Creating a Culture of Innovation: Minnetonka Innovates Campaign

The Minnetonka Public Schools face the problem of decreased funding from the state and national government while the cost to educate students continues to rise. The needs of students also continue to change as technology and new research goes against the industrial-era educational model that is familiar and comfortable to many adults. New ideas are needed to generate revenue and meet the changing needs of learners.

The Minnetonka School District needed to create a sense of urgency and engage staff through an innovation campaign. Key to the campaign was a communications plan that kept the focus on students while motivating staff to share innovative ideas, which needed to meet four criteria set by the school board. Ideas must:

1. Address the financial realities of the future
2. Address the changing nature of the student
3. Address the means to implement 21st Century skills and knowledge
4. Achieve proven, measurable, academic or behavioral results that are incrementally greater than results achieved through current strategies

Researching corporate and education innovation models during the 2010-11 school year, we could not find other school districts that were working to institutionalize and improve innovation efforts across their district. A district innovation team, comprised of administrators, teacher leaders, staff and community members began to study innovation under the direction of an innovation consultant.

On February 1, 2012 we launched a district-wide “Big Idea Hunt” which encouraged staff to submit their innovative ideas and comment on the ideas of others through a secure crowd-sourcing website.

Over the past three years we have received more than 430 new ideas and nearly 4,000 comments. Many of these ideas have been implemented or are being researched for implementation.

This process has given new and veteran staff members a voice for change while shifting the culture.
RESEARCH: Innovation projects can take many forms, but they have two things in common: they involve something new, and they have an uncertain outcome. Innovating in high-performing schools brings additional challenges because there is little room for error when it comes to educating students for their future.

The school board created a goal in 2010 “to institutionalize and improve innovation across the District.” Researching best-practices in corporate and education innovation, we could not find other school districts with an innovation initiative. Our research found a few keys for success:

- Create a culture of innovation
- Create a dedicated website
- Use crowdsourcing techniques
- Implement a “gaming” aspect
- Build a reward/recognition structure

Two books guided the District’s strategy for innovation; *How Stella Saved the Farm* and *Our Iceberg is Melting*. These books, based on research by Vijay Govindarajan, Chris Timble and John Kotter, were studied and discussed by district leaders to help inform the process. Parents, students, community business leaders and staff were part of this process. Key findings from these books included:

- The idea is only the beginning in innovation and is often the “easy” part
- Conflicts between the existing organization and the innovation team are inevitable – nurture a healthy relationship between the two
- One person cannot make innovation happen on their own; a dedicated innovation team needs to be built, as if you are starting a new company
- Create a sense of urgency
- Find a sensible vision of a better future and communicate it
- Create some “quick wins” and communicate them

In 2011, primary research for this plan included qualitative and quantitative approaches. We received qualitative information from teachers through meetings and conversations, including:

- Teachers felt pressed for time and overwhelmed by new district initiatives
- Teachers were frustrated because they had not come to terms on a new contract with the district
- Staff was upset about a 15 percent mid-year health insurance premium increase
- Teachers felt their work and the district’s work was already innovative
- There were different view points of the need for innovation based on school building and teaching tenure
- Teachers were comfortable sharing their ideas with trusted colleagues, but not to everyone in the district through a website
We also incorporated research from our innovation website vendor. Their work in Fortune 500 companies gave us a good starting point to create our culture of innovation. We discovered the need to adapt many corporate practices to fit our environment. Our findings included:

- Most employees have a good idea of what needs to happen, but need the framework and permission to make changes
- Rewards and recognition are important - tangible and intangible
- People like to have fun and elements of fun need to be part of the plan; this makes the innovation process feel less like work
- A system needs to be in place to move ideas forward, otherwise credibility will be lost and the culture will not be receptive toward helping with future projects
- Clear communication is critical before, during and after idea hunts
- Use gaming elements to make the process fun
- Games have rules and are often time-bound; clearly communicate the rules
- Have new “sticky” content and challenges on the innovation website to draw people back even when they don’t have an idea

**PLANNING:** Through our analysis of best-practices for institutional innovation and the research we conducted, our staff identified strategies to communicate with various stakeholders. While teachers were the primary audience, we included other staff members and involved parents/community members in our plan. From our research, we created a situation analysis that included:

- Costs of education continue to rise 2-3 percent per year, while funding decreases or remains flat
- Funding, time and regulation continually squeeze public education
- Most people believe something in the education system needs to change, but don’t know where to start
- Today’s methods of teaching and learning will not meet the changing needs of learners and are not financially sustainable
- Creating change is difficult, when the district is already seen as successful
- Teachers complain of “initiative fatigue” and being stretched too thin – some aren’t eager to create more work for themselves
- Different climate in each school – elementary teachers more willing to participate than high school teachers

To get staff to participate in the innovation initiative, we developed strategies to implement three goals:

1. Create a culture of innovation by empowering innovative thinking
2. Generate new ideas that meet school board criteria
3. Identify and engage staff members who were passionate about innovation

For our plan to be successful, we identified the need to have low-touch and high-touch tactics to deliver messages and build trust. Low-touch tactics included emails, posters and website banners. We used personal thank-you notes, personal invitations and strategic one-to-one conversations in our high-touch tactics.
Primary audience: Teachers
Objectives:
- 100% of teachers will be aware of Big Idea Hunt Campaign
- 33% of teachers will engage online in Big Idea Hunt
- 66% of teachers will feel safe sharing ideas and comments online
- 100+ ideas will be submitted on innovation website
- 75% of teachers will report innovation efforts are about helping kids; not just to look good

We acknowledged the need to have a bridge to connect online and offline activities. For this, we developed a BINGO game card that was distributed to staff members at site launch parties. Numbers for the game were posted on the website, where staff needed to login to view numbers for the day. In addition, staff needed to complete specific tasks, like posting a comment on an idea to complete a square.

We also made clear to staff that participating in the innovation initiative was voluntary.

Secondary audience: Principals
Objectives:
- All principals will know the four board criteria for the reasons behind innovation
- All principals will serve as ambassadors of the innovation initiative
- 75% of principals will engage on innovation website

Principals needed to be our leaders and key message communicators. We equipped them with speaking points and links to videos they could share with staff on a personal-level or at staff meetings.

Other audiences included non-teaching staff and engaged parents and community members.

COMMUNICATION/IMPLEMENTATION: The innovation initiative was formally introduced to all staff at a back-to-school kick-off event on September 1, 2011. An innovation consultant who helped form our internal innovation processes delivered a keynote address to more than 1,200 staff members. District leaders then introduced the “Big Idea Hunt” which would engage staff later in the school year. Over the three years we have had the innovation initiative, we have employed a variety of tactics, tools and resources to gain support for our efforts. Some of these include:

- Kick-off campaign to staff at all-staff meeting in September 2011
- Launch innovation website in February 2012
- Provide training for posting ideas and comments to the website
- Create large posters for display in staff lounges and mail rooms
- BINGO game to promote online and offline engagement
- Recognize staff participating in the gaming and ideation elements
- Use thank-you notes from superintendent to acknowledge teacher participation
- Communicate quick-wins through all district emails
- Engage principal leadership and recognize staff from their buildings
- Refine and communicate progress of ideas through the “idea funnel”
• Showcase top ideas and idea champions on a leaderboard
• Create short videos to highlight idea voting
• Highlight national innovative K-12 efforts, like code.org
• Create paid “Innovation Coach” job positions in each building
• Have teachers create short video clips to explain their idea
• Create off-site gatherings for innovative thinkers to take their conversations “offline”

Our calendar of events published for teachers for the 2013-14 campaign included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Name of Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 15-25</td>
<td>Idea Collection</td>
<td>Innovation website will be open for new idea submissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 28 – November 8</td>
<td>Idea Review</td>
<td>Comment, vote and review ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 11-22</td>
<td>Pairwise Voting</td>
<td>Pepsi or Coke? Ideas will be compared side-by-side for voting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 25 – December 6</td>
<td>Business Case Development</td>
<td>Teams will develop business cases for ideas that have generated the most interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 9-17</td>
<td>Idea Marketplace</td>
<td>Spend the points you earned through participation on your top ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>Idea Champion Celebration</td>
<td>Join fellow innovators to celebrate and learn more about this year’s top ideas</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**EVALUATION:** Over three years, the innovation initiative in Minnetonka has brought more than 430 new ideas to the table and nearly 4,000 comments. The comments brought affirmation from others and additional view points to make ideas even stronger. Nearly 1,000 staff members have created an account in the innovation website and 97% of staff was aware of the “Big Idea Hunt” last year.

We have achieved success based on the evaluation of the strategies and tactics used to achieve our three goals.

1. **Create a culture of innovation by empowering innovative thinking**
   While difficult to measure, the culture of innovation has grown over the past three years. There was a 10% increase in 2013 of the number of staff reporting “innovation in Minnetonka schools has been positive.” Staff participation has also increased by 200 users over the past three years. In 2013, we removed the gaming aspects of the idea hunt, based on staff feedback. Teachers told us they did not need a game to incentivize their participation, which is further evidence of a positive innovation culture.

2. **Generate new ideas that meet school board criteria**
   In September 2013 the VANTAGE program launched, which was the first program to follow the innovation framework that was developed. VANTAGE provides junior and senior students with real-
world experiences in professional settings, where they can learn and develop skills for high-demand careers. The program launched with 40 students in 2013 and has nearly 150 students registered for the 2014-15 school year.

While looking for “big” ideas to help move the district forward, a number of smaller ideas came through the process. Some of these ideas, like ways to share and organize web links, were quickly implemented. The larger ideas require more resources and research. The district is working on three projects that have progressed through our innovation pipeline.

- Creating Minnesota's first computer coding curriculum for grades K-5
- Creating advanced online coursework for high school students
- Expanding 1:1 iPad initiative to grades 7-12 (The first innovation idea from training in 2010.)

These ideas will help prepare students for their future, while helping the district deliver services more efficiently. These programs are also marketable to students not currently enrolled in our district. Additional revenue through innovation allows us to not rely as heavily on state and federal tax dollars, while providing high-quality programs for our students.

3. Identify and engage staff members passionate about innovation
   The number of staff members involved in the innovation process continues to increase. New this year, each principal selected an Innovation Coach to help others through the process of sharing and building innovative ideas. Many of these coaches did not have previous school leadership positions and were identified through their involvement in previous Big Idea Hunts.

We have implemented an annual innovation survey of all staff and use website metrics to measure engagement. Surveys were sent to all staff in the spring of 2011, 2012 and 2013 to measure our innovation efforts. The survey was sent to approximately 1,300 district staff. Teachers were approximately 75% of the respondents in each year. The 2011 results do not include data on the Big Idea Hunt because it did not start until February 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minnetonka Innovation Survey Data</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation in Minnetonka schools has been positive.</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation in Minnetonka schools should be a priority.</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was aware of The Big Idea Hunt campaign earlier this school year.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable discussing innovative ideas and thoughts one-on-one with colleagues.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable sharing innovative ideas and thoughts online</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
within a secure website.

If there are future Big Idea Hunts, I will likely participate by sharing or commenting on ideas.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>57.6%</th>
<th>65.9%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of ideas submitted on innovation website</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of comments submitted on innovation website</td>
<td>1,309</td>
<td>1,220</td>
<td>1,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of surveys completed</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>268</td>
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There is tremendous excitement around the future of innovation in Minnetonka schools. While other districts have spent time deciding where to cut budgets, we have been able to harness the collective ingenuity of our staff to develop ideas that are good for students and the future of our district.
Minnetonka Public Schools Innovation Timeline

October 2013 – Third Big Idea Hunt launches to staff

September 3, 2013 – VANTAGE Program launches at Minnetonka High School

Summer 2013 – Idea development and pilot planning for ideas recommended by School Board

April 25, 2013 – Three potential ideas presented to School Board at business meeting for consideration

March 21, 2013 – Four ideas presented to School Board at Study Session

February 27, 2013 – Innovation Guiding Team recommends four ideas to move forward

February 4 – 19, 2013 – “All Hands on Deck” campaign for refinement of six ideas (from 108)

January 3, 2013 – VANTAGE Program courses approved by Board

November 8, 2013 – Second Big Idea Hunt ends with 108 new ideas

October 22, 2012 – Second Big Idea Hunt launches to staff

August 30, 2012 – Eric Schneider highlights innovation initiatives to all District staff at MHS event

June 5, 2012 – School Board approves pilot for VANTAGE Program

April 12, 2012 – School Board receives update on three potential innovation ideas

March 2012 – 143 potential ideas are collected and evaluated by committees

February 1, 2012 – First Big Idea Hunt launches to staff

October 2011 – Innovation “Guiding Team” given six innovative ideas from past internal research to refine

September 1, 2011 – Tim Sutton gives innovation keynote to all District staff, formal kick-off to innovation initiative

October 2010 – Selected staff and community members read and discuss innovation-themed books, How Stella Saved the Farm and Our Iceberg is Melting

October 2010 - Innovation consultant Tim Sutton begins work with District

2010-11 school year – Transition from strategic planning model to intentional innovation model

2010-11 Board Retreat goal – Institutionalize and improve innovation across the District

2009-10 Board Retreat goal – Support innovation and collaboration within the District

2002 - 2011 – Strategic planning process guides District projects and goals
Collecting baseline data: Online staff survey

A survey was administered in 2011 to gather baseline data from staff regarding innovation. There were 338 completed surveys, with approximately 75% completed by teaching staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. The pursuit of innovation in Minnetonka Schools:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes undertaken in the last five years to enhance Minnetonka schools have been designed to provide more educational opportunities for Minnetonka kids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5% (6)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovative efforts in Minnetonka schools are important.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovation in Minnetonka schools has been positive.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5% (6)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovation in Minnetonka schools should be a priority.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2% (4)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovation in Minnetonka schools is largely about looking innovative and less about kids.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.8% (39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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- answered question 332
- skipped question 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Looking to the future for Minnetonka Schools:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our current educational model (program, staffing, financing) will remain viable for the next two years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1% (7)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our current educational model (program, staffing, financing) will remain viable for the next five years.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1% (20)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our current educational model (program, staffing, financing) will remain viable for the next ten years.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>14.8% (40)</td>
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- answered question 331
- skipped question 7
**Communications Plan — Innovation Initiative**

**Problem:** Faced with changing student needs and decreased funding from the state and national government, the Minnetonka School District needs to engage staff to generate innovative ideas on how we educate students.

**Goals**
1. Create a culture of innovation by empowering innovative thinking
2. Generate new ideas that meet school board criteria
3. Identify and engage staff members passionate about innovation

**Audience:** All Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Communication Strategy</th>
<th>Messages</th>
<th>Tactics/Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 100% of teachers will be aware of Big Idea Hunt campaign | Informational campaign | - Students need us to find new ways to reach them  
- Change is coming; let’s do it on our terms  
- It’s fun & safe to share and comment on new ideas.  
- Teachers are integral to our future success  
- We’re already innovative; will be better when collective effort is focused | All-staff presentation  
- Staff meetings at schools  
- Email messages  
- BINGO game cards  
- Launch event at each site  
- Internal website advertising  
- Large posters in high traffic areas  
- iPads/computers available at launch events to register  
- Update progress monthly through all staff emails |
| 33% of teachers will engage online in Big Idea Hunt | Informational & Gaming campaign | - Ideas needed to impact future students  
- Innovation is important, but fun work  
- You don’t need to have an idea to participate  
- Participation is voluntary  
- Earn points to win prizes | Email invitations to participate  
- Recognize teachers who are participating through all staff email  
- Guiding team members will personally reach-out to key staff in each building to participate  
- BINGO game cards  
- Reward participants with small prizes and recognition  
- Kick-off event at each site to answer questions  
- Principals will recognize participants informally and formally  
- iPads/computers available at launch events to register |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 66% of teachers will feel safe sharing ideas and comments online | - Informational campaign
- Face-to-face positive reinforcement
- Engage leaders in recognition | - Don’t have to spend time on idea if it’s picked
- Secure website just for staff
- Ideas get better when not held in isolation
- Participation is voluntary |
| - Guiding team will pre-enter ideas into website
- Guiding team members will actively comment on new ideas
- Principals will comment with positive remarks
- Superintendent will write personal thank-you notes to idea champions
- All staff email messages will highlight idea champions and contributors
- All staff emails will show photos of BINGO winners with Asst. Superintendent
- Principals will stress importance of innovation and safety in process in month prior to staff meeting

100+ new ideas will be submitted on innovation website | Crowdsourcing and recognition campaign | - Ideas needed to impact future students
- Have fun by earning points & win prizes by submitting ideas
- Many teachers are submitting ideas
- Ideas get better when not held in isolation
- Change is coming; let’s do it on our terms
- Adults working directly with students have great perspective on creating change |
| Large posters in high traffic areas
- BINGO cards listing prizes, rules, game info
- Guiding team add ideas on website early
- Guiding team members will personally thank idea champions
- Highlight idea champions and contributors thru all staff email
- Principals recognize teachers formally and informally
- Website banner ad on “For Staff” webpage
- Superintendent will write personal thank-you notes to idea champions

75% of teachers will report innovations efforts are about helping kids; not just to look good | Informational campaign | - Innovation efforts are being driven by changing student needs
- Schools need to remain relevant to exist
- Teachers have the best perspective on how to make meaningful change |
| BINGO card to include student photo and messaging about changing student needs
- Emails will remind staff on student focus behind innovation
- Principals to receive speaking points about submitted ideas that highlight potential student impact
- Email and principal communication after the hunt will focus on potential impact on students
- Update monthly progress through staff emails and admin council meetings
- Recognize through video innovative teachers at kick-off meeting in August |
<table>
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<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Communication Strategy</th>
<th>Messages</th>
<th>Tactics/Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All principals will know the four board criteria for the reasons behind innovation</td>
<td>Informational campaign</td>
<td>-Need to focus on future needs of students and financial realities&lt;br&gt;-Change is coming; let’s do it on our terms&lt;br&gt;-As building leader, you need to set example</td>
<td>-Superintendent speaks at principal meetings&lt;br&gt;-Follow-up email communication&lt;br&gt;-Principals involved in process speak to colleagues about importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All principals will serve as ambassadors of the innovation initiative</td>
<td>Informational campaign&lt;br&gt;Face-to-face campaign&lt;br&gt;Recognition campaign</td>
<td>-You are important part of this process&lt;br&gt;-Model the behavior we want to see&lt;br&gt;-Recognize &amp; reward staff for participating&lt;br&gt;-Innovation is important for our future&lt;br&gt;-This is a fun, optional activity for staff&lt;br&gt;-Don’t need an idea to participate</td>
<td>-Principals to receive speaking points about submitted ideas that highlight potential student impact&lt;br&gt;-Principals to receive lists of active staff members on the innovation site for recognition&lt;br&gt;-Principals will allow brief demo of innovation website at Feb. staff meeting&lt;br&gt;-Principals will communicate importance of innovation at staff meetings prior to idea hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% of principals will engage on innovation website</td>
<td>Informational &amp; training campaign</td>
<td>-Build trust with positive online feedback on your staff ideas&lt;br&gt;-Offer to help staff get started&lt;br&gt;-Easy and fun&lt;br&gt;-Listen to conversations taking place online to help find new ideas for your school</td>
<td>-Training sessions for principals on innovation website&lt;br&gt;-Asst. Supt. will recognize principals for participating&lt;br&gt;-Principals will receive speaking points and new ideas during hunt&lt;br&gt;-Superintendent will remind and encourage participation at principal meeting in February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Communication Strategy</td>
<td>Messages</td>
<td>Tactics/Tools</td>
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</table>
| 90% of all staff will be aware of Big Idea Hunt campaign                   | Informational campaign                 | - Students need us to find new ways to reach them  
- Change is coming; let’s do it on our terms  
- It’s fun & safe to share and comment on new ideas.  
- All staff are integral to our future success  
- We’re already innovative; will be better when collective effort is focused | - All-staff presentation  
- Staff meetings at schools  
- Email messages  
- BINGO game cards  
- Launch event at each site  
- Internal website advertising  
- Large posters in high traffic areas  
- iPads/computers available at launch events to register  
- Update progress monthly through all staff emails |
| 100+ new ideas will be submitted on innovation website                     | Crowdsourcing and recognition campaign | - Ideas needed to impact future students  
- Have fun by earning points & win prizes by submitting ideas  
- Many colleagues are submitting ideas  
- Ideas get better when not held in isolation  
- Change is coming; let’s do it on our terms  
- Adults working directly with students have great perspective on creating change | - Large posters in high traffic areas  
- BINGO cards listing prizes, rules, game info  
- Guiding team add ideas on website early  
- Guiding team members will personally thank idea champions  
- Highlight idea champions and contributors thru all staff email  
- Principals recognize staff formally and informally  
- Website banner ad on “For Staff” webpage  
- Superintendent will write personal thank-you notes to idea champions |
| 25% of non-teaching staff will log into innovation website during Big Idea Hunt | Informational & gaming campaign        | - Ideas needed to impact future students  
- Innovation is important, but fun work  
- You don’t need to have an idea to participate | - Email invitations to participate  
- Recognize teachers who are participating publically through email  
- Guiding team members will personally reach-out to key staff in each building to participate  
- BINGO game cards |
| Participation is voluntary  
| Earn points to win prizes  | Reward participants with small prizes and recognition  
| Kick-off event at each site to answer questions  
| Principals will recognize participants informally and formally  
| iPads/computers available at launch events to register  |

**75% of staff will report innovations efforts are about helping kids; not just to look good**

**Informational campaign**

- Innovation efforts are being driven by changing student needs
- Schools need to remain relevant to exist
- School staff have the best perspective on how to make meaningful change

- BINGO card to include student photo and messaging about changing student needs
- Emails will remind staff on student focus behind innovation
- Principals to receive speaking points about submitted ideas that highlight potential student impact
- Email and principal communication after the hunt will focus on potential impact on students
- Update monthly progress through staff emails and admin council meetings
- Recognize through video innovative teachers at kick-off meeting in August

**75% of paraprofessionals will feel their ideas are valued as a member of the educational team**

**Informational campaign**

- Ideas can come from all staff
- We are all in this together – for kids

- Email messages to all staff will highlight paraprofessional involvement
- BINGO cards will emphasize importance of ALL staff
- Guiding team members will personally thank paraprofessionals for their contributions

**Audience: Involved Parents & Community Members**

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<tr>
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</table>
| 66% of non-staff members who enter schools will be aware of Big Idea Hunt | Informational campaign | Innovation efforts are important for our students and schools
- Minnetonka is a leader in education
- Minnetonka is constantly improving and looking for new ways to meet student needs | Innovation posters displayed in high traffic areas of the school
- Principals will mention posters and idea hunt at Feb. PTO/PTA meetings |
Why Do We Innovate?

Liliana is a Kindergartener at Deephaven Elementary.

She will graduate in 2025 and needs to be prepared for her future.
Your guide to getting started with innovating in Minnetonka

Why innovate? Minnetonka Schools has embraced innovation for a number of reasons, including:

- Better preparing students for the future
- Changing at a pace consistent with the world around us
- Dealing with external threats and pressure

What is Spigit? Spigit is the online tool we are using to create, engage and grow innovation within the District. The Spigit platform provides a dynamic, real-time environment for sharing and interacting with ideas. The software measures many things, like the number of comments and page views, allowing the best ideas to come to the surface.

How does it work? All staff has the opportunity to post, comment and support ideas on the Minnetonka Innovates website. While ideas can be submitted anytime of the year, there are four quarters of innovation where we will have an "idea hunt" focusing on different types of ideas.

- Quarter 1 – Back to School (what are you looking forward to trying this year)
- Quarter 2 – Minnetonka Public Schools Foundation Grants
- Quarter 3 – I don’t remember what we had here
- Quarter 4 – Looking Back (what are some things that worked well for you)

The software uses game mechanics to make the process a little more fun. During each quarter, website users start with 100 points. These points can be used to support your favorite ideas to help them move through the system. You can gain additional points by interacting with the website.

- 5 Points – Vote on an idea (thumbs-up or thumbs-down)
- 10 Points – Comment on an idea
- 20 Points – Submit a new idea

Voting, commenting and submitting ideas increases your reputation score. Users with the top reputation scores at the end of each quarter will be awarded a prize. Points are automatically reset to 100 at the start of each quarter.

Posting an idea After you sign-in with your MyMinnetonka login, you will see “Minnetonka Innovates” as a link under your Single Sign On activities. You can then click on “Post an Idea” on the Minnetonka Innovates Website.

Commenting on an idea On the Minnetonka Innovates website, click on “Ideas”. You can enter in keywords at the top of the page to filter ideas, or scroll through the page. When you click on an idea, you have the opportunity to comment near the bottom of the page.

Supporting an idea Following the same steps as you would to comment on an idea, there are a couple of ways to support an idea in Spigit. You can click on the thumbs-up or thumbs-down icons on the left side of the idea page. You can also spend your points on the idea(s) you think are the best.

What happens next? As ideas gain popularity on the website, they graduate through different levels. Incremental ideas (paper and pencil tests changing to computerized tests) will have a different path to follow than transformational ideas (adding language immersion to elementary schools). Login to the Spigit website for more information.
# Stages of Innovation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages:</th>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>I. Develop Concept</th>
<th>II. Develop a Plan</th>
<th>III. Test the Hypothesis</th>
<th>IV. Soft Launch</th>
<th>V. Scale</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Tasks:  | • Identify problem  
       • Challenge assumption  
       • "Big Idea Hunt"  
       • Generate idea | • Determine feasibility  
       • Identify demand  
       • Establish initial stakeholder analysis  
       • Develop a business case (if applicable)  
       • Align idea with Board criteria | • Divide the labor  
       • Create a team  
       • Formalize the experiment  
       • Develop a prototype or test plan  
       • Develop plan evaluation  
       • Develop test plan budget  
       • Seek external partners (if appropriate)  
       • Present to Board | • Break down the hypothesis (test early/test often)  
       • Execute pilot  
       • Validate assumptions  
       • Prove fidelity of meeting Board Criteria  
       • Develop "Launch Plan"  
       • Secure external business partners (if appropriate)  
       • Communicate  
       • Capture learning  
       • Launch innovation | • Successful pilot  
       • Summary of experiment and Launch Plan  
       • Feedback and coaching from GT  
       • Summary presented to Board  
       | • Consummate acquisitions or partnerships to accelerate growth |
| Output: | • Idea submission to Siglit | • Innovation idea Template  
       | | | | | |
| Input:  | • Feedback through Siglit  
       • Identify GT coach  
       • Champion can solicit help/support | • Feedback and coaching from GT  
       • Idea template | • Innovation Team trained in "How Stella Saved the Farm"  
       • Feedback and coaching from GT  
       • Experiment template | • Feedback and coaching from GT  
       • Summary presented to Board | | |
| Who is involved: | Idea Champion(s)  
       • Concept Team  
       • GT Coach  
       • Expert Reviewer (optional) | • Innovation team  
       • GT Coach  
       • GT  
       • Board  
       • Expert Reviewer (required) | • Innovation team  
       • GT Coach  
       • GT  
       • Board | • Innovation team  
       • GT Coach  
       • GT  
       • Board | • Launch Team  
       | | |
| Criteria to move to the next step: | Approval for Guiding Team (whole or subset)  
       • Meets Board criteria  
       • Approval from GT  
       • Approval from GT  
       • Final approval from Board | • Approval from GT  
       • Final approval from Board | | | |
| Guiding Team Role: | • Organize "Big Idea Hunt" at sites  
       • Provide coaching and feedback  
       • Approve ideas | • Track progress  
       • Feedback and coaching  
       • Ensure Board Criteria are met  
       • Approve concept  
       • Update Board | • Track progress  
       • Feedback and coaching  
       • Identify and meet with possible external partners  
       • Pre-approve before Board presentation | • Track progress  
       • Feedback and coaching  
       • Pre-approve before Board presentation  
       | | |
| | | | | | | |
Barriers of Success Coach

by Carrie Radde on 10/21/2013 09:16 AM EDT

There are so many students who are in need of more direction and motivation than what is given to them in their home environments. Having a Barriers of Success Coach in the district would be another way to support our students through goal setting and life skills instruction. We have fabulous counselors, teachers, and support staff, but we are always in need of another resource.

A Barriers of Success Coach could provide that extra guidance to those in need. The leadership and guidance could be in the form of health, time management, organization, fitness, and many more. In the end, it is about getting to the heart of what is in the way of making each student at Minnetonka as prosperous and successful as possible.

Comments

Posted By Paula Erbisch

This person could also help coordinate documentation and services!

Posted By Gina Nelson

This is awesome!! There is actually a program already in existence collaborating with schools to work on better graduation rates...AmeriCorps Promise Fellows. Promise Fellows are amazing!!! Fellows work with a cohort of students on attendance, improving grades, and provide mentoring. http://mnyouth.net/
I think the middle schools would greatly benefit from having an additional support person. Using this AmeriCorps program is super cost effective for the 40 hours/week support you get!!
Join the fun, play the game, win prizes!

Bingo numbers will be announced daily via email on February 1-3 and on the Minnetonka Innovates website starting February 6. The game continues until a “blackout” winner is announced.

Win by completing a vertical, horizontal or diagonal line on the game board or complete all boxes as a “blackout.” Visit the Minnetonka Innovates website to complete tasks like completing your profile, posting, voting or commenting on an idea.

Make a copy of your winning game card and send it via interschool mail to Innovation at the District Service Center, or scan or photograph your game card and email it to innovate@minnetonka.k12.mn.us. Don’t forget to add the date submitted to the top of your card. Each game card can win more than once!

Multiple winners can be awarded each day, so it is not a “race” to get your card in, just submit it on the day you get Bingo! Questions? Email: innovate@minnetonka.k12.mn.us

To access the Minnetonka Innovates website from the District website:
Go to: For Staff > Single Sign-on > Minnetonka Innovates

(See back of the card for more information)
2013 Idea Hunt
Starts October 15!

Why Do We Innovate?
Our students need us to help develop innovative ideas for their future.
Are you up for the challenge?

**Innovation 2.0 Calendar**

**October 15-25:**
**Idea Collection**
Site open for new idea posts.

**October 28-November 8:**
**Idea Review**
Comment, vote and review ideas to earn points. Join the team of an idea that interests you.

**November 11-22:**
**Pairwise Voting**
This or that? Ideas will be compared side-by-side for voting.

**November 25-December 6:**
**Business Case Development**
Teams develop business cases for ideas that have generated the most interest.

**December 9-17:**
**Idea Marketplace**
Earn money to spend on ideas through participation.

**Ideas Fit Into Three Categories**

- **Adjusting the Sails**
  We already do this well, but here is a way to DO IT BETTER!
  - iPad Insurance, Skyward Referrals, Video Modeling

- **Harnessing the Wind**
  Here is a POSSIBLE SOLUTION to a current problem that needs to be fixed.
  - District App, Innovation Coaches, Flipped Classroom

- **Turning the Tide**
  Are you ready for a TOTALLY NEW IDEA? Wouldn’t this be awesome?
  - VANTAGE Program, iPads in Education, Tonka Online School

**STAFF: Log-on — Click “For Staff” Then choose “Minnetonka Innovates”**
Evaluating data: Online staff survey

A survey was administered in 2013 to gather data from staff regarding innovation. The results from this survey showed growth in key areas as compared to the 2011 and 2012 survey data.

### 3. The pursuit of innovation in Minnetonka Schools:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes undertaken taken in the last five years to enhance Minnetonka schools have been designed to provide more educational opportunities for Minnetonka kids.</td>
<td>0.4% (1)</td>
<td>2.7% (7)</td>
<td>57.9% (151)</td>
<td>39.1% (102)</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative efforts in Minnetonka schools are important.</td>
<td>0.4% (1)</td>
<td>1.5% (4)</td>
<td>48.7% (130)</td>
<td>49.4% (132)</td>
<td>3.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation in Minnetonka schools has been positive.</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>5.7% (15)</td>
<td>62.9% (166)</td>
<td>31.4% (83)</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation in Minnetonka schools should be a priority.</td>
<td>0.4% (1)</td>
<td>10.6% (28)</td>
<td>57.0% (150)</td>
<td>31.9% (84)</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>263</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation in Minnetonka schools is primarily focused on meeting the changing needs of students.</td>
<td>1.9% (5)</td>
<td>16.7% (43)</td>
<td>57.0% (147)</td>
<td>24.4% (63)</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>258</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our District’s emphasis on innovation is positively influencing the instructional practices I use in my classes.</td>
<td>1.6% (4)</td>
<td>18.4% (45)</td>
<td>59.8% (146)</td>
<td>20.1% (49)</td>
<td>2.98</td>
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</table>

3 questions answered, 1 question skipped

### 4. Minnetonka’s Big Idea Hunt

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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tr>
<td>I was aware of The Big Idea Hunt campaign earlier this school year.</td>
<td>1.1% (3)</td>
<td>2.2% (6)</td>
<td>47.8% (128)</td>
<td>48.9% (131)</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Big Idea Hunt was a good way to gather innovative ideas from employees.</td>
<td>1.2% (3)</td>
<td>12.8% (33)</td>
<td>59.5% (153)</td>
<td>26.6% (68)</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>257</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable discussing innovative ideas and thoughts one-on-one with colleagues.</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>6.9% (18)</td>
<td>67.6% (177)</td>
<td>25.6% (67)</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>252</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable sharing innovative ideas and thoughts online within a secure website.</td>
<td>1.5% (4)</td>
<td>22.7% (59)</td>
<td>61.2% (159)</td>
<td>14.6% (38)</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>260</td>
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<tr>
<td>If there are future Big Idea Hunts, I will likely participate by sharing or commenting on ideas.</td>
<td>5.1% (13)</td>
<td>29.0% (74)</td>
<td>53.7% (137)</td>
<td>12.2% (31)</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>255</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3 questions answered, 0 questions skipped
Minnetonka Staff:

Thank you (once again) to everyone who participated in The Big Idea Hunt! Yesterday we announced that the contest concluded with 134 ideas submitted and nearly 1,000 comments from staff. The quality of the ideas and comments were truly remarkable. When we launched The Big Idea Hunt on February 1st, we announced that the top seven ideas would move forward to the Innovation Guiding Team. Those top seven ideas (based on the quality of comments, number of votes, page views and reviews), are as follows:

- **Putting Immersion Education to Work in the Community**, Kathy Klumb, Clear Springs
- **The Flipped Classroom**, Peg Keenan and Diane Rundquist, Groveland
- **The Project-Based Classroom**, Diane Rundquist and Jeremy Engebretson, Groveland
- **Here, Take Another Assessment!**, Jeremy Engebretson, Groveland
- **21st Century Skills Liaison**, Jonathan Maki, Scenic Heights
- **Minnetonka Smart Phone Apps**, Alicja Krebs, MMW
- **Well, if You’re Encouraging Creativity...**, Jonathan Maki, Scenic Heights

Many of the 134 ideas tie into our strategic plan, school board goals and our focus on 21st century skills. These ideas can help shape our future and will not “fall through the cracks.” The Innovation Guiding team will look at all ideas at their meeting next week. They will find common idea threads and group some of the ideas together. The team will also recommend moving some of these group and individual ideas forward.

After spring break, we will be asking you to share innovative things you have seen your colleagues doing this school year that have had a positive impact for students. As you know, this was our first Big Idea Hunt. If you have any ideas or suggestions, I’d love to hear them.

Thanks again for supporting our culture of innovation!

Eric

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Eric Schneider  
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction  
Minnetonka Schools  
(Office) 952-401-5010  
(Cell) 952-917-9535  
Eric.Schneider@minnetonka.k12.mn.us
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<th>Comments</th>
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