

Exhibit 4

Share Your Views and Experiences With Us

>A superintendent recently sent this:

I realized that we were approaching student improvement the wrong way ... I am the Superintendent of a Joint Union High School District. I just wanted to send a message to you to thank you for all the work you have done ... and let you know how this impacted our district. In 2009, as an Assistant Superintendent I happened to get an e-mail from SMHP that had an article about how schools were trying to do school improvement the wrong way. It indicated that the only to have student improvement was to improve student support systems. I read it very carefully and then started receiving your articles regularly. I realized that we were approaching student improvement the wrong way, through just academic improvements. During that time we had the lowest graduations rates and highest dropout rates in our county, 70% and 30%. So, because of your work we started the road of providing more extensive support in all areas. We increased the number of psychologist in our district from 1 districtwide to 1 on every campus. The number of counselors were increased, we partnered with the local Mental Health agency to contract with them to have mental health services on all our sites. We brought in Chaplains at every campus, we increased our services for drug and alcohol counseling. We brought in counselors specifically to deal with students in gangs. We provided other intensive interventions. AND we started seeing the results. We increase the graduation rates every year, from 70% to 75% initially but continued that growth.

We now have the highest graduation rate in the county, 95.7%. The dropout rates are also the lowest in our county with a 4% dropout rate. Our attendance rate went from the low 80% to now being at the highest it has ever been at 97%. This means our students want to come to ours schools because we offer so many support systems for them. What I learned was that to create enduring change and improvements we needed to change our entire system and not do a band-aid approach. Of course our job is never done because like I tell my team, we still need to reach that 4% of students that dropout. So, to you and to your team, a thank you for the work you do in this area. Your ideas and strategies guided me in our work.

>From a District Director of Student Supports:

I cite the Center's work repeatedly as I advocate for a unified model for student and learning support services that embeds into our existing school settings as one division. This year we have taken the first step and created a division for school support services that houses our counseling services, career pathways, and assessment programs. It is a work in progress to shift mindsets to see how these programs connect to reduce barriers and increase capacity for success with our re-engaged students. I forward the Center emails to the new division team members to engage us in a dialogue about what unification of our programs means to us and how we can work together to strengthen student support. It isn't perfect and is certainly far from done. Your information keeps me on track as I guide us through this period.

>From Texas, we learned about the following testimony to the Texas Senate Finance Committee re. *Addressing Barriers to Student Learning*

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5728d34462cd94b84dc567ed/t/58885c6259cc681363f0e1ca/1485331557808/Senate-Finance-TEA-budget+testimony-January2017.pdf>

...On average, schools use about 14 different strategies or programs to prevent violence and promote safe learning environments. Instead of adopting a different program to combat each new problem that emerges, schools can develop a consistent and long-term strategy that addresses multiple student concerns through a set of well-integrated programs and services. Rather than having siloed efforts that are disconnected from each other, schools have the opportunity to strategically align policies, strategies and practices, weaving together school and community resources, to promote students' healthy development and learning and prevent things schools, students, families and the state wants to see less of: bullying, truancy, mental health concerns, substance abuse, disciplinary actions, and school failure. TEA provides little guidance to districts on using available resources to more effectively address nonacademic barriers to learning. ... Education service centers (ESCs) offer schools information and training on things like positive behavior management and supports, bullying prevention, and family and community engagement. However, with separate ESCs leading different efforts, training related to school climate is largely planned and delivered in silos. ...

(cont.)

Note: The testimony to the Texas Senate Finance Committee concluded by recommending Establishment of an Office of Student Learning Supports at TEA, with a minimum of one FTE, charged with leading agency efforts to address non-academic barriers to student learning.

>From the website, the California Department of Education (CDE), we learned about its efforts to align a system of supports to better meet the needs of the whole child (from cradle to career).

Within CDE, we have created a One System Action Team (OSAT) made up of CDE division representatives to support and continue to build the basis for "whole child" support systems and drive the CDE-wide integration of the "one system" concept. The OSAT will provide the internal mechanism to ensure a collaborative, department-wide focus on supporting and building the capacity of LEA's to implement proven or promising research-based programs and practices, specifically targeted at one system serving the whole child.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/onesystem.asp>

>And from the Department's The EDge newsletter:

... the California Scale-Up MTSS Statewide (SUMS) Initiative, will 'address barriers to learning and re-engage disconnected students by creating a culture of collaboration' among disparate and fragmented support systems. The plan envisions a statewide transformation that will 'increase equitable access to opportunity, develop the whole child, and close the achievement gap for all students.' ... As an initiative that encompasses the whole state, SUMS also answers the broader national effort for reform called for by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor ... at UCLA. ...

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/edgenewsletterhome.asp>

And here's an example of the many requests we receive:

Our district leadership has begun the process of reading and discussing your publication, *Transforming Student and Learning Supports*; we feel it fits nicely with the vision we have for our students and schools. We would like to set up a time to discuss it further.

Our Center, of course, is always ready to help. The best way to start is with a conference call with key district leadership. In preparation for the call, districts email us the matters they want to discuss and we suggest looking at the resources cited in Exhibit 3.

Why do they keep asking us the same needs-assessment questions over and over again?



Because it's cheaper than doing something to address the needs!