



Sumter School District Boosts Staff Morale with Mini Summit

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sumter School District sought to address the growing social-emotional learning (SEL) needs of its students and staff. By partnering with AccuTrain to host a custom professional development conference, the district provided high-quality, targeted training that was both affordable and easy to organize. The conference resulted in increased staff engagement, collaboration and the successful implementation of new SEL strategies district-wide.

INTRODUCTION

Sumter School District, located in suburban South Carolina, is a diverse educational community serving approximately 14,000 students. With a high-poverty, military-connected population, the district is committed to providing comprehensive support that addresses both the academic and personal needs of its students and 1,500 employees. Pamela Rhodes, Ed.S., the Director of Federal Programs/Conference Chair at Sumter School District, is dedicated to creating impactful professional development opportunities for her staff and led the effort to deliver a customized Mini Summit.

THE PROBLEM

In recent years, the need to support the social-emotional well-being of both students and staff has become a critical priority for school districts nationwide. Sumter School District was no exception. The leadership team recognized an urgent need to equip educators with practical, effective strategies to manage the complex social and emotional challenges present in the classroom.

The district faced a significant challenge: how to provide high-impact, relevant training on social-emotional learning to a large number of staff members in a way that was both cost-effective and logistically manageable. They needed a solution that would inspire their educators and provide them with realistic tools they could implement immediately. The goal was to find a partner who could deliver exceptional content without creating an organizational burden for the planning committee.

THE SOLUTION

Sumter's decision-making process led them to AccuTrain. Having been impressed by AccuTrain's speakers at its national Innovative Schools Summit events, Pamela Rhodes and her team were confident in the quality they could expect at a Mini Summit. AccuTrain stood out from competitors due to the caliber of its keynote and concurrent speakers, the wide variety of relevant topics offered and its reasonable, all-inclusive pricing.

The partnership involved creating a district-based professional development conference tailored to Sumter's specific focus on SEL. AccuTrain provided a clear, comprehensive proposal that outlined all services and costs, simplifying the planning process for Rhodes's team. "Having everything included in the price was also a benefit," she noted.

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This streamlined approach allowed the district to host a high-quality Mini Summit featuring renowned speakers including Robert Jackson and Brian Dinkins, whose sessions became standout moments for attendees. AccuTrain delivered a turnkey solution that empowered Sumter to provide its staff with a powerful, motivating and educational experience centered on their most pressing needs.

THE RESULT

The impact of the Mini Summit was immediate and overwhelmingly positive. The district received excellent feedback from attendees, who praised the event for providing strategies that were both "realistic and easy to implement in the classroom and in their own personal lives."

The conference successfully addressed the district's primary goal of providing effective SEL strategies. The positive effects rippled throughout the district, leading to several key outcomes:

- **Increased Staff Engagement and Collaboration:**

The Mini Summit fostered a renewed sense of community. "There has been an increase in engagement and collaboration among the attendees," Rhodes confirmed. To continue the momentum, the district created a shared digital platform where staff could exchange ideas and resources from the various sessions.

- **Practical Application of Skills:**

Educators quickly began integrating what they had learned. "The staff members have been sending in artifacts to showcase how they have been implementing the strategies learned at the conference," said Rhodes. This demonstrated the direct and tangible impact of the training on daily classroom practices.

- **Improved Staff Morale:**

The success of the Mini Summit generated a strong desire for similar future events, with staff expressing interest in making the district-based conference an annual occurrence. The shared experience and valuable takeaways left educators feeling supported and energized.

In summing up the event's impact, Rhodes stated, "The Mini Summit increased collaboration among staff members at different schools and it allowed teachers to learn SEL strategies for themselves and their students."

CONCLUSION

The partnership between Sumter School District and AccuTrain demonstrates the transformative power of targeted, high-quality professional development. By providing an accessible and engaging conference focused on social-emotional learning, Sumter was able to equip its educators with invaluable tools, boost morale and foster a more collaborative and supportive district culture. The success of the Mini Summit has laid the groundwork for future annual conferences, ensuring that staff continue to receive the training they need to support their students and themselves.



AccuTrain.com
InnovativeSchoolsSummit.com