



# Center For Mental Health in Schools\*

Update



## Who are we?

In our role as a national center, we approach MH and psychosocial concerns from the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. A major emphasis is on comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive frameworks and practices to deal with the many external and internal barriers that interfere with learning and teaching.

To offset institutional inequities, specific attention is given policies and strategies that can counter marginalization and fragmentation of essential interventions and enhance collaboration between schools and communities. Particular emphasis is on (1) coalescing interventions under the unifying concept of a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and (2) fully integrating the focus on psychosocial and mental health concerns into school improvement planning. From this perspective, we do research, analyses, and development and offer capacity building assistance to a wide range of stakeholders, including school and public health policy makers, administrators, and staff, primary care physical and mental health providers, and consumers.

## What We Offer You

We provide a variety of free and readily accessible resources and technical assistance. We also engage in strategic training (at a distance and face-to-face), facilitate networking, and pursue several major initiatives for moving the field forward. For example:

< **Website Features** - <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>  
Our continuously developing website provides free and easy access to resources, information, and assistance. Log on and go to the icon labeled *First Visit* or go to the site map's *Table of Contents* for an overview of what's available (e.g., resources, materials, technical assistance, consultation cadre, news updates, upcoming events, networking, interaction around issues, continuing education, links to related sites).

*Quick Find* searches ease the process of locating and accessing a wide range of info and resources relevant to MH, psychosocial problems, addressing barriers to learning and teaching, and promoting social and emotional development.

Other special website features include *What's New*, *Hot Topics and Issues*, a special *Gateway to a World of Resources*, aids for crisis response, *Ideas for Enhancing Support at Your School This Month*, and

*Networking Opportunities*. You can also access all issues of our quarterly topical newsletter/journal *Addressing Barriers to Learning*.

< **Many Online ResourceAids** – In addition to policy and program analyses, we have guidebooks and guidance notes, fact and information resources, introductions to specific practices, resource aids, samplers, continuing education modules, Quick Training Aids, Training Tutorials, special reports, newsletters, policy and program analysis briefs, and selected reprints. All are online to make them immediately accessible at no cost and with no restrictions on use.

Some recent examples of issues briefs, practice guides, and training aids include:

*Frameworks for Systemic Transformation of Student and Learning Supports*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/frameworksforsystemictransformation.pdf>

*Understanding and Minimizing Staff Burnout*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/burnout/burn1.pdf>

*Transitions: Turning Risks into Opportunities for Student Support*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/transitions/transitions.pdf>

*Learning Problems and Learning Disabilities*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/ldprobs/ldprobs.pdf>

*Confidentiality and Informed Consent*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/confid/confid.pdf>

*Early Development and Learning from the Perspective of Addressing Barriers*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/earlydevelop/earlydev.pdf>

With specific respect to mental health in schools, see

*"The Current Status of Mental Health in Schools: A Policy and Practice Analysis"*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/currentstatusmh.htm>

< **Listserv for School MH Practitioners and the Center's Consultation Cadre** – *Want to exchange info on MH practices in school and network with colleagues across the country?* Join the practitioners' listserv. Sign up by e-mail: [smhp@ucla.edu](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu)



Online, see "What's New" or go to the complete list of materials at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> and download whatever you want or contact us for hard copies

< **Electronic Monthly News** - Focusing on mental health in schools, our free ENEWS highlights major news items and emerging issues, provides info about recent reports, publications, resources, funding opportunities, and much more. (See the box for how to subscribe.)

< **Quarterly Topical Newsletter/Journal** – We call it *Addressing Barriers to Learning*. Each issue includes a feature article. Other features related to daily work in school settings include “Lessons Learned” and “Ideas into Practice” and an occasional commentary. All this is capped off with info about resources from our Center and around the country. Past issues are on our website; let us know if you want to be on the mailing list for this free resource.

< **On-site Across The Country** – In response to state and local needs, we travel to wherever it appears we can make a *strategic* contribution. This work ranges from consultation sessions to leadership workshops and presentations designed to advance the work of schools, districts, local and state agencies, pioneering initiatives, and school-community collaboratives.

< **School Improvement: Resources, Policy, and Practice Focused on New Directions for Student/Learning Supports** – We develop resources and conduct analyses of policy and practice designed to enhance how schools address barriers to learning and teaching (including psychosocial and MH concerns).

These resources have been developed with a view to how to proceed in stages and without allocations of additional funds. Many of these resources are designed to enhance readiness and momentum for new directions for student support; others are aids for building capacity. They all are relevant to sustainability of initiatives and innovations begun as projects, pilots, and demonstrations.

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 See the special resource list at:  
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/  
 NewDirectionsSomeResources.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/NewDirectionsSomeResources.pdf)  
 #####

We just missed the school bus.



Don't worry. I heard the principal say no child will be left behind!

## Want resources? Need technical assistance?

Contact us at:  
 E-mail: [smhp@ucla.edu](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu)  
 Phone: (310) 825-3634

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](mailto: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](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu) or by phone – (310) 825-3634.

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.

## Revamped Tool Kit for Rebuilding a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

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

Building a system of supports for learning requires blueprint guides, materials, tools and other resources for strategic planning, implementation, and capacity building. Such resources also help to deepen learning about the substance and processes of the work to be done. With this in mind, this online, evolving tool kit provides a wide range of detailed resource materials (e.g., exemplars, guides, aids, tools).

**You can get  
 there from here.**  
 (Bumper Sticker)

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

## **Strategic Initiatives to Advance the Field**

**National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support** – In October 2002, a national Summit on New Directions for Student Support was convened and spawned the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*, which is facilitated by our Center. The national summit generated a series of regional summits and currently is pursuing Statewide Summits and Leadership Institutes.

The goal is to revolutionize what schools do to address barriers to learning and teaching. To this end the Initiative 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), personnel who focus on Response to Intervention and prereferral interventions, and those 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 initiative's growing impact is seen in the involvement of increasing numbers of states and localities and initiative co-sponsors. The staff at the UCLA Center provides facilitative support and leadership. Listservs have been established to facilitate communications. Legislative action has been stimulated. The first-ever *Guidelines for a Student Support Component* has been developed to provide schools with a template for rethinking learning supports. Corwin Press has 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.

**Collaboration with Scholastic Inc.** – We have established a collaboration with the Community Affairs unit of *Scholastic Inc.* to establish an initiative to help school policymakers and administrators respond to the imperative for rebuilding supports for learning. The emphasis is on how schools can directly and systematically deal with factors that keep too many students from connecting effectively with good instruction. The initiative reflects pioneering work from across the country that is moving learning supports to a prominent place in enhancing school improvement and student outcomes. As a first phase, we worked together to draft a set of introductory leadership materials. Currently, we are working with the Louisiana Department of Education and with CCSSO and soon with AASA to help states and districts build leadership capacity for developing comprehensive systems of learning supports. This initiative will enhance the work being done with respect to the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*.

**National Initiative to Improve Adolescent Health (NIAH)** – We have spent considerable time working with the Leadership Group for this federal initiative and also have been an integral part of a work group on ways to enhance *diffusion* of efforts to improve adolescent health. If you are interested in learning more about all this, let us know. General information on the initiative can be accessed from our home page.

**Policy Leadership Cadre for Mental Health in Schools** – To advance MH in schools, the Center has facilitated the work of this leadership group. The focus is on expanding, linking, and building the capacity of the pool of persons who can provide policy leadership in this arena across the country. – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/policy.htm>

**Coalition for Cohesive Policy in Addressing Barriers to Development and Learning** – This is a broad-based policy-oriented coalition of organizations, all of whom have a stake in addressing barriers, as well as concern for promoting healthy development. The aim is to stimulate strategic efforts to foster policy integration and close policy gaps as ways to deal with the marginalization and fragmentation that dominates a great deal of prevailing practice – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/coalitin.htm>

## ***How We Approach MH in Schools***

Because we know that schools are not in the mental health business, all our work approaches mental health and psychosocial concerns in ways that integrally connect such efforts with school reform and improvement. We do this by integrating health and related concerns into the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Our policy and practice analyses have clarified the need to restructure recurrent policy, practice, research, and training to enable development of a comprehensive and cohesive approach that is an essential and primary component at every school. We stress that without a comprehensive component for addressing barriers to learning many students cannot benefit from instructional reforms, and thus, achievement scores will not rise in the way current accountability pressures demand.

The guiding principles and frameworks for the work of the Center emphasize ensuring (1) mental health is understood in terms of psychosocial problems as well as disorders and in terms of strengths as well as deficits, (2) the roles of schools, communities, and homes are enhanced and pursued jointly (3) equity considerations are confronted, (4) the marginalization and fragmentation of policy, organizations, and daily practice are countered, and (5) the challenges of evidence-based strategies and achieving results are addressed. From this perspective and through collaboration, the Center strives not only to improve practitioners' competence, but to foster changes in the systems with which they work. Such activity also addresses the varying needs of locales and the problems of accommodating diversity among interveners and among populations served.

Specific attention is given to enhancing policy, practice, theory, research, and training to

- (a) reduce marginalization, fragmentation, counterproductive competition, and inequities with respect to how school districts and school sites address psychosocial and mental health concerns and
- (b) increase productive collaboration between schools and communities (including families) in addressing such concerns.

The work encompasses

- advancing efforts designed to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate school-based programs in ways that enhance coordination, integration, and equity and reduce marginalization;
- analyzing and facilitating discussion of current systems, practices, needs, and trends in ways that contribute to systemic advances;
- developing new models for school-based policy, practice, research, and training and participating in their development, implementation and evaluation;
- demonstrating the value of school-university collaboration in developing, enhancing, and evaluating advancements in the field.

In accomplishing the above, the emphasis is on strategic activity that

- meshes with and facilitates the systemic reform movements reshaping the role of schools and their community partners in addressing mental health, psychosocial, and related concerns;
- enhances current and emerging stakeholder roles, functions, and competence (always with a view to benefitting the large number of children and youth in need)
- assists individuals, groups, and localities in ways that increase their access to available resources and support for enhancing policy, practice, research, basic training, and continuing education relevant to mental health in schools.

For more about the Center's work, see the Evaluation of Impact update report – online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/evaluation/evaluationupdate07-08.pdf>

\*The Center 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.



## Overview of the UCLA Center's Work with Louisiana Since 2005

### 2005-07

While our Center has worked with a number of Louisiana school and community colleagues over many years (e.g., through our listserv and mailings, responding to requests for resources and technical assistance, meetings with staff from school-based health clinic), we increased our involvement with the state after the hurricanes, Katrina and Rita, and the related flooding in 2005. Just days after the storms, we received a call from a social worker at the state department of education who asked for resources related to crisis response. She explained the difficulty of locating personnel (state, district, and school) who had been displaced and the many problems related to providing help to the students and families and schools impacted by the disaster.

As an immediate response, we provided resources for responding in a crisis. These were sent to all who we had contact information for in the state and in the impacted surrounding states (including those communities and school districts across the country who were receiving those who were relocated). For the next three weeks, we prepared daily updates and sent them across the country to all on our listserv and posted them on our website. This enhanced the updating and sharing of information not only in the directly affected states but to others who were interested in helping and learning lessons from the disaster response. We also started focusing on resources for crisis aftermath and transition supports for newcomers (e.g., welcoming centers, linking families to resources). Based on the feedback from colleagues and follow up over the course of the year, we were able to do a policy and practice analysis and write up some lessons learned on mobilizing resources when a disaster hits.

### 2007-08

As the schools in New Orleans reorganized following the hurricanes, we were contacted by a New Orleans based mental health foundation interested in introducing and funding a system of learning supports in newly forming local charter schools in the Recovery School District. They asked us to come to New Orleans and provide an orientation to schools interested in pursuing the foundation's RFA. Subsequently, two schools were selected for multiyear funding. Initially, we worked directly with the staff at the two schools. An April 2010 communication from the foundation indicates: "We are in the second year of implementation with our two schools with one more year of funding to go. One is doing an excellent job. They finally put [a designated leader] in the position of Learning Supports Director and she's really got things off in the right direction. They don't have the full span of services, but what they do have is well coordinated and there is a big focus on work in the classroom to support every child learning. Unfortunately, [the other school] has chosen to go the route of using their funding for special ed and their program, while serving some students well, is not a good adoption of the model. One of the things we've found is that a lot of the outcome locally, is dependent upon the personnel — how individuals charged with responsibility for implementing the model see the work and how they organize the work in a given school. So we are proposing in an i3 application a learning supports institute where we hope to help shape the vision and provide support as people work to implement the model in individual schools."

During this period, we were also contacted by a Louisiana department of education colleague working with mental health in schools as part of the state's coordinated school health unit. We provided her with direct assistance, publications and resources to meet immediate needs, and then met to discuss future work we might do together as part of our *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*. This led her supervisor in the Division of Student Learning and Support to initiate a series of conference calls related to their work with school and community networks. We suggested that the recently developed UCLA collaboration with Scholastic's *Rebuilding for Learning* initiative might provide a good opportunity to help support some new

directions work. This led to a series of calls and in person meetings with the Division staff, the UCLA Center's co-directors, Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor, and Scholastic's VP for Community Affairs, Karen Proctor, and their consultant Rhonda Neal Waltman.

## **2009-May 2010**

Through ongoing contact with staff in the state department, the UCLA/Scholastic collaborative team began to work with Assistant Superintendent Donna Nola-Ganey (Office of School and Community Support) and her staff. She indicated that the state department had committed to outreach to a range of "world class" consultants and resource centers as a way to transform the way all units in the department function. The transformation is intended to move the department from its overemphasis on compliance to playing a greater role in providing districts with support for capacity building. The Scholastic Team was invited to a March 31, 2009, meeting with the state superintendent and his cabinet to propose for their consideration the adoption of a comprehensive system of learning supports with the ongoing involvement of the UCLA/Scholastic Team.

The proposal was well received, and the Scholastic Team was invited to follow through. After a series of phone and video conferences, a Design Team was formed to develop the design document for Louisiana's Comprehensive Learning Supports System. A series of meetings in June and July 2009 focused on sharing information and creating readiness related to the design process. As part of this, a general orientation was provided to the staff of the Office of School and Community Support.

In selecting members for the Design Team, the department included representatives from a broad range of Offices and Divisions:

- >Office of Quality Educations, Division of Professional Development
- >Office of Educator Support, Division of Special Populations
- >Office of Management and Finance, Division of Planning, Analysis, and Information Resources and Division of Education Finance
- >Office of Literacy and Numeracy
- >Regional Education Service Centers
- >Office of School and Community Support, Division of Student Learning and Support; Division of Nutrition Assistance
- >Office of High School Redesign
- >Recovery School District
- >Board of Secondary and Elementary Education
- >Office of School Student and School Performance; School Improvement

The process included Design Team meetings and work groups that met between meetings. Sections of the design were crafted and a total draft of the design document was compiled and reworked until it was deemed ready to submit.

As the Design Team neared completion of its work, a meeting with the State Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent provided feedback and an update on how their work would be meshed with the department reforms. The feedback and other information provided a clear endorsement for the work to continue.

A subsequent meeting with the extended cabinet in August was another key event in the process. Each cabinet member commented on the presentation of the design for a comprehensive learning supports system. There were clear statements from cabinet members indicating the value of the work to their own work (e.g., professional development, finances, special education, public relations).

The online and hard copy of the Design for Louisiana's Comprehensive Learning Supports System became available in September 2009. The state superintendent also provided a brief TeacherTube statement about the importance of the work.

In September an Advisory group of senior state department staff was identified. An Implementation Team of mid-level staff from across the department was recruited to plan the strategic steps in introducing the learning supports system to the state department staff, to superintendents across the state, and to interagency partners.

Multiple opportunities through federal grants allow a comprehensive system of student support to be integrated into the major initiatives in the state. There is discussion of including this in the second department proposal for the Race to the Top competition and in the School Improvement Grant and the Interagency Systems of Care initiative. The state department also included a focus specifically on implementation of the Comprehensive Learning Supports System in one Region in their proposal for the federal Integrating Schools and Mental Health Systems program.

To help create awareness and readiness for a rolling out of a statewide initiative built around Louisiana's design for a Comprehensive Learning Supports System, the UCLA Center co-directors accepted an invitation to provide a keynote address and a workshop session at the Louisiana Social Work Conference in March, 2010. The time in Louisiana was also used to meet and discuss a series of matters with the department's leadership for learning supports.

A focus throughout the course of this work has been on identifying potential within state demonstrations of a comprehensive system of learning supports. One place that has been discussed is Sabine Parish, a district the UCLA Center has interacted with over many years and was chosen this year as one of the four LEAD districts involved in the American Association of School Administrators/UCLA/Scholastic collaboration for establishing demonstrations and leadership for developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports. A goal of the AASA/UCLA/Scholastic collaboration over the next year is to support and strengthen learning supports at Sabine so other districts in the state can learn directly about how to initiate and develop the work within the statewide initiative.

As of April and May 2010, the state department is focused on how various existing funding streams might be braided to improve the opportunities for all students to succeed in school. A series of regional meetings has been undertaken to bring local administrators up to date about how funds can be braided. These meetings underscore how existing funding streams can be braided and redeployed to support development of the type of Comprehensive Learning Supports System illustrated in the state's design document.