

To: Participants in the *District and State Collaborative Network for Developing Comprehensive Systems for Learning Support*

From: Linda Taylor & Howard Adelman (10/12/13)

As you will have noted from our quarterly e-journal/newsletter, the initiative has had a significant breakthrough (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/fall13.pdf>).

We now are working on ways to regularly share what is currently happening as SEAs and LEA's move forward across the country. Such sharing is essential to advancing the initiative. At this juncture, we will be sharing illustrative activity with you and hope you will share what we send with others and will send us additional info to enhance the sharing process.

Below is a brief example of the work at one district for whom we are providing email and online support. We have been mentoring and coaching them as they move forward. Because their work is illustrative of what a district can do without special funding, we are sharing their latest email (which describes current work) and our response to the following request for feedback:

“Are we on the right track? Are there any critical steps we are overlooking at this point? Should we be taking all the teams through each of the six areas? We are learning the material and teaching it at the same time. A bit challenging, I must admit, but extremely exciting. Any feedback you can provide us will be greatly appreciated.”

Here is what they shared:

"Thank you for sending the news article to superintendents.

<http://newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/alabama-georgia-public-schools-248010.aspx>

My superintendent read it and believes this is the right work to do. He is pleased to see that we are working to move our district/schools Student Support Services Teams toward a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports.”

They noted that they began with current teams of Learning Support Staff and asked all to read and then meet to discuss an introductory article about new directions for student and learning supports. Then,

“We asked each school team to identify the Barriers to Learning at their school. Each team was given time to share with each other. In the follow-up activity, we asked the teams to use poster board paper to create three T-Charts: academics, behavior, social/emotional. The teams worked together to categorize the Barriers to Learning from the previous activity into these three T-Charts. Once the Barriers to Learning were categorized, we asked them to identify the intervention on their campus that would address each Barrier to Learning they had identified. This activity was processed with the team. One team after another realized they had some programs in place to address some of the Barriers to Learning, but could not address others. They also began to realize the fragmentation that occurs not only at their schools, but across the district.

We introduced them to the Six Arenas of learning supports (classroom, transitions, home involvement, community outreach, crisis, student/family assistance). We gave them guiding questions to frame their thinking around the Six Arenas. The teams were asked to identify which of the Six Arenas were the strongest at their school and which one created some challenge for them. After this was processed, we provided each team with a poster size template of the Six Arenas. We asked the teams to identify and begin to categorize the resources they had at their school around the Six Arenas.

Next month, we will continue the Resource Mapping and share ... and we think it is time to put together a district design document to show our commitment to a unified and comprehensive system of Learning Supports. We noticed several examples on your

website (e.g., Alabama Department of Education produced a document with much of your information.) We want to create a similar document....

Our Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability has asked me to reserve the month of November to present the unified and comprehensive system of learning supports to various groups: the Curriculum Division, the Executive Team (Asst. Superintendents), the Principals, Assistant Principals, and the Board.”

Our response:

The first challenge in transforming student and learning supports is creating a critical mass of key stakeholders who are ready, committed, and engaged in developing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports. The work this district is doing is a good start in moving forward, especially with the Superintendent on board with the changes and key student support staff leading the way.

With staff taking the lead as internal coaches, we see our Center as providing external mentoring and coaching and sharing with them aids to guide the work. Recently, we drafted and added to our system change tool kit the following three resources that we think will help them and others as they move forward:

>*Planning Coaching for SEAs/LEAs to Establish a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/coaching.pdf>

>*Enhancing Readiness, Commitment, and Engagement for Transforming Learning Supports: An Ongoing Process* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/readiness.pdf>

>*Prototype Strategic Plan for Guiding SEAs and LEAs in Developing a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/stratplan.pdf>

In terms of next steps, we stress that it is strategically important to

- continue to enhance readiness, commitment, and engagement to ensure there is a critical mass of key stakeholders working toward the transformation
- establish a group of *high level* power leaders to become an official Steering Group for the work (to steer, champion, problem solve, clear barriers to moving forward)
- prepare a design document to demonstrate the vision and commitment to learning supports (This helps focus the effort to transform the system by ensuring everyone understands that this is what the district leadership has decided to do and is what the district is moving toward. The Alabama document is a good model. There are several other examples at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkitb1a.htm> . Also helpful are the examples of district and state brochures readily accessed at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkita1a.htm> .)
- prepare a strategic plan for getting from here to there (the prototype cited above that we use to guide our mentoring and coaching is useful for this).

Hope you all find this helpful.
Warm Regards,

Linda & Howard