SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT UCLA

Addressing Barriers
to Learning

New ways to think . . .

Better ways to link

UCLA Mental Health in Schools Center Training and Technical Assistance

It is not enough to say that all children can learn or that no child will be left behind; the work involves . . . achieving the vision of an American education system that enables all children to succeed in school, work, and life.

Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

Who at the School Addresses Barriers to Learning and Teaching?

We all know that in too many schools too many kids are not doing well. What should a school be doing about this?

As the Carnegie Task Force on Education has stressed: *School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students.* But ,*when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.* The challenge is not simply to say all students can learn; it is to ensure that *all* youngsters have an *equal opportunity* to succeed at school. Meeting this challenge requires effectively dealing with barriers to development, learning, and teaching. This encompasses a wide-range of mental health and psychosocial concerns.

Whose Responsibility is it to Meet the Challenge?

Look around a school and ask: *Who at this school is involved in addressing barriers to learning and teaching?* When we do this, we have to ask many folks because no one has "mapped" the full picture. So we end up having to do our own write-up of who's at the school, what programs and services they offer, and when they are available (see the tool on page 5).

Inside

The next question to ask is: *Who at the school leads the way in improving how barriers to learning and teaching are addressed?* When we ask this, we find no one's job description deals with these matters; no one has this concern as a primary responsibility and accountability.

In seeking answers to these questions, we find that schools do devote major resources to addressing student problems – mostly after problems arise. And in some schools, a few community resources are being brought to or linked to the school. But the picture that emerges is a hodge-podge of programs and services – with no one responsible for putting them together into an integrated and cost-effective system. We also find the focus is mainly on a few of the many students who are not doing well.

> *Despite all the emphasis on school improvement, it is evident that too little proactive attention has been paid to improving what schools do to address barriers to learning and teaching.*

By itself, limited awareness of all that is in place and about how few students are helped is a matter that warrants attention. But, the more fundamental reason for understanding all this is to improve how such resources are used. If schools are to enable *all* students to benefit from instructional improvements, it is essential to rethink prevailing approaches to student support and move in new directions, reframe the roles and functions of staff involved, and redeploy available resources.

Prevailing State of Affairs

Barriers to learning. Among the many external factors that can interfere with development and learning are problems stemming from restricted opportunities associated with poverty, difficult and diverse family conditions, high mobility rates,

English language deficits, violent neighborhoods, substance abuse, inadequate health care, and lack of enrichment opportunities. Some youngsters also bring with them intrinsic conditions that make learning and performing difficult. As a result, at every grade level some students come to school each day not quite ready to benefit from instruction. And, students' problems are exacerbated as they internalize the frustrations of confronting barriers to learning and the debilitating effects of performing poorly at school. All this interferes with the teacher's efforts to teach.

How schools address barriers. Our schools have a long-history of assisting teachers in dealing with problems. Prominent examples are seen in the range of counseling, psychological, and social service programs and in initiatives for enhancing students' assets and resiliency.

Data on how much is spent at a school to address barriers to learning and teaching are not easy to come by. In schools serving high numbers of students from economically impoverished families, some principals tell us that such matters consume the equivalent of as much as 25-30% of their budgets. Whatever the actual figures are, the best guess is that a large proportion of what's expended goes in this direction. Given this, schools must ensure that such major outlays benefit more than a few students.

Because the consensus is that existing programs are planned and implemented in a fragmented manner, what little attention has been paid to improving student supports has focused mostly on enhanced coordination. Recently, with tightening budgets and lay-offs of student support staff, some attention also has focused on increasing linkages with community programs and services (e.g., co-location of one or two community agency staff on school campuses).

However, whether provided by school or community staff, programs continue to be offered in relative isolation from each other, with a focus on discrete problems and specialized services for individuals and small groups. Too little thought is given to the importance of meshing community services and programs with existing school-owned and -operated activity. This means that only a small number of youngsters are provided services they may not otherwise have received, and little connection is made with families, teachers, and related programs. Because of this, resources often are expended in redundant ways, and a new form of fragmentation is emerging as community and school professionals engage in a form of parallel play at school sites.

Conflicts about turf, space, confidentiality, and liability are common. And, as "reductions in force" are deliberated, counterproductive competition is increasing for sparse resources.

But, these mainly are symptoms. Analyses of the prevailing state of affairs point to the root of what's wrong. Such analyses find that the entire enterprise of addressing barriers is *marginalized* in policy and practice. At all levels, policy makers and planners need to rectify this fundamental flaw in school improvement planning.

A major shift in policy and practice is long overdue.

New Directions

The coming years will mark a turning point for how schools and communities address the problems of children and youth. Currently being determined is: *In what direction should we go? And who should decide this?* Everyone who has been involved in providing student supports needs to find a place at the tables where the answers to these questions are being shaped. This includes all venues where school improvement is discussed. There is much work to be done in addressing barriers to learning and teaching as schools strive to leave no child behind.

Previous initiatives for enhancing student supports provide a foundation upon which to build in efforts to close the achievement gap and ensure all students have equal educational opportunities. Fortunately, the science-base provides evidence about what needs to be changed and what new directions hold promise. Also fortunate is the fact that trailblazing initiatives are demonstrating ways to broaden policy and practice. New frameworks are being used that outline a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach that is well integrated into school improvement initiatives.

Examples are emerging across the country. The entire State of Hawai`i has been moving in a good direction with its *Comprehensive Student Support System* (CSSS). Iowa recently published its design for *Enhancing Iowa's Systems of Supports for Learning and Development.* This is a joint effort of education and other state agencies involved in the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development. In California, the Speaker Pro Tem of the Assembly has reintroduced legislation for a *Comprehensive Pupil Learning Support System*

in every school. Oregon's Multnomah Education Service District has instituted policy to enhance "Learning Supports" in its schools. As part of the national *New Directions for Student Support Initiative*, seven states already have held summits and are establishing statewide initiatives. These and other innovative efforts are described online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ndannouncement.htm (click on "Example of Legislation" and on "Where's it Happening?").

> Schools recognize the essential nature and challenge of providing effective learning supports to enable the learning and development of all students by preventing and reducing barriers to student success. Given achievement gaps and recent evidence of a plateau effect in many schools, it seems evident that meeting the challenge will require not only improving how we teach, but also will necessitate developing better ways for schools and communities to address factors that interfere with learning and teaching.
>
> From: Assuring No Child is Left Behind – online at
> http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/assuringnochild.pdf

Reframing Roles and Functions

For school personnel involved in traditional student support roles, changes are afoot. The threat of reductions in force is widespread. This has resulted in many folks hunkering down to get beneath the radar in order to avoid being cut from dwindling budgets. Others have adopted a "take them" approach. (*We do important work; those other folks aren't really doing much.*) These tactics tend not to work very well over the long-run.

The better strategy is to take the lead in redefining student support. This involves ensuring the work is primary and essential to student learning in general and to closing the achievement gap in particular. The immediate goal is to end the marginalization of staff whose work addresses barriers to learning. Doing this means finding ways to participate on school and district governance, planning, and evaluation bodies, bringing to the table new directions for student support, and clarifying how personnel roles and functions should be reframed.

In all this, it is well to remember that one school improvement trend is away from intervention ownership and toward accomplishing desired outcomes through flexible and expanded staff roles and functions. This trend recognizes underlying commonalities among a variety of school concerns and intervention strategies and is fostering increased interest in cross-disciplinary training and interprofessional education. The trend has major implications for changing professional preparation, credentialing, and the continuing education of student support professionals.

A fundamental aspect of reframing student support staff functions is that direct service with students and families will have to be more circumscribed. The role of support staff needs to be expanded so they can work together to

- develop, over time, a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system of interventions that is fully integrated with efforts to enhance student engagement in instruction and that weaves together school and community resources

- become an integrated part of inservice for teachers and other school staff, with a special emphasis on practices to enhance intrinsic motivation as the key to re-engaging students who have disengaged from classroom instruction.

Those at a school already committed to addressing barriers to learning and teaching are the logical leaders for improving what schools do to address barriers to learning and teaching. Currently, such staff are too caught up in the day-by-day pressures of their defined roles and functions. Everyone is so busy "doing" that there is no time to work on developing better ways. One is reminded of Winnie-the-Pooh who was always going down the stairs, bump, bump, bump, on his head behind Christopher Robin. He has come to think it is the only way to go down stairs. Still, he reasons, there might be a better way if only he could stop bumping long enough to figure it out.

In a paradoxical way, the time is opportune for student support staff to stop bumping and become a guiding force in school improvement planning. Such planning should begin with a clear image of what the classroom and school must do to teach *all* students effectively. This will require a full

continuum of interventions to prevent and correct behavior, learning, emotional, and motivational problems. Then, the focus can move to planning how a family of schools (e.g., the feeder pattern) and the surrounding community can complement each other's efforts and achieve economies of scale.

Concluding Comments

Over the next decade, pioneering initiatives will reshape the work of all student support staff. *The effect will be to transform "support services" as we have known them.*

In place of the marginalized, fragmented morass that prevails today, we will have a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system. It will be fully integrated with efforts to improve instruction. A major emphasis will be on re-engaging students as active and productive learners. All this will include an intensive focus on practices that reflect the latest thinking about intrinsic motivation.

To these ends, decision makers at all levels must be encouraged to revisit current policy and practice using the lens of addressing barriers to learning. The need is for them first to realign what exists in ways that foster cohesive practices and, over time, to fill critical gaps. Then, it will be feasible to achieve the vision of an "American education system that enables all children to succeed in school, work, and life."

As support staff participate in school improvement planning, it is well to keep in mind fundamentals that permeate all efforts to improve schools and schooling. For example:

C The curriculum in every classroom must include a major emphasis on acquisition of basic knowledge and skills. However, such basics must be understood to involve more than the old "three Rs" and cognitive development. There are many important areas of human development and functioning, and each contains "basics" that individuals may need help in acquiring. Moreover, any individual may require special accommodation in any of these areas.
C Every classroom must address student motivation as an antecedent, process, and outcome concern.
C Special assistance must be *added* to instructional programs for certain individuals, but only after the best nonspecialized procedures for facilitating learning have been tried. Moreover, such procedures must be designed to build on strengths and must not supplant continued emphasis on promoting healthy development.
C Beyond the classroom, schools must have policy, leadership, and mechanisms for developing school-wide programs to address barriers to learning. Some of the work needs to be in partnership with other schools, some will require weaving school and community resources together. The aim is to evolve a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of programs and services ranging from primary prevention through early intervention to treatment of serious problems. Our work suggests that at a school this requires evolving programs to (1) enhance the ability of the classroom to enable learning, (2) provide support for the many transitions experienced by students and their families, (3) increase home involvement, (4) respond to and prevent crises, (5) offer special assistance to students and their families, and (6) expand community involvement.

In support of all this, our Center has available a handout listing the many free resources we have developed to aid those trying to enhance learning supports. These resources have been developed with a view to how to proceed in stages and without additional funds. Many of the resources are designed to enhance readiness and momentum for new directions for student support; others are aids for building capacity. The list is divided into three sections:

Stage I: Understanding Some Basics and Tools for Enhancing Readiness and Momentum;

Stage II: Initial Capacity Building;

Stage III: Development. Included are guides and an evolving "toolkit."

Go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/NewDirectionsSomeResources.pdf – Specific resources can be linked from there.

Initial Tool for Mapping Who's at the School

Often, schools have not generated a "map" of staff who are trying to address barriers to student learning. This becomes painfully evident when one asks at any school for a document summarizing what programs and services are available, when they are provided, who provides them, how to access them, and so forth. Few schools have such a document. Therefore, it is not surprising how little information most teachers, parents, and students have about such matters. The form below can be adapted to fit a specific school, and when it is filled out, it can be shared with teachers, parents, and other concerned stakeholders.

Administrative Leader for Learning Supports
_____

School Psychologist _____
   times at the school _____

    C Provides assessment and testing of students for special services. Counseling for students and parents. Support services for teachers. Prevention, crisis, conflict resolution, program modification for special learning and/or behavioral needs.

School Nurse _____
   times at the school_____
    C Provides immunizations, follow-up, communicable disease control, vision and hearing screening and follow-up, health assessments and referrals, health counseling and information for students and families.

Pupil Services & Attendance Counselor
_____
   times at the school _____

    C Provides a liaison between school and home to maximize school attendance, transition counseling for returnees, enhancing attendance improvement activities.

Social Worker _____
   times at the school _____

    C Assists in identifying at-risk students and provides follow-up counseling for students and parents. Refers families for additional services if needed.

Counselors   times at the school
_____   _____
_____   _____

    C General and special counseling/guidance services. Consultation with parents and school staff.

Dropout Prevention Program Coordination
_____
   times at the school _____

    C Coordinates activity designed to promote dropout prevention.

Title I and English Lang. Acquisition Coordinators
_____
_____

    C Coordinates categorical programs, provides services to identified Title I students, implements Master Plan for English language acquisition (e.g., supervises the curriculum, testing, and so forth).

Resource and Special Education Teachers
_____
_____
_____
   times at the school _____

    C Provides information on program modifications for students in regular classrooms as well as providing services for special education.

Other important resources:

School-based Crisis Team (list by name/title)
_____/_____
_____/_____
_____/_____
_____/_____
_____/_____

School Improvement Program Planners
_____/_____
_____/_____
_____/_____

Community Resources

    C Providing school-linked or school-based interventions and resources

Who	What they do	When
_____/_____	_____/_____	
_____/_____	_____/_____	
_____/_____	_____/_____	
_____/_____	_____/_____	
_____/_____	_____/_____	
_____/_____	_____/_____	

Center News

***NEW AND UPDATED RESOURCES

To feature what other countries are doing, an initial "Quick Find" on *Mental Health in Schools in Other Countries* has been put online. It will be expanded over the next six months as we gather more info. See http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/mhinternational.html

A few examples of Quick Find topics

- Ⅽ Abuse (Including Sexual)
- Ⅽ Conduct Disorders & Behavior Problems
- Ⅽ Conflict Resolution in Schools
- Ⅽ Funding Sources
- Ⅽ Safe Schools and Violence Prevention

. . . and some packets

- Ⅽ *Autism Spectrum Disorders and the Role of Schools* – Provides a resource for school and MH partners to integrate special education and community perspectives.

- Ⅽ *About Infrastructure Mechanisms for a Comprehensive Learning Supports Component* – (Continuing Education Brief Reading, Revised 2005)

- Ⅽ *Developing Resource-Oriented Mechanisms to Enhance Learning Supports* – (Continuing Education Module, Revised 2005)

- Ⅽ *New Directions for Student Support: Rethinking Student Support to Enable Students to Learn and Schools to Teach* (Resource Aid, Revised 2005)

- Ⅽ *Resource Oriented Teams: Key Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Education Supports* (Center Report, revised 2005)

- Ⅽ *Restructuring Boards of Education to Enhance Schools Effectiveness in Addressing Barriers to Student Learning* (Executive Summary, 2005)

For more, see the section of the Center Website labeled *What's New?*.

Let us know what you need, and share what you think others might find useful.

***WHAT'S YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

Below are two matters about which we are seeking input. Your perspective would be helpful (see insert).

>>What do you think are the two most important policy issues in need of analysis related to mental health in schools and addressing barriers to learning?

>>What ways are you aware of that result in effective diffusion of ideas, innovations, and/or resources (going beyond typical dissemination activity)?

***JOIN: PRACTITIONERS' LISTSERV

Every Monday the Practitioner Listserv deals with concerns, questions, and responses from the field. The exchange involves sharing of experiences, resources, and opinions.

To join, email smhp@ucla.edu and ask to be added to the Practitioner Listserv. Send questions and topics for discussion to ltaylor@ucla.edu. See Net Exchange on the Center's website for recent requests and responses.

When a teacher calls a boy by his entire name, it means trouble.
Mark Twain

Center Staff:
   Howard Adelman, Co-Director
   Linda Taylor, Co-Director
   Perry Nelson, Coordinator
   . . . and a host of graduate and undergraduate students

**POLICY NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

AT-RISK YOUTH FEDERAL LEGISLATION PROPOSED – The Federal Youth Coordination Act of 2005 proposes to "improve communication among federal agencies serving at-risk youth, assess their needs, set goals for helping them and establish best practices for improving services..." 2/16/05. http://www.youthcoordinationact.org

LEGISLATION PROPOSED IN CA FOR ENHANCING LEARNING SUPPORTS AS A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM – Speaker Pro Tem of the California Assembly, Leland Yee, has reintroduced legislation for a "Comprehensive Pupil Learning Support System." The Bill, AB 171, can be downloaded at http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/bill/asm/ab_0151-0200/ab_171_bill_20050120_introduced.pdf

IOWA RELEASES NEW DESIGN FOR LEARNING SUPPORT COMPONENT – A design team led by the State Department of Education along with its interagency partners in the Iowa Collaboration for Youth has developed a new design for a system of learning supports. See: *Developing Our Youth: Fulfilling a Promise, Investing in Iowa's Future - Enhancing Iowa's System of Supports for Learning and Development.* Downloadable for now from http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/iowasystemofsupport.pdf

NEW MEXICO TASK FORCE OFFERS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION – A task force convened by Governor Richardson recently reported its recommendations in ways that are tied to a variety of current funding sources (e.g., behavioral health, disaster preparedness, public education,) that might be appropriately linked to support the efforts. http://www.sprc.org/statepages/resources/nm_recs.pdf

17 STATES DEVELOP SCHOOL READINESS INDICATORS – An initiative of 17 state partners has focused on developing a comprehensive set of school readiness indicators to inform public policy for young children and their families. "The National School Readiness Indicators Initiative provides a set of indicators that policy makers can use to monitor school readiness and early school success..." See the report at http://www.gettingready.org

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Want resources?
Need technical assistance?

Contact us at:
E-mail: **smhp@ucla.edu**   Ph: **(310) 825-3634**
                Toll Free Ph: **(866) 846-4843**
Write: Center for Mental Health in Schools
              Department of Psychology, UCLA
              Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

Or use our website: **http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu**

If you're not receiving our monthly electronic newsletter (ENEWS), send an E-mail request to:
smhp@ucla.edu
or subscribe online @ – http://lists.ucla.edu/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/mentalhealth-L

**FOR THOSE WITHOUT INTERNET ACCESS,
ALL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE
BY CONTACTING THE CENTER.**

Exchange info on MH practices in school and network with colleagues across the country by joining (1) the **Weekly Listserv for School MH Practitioners** and/or (2) **the Center's Consultation Cadre**. Sign up by email at smhp@ucla.edu or by phone (toll Free (866) 846-4843)**.**

Also, if you want to submit comments and info for us to circulate, use the insert form in this newsletter or contact us directly by mail, phone, or E-mail.

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COMING IN JUNE FROM CORWIN PRESS

- C *The Administrator's Guide to Learning Supports: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning*

- C *The Implementation Guide to Classroom and Schoolwide Learning Supports: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning*

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A Policy Report
Juvenile Justice, MH, & Schools

The juvenile justice system has been described as a dumping ground for students with behavior, learning, and emotional problems. A terribly high rate of incarcerated youth are described as having mental health problems. In all the discussion, not enough attention has been paid to how schools contribute to the problem and how they could help alleviate it. A major exception is the 2003 report from the Advancement Project entitled: *Derailed: The Schoolhouse to the Jailhouse Track.* Online at http://www.advancementproject.org/Derailerepcor.pdf

The report's theme is that zero-tolerance policies are derailing students from an academic track in schools to a future in the juvenile justice system. The author Judith Browne states:

> In school district after school district, an inflexible and unthinking zero tolerance approach to an exaggerated juvenile crime problem is derailing the educational process. The educational system is starting to look more like the criminal justice system. Acts once handled by a principal or a parent are now being handled by prosecutors and the police.

The report emphasizes that this "has damaged children, particularly children of color, in three significant ways.

- C Criminalizing trivial offenses pushes children out of the school system and into the juvenile justice system. Even in cases where punishments are mild, students are less likely to graduate and more likely to end up back in the court system than their peers, and they are saddled with a juvenile or criminal record.

- C Turning schools into "secure environments," replete with drug-sniffing dogs, metal detectors, and uniformed law enforcement personnel, lowers morale and makes learning more difficult.

- C The negative effects of zero tolerance fall disproportionately on children of color and children with special needs."

Harkening back to the 1980s spurt in demonizing young people, Judith Browne notes that the public came to view many as amoral superpredators – "brutal, conscienceless, incorrigible." The media presented them "as the products of permissive single-parent families, poverty and a lenient judicial system. The public and political system responded with outrage and with draconian changes to juvenile law—boot camps, and a zero tolerance attitude that made even the slightest offense a crime."

The solution was seen in abandoning "soft" educational and rehabilitative approaches.

> "Zero tolerance was soon legislated into the school systems, as well. As schools filled with metal detectors, drug sniffing dogs and security personnel, administrators and teachers began to report vast and subjective classifications of 'criminal' activities to the police. Administrators suspended and expelled students for ludicrous and even imaginary violations, and increasingly, turned those suspected of minor violations over to the juvenile justice system.
>
> Although subsequent statistics show that the juvenile crime wave has receded, and that the 'superpredator' phenomenon was little more than an urban legend, the laws and policies engendered by these misperceptions live on."

The report documents "the astounding number of children criminalized by their schools; the negative effects of turning schoolhouses into security bunkers, and the disproportionate impact on children of color and children with special needs." The data show a "significant number of student arrests, and the growing proportion of arrests for relatively trivial and subjective offenses, including trespassing, disorderly conduct, and offenses so obscure they are categorized as 'miscellaneous,' in districts as diverse as Miami-Dade, Florida, Houston, Texas, and Baltimore, Maryland."

Also highlighted is the growing police presence in public schools, and "the sometimes disastrous results of using police as disciplinarians." Statistics are offered from Houston and Miami-Dade schools showing that "students of color are singled out for punishment significantly more often, regardless of where they go to school."

The final section of the report is devoted to seven recommendations for policy changes related to

schools and students designed to ameliorate the problem. These are:

C Schools must cease criminalizing students for trivial behaviors that can be handled by traditional, educationally-sound school disciplinary measures.

C School districts should improve data collection of arrest/summons data and should monitor referrals to law enforcement to root out subjective, unnecessary, and discriminatory referrals.

C State legislatures must clarify statutes pertaining to the referral of students to law enforcement agencies.

C Schools should notify students and parents of the conduct that the law requires – or standard practice dictates – to be referred to law enforcement agencies.

C School districts must be sensitive to the experiences communities of color have had with law enforcement.

C School district staff, including school police, need to be trained to educate and manage the behavior of students with disabilities. Additionally, prosecutors and judges should be trained to properly take into account disabilities in the charge and sentencing phases.

C Schools should implement policies requiring that parents, or an adult advocate for the student, be present for any questioning of children where it is possible that criminal charges may be filed.

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For more on the topic of *Juvenile Justice Systems and Mental Health Needs*, go to the Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Find.
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/juvenilejustice.htm
This resource provides easy access to selected materials, including relevant publications on the internet, and also links to related agencies and websites.
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NEW DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENT SUPPORT
. . . a national initiative

More and more folks who are committed to enhancing how schools address behavior, emotional, and learning problems are becoming involved in the *New Directions for Student Support* initiative. To spread the word, various documents have been developed, and a broad outreach campaign has been set in motion.
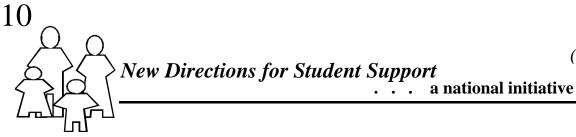
We hope that readers of this newsletter will help by sharing initiative outreach and related materials and reports. For instance, the flyer on the following pages can be copied or copies can be downloaded from the Center's website to share with others. All initiative information can be accessed online at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ndannouncement.htm

Initiative Updates – See updates for states already developing state initiatives (California, Connecticut, Indiana, Minnesota, Texas, Wisconsin) – online at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/currentstatus.htm

>>Some of these states are in the process of organizing follow-up meetings and training sessions. In general, current activity is focused on creating broader awareness of the initiative, additional outreach to key leaders and organizations, and integrating the initiative with local and state priorities. In Minnesota, a special focus is on pending legislation to establish a student support services advisory committee that will make recommendations on how school districts can most appropriately integrate student support services into the education programs. In California, a special focus is on the bill just reintroduced in the state Assembly designed to establish a Comprehensive Pupil Learning Support System in every school.

>>A state Summit was held in New York on March 7th and the process is underway to establish a statewide initiative.

>>The Iowa Summit is scheduled for April and will benefit from and contribute to rolling out the Iowa Department of Education's design for *Enhancing Iowa's Systems of Supports for Learning and Development*. Because of all the work done in Iowa over the last few years, the area education agencies already are planning ways to move the initiative forward.

New Directions for Student Support

. . . a national initiative

Involving all interested parties
to assure no child is left behind

Everyday a wide range of learning, behavior, physical, and emotional problems interfere with the ability of students to participate effectively and fully benefit from the instruction teachers provide. Even the best schools find that too many students are growing up in situations where significant barriers interfere with youngsters reaching full potential.

Schools have a long history of addressing problems that interfere with learning, but efforts are often fragmented and on the margins. As a result, they are less effective than they can be. It is time to establish as a priority the development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach for addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development. To this end, all stakeholders must play a role

by supporting creation of a comprehensive
Enabling or Learning Supports Component.

New Directions for Student Support is a national movement designed to facilitate organization of statewide initiatives. It encourages advocacy for and establishment of comprehensive, integrated systems of supports that enable schools to accomplish their instructional mission. Information and resources are online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/currentstatus.htm.

In developing an *Enabling or Learning Supports Component*, the emphasis is on classroom, school, home, and neighborhood improvements to prevent problems and enhance youngsters' strengths. The goal is to provide students with comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated learning supports that are accessible, timely, and strength-based so students can achieve in school, be confident and caring, and become contributing citizens in their communities.

What role can you play?

It will take all of us to make this happen – families, students, teachers, administrators, boards of education, support staff, community stakeholders.

Family members:
Use your role as an advocate for a student, as a member of the parent association, as a representative on a advisory, leadership, or school improvement team to enhance the focus on ways resources can be used more effectively to address barriers to student learning and promote healthy development. (See *Parent and Home Involvement in Schools* online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/parenthome/parent1.pdf)

Teachers:
You want support resources and programs to be more effective in enabling students to perform and learn in your classroom. So, it is in your interest to advocate for new directions for student support. The process requires working with support staff colleagues in advocating at the school, at the district level, and through your various organizations, including unions. (See Rethinking Student Support to Enable Students to Learning and Schools to Teach at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/studentsupport.pdf)

School administrators:
> Meaningful change at schools requires administrative leadership. Creation and long term development of a comprehensive *Enabling or Learning Supports Component* requires an administrative leader who is accountable for making it work. (See *Developing Resource-oriented Mechanisms to Enhance Learning Supports* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/developing_resource-Oriented-mechanisms.pdf.)

District administrators:
> New directions for student support require rethinking organizational and operational structures to enhance effectiveness and cost efficiency. This includes reducing fragmentation, marginalization, counterproductive competition, and over-specialization of learning support resources. (See *New Directions for School and Community Initiatives to Address Barriers to Learning: Two Examples of White Papers to Inform and Guide Policy Makers* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/newdirectionsforschoolandcommunity.pdf)

Staff for support services, special education, federal programs (e.g., Title I):
> Begin the process by forming a team of Learning Supports staff to ensure that all relevant resources are woven together to install, maintain, and evolve a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive continuum of interventions over a period of years. (See *What is a Learning Supports Resource Team?* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resourcecoordteam.pdf.)

School board members:
> Create a board committee focused on Learning Supports resources. Hold administrators and staff accountable for creating a comprehensive and cohesive range of programs to prevent and correct problems. (See *Restructuring Boards of Education to Enhance Schools Effectiveness in Addressing Barriers to Student Learning.* See the Executive Summary online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/boardexsumm.pdf and/or download the full report at no cost online at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/boardrep.pdf

Students:
> Advocate for the integration of all the separate programs and people at the school who help students deal with problems. Use your experiences to push for programs that would prevent problems and address them before they become serious. (See *What Might a Fully Functioning Enabling or Learning Supports Component Look Like at a School?* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/whatmightafully.pdf)

Community stakeholders:
> Advocate for linking community resources to a district level Learning Supports Component and for a Learning Supports Resource Team at each school. Guide stakeholders to information about enhancing school-community connections. (See *School-Community Partnerships: A Guide* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/guides/schoolcomm.pdf)

Interested in learning more about the initiative?

Go to the homepage of the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA (http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu) and click on the green button labeled "New Directions for Student Support Initiative."

Or contact:
Howard Adelman or Linda Taylor, Co-Directors, Center for Mental Health in Schools,
Box 951563, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095- 1563
(866) 846-4843 – toll free; Fax: (310) 206-8716; email: smhp@ucla.edu

**NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF ADOLESCENTS (NIIHA)
BY THE YEAR 2010 IS UNDERWAY**

This initiative was created by CDC/DASH and HRSA/OAH to elevate the national focus on the health and well-being of adolescents and young adults. It is anchored in Healthy People 2010 — a federal "roadmap for health" that presents national health objectives for the year 2010. The National Initiative prioritizes two key strategies: fostering healthy youth development and ensuring safe, nurturing environments that help young people make healthy decisions. This broad view defines health as more than the absence of health problems or risky behaviors and includes well-being, assets and achieving one's full potential as an integral part of health.

To learn more about the Initiative and its resources,
go to http://nahic.ucsf.edu/nationalinitiative

Please see the insert and take a few minutes to provide us with
some comments and feedback and/or to make a request.

**School Mental Health Project/
Center for Mental Health in Schools
Department of Psychology, UCLA
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563**
PX-55

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HRSA
Health Resources and Services Administration
Maternal and Child Health Bureau

CMHS
Center for Mental Health Services
SAMHSA
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration

Newsletter Response (Spring, 2005)

(1) Share your thoughts about the matters presented on p. 6

>>What do you think are the two most important policy issues in need of analysis related to mental health in schools and addressing barriers to learning?

>>What ways are you aware of that result in effective diffusion of ideas, innovations, and/or resources (going beyond typical dissemination activity)?

(2) Requests/comments related to the national New Directions for Student Support Initiative:

Below are some people the Center should contact to see if they are interested:
        Name   Contact Info

(3) If you have any resource requests, please list them below.

(4) As always, we welcome your feedback on any facets of the Center's operations.

Your Name _____   Title _____

Agency _____

Address _____

City _____   State _____   Zip _____

Phone (____)_____   Fax (____)_____   E-Mail _____

Thanks for completing this form. Return it by FAX to (310) 206-8716 *or* by mail.