

Initiative Update: Wisconsin's New Directions for Student Support (7/12/04)

In November, 2003, a group of key education leaders met for a state wide Summit in Madison to explore New Directions for Student Support with the aim of moving forward so that schools could more effectively address barriers to student learning and achievement.

Following the Summit, the core of a state wide Steering Group was established to formulate and take immediate next steps to (a) develop working groups, (b) launch a state wide campaign to share information on the New Directions for Student Support Initiative, and (c) identify districts already moving in new directions or wanting help in doing so.

As initially formed, the Steering Group includes

- >Lance Alwin, District administrator, Unified School District of Antigo
- >Stephanie Edwards, Principal, Savanna Oaks Middle School
- >Mary Gulbrandsen, Director of Student Services, Madison Metropolitan School District
- >Phil Knobel, Executive Director, WCASS
- >Twyla Lato, President, WI Assoc. of School Nurses
- >Kris Sieckert, President, WI School Psychologists Association
- >Judith Shine, WI School Social Workers Association
- >Karen Steindorf, WI School Counselors Association
- >Sue Today, Consultant
- >Doug White, Director of Student Services, WI Dept. of Public Instruction
- >Jeff Zdrale, Director of Curriculum and Instruction/Support Services Neenah Public Schools
- >Carole Ziesemer, Program Support for Social Work, Madison Schools

To jump start the Steering Group's work, members were invited to meet with the Wisconsin Alliance of Pupil Services Organizations on May 25, 2004. At that meeting, the Steering Group members present decided to develop workgroups to:

- C review and update the 2003 Wisconsin "white paper" on collaborative pupil services with an eye toward better communicating the main messages to administrators and board members
- C develop a marketing/outreach plan, including presentations at 2004-05 school board and administrator conferences

In addition, WAPSO decided to:

- C revise the core training modules (based on the WI pupil services summer institutes and Summit concepts) to better communicate the core ideas of pupil services collaboration;
- C revise marketing materials, promote and provide training, develop larger cadre of trainers;
- C develop a clear delineation of the skill sets and appropriate roles of the major pupil services professions (school counselor, nurse, psychologist, social worker) in collaboration with the professional associations

At the same time, it is noteworthy that the state Superintendent has included a statement on barriers to learning in her formulation of the *New Wisconsin Promise: A Quality Education for Every Child*. Specifically, her seventh point stresses the importance of:

Providing effective pupil services, special education, and prevention programs to support learning and development for all students while preventing and reducing barriers to student success.

Leaders for the state's New Directions for Student Support initiative will build on this promise by pursuing specific policies and practices so that every school can effectively address barriers to learning and teaching.

As proposed at the Summit meeting, a listserv has been established for Wisconsin's New Directions for Student Support Initiative. The listserv will provide periodic updates on what's happening. All replies are processed centrally and then shared within the state and with other states. If you would like to be on the listserv, just email ltaylor@ucla.edu.