

INITIATIVE STATUS REPORT – DECEMBER 15, 2004

Initiative Underway in Six States; Summit Dates Scheduled in Two More

It is encouraging to see the burgeoning interest and effort for new directions for student support. Not only is the initiative spreading, there already are various pioneering and trailblazing efforts across the country that are increasing clarity about the type of systemic changes that are required if all students are to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

The Connecticut Summit on November 9th added a 6th state to the national network mobilizing to move learning supports into the mainstream of school improvement. See the sections for each state for the names of those on the Steering Groups. If there is someone else in any of the listed states who you think would be a good addition to that state's Steering Group, contact – ltaylor@ucla.edu

Plans for Summits in New York in March and Iowa in April are underway. Iowa is ahead of the game having just completed a year long process during which they developed a design for their new approach to Learning Supports. (The design report is available in hardcopy and should soon be online.)

If you know of any education leaders in New York and Iowa who should be invited to the statewide summits, let us know. Also if you have ideas about next states to include, contact – ltaylor@ucla.edu

Social Marketing Efforts

Summit participants and co-sponsors continue to request materials to share with colleagues, with schools, district and state administrators, board members, and at conferences (e.g., student support staff meetings, Superintendent and Principal Conferences/Institutes, teacher conferences, conferences for board members). Several folks have reported contacts with legislators who have special interest in education. As part of such outreach, they report that sharing the legislation from Hawaii and the pending legislation in California is very useful.

In addition to the materials already developed for social marketing, there is now a generic brief 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" online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/assuringnochild.pdf> There also is a flyer for the national initiative – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/flyerjune04.pdf> These materials are being circulated and also are providing a starting point for state steering groups to develop a state brief and state flyer for their initiative. (If you look online in a few weeks, you will find the state-specific versions of the brief and flyer adapted by CA, IN, WI, and TX.)

In addition to overview material for enhancing understanding of the initiative and new directions for student support in general, requests already are being made for available Center materials to use in restructuring student support at school and district levels.

Strategic Planning of Next Steps

Clearly, strategic planning of next steps needs to establish ways to bring more key leaders on board. In the meantime, everyone interested in moving the initiative forward should reach out to colleagues to invite them to join in. Or, ask the Center to send them information and invite their participation.

The trend in current planning around state initiatives is to develop a strategic approach to mobilize key leaders. The focus is on:

- >>>>Relevant state organizations (e.g., student support associations, administrators, unions, teachers, PTA)
- >>>>Superintendents' tables
- >>>>Boards of Education
- >>>>Principals
- >>>>Legislators
- >>>>Other influential stakeholders (e.g., regional service centers)

The types of steps being discussed include:

- >>sending personalized letters with a copy of the state-specific brief, the state flyer, and a response form (an accompanying letter would indicate a desire to follow-up with a meeting after the recipients have had a chance to discuss the information).
- >>having a steering group representative call to arrange a meeting a few weeks later,

In preparing for the meeting, groups can draw on the talking points and Q and A developed for the initiative – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/q&a.pdf> There is also a powerpoint presentation online that can be adapted.

At the meeting, the objective would be to clarify specific follow-up steps, e.g.,

- >With school boards, there could be exploration about establishing a committee for Addressing Barriers to Learning;
- >With superintendents, there could be discussion about creating a blue ribbon commission to formulate specific recommendations for new directions for student support;
- >With Principals, discussion about a leadership institute for planning and implementing new directions for student support.

NOTE: At any point, the Center at UCLA will help locals in any way feasible. This includes preparing resources, doing mailing, making strategic presentations, etc. etc. Also, if there is a need and interest, follow-up conference calls and face-to-face sessions can be arranged.

New Directions in Practice

Compiling info on new directions. In support of the *New Directions for Student Support Initiative*, our Center is compiling information about places across the country where beginnings have been made that have relevance for developing comprehensive approaches. These are presented in a report entitled: *Where's it Happening? New Directions for Student Support and Lessons Learned*, which Center staff have just updated. It's online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/wheresithappening.html>

The trailblazing and pioneering efforts described provide an intriguing glimpse into the future of student support and offer invaluable lessons learned. Some endeavors already are well along the way; some are in the planning stage or are taking first steps. A few have implemented innovations but have yet to generate the type of momentum necessary to produce full blown systemic change.

Examples of the broad-based systemic designs and initiatives described in the report are:

- >Urban Learning Center Design – prototype model developed as part of the New American Schools initiative

- >Hawai'i – statewide initiative, including state legislation
- >Iowa – state dept. of education initiative
- >Madison, WI – district initiative
- >St. Paul, MN – district and school initiative
- >California – Proposed Legislation for a Comprehensive Learning Supports System
- >Multnomah (OR) Education Service District – School Board Policy for Learning Supports

Highlights of other initiatives also are included in this report, and we look forward to adding more and more examples in coming years.

What Might It Look Like at a School? The material in the “Where’s It Happening?” document provides a big picture of an enabling or learning supports component. Those interested in new directions also have called for a short description that could provide stakeholders with a picture of what a school with a comprehensive learning supports system in place might ideally look like in daily practice. The Center has just developed such a brief description – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/whatmightfully.pdf>.

Participating State’s Highlight Related Activity. The website section that reports Current Status for each state initiative now includes links featuring relevant info, policy documents, position statements, etc. from that state. These include documents from the “Where’s it Happening?” document, state-specific briefs and flyers as they are developed, and other statements developed in the state that have relevance to new directions. Examples of the last item are seen in the position statements from the Connecticut State Board of Education on (1) Student Support Services and (2) Creating a Healthy School Environment.

Other material will be added as it becomes available from a state, e.g.,

- >> material from Wisconsin’s Pupil Services Roles Delineation Project and the paper being updated on Collaborative Pupil Services.
- >> information on school improvement plans that include new directions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching

NOTE: It would be invaluable if anyone reading this could share info about work being done on:

- >> integrating new directions for student support into school improvement plans and information management systems
- >> integrating new directions for student support with the work related to Title I (e.g., examples of support service and Title I directors working together to enhance learning supports systems)

Other matters of Interest:

- C Many participants are using information about the “plateauing” of test scores as a way to introduce the importance of New Directions for Student Support. Others are stressing the focus on “Response to Intervention” in the reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as an opportunity to strengthen the continuum of learning supports.
- C An example of a direct effort to encourage higher education to play a role in new directions for student support is reported from Texas where a faculty member is in discussion with her dean about establishing a university-based support center for the state’s New Directions Initiative.

Thanks in Advance for Any Input and Support You Can Offer

As always, we value input on how to maximize the initiative's impact, including info on upcoming events where there could be an opportunity to engage decision makers in exploring New Directions.

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While there are over 30 co-sponsors for the Initiative, steering group members have stressed the importance of state groups signing on as co-sponsors of the State's initiative. It would be a great help if anyone who has contact with a state chapter that might be interested in being a co-sponsor talked with the group about signing on. If you do so, let the Center know and a follow-up contact will be made.

Send any suggestions, comments, information, relevant documents, etc. to ltaylor@ucla.edu for sharing with the Steering Group and other initiative participants.

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For updates related to each state that has already had a summit, go to the section on State Initiatives.