

The California Collaborative on District Reform

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June 15, 2012

Dear Collaborative Members and Guests,

I am looking forward to seeing you at our upcoming meeting of the California Collaborative on District Reform on June 28-29. This meeting will pick up on several themes and discussions over the past two years by tapping into the challenges and strategies related to leadership for change, particularly at the school level.

As usual, we have planned the agenda in close collaboration with our host district, Fresno Unified. However, at Mike Hanson's request, the discussions will not be focused primarily on Fresno but will explore perspectives and experiences from across our member districts. In our first planning discussion, Mike posed the challenge at hand: **building on what we learned in our last two meetings about labor force trends, the skills gap in California, and the need to forge connections with employers and post-secondary institutions, and given the challenge of moving to the Common Core State Standards, how do we ensure that schools have the leaders they need to move the work forward and to graduate all their student college and career ready?** Do the changing economic conditions and educational demands require a different conceptualization of leadership and new approaches to leader development? How are districts approaching these questions, what have they learned in the process, and how can they work together to build their collective capacity for system change and student success?

Day 1: We will begin Thursday morning with a fishbowl discussion among our district leaders about what qualities, skills and dispositions they are looking for in their school and district leaders, why these leadership qualities are necessary, and how their perspectives on leadership may have changed over time. This conversation and the ensuing discussion amongst the whole group will help to frame the dialogue throughout the rest of the meeting.

From there we will move to a consideration of leadership in the context of district efforts to address particular problems of practice—from grading practices in Garden Grove to building “accountable communities” in Fresno Unified schools to implementing the Common Core State Standards across all systems in California. We will discuss not only specific leadership strategies but also leadership themes and challenges that ran across the varying approaches and initiatives. We will conclude the afternoon with an exploration of potential collaborative efforts to share and extend leadership capacity across districts.

As is our usual practice, after a day of thought-provoking dialogue, we will gather for more informal conversation and relaxation at a group reception and dinner.

The California Collaborative on District Reform (www.cacollaborative.org) joins researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and funders in ongoing, evidence-based dialogue and collaborative activity to improve instruction and student learning for all students in California's urban school systems.

Day 2: Friday morning we will turn from the role of leaders in the context of specific problems of practice to an exploration of systemic approaches to developing leaders along a pipeline. We will hear about three different approaches that districts have taken to develop principals at different points of their career—from the Structured Apprenticeship Model for teacher leaders and aspiring administrators to principal preparation and ongoing professional learning. We will conclude the meeting with an exploration of succession planning and its connection to ongoing development along the pipeline.

Readings: As usual, we have collected a broad set of pre-reading and reference materials pertinent to the topics of the meeting. The materials are organized behind tabs relevant to particular parts of the agenda, with annotated reading lists that provide a description of each reading. **A double asterisk (**)** next to the title of the article or document indicates that it is a **priority reading—that is, one we suggest you try to read in advance of the meeting.**

Priority readings for Session I can be found behind the following tabs:

- Leadership for Change
- Leadership Qualities
- Leadership Standards

For Session II, we have not prioritized any particular readings, but you may want to browse the materials behind the Problems of Practice tab and the Teacher Leadership tab.

For Session III, there are no additional readings.

Priority readings for Session IV can be found behind the following tabs:

- Leadership Development
- Leadership Recruitment and Succession.

In addition, you may also want to at least look through the descriptions of the three leadership development strategies we will be discussing in Session IV (also located behind the Leadership Development tab).

For your convenience, we have enclosed a CD in the front sleeve that contains all of the briefing binder's materials. As always, we have also posted a full list of the literature and resources on our website: <http://www.cacollaborative.org/meetings/meeting-19/>

If you have any questions regarding the meeting logistics, please don't hesitate to contact Suzanne Claussen at 650.843.8192 or sclaussen@air.org. If you have any other questions, please email me (joday@air.org) or give me a call (202-262-4987). I look forward to seeing you all later this month!

Sincerely,



Jennifer O'Day, Chair
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