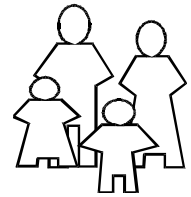


National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support

Connecticut Local Update (April 1, 2005)



The strong interest in the National Initiative across the country and around the state continues. For a national update on the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*, see the "Brief Progress Report" for April, 2005 (in pdf format – [click here](#)).

Some local highlights related to new directions in Connecticut are outlined below.

In general, participants who attended the statewide Connecticut summit already are reporting that the information and frameworks related to New Directions for Student Support are proving useful in planning for change.

Among the various materials related to the Connecticut Network for the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support* that have been circulated widely in the state after the Summit are:

- C the Connecticut version of the brief overview document entitled "Assuring No Child is Left Behind: Enhancing our Learning Support System by Building a Comprehensive Approach that Closes the Achievement Gap and Ensures Every Student has an Equal Opportunity to Succeed at School." This 10 page brief is designed for sharing widely throughout the state to expand interest and readiness for moving in new directions for student support.
- C a "flyer" on the initiative designed for Connecticut. The flyer also is intended to spark interest in the New Directions for Student Support Initiative. A list of core advisors in the Connecticut Network is provided on the back and will be updated as more people express interest in playing a leadership role.

Both of these documents are online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> (Go to the green circle labeled "New Directions" then click on Current Status of the Initiative. You will see materials for Connecticut as well as information on other states that are part of the growing network.)

Anyone who would like additional copies or either of these to share with others or at conferences should feel free to download and share these or contact us for copies or to directly send them to folks.

Initial response to the mailing of these materials throughout Connecticut has been excellent. In the process, we have heard from individuals who want to be added to the list of core advisors (including some who work at the superintendency level). Comments from those who have responded indicate interest and readiness to move forward:

- > "I think it is a good initiative and I want to become involved at the statewide level in some capacity."
- > "I am on an ad hoc committee at my university very concerned about NCLB and it's effects on schools. Is there a working group dealing with this?"
- > "I would be interested in becoming part of the initiative. I am not sure how to determine if my district is ready to "move forward." Is there some objective criterion that can be used in this regard?" We responded to this by delineating some initial criteria (these are outlined on the back of the attached form that seeks your advice on ways to enhance the work).

Finally, some in the Connecticut Network have asked about follow up sessions for those who are ready to move forward. (Note in the Brief Progress Report on the National Initiative that Texas already is planning a special training workshop, as well as another key stakeholder information sharing session for this summer.) Well-designed sessions are certainly worth pursuing. Do you have some advice to share on what types of sessions should be planned? The Initiative

Facilitators are ready to work with members of the Connecticut Network in determining interest, planning, and carrying out any strategic activity that is relevant to this National Initiative. In particular, they are ready to help inform and mobilize key leaders and administrators at state and district levels.

Please take a few minutes now to review the response form and share info and advice ([click here](#)).

NOTE: To facilitate communication, a brief progress report covering what is happening with the Initiative across the country and within the state are sent to the Connecticut network and others at the beginning of each month. Along with the report is an indication of some next steps being explored to move the work forward nationally and within the state ([click here](#)) and a request for advice on ways to enhance the work ([click here](#)).

An example of one bit of advice recently received: It was noted that what we have been thinking of as an initial statewide “Steering” Group really is a core group of initiative advisors. On reflection, this point clarified several problems that have arisen. So, from now on those who indicated a willingness to serve will be referred to as core advisors in the Connecticut Network. From the perspective of the National Initiative, such core advisors will be (a) joining with others across the country in helping shape the work nationally and (b) providing advice to help guide the early phases of the work within the state. And, at the right time, core advisors and others who have been active in the state network can help mobilize influential leaders for Connecticut’s new directions initiative.

Next Steps



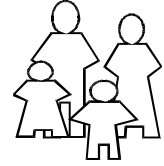
Social Marketing of the National Initiative

- (1) Outreach mailing across the country will continue.
- (2) Preparation by the New York Network of a New York version of the brief document “Assuring No Child is Left Behind.” This adaptation will convey an overview of the need for New Directions for Student Support and general concepts for moving in new directions in New York.
- (3) Once a New York version of the national initiative is developed, the document will be circulated throughout their state.
- (4) Statewide summit in Iowa in April.
- (5) Providing information and updates about the National Initiative at national, state, and local conferences. The Initiative Facilitators have been invited to do this at several upcoming national conferences. Others in the network are planning to do so at state and local conferences.

Mobilizing Action

- (1) Organizing a series of top level meetings with key groups (e.g., state depts. of education, major school districts, board of education leaders, union leaders, key legislators).
- (2) Identifying places that are ready to move forward across the country and in the state.
- (3) Providing special training sessions for those who are ready to move forward.
- (4) Establish work groups as soon as appropriate.

Advice on Ways to Enhance the Work.



Social Marketing

(1) Indicate your advice about follow-up training workshops and/or additional key stakeholder information sharing sessions.

(2) At what upcoming conferences would it be important to share information and updates about the National Initiative?

(a) national organization conferences

(b) conferences within your state?

If you involved with any of these organizations, please indicate what role you can play in arranging for sharing information and updates about the Initiative? If you would like materials on the initiative to share at a conference or elsewhere, just let us know.

Mobilizing Action

(1) As indicated in the statewide summit report, many groups were identified as important to contact. We have been including them all in the outreach mailing. Now we need your advice about arranging meetings with key groups to discuss the Initiative *and how to move it forward?* (e.g., Which groups should be assigned the highest priority? How to engage them?)

If you have access to any key group, please indicate what role you can play in arranging such a meeting.

(2) Please let us know of any places that are ready to move forward and we will outreach to them. (Some criteria for what we mean by “ready” are offered on the back of this response form.)

Name

Contact Info

(3) Any others who should be invited to join the network?

Name

Contact Info

(4) Use a separate piece of paper to offer any other comments and advice.

Your Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-Mail _____

Thanks for completing this form. Return by FAX to (310) 206-8716.

The Center for Mental Health in Schools is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Dept. of Psychology, UCLA. Support comes in part from the Office of Adolescent Health, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration. Co-funding comes from the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Both HRSA and SAMHSA are agencies of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.

Some Criteria for Identifying District/School Readiness to Move in New Directions for Student Support

Here are some initial criteria you might use in thinking about whether a district or school is ready to make significant systemic changes to move forward in new directions for student support.

Key leaders in the district (e.g., superintendent, director of student support, Title I administrator, board members) or at a school already have or are willing to begin

- C rethinking how they are addressing barriers to learning and teaching to move in new directions for student/learning supports (they see the need and the opportunity)
- C considering policy shifts to end the marginalization of student supports
- C mapping and analyzing the range of resources currently expended in addressing barriers to learning and teaching
- C revamping infrastructure and making systemic changes to enhance efforts to move forward in new directions for student support