



## Smaller Learning Communities Program FALL 2011 PROJECT DIRECTORS MEETING

### CONCURRENT SESSIONS DESCRIPTION

#### POSTSECONDARY DATA

##### From High School to College: Did they get there? Will they stay? Developing and Using

**Session Description:** The emphasis on postsecondary readiness has always been a key goal of SLC work in our schools. With the additional funds of the SLC Supplemental Grant beginning in 2009-10, we were encouraged to go beyond readiness to discover what our students actually did following high school. How many of them actually enrolled in college? If they didn't, why not? What other paths did they pursue? How many who entered college stayed beyond the first semester of their sophomore year or graduated within five years? We will examine and share the various strategies SLC schools have used to follow up on their graduates. We will also discuss strategies for taking a historical look at the high school careers of those who enrolled and persisted in college. What academic and social experiences might they have in common? How do we ensure that this data is used effectively to continuously increase the rigor and success of postsecondary readiness?

#### **Session Goals:**

Grantees will:

1. Share the most successful strategies they have used to gather post graduate data for their students supported by both the supplemental grant funds and other SLC funding.
2. Increase their capacity to gather historical data to predict college success.
3. Identify those strategies which will build their capacity to continue post graduate follow up data beyond the life of the SLC grant.

#### TRANSITIONS

##### Successful Transitions for Struggling Students: Ninth Grade Counts

**Session Description:** Middle school teachers warn and high school teachers remind their students: Ninth Grade is different and it counts. For a student, it's the year when grades begin to make up your high school cumulative GPA, when the repercussions of failure can be discouraging, when you set a course for graduation or dropping out. Recent research confirms the importance of a student's ninth grade experience and the potentially positive impact of strategic interventions. In this interactive and reflective session, participants will learn about national research on promising ninth grade practices, including research specifically conducted at SLC sites last year. Together with other grantees, participants will compare

their home district ninth grade systems and practices with those described in the research. Finally they will discuss the application of ninth grade research to their home districts, weighing what high leverage strategies are likely to be beneficial and sustainable.

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**Session Outcomes:**

Grantees will:

1. Understand the pivotal impact of 9<sup>th</sup> grade and the need to maximize efforts to ensure that students are on-track to graduation.
2. Develop understanding of Promising Practice Study of 9<sup>th</sup> Grade including special attention to the Framework & Rubric noted in the paper.
3. Reflect on home district/school characteristics, policies, and practices supporting 9<sup>th</sup> grade student success now by locating themselves on the Rubric.
4. Identify ways to increase student achievement and persistence by shifting to more proactive approaches meeting the needs of all students.

Clarify possible roles of Project Director in 9<sup>th</sup> grade efforts, especially focused in getting the most systemic supports in place that can remain beyond the life of the SLC grant.

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## **COLLABORATIVE PLANNING**

### **Strategic Use of Grant Resources**

**Session Description:** Building upon the premise that “the wisdom is in the room”, participants will engage in conversations and activities to maximize the opportunity to learn from each other. While grantees may be at various levels of implementation, we know that high quality collaborative planning pays off in improved student achievement, increased graduation rates, and college readiness particularly among struggling learners.

Session activities, tailored to meet the needs of the cohort groups and the role and influence of the project director, include addressing specific grantee implementation challenges, strategies to help schools allocate resources for effective implementation, and resources that established the conditions and support for high quality CPT to occur. In each session, invited grantees will respond to ways they have addressed these issues and questions raised by peer grantees.

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**Session Goals:**

Grantees will

1. Identify and address the implementation challenges they face *in their role* as SCLP project director.
2. Increase their capacity to influence the design, implementation and evaluation of high quality collaborative planning at the school level.

Identify those strategies that will build the capacity of their district or school to sustain collaborative planning after the funded period has ended.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### Making Changes That Stick: Strategic Use of Resources to Ensure Sustainability

**Session Description:** Funding provided by the SLCP program offers a great opportunity to change learning for students, but in reality, it only provides a start for the ongoing change process. Successful implementation of SLCP strategies requires changes in the organizational design of the school, instructional strategies, and the culture—changes that are both time consuming and ongoing.

Past experience with SLCP grantees has demonstrated that sustainability of these efforts hinges upon several key factors. Teachers and administrators need to be active participants and partners in this work, buying into the goals and strategies of the effort, and being willing to make a commitment of their time and energy necessary to see these changes to fruition. Grant funds need to be expended strategically to focus on high leverage strategies. And over time, schools and districts need to review and reassign funding and personnel resources to meet the needs of these changing schools.

This workshop will provide an introduction and overview of these issues and successful ways that SLCP grantees have addressed them, and provide participants an opportunity to reflect on their work in their context.

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#### **Session Outcomes:**

Participants will

- Understand the flexibility parameters in using SLCP funds to best promote successful implementation of practices aligned with the SLCP
- Learn key strategies to promote teacher buy-in and commitment to engaging in the opportunities offered through SLCP funding

Explore ways to ensure the likelihood of sustainability of SLCP activities beyond the scope of program funding.

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## PLENARY SESSIONS DESCRIPTION

**PLENARY SESSIONS: Day 1 - Wednesday November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**4.15pm – 4.45pm**

### EDUCATION EQUITY

The goal of achieving equity for all our students has been a key part of all the SLC grant work we have done and continue to do. Yet “equity in schools has still not been reached. But for students – who by virtue of their race, ethnic background, sex or national origin are deprived of their civil rights and an equal opportunity to a quality education – equity is a promise they are depending on for their future.”

This is a quote from the website of the South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE) which is one of 10 federally-funded centers that provide technical assistance and training at the request of school districts and other responsible governmental agencies in the preparation, adoption and implementation of plans for the desegregation of public schools. How many here are aware of these centers in your region? How many have accessed them for assistance?

Public schools can do what they choose to educate their students within certain limits and parameters, but they are accountable for educating *all* learners to high academic standards and outcomes regardless of differing characteristics of those learners. Bradley Scott, Ph.D., (director of the equity assistance center at IDRA) has proposed six goals of education equity. The South Central Collaborative for Equity, has embraced the goals of educational equity and the nine other equity assistance centers have embraced the goals as well.

Present the six goals - show power point of goals and ask them to think about which goal feels most important to address in their school.

To help you along your journey to achieve the goal of equity on all fronts at your schools, Dr. Scott has also developed a helpful ranking scale for examining those practices in your school that would ensure that each goal was achieved. Please take a look at the Six Goals and ranking scale document on your table. There should be one for each of you. Take the next few minutes to examine the questions for the goal you’ve chosen for your school. Use the scale to determine where you feel your school/district ranks in their achievement of this goal. When you have completed your ranking, go back and write down at least four next steps you will take when you return to your school or district. Who can you access for help with your selected equity goal? What data will you need? How will this fit into your SLC action plan? When you have sketched out your four steps, turn to another tablemate and share your plans with each other, giving feedback and additional ideas to help each other in deepening the equity work at your school.

**Table Activity**

*Purpose of the Session:* To provide PD's with

- 1) Insight into their issues from trusted colleagues;
- 2) Support for what they are doing well;
- 3) Initial connection to another PD that can be built upon over time.

*Structure:*

Facilitation will be from the podium. TA's and PO's will rotate, or remain at one table. Their task is to make sure the process flows smoothly as this is a "speed sharing" process.

Participants will be seated at their assigned tables in Academy Hall. If people have come with more than one person in their group (there should be VERY few like this), they need to split. Attempt to get even numbers at each table.

*Process:*

Step 1: Process is introduced by facilitator. (5 minutes)

Step 2: Fill out Sharing Form (three things they do well and are proud about; three issues they struggle with and could use help on) This will be used during the session. We will collect these IF people want to hand them in. Done silently (five minutes)

Step 3: Turn to a "sharing" partner. Facilitators at the table may have to step in to make sure everyone is paired up properly.

Step 4: First partner shares their sharing form. Share, then have a brief discussion about the struggling issues. (5 minutes)

Step 5: Second partner goes. (5 minutes)

Step 6: Get contact information from each other, thank your partner, and dosey do around (essentially turn in your seat) to a second partner.

Step 7 & 8: Repeat Steps 4 and 5 (10 minutes) (time permitting)

Step 9: Reflection: What two things did you hear from your partners--1) a successful strategy from one of your partners, and 2) a potential solution to one of your struggling issues--that could make you think differently about your work? (5 minutes)

Step 10: Table Round: Each person share their two pieces. (5 minutes)

Step 11: Share contact information

**PLENARY SESSIONS: Day 2 - Thursday November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011****8.15am - 9.15am****Communications: Effective Community Engagement: Straight Talk About the Work****Morning of Day 2**

Not surprisingly, public education has always been a hot topic of public debate, unfortunately, a debate that is often filled with factual errors, personal perceptions masquerading as facts, and individual needs falsely argued in the best interest of everyone. As educators, we have routinely failed to use research that would help us understand how best to present the quality of our work, the changing learning needs of our students, and the

necessity of educational refinement.

A growing body of research on effective communication will be shared to start this workshop. Several easy to use, but key, communication strategies that have been implemented by schools, will be shared. Finally, participants will start to explore their own communication triangle, the foundational base for broader communication efforts.

Outcomes: Participants will:

- Explore key research findings regarding public perceptions regarding public education;
  - Learn several effective communication strategies; and
  - Explore the development of a message triangle to support their work
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