

To: Advisory Group Members
for the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA

From: Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor, Co-directors

Re: Monthly Report and Request for Input – December, 2010

WISHING YOU ALL A HAPPY AND PRODUCTIVE NEW YEAR -- *This time of year provides us with an opportunity to reiterate our thanks to you and to wish good things for all.*

Our three Advisory Groups (professional, youth, and family) are very important to us. We know how busy everyone is, and we appreciate each and every way the members contribute to enhancing the lives of children.

You will be pleased to know that several new members have been added to our Advisory Groups. See the growing list online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/staff.htm>.

The frequent messages from our Center during each month provide a continuous perspective on the many activities in which we are involved. Below we highlight just a few benchmarks from this past month:

NEW OPEN COMPETITION FOR THE SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH: PROGRAM AND POLICY ANALYSIS PROGRAM

In mid December, we submitted our proposal for the new cycle of support. HRSA has decided to fund only one Center for the next three year cycle. The winning applicant should be announced sometime in the last half of January. Whatever happens, it is clear that with tightening budgets everywhere greater integration of all our work will be needed to advance the field.

WINTER NEWS/JOURNAL

This Special Edition focuses on:

School Engagement, Disengagement, Learning Supports, & School Climate

Contents:

- I About School Engagement, Re-engagement, and Learning Supports
- II Appreciating Intrinsic Motivation
- III Motivation: A Key Concern of Any Intervention
- IV Motivation and School Improvement: Beyond Reinforcement Theory
- V A Caution about Over-relying on Extrinsic
- VI About Psychological Reactance & Re-engagement
- VII School Climate as an Emergent Quality

This special edition will be E-mailed and online shortly. As a special outreach to Superintendents and principals (as part of the Center's administrators' and call to action initiatives), a hardcopy also will be e-mailed to our regular mailing list of 20,000, to about 5,000 district superintendents, and to about 34,000 school principals.

NEW DIRECTIONS WORK

As you know, our new directions works focuses on embedding mental health concerns into a comprehensive system of student and learning supports that addresses barriers to learning and teaching and re-engages disconnected students. Some noteworthy highlights about the new directions work:

(1) **Collaboration with the American Association of School Administrators** – We have completed site visits and initial follow-up activity with all 4 lead districts involved in the

Leadership Initiative resulting from the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), UCLA, and Scholastic collaboration (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/aasa/aasa.htm>). Between August and December, we visited Jefferson County, KY school district, Sabine Parish, LA, Gainesville, GA, and Indian River, FL. While progress varies, each has taken steps to map and analyze resources. Two are developing resource-oriented teams and are moving significantly toward a three component approach for school improvement policy and practice. In coming months, we will be working with AASA and Scholastic to develop plans for how this leadership development work will be expanded in the Lead district states and into others. As soon as any of the four have a satisfactory approach in place, it could become a "hub" in their state for others to model in moving toward a comprehensive system of learning supports.

(2) **Tucson (AZ) school district** – After our initial capacity building in November, we began working through email with the newly hired cadre of Learning Supports Coordinators. We will be returning in mid January to provide a Leadership Institute on broadening understanding of motivation for principals and Learning Supports Coordinators and then will continue to support the development of the districts comprehensive system of learning support. This will be followed with developing a strategic plan for design adaptation and implementation.

(3) **Columbus (OH) City School District** – After a series of discussions to ensure that the district was ready to move forward in new directions, we agreed to meet with key members of the Superintendents cabinet in early December to enhance their readiness and commitment and then to do a full day Leadership Institute for over 300 student and learning supports staff. We established a listserv to facilitate initial efforts and will return for another full day session in early February.

(4) **Rebuilding for Learning Collaboration with Scholastic, Inc.** – If you have had time to look at the online modules, we would love to get your feedback about its usefulness, changes would you recommend, ideas for letting others know about this resource, etc. The initial feedback continues to be good (<http://rebuildingforlearning.scholastic.com/>)

(5) **Louisiana's New Design for Student and Learning Supports** – The state is continuing to introduce the design to districts and has included it in the initiatives it highlights in its new manual and tools to assist local education agencies in understanding how to integrate multiple funding sources to accomplish efforts such as the development of the state's design for a Comprehensive Learning Supports System (see http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/comm/fiscal_model_training.html).

For more on the new directions work, see:

National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support

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

Scholastic-UCLA collaboration

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/rebuild/rebuilding.htm>

AASA website – <http://www.aasa.org/LeadershipDevelopment.aspx>

*****Be sure to let us know of anyone who would like to learn more about any of this.**

CALL TO ACTION INITIATIVE

(1) **Work with the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).** As more and more associations/centers sign on to the document entitled: *Enhancing the Blueprint for School Improvement in the ESEA Reauthorization: Moving From a Two- to a Three-Component Approach*. (See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/enhancingtheblueprint.pdf>), it is becoming a significant resource for NASP to use in various ways to advance the association's efforts related to informing the ESEA reauthorization process. If you know of associations/centers that might be interested in signing on to this call for action, please let us know.

(2) **Expanding Outreach to Education Leaders.** With the addition of more and more superintendents, Principals, and school and community folks, our listserv outreach has been expanded to about 60,000. As always, we are looking for additional ideas on how best to help busy school leaders move in new directions. Send your thoughts to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR IMPROVING ADOLESCENT HEALTH

We continue to work as part of the Volunteer Leadership Team of the National Initiative to Improve Adolescent Health (NIAH). We have proposed a workgroup focusing on “Health and Education: Working Across Sectors.”

THIS MONTH’S FEATURED CENTER RESOURCE

Given that the winter edition of our Quarterly News/Journal begins Volume 16, we are emphasizing that this resource continuously provides a reader friendly introduction to a range of ideas related to the Center’s mission and goals. All the previous editions are online (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.htm>).

THIS MONTH’S EMERGING CONCERN

>Needed: A Focus on School Engagement and Re-engagement to Address Chronic School Absence

In an October 2010 report,* the Vera Institute for Justice noted: “The most common responses to teenage chronic absence around the country are punitive, contrary to what adolescent development and school engagement research tell us about what motivates teens to go to school.” In studying the situation in New York state, they found that “the child protective system—the network of state and local agencies that handle allegations of child abuse and neglect—is not well equipped to help teenagers improve their school attendance. At times, it can make matters worse.”

The report concludes that legally designating chronic absence as educational neglect is counterproductive, and the institute recommends: “1) increasing schools’ accountability, system incentives, and access to services for engaging chronically absent teens; and 2) developing new approaches to reducing teen absence that address the underlying problem observed statewide and nationally: *a lack of effective methods for re-engaging chronically absent teens.*”

**Getting teenagers back to school: Rethinking New York State's response to chronic absence*
<http://www.vera.org/download?file=3062/Ed-neglect-summary-revised-v5-copyedit.pdf>

Are you seeing schools doing an effective job in addressing chronic school absence? Let us know about them and share your views about this important issue.

Send comments to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Related to this, see the Center’s new resource: *School Engagement, Disengagement, Learning Supports, & School Climate*. [Http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schooleng.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schooleng.pdf)

JANUARY’S FOCUS FOR SCHOOLS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO LEARNING

>January – New Year Resolutions – A time for renewal; A new start for everyone

New Year resolutions are promises we make to ourselves that we just can’t seem to keep (e.g., lose how many pounds?) Resolutions that work, usually involve a public commitment to a group of friends or colleagues who are also agreeing to make the promise a reality. The beginning of a year is a natural time for school staff to agree to “work smarter” with school and community colleagues in engaging and re-engaging students in school learning and reducing dropout/push out rates.

If there ever was a year for it, this one certainly calls for resolving to work smarter!

SOME NEW RESOURCES

Besides the Winter news/journal noted above:

>*Funding Stream Integration to Promote Development and Sustainability of a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports*

URL

>*Intrinsic Motivation, Student Engagement, and the Work of Deci and Ryan*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/deciinforesource.pdf>

>*About School and Classroom Climate*

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

>*School Engagement, Disengagement, Learning Supports, & School Climate* (The Winter news/journal transformed into a Resource Aid for wider use.

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

Also, you should have received the Center's January electronic newsletter (ENEWS) and for those who have elected to receive it, the weekly Practitioner listserv.

LOOKING AHEAD

(1) Return to Tucson, AZ -- January 18-19

(2) Return to Columbus, OH February 8

(3) Lead Districts will meet at AASA national meeting in Colorado in February

(4) National Coordinating Committee for School Health and Safety meet in DC in April

As always, we look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your ongoing contribution to the Center's work. We truly value all ongoing guidance and support.

Howard & Linda