Region 1 Summary Report: Office of Safe and Supportive Learning Environments Regional Meetings

In September 2011 at the Lucas County Educational Service Center, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center held one of 16 regional meetings to support schools in creating positive climates for their students, families and communities. Titled *Understanding the Role of a Comprehensive Learning Supports and School Climate in School Improvement*, the meeting sought to:

- Increase awareness about ODE initiatives and model policy on a comprehensive system of learning supports and school climate guidelines;

- Provide information and resources to parents, school-based staff and community-based staff to support local needs; and

- Facilitate cross-stakeholder group conversations to identify key leverage points and foster collaboration.

The session brought together educators and community organizations as well as families and representatives of the mental health, drug and alcohol prevention, health, juvenile justice and law enforcement fields. The following report summarizes the outcomes from that meeting.

Critical Needs of the Region

Participants were asked to identify the CRITICAL NEEDS faced by students, parents/families and professionals in their community. They identified the following critical needs of Region 1:

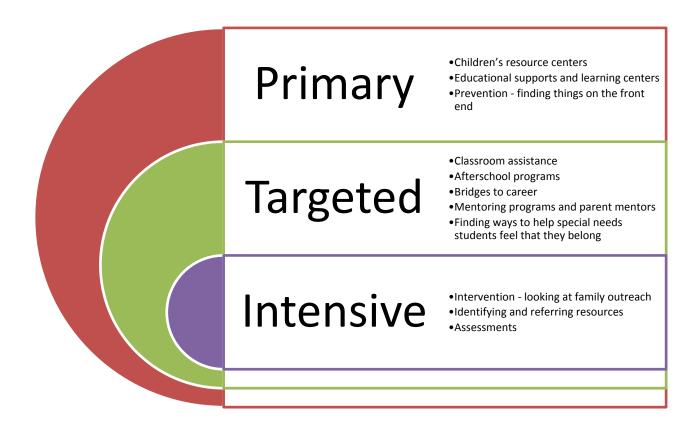|	
Health	•Health related education •School nurses •Access to and learning to prepare nutritional food
Mental Health	•Learning how to cope •Stressors (e.g., financial)
Basic Needs	•Homelessness
Education	•Truancy •Values neutral teaching •Parental involvement
Substance Use/Abuse	•Drug and alcohol abuse
Behavioral Concerns	•Disruptive behavior and bullying
Community	•Cultural competency •Changing demographics - being able to adapt for staff •Acclimating students and staff to the demographics

Continuum of Resources and Services

In order to address the identified critical needs present within the community, a continuum of resources that provides services at the primary, targeted and intensive levels is needed.

Primary resources and services are those that are provided to an entire population (e.g., all students at a school) and are typically focused on prevention.

Targeted resources and services are those that are provided to an identified subgroup that may be at risk for certain health, mental health and/or behavioral problems. Examples of targeted resources and services include homework assistance for poorly performing students, support groups for students of divorce and vocational counseling.
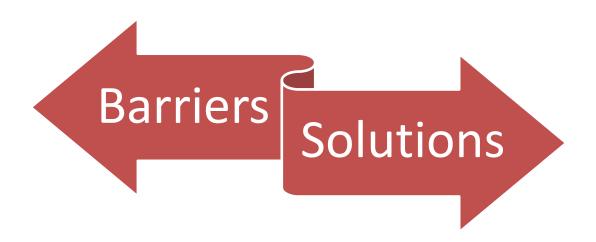
Intensive resources and services are those that are provided to students who need intensive treatment (e.g., substance abuse counseling, therapy following a trauma).

The following primary, targeted, and intensive needs were identified during the Region 1 meeting:

Primary
- Children's resource centers
- Educational supports and learning centers
- Prevention - finding things on the front end

Targeted
- Classroom assistance
- Afterschool programs
- Bridges to career
- Mentoring programs and parent mentors
- Finding ways to help special needs students feel that they belong

Intensive
- Intervention - looking at family outreach
- Identifying and referring resources
- Assessments

Barriers and Solutions

Awareness of barriers that impede a community's ability to successfully develop a continuum of resources can provide an opportunity for the community to strategically implement solutions. The list on the next page identifies the barriers and solutions suggested by participants in the Region 1 meeting:

Barriers → ← Solutions

People/Relationships

Barriers:
Lack of knowledge about barriers that students face
Lack of relationships between staff and students; The fear of change
Pre conceived notions that the staff and even students bring to the classroom

Solutions:
Professional development
Finding ways to develop relationships between systems
Support at different levels pending on the location

Needs & Resources

Barriers:
Increased levels of need
Models are not designed for all - making sure all districts have models

Solutions:
Providing mentoring
Employee assistance programs - finding ways to help staff
Raising awareness of the services that are available

Financial

Barriers:
Economic impact
Funding
Services that are cost prohibitive

Solutions:
Finding ways to have folks who are unemployed - mentors and volunteers
Making sure that services are not cost prohibitive

Time

Barriers:
Time
Calendar and scheduling - more bridges

Solutions:
Protected time for workshops