Implementation and Evaluation of the Use of STI Classroom Management Systems by

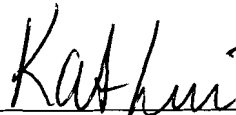River Falls High School Students, Parents, and Guardians

By

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to determine the proper means of implementing the

use of a classroom management system at River Falls High School for use by students,

parents, and guardians with access via the internet. The objectives of this field study are

to determine what information is needed for the parents to use the system, how the

information should be provided, to provide the information on the use of the system to

the parents, and finally to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the system by the

parents. This study was conducted by mailing questionnaires to parents of the freshmen

class of River Falls High School for the 2004-2005 school year and by surveying the

teachers of River Falls High School for the same school year. The populations were given

various information that could be provided over the internet by the classroom

management system and were asked to rate them as to their importance in keeping

updated with the student's school activities. They were also asked questions pertaining to the implementation of the system. The anonymous responses were mailed back in a stamped, self-addressed envelope by the parents and were returned to the researcher's mailbox at the school by the teachers. The results revealed that both the parents and the teachers felt it was important to provide information on student's progress over the internet. It also revealed that the parents felt comfortable and preferred a direction sheet as a way to learn how to use the system. Finally, the evaluation of the process revealed that the parents were mostly satisfied or very satisfied with the implementation of the program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The educational system in the United States is changing rapidly because of the influence of new technologies that have surfaced in the past decade. The use of the computer and the Internet in educational programs has increased the opportunity for parents and guardians to interact with the school program in faster and easier ways than in the past. School systems have been working hard to incorporate technologies that take advantage of these methods to keep parents up-to-date on their child's activities in the school (Pioneer Press, October 4, 2004).

River Falls High School is reacting to this general trend in advanced technology. The River Falls Public School System implemented a new classroom management system in the fall of 2004 as part of this response. The STI (Software Technology, Inc.) program was introduced to the school system staff by a training program administered by CESA 10. By second semester, the school district wanted the parents and guardians of the students to be able to access the system and use it to find information on their child. No training program had yet been considered and a need for information on parent use of the system was obvious.

The objectives of this field study were to determine what information was needed for the parents to use the system, how the information on using the system should be provided, to deliver the information to the parents, and finally to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the system by the parents. The study was limited to the training and use of the system by the River Falls High School parents and was implemented and evaluated during the 2004-2005 school year.

The objectives of the field problem were:

1. To determine what information should be provided over the internet for the parents to use in keeping track of their students.

2. To be able to provide an information sheet which will direct the parents and guardians on how to use the STI system.

3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the system use by the parents and guardians.

The significance of the field problem is that communication between parents and the school system is an important part of the success of any student (Faust-Horn, 2003). Any system which will make this communication easier will benefit both the students and the school system itself. In order for this to happen, the parents and guardians need to know how to access the system and use it effectively. Without this ability, the system will not provide the communication desired.

The field problem assumed there will be full cooperation between the River Falls School District and the researcher of this field problem. Further it assumed that the parents and guardians of the River Falls High School are concerned about the academic achievement of their children. It also assumed that the majority of the parents and guardians have access to the Internet in some form and have basic computer skills which allow them to utilize the system when they have the proper directions.

The following is a list of terms which need to be defined in relationship to the field problem:

Parent: This term is not limited strictly to birth parents. It refers to any adult in a child's life who has accepted the responsibility of parent/caretaker (Faust-Horn, 2003).

STI Classroom management system- This term refers to the Software Technology, Inc. program which is used for the management of student information which will be used by River Falls High School (Software Technology, Inc.).

Student-a person who is enrolled for study in a school, college, etc... (Webster's Dictionary). For this study, the term was used to indicate any person who attended River Falls High School for the 2004-2005 school year.

Home-School Collaboration-"Home-school collaboration focuses on the relationship between the home and school and how parents and educators work together to promote the social and academic development of children (Elizalde-Utnick, 2002, pg. 413).

CESA 10- Cooperative Education Service Agency-Number Ten-an educational agency serving 30 school districts in west central Wisconsin (CESA 10).

There were certain limitations placed on this field problem to ensure the effectiveness of the results. The problem was limited to the implementation and evaluation of the STI system at River Falls High School and not the other schools in the district of River Falls. The problem focused on the needs analysis and evaluation of the parents and guardians of the freshmen class of the 2004-2005 school year.

The methodology used in this field problem included several steps. The first step was a review of literature to determine the influence that parents involvement has on the positive performance of the student in their school work. This review also surveyed classroom management systems and the effects that they have had on school performance. Finally, the review determined what other school systems have done to implement the STI classroom management system. The second step was to perform a needs analysis from the review of literature on what type of information parents would need to use the system. This involved a survey of the parents of the freshmen class of the 2004-2005 school year. From the needs analysis, an information sheet for training was constructed to insure that parents would be able to use the system effectively. The parents were then provided the training during the second term of the 2004-2005 school year. Finally, a survey was developed to evaluate the use of the system and the parents perceived comfort level with the use of the system. This evaluation was administered to the parents of the freshmen class of the 2004-2005 school year during the third term.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The educational system in the United States is changing rapidly because of the influence of new technologies that have surfaced in the past decade. The use of the computer and the Internet in educational programs has increased the opportunity for parents to interact with the school program in faster and easier ways than in the past. School systems have been working hard to incorporate technologies to keep parents up-dated on their child's activities in the school.

River Falls High School is reacting to this general trend in advanced technology. The River Falls Public School System implemented a new classroom management system in the fall of 2004 as part of this response. The STI (Software Technology, Inc.) program was introduced to the school system staff by a training program administered by CESA 10(Cooperative Education Service Agency-Number Ten). By second semester, the district wanted the parents of the students to be able to access the system and use it to find information on their child. No training program had yet been considered and a need for information on parent use of the system was obvious as no one in the district was familiar with the system and with the use of it by the parents over the internet. The objectives of this field study were to determine what information was needed for the parents to use the system, how the information should be provided and delivered to the parents, and finally to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the system by the parents. A review of literature was first conducted to gain insight into the importance of home-school collaboration on the success of students and the implications of using information systems provided to the parents in the development of this collaboration.

The importance of parents in the education of their children is not a new concept. Parents have been their children's first educators since prehistoric times. Parent involvement and parent education today have their roots in parent involvement and education of yesterday. The emerging alliance between homes and schools comes from the recognition that not only are schools important to parents and families but that schools also need the support of parents in order to achieve optimum success. There are many levels of parent involvement, and each is important in its own way for its contribution to the alliance (Berger, 1991).

Although the term parent involvement is frequently used to describe teachers' attempts to involve parents in ongoing classroom or school activities, it can also refer to parents' involvement in learning activities at home. It has been argued that parents' home involvement with their children's learning can have important effects on children's education (Watkins, 1997). Watkins theorized that parents' involvement has made an impact on a child's learning and motivation. Parents' encouragement to achieve and to develop an interest in school performance are significantly related to student motivation and student achievement (Dietzman, 2002). Dietzman suggested that what might be called "The curriculum of the home" (p. 11) includes informed parent/child conversations about everyday events involving their school which will affect student performance. Sheridan (1997) discussed a study by Henderson and Berla that compiled the results of 15 studies which all indicated there is a correlation between student achievement and the intensity and duration of parent involvement. The article suggests that changes made within the educational process should focus not only on the role of the school, but should recognize the parents' contribution to their child's academic success. In order for this

process to be successful, though, several factors need to be in place. Home-school collaboration requires recognition by all involved that educational outcomes are influenced by events in the home, by events in school, and by the continuity between home and school environments. In order for a successful home-school collaboration to develop, parents and educators must identify, break down, and remove barriers which may impede the process. Home-school collaboration should begin early in a child's schooling and be an integral part of the school climate. While parent and educator participation are both essential to home-school collaboration, the onus for establishing a successful system rests with the educators. The studies also concluded student achievement increases to higher levels when the relationship between families and schools is more collaborative and comprehensive. The National Association of School Psychologists (1999) in its position paper on home-school collaboration summarized that: "Home-school collaboration leads to improved student achievement, better behavior, better attendance, higher self-concept, and more positive attitudes toward school and learning" (p. 4). The paper also contends that: "Successful home-school collaboration is dependent upon educators, families and community members working together to understand each others' perspectives and to develop shared goals".

If home-school collaboration does lead to higher student achievement in many areas, what guidelines are there in developing effective home-school collaboration? Esler (2002) suggested that effective collaboration with families requires schools to create avenues for parents to pursue initiatives to increase communication with their child. Faust-Horn (2003) in a research thesis on home-school collaboration suggested that the collaboration process should be pro-active, with a systematic approach taken to offer

opportunities for parents to come into school to learn about the children, and, if that is not possible efforts should be made to make contact with parents at home and in their community. The study further suggested that while parent and educator participation are both essential to home-school collaboration, the onus for establishing a successful system rests with the educators. Blendinger and Snipes (1993) in a paper presented to guide administrative practices in establishing and maintaining strong, positive school-home collaboration called for the principal to take an active leadership role in developing and implementing a comprehensive parent-involvement program. The paper argued that student achievement is more apt to improve through collaboration when the school takes the lead in planning and implementing parent-involvement strategies and activities. Godber and Esler (1999) felt that families and schools are equal partners in the education of children, with their partnership based on mutual trust and respect but the educators must take the lead in developing and nurturing effective collaboration with families. Educators need to create open and friendly environments for communicating with parents. Elias and Bryan (2003) concluded in their study that home-school partnerships need to focus on the common goal of building positive adolescent identities. They suggested that developing new forms of home-school partnerships that develop positive feedback systems to show appreciation for small amounts of progress and academic success will help in this process. They also suggested that we need to "work to develop feasible systems of communication that do not overload educators yet also allow for responsiveness to parental concerns on a nonemergency basis" (p. 32). Patton, Jayanthi, and Polloway (2001) agreed in concluding that good home-school relationships are essential to meeting the educational goals developed for students today. They suggested

that fundamental to the success of all home-school collaborative efforts are an effective communicative component.

Communication seemed to be a common point brought out in home-school collaboration literature. Several other important pieces of literature list it as a major factor. The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) lists communicating as first of their six standards for Parent/Family Involvement Program, stating that: "communication between home and school needs to be regular, two-way, and meaningful". Elizalde-Utnick (2002) in a paper on home-school collaboration mentions ten home-school collaboration principles that the U.S. Department of Education supports. The list includes as number five that "families will monitor student's attendance and homework completion", and as number nine that "there will be effective two-way communication between schools and families. This is accomplished by schools minimizing the use of educational jargon and breaking down cultural and language barriers and by families maintaining contact with the schools" (pg. 414-415).

The strongest suggestion of the need for parent-school collaboration comes from Public Law 107-110, Section 1118,d. "As a component of the school-level parental involvement policy developed under subsection (b), each school served under this part shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards. This suggests that not only is parent-school collaboration important in the academic success of their children but that it is in fact the law and

schools are responsible for providing effective communication systems between them and the parents.

The literature provides many insights into the need for home-school collaboration but a review of information on the use of this computer technology by school systems was also in order. However, little was available on this topic in the literature. White (2003) in an article on use of home-school technology at the School District of Kettle Moraine in Wales, Wisconsin stated that there was not an overwhelming demand from parents for more access to information about their children but that school-to-home communication was a priority they needed to proactively address. The author felt that: "the power of ParentCONNECTxp as a school-to-home collaboration tool has brought parents, students, teachers and administrators together, and reinforced the conviction that education is really a team effort"(p. 2). The latest and best information was provided by an article in the St. Paul Pioneer Press on October 3rd of 2004(Pioneer Press), on the use of internet by parents in schools in the Twin Cities metro area. The article states that dozens of schools in the metro area are using programs which utilize the internet for providing information to parents on their students. The article listed sixteen school districts which either were already providing information over the internet or have plans in place for implementation of programs. Information provided by the systems varied with most of the systems providing information on grades. Other information provided included attendance, discipline, email access to instructors, and even systems which provided the ability to pay money into school lunch accounts. Most of the systems were very new in use and reactions to the programs were varied. Many parents liked the ability to easily access information on the child where others question security and the value of

parents not trusting their child for this information. Also of interest in the article was that students were concerned that some of the teachers did not keep information on their grades as updated as they would like.

The final part of the research into this subject involved not a review of what was in the literature but involved what was actually being done at schools similar to River Falls High School. The decision was made to look at the schools in the same conference as the school and what was being done or had been done at these schools. The information was collected using a survey which was provided to representatives from the six schools in the Big Rivers Conference. Five of the six schools responded to the survey. Of the five schools who responded to the survey, all of them have computerized classroom management systems in place with three of the five using the internet to provide information to the parents on their students. Information that was provided in these systems included grades, assignments, and attendance. Of the schools who have the systems in place, one provided both a training sheet and an information meeting to train them on the system. One provided only an information sheet with directions on how to use the system and one provided no training on the system as the system itself had information on how to use it after it was accessed. In general, the schools responded positively to the use of the systems over the internet. Problems listed by the schools included that not all families have computers or access to them, teachers not updating information regularly, and parents not using the systems to keep updated on their students.

The review of literature provides a broad overview of several aspects of classroom management systems in relationship to students. Foremost was the affects of on home-

school collaboration and how it may affect student performance. Information on the implementation by other schools also guided this study. The information was very useful in the development of the surveys and in proceeding with the implementation of the program. Motivation to proceed as quickly as possible with the implementation of the system was provided by the strong message of the importance in parent involvement suggested by the review. The information provided the direction of decisions and for the timing of the entire process.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The educational system in the United States is changing rapidly because of the influence of new technologies that have surfaced in the past decade. The use of the computer and the Internet in educational programs has increased the opportunity for parents to interact with the school program in faster and easier ways than in the past. School systems have been working hard to incorporate technologies that take advantage of them to keep parents up-dated on their child's activities in the school.

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Basic Outline:

1.   Needs analysis- training needed by the parents to use STI system properly. This consisted of a survey given to the parents of the freshman class of 2004-2005 through the mail. This population was selected since this group of

students would be in the school for the longest period of time of the students attending the school and would be most influenced by the program. It also involved surveying the teachers of the high school for the 2004-2005 school year. These surveys are included in the appendix of this paper.

2.   From the needs analysis, develop the training procedure that would be used for the parents. This involved an information sheet sent to the parents explaining the system and how to use it. This sheet was chosen based on the response from the parents on their preference. The training sheet is included in the appendix of this paper.

3.   Evaluation of the training sheet that was provided and the program itself was done by administering a survey to the same population and in the same manner as was used in the initial survey. This involved sending out a survey to the freshmen parents of the 2004-2005 school year. The results of the evaluation were analyzed to see if the training provided would need to be revised for use in the 2005-2006 school year. The evaluation sheet is included in the appendix of this paper.

In developing the procedures that I used for doing this needs assessment, I used the three phase model of needs assessment as explained in the text "Planning and Conducting Needs Assessments" (Witkin and Altschuld 1995). The three phases are: Preassessment or exploration, Assessment or data gathering, and Postassessment or utilization. I will explain the procedures that I used during each of these areas.

Phase one of the process involves setting up the management plan for the needs assessment, defining the purpose of it, identifying existing information regarding the

needs areas, determining what information to collect and how it would be collected, and then developing the needs assessment procedures.

Information on the STI system was provided by CESA 10 at an in-service for teachers held at River Falls High School in August of 2004. This information helped to show what the capabilities of the program were and how it could be used. Software Technology, Inc. provided further information regarding what is possible with the program and how it may be implemented. This information, with the help of River Falls Public School employees Mr. Brad Farrier, Curriculum Coordinator; Dr. Elaine Bauman, High School Principal; and Brian Dado, Technology Coordinator, influenced the development of the assessment. It was decided to survey three different groups of people for the assessment. The groups were Parents of the Students, Teachers of the High School, and other schools of similar size to River Falls High School. The groups would be surveyed with paper and pencil methods because of constraints in time that were involved with the project. Each group would be asked questions pertaining to the use of classroom management systems and general questions which may relate to the topic. The process involved a consent form which was created to insure protection for participants of the survey in line with IRB procedure for the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The surveys were field tested by selected teachers who had students attending River Falls High School at the present time. The project was submitted and approved by the IRB initially and was resubmitted after changes were made at the request of Dr. Baumann

The final process of the preassessment phase was to determine how the data would be analyzed. The decision was made to use the statistical program called "Minitab" provided by Dr. Joe Benkowski of the Training and Development Department at UW-

Stout for analyzing the data. The data would be entered into the program, analyzed for frequency of response, mean, median, and standard deviation. It was determined that the information listed on a likert scale would be considered important enough for inclusion in the project if the mean was determined to be less than 3.0 in number. The importance of the simple choice (yes or no) responses would be considered important if the percentage of response rate was over 50% of the responses.

In Phase Two of the assessment process, the context, scope, and boundaries of the NA were set, the surveys were completed, and the data was analyzed. The main emphasis for the actual Needs Assessment was placed on the Parent Surveys since this was the group that would be most affected by the project. The decision was made to use the parents that attended parent-teacher conferences for the first term of the 2004-2005 school year as the population that we would use for the sample. This was done for ease in which it could be accomplished, this group would be the most likely group of parents to use the program, and it was the most cost effective. The parent teacher conferences were held on Monday, October 11. Because of some miscommunication not all of the parents attending the conferences received the survey. The results were that only fifteen surveys out of a population of 987 students were returned. Plan B seemed to be in order. The decision was made by Mr. Farrier, Dr. Bauman, and I that a stratified sample of the freshmen parents would be mailed the survey with return envelopes included. This decision was based on the fact that these students would potentially receive the most use of the program over the next four years and would thus have the most to gain by filling out the survey. It was also felt that this would provide an adequate sampling of the

parents at a reasonable cost to the school district. On October 25th, two hundred eleven surveys were sent out to the parents of the freshmen students at RFHS.

The survey for the teachers was administered at a normal monthly teachers meeting on Thursday, October 21st. The survey was given to forty-two teachers attending the meeting and five teachers who attended the make-up meeting the following morning. The survey for the schools in the conference was intended to be an interview survey where a contact would be determined for each school and I would do a phone survey of the questions on the survey. The decision was made that Mr. Dado, the Technology Coordinator, would determine contacts that were Technology Coordinators for each of the conference schools as they would know the working processes of their systems. This system did not work and contacts were hard to find. Time constraints became a problem and the decision was made by me to find other sources of this information. The decision was made to use personal contacts as a means of accessing this information. Contacts were made with representatives from all six of the conference schools with usable data being received from five of the six. An arbitrary date of November fifteenth was set as the date when all of the information for analysis would be collected and no further data would be received. This date was used because of the December 6th date of the next parent-teacher conferences which was a deadline for the next step in the process.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The educational system in the United States is changing rapidly because of the influence of new technologies that have surfaced in the past decade. The use of the computer and the Internet in educational programs has increased the opportunity for parents to interact with the school program in faster and easier methods than in the past. School systems have been working hard to incorporate technologies than take advantage of them to keep parents up-to-date on their child's activities in the school.

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The surveys for analysis included 102 returned parent surveys out of the 211 sent out or 48% return rate, 23 teacher surveys of the 47 teacher surveys that were handed out also a 48 % return rate , and five of the six coaches in the conference returning the

surveys, an 83 % return rate. The data was tabulated using a statistical program called "Minitab" which was provided by Dr. Joe Benkowski of the Training and Development Department at UW-Stout.

As stated before, it was determined that the Parent Survey would be considered the most significant in the analysis for the project with the other surveys providing additional information. This was decided since the Parents would be the group that would be most affected by the project. Results of the surveys are listed in table one on the next page.

Table One: Parent Survey Results:

Importance   Most ------------------------------- Least

Categories	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Student Demographics	17	18	30	21	16	3.0098	3.0	1.301
Graduation Requirements	51	24	15	8	4	1.922	1.00	1.149
Standardized Test Scores	26	47	21	6	5	2.1275	2.00	0.9299
Student's School Sched	35	32	23	10	2	2.137	2.00	1.063
Student Attendance	45	25	18	8	6	2.069	2.00	1.213
Student Grade Or Progress	78	8	4	8	4	1.549	1.00	1.131
Student Assignments	52	30	7	7	6	1.873	1.00	1.175
Student Discipline	34	26	22	10	10	2.373	2.00	1.304

Part Two:
Do you have convenient access to the internet?   Yes—102 No--0

Do you have knowledge in the use of the internet? Yes--99 No---3

Would you like to use the internet to check the progress of your student?

Yes--94 No--8

Would you check the progress of your student on the Internet if it was made available?

Yes--98 No--4

Would you require information on using the internet and the system if it were provided?

Yes--49 No--53

If yes to the above question, would you prefer the information being in the form of an information sheet or would you prefer an information meeting at the school?

Sheet—89 Meeting--13

It had been determined in the preassessment phase that the categories for consideration would be used only if the median of the responses were at the 3.0 or lower category for importance. It was also determined that the information would be deemed important on the direct response questions if the response was over 50% of the total respondents. Based on these parameters, the recommendations which seemed appropriate were that we develop a training sheet for using the STI program with all of the eight categories included except for "Student Demographics" since it was the only category with a mean over 3.0. The aspects of the parent surveys, which seemed the most significant, were overwhelming the importance placed on student progress and grades by the parents over the other categories and the parents' access to, knowledge of, and willingness to use the internet for this purpose. The survey also showed a distinct choice of providing information on using the system by receiving an information sheet and not a training meeting.

The teacher survey provided additional information that was considered in the development of the training and also in the decision of when to implement. The results are contained in Table Two.

Table Two: Teacher Survey Results:

Importance   Most--------------------------------Least

Categories	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Student Demographics	3	3	10	4	6	3.269	3.0	1.282
Graduation Requirements	15	4	2	4	1	1.923	1.00	1.294
Standardized Test Scores	5	5	11	4	1	2.654	3.00	1.093
Student's School Sched	18	1	3	0	4	1.885	1.00	1.505
Student Attendance	16	4	2	3	1	1.808	1.00	1.234
Student Grade Or Progress	14	4	3	2	3	2.077	1.00	1.440
Student Assignments	11	5	1	4	5	2.500	2.00	1.631
Student Discipline	12	6	3	2	3	2.154	2.0	1.405

Do you feel comfortable using the STI management system?

       Comments: For the most part, grading program is poor, yes, inefficient and slow

What concerns do you have about providing information to the parents via the Internet with the STI system?

       Comments: Security, errors in technology, concerns with privacy, keeping up to date, unreliable, kids email, not confidential, potential of hacking and changing of grades

Do you feel providing information to parents via the Internet would increase parent involvement and student achievement or will it be the same?
       Increase--8 Same--14

Do you feel that information should be provided through the STI systems to the parents of your students?
       Yes--15 No--8

Other comments: Don't like the process of working out the bugs, teachers need another

in-service day to address questions; it's a great way to keep parents informed

The teacher survey seemed to indicate hesitancy by the teachers in implementing the system but not to an extreme extent. It also brought a sense of a need felt by the teachers to use the system. The related school survey showed that at least half of the other schools in our conference are already providing information over the internet to their parents which indicated that RFHS was slightly behind the other schools in this matter. This had a factor in the process of implementing the system in a time earlier than expected. These results are listed below.

Survey questions for school systems similar to River Falls High School (Big Rivers Conference Schools, regarding their classroom management systems and information provided to parents.

Do you have a computerized classroom management system?   Yes--5 NO--0

What type of classroom management system do you have?
1. Grade Quick
2. Microsoft ClassXP Integrade Pro
3. Kiz Planet
4. Edline

Do you provide information to the parents of your students via the Internet using your classroom management system?
Yes--3 No--2

If you answer yes to above, what information is provided to the parents via your system?
1. Grades
2. Assignments-Grades-Absence-Tardy
3. Grading-Missed Assignments

Do you feel the system is working to provide the information needed for the parents regarding the system?
1. Somewhat
2. Yes, Edline

What problems have occurred in implementing the system for use by the parents?
1. Not all families have computers
2. Teachers not updating regularly
3. Parents not updating regularly

Did you provide training for the parents for use of the system and if you did was it in the form of an information sheet or an informational meeting?
1. Both
2. None, Edline does it

Have the teachers in the school system been supportive in the use of the system by the parents?
Yes

What other concerns, comments, or information can you provide on parent use of your classroom management systems?

They need to use it more.

In the Post assessment phase of the needs assessment, utilization of the material was done and an evaluation of the assessment occurred. The first step was to share the information from the needs assessments with Dr. Bauman, the Principal of the school. I did not expect the Principal's response; she was much more excited about the information than I would have anticipated. What excited her was that the parents were overwhelmingly on board with wanting to, willing to, and being able to use the program. She decided that we would develop an information sheet on how to use the program for the parents by the December 6th Parent-Teacher conference and we would begin using the program at that time. I had not anticipated on proceeding at such a fast rate with the implementation. Mr. Dado was assigned the task of developing the training sheet and getting the program up for use. He felt it would be important for me to be involved in the development of the sheet since I had been the leader in the project from the start. We ended up working together to develop a sheet of directions based on the information from the surveys and the information that was provided for directions by the STI program. The directions that STI provided were about six pages long which we trimmed to fit our needs to a one page direction sheet with general information provided on the front of the page.

This sheet was hastily field tested by a group of ten employees of the River Falls School District who have students in the system. It was revised several times before the final copy was tested and approved by the Principal after using it at home herself with success. The resulting information sheet is attached in the Appendix on pages 41. The sheet was given to the parents at the Parent-Teacher conferences held on Monday, December 6th. The parents not attending conferences were mailed the sheets on Thursday, December 9th. The program recommendations that I gave because of the results of the assessment were not followed initially. All of the categories were included in the program. From the survey results, parents did not necessarily care about "Student Demographics" and my recommendations were not to include it. The decision was made to include "Student Demographics" because it really wasn't causing a problem to include it when implementing the program. After the parents had been introduced to the program, several did complain about "Student Demographics" being on the program for security reasons. After several complaints by parents and going back and looking at the responses to the surveys, the category was taken off the site, as was first recommended. The final process of the needs assessment was to evaluate the project. This was done by surveying the parents of the 2004-2005 freshmen parents to see their reaction to the system. The results of the survey are listed in Table Three on pages 26-27.

Table Three: Evaluation Survey

Evaluation Survey Results: number=71 respondents

Categories:	Never- 1	Seldom- 2	Some- 3	Often- 4	Very Often- 5	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
STI in General	13	3	15	28	12	3.324	4.0	1.3285
Student Demographics	32	6	22	5	2	2.085	2.0	1.168
Graduation Requirements	25	13	18	7	4	2.268	2.0	1.218
Test Scores	35	12	11	4	5	1.972	1.0	1.253
School Schedule	17	8	18	21	3	2.747	3.0	1.262
Attendance	19	11	22	11	4	2.536	3.0	1.229
Grades or Progress	9	1	4	20	34	3.972	5.0	1.404
Assignments	11	5	11	18	22	3.451	4.0	1.452
Discipline	30	13	12	5	7	2.1831	2.0	1.356

How would you rate your satisfaction with the STIHome+ program?

Very Unsatisfied—3 Unsatisfied—3 Unsure—14 Satisfied—29 Very Satisfied—22

What do you particularly like about the program?
  Up-to-Date grades per class-21 times   Ability to track assignments-9 times
  Easy access to information-7 times   Keeping on top of information-3 times
  Attendance tracking-2 times

What do you particularly dislike about the program?
  Teachers don't keep grades up to date or post homework-5 times
  Difficult to get to the site-3 times   Not always up-to-date-3 times
  Getting out of program to check on another child-4 times
  Information is sometimes inaccurate-3 times

What concerns have you had with the program?
  Demographic page—security (this was taken off)-5 times
  Teachers dropping in totals at the end of term-2 times
  That it meant be stopped being used-1 time
  Waste of money-1 time

What suggestions do you have for improvements in the program?
"STI Home" link at the "RFSD" site
Get all the teachers to use and keep updated—6 times
Link to teacher email
Improve process of multiple children-2 times
Lunch account access
Help line or contact person for problems-5 times
Easier access
Let everyone know about it

The evaluation survey seemed to point out several main points. The overall satisfaction with the program seemed to be very positive. The results show that fifty-one of the seventy-one respondents being satisfied or very satisfied with the implementation of the program. The means show that Grades and Assignments with means over three are the areas with greatest concern for the parents and where the most effort should be made to keep up-to-date. The comments sections also show a concern with these areas not being kept up-to-date. The problems in the implementation of the program dealt mostly with small problems in the programs itself. The use of the training or direction sheet seemed to answer most of the questions that parents had and very few had problems with using the program.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY

This field problem started with questions as to how and would the STIhomeplus system be implemented for use by the River Falls High School parents and students. School districts today are being stretched to the limit as far as time and budgets are concerned. Implementing a program such the "STI Classroom Management System" causes a great deal of pressure on the time of the people involved. Implementing the STI computer information system was a decision which had already been made by the district and was part of the normal procedural processes at the school. Implementation of the HomePlus aspect of the program which provided the information over the internet seemed at the beginning of the project to be a step that should be looked at slowly. The project started with this thought in mind. As the project progressed, the thinking in this regard began to change. The more research that was done relating to the project, what was being done presently with these systems, what the programs could do, and what the feelings of the parents were; the greater the belief that this program would be good for the educational system at River Falls High School.

The needs assessment involved in the program suggested that the parents of River Falls High School students were ready for the program and that the time was very much right to implement the system. Implementing the program faster than we had planned was a result of this information. The school being able to access the information from the parents and the teachers, helped to make this a much easier decision. The information from the needs assessment made decisions on how to implement the system much easier and smoother.

The information from the evaluation survey shows that some parts of using the program need improvement for the 2005-2006 school year, but that the parents were overall very pleased with the program. Informal responses from talking to parents at Parent-Teacher conferences were even more positive about the capability to monitor their students and to have dialogue regarding their progress. I believe that teachers and students will find in the future that the system will be an integral part of the educational process and will make life easier and better for parents, students, and teachers. Students themselves have shown an interest in being able to have access to the system to monitor their progress.

The project is not without some concerns. One major concern area that was brought out by the surveys and informal responses from parents was that of teachers using the program who do not keep the information updated on their students. Parents who do monitor their students and use the system felt frustrated when some of the classes did not use the system or were slow in keeping the information updated. There is a concern by teachers that this program has added another chore to the many responsibilities that teachers have to perform. Research could be done to see if teachers have the time and capability to maintain systems like this one without causing an adverse effect on their performance in the classroom.

Another area of concern was the use of the system for listing homework assignments and projects that may be due. Parents have a desire to keep up with not only the progress of the students but with what is coming up. This feature is available on the program but is not used by many teachers because of time restraints. Further research into the effects of the use of information systems to inform parents of homework and

projects could be done to see if this would indeed have a positive impact on student performance.

A final note on negative aspects of using computer monitoring systems that needs to be addressed is the fact that a minority of the parents expressed some concern that, at least at the high school level, the students should show responsibility for themselves and their progress. If we are preparing students to live responsible adult lives, are we doing them a favor by continually having their parents responsible for monitoring their progress? Are we making students less responsible for their well-being and their future? Research into how responsible students are for their progress in schools could be in order.

The completion of this project has brought out several very positive, as well as, some negative aspects of using the Internet for monitoring the progress of a student by their parent. As with other inventions and developments in society, there are good things in progress as well as problems. The project seems to indicate that use of systems like this one are probably here to stay and will be with us in the future. Other improvements in the use of computer technology in education are sure to follow and will need to be studied carefully to see that we are indeed doing what is best for the education of our youth.

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River Falls High School
STI Student Classroom Management Implementation Survey
Consent Form

Please read carefully before beginning.

The recently reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the "No Child Left Behind Act" of 2001, requires schools to provide many different kinds of information and notices to parents about their children's school, academic progress, and more. Schools must make reasonable efforts to present the information in an understandable format. In partial response to this requirement, River Falls High School has purchased and is currently using a new classroom management system for information regarding the students enrolled in the school. The system has the capability of making information available to parents and students online via the internet. The purpose of this survey is to gather information on implementing this program to best satisfy the needs of the students, parents, teachers, and the school district in general. The information is also part of a Field Problem conducted as partial requirement for a Masters program at University of Wisconsin-Stout and thus is under the scrutiny of strict research guidelines as to confidentiality and ethical conduct. I understand that by returning this survey, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that only minimal identifiers are necessary and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no prejudice. Thank you for your consideration.

Note: Questions or concerns about the research study should be addressed to Bill Forster, the researcher, River Falls High School, 818 Cemetery Rd., River Falls, Wisconsin 54022. (715-425-1830 Ext. 1208) or Dr. Kat Lui, UW-Stout M.S. Training & Development Program Director, 140 Communication Technologies Building, Menomonie, Wi. 54751. (715-232-5634) Questions about the rights of research can be addressed to Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 Harvey Hall, Menomonie, Wi. 54751, (715-232-1126).

Parent Survey:

Part One:
Please rate the following items according to the importance to you in keeping up with your student's school activities. Rate these items from least important to most important with <u>one being considered most important.</u>

Student Demographics   1   2   3   4   5

Graduation Requirements   1   2   3   4   5

Standardized Test Scores   1   2   3   4   5

Student's School Schedule   1   2   3   4   5

Student Attendance   1   2   3   4   5

Student Grades or Progress   1   2   3   4   5

Student Assignments   1   2   3   4   5

Student Discipline   1   2   3   4   5

Part Two:
Please respond to the following questions by circling the appropriate respond:

Do you have convenient access to the internet?   Yes or No

Do you have knowledge in the use of the internet?   Yes or No
Would you like to use the internet to check the progress of your student? Yes or No

Would you check the progress of your student on the Internet if it was made available?

Yes or No

Would you require information on using the internet and the system if it were provided?

Yes or No

If yes to the above question, would you prefer the information being in the form of an information sheet or would you prefer an information meeting at the school?

Sheet or Meeting

Thank you for your participation

Teacher Survey:

Please rate the following items according to how comfortable you would feel in providing information to parents of your students. Rate these items from least important to most important with <u>one being considered most important.</u>

Student Demographics   1   2   3   4   5

Graduation Requirements   1   2   3   4   5

Standardized Test Scores   1   2   3   4   5

Student's School Schedule   1   2   3   4   5

Student Attendance   1   2   3   4   5

Student Grades or Progress   1   2   3   4   5

Student Assignments   1   2   3   4   5

Student Discipline   1   2   3   4   5

Do you feel comfortable using the STI management system?

What concerns do you have about providing information to the parents via the Internet with the STI system?

Do you feel providing information to parents via the Internet would increase parent involvement and student achievement or will it be the same?

Increase or Same

Do you feel that information should be provided through the STI systems to the parents of your students?

Yes or No

Other comments:

Survey questions for school systems similar to River Falls High School, regarding their classroom management systems and information provided to parents.

Do you have a computerized classroom management system?   Yes or NO

What type of classroom management system do you have?

Do you provide information to the parents of your students via the Internet using your classroom management system?

<div align="center">Yes or No</div>

If you answer yes to the above, what information is provided to the parents via your system?

Do you feel the system is working to provide the information needed for the parents on their system?

What problems have occurred in implementing the system for use by the parents?

Did you provide training for the parents for use of the system and if you did was it in the form of an information sheet or an informational meeting?

Have the teachers in the school system been supportive in the use of the system by the parents?

What other concerns, comments, or information can you provide on parent use of your classroom management systems?

School District of River Falls

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
852 East Division Street, River Falls WI 54022
715-425-1800 phone / 715-425-1804 fax

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The educational system in the United States is changing rapidly because of the influence of new technologies that have surfaced in the past decade. The use of the computer and the Internet in educational programs has increased the opportunity for parents and guardians to interact with the school program in faster and easier methods than in the past. School systems have been working hard to incorporate technologies that take advantage of this to keep parents up-to-date on their child's activities in the school. To keep up with this trend, River Falls Public Schools has implemented a new classroom management system. The STI (Software Technology, Inc.) program allows parents and guardians of students to access the system and view information on their child. The purpose of this information sheet is to provide directions to access STI via the internet. This fall the parents of the current freshmen were surveyed in regards to this matter. Based on this survey, we assume that you have access to the Internet and basic knowledge in using it. With this assumed, the following directions will allow you to access information on **your child only**. If you have problems or questions, you will find help with the program by clicking on the word document on the Home Plus page where it says *Click Here.* You can also contact:

Bill Forster
River Falls High School
425-1830 Ext 1208 bifors@rfsd.k12.wi.us

Steps for access to the STI program for student information:

1. From the internet log into the program by typing in:

   http://www.rfsd.k12.wi.us/home_plus.htm

2. Click on the school that your child is attending.

3. You will first see a security alert. It will warn you that you are entering a secure connection. Click "ok" to continue.

4. It will next ask you to accept a security certificate. Click "yes" to continue.

5. You will then see a screen called STI-classroom with four sections: Teacher Services, Parent Services, Student Services and Admin. Services. In the upper right hand corner you will see *Home/Sign In*. Click on the "Sign In" part.

6. You will then enter a sign in page. You will need a user ID number (Student Number) and a password number (Student Pin #). These will be provided for you by the school system. Check with the main office to receive these numbers. This ensures that only you can access this information on your child.

7. Enter your user ID number (Student Number) and Password number (Student PIN #) and click "OK".

8. You will again see the STI-Classroom page, but it should now have the name of your student in the upper right hand corner. From here, you can access information by clicking on the "Student Services". This is where you will find information on your student.

9. Click on "Student Services". You will see a page that contains various information about your student. The main categories provided are: Schedule, School calendar, Demographics, Discipline, Attendance, Grades, and Grad Requirements. You will find these categories in the upper left corner. You can access information in each category by clicking on that particular category.

10. If you would like to Email your child's teacher, "click" on the teacher's name located on your student's schedule. This will allow you to send an Email to the teacher. When you Email the teacher, please provide your contact information so the teacher can respond to your email. The teacher can not automatically reply with this system. With a little bit of searching you will find that it is easy to access important information about your child.

11. Please be sure to exit the program when completed. **Good luck!**