



**COALITION FOR COHESIVE POLICY
IN ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO
DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING***

Proposal for Policy Legislation

**Restructuring Student Support Resources
& Enhancing Their Connection with
Community Resources**



****About the Coalition for Cohesive Policy in Addressing Barriers to Development & Learning***

This is a broad-based, policy-oriented coalition of organizations who have a stake in addressing barriers to development, learning, and teaching, as well as concern for promoting healthy development. Currently, over 75 organizations across the country are Coalition participants. The Coalition's 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. Currently, the Coalition is facilitated by the School Mental Health Project at UCLA. (See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> -- go to Contents and scroll down to Center Hosted Sites or contact Co-directors Howard Adelman or Linda Taylor at PO Box 951563, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563 Ph: 310/825-3634.)

Background

School-linked service initiatives around the country have shown considerable promise in demonstrating another element that is worth building upon in efforts to enhance student achievement and well-being.

At the same time, such initiatives have had difficulty demonstrating ways to

- fully integrate community resources with school-owned programs and services
- sustain existing projects
- clarify how other schools can adopt the model without project funding.

And, the models used to develop the initiatives have by-passed the more fundamental problem of clarifying how school-owned student/learner support programs and services should be restructured to enhance their impact.*

Policy is Needed

One key to dealing with these concerns is new policy designed to encourage the restructuring of school-owned student support resources in ways that enhance their ability to (a) address barriers to student learning and promote healthy development and (b) connect with community resources (e.g., community-based organizations and businesses, regional non-profits, county/city public agencies, parent organizations and family members, volunteers).

Such restructuring should encompass (but not be limited to) all school-owned student/learner support programs and services including those provided by psychologists, counselors, nurses, social workers, various specialist personnel, and by others involved with programs designed to

- minimize grade retention by providing supports for students not meeting promotion standards
- prevent dropouts and pregnancy
- reduce violence and enhance school safety
- ensure that schools are drug free
- provide supports for various student transitions
- provide supports and special assistance for those with special needs related to readiness skills, second language acquisition, disabilities, and so forth
- respond to and prevent crises
- identify and address physical and mental health problems
- promote physical, social, and emotional development and well-being
- enhance family and community involvement in school and schooling
- support and strengthen families
- contribute to neighborhood safety, security, and stability

Policy Proposal

To achieve the above results, policy should be formulated to

- encourage school districts and every school to include an emphasis on restructuring student/learner supports in school improvement plans and certification reviews and to include family/community active involvement in these processes
- encourage state education agencies to develop and provide district staff and their school boards with frameworks, training, and technical assistance relevant to such restructuring
- encourage institutes of higher education to include such frameworks in their preparation programs for district and school administrators and pupil service personnel.

*Note: The term "school-owned" refers to the programs, services, resources, and related personnel financed directly by the school system.. "School-linked" refers to programs, services, resources, and related personnel financed by an agent other than the school system (e.g., a community health or human services agency). Some school-linked resources are co-located at a school site or at a district-owned regional facility. The term "school-affiliated" has been proposed by some to refer to situations where resources are underwritten with pooled funding.