Graduate Feedback for Sycamore Community Schools

April 13, 2020
Sycamore Advisory Commission

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Essential Questions to Guide Project

- What strategies are being employed to gather both qualitative and quantitative data on the preparedness of graduates from Sycamore High School?

- How are premier school districts, both public and private, reaching out to its graduates to understand what was done successfully and what opportunities for growth exist in improving graduate

Summary of Project

- Identify school districts who currently survey recent graduates to find out how well the district prepared them for life after high school; whether work, military and/or college.

- Understand how that data is utilized to find out what the schools did well and what could be done better.

- Find a way to implement a similar system at Sycamore

Case Study #1 - *Upper Arlington City School District, Columbus, OH*

- Through their Education Foundation, UA assembled an Innovation Team to oversee their graduate study process.

- Survey was created by a Market Research Expert and sent to recent graduates so there would be "good information as to what the school district is doing well and where there are perceived gaps or needs."

- Questions created were specifically to address the

UA City Schools, Cont.

- Survey consists of 26 questions (roughly 10 minutes), all students who successfully complete the survey are entered into a drawing for gift cards *(incentive for completion)*.

- Questions are on a rating scale with room for elaboration.

- After completion of survey, all participants are asked if they are willing to participate in a group discussion (bi-annual).

UA City Schools, Cont.

- Biggest challenge in gathering this information is/was connecting with alumni after graduation.

- Suggested ways to solve this issue:

  - Before graduation, obtain non-school email from graduating seniors.

  - Send postcard to parents' addresses with information about survey.

Case Study #2 – *Madeira City Schools, Cincinnati, OH*

- The Graduate Follow-Up Study is done by the Planning Commission subcommittee members assigned to the study.

- Planning Commission subcommittee collaborates with high school guidance counselors and administrators to gather suggested enhancements to the previous study, but the subcommittee is the sole generator / owner of the study including creation, distribution, compiling of results.

Madeira City Schools, Cont.

- The primary objective of the Graduate Follow-Up Study is to gather information about graduates' opinions of their experience at Madeira High School as well as to determine how Madeira graduates feel they were prepared for their future whether that be college, the military, career or technical programs.

- Survey focused on academics, curriculum, technology, social/emotional skills, culture, guidance and college/career selection as well as strengths and weaknesses identified in their

Madeira City Schools, Cont.

- Similarly, the biggest challenge Madeira faces is communication and distribution of the survey to alumni.

- Madeira communicates with their alumni in the following manner:
  - The Blue and Gold Digest – advertise with link
  - Superintendent Matsudo tweeted the link
  - Past class presidents were directly contacted to encourage alumni participation
  - Tagged on Facebook and Instagram
  - Connect with parents still living in the community

Case Study #3 – *Moeller, Elder, St. Xavier, Cincinnati, OH*

- Moeller, Elder and St. X high schools as they are the gold standard for alumni engagement.

- St. Xavier was established in 1831, Elder in 1922 and Moeller in 1960. They have approximately100,000 alumni collectively. Each school maintains records and is engaged with an average of 85% of their alumni. The percentage will increase as many older alumni do not utilize technology to stay in touch. These schools are grouped together as their objectives and strategies are similar.

Private schools, Cont.

- The schools each have 2 full time alumni engagement staff members. The staff members of the Greater Cincinnati Catholic Schools meet quarterly to share best practices.

- Moeller has an alumni board and the president of this board sits on the main school board. On the alumni board there are decade captains and class captains.

- These alumni are responsible for recruiting additional alumni to manage the networking events, alumni business network, the monthly magazine, the Veteran's Day events, career days and lunches on campus, summer reunions with spouses, golf outings, family picnics, sports stags, alumni sporting leagues, monthly breakfasts with classmates, bourbon stags, annual auction dinners, class nights out, etc. They conduct annual calling nights with peers to contact classmates to touch base and ensure the contact info

Private schools, Cont.

- The staff members lead initiatives, maintain school records, social media posts & the logistics for all events. The staff members travel to bring Moeller alumni events to alumni in other cities. They promote alumni businesses, products, careers, awards & promotions. They highlight the lives of alumni and share interviews. Their focus is on bringing alumni back to campus and facilitating networking.

- These private schools do not send surveys to query graduates. This would go against the schools' cultures. The schools pride themselves on knowing the students & families and get feedback directly from the graduates. Alumni are in contact with the school and are back on campus frequently sitting on boards, volunteering, driving initiatives and having lunch with faculty, staff and students. Feedback is obtained by calling or meeting with graduates/parents one on one to get information. Alumni donate to fund improvements they deem necessary for the needs of future generations.

- These schools are in constant social media contact with alumni in addition to the events, emails, calls and mailings they do.

Recommendations:

- We recommend that Sycamore Community Schools establish a committee to create, distribute and compile a Sycamore Graduate Study.

- This committee should include an administrator resource person.

Questions?