Prior to IDEA 2004, there appeared to be little integration of secondary transition services and academic standards for learning and student transition services and goals were restrictive and narrow. This division resulted in a distinct curriculum for academics and a completely different service plan to address secondary transition needs of students with disabilities. Quite simply—there was no alignment between the expectations for student learning across academic content and expectations related to post-school outcomes. As longitudinal studies such as the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 examine the social indicators related to the transition between youth and adulthood (such as postsecondary education, employment, and independent living), educators seek ways to address the determinants (such as nature and intensity of secondary transition services) of these indicators within educational contexts. Since then, there has been a shift in perspectives and service implementation around secondary transition services for students with disabilities. These changes have focused primarily on three areas:

1. Focus on academic and career skills. The common core standards reflect the knowledge and skills that facilitate student success in school, careers, and in life. Students with disabilities are expected to access common core content and its emphasis on 21st century skills, including such themes as health, safety, and community literacies.

2. Delivery of transition services. There has been an impetus to include students with disabilities in the career and guidance services that are provided to the entire student body. This has been especially evident in state initiatives around individualized learning plans (ILPs).

3. Postsecondary goals for students with disabilities. Prior to IDEA 2004, postsecondary goals for students with disabilities were narrow, restrictive, and often very different from those goals expected for the larger student population. Although there is still a long way to go, there are increased opportunities for students with disabilities to attend postsecondary education, participate in service learning, reside in independent living settings, and realize other goals that are more aligned with expectations for the general student population.
Will Gordillo is the District Director of the Division of Special Education in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools in Miami, Florida, a school district he has served in for 33 years.

The fourth largest school district in the nation, Miami-Dade has just over 347,000 students in grades Pre-K through 12, of which approximately 39,000 are students with disabilities. Hispanic students make up 65 percent of the overall student population, and more than 62,000 students are in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.

Born in Pinar del Rio, Cuba, Will Gordillo came to the United States at the age of five. He began his career in education in 1978 as a teacher of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and emotional/behavioral disorders, followed by stints as an Educational Specialist, Assistant Principal, and Principal. Mr. Gordillo holds degrees in Educational Leadership, Special Education, and Reading Education as well as an endorsement in ESOL.

In addition to his active involvement with the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, Mr. Gordillo serves on the Council of Great City Schools and the Council for Exceptional Children, Miami Chapter 121; is a past president of the Dade Association of School Administrators; and is currently the president-elect for the Florida Council for Administrators of Special Education. Will was interviewed by Ron Felton, Associate Director of the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative.

RON: You have had a successful career for over 30 years in the fourth largest school district in the United States. What have been the most significant changes you have seen in the field?

WILL: Overall, there has been a huge change in expectations, both for our students with disabilities and for teachers. We are now serving the majority of our students with disabilities in the general education setting, and we—all of us—are being held accountable for their performance. This has forced educators, at both the school and central office levels, to collaborate across departments in order to assure this success. Our internal structures at the central office have changed to facilitate collaboration and improve outcomes for all students. We have been allowed to use categorical funds with more flexibility, which also facilitates cross-functional collaboration to address the academic needs of our students.

We have also experienced enormous growth in the numbers of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. There has been a broadening of the definition of who qualifies under this disability category based on educational and scientific research. We know so much more about autism now than we did when my career began, yet we still need to know a lot more about research-based interventions for this group of students. The increase in the level of advocacy and parent involvement for this population has been incredible.

In my community, we have the Autism Society of South Florida, Parent to Parent of Miami, University of Miami’s Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, and Autism Speaks. I currently sit on the board of directors of the local chapter of Autism Speaks, a national autism advocacy group, and our chapter in Miami-Dade is one of the largest in the nation.

Another big change has been the collection and use of student data in special education. Data is being used both for subgroup accountability and to improve outcomes for students with disabilities as much as making instructional and programmatic decisions and maximizing efficiency.

RON: What have been the changes in expectations for teachers?

WILL: Our district has a unified core curriculum and highly defined tiered interventions. Special education teachers now have to be qualified to teach the core content, and general educators are expected to provide accommodations and to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of a wide range of learners. Many special education teachers are now expected to co-teach in general education, although, in Miami-Dade, there are just not enough teacher allocations to provide the level of co-teaching that we would like. However, other models of support are being used to provide in-class support and consultation/collaboration in special education to students with disabilities. There has been a major shift in the changing role of the special education teacher. There has also been a shift for parents who want to know why specialized instructional support in general education classrooms is replacing the traditional resource room model for...
the delivery of educational services. It has been a struggle to shift the focus to special education being viewed as a service rather than a place. We still have a way to go to get where we need to be in this regard since shifts happen slowly.

RON: What significant changes do you see happening in the future?

WILL: There are so many significant changes that are taking place in the field at this time. We will be seeing an increase in competition in the provision of services to students. For instance, Florida is a “choice state” and has legislated school choice for families; Florida also offers a supportive environment for the expansion of both charter schools and private schools. It started with the McKay Scholarship program [an on-demand voucher program for students with disabilities] that originally was for students who were eligible under IDEA. It has now been expanded to students with 504 plans. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of private schools offering education to students with disabilities. Some of these private schools, and some charter schools, are exclusively created to serve students with disabilities, thereby offering parents an option that we have been encouraged to move away from—segregated facilities for students with disabilities. However, parents are availing themselves of this choice option. This is forcing public schools to re-examine special education programs and services towards implementing more innovative practices and improving cost efficiencies.

The implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) will lead to significant changes in general and special education. It is giving states greater flexibility in making special education eligibility determinations based on a student’s response to instruction and the implementation of multi-tiered systems of support. This is resulting in more students making instructional progress in general education and not requiring special education.

RON: When you came to the U.S. as a young child, you had to acquire English as a second language. With so many immigrant students in Miami and such a large ESOL program, how do you make sure that appropriate special education services are provided to the English language learners (ELLs) who need them and avoid over-identifying students for special education while they are acquiring a new language?

WILL: When I arrived here in Miami from Cuba as a refugee, via Ecuador, in 1961, there was no ELL or ESOL program. For me it was immersion—sink or swim. I learned to swim quickly thanks to wonderful teachers. I was also very young. As a result of the huge influx of immigrants that began in the 1960s, Miami has always been on the cutting edge in terms of providing supports and services to students with disabilities who are also ELLs and in providing bilingual programs. As a result, we are very sensitive to the issues around second language acquisition and disability determination as well as the need to integrate ESOL strategies with special education for students who are ELL and have disabilities. Our teachers are required to add on an endorsement in English for Speakers of Other Languages in order to effectively address the instructional needs of our ELL students. Within our Special Education department, we have an entire department that is focused on Bilingual Special Education. This department provides Language Proficiency Dominance Assessment (LPDA) for students with academic/behavior difficulties to determine if those difficulties are due to language. These individuals also conduct records reviews of students receiving ESOL and special education services to ensure compliance and to target areas of need. Additionally, our Special Education Management Web-based Individual Education Plan (IEP) System addresses the instructional needs for ELLs with disabilities and includes entry and exit dates, post-monitoring, and English language acquisition skills in core content, language arts, reading, and writing.

RON: After a career spanning three decades, what is one important thing you have learned about education?

WILL: Good teachers do make a difference. Thankfully, I had many of them in the Miami school system. My family’s life changed drastically for the better when we came to Miami and made the United States our home. The initial transition was made easier by Mrs. Williams, a wonderful teacher at Miramar Elementary School who had a memorable southern drawl. I will never forget her. Teachers like her make a difference in the life of children every day.
The national focus on accountability in education has led to an increased emphasis on the measurement of teacher effectiveness, its relationship to various measures of student achievement, and the methods that should be used to evaluate teachers. One result of this focus is an ongoing examination of what constitutes good teaching and how to develop fair and reliable measures for assessing teacher performance. This effort has proven to be particularly challenging when looking at the work of special education teachers in urban schools. The roles of these educators have been changing and have become increasingly more intertwined with those of their general education colleagues.

The topical focus for the Urban Collaborative’s Fall 2011 Meeting, October 26–29, in Austin, Texas, will be on how urban school districts are addressing these issues and how research is—or is not—informing the process. Entitled “Highly Effective Special Education Teachers in Urban Schools: Taking the Measure,” the meeting will seek to bring clarity to such questions as:

- What are the attributes of highly effective special education teachers?
- How do these attributes differ from those of general education teachers?
- How are special education teachers to be fairly evaluated when student performance and outcomes are part of the equation?

Ms. Lynn Holdheide, a Vanderbilt University Research Associate at the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, will serve as the meeting’s keynote speaker. Ms. Holdheide works on several projects related to evaluating teacher effectiveness and improving the preparation of teachers for students with at-risk characteristics and disabilities. She provides technical assistance to states and districts as they design comprehensive teacher evaluation systems—with a particular emphasis on addressing the unique challenges in evaluating teachers of students with special needs. Ms. Holdheide will present an overview of current national efforts related to teacher evaluation and discuss the challenges in designing comprehensive teacher evaluation systems that have the capacity to differentiate among specialty area educators.

For more information about the meeting, please visit www.urbancollaborative.org.
A New Home for the Inclusive Schools Network

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), is pleased to announce that it has transferred ownership of the Inclusive Schools Network to Stetson & Associates, Inc., of Houston, Texas.

The Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) was founded in 2005 by Dr. David Riley, Executive Director of EDC’s Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative. ISN was a response to the many requests from celebrants of Inclusive Schools Week for year-round information and support regarding the development and expansion of inclusive schooling practices.

As Dr. Riley explains:

Inclusive Schools Week was initiated in 2000 as part of an effort to promote a national dialogue on the benefits of inclusive schools to all students. The purpose of Inclusive Schools Week has been twofold: (1) to celebrate the progress that has been made in improving inclusive educational opportunities for children and youth with disabilities and diverse learning needs and (2) to reflect on how much more has yet to be done in this country and around the world to ensure that these students have access to a quality education and its benefits. Each year, The Week has been celebrated by teachers, parents, and school communities—literally—around the world during the first full week of December.

The acquisition of ISN by Stetson & Associates was the result of a long search to find a permanent home for the network. In Stetson & Associates, we have found an organization that is just as passionate about the inclusive schools message and more than capable of building upon our vision for the network. Website visitors and ISN members will now have access to an extensive range of information, tools, and networking opportunities to assist them on their journey to develop more inclusive schools and classrooms. Stetson & Associates will be contributing their 24 years of experience in providing on-site and online professional development to classroom and special education teachers, school principals, and family members. Most educators and families are supportive of the concept of inclusive schools and classrooms. They now need the “how to.” That is the expertise that Dr. Frances Stetson and her associates at Stetson & Associates will bring. I could not be more pleased that Dr. Stetson will now be leading the network and sharing that expertise.

In her own statement, Dr. Stetson said, “We are honored by the trust placed in our organization by the Education Development Center and Dr. David Riley to assume the lead role in the Inclusive Schools Network. Our entire history as a firm has, indeed, revolved around improving the quality of inclusive schools for all students. Building on the outstanding work of EDC and Dr. Riley, we are introducing a new website, complete with a tool for self-assessing schools’ inclusive processes; free downloadable tools and resources; an exciting calendar of topics of interest that will feature new blogs, resources and technology tools; and exciting Inclusive Schools Week celebration materials.”

The new ISN website was launched in October 2011 and may be visited at www.inclusiveschools.org.

“We are honored by the trust placed in our organization by the Education Development Center and Dr. David Riley to assume the lead role in the Inclusive Schools Network.”

Dr. Frances Stetson, Stetson & Associates
The Shift from Accountability to Accountability and the Integration of Academic and Career Skills

Special education administrators are aware of the federal accountability requirements for transition. Indicator 13 requires data collection regarding transition planning and mandates that individualized education programs (IEPs) include appropriate, measurable, post-school goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments related to education and training, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills.1 Although, federal, state, and local accountability requirements are not likely to go away, the move to national standards across 44 states (http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states) has provided expanded learning opportunities for all students. Concurrently, the common core standards and the use of multi-tiered models or response to intervention (RtI) systems have given educators a framework to identify measurable goals and, at the same time, implement academic plans that have the potential to improve student post-school outcomes.

The common core standards are explicit in the integration of learning content that is relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that young people need for success in college and careers. (http://www.corestandards.org/). The core subjects underlying the standards (language arts, math, etc.) are woven with 21st-century interdisciplinary themes (such as global awareness and financial, civic, health, and environmental literacies). The integration of these interdisciplinary themes, along with the common core focus on learning and innovation skills (creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration), provide rich content for students with disabilities, offering them learning opportunities that can facilitate their inclusion in real-world, life and community activities. (http://www.p21.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1005&Itemid=236).

A new program by Urban Collaborative Member Boston Public Schools exemplifies the application of these learning and innovation skills with the launch of Impact (http://www.impactboston.org), a personal safety and self-defense program that teaches students with significant disabilities effective strategies to resist threats and intimidation, thereby, enhancing their comfort in community-based activities. Impact is integrated into the district’s career and technical education program and is closely linked with STRIVE. Impact focuses on helping students create effective solutions, think critically about violence, and improve communication and collaboration. Impact provides students with a skill set that enables them to effectively challenge potentially violent situations. This program offers learning that is integrated into academic opportunities for students and is important for post-school success.

STRIVE is a comprehensive transition program providing support services to Boston Public Schools students with disabilities. STRIVE is part of Boston’s School to Career/Technical Vocational Education system, which develops training and employment opportunities for students in a variety of career pathways.

The Shift from Disparate to Integrated Career and Guidance Services

An example of a cohesive academic and career system is offered by another member district, Memphis City Schools. Through Cradle to Career, Roadmap of Critical Benchmarks and Transition Years for Memphis City Schools, educators receive training and support regarding the
important milestones in a student’s school program, from early childhood through college graduation. This roadmap seeks to integrate effective interventions related to post-school outcomes with academic and social content that are provided to students in inclusive ways. (http://www.mcsk12.net/forms/Cash/MCS_Student_Cradle_to_Career_Roadmap7Sep2010.pdf).

Another integrated service delivery model and an important opportunity for students with and without disabilities, is provided by state initiatives related to **individualized learning plans** (ILPs). An ILP, required in 23 states, is a strategic planning tool intended to help youth identify, engage in, and achieve post-school goals. Referenced differently across the states, such as graduation plans or career plans, ILP has empirical evidence related to increased student motivation, heightened understanding of post-school options, improved school family relations, enhanced self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses, and strengthened alignment between school courses and post-school goals. (http://www.ncwd-youth.info/ilp-infobrief) (http://rennCENTER.issuelab.org/research/listing/student_learning_plans_supporting_every_students_transition_to_college_and_career)

Requirements in some states, such as Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina, mandate that students begin developing learning plans in the 7th and 8th grades. States with learning plan initiatives also offer students an online Web platform through which they can take transition and career interest and preference assessments, explore various careers, and build an interactive electronic portfolio—all as a way for students, families, and educators to track students’ progress. Examples of these interactive systems used by member districts follow:


- **Wisconsin Careers** in Madison, Milwaukee, and Sun Prairie Area School Districts (http://wiscareers.wisc.edu/Default.aspx)

### The Shift from Restrictive Expectations to Expansive Opportunities

National policy around college and career readiness is supported by data demonstrating that postsecondary education is correlated with increased wages and job opportunities. Therefore, not surprisingly, between 1990 and 2005, there was a 19% increase in students with disabilities attending college or receiving some level of postsecondary education within four years of leaving high school. Legislative changes have created opportunities and heightened expectations for students with significant disabilities, such as intellectual disabilities, to attend postsecondary education. (http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html) However, recent data from Wave 4 of the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 indicate that six-years after leaving high school, there is a disparity regarding the type of postsecondary institution that youth with and without disabilities attended. Young adults with disabilities were more likely to enroll in a two-year community college (37 percent) versus a 4-year college or university (15 percent), than their peers. Youth without disabilities attended a 4-year college or university 37 percent of the time, while their peers with disabilities attended a 4-year college or university 15 percent.

The HEOA provides the impetus for demonstration transition programs, including dual enrollment programs, whereby students with cognitive disabilities attend college during their last years of high school. Many of these programs are partnerships between two- and four-year colleges and school districts (www.thinkcollege.org), and some offer opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to live in campus housing. The chance to live in campus residence halls provides students with opportunities to enhance their independent living skills, especially those related to the common core, 21st-century interdisciplinary content. Member districts in Massachusetts, including Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Leominster, Newton, Springfield, and

When students with severe disabilities have the opportunity to go to college, they are getting the chance to grow and mature just as their classmates without disabilities. They may be sitting in classes with their neighbors, cousins, or friends they had when they were included in school. They are with same age peers, participating in the life of their communities—just like everyone else.”

Marco Rodrigues, Manager of Special Education & Intervention Services, Worcester Public Schools

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Worcester, participated in the state-supported initiative Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) Program. ICE Programs are offered collaboratively between school districts and institutions of higher education and must meet specific requirements:

- Be designed to promote and enhance academic, social, functional, and employment skills and outcomes
- Provide opportunities for the inclusion of students with severe disabilities in credit and non-credit courses with their non-disabled peers
- Provide linkages to adult agencies and organizations
- Promote participation in the student life of the college community
- Include student participation in community-based employment related directly to course selection and career goals (http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/grants11/rfp/235.html)

Heightened expectations are also evident in inclusive service learning, which creates experiential learning opportunities for students with disabilities. (http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/) According to the Institute of Community Integration at the University of Minnesota:

Service learning seeks to integrate the academic curriculum and service activities, thus providing all students with opportunities to learn in real-world settings, raise their regard for civic engagement, and gain an understanding of community-based organizations. For example, member district Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) in Kentucky describes their service learning program as "a teaching strategy that connects classroom curriculum with service projects. The goal of the JCPS Volunteer Talent Center Service Learning Program is to identify and assist with opportunities for students (PK-12) to participate in student-centered, curriculum-based, service-learning projects. http://www.jefferson.k12.ky.us/Programs/VolunteerTalentCenter/Service_Learning.html

Conclusion

Secondary transition services can be integrated across academic content areas, aligned with district-wide career development initiatives for all students, and represent expanded opportunities for students with the most significant disabilities. The advantages created by these integrated systems overshadow old notions of secondary transition services characterized by narrow assessments, such as work samples (only measuring routine eye-hand coordination); limited experiential learning, such as sheltered workshops; and predictable employment (4F jobs: food, filth, filing, and flowers).

Educators at multiple levels can embrace this integrated service delivery using activities such as the following:

- Examining existing district-wide career development systems and identifying avenues for integrated delivery
- Offering in-service to all educators and family liaisons regarding secondary transition
- Encouraging participation in professional development forums crossing general and special education
- Establishing linkages across school, community, and adult service agencies
- Creating opportunities for formal and informal dialogue across secondary transition, career guidance, and career and technical education (CTE) personnel

This article was intended to provide an overview of some of the policy and practice changes that have resulted in a more cohesive and integrated approach to secondary transition planning and services. It is hoped that readers will use the examples by member districts and the many links as a springboard to further their own work.
Select Resources


- Division on Career Development & Transition (DCDT) – Promotes efforts to (1) improve the quality of and access to career, vocational, and transition services, (2) increase the participation of education in career development and transition goals, and (3) influence policies affecting career development and transition services for persons with disabilities. www.dcdt.org

- National Center on Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) – Helps to implement IDEA and help youth with disabilities and their families achieve desired post-school outcomes. NSTTAC helps states build capacity to support and improve transition planning, services, and outcomes for youth with disabilities and to disseminate information and provide technical assistance on scientifically based research practices. www.nsttac.org

- The ALLIANCE National Parent Technical Assistance Center (NPTAC) – Provides Parent Centers, Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs), and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs) with technical assistance and disseminates information focused on four major areas of national significance for youth with disabilities and their families. www.ncset.org

- National Dissemination Center (NDC)/NICHCY – Offers information on disabilities and serves the nation as a central source of information on disabilities in infants, toddlers, children, and youth. Here, you’ll also find easy-to-read information on IDEA, the law authorizing early intervention services and special education. www.nichcy.org/schoolage/transitionadult

References


The examples included in this article were identified through a district’s website, and in some cases, we were unable to verify the content with district personnel.

For information about this article or the Urban Collaborative work pertinent to secondary transition, please contact Judy Shanley at jshanley@edc.org

THE COLLABORATIVE EXTENDS A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT!
Multicultural Los Angeles, with its urban panoramas, Hollywood appeal, and plentiful art, dining and shopping options, provided the site for the Urban Collaborative’s Spring 2011 meeting “Systemic Implementation of Multi-Tier Academic and Behavioral Supports.” More than 200 special education leaders from 50 school districts across the country gathered for what has become a favorite biannual learning and networking event. The primary topic of this Spring’s Member Meeting was to learn how Urban Collaborative Member Districts are adopting and implementing research-based, multi-tier systems of supports. Dr. Judy Elliott, Chief Academic Officer of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), provided a stimulating keynote address that was complemented by colleagues from across the country who presented on the topic in concurrent sessions. In these sessions, nine member districts highlighted their path to adopting multi-tier systems of support, including their challenges with scaling up, incorporating teacher efficacy measures, and building a collaborative culture. The host city of Los Angeles welcomed members with fabulous weather, and on May 11, 2011, the meeting commenced with two thought-provoking consultancy sessions. LAUSD presented two challenges: (1) providing one-to-one paraprofessionals to students with autism and (2) dealing with extended school year programs that are cost-efficient but also provide a wider array of more creative programming for students. The structured consultancy protocol allowed members to probe, clarify, and problem solve each of the dilemmas presented, providing the presenters with a window into shared challenges and approaches that have worked elsewhere.

The meeting continued on Thursday as member districts attended size-alike roundtable discussions. During these sessions, leaders from small, medium, and large school districts shared how they are facing the demand to identify savings within their service delivery models while also maintaining or improving the quality of services delivered for students with disabilities. The size-alike roundtable discussions resulted in shared strategies for finding efficiencies to support students with disabilities, and a discussion of opportunities and challenges have resulted from the economic downturn. In particular, the conversations produced a wealth of ideas on how to reconfigure departments, break down silos within departments, and implement multi-tier systems of support more coherently.

The Partner Focus Groups offered useful and engaging case studies and conversations showcasing impactful academic and behavioral interventions, differentiation through technology, and strategies for achieving personnel efficiencies. Following the Partner Focus Groups, Sharyn Howell, Executive Director, Division of Special Education, LAUSD, welcomed members to Los Angeles and highlighted the geographical expanse of LAUSD, the diversity of its students and families, and the innovative programming and services offered to students with and without disabilities in Los Angeles. She acknowledged concerns... change movements require not only leadership but cultivated followership.
about serving students with disabilities in an economic climate that values efficiencies and savings, and she emphasized the district’s commitment to students and families to deliver high-quality services through a multi-tier system of academic and behavioral supports.

Dr. Judy Elliott, Chief Academic Officer, Los Angeles Unified Public Schools, literally had the crowd on their feet with her rousing, informative, and inspiring keynote address entitled Making What Matters Happen. In explaining how the Los Angeles schools have adopted a multi-tier system of academic and behavioral supports, she spoke to the unique challenges and opportunities presented when working to serve such a large and geographically expansive student population. (The district educates more than 650,000 students in almost 1,100 schools!) Dr. Elliott emphasized that the process of implementing multi-tier systems of support in Los Angeles was a systemic change effort that involved coordination of district-level personnel and resources, infrastructure development, ongoing professional development, and reflection on the implementation process itself. She noted that the heart of the effort involved systematically educating teachers and staff about how to use data to inform problem-solving and decision-making. After wowing the audience with the outcomes of this large-scale change effort, Dr. Elliott showed a TED Talk to remind members that change movements require not only leadership but cultivated followership. She concluded her address by calling on the audience to seize the day and be agents of change in implementing multi-tier systems of support to accelerate student achievement.

Following the keynote address, members engaged in a question-and-answer panel session with Dr. Elliott, Jayne Rhyne of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools, Will Gordillo of Miami-Dade County Schools, and Charlene Green of the Clark County School District. Each panelist offered a distinct perspective on the implementation of multi-tier systems of support in his or her district. Following this invigorating day, members gathered in the beautiful Dorothy Chandler Pavilion at the LA Music Center for a reception and enjoyed fabulous food, interesting conversations, and a fun respite from the day’s events.

The next day included concurrent sessions from nine member districts: Chicago, Clark County, Hillsborough County, Houston, Jefferson County, Los Angeles, Miami Dade County, SPEED, and Washoe County. Each district presented its approach to implementing multi-tier systems of academic and behavioral support in a systemic way. Common to all presentations were the inevitable challenges with implementing change on a large scale. However, presenters also spoke of innovative thinking, overcoming obstacles, and commitment to the vision that sustained and motivated the effort. Measuring teacher efficacy, developing a district-wide discipline policy, addressing the challenges of scaling up, and sustaining a collaborative culture represented some of the unique perspectives shared in these sessions. (Collaborative Members and Associates may view/download session presentations at http://www.urbancollaborative.org/node/92)

The Spring Member Meeting concluded Saturday morning with a plenary session, in which leaders from LAUSD discussed school choice and students with disabilities.
NEW COLLABORATIVE MEMBERS

The Collaborative currently links together 103 school districts from 34 states. Eight school districts have joined since February 2011.

- Greenville County School District, SC
- Elgin Unit School District 46, IL
- Naperville Community Unit School District 203, IL
- Recovery School District, LA
- Bibb County Schools, GA
- Central Indiana Educational Service Center, IN
- Lincoln Elementary School District, IL
- Westwood Public Schools, MA

For a complete list of Collaborative members and enrollment information, please visit our website at www.urbancollaborative.org