

STI OFFERS ONLINE COURSES ON FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND DATA ANALYSIS TOPICS TO DRIVE INSTRUCTIONAL CHANGE

New courses part of STI Achievement Services to address increased need, help schools effectively conduct ongoing formative assessment and data-driven decision-making

MOBILE, ALA. (July 1, 2008) – While school use of formative assessment continues to increase, many classroom teachers have not been trained to use assessment data effectively to modify instruction and accelerate student progress. STI, a leading provider of education data management systems, today introduces five online courses that cover formative assessment and data analysis topics to meet educators’ professional development needs in these areas. The new courses are offered as a part of STI *Achievement Services*, a comprehensive professional development and consulting service offering that helps schools and districts address student achievement shortfalls.

Although the concept of using data as a change agent is not new, the practice has not been fully deployed in educational systems to integrate and use various data sets. According to Noyce, Perda and Traver, in their article, “Creating Data-Driven Schools,” in *Educational Leadership*, February 2000, “Many school districts underuse one of the most powerful and common symbol systems available to them – numbers – to monitor, evaluate, and revise programs and policies.” Research has shown that the common thread found in effective schools and districts is the proper use of data. Using data in education to improve instruction requires a localized, systematic program, and it must be institutionalized in the school or district culture.

Based on customer feedback, STI developed the following courses to help schools conduct formative assessment and data-driven decision-making as part of an ongoing school or district-wide program:

- ***Essentials of Formative Assessment*** – Designed to provide instruction on the creation of valid and reliable formative assessments that are aligned to specific learning standards and objectives.
- ***Standards and Performance Objectives*** – Designed to provide information and resources for administrators and educators as they become more progressive in the integration of standards and performance objectives in the instruction planning process.
- ***Preparing Students for Graduation*** – Designed to provide information and resources for administrators and educators as they become more progressive in preparing students for graduation using the instruction planning process.

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- ***Implementing Instructional Strategies*** Designed to provide information and resources for administrators and educators as they become more progressive with the use of instructional strategies in the instruction planning process.
- ***Using Data to Improve Instruction*** –Designed to provide information and resources for administrators and educators as they become more progressive with the use of data analysis in the instruction planning process.

The *STI Achievement Services* courses are available to administrators, teachers and curriculum staff. Courses start August 4, 2008. Each course is eight weeks, and requires approximately two hours per week of instruction, discussion participation and weekly assignments. The graduate-level courses provide 1.5 continuing education units or 15 professional development hours for course certification. The cost is \$199 per log-in per course. No course books, supplies or additional course fees are required. All class work and assignment materials are available online. Already, more than 150 educators have enrolled in the available courses.

STI Achievement Services complements *STIAssessment* to offer schools and districts a complete assessment solution that is adapted to fit their specific needs, and provides a blueprint for improving student achievement. *STIAssessment* is a Web-based formative assessment management system that allows users to create, administer, and track formative assessments, and to gather data detailing student performance on state standards. In the recently released report, “State-Wide Improvement with *STIAssessment*,” authored by Dale Mann, PhD., more students met or exceeded state reading and math standards at most grade levels when taught with *STIAssessment* support than did those in statewide groups not using STI. Additionally, with *STIAssessment*, administrators and teachers embraced assessment in ways that changed faculty culture and increased student achievement through improved data analysis.

For more information about STI, visit www.sti-k12.com or phone 800-844-0884.

About STI

STI is a leading provider of Education Data Management solutions to the K-12 market. STI’s fully integrated suite of products addresses attendance, scheduling, special education, assessment, discipline, grade reporting, professional development, fund accounting, health, and parent/teacher communications. More than 6,000 schools in 28 states use STI solutions. The company was founded in 1982 and is headquartered in Mobile, Ala. For more information, phone 800-844-0884 or visit www.sti-k12.com.

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