

### **Update # 3 -- California Initiative: New Directions for Student Support - 8/30/04**

Hope you had some time to rest up over the summer and are ready for the new school year and for moving in New Directions for Student Support.

Just to follow up on the two strategies for moving the initiative forward in California:

1. A Social Marketing Campaign aimed at specific groups and key leaders.

A number of you have shared information at conferences over the summer and some have done presentations on New Directions for Student Support. Let us know what your experience was in sharing information and any support you need in taking next steps.

We sent a mailing to key education leaders throughout California with information on New Directions and asked "Where are you and Where are you going with regard to New Directions for Student Support?"

>At this point, the responses are about evenly divided between  
(1) those saying "I think it is important to move in new directions and my school/district is ready" and  
(2) those who say "I think it is important, but my school/district is not ready."

---

We responded to each of the 98 who answered the questions with these strategies and resources:

#### **HERE ARE A FEW RESOURCES FOR ENHANCING READINESS AND MOMENTUM FOR NEW DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENT SUPPORT**

In an era of scarce resources, new directions for student support are essential. The following resources have been developed with a view to how to proceed without an allocation of additional funds.

##### **>I. Enhancing Readiness**

For those in situations where more attention to enhancing readiness is necessary, tools for enhancing readiness are listed below.

To begin with:

>>You might want to download, adapt, and share the brief "white papers" in the document "New Directions for School & Community Initiative to Address Barriers to Learning : Two Examples of White Papers to Inform and Guide Policy Makers." Each of these brief papers offers a short overview along with talking points. (One is designed for urban districts and one for suburban districts.) You can download the whole document at -

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/newdirectionsofrschoolandcommunity.pdf>

>>"So you want higher achievement scores? Its time to rethink learning supports" (2002) by H.S. Adelman, & L. Taylor in The State Education Standard, (Autumn 2002) National Association of State Boards of Education, Alexandria, VA. (On our website at

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> "Summits: Concept Papers")

>>"New Directions for Student Support: A Comprehensive Student Support System - Q & A <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/q&a.pdf>

>>Also see the documents developed for the Outreach Campaign - online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/outreachcampaign.htm>

>>Also helpful may be "Where's it Happening? New Directions for Student Support" - online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/overview.pdf>

"Restructuring Boards of Education to Enhance Schools' Effectiveness in Addressing Barriers to Student Learning" - online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/boardrep.pdf>

## >II. Enhancing Momentum

If your school or district is ready to move, you might enhance the momentum by sharing ideas to move the process forward. The various tools for enhancing readiness listed above still may be helpful, and specific tools related to enhancing momentum also are listed below.

>>You might start with the document "About Infrastructure Mechanisms for a Comprehensive Learning Support Component" has ideas for leadership, resource coordination, and working with a feeder pattern to improve learning support. Download at - [http://smhp.psych.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/infra\\_mechanisms.pdf](http://smhp.psych.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/infra_mechanisms.pdf).

>>To build on the "white papers", see "New Directions for Student Support" (a concept paper) - online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/newdirections.pdf>

>>For specific aids, see "Resource Aids for Rethinking Student Support to Enable Students to Learn and Schools to Teach" - (a tool kit that includes a copy of the Concept Paper) - online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/studentsupport.pdf>

>>One of the tools is the "Guidelines for a Student Support Component" - online separately at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupportguidelines.pdf>  
>>The guidelines have a supporting document outlining rationale and research- online at -- <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/guidelinessupportdoc.pdf>

>>With respect to policy, see the "Example of Legislation for a Comprehensive Student Support Component" <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> "Summits: Example of Legislation"

>>>Because we are a federally-funded center, we have a variety of ways (materials, TA, training) to help in your efforts to move in new directions for student support. (Most of the Center's resources are

available at no cost and others require only reimbursement of Center costs). As a starting point, see the resources listed above and then go to the Center website to see the extensive list of Center materials, Quick Finds, etc. <http://smhp.psych.edu/>

Let us know if we can provide additional resources or assistance as you move forward.

>>>>And, we would like to hear more from you about what local schools and districts are doing to strengthen learning support (e.g., please share any policy statements for a learning support component; infrastructure designs for pursuing such a component; comprehensive learning support frameworks and any related guidelines, standards, accountability indices, leadership job descriptions, etc.). Examples of what others are sharing about their new directions are compiled into a document entitled "Where's it Happening? New Directions for Student Support" which is online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/overview.pdf>. We are looking forward to expanding this resource document as we receive detailed descriptions from other places. And, of course, at each statewide summit, we highlight where its happening in the state.

#####

2. With regard to the second focus in following through on the New Directions for Student Support Summit, we are working with several school districts as they begin to put ideas into policy and practice. We will share information on their work as it moves along. If you want to share what is going on in your school or school district to strengthen learning supports this year, please let us know so we can had it to "Where's It Happening in CA?"

#####

Related to the imperative for moving in New Directions for Student Support, you might be interested in the following:

#### The Plateau Effect

Reports from across the country are verifying the earlier predictions that key facets of the No Child Left Behind reforms would result in modest immediate test score increases followed by a longer-term plateau. In an article in the Los Angeles Times (8/22/04), Bruce Fuller notes that after a steady few years climb in student achievement during the 1990s, states have experienced faltering achievement levels (e.g., Florida, Michigan, Texas). For those showing gains in the 1990s, he stresses "scores have barely budged in recent years." The most recent example is "the same sort of fade-out" in California where Jack O'Connell, the state's chief school officer, confirmed that a majority of California's schools have hit a plateau or worse. (Last year's test scores showed a decline in student proficiency in just under half the elementary schools in the state.)

Given the "plateau effect," two issues are emerging:

(1) How to interpret why it's happening and

(2) What to do about it.

In keeping with our Center's long-term focus on this matter, we continue to suggest that the plateau is inevitable as long as schools do not develop a comprehensive approach to addressing barriers to student learning, and therefore, the problem requires an enhanced focus in policy and practice that results in every school moving toward a learning support system that is fully integrated into school improvement planning and implementation (see — <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/whynewdirectionsimperative.htm>).

What's your view about these two matters.

Howard Adelman

Linda Taylor  
Co-Directors  
Center for Mental Health in Schools  
UCLA Dept. of Psychology  
Box 941563  
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563  
(310) 825-3634 - Phone  
(310) 206-8716 - Fax  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>