performance matters

MAKING THE EVALUATION PROCESS WORK

CASE STUDY

How Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools ensures all employees are effectively evaluated

BACKGROUND

Located in southwest North Carolina, near the South Carolina border, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is the second largest school district in the state. This culturally diverse district is on a mission to provide all students with the best possible education, preparing them to lead rich and productive lives upon graduation. CMS is one of the largest employers in the county, with over 18,000 employees including teachers, support staff, administrators, and central staff. CMS employees work together to ensure students they educate are provided every opportunity to succeed in each of the district's 169 schools. For the district, this means recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding a premier workforce that will ensure an effective educator for every student.

THE CHALLENGE

In order to achieve its goals, CMS needed a talent management system that could provide an effective means of evaluating all district employees, using rubrics and other assessment tools specifically designed to assess job performance for each role. In the past, district employees were evaluated using a variety of methods and tools and several different ratings scales. There was no effective way to track evaluation completions across the district, as some evaluations were paper-based and not housed in a central location. As so often happens with paper-based systems, evaluators struggled to determine which form should be used for each employee. As a result, employees were sometimes evaluated using the wrong forms, adding to the frustration.

Human Resources staff were challenged with gathering data points from a variety of sources to try to arrive at an accurate overall assessment of performance. With so many employees to evaluate, supervisors often had difficulty completing the evaluations, and tracking the results was an administrative challenge.

Staff, faculty, and support personnel had their challenges as well. Evaluation results often weren't available until the end of the school year, so employees couldn't immediately address identified areas of needed improvement or growth. Instead of using the results to set and support goals throughout the year, they often had no choice but to wait until the next school year to take action.

CASE STUDY

THE SOLUTION

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools partnered with Performance Matters, formerly Truenorthlogic, to create the MyTalent System, an integrated platform through which evaluators conduct meaningful evaluations and provide actionable results using Performance Matters's Truenorthlogic Evaluation. Employees have access to evaluations and professional development plans, and can take steps to address identified areas of need. Instead of a variety of evaluation systems and multiple rating scales, the district standardized its forms and processes, ensuring all employees are effectively evaluated using rubrics designed for their particular roles.

The district ultimately decided to partner with Performance Matters because they had a need for a solution that would align with the district's strategic plan. Performance Matters took the cake as far as evaluations. Other vendors had part of the solution but not the evaluation component," said Jillian Near, Leader Tracking System Project Manager. "We saw that we could bring in modules like Truenorthlogic PD that inform evaluations. Not a lot of other vendors had this tie in and this was huge for us."

Performance Matters developed an integrated solution that aligns evaluation results to supportive professional development, directly addressing identified areas of need. As the state's evaluation process for teachers became more comprehensive, employees began to be rated on areas of performance that had often been overlooked in previous evaluations. "Sometimes teachers thought that if something wasn't going to affect their evaluation, it wasn't worth working on. The new system is so broad now that they're paying attention and it's helping them continue to see where they can get ahead, help kids, and work on things that need improvement," said John LeGrand, high school principal. Supporting evaluation results with professional development makes sense, and now that employees have access to their evaluations and professional development plans, they can take charge of their own professional growth more effectively.

CONCLUSION

A key benefit of MyTalent is that employees know what's expected of them, and what they need to do to become more effective in their respective positions. Since the data is available for year over year comparisons, the district can track what's working, and where employees need additional support. "Once you see the information you created with your supervisor last year, people will begin to see they can build on this," said Kris Zorigan, Executive Director, Talent Management & HRIS.

Having access to this information, and the tools to address results, will help Charlotte-Mecklenburg achieve its vision of providing "all students the best education available anywhere, preparing every child to lead a rich and productive life."

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