

Minnesota Principal's Academy-Action Learning Project

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Including Student Voice: Student Feedback to Teachers

Abstract

The Action Learning Project was designed to allow students an opportunity to express their perspectives on how effective their teachers were in terms of two areas. The two areas are 1). Explicit Curriculum or how does the teacher teach their subject; 2). Implicit Curriculum or how well does the teacher build interpersonal relationships with students (National Schools of Character, 2005). Teachers involved in the survey were also allowed to see the results of their individual surveys and reflect on where they can see areas of strength and areas of for improvement to reach students based off their voice and perspectives. A group of students were randomly selected to participate in a series of follow-up questions based off the original survey.

A group of seven teachers volunteered to participate in the survey. The survey was conducted in both single taught and co-taught classrooms. The survey was administered at the start of third trimester and follow-up qualitative interviews were conducted during the final two weeks of the trimester.

Mission: The Osseo Area Schools mission is “to inspire and prepare all students with the confidence, courage, and competence to achieve their dreams; contribute to community; and engage in a lifetime of learning.”

Strategic Objectives: One of the strategic objectives in the Osseo Area Schools is to “engage students and parents as partners to achieve our mission and strategic objectives”.

Core Values:

- Everyone has equal intrinsic value
- Better decisions emerge when diverse perspectives are intentionally included in a collaborative process
- Everyone can learn more

Background/Demographics: North View IB World School is located in Brooklyn Park, MN. It is one of four junior high schools in the Osseo Area Schools District. It houses grades 7, 8, and 9 in 2014-15 and will become a middle school serving student in grades 6, 7, and 8 starting in 2015-16. North View has been an International Baccalaureate school since 2007.

North View IB World School serves approximately 700 students. 1.3% Native American (or Indigenous students); 25.7% Asian/Pacific Islander (primarily Hmong students); 14.6% Hispanic students; 47.3% Black students 11.1% White students. Over 85% of North View students receive Free/Reduced Priced Lunch, 20% English Language Learners and 20% Special Education. We also serve a high population of students who are considered highly mobile throughout the year.

Teacher Point of View:

Effective educators seek feedback from a variety of sources. Feedback can come in the form of principal to teacher, teacher to teacher, and also from teacher to student. What about the essential need for students to provide feedback to their teachers? Student's feedback to teachers can provide a range of perspectives for teachers to explore and reflect upon to potentially adjust their approaches to students. This type of feedback allows for teachers to gain insight into their student's perspective and what they need from the teacher's instruction to and to engage in meaningful learning experiences.

Sample of Survey Results: n=206

	Rarely	Once in a While	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
Teacher listens and understands students' point of view; he/she may not agree, but students feel understood.	2.06%-4	3.09%-6	20.10%-39	33.51%-65	41.24%-80
Teacher likes and respects students.	1.57%-3	3.14%-6	10.47%-20	30.37%-58	54.45%-104
I trust this teacher.	3.13-6	4.17%-8	11.46%-22	27.60%-53	53.65%-103

In interviews with students student responses in regards to the question about **trust** students said:

- Talked to me with open arms
- The teacher will help me through tough times
- There's not anything I can't talk about
- When they don't let you down. They care about you.
- Doesn't talk about you behind your back.

Implications:

In conclusion, as we prepare to go deeper with TDE and the state requiring teachers to do student surveys as part of their evaluation the Teacher Evaluation by Students from the National Schools of Character (2005) is just one tool that can be used to elicit student feedback. The voice that is rarely heard in terms of teacher evaluation, growth and development is that of those who spend the most time with them...their students.

- In 2015-16 we will use the survey with more teachers and in more classes, in addition to the MN Student Survey.
- Use the survey with our first-year teachers involved in our First-Year To North View Teacher Learning Group.
- Evaluate and explore deeper perspectives from individual students and various student groups.
- Allow teams to use the surveys within their Grade Level/Houses to assess the pulse of students and how students are feeling about their explicit and implicit curriculum.