

National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support

Brief Progress Report (June 6, 2005)

As this school year ends, it's a good time to reflect on the work that is catapulting a national initiative for New Directions for Student Support forward.

What's Happened so Far

The Initiative has contributed in major ways to the growing, widespread appreciation that new directions for student support is an imperative. As a result of the national summit in late 2002 and the subsequent three regional and eight statewide summits that have been convened to date, there is enhanced awareness that continued tinkering with the status quo will not meet the immense needs confronting schools as they strive to enable all children and adolescents to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. There is deepening understanding that new directions must be bold, innovative, and comprehensive if the student support enterprise is no longer to be marginalized in school policy and practice.

It is noteworthy that pursuit of comprehensive systemic changes for new directions became significant agenda items in diverse states and localities across the country (e.g., in Iowa, Washington, California, Hawai'i, Oregon, Texas, Minnesota, Wisconsin). This was the case even when there had been no state summit or formal statewide initiative. In states that have convened summits, networks of stakeholders have been identified who are contributing to the initiative nationally, and some have begun to generate movement in their own states and localities. Outreach mailings in these and other states are yielding new participants in the national network and are identifying next states in which to pursue statewide summits. And, it is significant that 33 initiative co-sponsors already have signed on.

Where We're Going

The work ahead involves continuing to coalesce stakeholders who are supportive of the National Initiative. It also encompasses facilitating the efforts of those who want to embrace statewide initiatives, including new states and states that began the process and have yet to gel.

A few highlights from around the country:

- Hawai'i's enacted legislation for a Comprehensive Student Support System and the inclusion of a major focus on Student Support in their school improvement planning guide – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/hawaii.pdf>
- California's proposed legislation for a Comprehensive Pupil Learning Supports System – see [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ab171\(1-20-05\).pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ab171(1-20-05).pdf)
- Iowa's design for Systems of Learning Supports developed by the State Department of Education in Iowa in collaboration with other state agencies – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/iowasystemofsupport.pdf>
- Multnomah Education Service District Board's policy establishing "components to address barriers to student learning and enhance healthy development be fully integrated

with efforts to improve instruction and management/governance for instruction and be pursued as a primary and essential component of MESD education reforms in classrooms, schools, and consultation/ services to component districts" – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/multnomah.pdf>

- St. Paul Public School's integration of new directions for student supports in projects such as the Achievement Plus schools and the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative and the increasing focus on learning supports by the district's Student Services director and staff (with a special presentation planned for August, 2005)
- Berkeley, California's move toward a collaborative initiative for school and city to pursue a comprehensive, multifaceted, initiative to address barriers to student learning.
- Massachusetts State Dept of Education's development of a Leadership Institute for New Directions for Student Support (for June, 2005)
- Texas' Association of Secondary School Principals' in their journal the Texas Study of Secondary Education recently devoted the issue to "Changes...Responses...New Directions in Learning Supports for Students" featuring a lead article by Jane Owen entitled "Learning Supports for Students: An Organizational Approach" (see attached)

Texas also is planning a Leadership Institute for New Directions for Student Support (for September, 2005)

- National Association of Pupil Services Administrators' continued integration of a major focus on New Directions for Student Support at its yearly conference (next conference is in October, 2005); Increasing number of the association's members are joining the national network and looking toward statewide summits
- South Carolina Regional Conference hosted by Richland County School District One is designed as an intense training and professional development will focus entirely on "Removing Barriers from Student Learning" and will feature the New Directions Initiative as another step in advancing the work in the southeast region and readying states in the region for statewide summits (September, 2005)
- At national, state, and local levels, network participants are conveying information from the Initiative to state department and district leaders, to support staff associations conferences, at school boards meetings and conferences, and more. This has included presentations to the national conference of school social workers (SSWAA), state associations of administrators, and superintendents' cabinets. An interesting example of an upcoming event stems from the work in Berkeley, CA. A school board member there has organized and will moderate a 2 hour "clinic" at the California School Board Association conference that will feature the city and school collaboration for New Directions for Student Support with the city's mayor, the District superintendent, and the UCLA Center's co-directors presenting. (December, 2005)

Resources for Moving the Initiative Forward

In addition to the many resources prepared by and available at no cost from the center (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>), Corwin Press is publishing this July two books specially designed to advance New Directions for Student Support. The works are:

>The implementation guide to student learning supports in the classroom and schoolwide: New directions for addressing barriers to learning. Corwin Press (2006).

>The school leader's guide to student learning supports: New directions for addressing barriers to learning. Corwin Press (2006).

We anticipate these will be widely disseminated and provide the type of integrated introduction to new directions to student supports that will give the Initiative a major boost. And, these two books may be the beginning of a New Directions' series.

As the above highlights underscore, the Initiative is continuing to create readiness in all states, with a strong emphasis on expanding readiness in states where Summits have been held. Current plans call for the next statewide Summit to be in Pennsylvania; other states are being identified. Additional outreach and leadership will be devoted this coming year to integrating the efforts of the wide range of leaders pursuing policy for MH in schools.

The staff at the UCLA Center will continue to provide facilitative support and leadership. Listservs will be expanded to facilitate communications. Each month the Center will generate outreach mailings to enhance readiness for and increase awareness of new directions. Strategic responses will be made to the many requests for more information and assistance from state and local education agencies and boards of education seeking to move in new directions. A continuous flow of policy and program reports, such as the recent analysis of school improvement planning guides (see attached), will be generated.

Respectfully Submitted,
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