

Client Success Story

Elevating Educational Leadership and Culture at De La Salle High School

How David Holquin, President of De La Salle, harnesses the power of 360-degree feedback to build a culture of trust, transparency, and growth



Executive Summary

David Holquin, President of De La Salle High School, successfully leverages 360-degree feedback to transform organizational culture and drive educational excellence.

Over six years and across two academic institutions, David experienced the power of feedback in fostering **trust, transparency, and leadership growth**.

This success story explores his journey, highlighting the role of SurveyConnect as a trusted partner in his transformative process.

“SurveyConnect has been instrumental in transforming our leadership culture. As a third-party partner trained in best practices, they have helped us build trust and transparency within our organization.

We use 360-degree feedback surveys at the administrative level to show our teaching staff that we are equally committed to learning and improvement. This process has helped us navigate challenges and achieve organizational excellence.”

— **David Holquin**, President, De Salle High School

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Background

David Holquin has served as president at two different high schools. In his first role as president, he was brought on to help stabilize the school’s leadership following a period of upheaval. His journey with SurveyConnect began there, in 2018.

Three years later, David transitioned to De La Salle High School, where he continues to promote a culture of feedback and growth.

About De La Salle High School

De La Salle High School is a renowned institution committed to academic excellence and leadership development.

Operating within a collegiate leadership model, De La Salle integrates key authority structures, including a President, a Board of Trustees, several Vice

President division leaders, and Department Chairs, in order to create an environment where both educators and students thrive.

The school is dedicated to fostering a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and excellence. With a strong emphasis on leadership and personal growth, De La Salle High School prepares its students to excel in their academic pursuits and future careers.

Building a Culture of Trust and Transparency Prior to De La Salle

In his first role as president, David was brought on to help stabilize the leadership team at a school where he'd worked previously.

He immediately recognized the need for a new leadership approach there: one that prioritized trust, transparency, and growth.

To address this need, David sought advice from a friend and mentor, Sunny Claggett. Sunny recommended doing 360-degree surveys through SurveyConnect.

Sunny was well-versed in the benefits of 360-degree feedback. Working with Marcie Levine (SurveyConnect's Founder), she had used 360 feedback to coach leaders and senior management at CBIZ. Together, they helped people capitalize on their strengths, as well as identify areas and actions for improvement.

For David, this introduction to SurveyConnect marked the beginning of a new period of leadership and professional growth.

Initial Implementation of SurveyConnect

David's first step was to set up the feedback system with SurveyConnect and educate the staff about its purpose and benefits.

Because this school had recently undergone some turmoil, it was important that everyone understood the **purpose of feedback as a tool for growth** – *not* punishment.

It was also important that everyone understood the role of SurveyConnect as an **outside expert** in the process.

“There’s so much great learning and work that’s being done outside of our sector that we can benefit from,” said David.

One of the benefits of partnering with an independent expert is that it **builds trust into the feedback process**, he explained. The raters could feel confident that their honest feedback wouldn’t be altered, withheld, or misused.

“[The survey] was intended to provide a snapshot in time so that our senior leadership could understand how we were being perceived.

And it didn’t mean that those perceptions were right or wrong. But we needed to know what they were, and if we weren’t satisfied with those perceptions, then what do we do about them?

That’s where SurveyConnect’s expertise came in.”

By leveraging SurveyConnect’s status as a third-party partner, David was able to build trust more quickly among the staff and achieve the following objectives:

- rebuild trust in the leadership and stability within the school
- establish a culture of feedback and continuous improvement
- enhance leadership effectiveness and organizational excellence

These positive changes in organizational culture set a precedent for future success- not just for David but for the administrators working with him.

Transition to De La Salle High School

After three successful years using SurveyConnect at his first high school, David transitioned to De La Salle, bringing his valuable experience with him.

At De La Salle, David continued to use SurveyConnect’s 360-degree feedback system to foster a positive organizational culture.

Elevating Organizational Culture Through Feedback at De La Salle

SurveyConnect played a crucial role in establishing a **healthy feedback culture** at De La Salle. With David's guidance, continuous leadership improvement based on feedback became a cornerstone of the school's culture.

“We're a school for a reason: because we're about growth. The 360 is also about growth.”

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— **David Holquin**, President, De Salle High School

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In 2022, there were 200 completed surveys, and by 2024, this number had increased to 249, showing a growing commitment to feedback and improvement.

The survey included several competencies important to De La Salle: Accountability, Approach, Change Management, Collaboration, Communication, Community Relations, Customer Focus, DEI, Faith, Innovation, Integrity and Trust, Leadership, Managing People, and Results Driven.

Using Feedback to Drive Leadership Growth at De La Salle

The 360-degree feedback process helped David, his leadership team, and the school's educators **identify their strengths and areas for improvement**.

For example, the process helped one staff member identify a mismatch between their strengths and job requirements. Honest feedback led to a constructive conversation and a positive career move for the individual.

“SurveyConnect enables us to have growth-minded conversations to help people understand their strengths,” said David. “Sometimes, those strengths aren’t necessarily the ones best suited to their current current role. It was only because they were able to identify that mismatch that they were able to achieve positive growth.”

The 360-degree feedback process also highlighted the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives to De La Salle’s staff.

Initially, DEI wasn’t a primary focus of the surveys, but after receiving consistent feedback about its importance, David and his team made it a key competency. This led to **more structured and visible DEI efforts within the school**.

Finally, the feedback process also helped David understand his own visibility across the school:

“Some people said they wished I was more present, while others felt they saw me everywhere. Their feedback made me realize that I needed to diversify my engagement across different groups within the school,” he said.

This insight helped him adjust his approach to ensure he was accessible to *all* staff members.

Throughout the process, SurveyConnect played a crucial role as a trusted partner, providing best practices and expert guidance. The team facilitated debriefs and helped interpret feedback results, making the process smooth and effective for David and his staff.

““ I really appreciated how responsive everybody was [at SurveyConnect], and that I never felt alone. I felt like I had a partner in this.”

— **David Holquin**, President, De Salle High School

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Conclusion

David Holquin's experience with SurveyConnect highlights the transformative power of 360-degree feedback in educational leadership.

By fostering a culture of trust, transparency, and continuous improvement, David was able **navigate significant challenges and drive educational excellence** at two high schools.

Key Takeaways

- A third-party feedback system that follows best practices is important for building trust.
- Honest feedback is essential for leadership development and continuous improvement.
- Feedback is a useful tool for driving strategic planning for organizational growth.

For educational leaders looking to transform their institutions through effective feedback and expert guidance, SurveyConnect offers a proven solution. Discover how SurveyConnect can help *your* school achieve excellence.

Start collecting valuable feedback today

Empower individuals, teams, and organizations to reach their full potential with our 360-degree feedback system and customizable online surveys.

Visit surveyconnect.com for more information or to schedule a free demo.