



Virginia school boosts student recognition, celebration with 'The Pulse' (Jostens)

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Jostens' online survey tool a 'difference maker' for school climate and culture

STAFFORD, Va., Dec. 20, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- It doesn't take long to realize that there's just something different about North Stafford High School.

Those who stroll the halls in between classes will most likely witness a sea of orange clothing, wall art that shares uplifting messages celebrating the academic success of students, and multiple national flags lining the ceiling, representing a diverse population among the school of 1,700.

At North Stafford, every week is treated like it's Spirit Week. It's a mentality driven by Jostens Renaissance Education, a strategic approach designed to help schools renew their climate and culture for the 21st Century. North Stafford is also a member of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), which partners with Jostens in Renaissance Education and multiple other initiatives to renew school climate and culture.

North Stafford has been a Renaissance school for 10 years. But over the last six months, the impact that Jostens Renaissance Education has had on the school's climate and culture has amplified significantly, thanks to a new tool – The Pulse.

"The Pulse and Jostens Renaissance have become the structural backbone of our school," said Dan Hornick, North Stafford assistant principal. "I believe 100 percent that this initiative has been the difference maker at our school." He added that North Stafford plans to utilize The Pulse annually.

The Pulse, which is free to all Jostens customers, is a first-of-its-kind survey tool accessed online through mobile or desktop platforms. It's taken by students, parents and teachers in less than 10 minutes, and measures school recognition with regard to how recognition is given and experienced, as well as how it makes a difference in building positive climate and culture in schools. Learn more about Jostens Renaissance Education and The Pulse here: <https://www.jostensrenaissance.com/pulse/>

The main goal behind The Pulse is simple. Create an environment where kids feel recognized and are motivated to succeed at school. North Stafford's recurring Spirit Week mentality – which has proven to be a key contributor to the school's positive climate and culture – increased significantly when The Pulse entered into the picture.

"North Stafford has an awesome commitment to building a culture of recognition," said Michael Wolf, Director of Jostens Renaissance Education. "It's exciting that they now have a means to measure the impact of their efforts with The Pulse."

"The Pulse provides practical and actionable feedback for strengthening student recognition and inclusiveness," said Dr. Kent Pekel, president and CEO of Search Institute, an international leader in youth development Jostens partnered with to create and scientifically validate The Pulse. "No other survey fills this need. It allows students to express what types of recognition matter most to them and how frequently they experience those types of recognition in their schools."

Each school that takes The Pulse receives detailed analytics on five key areas: informal recognition, formal recognition, fairness in recognition, recognizing students based on effort, and having a voice in student recognition.

During the 2016 pilot program, The Pulse revealed insight that helped create positive change at North Stafford. The findings showed that, in some cases, students, parents and teachers had different perceptions, which allowed the school to take action.

The Pulse resulted in school administrators putting on more rallies, not just during Homecoming or before a big football game, but in honor of students who've achieved academic milestones or experienced other forms of success. The school's climate and culture has become that of recognition for each and every student.

Additionally, The Pulse helped administrators at North Stafford realize they needed to celebrate the positive things that were happening with students, rather than focusing more on handing out consequences for negative things.

"We're very pleased that The Pulse was so easy to administer, and helpful in giving us tangible information to look at," Hornick said. "Whether results are good, bad, or indifferent, we want to know so we can improve our school."

For questions about The Pulse or Jostens Renaissance Education, please contact Michael Wolf by emailing Michael.wolf@jostens.com or calling 952-830-4707.

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