School Executive Website study

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Abstract: The School Executive Website will be a one-stop, online site for officials who are looking for educational data, best practices, product reviews, school documents, professional opinions, and/or job-related networking. The format of the website is designed in certain sections similar to other current and popular websites, such as Angie's List.com, YouTube, and Linkedin.com. The development and complication of components for a School Executive Website required a survey study to be conducted. This survey was sent to all school superintendents in Ohio to seek out the most relevant resources to place initially in the website. The exploratory study provided important insights for the development of components within the website setup.

Key words: leadership; educational administration; school resources

1. Introduction

The MWERA presentation will highlight the development and components of a website for school executives. In order to compile and develop the website, a survey study was conducted among school administrators in Ohio to seek out the most relevant resources to place in the website. This exploratory study provided important insights for the development of website components.

The School Executive Website will be a one-step, online site for school executives who are seeking educational data, practices, product reviews, documents and professional opinions. The website format will be designed in certain sections similar to other current websites, such as Angie's List, YouTube, and LinkedIn.com.

2. Purpose and content of the study

School executives are busy individuals who face a whole array of issues. The purpose for this exploratory study through a survey is to help build a website that is productive and useful for these school leaders.

Calling upon his 25 years as a school superintendent in Ohio, Dr. Robert Thiede is constructing this website to provide practical, hands-on information and materials for school executives. An individual will be able to go to this website and review and/or retrieve the following items:

(1) School documents, such as grade cards, evaluation instruments, disciplinary handbooks;

(2) Best practices in schools, such as mock crisis drills, curriculum mapping, intervention programs (formatted similar to YouTube.com);

(3) Reviews of school products/services by school officials (formatted similar to Angie's List.com);

(4) Polling and professional networking and blogging among school officials (formatted similar to LinkedIn.com).

This type of website will be a very efficient and streamlined way for school officials to retrieve resources. In

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fact, they only need to go to this one website to garner a great deal of information, data, and materials. It will, also, be a very practical tool for them because they can download many different best practices and documents currently being utilized throughout the nation's schools.

An online survey of school superintendents was conducted to determine what items would be most relevant and useful to be part of the website. This survey contained four basic categories (Educational Products, Educational Practices, Educational Documents and Educational Polling) with several items in each category area.

These categories in the survey reflect the basic format for the actual School Executive Website. Through this study, the survey data collected is being built into the website. A copy of the online survey sent to the school superintendents is attached to this paper.

3. Methodology for data collection

Dr. Thiede had presented this concept of a website (January, 2008) initially to a group of about one hundred educators, to see if they thought this type of website idea would be useful to school leaders. These educators responded in a post-session feedback form that they thoroughly liked the website concept and thought it would be very useful.

To further the study regarding for this website, Dr. Thiede, conducted an online survey to 611 school district superintendents in Ohio. To determine the items desired in this School Executive Website, the superintendents were asked to respond to the survey items (from the various educational categories of products, practices, documents and polling information) in which they would like to see in the website.

The online survey was emailed to 611 school superintendents in July, 2008. The response rate was 27%, yielding 162 survey responses.

4. Collection and analysis of data

With the survey responses of 162 superintendents, there was sufficient data to determine the items school executives would like to see in the website. The superintendents were asked in the survey to mark an "X" beside each item in the categories that they would believe is desire useful information.

A frequency tables were established to display the "item" data marked by the respondents (from Table 1 to Table 4).

Table 1   Educational products selected by the superintendents

Educational products		
Items	n (Numbers)	Ranking (Top 6 items)
Construction materials	4	
Maintenance materials	29	
Building cleaning materials	28	
Green materials (environmentally friendly)	49	5
Textbooks	54	4
Consumable workbooks	24	
Computer software	75	1
Technology hardware	56	3

(to be continued)

Computers	39	6
Nursing supplies	7	
Kitchen equipment	3	
Custodial equipment	21	
School buses	26	
Professional books & publications	68	2

Table 2   Educational practices selected by the superintendents

Educational practices		
Items	n (Numbers)	Ranking (Top 6 items)
Curriculum design	43	6
Professional development	60	3
Crisis plans	58	4
Instructional techniques	74	1
Student assessment/testing	68	2
Gang-related programs	5	
Classroom management techniques	50	5
Alternative school programs	20	
Time management	10	
Program evaluation	34	
Vision/mission creation	17	
Strategic planning	20	
Teacher interviews	20	
Problem solving steps	12	
Classroom environment setups	10	

Table 3   Educational documents selected by the superintendents

Educational documents		
Items	n (Numbers)	Ranking (Top 6 items)
Superintendent evaluation forms	57	2
Principal evaluation forms	74	1
Teacher evaluation forms	44	4
Grade cards/progress reports	23	
School handbooks	56	3
Disciplinary codes	13	
Labor contracts	57	2
Job applications	19	
Expulsion/suspension forms	9	
Crisis plans	44	4
Board of education policies	30	
Strategic planning reports	41	

There were responses from 48 superintendents that were classified as "non-transmittal" through the online system. A variety of reasons probably exist for these "non-transmittal" responses, however, they most likely were

because of the superintendents not possessing an e-mail address at their respective school districts any longer (recently retired or resigned).

Table 4   Educational polling selected by the superintendents

Educational polling		
Items	n (Numbers)	Ranking (Top 6 items)
Leadership	77	1
Special education	49	3
Multicultural education	12	
Curriculum standards	49	4
Technology	52	2
Suspension/expulsion	10	
Site-based management	16	
Online schools	38	
Strategic planning	38	5
Financing	49	3
Alternative licensure programs	22	
Administrative preparation	28	

5. Discussion of exploratory results

The results of this exploratory study provided some valuable data and insights for the development of the School Executive Website. The school superintendents in this study clearly desired data regarding certain educational products, documents, practices and polling information. In designing this website, this survey information is very important for the placement and structure of items in the various website categories. This respondent data will, also, be helpful in providing the most relevant and up-to-date information and resources to school leaders.

Furthermore, this exploratory study has indicated significant numbers of items for each category. Survey results showed a high frequency of responses for the following areas: technology, curriculum and instruction, student assessment/testing, professional development and administrators' evaluations. A breakdown of specific responses for each item can be seen in the tables under the "collection and analysis of the data" section.

The survey results definitely aid in the development of the School Executive Website. Survey data garnered will determine which items in the website will be initially placed and expanded in the various categories of the website.

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