



SYNESI ASSOCIATES

Synesi Associates
1 East Wacker, Suite 3600
Chicago, Illinois 60601

CASE STUDY: RECOVERY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW ORLEANS



Customer Profile

New Orleans Public Schools serves 65,000 students in 127 schools. The District has more than 7,500 employees and a budget of \$430 million.

Program Specifics

- ◆ Thirty-five Elementary, Middle and High Schools
- ◆ Fifteen Educational Experts for the District/School Assessment
- ◆ Five Educational Experts for Ongoing Work
- ◆ Initial Transition Program: One month
- ◆ Ongoing Central Office Support: April 2007 – Present

“The function of [Synesi Associates] has been critical to our continual success.”

*Kelvin Adams
RSD, Chief of Staff*

The Challenge

In April 2007, Paul Vallas was appointed Superintendent of the Recovery School District in New Orleans (RSD). At that time, Superintendent Vallas took on the challenge of reforming the entire system with a specifically heavy emphasis placed upon on five areas: 1) creation of a rigorous system-wide structured curriculum; 2) establishment of benchmark assessments, extended school day, and extended school year learning opportunities; 3) development of a principal leadership academy; 4) foundation of a leadership team to re-design RSD high schools; and 5) management of capital improvements and classroom modernization – all of which have the inherent goal of helping youth, families, and communities improve their quality of life in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Superintendent Vallas contracted with Synesi Associates in April 2007 in order to help address these issues by quickly assessing current practices and protocols in the RSD and developing department/school-specific action plans. Once action plans were submitted to the RSD, Synesi Associates has continued to work in the RSD in the areas of academics, accountability, high school re-design, communications, and fundraising. The contract continues to the present.

Deliverables

Synesi Associates was contracted to provide the RSD with consultative support and the following outlines specific areas of focus and the deliverables respective to that area:

Academics

- ◆ Acted as interim Deputy Superintendent of Academics during the transition period
- ◆ Assisted in the hiring of the Deputy Superintendent of Academics and 12 school principals
- ◆ Led the development of a system-wide managed curriculum
- ◆ Facilitated a curriculum and instruction committee to determine system initiatives for 08-09 academic year
- ◆ Led the development of an RtI (Response to Intervention) process for the District
- ◆ Reorganized the Department of School Charters
- ◆ Hired the Director of School Charters
- ◆ Organized a principal advisory group and a charter advisory committee
- ◆ Advised the Deputy Superintendent of Academics and the Office of School Charters

Accountability

- ◆ Developed and staffed the Office of Accountability
- ◆ Hired and advised the Deputy Superintendent of Accountability



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High School Re-Design

- ◆ Established a committee of internal administrators and external partners in order to re-design RSD high schools
- ◆ Created theme/magnet schools that combine best practices and procedures with a rigorous curriculum

Communications

- ◆ Managed the creation of a new, service-oriented RSD website
- ◆ Streamlined communication and public relations protocols

Fundraising

- ◆ Set up a not-for-profit partner, to receive money on behalf of the RSD
- ◆ \$100,000 from the Ohio State Alumni Association
- ◆ \$275,000 from the Carnegie Foundation
- ◆ \$10 million from one of the nation's largest educational foundations

Outcomes

As the current 2007/2008 school year is now coming upon the spring semester, the Synesi Associates team has worked with Superintendent Vallas and the RSD leadership to effectively implement the following programs:

- ◆ System-wide Structured Curriculum
- ◆ District-wide Benchmark Assessment Program and Extended School Day Program
- ◆ Principal Leadership Academy
- ◆ High School Re-Design
- ◆ Capital Improvements and Classroom Modernization