

Staying Connected

February 2001
Volume 3 Issue 1

School services

Meet face-to-face and use the CoNexus[®] suite of decision tools. Or have PRISM deliver your planning event over the Internet with the Concept System[®].

School benchmarking

Want to know how your school buildings stack up against best practice peers? Looking for peer-based performance targets to encourage improved student performance? Introducing Frontier Analyst[®].

Let stakeholders help build strategy

The Concept System[®] provides unparalleled capability to survey stakeholders and build strategy from the bottom up.

Training opportunities

Look to Page 2 for exciting opportunities to improve your collaborative planning and creativity skills.

Optimal thinking tips

Do you get in thinking ruts? The battery's dead...but you continue to turn the key. Check out tips to recharge, start the engine, and move down the idea highway—pedal to the metal.

School services

PRISM Decision Systems helps you accelerate and improve planning with dynamic group processes and state-of-the-art decision systems. PRISM services are BOCES aidable.

Meeting all your planning needs

PRISM accelerates a team's ability to

- Survey for needs assessment.
- Formulate a mission and vision.
- Agree to performance targets.
- Generate strategies.
- Identify priority objectives.
- Allocate resources.
- Plan for implementation.
- Make any decision.

School benchmarking

Want to know how well your schools are doing? Not just on one assessment, but comprehensively? And more importantly, how much they could improve?

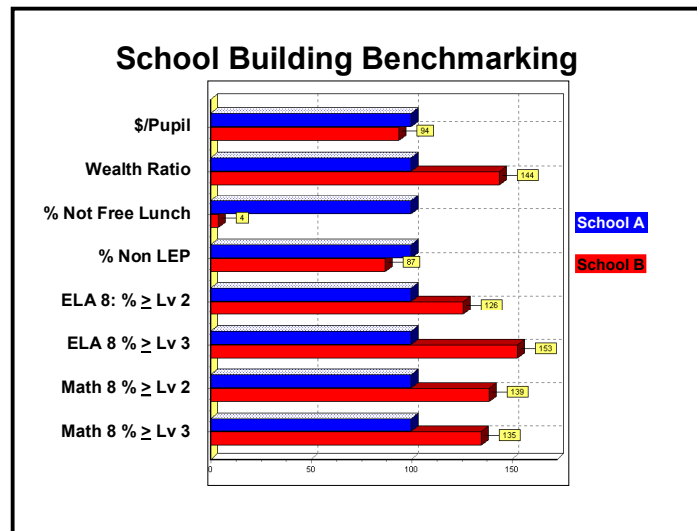
PRISM is currently studying the efficiency of all school buildings in New York State using Frontier Analyst[®] (FA). Algorithms within FA create a single efficiency factor for each school building based on multiple input-output ratios.

Peer-based performance targets

The most efficient schools in each peer group are rated as being 100%

efficient and are considered "best practice." FA then sets peer-based targets for all other schools showing how much they need to increase outputs to become 100% efficient, best practice institutions.

Because the targets are based on actual peer performance—



School district planning

PRISM assists schools and BOCES to develop powerful plans for

- Academic improvement (CDEP).
- Academic intervention services.
- Professional development.
- Special education.
- Alternative education.
- Annual professional performance review.
- Technology.
- Facilities.

rather than on an absolute, arbitrary benchmark—the targets are realistic.

Best practice

The graph above compares two urban schools. School B dramatically outperforms School A on all four state assessments despite having 95% more students on free lunch, 13% more LEP students and a lower per pupil expenditure. The obvious question begged: What is School B doing differently than School A? "Benchmarking" continued Page2

“Benchmarking” continued

Performance target setting

Below are the actual performance targets FA set for School A. If these targets were achieved, School A would become 100% efficient and a best practice peer.

School A Performance Targets

Output Results	Actual	Target	Potential Improvement
ELA 8 % ≥ Lv 2	76	100	32%
ELA 8 % ≥ Lv 3	28	51	81%
Math 8 % ≥ Lv 2	63	89	42%
Math 8 % ≥ Lv 2	28	42	49%

For benchmarking information specific to schools in your district, please contact PRISM Decision Systems.

Let stakeholders help build strategy

Mark T. O’Neil, Jr., CEO of Philadelphia’s Mercy Health System (MHS), wanted to begin a dialogue with his stakeholders regarding the future of the MHS. Little did he suspect that the ensuing Concept System® focus group study would provide much more: the detailed foundation for a long-range plan.

The Concept System®

Over a two-day period, focus groups met and contributed 372 statements describing specific actions MHS needs to take to fulfill its mission and excel as a community-based health system. PRISM and MHS analyzed the results to eliminate redundancy.

Ten MHS colleagues volunteered to sort the final set of 90 action statements into named clusters. The focus group participants rated the importance of each action statement.

Powerful algorithms within the Concept System® analyzed all participant sorting and rating data. The resulting concept map defines 10 clear strategic clusters in order of priority. (See Map right.) And the 90 detailed action statements are a great

Optimal thinking tips

Struggling with a tough decision? Wavering back and forth, unable to make up your mind? Very likely your frustration results from thinking about a complex problem—like buying a house—one factor at a time. To attack a complex problem and keep track of its multiple factors, create a decision matrix:

- Down the left side, enter your options.
- Across the top, list your decision criteria. A criterion is an objective test upon which a judgment can be made.
- Assign a weight to each criterion to indicate its importance to a good decision. The weight is usually a number between 0.0 and 1.0 with the sum of the weights equaling 1.0.

	Criterion A	Criterion B	Criterion C	Criterion D	Total
Option 1					
Option 2					
Option 3					
	Criteria Weights				

Then, one column at a time, ask: “To what degree does option 1..2..3 contribute to criterion A..B..C?” Use a simple scale where 5 = Highest Contribution and 1 = Lowest Contribution. Multiply the score in each cell by the criterion’s weight. Then add across the rows to determine a total, weighted score for each option.

You should now have a deeper understanding of the relative value of each option. Hey, maybe you’ll even be able to make the decision!

start on an implementation plan.

“Our success depends on the ability of all Mercy colleagues to support the objectives set forth by our strategic plan,” explains O’Neil. “The Concept System® provided information from colleague focus groups essential to developing a plan that addresses issues deemed important to the future success of the system by those who contribute to that success.”

Training

PRISM delivers training in efficient team planning and decision-making, including creative problem solving, conflict resolution and consensus building. Other opportunities include:

The 16th Annual Conference on The Positive Power of Humor and Creativity, March 30-April 1, 2001, Saratoga Springs, New York. Go to www.humorproject.com.

The 46th Annual Creative Problem Solving Institute, June 16-21, 2001, Adams Mark Hotel, Buffalo, NY. Go to www.cef-cpsi.org.

Engagements

Baldwinsville Schools
Binghamton City Schools
Borough of Fanwood, NJ
Champlain Valley Ed. Svcs.
Chenango Mem. Hospital
City of Grand Rapids, MI
City School Dist. of Albany
Duchess County, Erie 2,
Broome-Tioga, and
Herkimer BOCES
The Greater Boston Visitor
and Convention Bureau
Johnson City Schools
The Los Angeles Times
Lockport City Schools
Maine-Endwell Schools
Mercy Health System
National Institute for Health
NYS Electric & Gas
Newark Valley Schools
Science Applications International
Saugerties Central Schools
Telcordia Technologies
Times Mirror Company
United Health Services
Wash. DC Transit Authority

