

Update from Phoenix (12/16/14)

What's been happening at Phoenix Union with respect to moving toward a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports?

“We had several personnel changes at the start of the school year, which led to the student services department being divided into multiple sections, each having a different person overseeing the different groups; each going in a different direction. ... All the work we had done to identify and remove the barriers to learning, and organize our staff and services around the six arenas, seemed to have gone by the wayside, so I thought.

However, this year our district is going through the AdvancEd process for accreditation. The process requires that we conduct a self-assessment by the standards set forth by AdvancEd. Interestingly enough, one of the standards focused on student services. The superintendent and his cabinet were reviewing the self-assessment documents, and questioned the low score received from the student services practitioners this year. I was told he stated, ‘We need to do something about this,’ to which someone replied, ‘We were doing something about it. It was called the UCLA Model of Learner Supports.’ The individual in the room explained that we did try to implement the model last year with very little support. He then said, ‘What do we need to do to bring it back?’ When the reasons were explained to him, he apparently stated he wanted us to look into this and continue down that path. ... It appears our superintendent now wants to learn more about UCLA Model. I hope his renewed interest will translate into action and support from all directions and levels.... Stay tuned.”