



New Directions for Student Support Initiative*

Texas' Statewide Summit
In Austin on September 27, 2004

The Texas Summit was held in Austin on September 27, 2004.**

Summit goals include:

1. Clarifying basic frameworks for new directions in student support
2. Highlighting where it is happening
3. Mobilizing local action toward new directions for student support
4. Providing resource aids for moving forward
5. Developing a mechanism within the state for supporting new directions for student support.

Objectives for the day were to:

- C Clarify new directions thinking about the nature of student support through clarifying four fundamental problems that must be addressed in pursuing New Directions (i.e. the policy problem, the intervention frameworks problem, the infrastructure problem, the systemic change problem).
- C Highlight ways to enhance the policy and practice priority status of this component of schools
- C Foster an exchange of information about policy and practice around the country
- C Facilitate proactive strategic planning and problem-solving for next steps state-wide and at local levels related to moving student support from the margins to a central position in school improvement policy and planning

*The *New Directions for Student Support Initiative* is sponsored by the national Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. Appendix A lists the co-sponsors and offer a brief description of the initiative. More information on the Initiative is at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

**Appendix B is a list of attendees, as well as a list of others throughout the state who were

unable to attend, but indicated interest in new directions.

Participant Perspectives

Based on the discussion and written input, participants stressed:

1. Evidence of a “Plateau Effect” Increases the Urgency for Pursuing New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

The urgency for systemic changes stems from the data on test scores, dropouts, graduation rates showing the reality of how many students are not profiting from the exclusionary focus on improving instruction. Moreover, evidence is increasing that achievement test score averages tend to plateau after a few years of initial gains.

Without a major focus on effectively addressing barriers to learning and teaching, too little attention is devoted to classroom and school-wide programs for engaging and re-engaging students in classroom learning. Comprehensive approaches to these matters, not just greater attention to controlling behavior, must be a central focus of leaving no child behind.

Given there will be mid-course corrections to the No Child Left Behind Act, it is imperative to stress new directions for learning supports as essential to efforts to raise test scores and ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. Based on student data, a learning support component should be included in all school improvement planning and implementation.

2. New Directions: Not New Resources

New directions is about leadership for systemic changes that use existing resources more effectively.

Strong leadership at the school and district is needed to

- C develop mechanisms for consistent planning to integrate a broad range of resources and personnel for learning supports (e.g., horizontal and vertical teams such as a Learning Supports Resource Team at each school and a Learning Supports Resources Council for each feeder pattern)
- C facilitate integration of instructional and learning supports personnel at building and district levels to map existing resources for learning supports, do a gap analysis, set priorities for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, and so forth
- C determine the cost-benefits of sharing resources to achieve economy of scale(e.g., the high school and it’s feeder schools in a neighborhood)
- C review school improvement plans to determine if they appropriately include a focus on learning supports, and if not, take steps to correct the oversight
- C reach out strategically, as needed, to community resources. In doing so, focus on *integration of resources* at each school, not just coordination.

3. Across the State, Existing Practices Provide a Foundation Upon which to Build

Schools across Texas offer examples of outstanding programs to build on in pursuing systemic changes, especially with respect to prevention and early intervention. It is the case that these are fragmented because they are marginalized in schools and districts. This can change by adopting an umbrella concept such as addressing barriers to learning and use of broad frameworks to connect learning supports and instruction. Throughout, it is important to show clear connections to data on what students need to be successful. Under one umbrella, the focus can be on a comprehensive approach to learning supports that enables students to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Next Steps in Moving Forward in Texas

Participants were eager to move ideas into action and to set priorities on where to start. The following were key comments and suggestions:

- C Reach Out Again to Influential State Professional and Community Organizations* (e.g., school boards; PTA; Teachers Associations; Administrators Associations; all pupil service organizations; United Way, League of Women Voters, Mayors, Chambers of Commerce etc.).

The goal is to enhance their involvement in the *New Directions for Student Support Initiative*. Encourage them to share information through their websites, newsletters, and at meetings. (Once a state-wide Steering group is functional, the UCLA Center can facilitate communications from the Steering Group to relevant organizations.)

- C Embed New Directions for Student Support in Training and in Accountability Documents*

It was recognized that work would have to be undertaken with University preservice and inservice programs (and with researchers as well). And, it was suggested that eventually the initiative should explore ways to have the Association of School and College Accreditation address this matter.

- C About creating readiness and building capacity for change*

Immediate contact should be made with all state associations concerned with schools. In this era of dwindling resources, it is essential to stress that enhanced student outcomes can be achieved through positive systemic changes that *use existing resources in more effective ways*. Early emphasis should be on emphasizing need and feasible strategies, including clarifying the flexibility that exists under current local, state, and federal policies for reshaping learning supports. Clarify strategies for braiding resources and provide ongoing technical assistance to move forward. All this can help show that working toward a cohesive and comprehensive learning

supports component is permitted and encouraged.

- C *Determine if the State Education Agency can play a greater leadership role related to new directions for student support*

For example, identify what systemic changes would foster new directions for students support (credentialing/licensing requirements; job descriptions, inservice training for learning support and instructional staff, development of standards and expanded accountability for student support, etc). Regional Centers might provide the support for mapping existing resources and moving toward comprehensive and integrated learning supports.

- C *Prepare a document that clarifies Texas' New Directions for Student Supports Initiative*

Have a work group develop a brief document clarifying what would New Directions would mean and look like in terms of content and infrastructure at a school and at the district level. Develop examples for rural, suburban, and urban districts

- C *Share the information at multiple venues* (association meetings, staff development conferences, inservice training, etc).

Begin a process that brings a broad range of key leaders on board (e.g., Superintendents, School Boards, Directors of Special Education/Student Support/Title I, Unions, etc.). This means formulating an effective message to them and outlining ways to proceed that they will see as a good use of their time and energy. This should be the focus of an early work group. A goal here is to ensure that a learning supports component is included in every school's school improvement plan.

- C *Build leadership capacity*

Ask those involved in pre- and in-service professional preparation and those providing technical assistance (institutions of higher education, TA centers) to include a focus on addressing barriers to learning and teaching and on responding to such barriers with a comprehensive learning supports component. Enlist their involvement in the Texas New Directions for Student Support Initiative.

To facilitate capacity building, work groups could identify

- >efforts around the state that reflect major systemic changes toward new directions for student support and best practices related to resource use and learning supports component development
- >benchmarks to keep systemic changes on track (e.g., establishment of supportive policies, waivers to facilitate braiding of funds, inservice training).
- >out-of-state places moving in new directions for student support (e.g., Iowa, Hawai`i, Madison, etc.).

Who is Ready to Take the Lead in Moving the Initiative Forward?

Participants discussed the need for *mechanisms* focused specifically on moving forward with the new directions initiative. (How to set the process in motion? Who would take the lead?)

It was recognized that a steering and work groups are needed.

(1) Steering Group to Guide Next Steps

This group should assume ownership of the initiative and commit to championing, leading, and guiding the process in ways that ensure effective systemic change and sustainability. It's first functions would include:

- >identifying, establishing, and providing direction to work groups
- >ratifying the “brief” that provides an overview of the need for and general concepts for moving in new directions.
- >supporting, reviewing and, as appropriate, ratifying work group products.

The UCLA Center will facilitate organization of the Steering Group over the next 1-2 months

Note: For a steering group to be most effective, its ultimate membership should consist of high level “power brokers” who have the vision, commitment, position, and status to lead in new directions and also clear away barriers to progress. And, it helps to have some staffing resources to support implementation of steering functions and facilitate work group efforts can be volunteered by the organizations represented on such a group.

The following Summit participants indicated willingness to be part of a statewide steering group:

Ramon Abarca, Superintendent, Uvalde Consolidated ISD
Kathy Armenta, Associate Clinical Professor, University of Texas School Social Work
Sally Arthur, Director Educational Support Services, Humble ISD
Carol Bennets, Katy ISD
Stephanie Blanck, Special Education Director, Georgetown ISD
Nancy Chavkin, Prof./Director, Richter Institute for School Work Research, Texas State Univ.
Jill Darling, Student Assistant Programs Director, Richardson ISD
Lupita Garcia, Director Parent/Student Services, Irving ISD
Estella Garza, Coordinator, San Antonio ISD
Maria (Chris) Garza, Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans
Evelyn Henry, Director, Houston ISD
P. J. Holland, Director of Student Development, McKinney ISD
Peggy Hood, Assistant Director Special Education, Humble ISD
Linda Meigs, SAIL Coordinator, Georgetown ISD
Brenda Melton, Past President American School Counselor Association, San Antonio ISD
John Moore, Executive Director, Office of Educational Support Services, Austin ISD
Robert Muller, Executive Director Student Services, Killeen ISD
Debra Rimmer-Mayorga, Interim Asst. Superintendent Student Support Services, Houston ISD
Cynthia Schiebel, Director Student Support Services, Eanes ISD
Jennifer Scott, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative and Pupil Services, Longview ISD

Constance Thompson, Manager Counseling and Guidance, Houston ISD
Patricia Weger, Acting Manager, Psychological Services, Houston ISD
Brenda Wilson, Director of Secondary Education, Frenship ISD
Linda Yater, Assistant Superintendent Student Services, Dallas ISD

If you would like to join the steering group, please fax us the response form enclosed.

Others interested in working on next steps, include:

Stan Brein, Grant Specialist, Austin ISD
Sandra DeLaCruz, Executive Director Pupil Support, Grand Prairie ISD
Pam Faulkner, SDFSC Coordinator, ESC2
Sancy Fuller, Special Populations Coordinator, McKinney ISD
Steve Hamman, Assistant Director of Special Education, Austin ISD
Robert Jaklich, Executive Director, Harlandale ISD
Janie Livas, Director of Federal Programs, Edcouch Elsa ISD
Angie Pena, Special Education Director, Edcouch Elsa ISD
John Washington, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services & Community Relations,
Garland ISD
Willie Zavala, Superintendent, Harlandale ISD

Others “nominated” to join the efforts:

Mary Cardiff, Round Rock ISD
Linda Bloomquist, Williamson Co Prob. Dept.
Pat Workman, Director of Special Student Services, Richardson ISD
Cory Green, Texas Education Agency
Marcus Nelson, Austin ISD
Nolan Estes
Annell Todd
Michelle McComb, Texas Department of Health
Gwen Johnson, Houston ISD
Ted Moore, McKinney ISD
Mike Moses
Rosemarie Allen, Dallas ISD
Shirley Neeley, Commissioner, Texas Education Agency
George Fair, UT, Dallas
Betty Baitland, Sptd., Fort Bend ISD
Gene Green, U.S. Congress

Organizations that should be included:

Texas Association of Student Assistance Professionals
State Attorney Generals Office
Texas School Nurse Administrators
National Education Association
American Federation of Teachers
Association of Compensatory Education
Healthy Student, Healthy Schools
Commissioners Cabinet
Texas legislature
National Association of Student Assistance Professionals
Juvenile Justice Programs
Texas School Counseling Association
Texas Association of School Psychologists
Texas School Nurse Association
Texas Social Work Association
National Elementary School Principals Association

National Secondary School Principals Association
Texas Summit Committee for Prevention
Safe and Drug Free Schools State Initiative
National Association of School Administrators
National Parent Teacher Association
National Council of La Raza
Texas Department of Health
Area Adult Ed Cooperatives
Texas Association of School Boards
Texas Association of School Administrators
Texas Association of Secondary School Principals
Texas Association of Elementary Principals
American School Counselor Association
The Education Trust
National Association of School Boards
The College Board
Texas ASCD
Texas Retired Teachers Association
Alliance of Urban School Districts
Texas Urban School District Alliance
Texas Parent Teacher Association
Texas School Counseling Association
League of United Latin American Citizens
READ Commission
United Way

(2) Work groups

Work groups will be formed to flesh out specific ideas about new directions and about how to get from here to there. Facilitators for each work group should be established to ensure group effectiveness and cross-group communication and to interface with the steering group. Given that groups will include individuals from around the state, the process would use email, supplemented by U.S. mail, FAX, and phone.

Examples of work group products might be a series of briefs that provide an overview about the need and possible nature of new directions for student support.

- >clarify existing resources and concerns about how they are currently deployed
- >outline a comprehensive intervention learning supports framework for new directions
- >describe how existing infrastructure might be reframed at all levels so that new directions are pursued effectively
- >clarify what must happen to get from here to there (how to effect necessary systemic changes)

As a participant or someone who is interested in *New Directions for Student Support*, we encourage you to send a copy of this document to anyone or any organization that you feel should be part of the network of people and programs that is coming together around this important matter.

Appendix A

The *New Directions for Student Support Initiative* is sponsored by the national Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA* and is co-sponsored by:

- C American School Counselors Association
- C American School Health Association
- C Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- C California Association of School Psychologists
- C California Center for Community School Partnerships
- C California Department of Education
- C Center for Cooperative Research and Extension Services for Schools
- C Center for Prevention of Youth Violence, Johns Hopkins University
- C Center for School Mental Health Assistance at the University of Maryland at Baltimore
- C Center for Social and Emotional Education
- C Coalition for Cohesive Policy in Addressing Barriers to Development & Learning
- C Coalition for Community Schools
- C Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
- C Education Development Center
- C Indiana Department of Education
- C Johns Hopkins University Graduate Division of Educ.
- C Minnesota Department of Public Instruction
- C National Alliance of Pupil Service Organizations
- C National Association of Pupil Services Administrators
- C National Association of School Nurses
- C National Association of School Psychologists
- C National Association of Secondary School Principals
- C National Association of Social Workers
- C National Association of State Boards of Education
- C National Center for Community Education
- C National Middle Schools Association
- C Policy Leadership Cadre for MH in Schools
- C Regional VII Comprehensive Center
- C School Social Work Association of America
- C Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative
- C Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

*The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Department of Psychology, UCLA.

Write: Center for Mental Health in Schools, Box 951563, Los Angeles, CA 90095- 1563 Phone: (310) 825-3634
Fax: (310) 206-8716 E-mail: smhp@ucla.edu **Website: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>**

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About the Summits Initiative

The Summits Initiative: *New Directions for Student Support* is designed as a strategic effort to move student support efforts in new directions and into a central position in improving schools and enhancing outcomes for all students. It represents a major response to the growing and widespread imperative for closing the achievement gap and leaving no child behind.

The initiative already has mobilized a great deal of interest and energy from educational leaders and school staff and from their organizations across the country. (There are currently 31 co-sponsoring groups.) At this stage, the emphasis is on increasing proactive advocacy for *New Directions for Student Support*, building a leadership network nationally and in every state, and delineating specific recommendations and action steps for getting from here to there.

The Initiative began in October 2002 with a national Summit. This was followed by a series of regional summits. Based on the exceptional response, the decision was made to proceed with state-wide summits. Indiana was the fourth of these, following Minnesota, Wisconsin, and California. Several other states are in the planning stages. At an appropriate time, a policy makers' summit on student support will be organized to clarify new directions and encourage adoption of major recommendations.

Throughout the process, efforts across the country to move in new directions are being identified and showcased. Technical assistance and training for localities and states is being provided. And, mutual support networks are being developed for sharing of effective practices, lessons learned, and data on progress.

*While all Summit information can be accessed at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> and many stakeholders already have received the introductory pamphlet on the initiative and some other documents, attached to this report are several key documents for sharing with others. These are (1) an overview about the initiative and the concept paper entitled *New Directions for Student Support*, (2) a document outlining *Guidelines for a Student Support Component*, and (3) the Executive Summary of the Report from the National Summit. Please feel free to copy and share any of these and refer colleagues to the information on the website (which includes examples of "Where it's Happening" and a growing tool kit to facilitate the process).

Appendix B
Summits Initiative:
New Directions for Student Support
Texas, September 27, 2004

Ramon Abarca, Superintendent
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District
1000 N. Getty St.
Uvalde, TX 78801
Phone: 830-278-6655
Fax: 830-591-4909
Email: ramon.abarca@uvalde-cons.k12.tx.us

Howard Adelman, Co-Director
UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools
Dept. of Psych. Box 951563
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563
Phone: 310/825-1225
Fax: 310/206-8716
Email: adelman@psych.ucla.edu

Kathy Armenta, Clinical Associate Professor
Univ. of Texas, School of Social Work
1 University Station, D3500
Austin, TX 78712-0358
Phone: 512-471-8230
Fax: 512-471-9600
Email: Karmenta@mail.utexas.edu

Sally Arthur, Director, Educational Support Services
Humble ISD
PO Box 2000
Humble, TX 77347-2000
Phone: 281/641-8402
Fax: 281/641-1073
Email: sally.arthur@humble.k12.tx.us

Margaret Barrera, Director of Special Education
Edinburg CISD
411 North 8th
Edinburg, TX 78541
Phone: 956-289-2314
Fax: 956-316-3787
Email: margie.barrera@edinburg.escl.net

Emily Beaird, Coordinator of Student Services
Pflugerville ISD
1401 West Pecan
Pflugerville, TX 78660
Phone: 512-594-0106
Fax: 512-594-0101
Email: emily.beaird@pflugerville.net

Carol Bennetts,
Katy School District
634 Spring St.
Columbus, TX 78934
Phone: 281-396-6000
Email: carolbennetts@katyisd.org

Stephanie Blanck, Special Education Director & CRCG
Chairman
Georgetown Independent School District
603 Lakeway Drive
Georgetown, TX 78628
Phone: 512-943-5008
Fax: 512-943-5002
Email: stephanieb@georgetown.txed.net

Mary Ann Brandt, Counselor
Friendswood HS
702 Greenbriar
Friendswood, TX 77546
Phone: 281-482-3413
Fax: 281-996-2523
Email: mbrandt@fisdk12.net

Stan Brein, School Psychologist
Austin ISD
1111 W. 6th St.
Austin, TX 78703
Phone: 512-414-3472
Fax: 512-414-1791
Email: sbrein@austin.isd.tenet.edu

Diane Briggs,
Clear Brook High School
2305 E Main St.
League City, TX 77573
Phone: 281-338-5600
Fax: 281-338-5631
Email: dbriggs@ccisd.net

Martha Cantu, Director for Special Education
McAllen Independent School District
2604 Galveston
McAllen, TX 78501
Phone: 956-632-3285
Fax: 956-632-3269
Email: martha.cantu@mcallenisd.net

Albert Champion, Grants Administrator
Birdville ISD
6125 East Belknap
Halton City, TX 76117
Phone: 817-547-5778

Nancy Chavkin, Co-Director
Center for Children and Families
Texas State University
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666
Phone: 512-245-2593
Fax: 512-245-8097
Email: nco2@txstate.edu

Jill Darling, Student Assistance Programs Director
Richardson Independent School District
400 S. Greenville
Richardson, TX 75081
Phone: 469/593-0379
Fax: 469/593-0383
Email: jill.darling@risd.org

Sandra De La Cruz, Executive Director, Pupil Support Services
Grand Prairie ISD
2602 S Belt Line Road
Grand Prairie, TX 75052
Phone: 972-237-5366
Fax: 972-237-5540
Email: sandra.delacruz@gpisd.org

Barry Dewlen, Director of Psychological Services
Northside Independent School District
5651 Grissom
San Antonio, TX 78238
Phone: 210-397-3508
Fax: 210-257-3525
Email: barrydewlen@nisd.net

Pamela Faulkner
Coordinator, State Initiative
Safe & Drug Free Schools & Communities
Education Service Center Region 2
209 N. Water St.
Corpus Christi, TX 78401
Phone: 361-561-8605
Fax: 361-561-8649
Email: pfaulkner@esc2.net

Wanda Flowers, Director of Student Support Services
Austin ISD
3908 Ave B - Baker Bldg.
Austin, TX 78751
Phone: 512-414-0333
Fax: 512-414-0378
Email: wflowers@austin.isd.tenet.edu

Sancy Fuller,
McKinney ISD
#1 Duvall
McKinney, TX 75069
Phone: 469-742-4000
Email: slfuller@mckinneyisd.net

Lupita Garcia, Director of Parent/Student Services
Irving ISD
2621 Airport Frwy
Irving, TX 75062
Phone: 972-215-5025
Fax: 972-215-5026
Email: lupitagarcia@irvingisd.net

Estella Garza, Coordinator
San Antonio Independent School District
1702 N. Alamo, Ste. 213
San Antonio, TX 78215
Phone: 210-227-1206
Fax: 210-227-4737
Email: egarza@saisd.net

Maria Garza,
Assoc. for the Advancement of Mexican Americans
2309 Caloway Ct.
Pearland, TX 77581
Phone: 281-464-9710
Fax: 281-464-9709
Email: crisda@aol.com

Mary Gatewood-Hale, Director of Special Services
Azle ISD
483 Sandy Beach Rd #B
Azle, TX 76020
Phone: 817-444-2851
Fax: 817-444-5028
Email: mghale@texas.net

David Gerabagi, Director of Planning and Resource Development
Birdville ISD
6125 East Belknap
Halton City, TX 76117
Phone: 817-547-5768

Melvin Getwood, Director of External Funding
Port Arthur ISD
733 5th St.
Port Arthur, TX 77640
Phone: 408/989-6212
Fax: 409-982-9030
Email: mgetwood@paisd.org

Dianna Groves, Intervention & Counseling Specialist
Austin Independent School District
Baker Center
3908 Ave.B #206
Austin, TX 78751
Phone: 512-414-0177
Fax: 512-414-0378
Email: dgroves@austin.isd.tenet.edu

Steve Hamman, Assistant Director for Special Education
Austin Independent School District
1111 W. 6th Street
Austin, TX 78703
Phone: 512-414-3272
Fax: 512-474-7338
Email: jameshamman@austin.isd.tenet.edu

Evelyn Henry, Director
Houston Independent School District
Health & Medical Services Dept
5827 Chimney Rock
Houston, TX 77081
Phone: 713-349-7423
Fax: 713-349-7439
Email: ehenryl@houstonisd.org

PJ Holland, Director of Student Development
McKinney ISD
#1 Duvall
McKinney, TX 75069
Phone: 469-742-7803
Fax: 469-742-7801
Email: pholland@mckinneyisd.net

Peggy Hood, Assistant Director/Special Education
Humble ISD
PO Box 2000
Humble, TX 77347
Phone: 281-641-8414
Fax: 281-641-1071
Email: peggy.hood@humble.k12.tx.us

Trey Hughes, Student Support
Clear Brook High School
4607 FM 2351
Friendswood, TX 77546
Phone: 281-996-2742
Fax: 281-992-2616
Email: thughes@ccisd.net

Vicki Ikeler, President
Texas School Counselor Association
1919 Cascade Court
Sugar Land, TX 77479
Phone: 281-343-9464
Email: dvikeler@houston.rr.com

Mark Jackson, Superintendent
Burlleson ISD
1160 SW Wilshire Blvd.
Burlleson, TX 76028
Phone: 817/441-5730
Fax: 817/447-5737
Email: mjackson@burllesonisd.net

Robert Jaklich, Ex. Dir. Personnel
Harlandale ISD
102 Genevieve
San Antonio, TX 78214
Phone: 210-921-4340
Fax: 210-921-4384
Email: jaklich@harlandale.net

Joe Dan Lee, Superintendent
Georgetown Independent School District
603 Lakeway Drive
Georgetown, TX 78628
Phone: 512-943-5015
Fax: 512-943-5002
Email: leejd@georgetown.txed.net

Janie Livas, Federal Programs Director
Edcouch-Elsa ISD
PO Box 127
Edcouch, TX 78538
Phone: 956-262-6000
Fax: 956-262-6032
Email: jlivas@eed.org

Julie Majors, Student Support Services Coordinator
Weslaco ISD
PO Box 266
609 East 6th St.
Weslaco, TX 78596
Phone: 956/969-6918
Fax: 956/969-6919
Email: jmajors@wisd.us

Maria Elena Martinez, Special Education Director
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District
PO Box 1909
Uvalde, TX 788802
Phone: 830-591-4928
Fax: 830-591-4931
Email: maria.martinez!@uvalde-cons.k12.tx.us

Sherry Mayes, Coordinator for Special Education
McAllen Independent School District
2604 Galveston
McAllen, TX 78501
Phone: 956-632-3285
Fax: 956-632-3269
Email: sherry.mayes@mcallenisd.net

Linda Meigs, SAIL Coordinator
Georgetown Independent School District
603 Lakeway Drive
Georgetown, TX 78628
Phone: 512-943-5000 x6097
Fax: 512-943-5002
Email: meigs@georgetown.txed.net

Brenda Melton, Past President
American School Counselor Association
11719 Whisper Dew
San Antonio, TX 78230-3535
Phone: 210-492-4748
Fax: 210-226-5426
Email: meltonbrenda@msn.com

John Moore, Executive Director, Educational Support Services
Austin ISD
1111 W. 6th St.
Austin, TX 78741
Phone: 512-419-1511
Fax: 512-419-0035
Email: jmoore@austin.isd.tenet.edu

Robert Muller, Exec. Dir. Student Services
Killeen ISD
902 North 10th St.
Killeen, TX 76541
Phone: 254/501-0387
Fax: 254/501-0232
Email: robert.muller@killeenisd.org

Jane Owen, Asst. Professor
Midwestern State University
West College of Education
3410 Taft Blvd.
Wichita Falls, TX 78602
Email: jane.owen@mwsu.edu

Angie Pena, Special Ed Director
Edcouch - Elsa ISD
PO Box 127
Edcouch, TX 78538
Phone: 956-262-6015
Fax: 956-262-6016
Email: apena@eeisd.org

Charlotte Rhyne, Director of Student Support Services
La Porte Independent School District
1002 San Jacinto St
La Porte, TX 77571
Phone: 281/604-7034
Fax: 281/604-7026
Email: rhyne@lpsisd.org

Debra Rimmer-Mayorga, Manager Counseling and Guidance
Houston Independent School District
3830 Richmond
Houston, TX 77027
Phone: 713-892-6684
Fax: 713-892-7494
Email: dmayorga@houstonisd.org

Andrea Schackor, Support Services
La Porte ISD
1002 San Jacinto St
La Porte, TX 77571
Phone: 281-604-7032
Fax: 281-604-7026

Lee Schermerhorn, Director of Student Services
Uvalde Consolidated ISD
PO Box 1909
Uvalde, TX 78802
Phone: 830-278-6655
Fax: 830-591-4971
Email: lee.schermerhorn@uvalde-cons.k12.tx.us

Brenda Scheuermann, Professor
Texas State University
Dept. of Curriculum & Instruction
San Marcos, TX 78666-4616
Phone: 512-245-2267
Fax: 512-245-7911
Email: brenda@swt.edu

Cynthia Schiebel, Director, Student Support Services
Eanes ISD
601 Camp Craft Rd.
Austin, TX 78704
Phone: 512/732-9025
Fax: 512/732-9029
Email: cschiebe@eanes.k12.tx.us

Don Schmidt, Asst. Supt. of Student Services
Northside ISD
5651 Grissom Road
San Antonio, TX 78238
Phone: 210-397-8763
Fax: 210-706-8884
Email: donschi@nisd.net

Joyce Schreitmueller, Coordinator Federal Program
Plano ISD
2700 W. 15th Street
Plano, TX 75075
Phone: 972-985-1441
Fax: 469-752-8039
Email: jgchrei@pisd.edu

Pam Schutte, Student Support Services
La Porte ISD
1002 San Jacinto
La Porte, TX 77571
Phone: 281-604-7034
Fax: 281-604-7026

Jennifer Scott, Assistant Superintendent
Longview ISD
PO Box 3268
Longview, TX 75606
Phone: 903/381-2242
Fax: 903/753-5389
Email: jscott@lisd.org

Linda Simonson, Asst. Superintendent for Instruction
Georgetown ISD
603 Lakeway Drive
Georgetown, TX 78628
Phone: 512-943-5011
Fax: 512-943-5002
Email: lindas@georgetown.txed.net

Meredith Smith, Assistant Superintendent
Dallas Independent School District
3700 Ross Ave.
Box 24
Dallas, TX 75204
Phone: 972/925-5510
Fax: 972/925-5501
Email: mesmith@dallasisd.org

Linda Taylor, Co-Director
UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools
Dept. of Psych. Box 951563
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563
Phone: 310/825-3634
Fax: 310/206-8716
Email: ltaylor@ucla.edu

Constance Thompson, Director Counseling and Guidance
Houston Independent School District
3830 Richmond Ave.
Houston, TX 77027
Phone: 713-892-6684
Fax: 713-892-7494
Email: cthompso@houstonisd.org

John Washington, Asst. Supt. for Student
Services/Comm. Relations
Garland ISD
501 S. Jupiter Rd.
Garland, TX 75042
Phone: 972-487-3250
Fax: 972-485-4919
Email: jwwashin@garlandisd.net

Patricia Weger, Acting Mgr, Psychological Services
Houston ISD
1615 Rutland Street
Houston, TX 77008
Phone: 713-867-5220
Fax: 713-867-5225
Email: pweger@houstonisd.org

Brenda Wilson, Director of Secondary Education
Frenship ISD
PO Box 100
Wolfforth, TX 79382
Phone: 806-866-4756
Fax: 806-866-2790
Email: bwilson@frenship.k12.tx.us

Charlotte Winkelmann, Asst. Director, Student Services
Austin ISD
3908 Ave B - Baker Bldg.
Austin, TX 78751
Phone: 512-414-0333
Fax: 512-414-0378
Email: c.winkelm@austin.isd.tenet.edu

Debbie Woodson, Counselor
Friendswood High School
702 Greenbriar
Friendswood, TX 77546
Phone: 281-482-3413
Fax: 281-996-2523
Email: dwoodson@fisdk12.net

Linda Perez Yater, Assistant Superintendent, Student
Support
Dallas Public Schools
3700 Ross Avenue
Box 24
Dallas, TX 75204
Phone: 972-925-3762
Email: lyater@dallasisd.org

Guillermo Zavala, Superintendent
Harlandale ISD
102 Genevieve
San Antonio, TX 78214
Phone: 210-921-4340
Fax: 210-921-4384
Email: guillermo.zavala@harlandale.net

Nina Zemel
Clear Creek Independent School District
Clear Lake High School
2929 Bay Area Blvd.
Houston, TX 77058
Phone: 281-266-7817
Fax: 281-488-2991
Email: nzemel@ccisd.net

St. Paul, Minnesota Attendees

Beth Coleman, Guidance Counselor
St. Paul Public Schools
360 Colborne St.
St. Paul, MN 55102
Phone: 651-293-8875
Email: beth.coleman@spps.org

Mary Gannon, Guidance Counselor
St. Paul Public Schools
360 Colborne St.
St. Paul, MN 55102
Phone: 651-228-7746
Email: mary.gannon@spps.org

Lisa Koelfgen, Guidance Counselor
St. Paul Public Schools
360 Colborne St.
St. Paul, MN 55102
Email: kisa.koelfgen@spps.org

Kris Moe, Guidance Counselor
St. Paul Public Schools
360 Colborne St.
St. Paul, MN 55102
Phone: 651-293-8950
Email: kristian.moe@spps.org

Raymond Yu, Director, Student Services
St. Paul Public Schools
360 Colborne St.
St. Paul, MN 55102
Phone: 651-767-8157
Fax: 651-290-8331
Email: raymond.yu@spps.org

Summits Initiative:
New Directions for Student Support
Texas, September 27, 2004
Interested But Unable to Attend

Alma Allen, State Representative Elect
State Board of Education
3717 Cork Drive
Houston, TX 77047
Phone: 713-734-1542
Fax: 713-734-1547
Email: aaaallen@flash.net

Rosemarie Allen, Associate Supt. Student Support Serv.
Dallas Independent School District
Box 10
3700 Ross Avenue
Dallas, TX 75204
Phone: 972/925-5500
Fax: 972/925-5501
Email: roallen@dallasisd.org

Joan Altobelli, Director of Special Education
Austin Independent School District
1111 W. 6th Street
Austin, TX 78703
Phone: 512-414-3272
Fax: 512-474-7338
Email: joanaltobelli@austin.isd.tenet.edu

David Anthony, Superintendent
Cypress-Fairbanks ISD
PO Box 692003
Houston, TX 77269-2003
Phone: 281-897-4000
Fax: 281-897-4125

Betty Baitland, Superintendent
Fort Bend Independent School District
16431 Lexington Blvd.
Sugar Land, TX 77479
Phone: 281-634-1006
Fax: 281-634-1700
Email: betty.baitland@fortbend.k12.tx.us

Janet Beeler,
Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD
1805 Walnut Ave.
Carrollton, TX 75006
Phone: 972-323-2869
Fax: 972-323-5947
Email: beelerj@cfbisd.edu

Nancy Boyd, District Director of Guidance
Plano ISD
2700 W 15th Street
Plano, TX 75075
Phone: 469-752-8012
Fax: 469-752-8034
Email: nboyd@pisd.edu

Cathy Bryce, Superintendent
Highland Park ISD
7015 Westchester Drive
Dallas, TX 75205
Phone: 214-780-3002
Fax: 214-780-3004
Email: brycec@hpsid.org

Ron Cagle, Asst. Supt. Curriculum & Instruction
DeSoto ISD
200 E. Beltline Rd.
DeSoto, TX 75115
Phone: 972-223-6666
Fax: 972-274-8008

Clint Capers, Education Specialist
Education Service Center Region XII
P.O. Box 23409
Waco, TX 76702-3409
Phone: 254/297-1146
Fax: 254-666-0823
Email: ccapers@esc12.net

F. Linelle Clark, Coordinator, Dropout Prevention &
Reduction
Austin Independent School District
Baker School
3908 Ave B
Austin, TX 78751
Phone: 512-414-0201
Fax: 512-414-0195
Email: lclark@austin.isd.tenet.edu

Darryl Cross, Assistant Superintendent
Weatherford ISD
1100 Longhorn Drive
Weatherford, TX 76086
Phone: 817/598-2804
Fax: 817/598-2953
Email: dcross@weatherfordisd.com

Wanda Crotty, Special Services
Boerne ISD
123 W. John's Road
Boerne, TX 78006
Phone: 830-249-5024
Fax: 830-249-5064
Email: crottyw@boerne-isd.net

Chante Davis, Director-Accountability
Reporting/Research
Nacogdoches ISD
PO Box 631521
Nacogdoches, TX 75963-1521
Phone: 936-564-3332
Fax: 936-569-5745
Email: cdavis@nacogdoches.k12.tx.us

Cynthia Franklin, Professor
The University of Texas School of Social Work
1925 San Jacinto
Austin, TX 78712-1203
Phone: 512/471-0533
Fax: 512/471-9600
Email: cfranklin@mail.utexas.edu

Lana Fry, Consultant, L.S.S.P
Region 16 ESC
5800 Bell St.
Amarillo, TX 79109
Phone: 806-677-5196
Fax: 806-373-3432
Email: lana.fry@esc16.net

Rosa Maria Garcia, Executive Director, Special Programs
Brazosport ISD
P.O. Drawer Z
Freeport, TX 77541
Phone: 979-730-7285
Fax: 979-237-6352
Email: rgarcia2@brazosportisd.net

Ginger Gates, Director of Psychology & Counseling
Deer Park ISD
204 Ivy St.
Deer Park, TX 77536
Phone: 832-668-7143
Email: ggates@dpisd.org

Cris Gonzalez, State Compensatory Coordinator
Weslaco Independent School District
319 W. 4th
Weslaco, TX 78596
Phone: 956-969-6637
Fax: 956-969-6736

Gwen Gordon, Director of Special Programs
Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD
1200 Old Decatur Rd.
Fort Worth, TX 76179
Phone: 817-232-0880
Fax: 817-232-3596
Email: ggordon@emsisd.com

Annette Griffith, Executive Administrator for Student
Services
Spring Branch Independent School District
955 Campbell Road
Houston, TX 77024
Phone: 713/464-1511 x2329
Fax: 713/365-4819
Email: griffita@springbranchisd.com

Margie Gunther, Exec. Dir. Special Ed.
Carrollton-Farmer Branch ISD
2115 East Frankford Rd.
Carrollton, TX 75007
Phone: 972/323-5755
Fax: 972/323-5725
Email: Guntherm@cfbisd.edu

Jan Hughes, Professor
Texas A & M University
709 Harrington, TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-4225
Phone: 409/845-2324
Fax: 409/862-1256
Email: jhughes@tamu.edu

James Kelch, Asst. Supt. Inst. Services
Clint ISD
14521 Harizon Blvd.
El Paso, TX 79928
Phone: 915-926-4031
Fax: 915-926-4039
Email: jim.kelch@clint.net

Patti Kieker, Deputy Superintendent
Richardson ISD
400 S. Greenville
Richardson, TX 75044
Phone: 469-593-0252
Fax: 469-593-0251
Email: patti.kieker@risd.org

Gail Krohn, Superintendent
Nederland Independent School District
220 17th Street
Nederland, TX 77627
Phone: 409-724-2391
Fax: 409-724-4208
Email: gkrohn@nederland.k12.tx.us

Janet LaCour, Federal Programs/Grants Administrator
Judson ISD
8012 Shin Oak
San Antonio, TX 78233-2457
Phone: 210-945-5323
Fax: 210-945-6917

Marie Lambert, Deputy Executive Director
Region 18 ESC
PO Box 60580
Midland, TX 79711-0580
Phone: 432-567-3230
Fax: 432-567-3290
Email: mlambert@esc18.net

Margaret Leifeste, Spec. Ed. Coordinator
Region XV ESC
PO Box 5199
San Angelo, TX 76901
Phone: 325-658-6571
Fax: 325-658-6571

John Lucas, Dir. Of Guidance & Counseling
Texas Education Agency
1701 N. Congress Ave.
Austin, TX 78701
Phone: 512-463-9498
Fax: 512-463-4584
Email: jlucas@tea.state.tx.us

Deana Machos, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Weatherford ISD
900 N Elm
Weatherford, TX 76086
Phone: 817-598-2804 x2
Fax: 817-598-2833

Cynthia Martin, Dir. Special Education
Eanes ISD
601 Camp Craft Rd.
Austin, TX 78746
Phone: 512-732-9021
Fax: 512-732-9029
Email: cmartin@eanes.k12.tx.us

Joe Miniscalco, Senior Director of Tech. & Admin.
Services
McKinney ISD
#1 Duvall
McKinney, TX 75069
Phone: 469-742-4056
Fax: 469-742-4188
Email: joem@mckinneyisd.net

Enrique Montalvo, Federal Programs Director
Federal Programs Department - Eagle Pass ISD
1420 Eidson Road
Eagle Pass, TX 78852
Phone: 830-773-5181
Fax: 830-757-2792

Hector Montenegro, Superintendent
Ysleta ISD
9600 Sims Drive
El Paso, TX 79925
Phone: 915-434-0031

Jim Nelson, Supt. of Schools
Richardson ISD
400 S. Greenville Ave.
Richardson, TX 75044
Phone: 469-593-0401
Fax: 469-593-0251

Deborah Northrup, Intirm Supt.
Angleton ISD
1900 N Downing Rd.
Angleton, TX 77515
Phone: 979-849-8594
Fax: 979-849-3041
Email: dnorthrup@angleton.net

Dawson Orr, Superintendent
Wichita Falls Independent School District
1104 Broad Street
Wichita Falls, TX 76301
Phone: (940)720-3273
Email: dorr@wfid.net

Bobby Parker, Superintendent
Waxahachie ISD
411 N. Gibson St.
Waxahachie, TX 75165
Phone: 972-923-4631
Email: bparker@wisd.org

Pam Pauers, Associate School Psychologist
Cleburne ISD/Dept. of Sp. Ed.
311 Featherston
Cleburne, TX 76033
Phone: 817-202-1612
Fax: 817-556-5640
Email: pam.pauers@cleburne.k12.tx.us

Ron Peace, Superintendent
Victoria Independent School District
102 Profit Drive
Victoria, TX 77901
Phone: 361-788-9202
Fax: 361-788-9643
Email: ron.peace@visd.com

Arthur Peralta, Director of Pupil Services
El Paso Independent School District
6531 Boeing Drive
El Paso, TX 79925-1086
Phone: 915-779-4041
Fax: 915-779-4028
Email: acperalta@episd.org

Anna Peterson, Asst. Sptd. Curriculum & Inst.
Tuloso - Midway ISD
PO Box 78460
Corpus Christi, TX 78460
Phone: 361-903-6402
Fax: 361-241-5836

Carmen Phillips, Special Ed. Director
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo I.S.D.
Rt. 3 Box 150
Alamo, TX 78516
Phone: 956/702-5878
Fax: 956/702-5885
Email: Carmen_phill@hotmail.com

Rose Ramos, Parent Educator
Brazosport ISD
PO Drawer Z
Freeport, TX 77541
Phone: 979-730-7285
Fax: 979-237-6352
Email: rramos@brazosportisd.net

Linda Roberts, Federal Programs Coordinator
Copperas Cove ISD
709 W. Ave., D
Copperas Cove, TX 76522
Phone: 254-597-1227
Fax: 254-547-4193
Email: linda@ccisd.com

Kim Rose, Coord. Of Counseling & Guidance
Hurst-Euleless-Bedford ISD
1849 Central Dr.
Bedford, TX 76022
Phone: 817/399-2064
Fax: 817/354-3311
Email: rosek@hebisd.edu

David Sharp, Superintendent
Lufkin Independent School District
101 Cotton Square
Lufkin, TX 75904
Phone: 936-634-6696

Mario Solis, Executive Director for State and Federal Programs
Mission Consolidated Independent School District
1201 Bryce Drive
Mission, TX 78572-4399
Phone: 956/580-5500
Fax: 956/580-5581
Email: masolis@mission-cons.k12.tx.us

Nancy Stiles, Director of Student Support
Katy School District
634 Spring St.
Columbus, TX 78934
Phone: 281/396-2204
Fax: 281/396-6131
Email: nancystiles@katyisd.org

Stephen Waddell, Superintendent
Birdville Independent School District
6125 E. Belknap
Haltom City, TX 76117
Phone: 817-547-5722
Fax: 817-831-5233
Email: stephen_waddell@birdville.k12.tx.us

Patricia West, Counseling Director
South San Antonio Independent School District
2515 Bobcat Lane
South Antonio, TX 78224
Phone: 210/977-7456
Fax: 210/977-7458

Bonnie Williams, Director of Federal Programs
Victoria Independent School District
102 Profit Drive
Victoria, TX 77901
Phone: 361-788-9295
Fax: 361-788-9302
Email: bonnie.williams@visd.com

Fred Zambrano, Director
Student Support Services/Discipline Mgt.
200 S. 3rd.
Donna, TX 78537
Phone: 956/464-1771
Fax: 956/464-1755
Email: fredzambrano@yahoo.com

Rosa Zapata, Director
Edgewood Independent School District
1930 Herbert Lane
San Antonio, TX 78227
Phone: 210/444-8103
Fax: 210/444-8130
Email: rzapata@eisd.net

Steve Zurline, Asst. Supt. For Student Support Services
Marshall ISD
1305 E. Pincrest
Marshall, TX 75671
Phone: 903-927-8705
Fax: 903/935-0203
Email: zurlines@marshallisd.com