

March 2005 Update:

New Directions for Student Support . . . the Texas Initiative

For those of you who have recently joined the listserv for the Texas *New Directions for Student Support Initiative*, this is a progress update. Also included is info from other states that are moving forward with New Directions for Student Support. Specifically, this report includes:

I. Outreach to expand interest and readiness

II. Strengthening the Texas leadership and infrastructure for the New Directions initiative

III. What's going on in other states moving in New Directions for Student Support (Items from Indiana, Minnesota, California, and Iowa)

IV. New Resources for New Directions for Student Support

#####

I. Outreach to expand interest and readiness

>We have had a great response to the widespread mailing throughout Texas of:

- C "New Directions for Student Support . . . Creating a Comprehensive Learning Supports System to Close the Texas Achievement Gap"
- C the flyer on the Texas New Directions initiative (which lists the state's steering group for the initiative)

If you want to download copies of these brief overviews for sharing with others, go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ndannouncement.htm> then click on Current Status and scroll down to the Texas section. (If it would help, we can send you copies of the documents to share with leaders, colleagues, at conferences, etc.)

Most respondents are requesting additional info on frameworks and strategies for enhancing learning supports to address barriers to learning. Many have asked to be included on the steering group and any work groups that are formed.

>Presidents of District Boards of Education were also sent the above materials along with an Executive Summary of "Restructuring Boards of Education to Enhance Schools Effectiveness in Addressing Barriers to Student Learning." [Http://smh.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/boardrep.pdf](http://smh.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/boardrep.pdf)

Many Board Presidents have expressed interest in the initiative and several have encouraged their superintendents to become involved.

QUESTIONS:

- (1) Who else should be sent this information?
- (2) Is there any way you might follow-up (e.g., with the Board) to see if local leaders have gotten the message about the importance of rethinking how their schools are addressing barriers to learning and teaching?

II. Strengthening the Texas leadership and infrastructure for the New Directions initiative

Two members of the Steering Group have volunteered to "co-chair" the group, Cynthia Schiebel and Linda Meigs. Their role is to act as "spark plugs" in mobilizing the Steering Group as it

strives to move the state initiative forward.

In particular, at this stage, the group recognizes that it is essential to mobilize all the Steering Group members (and others) to

(1) continue to create an awareness of the initiative with a view to expanding the readiness of an increasing number of leaders and staff.

>>Good examples of some first steps are presentations Steering Group members made at the SDFSC conference and their plans to present at the Summer Institute of the TX Association of School Admin/TX Association of School Boards.

(2) clarify the local/state opportunities for connecting/embedding the initiative into current priorities or state and district staff and consider how the Steering Group and our Center might facilitate making the connection

>>Of particular importance here may be integrating the New Directions frameworks into school improvement planning. The Steering Group will share with the UCLA Center whatever opportunities are identified, and the Center will try to help take advantage of them.

(3) plan next strategic next steps and establish some work groups

>>Example of immediate steps -- getting co-chairs in place, organizing work groups, outreaching to engage influential leaders in a strategic way.

(4) build on and support the interests of districts who are already asking for "training" related to new directions for student support.

>>Several school districts have reached out to the UCLA Center about returning to Texas to provide a "training" to which the district could send its support service staff. We think that a follow up training for support staff could also serve as a introduction for other key leaders who did not attend the summit. This would enable us to reach out to those the steering group members think need to hear about all this(e.g. TX Education Agency, representatives from each of the regional education service centers, someone from the TX Association of School Boards, TX Association of School Administrators and the American Association of School Administrators). In planning a Texas training, we will send such leaders a special invitation to either come to the "training" or to special meetings for a select group who did not get to the Summit session.

(5) continue to work with the Center to develop initiative materials specific to Texas.

III. What's going on in other states moving in New Directions for Student Support

See if any of the following suggests ideas for your efforts in Texas

Item from Indiana:

>Gaylon Nettles, Director, Office of Student Services, Indiana Department of Education, has volunteered to play a major facilitative role in moving the initiative forward. He suggested the need for members of the Indiana Steering Group to have a face-to-face meeting to help with strategic planning. Two Steering Group members, Cathy Gray, Assistant Superintendent, Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation and Michelle Alvarez, Assistant Professor, Social Work, University of Southern Indiana, have volunteered to co-chair an upcoming get together. The agenda for that meeting will focus on clarifying where folks are in their understanding of the initiative and identifying next strategic steps, including reaching out to bring other key leaders to the table

#####

Item from Minnesota:

Folks are anticipating a good response to the widespread state mailing of “New Directions for Student Support . . . Minnesota’s Initiative: Assuring No Child is Left Behind” and the flyer on the state’s initiative. This will be another step in invigorating the initiative. The next step is a conference call to do some strategic planning.

Independent of the initiative, a bill has been introduced to establish a student support services advisory committee in Minnesota. See the legislation at <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/legis.asp>. Search for Bill SF772 in House. Here is a brief excerpt:

“A bill for an act relating to education; establishing a student support services advisory committee; requiring school districts to adopt a student support services plan...

The commissioner must select one committee member from each of the following organizations:

- (1) the MN Department of Education
- (2) the MN School Boards Association
- (3) the Board of School Administrators
- (4) the MN School Social Work Association
- (5) the School Nurse Organization of MN
- (6) the MN School Psychologists Association
- (7) the MN School Counselors Association
- (8) the MN Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health

The committee must (1) identify alternatives for integrating student support services into public schools; (2) recommend support staff to student ratios and best practices for providing student support services premised on valid, widely recognized research; (3) identify the substance and extent of the work that student support services staff provide and the characteristics of the student populations they serve; (4) recommend how school districts can most appropriately integrate student support services into the education programs; and (5) recommend public and nonpublic revenue sources that school districts can use to fund student support services...”

THE QUESTION ARISES: Is this likely to reduce or increase fragmentation, counterproductive competition, and marginalization?

If you have thoughts about this, please send them along to the UCLA Center for summarizing and sharing.

#####

Item from California:

Speaker Pro Tem of the California Assembly, Leland Yee, has reintroduced legislation for a “Comprehensive Pupil Learning Support System.” The new version of the Bill is AB171. See http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/bill/asm/ab_0151-0200/ab_171_bill_20050120_introduced.pdf

The speaker is working with the department of education and grass roots advocates around the state. Here is a brief excerpt: “...a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive learning support system should be integrated with instructional efforts and interventions provided in classrooms and schoolwide to address barriers to learning and teaching...To implement the concept of learning supports, the state must systemically realign and redefine existing resources into a comprehensive system that is designed to strengthen pupils, school, families, and communities rather than continuing to respond to these issues in a piecemeal and fragmented manner.

Development of learning supports at every school is essential in meeting the needs arising from the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act...A learning support system should encompass school-based and school-linked activities designed to enable teachers to teach and pupils to learn. It should include a continuum of

interventions that promote learning and development, prevent and respond early after the onset of problems, and provide correctional, and remedial programs and services. In the aggregate, a learning support system should create a supportive and respectful learning environment at each school. A learning support system is a primary and essential component at every school, designed to support learning and provide each pupil with an equal opportunity to succeed at school. The learning support system should be fully integrated into all school improvement efforts..."

CAN YOU SUPPORT THIS BILL? Assembly Member Yee would find it helpful if folks from other states sent him indications of support by email or send a hard copy indication to him.

Contact Info:

Leland Yee, Assembly member
California State Assembly
State Capital, Room 2188
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916-319-2012
Fax: 916-319-3625
Email: Assemblymember.yee@assembly.ca.gov

Item from Iowa:

Even though Iowa's Summit for New Directions for Student Support is not until April, we have had the opportunity to work with the Iowa design team and stakeholder's group as they have designed New Directions for systems of support. The following announcement briefly highlights their accomplishments to date:

**IOWA'S DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WORKING WITH THE IOWA
COLLABORATION FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
has just released its Design for:

ENHANCING IOWA'S SYSTEMS OF SUPPORTS FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The document is intended for policy makers and leaders at the state, regional, and local levels within and outside of the education system who have a compelling interest in the achievement of all students and are seeking effective ways to improve student learning. It introduces a set of new concepts for systems of supports that students need if they are to achieve at high levels. The document calls for rethinking the directions for student supports in order to reduce fragmentation in the system and increase the effectiveness and efficiency by which it operates. The intended results are for all children and youth to succeed in school, grow up healthy and socially competent, and be prepared for productive adulthood.

In introducing the document, Judy Jeffrey, the Director of the Iowa Department of Education stresses:

"Not every student comes to school motivationally ready and able to learn. Some experience barriers that interfere with their ability to profit from classroom instruction. Supports are needed to remove, or at least to alleviate, the effects of these barriers. Each student is entitled to receive the supports needed to ensure that he or she has an equal opportunity to learn and to succeed in school. This [design] provides guidance for a new direction for student support that brings together the efforts of schools, families, and communities .

If every student in every school and community in Iowa is to achieve at high levels, we must rethink how student supports are organized and delivered to address barriers to learning. This will require that schools and school districts, in collaboration with their community partners, develop a comprehensive, cohesive approach to delivery of learning supports that is an integral part of their school improvement efforts. Investing in our young people today is investing in their future, and, in turn, investing in their future is an investment in the future of our state. We must make this investment."

The Steering Committee of the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development has endorsed the concepts and principles put forth in the document and has pledged to "develop, integrate, and oversee cross-agency implementation of a comprehensive system of supports to promote healthy development and address barriers to learning, thereby ensuring that all children and youth have an equal opportunity to succeed in school and in life."

The document will soon be online at the Iowa Department of Education website. For now it can be downloaded at: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/iowasystemofsupport.pdf> The Center has also prepared a brief summary of the document that can be downloaded from the website.

With all this done prior to the Iowa Summit in April, they have really created readiness for the New Directions for Student Support Initiative throughout the state. Specific key leaders are being contacted to encourage their participation in the Summit and follow up activities. The Summit is seen as a "roll-out" for the state Department of Education document and is featured as an example of *Where's It Happening?*.

IV. New Resources for New Directions for Student Support

We continue to respond to frequently asked questions by producing brief documents and fact sheets to move the initiative forward. Here are the latest:

>"New Directions for Student Support: Some Resources"

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/NewDirectionsSomeResources.pdf>

This provides lists and links to many free resources to aid those trying to enhance learning supports. These have been developed with a view to how to proceed in stages and without an allocation of additional funds. Many of these resources are designed to enhance readiness and momentum for new directions for student support; others are aids for build capacity. The resources are grouped into three stages for moving the work forward:

Stage I. Understanding some basics and tools for enhancing readiness and momentum

Stage II. Initiative Capacity Building

Stage III. Development

>"What might a fully functioning enabling or learning supports component look like at a school?" [Http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/whatmightfully.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/whatmightfully.pdf) This brief handout was developed to provide an answer to this frequently asked question.

As you need information, support, or technical assistance in moving in New Directions for Student Support, please let us know (ltaylor@ucla.edu).

#####

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