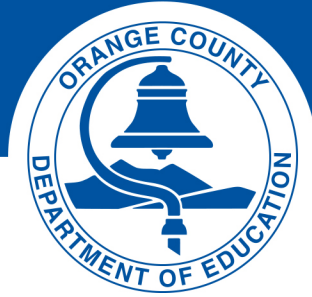


NEWS RELEASE

Al Mijares, Ph.D.
County Superintendent of Schools
200 Kalmus Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626



Contact: Ian Hanigan
714-966-4008
communications@ocde.us

OCDE to lead statewide implementation of academic and behavioral framework Butte County Office of Education and the SWIFT Center will partner on the new initiative

COSTA MESA, Calif., JULY 11, 2016 – The Orange County Department of Education has been awarded \$30 million in state funding to assist schools and districts throughout California with the implementation of a proven framework of supports to address each student’s academic, behavioral and social needs.

The investment by the California Department of Education positions OCDE as the lead agency on the California Scale-Up MTSS Statewide (SUMS) Initiative, which is designed to promote and expand the use of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports, or MTSS.

MTSS is an integrated framework that has been employed by a number of schools and districts to successfully identify students who need academic or behavioral support, implement response plans, evaluate the impact and make refinements over time. By combining and coordinating new and existing supports, MTSS can be utilized to increase student attendance, prevent dropouts, lower disciplinary rates, improve school climates and boost overall performance. As such, several states have explored MTSS initiatives in recent years.

“California continues to take the lead on 21st-century learning, as well as addressing the needs of the whole child, and the Orange County Department of Education is well-positioned to further this important work,” said Orange County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Al Mijares. “The California SUMS Initiative will leverage OCDE’s considerable experience leading successful intervention and support strategies to build a scalable and sustainable MTSS framework that promotes equitable access for all students, creates a culture of collaboration among stakeholders and aligns fragmented support systems.”

To implement the California SUMS Initiative, OCDE will partner with two highly regarded educational agencies — the Butte County Office of Education and the SWIFT Center at the University of Kansas.

The Butte County Office of Education will advance statewide communication and enable the sharing of professional learning resources through its Digital Chalkboard, an online access portal. Additionally, Butte staff will engage rural, geographically-isolated county offices of education, districts and schools to support their unique needs.

The SWIFT Center is a nationally recognized technical assistance center with a primary mission of building district and school capacity to implement inclusive educational programs and improve

instruction by providing academic and behavioral supports to students. SWIFT will support the partnership by providing technical assistance and professional learning opportunities that focus on whole system engagement, building on the strengths of educators, students and their communities.

OCDE and its partners plan to establish four tiers of trainers to help school districts and county offices of education scale up their own MTSS programs. At the top will be a State Leadership Team featuring experts from the California Department of Education, OCDE, Butte County and the SWIFT Center. The second tier will include 11 Region Transformation Teams, which will work with 57 County Transformational Teams. Numerous Local Education Agency (LEA) Implementation Teams will integrate the California SUMS Initiative at the district and school levels.

In December 2015, the California Department of Education announced it would accept applications from county offices of education to lead a new project called “Developing, Aligning, and Improving Systems of Academic and Behavioral Supports.” Funding for the project was appropriated in response to recommendations from a March 2015 California Statewide Special Education Task Force Report that cited the need for a unified MTSS framework capable of aligning the state’s educational systems and services, many of which remained uncoordinated.

The Orange County Department of Education’s proposal called for a coherent educational system based on the principles of implementation science, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the whole child approach.

Applications were due in February, and OCDE learned in March that its submission had received the highest score in the state and an initial \$10 million in funding. In June, after OCDE had been selected to lead the SUMS Initiative, the governor’s budget allocated an additional \$20 million to support the scope of work.

“The California SUMS Initiative has the potential to have a transformative impact on education in our state,” Dr. Mijares said. “MTSS is an evidence-based framework that is making a difference in our schools and in the lives of our students by addressing their academic and social needs. By working together to create a universal process for implementation, we can improve student outcomes at all levels.”

To learn more about MTSS, visit ocde.us/MTSS.

About the Orange County Department of Education

OCDE is a public education organization offering support services to 27 school districts, nearly 600 schools and over 23,000 educators serving more than 500,000 students in Orange County. OCDE’s personnel offer support, professional development and student programs through its divisions and departments, which include Administrative Services, Alternative Education, Business Services, Career Technical Education, Information Technology, Instructional Services, Legal Services, School and Community Services, and Special Education. The department’s vision is that “Orange County students will lead the nation in college and career readiness and success.”

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