



Addressing Barriers

to Learning



New ways to think . . .

Better ways to link

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The most dangerous phrase in the language is:
"It's always been done that way."

Grace Hopper

a call to action . . .

School Improvement: Where's Student Support?

Recent policy and program analyses conducted by our Center make it clear how few support staff are full participants at school and district tables where major school improvement decisions are made (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsmissing.htm>). It is not surprising, then, that student support staff are not appropriately accounted for in school improvement planning and implementation. This state of affairs fundamentally undermines efforts to enable all students to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

It is widely conceded that student supports tend to be fragmented and narrowly-focused and reach only a small proportion of those in need. Moreover, sparse budgets lead school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and other support staff into counter-productive competition with each other and with community professionals working with schools. Changes clearly are needed. The question is how best to alter this unacceptable status quo.

Given federal policies as reflected in the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) and the recent reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), there can be little doubt that united action is essential. Moreover, with the impending reauthorization of NCLB, the field must move quickly, with a focus on assuring that a comprehensive system of student/learning supports is fully integrated into school improvement policy and practice.

To encourage action, we are using this newsletter and other forums to highlight topics that need to be addressed in strategic efforts to move forward. Our current action agenda emphasizes getting student support personnel to school improvement decision making and planning tables. In doing so, we have suggested that ending marginalization requires bringing to the table proposals for

- a unifying umbrella concept
- a comprehensive systemic intervention framework
- an integrated infrastructure at a school and throughout the feeder pattern of schools for developing a comprehensive system of learning supports and ensuring that it is a full partner in school improvement planning and decision making

These three topics have major relevance for improving how schools address barriers to student learning and teaching. And, dealt with effectively, they can help establish that student/learning supports are an essential component in *enabling* all students to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Unifying Concept

For fragmentation and marginalization of student support to end, all staff involved must find better

(cont. on p. 2)

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ways to work together. Some efforts have been made. At the same time, we all can point to forces likely to perpetuate “silo” activity and counter-productive competition among personnel who represent different programs and professional affiliations.

Part of the problem is the term *student support*. It doesn’t seem to convey to policy makers that the total enterprise is essential and must be a primary component of school improvement. The problem is compounded because the term often is interpreted as denoting the work of “specialists” who mainly provide “services” to a few of the many students who are not doing well at school.

We think major inroads could result from adoption of a unifying umbrella concept that better conveys the primary role student/learning supports can play in school improvement. Such a concept should convey a big picture understanding of the supports and why they are essential. It should provide an unambiguous answer to the question: *What is the overall direct and immediate function of student supports?*

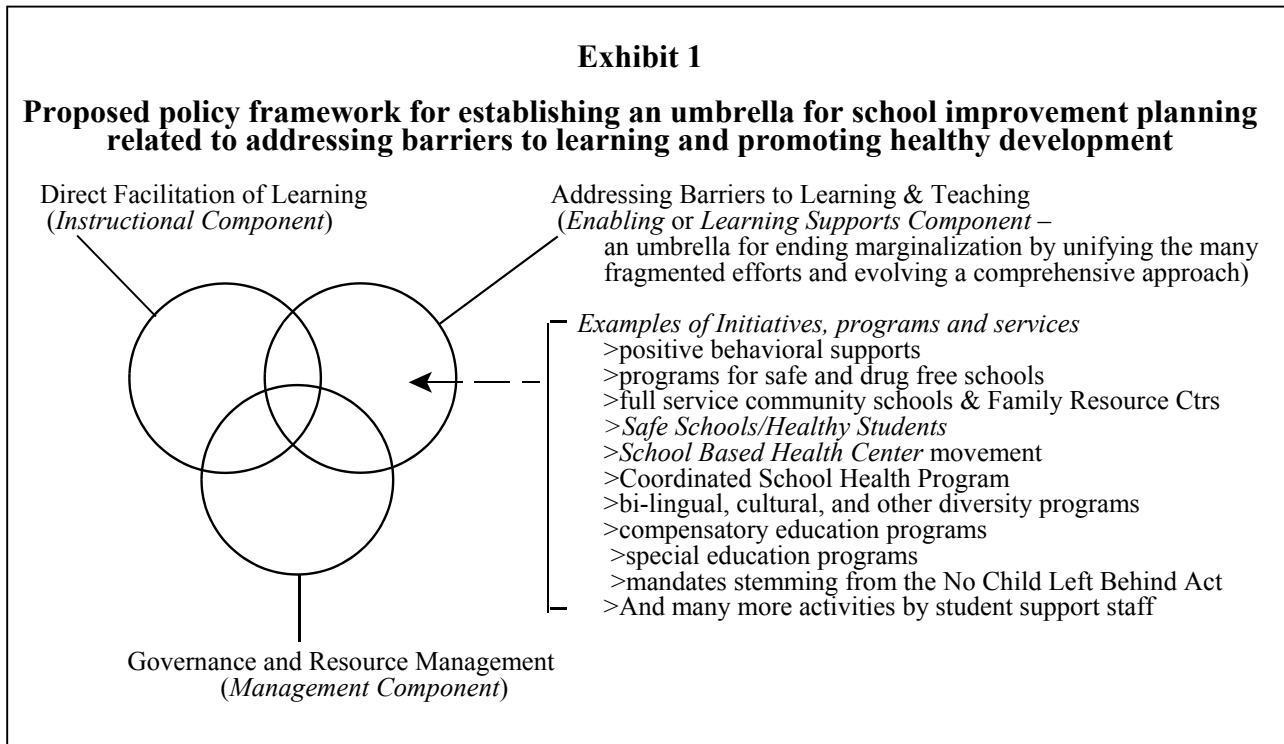
Our work suggests the value of

- coalescing all student/learning supports under a rubric such as *addressing barriers to student learning*
- configuring the work into a *primary and essential component* of school improvement.

In our work, such a component is defined as a comprehensive system of learning supports designed to enable learning by addressing barriers.

Moreover, the component is framed in policy and practice as fully integrated with the instructional and management components at a school and district-wide (see Exhibit 1 below). The intent of all this is to move current school improvement policy from its overemphasis on two components to adoption of a three component model. (For more on this, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/assuringnochild.pdf> .)

To underscore the importance of a component to address barriers to learning, we call it an *Enabling Component* (i.e., a component to enable learning by addressing the barriers). Various states and localities moving to pursue school improvement as a three component approach have adopted other designations for their enabling component. For example, the state education agencies in California and Iowa and various districts across the country have adopted the term *Learning Supports*. The Hawai’i Department of Education calls it their *Comprehensive Student Support System* (CSSS). Building on this, proposed legislation in California refers to a *Comprehensive Pupil Learning Supports System*. Whatever the component is called, the important points are that (a) it is seen as necessary, complementary, and as overlapping the instructional and management components, and (b) it is elevated to a level of importance commensurate with the other components.



A Comprehensive Systemic Intervention Framework

Because the range of barriers to student learning is multifaceted and complex and the number of students affected is quite large, it is reasonable to stress that a comprehensive and systemic approach to intervention is necessary. The question is: *How should such an approach be depicted?*

One trend has been to formulate a continuum of interventions. For example, a graphic many folks use is a pyramid-like triangle that, starting at its peak, stresses “intensive interventions” (for a few), “supplemental interventions” (for some), and “universal interventions” (for all). Other outlines highlight prevention, early intervention, and treatment approaches. Other descriptions amount to little more than itemizations of specific interventions and listings of various disciplines providing support.

If the marginalization of student supports is to end, a framework that presents a coherent picture of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive set of interventions must be formulated and operationalized. Minimally, such a framework must delineate the essential scope and content focus of the enterprise.

Our approach conceives the *scope* of activity as a school-community continuum of interconnected intervention systems consisting of

- *systems for promotion of healthy development and prevention of problems*
- *systems for intervening early to address problems as soon after onset as is feasible*
- *systems for assisting those with chronic and severe problems.*

This continuum is intended to encompass efforts to enable academic, social, emotional, and physical development and address learning, behavior, and emotional problems at every school.

For any school and community, the continuum encompasses many activities, programs, and services. These are not presented as a lengthy list of specifics. Rather, they are clustered into a delimited, set of overlapping arenas, each of which reflects the intervention’s general “content” focus.

Pioneering school initiatives have operationalized six arenas of intervention *content*. In doing so, these trailblazers have moved from a “laundry-list” of interventions to a defined set of general categories

that captures the multifaceted work schools need to pursue in comprehensively addressing barriers to learning. The categories are:

- *Classroom-focused enabling* – enhancing regular classroom strategies to enable learning (e.g., improving instruction for students with mild-moderate learning and behavior problems and re-engaging those who have become disengaged from learning at school)
- *Support for transitions* (e.g., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes, daily transitions)
- *Home involvement with school* – strengthening families and home and school connections
- *Crisis response and prevention* – responding to, and where feasible, preventing school and personal crises
- *Community involvement and support* (e.g., outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers)
- *Student and family assistance* – facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed.

Combining *scope* and *content* generates a matrix framework (e.g., in our work, the matrix consists of the three levels of the intervention continuum and the six content arenas). Such a framework helps convey a big picture of a comprehensive, systemic approach. It currently is being used as a unifying intervention framework and as an analytic tool for mapping and analyzing what schools are and are not doing. This, then, provides a well-founded basis for setting priorities to guide school improvement planning. (For more on this, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/standardsforenabling.pdf>.)

An Integrated Infrastructure

Support staff understand that addressing barriers to learning and teaching is essential to school improvement. But, many don’t see why they should be concerned about school infrastructure, never mind infrastructure for connecting school and community. (*What’s infrastructure got to do with helping kids?*, they ask.)

(cont. on p. 4)

We think it is a fundamental error not to focus school improvement planning on infrastructure changes to better account for student/learning supports. And, in discussing what's needed, it is important to advocate for much more than case-oriented multidisciplinary teams.

As you know, what happens for kids depends first and foremost on who makes decisions about resources and who plans the details of what will be done. As you also know, the reality is that prevailing infrastructure mechanisms *marginalize* the influence of those most directly concerned about addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems. So, it is essential to rethink school and district infrastructure to correct this deficiency. We offer a few points here to underscore the matter.

First, the term infrastructure: Our concern at this juncture is with the *organizational and operational mechanisms* that allow a system to accomplish critical functions and to do so in an effective and efficient way. Of particular concern are designated administrative leaders, resource-oriented teams, and standing and ad hoc workgroups.

Note that a fundamental principle in designing infrastructure is: *structure follows function*. This means that infrastructure design should begin with a clear understanding of roles, functions, and related tasks. Roles, for example, include governance, leadership, administration, program design and development, capacity building, evaluation and accountability, change agent, and so forth.

In pursuing these roles as related to developing a comprehensive system of learning supports, a variety of immediate and longer-term functions and tasks must be accomplished (see Exhibit 2). Then, the focus turns to designing an integrated set of mechanisms that can accomplish the work in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

When the intent is to develop a comprehensive enabling component, the component's mechanisms not only must be integrated with each other, they must be fully enmeshed with those designed to enhance instruction and strengthen management/governance. This all requires major changes in the organizational and operational infrastructure at a school and ultimately at district, regional, and state levels. Moreover, implied in all this are new roles and functions for administrators and student support staff.

Exhibit 2

Examples of Functions and Tasks to Consider in Rethinking Infrastructure for a Learning Supports Component

Functions – a few examples

- delineating and operationalizing the vision and defining standards
- reworking infrastructure
- needs assessment
- mapping, analyzing strengths/weaknesses/gaps
- establishing priorities and making decisions about allocating resources for learning supports activity
- integrated planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation
- outreach to create formal working relationships with community resources to bring some to a school and establish special linkages with others
- managing, redeploying, and braiding available resources
- process and outcome data gathering and analyses

Tasks – a few examples

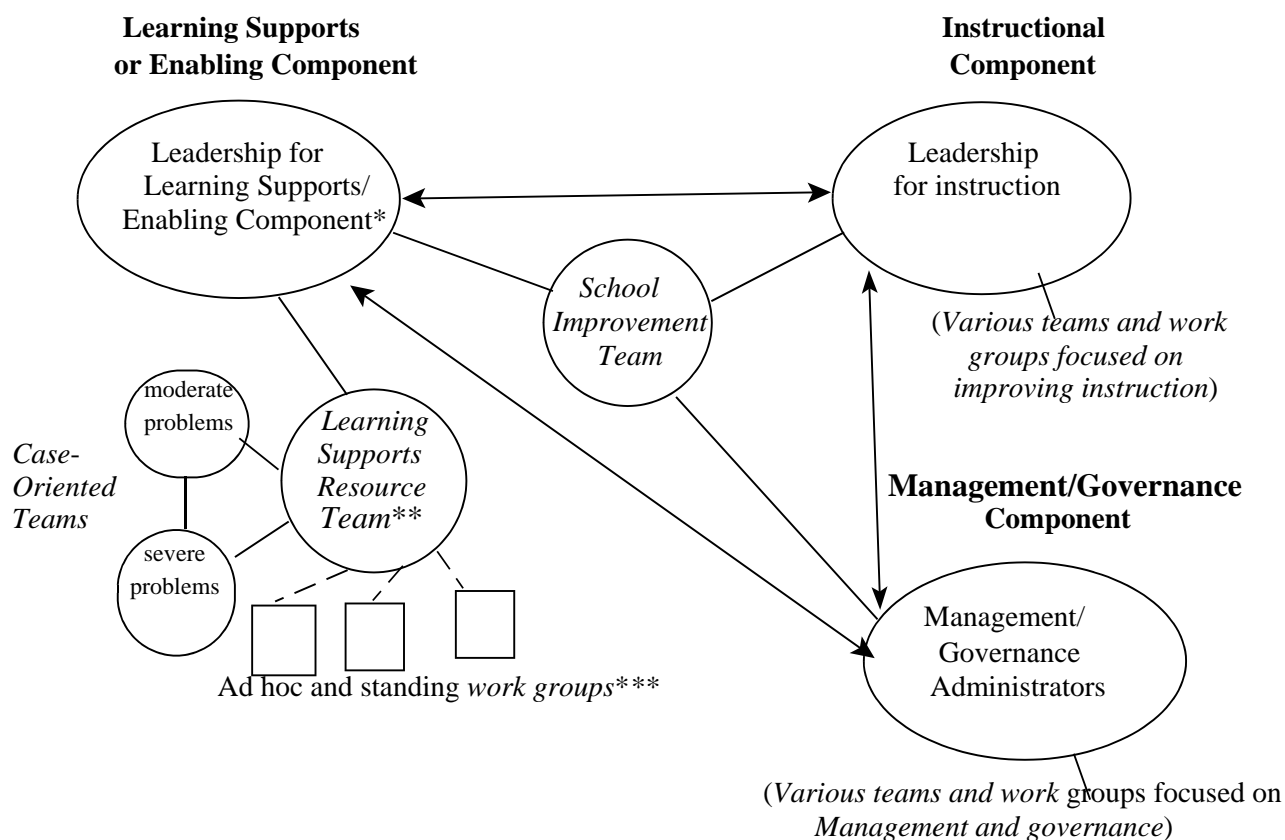
- coordination and integration for cohesively sharing facilities, equipment, and other resources
- information management, analysis, and communication
- developing strategies for enhancing resources and building capacity
- social marketing
- developing pools of nonprofessional volunteers and professional pro bono assistance

Exhibit 3 illustrates how the infrastructure at a school might be reworked.

Compare this example with what exists in most schools and districts.

Exhibit 3

Example of an integrated infrastructure at the school level



*Learning Supports or Enabling Component Leadership consists of an administrator and other advocates/champions with responsibility and accountability for ensuring the vision for the component is not lost. The administrator meets with and provides regular input to the Learning Supports Resource Team.

**A Learning Supports Resource Team ensures component cohesion, integrated implementation, and ongoing development. It meets weekly to guide and monitor daily implementation and development of all programs, services, initiatives, and systems at a school that are concerned with providing learning supports and specialized assistance.

***Ad hoc and standing work groups – Initially, these are the various “teams” that already exist related to various initiatives and programs (e.g., a crisis team) and for processing “cases” (e.g., a student assistance team, an IEP team). Where redundancy exists, work groups can be combined. Others are formed as needed by the Learning Supports Resource Team to address specific concerns. These groups are essential for accomplishing the many tasks associated with such a team’s functions.

For more on this, see

- ><http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf>
- ><http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/aidk.pdf>

(cont. on p. 6)

Concluding Comments

In facilitating the work of the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*, we have seen considerable movement in addressing the above matters (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ndannouncement.htm>). Early efforts concentrated on (a) clarifying the degree to which student supports are marginalized in schools and (b) mobilizing support staff at school sites to collaborate for development of comprehensive intervention systems (as contrasted with the tendency mainly to emphasize expanded services and enhanced delivery).

Currently, the initiative is focused on the need for those most knowledgeable about student supports to find a place at key planning and decision making tables. We realize most school staff are not looking to take on more work. But, it is a serious mistake for student support staff not to be thoroughly involved at school improvement planning tables. The immediate opportunity is to fill a major void related to school improvement; in the process, the contribution and status of student supports will be elevated.

As key participants in planning, it will be important to avoid being seen merely as advocates for a specific program and for hiring more support staff. The emphasis must be on how schools can develop a comprehensive system of learning supports. With this in mind, those representing student supports will want to be prepared to propose

- a unifying concept that makes all learning supports fit together
- an overall comprehensive framework to guide intervention planning and development
- infrastructure changes that facilitate development of a comprehensive system of learning supports and ensure full integration into school improvement decision making and planning.

And, it must be clear that the aim is not to turn schools into service agencies, but to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. To this end, the time to act is now.

Some Additional Center Resources on these Matters

- > *Addressing What's Missing in School Improvement Planning: Expanding Standards and Accountability to Encompass an Enabling or Learning Supports Component*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/enabling/standards.pdf>
- > *Designing Schoolwide Programs in Title I Schools: Using the Non-Regulatory Guidance in Ways that Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/briefs/DOEGuidance.pdf>
- > *Another Initiative? Where Does it Fit? A Unifying Framework and an Integrated Infrastructure for Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Promote Healthy Development*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf>
- > *The School Leader's Guide to Student Learning Supports: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning* (<http://www.corwinpress.com/book.aspx?pid=11343>)
- > *The Implementation Guide to Student Learning Supports: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning* (<http://www.corwinpress.com/book.aspx?pid=11371>)

It is only those who don't care about where they end up who can afford not to be involved in which way they are going.





Center News

We've done a bit of retooling on our website's homepage. If you haven't visited for a while, check it out – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

- See What's New!
- Explore the latest Hot Topic which focuses on *Prescription Drugs Abuse Among Youth*
- Use the online clearinghouse *Quick Finds* as a fast way to access resources on a topic
- Use the "Table of Contents" for an overview of everything on the site
- Go to the "Gateway to a World of Resources" for a "links map" that provides quick access to relevant resources on the internet.
- Access all issues of our quarterly topical newsletter *Addressing Barriers to Learning*
- See the list of all the *Center material* and download whatever you want at no cost (e.g., Continuing Education, Special Training Tutorials and Quick Training Aids, Guidebooks and Guidelines, Fact and Information Sheets; Policy Reports & Issues Briefs, and much more)
- Check out the *Networking Opportunities* (informal and formal ways to interact and network with the Center and colleagues around the country)

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Recent Center Report

Designing Schoolwide Programs in Title I Schools: Using the Non-Regulatory Guidance in Ways that Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching

Focuses on the U.S. Department of Education's 2006 Non-regulatory Guidance "Designing Schoolwide Programs." This brief analysis highlights ways to enhance how schools can better address barriers to learning and teaching through school improvement planning that fully integrates development of a system of learning supports.

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/DOEGuidance.pdf>

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Want resources?
Need technical assistance?

We can help!

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 access to the latest Center developed resources, go to:
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/JustPutOnline.htm>
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/otherresources.htm>

**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.

Isn't the human brain amazing?



\ It sure is.
/ Mine produces great ideas – until the teacher calls on me in class.

*INITIATIVE FOR NEW DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENT SUPPORT

Most people hear the term *student support* and think mainly about pupil service personnel (e.g., school psychologists, counselors, social workers, nurses) and the special services such staff provide. But, schools need and have many more resources to use in enabling *all* students to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. And, as this newsletter's lead article stresses, these resources can be coalesced to address barriers to learning and teaching in a comprehensive way.

To this end, the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support* stresses that new directions means rethinking *all* support programs, resources, and personnel. Besides traditional support staff, learning support is provided by compensatory education personnel (e.g., Title I staff), resource teachers who focus on prereferral interventions, and personnel who provide a variety of school-wide programs (e.g., after school, safe and drug free school programs). New Directions stem from rethinking how *all* these resources are used.

The initiatives growing impact is seen in the involvement of increasing numbers of states and localities and initiative co-sponsors. The trend has been to look to the National Initiative for support in mobilizing active networks. The staff at the UCLA Center provides facilitative support and leadership. Each month the Center generates outreach mailings in all states and is receiving a steady flow of requests for more information and assistance from state and local education agencies and boards of education seeking to move in new directions. Listservs have been established to facilitate communications. Special meetings/trainings are convened. Legislative action has been stimulated. Corwin Press recently published two books that support the initiative, and these may be the beginning of a New Directions series.

Stakeholders in each state, of course, differ in how they relate to and support the National Initiative and pursue work in their own states and localities. What is common across venues is that increasing numbers of stakeholders want to go in new directions through making systemic changes to develop comprehensive approaches. And, what is becoming clearer is that opportunities to move forward occur every time school improvement is an agenda item.

Interested in learning more about this? Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ndannouncement.htm> and/or contact the Center.

*DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ...?

Here's three major documents on mental health in schools that have appeared this year:

> *School Mental Health Services in the United States, 2002—2003* from SAMHSA (2006).

<http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/sma05-4068/>

> *The Current Status of Mental Health in Schools: A Policy and Practice Analysis* from the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA (2006).
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/currentstatusmh.htm>

> *School-Based Mental Health: An Empirical Guide for Decision-Makers* by Krista Kutash, Albert Duchnowski, & Nancy Lynn (2006).
<http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtcpubs/study04/index.htm>

These all follow the earlier field-defining report:

> *Mental Health in Schools: Guidelines, Models, Resources & Policy Considerations* by the Policy Leadership Cadre for MH in Schools (2001).
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>

Here's a few recent practice and guidance notes the Center has produced:

> *Schools as Caring, Learning Communities*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/caring.pdf>

> *Life Beyond the "Project" – Fully Integrating the Effort into the School Improvement Agenda*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/lifebeyondproject.pdf>

> *Prescription Drugs Abuse Among Youth*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/abuseofprescript.pdf>

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Oh, Oh – We have a big problem! What do you mean "we" ?



Don't stop to stomp on ants when the elephants are stampeding.

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

Analysis Suicide Prevention and Schools: Key Issues



Many resources related to suicide prevention can be accessed through the Center's online clearinghouse *Quick Find* on the topic (see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p3002_02.htm).

While many of the practices could be used in schools, policy makers remain in conflict over whether schools should play an institutionalized role in preventing student suicide. The specific pros and cons raised in this context are reflective of the general arguments that arise in connection with mental health in schools.

To help clarify the controversies surrounding mental health screening and suicide prevention, the Center has developed two briefs.

- *Screening MH Problems in Schools* – which explores the pros and cons of screening
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/policyissues/mhscreeningissues.pdf>
- *Suicide Prevention in Schools* – which discusses two issues:
 - (a) Does suicide education stigmatize some students and increase the risk of suicide ideation?
 - (b) Should schools be involved in monitoring students identified as suicidal risks?<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/policyissues/suicide.pdf>

The following is excerpted from the second brief.

Should Schools be Involved in Monitoring Students Identified as Suicidal Risks?

Is such monitoring an appropriate role for schools to play?

If so, who should do it?

Concerns arise about parental consent, privacy and confidentiality protections, staff qualifications, involvement of peers, negative consequences of monitoring (especially for students who are false positive identifications), and access and availability of appropriate assistance.

Examples of positions that are often heard:

School staff are well-situated to keep an eye on kids who are at risk for suicide.

Teachers can't be expected to take on another task and aren't qualified to monitor such students.

Such monitoring can be done by qualified student support staff.

Monitoring infringes on the rights of families and students.

It's irresponsible not to monitor anyone who is a suicidal risk.

It's inappropriate to encourage kids to "spy" on each other.

Monitoring is needed so that steps can be made to help quickly.

Monitoring has too many negative effects.

Formal Positions:

- *Pro* – Those arguing that schools should play this role emphasize that it is essential to monitor anyone who is a suicidal risk so that help can be provided quickly. Moreover, they believe school staff are well-situated to do so, and staff (and even students) can be trained to do it appropriately and with effective safeguards for privacy and confidentiality. And they suggest that positive benefits outweigh any negative effects.
- *Con* – As with many practices related to mental health in schools, a basic argument against monitoring students identified "at risk" is the position that the practice infringes on the rights of families and students. Other arguments stress that teachers should not be distracted from teaching; moreover, teachers and other non-clinically trained school staff are seen as ill-equipped to monitor for suicide. And, it also is seen as inappropriate to encourage students to play such a role. Additionally, it is argued that existing monitoring practices are primarily effective in following those who have already attempted suicide and that monitoring others has too many negative effects (e.g., costs are seen as outweighing potential benefits).

(cont. on p. 10)

Examples of Documents Related to the Issue:

- >> *Youth Suicide Prevention Programs: A Resource. Chapter 2: School Gatekeeper Training* by The Center for Disease Control – <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/Chapter%202.PDF>
- >> *Youth Suicide Prevention Programs: A Resource. Chapter 5: Screening Programs* by The Center for Disease Control – <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/Chapter%205.PDF>
- >> *Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Suicide* by the Department of Health and Human Services – <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calltoaction/calltoaction.pdf>
- >> *Child Suicide and the Schools* Editorial in *Pediatrics* – <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/106/5/1167>

Note: As with most issues related to mental health in schools, there remains a sparsity of research to support positions that often could be enlightened through empirical study.

Summary of Key Issues

Arguments for School Involvement in Monitoring Students Identified as Suicidal Risks

Pro

- It is essential to monitor anyone who is a suicidal risk so that help can be provided quickly.
- School staff are well-situated to do so.
- Staff (and even students) can be trained to do it appropriately.
- Effective safeguards can be put in place for privacy and confidentiality.
- Positive benefits outweigh negative effects.

Con

- The practice infringes on the rights of families and students.
- Teachers will be distracted from teaching.
- Teachers and other non-clinically trained school staff are ill-equipped to monitor.
- It is inappropriate to encourage students to play a monitoring role.
- Existing monitoring practices are mainly useful for following the very few students who have already attempted suicide.
- Negative effects outweigh potential benefits.





Ideas into Practice

Doing Something about the Trend to Over-pathologize Students

Reasonable concern for the well-being of children and adolescents and the need to address barriers to learning and teaching has led schools to deploy resources to deal with a variety of health and psychosocial matters (e.g., bullying, depression, suicide, ADHD, LD, obesity, etc.). Over time, agenda priorities shift, and resources are redeployed. Some of the activity is helpful; some is not; some has unintended negative consequences.

One of many issues raised:

How often are the ways in which students respond to and cope with the demands of growing up labeled as pathology and sensationalized?

The problem is compounded by the tendency to generalize from extreme and rare incidents. While one school shooting is too many, fortunately few students will ever act out in this way. One suicide is too many; fortunately few student take their own life. Some young people commit violent crimes, but the numbers are far fewer than the news media conveys and are on a downward trajectory.

Doing something about it: Student support staff at a school can play a key role in reversing the trend by

- providing general info – about the wide range of “normal” behavior and individual differences and the importance of not over-pathologizing
 - > distribute info and fact sheets
 - > offer as part of a school’s inservice program

See:

- > *Bias in Psychiatric Diagnosis* (2004) by P.J. Caplan & L. Cosgrove (Eds)

- offering specific feedback on specific incidents and students – using staff concerns and specific referrals as opportunities to educate them about what is and is not pathological and what should be done in each instance.

See:

- > *Guidebook on Common Psychosocial Problems of School Aged Youth: Developmental Variations, Problems, Disorders and Perspectives for Prevention and Treatment*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/psysocial/entirepacket.pdf>

- > *Revisiting Learning & Behavior Problems: Moving Schools Forward* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/revisitinglearning.pdf>

- Resisting the pull of special funding – One of the hardest things to do is avoid using the need for funds and other resources as justification for a “pathological” interpretation of student actions and performance. The first step in countering this is to raise concern about the problem.

See:

- > *The Impact of Fiscal Incentives on Student Disability Rates* (1999) by Julie Berry Cullen, National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 7173. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w7173>
- > *Effects of Funding Incentives on Special Education Enrollment* (2002) by J.P. Greene & G. Forster. Manhattan Institute for Policy Res. http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_32.htm

- Using the least intervention needed when it becomes essential to provide students with special assistance.

See:

- > *Least Intervention Needed: Toward Appropriate Inclusion of Students with Special Needs* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/leastint/leastint.pdf>

Doing something about it: School leaders and all staff can focus on enhancing the professional development of teachers to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to

- engage all students in learning
- re-engage students who have become disengaged from classroom learning.
- accommodate a wider range of individual differences when teaching
- use classroom assessments that better inform teaching.

See:

- > *Re-engaging Students in Learning* (Quick Training Aid) <http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/quicktraining/reengagingstudents.pdf>

- > Re-engaging Students in Learning at School (newsletter article)

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Newsletter/winter02.pdf>

- > Enhancing Classroom Approaches for Addressing Barriers to Learning: Classroom-Focused Enabling (Continuing Education Modules) <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/cfe.pdf>

Need More? Use the Center's online clearinghouse *Quick Finds*. (Each contains links to key references, empirically supported programs, and centers specializing in the designated and related topics.)

Schools as Businesses

In a recent article, Larry Cuban recalled a story that Jamie Vollmer had shared with educators a few years ago about when he made a presentation to a group of teachers as a representative of a group of business people dedicated to improving public schools.* Below is an abridged version.

"I was an executive at an ice cream company that became famous in the middle-1980s when *People* magazine chose its blueberry flavor as the 'Best Ice Cream in America.' I was convinced of two things. First, public schools needed to change. They were archaic selecting and sorting mechanisms designed for the Industrial Age and out of step with the needs of our emerging 'knowledge society.' Second, educators were a major part of the problem. They resisted change, hunkered down in their feathered nests, protected by tenure and shielded by a bureaucratic monopoly. They needed to look to business. We knew how to produce quality. Zero defects! Total Quality Management! Continuous improvement!

As soon as I finished, a woman's hand shot up. She began quietly, 'We are told, sir, that you manage a company that makes good ice cream.'

I smugly replied, 'Best ice cream in America, ma'am.'

'How nice,' she said. 'Is it rich and smooth?'

'Sixteen percent butterfat,' I crowed.

'Premium ingredients?' she inquired.

'Super-premium! Nothing but triple-A.'

I was on a roll. I never saw the next line coming.

'Mr. Vollmer,' she said, leaning forward with a wicked eyebrow raised to the sky. 'When you are standing on your receiving dock and you see an inferior shipment of blueberries arrive, what do you do?'

In the silence of that room, I could hear the trap snap.

I was dead meat, but I wasn't going to lie.
'I send them back.'

'That's right,' she barked, 'and we can never send back our blueberries. We take them big, small, rich, poor, gifted, exceptional, abused, frightened, confident, homeless, rude and brilliant. We take them with attention deficit disorder, junior rheumatoid arthritis and English as their second language. We take them all. Every one. And that, Mr. Vollmer, is why it's not a business. It's school.'

In an explosion, all 290 teachers, principals, bus drivers, aides, custodians and secretaries jumped to their feet and yelled, 'Yeah! Blueberries! Blueberries!'

And so began my long transformation [from business executive into school reformer]."

*Cuban's article is entitled "Why Can't Schools Be Like Businesses?" and can be found in the *School Administrator* (Feb., 2006) online at:
<http://www.aasa.org/publications/saarticledetail.cfm?ItemNumber=5212&snItemNumber=950&tnItemNumber=951>

Please see the insert and provide us with some evaluative feedback.

School Mental Health Project/
Center for Mental Health in Schools
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Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563
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The Center for Mental Health in Schools is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Dept. of Psychology, UCLA. Support comes in part from the Office of Adolescent Health, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration. Co-funding comes from the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Both HRSA and SAMHSA are agencies of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.



Summer 2006 Newsletter Response Form

If you aren't already, indicate below if you want

___ to join the network for the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support* – see description online at –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ndannouncement.htm>

___ to receive our free monthly *electronic newsletter (ENEWS)* – see recent issue online at –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/enews.htm>

___ to receive our free *quarterly hardcopy newsletter* – see past issues online at –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.htm>

___ to be part of the *weekly Practitioners Listserv exchanges* – see last interchange online at –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mhpractitioner/practitioner.pdf>

___ to be part of the *Center's Consultation Cadre* – see description at –

<http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/consult.htm>

Based on what you know about the Center, are there any resources and/or assistance we can offer that would aid your efforts to move schools forward? (Indicate below.)

Would it be helpful to have a Leadership Institute in your state or locale? Yes No
(Indicate what type of Institute focus you would find helpful)

Other thoughts you want to share about and examples of important initiatives in your locale:
(Don't be limited by the space below)

Your Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

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

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