

To: **District and State Collaborative Network for Developing Comprehensive Systems for Learning Supports**

From: Howard & Linda

Re: Sharing from a sample of recent updates from sites across the country (November 26, 2013)

(1) ***Gainesville City Schools (GA)***

“We are effectively using the Learning Supports framework to meet State mandates to improve School Climate by coming up with proactive strategies to reduce discipline rates (e.g. tribunals). Through a more focused effort on earlier interventions and prevention strategies (Disciplinary Placement meetings) we are removing system barriers in our procedures to help keep students in school and then research strategies to address these issues.

We have also had great success in sharing the Learning Support framework at various conference (e.g. Ed Leadership, National Dropout Prevention (upcoming), and National School Social Workers Association of America Conference) giving the framework more exposure and generating more interest.

Plan for the rest of this year: We are continuing to unpack the framework in efforts to integrate it more deeply into our schools and operationalize it so the process will be the same/duplicatable from one school to the next. For instance:

- 1) Identify your barriers based on school data
- 2) Dig deeper by asking "why" this barrier is occurring
- 3) Set specific goals/benchmarks that you can use as indicators for success
- 3) Take time to search out some research-based strategies to use for implementation
- 4) Create an action plan outlining how you will implement the research-based plan through the lenses of the six content arenas
- 5) Evaluate progress by revisiting the data
- 6) Make adjustments as needed

We are integrating this framework using this process into our school improvement and 45 Day Action plans for long-term sustainability.

We will empowering Learning Support Leaders on the school level by taking time to go back and provide some more training ground the framework to deepen their understanding so they can 1) deepen their school staff's understanding and 2) further embed and integrate the framework on the school level

We will begin planning for the following school year early next semester to ensure that plans are already in place when the new superintendent officially begins his/her administration.”

(2) ***Bloomington School District (MN)***

“Here is a big picture update of the progress made so far in Bloomington and an outline of where we are headed for the remainder of the year. In Bloomington the work around developing a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports began last school year and really caught fire this summer! The district invested in this work by hiring a District Learning Supports Coordinator. Initial work focused on integrating existing Response to Intervention practices into the larger framework of Learning Supports.

As staff came back this fall, much of the work in Bloomington has been centered around providing the professional development needed to create a strong, common knowledge base among the various groups of staff who are engaged in the systems level work. District level presentations and trainings were held as well as trainings at the building level, smaller meetings with specific staff at the building level, and many informal meetings/discussions with staff. In addition to readiness building, the work of mapping of district interventions in the six content areas has been moved forward.

At both the building and district level, initial mapping has begun as a part of fueling the imperative for a unified, comprehensive, cohesive system of Learning Supports. As a result of this work, staff are seeing the benefits of unifying and systematizing resources, strategies and practices into a Learning Supports framework. Bloomington is also doing organizational leadership work as they move to a Three Component Framework both at the district and building levels. The organizational shift of having Learning Supports be an equal player with Instruction and Management in school improvement is allowing the district to focus on student success for every child and address the barriers to learning and teaching in a more effective and systematic manner. There are plans to keep the work moving forward throughout the school year! Continued readiness building, commitment to the work with regular meetings, mapping at all buildings, and auditing current surveys, as well as integrating our instructional practices are all parts of the implementation process.”

See Bloomington’s press release at <http://www.bloomington.k12.mn.us/node/3117127>

See their moodle site at <https://moodle2.bloomington.k12.mn.us/course/view.php?id=674>

(3) *Stillwater Area Public Schools (MN)*

“A vital and successful component to Stillwater Area Public Schools learning supports framework has been the new development of a District Learning Supports Leadership Team. This team meets once every three weeks to guide and monitor the implementation and integration of learning supports. It includes diverse representatives from each building beginning with early childhood and continuing through community education. The collaborative conversation and work is allowing us to understand and address our barriers to teaching and learning in a comprehensive and systematic approach. For example, a district-wide Intervention Supports working group is being established to map our current delivery of intervention services and work collaboratively to enhance and incorporate an integrated approach to interventions utilizing the six arena and three-tier model.

Our District Learning Supports Resource Team (Psychologists, Counselors, Nurses, Social Workers) meets on a monthly basis and directly supports and guides the work of learning supports within our buildings. Bringing together all of these experts proves invaluable for our district as we are able to maintain ongoing conversation and work to address the social, emotional, and behavioral health of our students. Three areas in which we are currently focusing on include translation services, connecting families experiencing financial difficulties with supportive resources, and examining how to best support students and families experiencing homelessness. We are also trying to develop an approach to collecting data related to learning supports barriers and identification and prioritization of needs.

Systems Supporting Learning is one of four anchors that incorporate learning supports into our district’s Bridge to Excellence strategic plan for the 2013-14 school year. Embedded into this community-supported plan are five key areas which integrate our efforts within learning supports: fully implementing a system of learning supports, providing support for transitions, implementing a E-12 bully prevention program, and organizing the district-wide implementation of PBIS.”

(4) *LaCrosse School District (WI)*

“Thank you for extending an invitation to the School District of La Crosse, to supply some highlights/updates regarding the Rebuilding for Learning efforts taking place in La Crosse, Wisconsin. We are enthusiastic about our efforts; thus, very happy to share. Please know that what I am sharing (including attachments) are not intended to be comprehensive, but rather a snapshot of our efforts. .

(a) We held our 3rd district/community summit in August, and were very pleased with the results (150+ attendees representing over 30 community organizations...all working to benefit

youth and families). In reviewing the attached documents, you will get a solid understanding of our efforts. That said, if you'd enjoy a video, you can view a summary from our second summit on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QmhekE7__k (Note: Video summary from 3rd summit is in production.)

(b) Our steering committee continues to "get word out" throughout the community via presentations as well. Another attachment you will find is a PDF of a Mac Keynote presentation that provides an overview of our efforts for various community groups. Additionally, we are designing monthly updates to be launched in mass e-mail and on our new website

(c) We have prepared documents to provide a glance into a tiered approach we have embraced to better (a) raise awareness, (b) provide differentiated support, and (c) ultimately work to address increased mental health considerations in our region. The first describes a flow chart whereby we work with organizations to provide 1:1 mental health therapy sessions for youth on site (i.e. in the schoolhouse). We have many additional documents that have been vetted by legal council, etc., should you be interested in our process in La Crosse (permission forms, contractor agreements, etc.) just say the word. The final "liaison" document is a tiered effort to provide support for our schools' educators as they recognize and appropriately address mental health issues as related to our youth.

Please note that we have launched a website to help coordinate efforts, etc. The website is in its very early development, but you might find it interesting. Please check us out at <http://www.lacrossepartnersinlearning.org>.

Finally, our content arena work is regular and on-going; truly the foundation for all of our efforts. Our co-facilitators are dynamic and have organized their committees' efforts around a SMART goal approach. We are truly striving for a collective impact that is seismic for the La Crosse community. (More info. on the website...) Anyway, this just "wets the whistle" a bit with our approach and accomplishments. Come see us if you can! Perhaps you'd like to be a value added part of our 4th community summit? Mark your calendars (Tuesday, August 12th, 2014 in beautiful La Crosse, WI.)."

(5) *Phoenix Union High School District (AZ)*

"Is there a comprehensive list of all the states/Districts who are implementing this model across the country? Do you have a map somewhere in the toolkit that shows all the states participating? We are preparing a presentation to the board and would like to show the map of those participating in the UCLA Model of Learner Supports."

[Note: We suggested that they use the *Where's It Happening?* section on the Center's website to access links to materials from district and state departments

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/wheresithappening.htm>. This includes examples from other districts -- design documents, brochures, etc. We also noted that they might be able to pull slides from our 15 minute "Introduction to New Directions for Student and Learning Supports" <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/powerpoint/briefintrosides.ppt>].

(6) *Alabama*

See coverage of the state department's first phase of implementing their design for a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports in 19 districts –

<http://alabamaschoolconnection.org/2013/10/17/extra-learning-supports-arrive-for-alabamas-children/>

Here is an excerpt:

"...The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) recently took a huge step forward to ensure children and families have greater learning support systems available within their schools. Schools and districts have been providing various levels of support on a piecemeal, case-by-case basis.

A Comprehensive System of Learning Supports provides a framework and structure to coordinate multiple activities that break down those barriers in a proactive, organized manner. It is a preventive approach rather than reacting after problems have manifested themselves in chronic absenteeism or disengagement...

The system should be fully rolled out in all of Alabama's school districts in three to five years. No clear word on whether any additional financial resources will be needed by school districts to implement this framework.

A District Leadership Team will be formed within each school system consisting of the superintendent plus four or five additional people. The District team will meet on a regular basis. In addition, each school will form its own team to identify children in need of additional supports. Little detail beyond that was offered.

Introducing the plan, Chief of Staff Dr. Craig Pouncey stated it is "a school district's responsibility to try to do more than just provide instruction that will ensure children's success." "We can remove barriers that prevent children from achieving at their highest potential," he added. "We cannot ignore children's issues, and schools must support children in order for them to achieve their highest potential."

Dr. Linda Felton-Smith, Director of the Office of Learning Supports, said the ALSDE worked on the plan for more than a year. She emphasized that the plan was developed by folks in Alabama, in consultation with UCLA's Center for Mental Health Dr. Howard Adelman and Dr. Linda Taylor

(7) *Michigan*

Update from a colleague at the state department of education

"Work on the efforts to integrate Learning Supports/SEL into the Common Core Standards (CCS) adopted in Michigan was stalled as a result of some legislative concerns regarding CCS in general. Those concerns have been resolved and so this work can continue again. There has been support from several of the various units within the MDE although not all units have had an opportunity to review those standards for input. That will be the next steps, to garner additional support from those last few units and then move them up to the state level administration and on to the State Board of Education for approval.

As a result of the school shootings in recent years the Governor has created a Mental Health and Wellness Commission. This group is co-chaired by the Lt. Governor and the State Superintendent. Input from various subcommittees of this commission are being considered in moving recommendations forward to the legislators, including providing schools with additional resources to support students mental health, improve access to services and supports and enhance school safety. I have participated in a handful of the subcommittee meetings.

Approximately 15 schools were funded during the previous school year to convene a Coordinated School Health Team and assess the effectiveness of meeting the mental health needs of students in those schools. They were also required to pass a Mental Health Policy for their district. Of those grantees the Top Three are being funded for this school year to continue with their efforts to move the needle forward in the great work they began in the last school year.

The School Improvement Office at MDE has many initiatives underway to increase graduation rates and academic success in schools statewide but also specifically in schools that have high minority populations. That office continuously collaborates with our office (Coordinated School Health and Safety Unit) to assist them in providing their participating schools with resources around school climate, conditions for learning and mental health. I have conducted trainings for the principals of these 28 schools using the SAMHSA "Eliminating Barriers for Learning" curriculum. It has been positive to see our offices work together on such endeavors. This has also allowed us to continue work on incorporating school climate and coordinated school health efforts into each schools school improvement plan.

Finally, Michigan was one of seven states awarded the Safe Schools/Health Students grant.

We will be working with 3 districts to help them convene teams of community members, parents and other professionals to focus on improving access to mental health services for students, pre-k through graduation. This is a great opportunity for these districts and the state of Michigan to continue its work towards improving conditions for learning for its students.”

For more on the *National Initiative and Networks for New Directions for Learning Supports*, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ninhome.htm>

***LET US KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING TO MOVE LEARNING SUPPORTS
FORWARD AS A UNIFIED AND NONMARGINALIZED SYSTEM***

Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu