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Electronic Registrar Online “Programs” Feature ***A Case Study: Northside Independent School District***

Research indicates that a comprehensive approach to staff development – through a series of learning opportunities – is far more beneficial than a one-time session. You may not realize it, but Electronic Registrar Online (ERO) – eSchool Solutions’ professional development management system – includes a feature to support this best practice.

Known as the “programs” feature, this tool enables ERO administrators to define groups of related courses, which are then displayed in teachers’ “My Programs” area. How is this helpful, you may ask? According to Carol Pett, the ERO system administrator for Northside (TX) Independent School District, the “programs” feature streamlines staff development – saving teachers a significant amount of time and eliminating confusion about required courses. This tool helps districts ensure that the right teachers are taking the right courses.

“It’s a valuable communication tool,” Pett explained. “We can assign courses to specific teachers based on district and state staff development requirements. The feature also allows us to monitor teachers’ progress.”

How does this valuable tool work? It’s relatively simple. Let’s use new teacher orientation program as an example. First, create a name for the program (i.e. New Teacher Orientation). Next, district administrators can define one or more subject areas – such as “Understanding District Policies” or “Classroom Management Skills.” Next, select courses that satisfy the orientation requirements. This newly created program can then be assigned to all new teachers’ profiles. They can access it by clicking the “My Programs” tab. By creating these programs, teachers can review customized lists of courses – thus eliminating the need to search through the entire catalog. This feature makes the professional development process more efficient.

Northside Independent School District applies the program feature to a variety of teachers and situations. For example:

- ***Gifted & Talented Teachers*** – Kindergarten and elementary school teachers are required to have a specified number of hours in this area (e.g., kindergarten teachers need 30 hours in their first semester). Pett wrote a program that includes all the available Gifted & Talented courses and linked it to the

appropriate teachers' "My Programs" tabs. With just a click of a button, teachers can easily access their requirements, and administrators can monitor the completion status.

- ***PDAS*** – All new teachers in the state of Texas are required to take PDAS (Professional Development Assessment System – a Texas-specific system) courses. At Northside, the required programs are easy to find, located in each teacher's "My Programs" tab.
- ***Teachers In Need of Assistance (TINA)*** – Some teachers are required to take additional course topics such as classroom management or discipline. A TINA program has been created that includes the available courses. Thanks to the programs feature, teachers can easily locate the required courses and mentors can check their progress.

Electronic Registrar Online's "programs" feature is a valuable organizational and tracking tool that increases the efficiency of staff development activities and equips districts to meet mandates. To learn more about Electronic Registrar Online and the "programs" feature, contact your account manager today.