

Evaluation of the Tandem Online Calendar Program

A REPORT SUBMITTED TO GASTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Abstract

This is an evaluation report of the Tandem Calendar Program at Gaston School District. This program organizes events into a single, online calendar that communicates event information to parents, staff, students, and the community through an online calendar embedded into Gaston School District's home webpage. This program was chosen for evaluation to determine if Tandem was effective in providing staff and parents communication of events, sports, activities, and room reservations.

This evaluation consisted of a survey sent to participants that consisted of junior/senior high school teachers, elementary school teachers, parents, admin, and other (non-teachers, registered online users not belonging to categories listed).

The results revealed that participants were satisfied overall with the Tandem Online Calendar Program, and very satisfied with the Tandem as an all-in-one calendar scheduling system. Areas for improvement are difficulty entering information, and information is lacking or incorrect.

Overall, this program seems practical, effective, and efficient for Gaston School District's needs. The results overwhelmingly conclude that Tandem is a beneficial program for the district.

Introduction

Tandem Calendar is an online calendar program Gaston School District implemented two years ago. The Tandem program at Gaston was necessitated due to a scheduling and viewing need of administration, staff, and parents. It created a place for interested parties to see sports schedules and the district calendar at a glance, and for teachers to reserve computer lab time.

The purpose of this report is to determine if this program is satisfying the districts needs, if this product is reaching the correct intended audience, or revealing an unintended audience that may require greater focus. It will also determine the outcomes of further training, in-service opportunities to improve the product use, or reveal more the product is able to accomplish for the schools needs.

This document is the final evaluation report of the Tandem Online Calendar Program implemented at Gaston School District. This report contains a description of the program and the components, evaluation method used in this evaluation, results of the evaluation, and a discussion of these results.

Description

Tandem organizes events into a single, online calendar that communicates event information to parents, staff, students, and the community. Gaston School District utilizes this program to correspond about sports schedules, gym/room reservations, publicize community events, reserve computer labs, and to notify parents of the district-wide school calendar.

Program Objectives

The goals of the Tandem Online Calendar Program are to provide a(n):

1. Internet based, centralized calendar program accessible from any location.
2. Site where sports activities and room reservation information is available instantaneously.
3. Place parents and clubs could easily view and also enter information.
4. Reduced workload for the front office regarding phone calls related to calendar, sports, activity, and reservation questions.

Program Components

The Tandem Calendar program consists of an online calendar embedded in the school website, a personalized calendar option, news, sports schedules, event requests, RSS feed, and automatic email updates and reminders. This program is ongoing and is used district-wide to provide open communication among staff, parents, and the community.

Evaluation Method

Participants

The participants in this evaluation consisted of Gaston School District teachers from the elementary school and the junior/senior high school, administrators, and parents of Gaston students.

Participants were selected using a stratified random sampling method. First, participants were located by accessing the admin function of Tandem Calendar Program user account page. Participants showing they had activated accounts in the system, were selected. Participants were grouped into admin, elementary teachers, secondary teachers, parents, and other. It should be noted that all Gaston School District staff have an account. In addition, the group 'other' consisted of staff that are not teachers or users signed up that are not parents, thus most likely community members. Of the groups selected, a random sample was conducted and a survey was emailed to each participant selected in the sample.

Procedures

During the evaluation, Tandem operated as normal. Teachers and staff entered reservations, events, sports, and public activities as usual. Parents and others viewed this information, initiated requests for room reservations, and accessed sports schedules. There was no down-time maintenance or outages during the evaluation.

In evaluating this program the goal-free model was used which allowed for the gathering of data, identify processes, and determining the importance of the program in relation to school district needs.

Data Sources

Data was collected through an anonymous survey that was sent to all participants randomly selected and by a program observation analysis.

The survey consisted of an attitude section, which was designed to measure the participants attitude toward the program. It consisted of a 4 point Likert scale rated 1 – very satisfied, 2 – satisfied, 3 – dissatisfied, 4 – very dissatisfied. The attitude questions related to program support, and specific areas of the program that included all-in-one scheduling program, accessibility, user friendly, school support, and if they felt the correct information was listed.

In addition to the attitude section, participants were asked their role, how they utilized the program, what resources they accessed, what they liked and disliked most about the program, where they accessed the program from, what other scheduling programs they use, and what method they prefer to access calendar and schedule information. There was also a section for open ended answers so participants could voice anything they felt was not adequately addressed in the selected questions.

Results

The results of the survey are detailed below. The survey was conducted in November, 2011 at Gaston School District via email to participants, who were given a week's time frame to complete the survey.

Role

Participants were chosen through a stratified random sample. Of the 40 participants selected in the sample, 18 completed the survey. The breakdown of participants is listed in the table below.

Participant	#
Parents	6
Elementary Teacher	3
Junior High School Teacher	4
Admin	2
Other	3

Table 2

Attitude

The responses to the attitude section of the survey are listed below. The summary displays the number of participants responses, the average score for the listed topic, an overall mean, and an overall percentage.

Participants were first asked what they most liked about the Tandem Calendar Program. They were given the options; being able to download the Tandem Calendar Program into their existing calendar program, ease of use, locate scheduling of all district activities in one central location, and other. 15 of the participants chose 'locate scheduling off all district activities in one central location' as what they most liked about the program.

In addition to likes, participants were asked what they disliked most about Tandem. They were given options of; difficult to enter information, information lacking or incorrect, unable to navigate easily, and other. The answers to this question were very diverse. The compilation of responses are listed below in Figure 1.

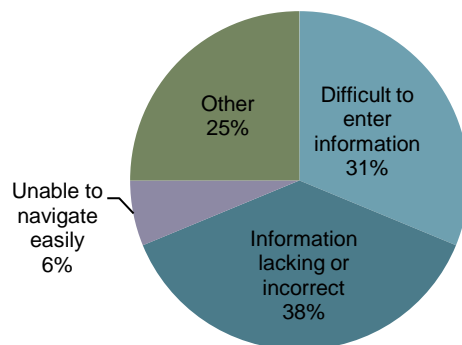


Figure 1

The table below reveals a positive attitude response to the Tandem Calendar Program. The average rating of responses was 1.98, narrowly falling into the ‘very Satisfied’ category, and the mean for the response to the question regarding participants satisfaction with the calendar overall was 2.1, narrowly falling into the satisfied category.

The specific questions also all had a mean rating of ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’. Responses regarding satisfaction with Tandem rating ‘very satisfied’ were; resources, all-in-one scheduling system, accessibility, and school support. Responses with a ‘satisfied’ rating were correct information listed, user friendly, and calendar overall.

	Very satisfied-1	Satisfied – 2	Dissatisfied – 3	Very dissatisfied – 4	
How Satisfied are you with Tandem:	1	2	3	4	M
Resources	6	3	1	1	1.72
Correct Information listed	3	9	2	1	2.07
All-in-one scheduling system	10	4	0	2	1.63
Accessibility	6	7	1	2	1.93
User Friendly	3	7	5	1	2.25
School Support	5	7	4	0	1.94
Calendar overall	4	10	2	2	2.10
	Total	37	47	15	9
	Percent	34%	44%	14%	8%
					100%

Table 1

Utilization

Participants were asked why they accessed Tandem. Of the responses viewing the calendar activities dominated the choices for how the program is most utilized.

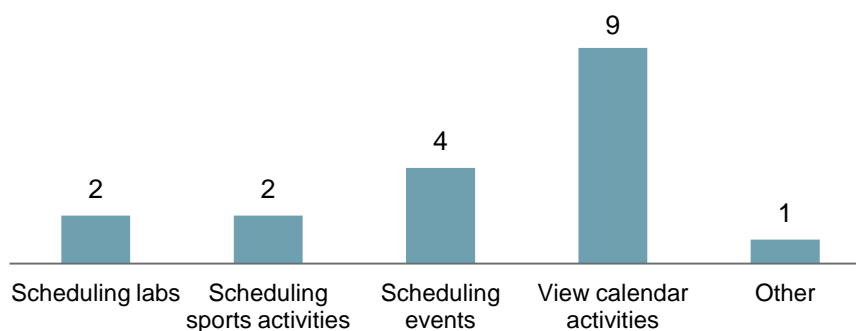


Figure 2

Participants were then asked where they accessed Tandem from, with choices of home, school, work, mobile device, or did not access calendar. Users accessed Tandem equally from home or the school. Only 3 participants accessed the calendar from work, and 1 does not access Tandem.

Participants were also asked which program they preferred for accessing and inputting calendar information.

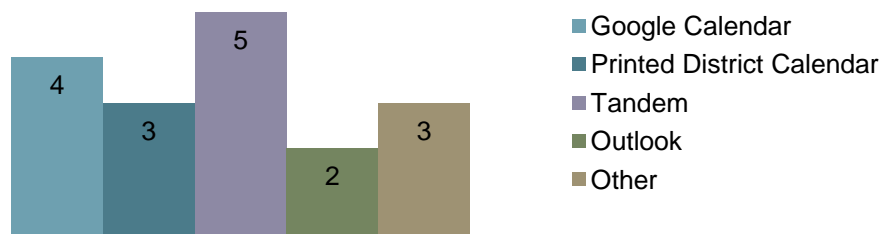


Figure 3

Resources

Participants were asked what resources they most often access for help. They were given survey choices of help phone number, online tutorials, videos, school Tandem coordinators, not accessed resources, or other. They were given the choice to select all that applied, therefore, the total could exceed more than the amount of participants. Of the resources given, participants chose ‘not accessed resources’ the most, followed by ‘school Tandem coordinator’. All of the other choices only had minimal responses.

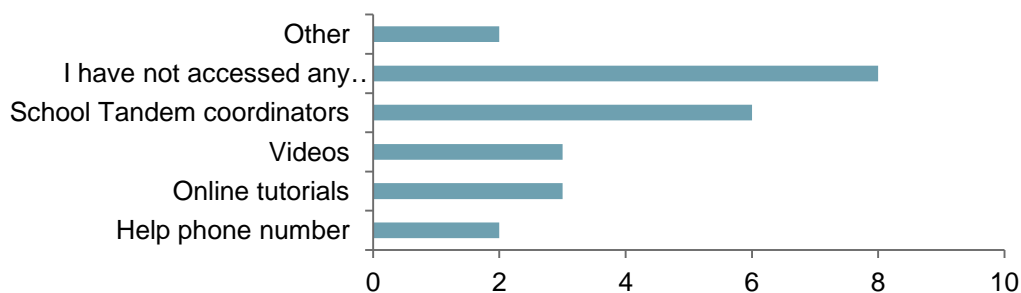


Figure 4

Open-ended Response

Participants were given an opportunity to share freely any information they felt was not addressed in the questions of the survey.

“Many administrators have not embraced using the program nor have they encouraged their staff to use the program making it difficult for everyone who does want to use the calendar. This is not a problem with Tandem, but a systemic lack of technology abilities at our district.”

“Tandem is only as effective as those using it. Many staff members have never taken the time to learn how to use it. This makes it difficult for those who do use it.”

“Once I had a tandem sheet explaining the process and the steps to follow, the system seemed more manageable to use.”

“It is hard to understand, confusing when trying to schedule time for labs. I don't like it!!!”

“Although Tandem offers a tutorial, it is also a very user friendly software.....I used it and only had to call for help a couple times.”

Discussion

This evaluation revealed that participants at Gaston School District are satisfied with the Tandem Online Calendar Program. Overall this calendar program is fulfilling the objectives of providing a centralized calendar program with easy accessibility for interested participants, a place where interested parties can easily view information, and through available resources it reduces the front office workload in regards to calendar and scheduling questions.

From the survey sent to all participants, it is apparent that participants are utilizing this program to schedule activities, view information, and access resources. They preferred Tandem over other programs available. Unanimously participants felt Tandem fulfilled the need of having a centralized location for all district activities. They were very satisfied with resources, accessibility, school support, were satisfied with information listed and the program being user friendly.

However, there are areas for recommended improvement. These areas are related and therefore may be the problem. Participants disliked that the Tandem program was difficult to enter information and that information was lacking or incorrect. If information is difficult to enter, this possibly results in lacking information. It is likely that staff were the participants feeling the program was difficult for entering information as they were the users that entered data the most. As a result, the parents are likely the participants or other viewers are the ones feeling information is incorrect or lacking.

Ways to improve this problem area could be done by having a staff in-service refresher course for data entry, providing an instructional sheet for data entry, or creating a noticeable link to online help tutorials and videos. In addition, users may be unaware of the additional features Tandem provides, such as email updates regarding schedule changes, RSS feed, a personalized calendar option, and news updates.

Project Cost

Personnel

Professional Salary

Chrissy Jarvis

(5 days at \$500/day) \$2,500

Professional Salary Total **\$2,500**

Travel

Travel to Gaston School District from Yamhill

(mileage expenses x 5 days) \$200

Travel Total **\$200**

Miscellaneous

Communications, supplies \$50

Miscellaneous Total **\$50**

TOTAL DUE **\$2,750**