

June 6, 2018

Dear Collaborative Members and Guests,

We look forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming meeting of the California Collaborative on District Reform on June 18-19 in Sanger. The meeting will continue the focus we established last summer on advancing equity and access to ensure opportunities for all students, building the capacity of teachers and administrators to meet student needs, and embracing the mindset and practices of continuous improvement to create effective school systems. In this case, we are excited to use those lenses to examine multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) as a vehicle for identifying and responding to all students' needs. Sanger Unified School District presents an especially compelling case of a district integrating its MTSS work into its existing structures and processes for improving student learning. We thank the Sanger team for hosting and sharing their journey with us.

Meeting Overview

Day 1: The meeting will begin on Monday with an orientation to the district's framework for improving outcomes for all students and the role and model of MTSS within this broader frame. MTSS is a systemic, tiered approach to meeting all students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs through a strong base instructional program for all students (Tier 1) and collective data-based problem-solving and intervention for students whose needs extend beyond the core program (Tiers 2 and 3). Sanger USD has adapted this general approach to the district's particular context, history, and students.

With Sanger's general MTSS framework in mind, we will turn to the specifics of the model as it is envisioned and implemented at the school level. We will begin with an exploration of universal design for learning (UDL), which defines the principles for instruction in Sanger and shapes Tier 1 of the district's MTSS. After a brief introduction to UDL, meeting participants will view demonstrations from three different school teams to illustrate what UDL looks like in practice and to understand the way in which Sanger's loose-tight model sets common expectations while also creating space for site-level design decisions. Following discussions about UDL, we will learn about the structures and processes through which school teams identify individual student needs and progress for Tiers 2 and 3 interventions. A panel of local educators will join the group to talk about the learning opportunities they have experienced and the ways in which they apply UDL and differentiated supports in their work with students.

The conversation will transition next from a focus on work with students at the site level to the ongoing data review and system design decisions that happen in the central office. Participants will observe a fishbowl conversation among members of the Sanger MTSS district data team. This session is designed to illustrate the ways in which the district systematically reviews data to monitor progress in a variety of areas and use that information to inform its ongoing practices of reflection and improvement. It will also preview a problem of practice to be explored in further detail on the second day. We will close our Day 1

discussion by inviting reflections from other district leaders who have implemented components of MTSS in their own contexts.

As is our typical practice, we will end the day with an opportunity for networking, collective relaxation, and continued conversation over dinner, this time at Fresno's The Old Spaghetti Factory.

Day 2: On Tuesday morning, we will return to the process of district-level data review introduced by the Sanger team the day before. Although the district has designed processes and practices to ensure the systematic progress monitoring, district leaders sometimes encounter challenges in prioritizing and acting on what can seem like overwhelming amounts of data. The Sanger team will pose a problem of practice to the full group, which we will consider in small group consultancies to provide feedback to the district.

After the consultancies, we will pivot to a conversation about resource allocation. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) has put a spotlight on the ways in which districts align their spending to their strategic priorities. We will therefore consider the ways in which budgeting and programmatic decisions connect in a school system that uses MTSS as a frame for its improvement efforts. We will also explore the ways in which community engagement contributes to conversations around data review, program design, and resource allocation. The meeting will conclude with a discussion of implications for state policy.

Readings

As usual, all readings and reference materials for the sessions are available in multiple formats. If you requested a hard copy of the binder, all of the materials are included there; the cover sheet behind each tab identifies a subset of priority readings that we suggest you read before the meeting. **For your convenience, on Thursday, June 7, you will also receive an email with this subset of priority pre-meeting readings attached. We strongly encourage you to read this subset of materials prior to the meeting**, as they provide important background information on the topics we will discuss. Also for your convenience, all of the meeting materials are available on the Collaborative website at <http://www.cacollaborative.org/meetings/meeting36> and at a DropBox link you will receive via email.

If you have any questions regarding the meeting logistics, please do not hesitate to contact Dawn Smith at 650-376-6439 or dsmith@air.org. If have any other questions, please email me (joday@air.org) or give me a call at 202-262-4987. I look forward to seeing you all later this month!

Sincerely,



Jennifer O'Day
Chair, California Collaborative on District Reform, and
Institute Fellow, American Institutes for Research