

June 7, 2017

Dear Collaborative Members and Guests,

We are excited to see all of you at our upcoming meeting of the California Collaborative on District Reform on June 22-23 in Twin Rivers Unified School District. This meeting is a departure from our typical approach of examining a specific problem of practice presented by our host district. Given recent and upcoming changes to the social, economic, and political context in which California's K-12 districts operate, it is an opportune time to step back, reflect, and take stock of the road ahead of us. We see this meeting as a chance to map the terrain for the months and years ahead, to identify key areas of focus and potential next steps for the Collaborative and for the state as a whole. We extend our thanks to Steve Martinez and his team at Twin Rivers for hosting us as we engage in this reflective and prospective planning process.

Meeting Overview

Day 1: The meeting will begin Thursday morning with three short research-based presentations to help set the broad context in which our work over the next few years will take shape. Hans Johnson (Public Policy Institute of California) will outline California workforce projections, thus providing a picture of the adult world our young people will enter. Kfir Mordechay (The Civil Rights Project at UCLA) will consider the conditions under which California students (particularly historically underserved students) live and learn by reviewing demographic trends and economic and social disparities since the Great Recession. Finally, Mac Taylor (Legislative Analyst's Office) will explore projections about state revenues, local obligations, and the resulting financial conditions that districts may face in the coming period. Discussion among participants and reflections from a panel of our members will add perspectives from the ground about our central educational challenges in light of the research and their own experience.

After lunch, we will break into three working groups to home in on specific issue areas in more detail. One of these groups will focus on challenges related to the instructional core (teachers' and students' interaction around content) as central to improving student outcomes and advancing equity. A second group will address financial constraints and opportunities related to revenues, obligations, and investment priorities. The third group will address the out-of-school factors that influence students' abilities to engage in academic learning during their K-12 experience and to thrive after high school graduation. In each group, meeting participants will identify the highest priority challenges, discuss promising strategies for addressing those challenges, and consider the capacities needed at the state and local levels to address those issues.

We will return from the working groups to share key takeaways and identify emerging themes across the groups. Our goal is to identify the main substantive challenges on which we may want to focus over the next few years. As we always do, we will end the day with an opportunity for networking and collective relaxation over dinner, this time at Seasons 52 Restaurant in Sacramento.

Day 2: On Friday morning, we will turn our discussion to the capacity building and continuous improvement systems and approaches that will be necessary to effectively and equitably address the

challenges identified on Day 1. To ground our conversation in the concrete realities of local systems, we will begin the morning with two examples of continuous improvement efforts in member districts, with particular emphasis on the opportunities and challenges associated with growing to become a learning organization. Armed with the knowledge gained from these experiences and from those of participants around the room, we will explore the capacities needed to facilitate continuous improvement at the state and local levels and implications for designing the Collaborative's work moving forward.

Our conversation will then turn to the statewide narrative about educational improvement and equity. Although the Collaborative and its members have long focused our attention on instruction, student learning, and overall system improvement, the policy discourse frequently centers more narrowly on matters of accountability and compliance. In light of the participant dialogue over the two days, we will consider how we might encourage greater attention to capacity building and instructional improvement within the statewide policy discourse.

The meeting will conclude by mapping a broad agenda for the Collaborative over the upcoming months and years. Given the priorities for California's education community and the steps necessary to address them, what are the implications for the Collaborative's activities and areas of focus? What steps might the Collaborative and its members take—both within and beyond these meetings—to stimulate progress with the state's most pressing education issues?

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 will be included there; the cover sheet behind each tab identifies a subset of the readings as priority readings that we suggest you read before the meeting. **For your convenience, on Thursday, June 8, you will also receive an email with this subset of priority pre-meeting readings attached. We strongly encourage you to read these 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/meeting33> and via DropBox at a link you will receive via email.

If you have any questions regarding the meeting logistics, please do not hesitate to contact Dawn Smith at 650.843.8239 or dcsmith@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