

THE CALIFORNIA COLLABORATIVE ON DISTRICT REFORM

February 9, 2007

Dear Collaborative members and guests,

The third meeting of the California Collaborative on District Reform will take place on February 28th and March 1st at the Hewlett Foundation in Menlo Park, CA. We look forward to another session of informative and thoughtful dialogue.

In our last Collaborative meeting we began to establish a common understanding of the instructional needs of English learners and of effective classroom and school strategies to address those needs. A key theme that emerged from that meeting was the need for strong professional development to help teachers learn how to differentiate instruction for English learners and for other students. We have designed the agenda of this third meeting to address this important theme.

The topic for our deliberations is “Differentiating Instruction for English Learners: Developing Instructional Capacity.” We will focus on teacher learning and on systemic strategies to support this learning. In planning this meeting, we decided that bringing in the voices of teachers, their principals, and their mentors would be an effective way to introduce this topic and integrate on-the-ground perspectives into our dialogue. Therefore, rather than visiting schools and classrooms, we will be joined by teacher, principal, and mentor participants in the New Teacher Center’s work in the Ravenswood City School District in East Palo Alto. We will hear their perspectives on the changes they have undergone and supports that have helped them better address the learning needs of their students. Ravenswood Superintendent, Maria Meza-De La Vega will join us to share her vision for improving teacher and student learning. In addition, Collaborative member Ellen Moir and her colleagues from the New Teacher Center will share their strategies for building teacher and systemic capacity to support differentiated instruction in Ravenswood and elsewhere.

We designed our agenda to provide an opportunity for group members first to establish a common understanding of key principles of *teacher learning* (Session II), then to consider the *district role* in teacher learning and human capital development (Session III), and finally to explore ways in which districts can leverage current *state initiatives* to support this work (Session IV). We have tried to allow substantial time for group discussion.

Wednesday schedule

As in previous meetings, we will begin our first day by setting the context (Session I). We will convene promptly at 9:00 am at the Hewlett Foundation (see the logistics summary in the front cover of the binder). Superintendent Maria De La Vega will provide an overview of Ravenswood’s overall context as well as of her vision and strategies for professional learning and student success. Ellen Moir will then present the New Teacher Center’s work in the district. We will provide time for questions and comments from the group.



Session II on Wednesday afternoon will focus on *teacher learning*. We will start the session by hearing from several Ravenswood teachers and their principals about the teachers' learning processes and experiences. Kitty Dixon, Miakje Kamstra, and Caroline Lucas from the New Teacher Center will then speak in greater depth about their teacher mentoring program, a core piece of the NTC's work. The bulk of Session II will be devoted to full-group discussion. Towards the end of the day we will break into smaller groups to identify key principles of teacher learning that would be important for other districts to consider in designing strategies for enhancing teacher capacity. This discussion will provide a segue to our focus on systemic capacity building to support instructional improvement during Day 2.

Wednesday's discussion will be followed by a group dinner at Zibibbo Restaurant in Palo Alto (see logistics summary).

Thursday schedule

On Thursday, we will reconvene at 8:30 am at the Hewlett Foundation.

Session III in the morning will focus on the *district's* role in building instructional capacity. We will consider systems and structures to enable effective teacher learning, as well as other strategies districts can use to build human capital across the system. We will discuss the challenges associated with creating systemic supports and will hear from some of our participants who have tackled these challenges. This session will allow us the opportunity to shift from Wednesday's focus on the case of Ravenswood to a more generalized discussion of approaches that much larger districts facing similar problems could take on.

In the afternoon (Session IV) we will turn to a consideration of how districts might leverage current *state initiatives* to build the capacity of schools and school personnel to enact high quality instruction, including the Quality Education and Investment Act (QEIA of SB 1133), AB 2117, and SB 1209. We have provided summaries of each bill in this briefing book.

The meeting will end with a discussion of prospective topics and locations for subsequent convenings. We will adjourn at 3:00 pm.

If you have any additional questions regarding the meeting logistics, please don't hesitate to contact Suzanne Claussen and the California Collaborative staff at 650.843.8192.

Again, thank you for joining us. We hope you will find this an informative and productive meeting. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely,



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