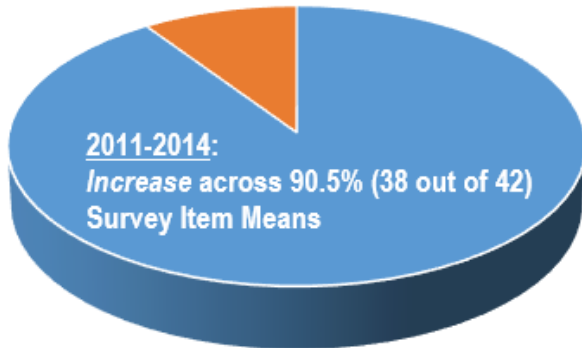
The **aligned goals** component included district leaders identifying key (**behavior**) performance measures aligned to creating a best place to work environment; these measures included Employee Engagement and Support Services. Data and feedback from these measures coupled with Studer Education principles are the **aligned processes** (strategies and tactics) for improving internal processes and making strategic changes that accelerate employee engagement and district support services across all district departments and schools.



Results highlight the impact of the district’s application of the Evidence-Based LeadershipSM framework.

The Results

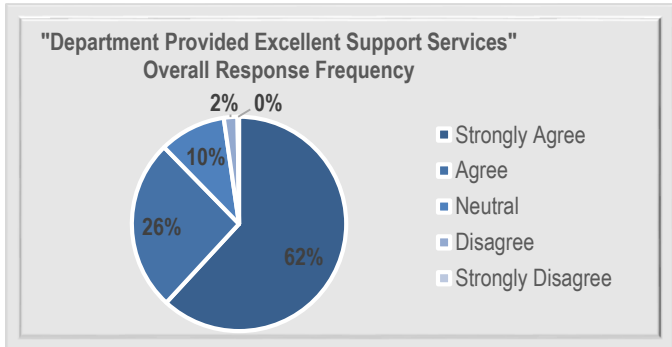
Employees who perceive their immediate supervisor (leader) is engaged with them in the workplace will be more satisfied and therefore do a better job. Beginning September 2010, Santa Rosa County began using a district-wide **Employee Engagement Survey** to measure the perception of employees with regard to the degree to which their immediate supervisor provides the type of work environment that supports their ability to perform at the highest level.



To determine the level of service schools receive from district departments, school leaders complete a **District Services Survey** every 45 days. The survey assesses the level of service across five categories—Accessibility, Accuracy, Attitude, Operations, and Timeliness—and the consistent flow of data helps district departments focus on the needs of schools and continuous improvement of services.

Characteristics	Mean 01/2013	Mean 01/2014	Difference
Accessibility	4.12	4.47	+ 0.35
Accuracy	4.16	4.47	+ 0.31
Attitude	4.22	4.54	+ 0.32
Operations	4.15	4.43	+ 0.28
Timeliness	4.09	4.44	+ 0.35
Overall Mean	4.15	4.47	+ 0.32

District departments (n=24) averaged 0.10 and 0.33 overall mean increases when comparing month and previous year (2012-2014).



The key to the district’s early success was not simply collecting and analyzing data; it was how well district and school leaders:



- Shared the data with teachers, staff and stakeholders;
- Communicated actions based on employee and stakeholder feedback; and
- Followed through for continuous improvement of the action plan.

District and school leaders’ actions created a systematic approach to drive employee engagement and service excellence results to support all of the district’s goals. This is a key component of continuous improvement. For school districts to be the best places for students to learn, employees to work, teachers to teach and parents to send their children for an excellent education, all schools and all service departments of the district must be excellent.