To: **District and State Collaborative Network for Developing Comprehensive Systems of Learning Support**

From: Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor

July 5, 2012

Re: Update

We hope everyone is finding ways to relax a bit and rev up for the coming school year.

(1) From Sandy Anderson, principal, Oak Terrace Elementary School

This year has been amazing in terms of hearing from districts and schools across the country that are recognizing the importance of adopting a unified and comprehensive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

We wanted to share the following email from Sandy because she not only reports using our intervention framework to reduce unnecessary referrals for special education, but also highlights an approach to the social marketing of new directions for student and learning supports. Sandy's school's demographics = 74% low-income and second language learners.

She states:

> "For years, I have looked for research that would help to design a break through approach for this kind of school. The past 2 years, your research has helped [us] develop a systemic reform to addressing barriers to learning. Using your matrix as part of a school wide approach- staff, parents and students became a team to help at risk children beat the odds. In doing so, we have been able to reduce the number of students referred for special education-IEPs by 50%. These wonderful results have been shared via a webinar for the state of IL. Ninety-one schools subscribed to the webinar in May.

> Most recently, our school improvement team, has identified attendance and tardiness as a priority to be addressed for next year. After working with at risk populations for more than 30 years and looking for practical answers to serve the needs of children, your policies and practices have helped to bring about significant change for the children in our area. (I have also shared your work at our district level and other schools hope to replicate similar approaches as well).

> Thank you for your meaningful work. It has changed my life and the lives of the students I serve."

The surprising thing to us is that we have never spoken directly to Sandy – she picked it all up from the resources we email, publish, and put online.

(2) Social Marketing

Social marketing is essential to establishing and sustaining new directions for student and learning supports. Thus, we are trying to develop a series of guidance notes to help others who are doing this work (e.g., see *Social Marketing As a Spiraling Facet of Program and Systemic Change* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/socmark.pdf) -- also in Section A of the Rebuilding toolkit – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm

It would be helpful if you could share in general, what you have found effective in social marketing to enhance support for a specific school initiative or public education in general.

Send any info and general comments about social marketing to ltaylor@ucla.edu

(3) From Bob Cormany, Executive Director, PA Association of Pupil Services Administrators

> "I thought that you and the members of the Collaborative might find what we are doing in PA interesting. As part of an overall revision to the teacher and administrator evaluation system for the state, we are developing rubrics for evaluating student services staff. This will be the first time that separate rubrics have been developed for these positions. Prior to this specialists were evaluated using the same form as for classroom teachers. Currently, subcommittees are working with our Department of Education staff to create rubrics based upon the Charlotte Danielson Model. We expect to pilot them in some volunteer districts beginning in January 2013 and to have the system fully operational for the 2015-16 school year. This has been an excellent opportunity for representatives from all the state organizations serving educational specialists (and special education teachers) to work together on this topic."

(4) AASA/Scholastic/UCLA Learning Supports Lead District Collaboration

On June 27th, the participants met in Baltimore to share and plan for the coming year. A continuous focus for the group is on ensuring that what is developed is sustained. This involves a carefully crafted and strategically planned focus on social marketing and a plan for minimizing the impact of leadership changes. At the meeting, the Center shared some thoughts about all this. We also provided the social marketing brief cited in #2 above and materials such as the brochures various places have developed (see *Brochures from Districts and State Departments* in Section A of the rebuilding toolkit – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkita1a.htm). With respect to sustainability, we shared a brief guidance on *Leadership Changes: Minimizing the Downside* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newleader.pdf .

The summary update report on the *Learning Supports Lead District Collaboration* is online at – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/distupdatejune12.pdf

(5) Blueprints for Improving and Transforming Education: What's Missing? – a Unified and Comprehensive Focus on Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

As you know, blueprints for education reform have become trendy. Over the last few year, President Obama, governors, chief state school officers, local superintendents' associations, policy institutes, foundations, and business leaders have formulated such documents to guide school improvement. The problem remains that the various blueprints continue to ignore the need for a unified and comprehensive focus on addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Because of this, as you may have noticed, we prepared a policy brief entitled: **Blueprints for Education Reform: Have You Analyzed the Architects' Vision?**
(Online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/blueprint.pdf)

This brief highlights:
    I. The focus of current blueprints
    II. What's missing in most of the plans
    III. An expanded vision that directly addresses barriers to learning and teaching
    IV. Cautions that
        >More is involved than improving coordination and services
        >More is involved than specifying adoption of a community school approach

We think the brief could be useful in raising the level of discourse about this concern; so please help to get this brief into the hands of as many key stakeholders as is feasible.

(6) Bullying and Social Dynamics

The online video of a 68 year old school bus monitor being verbally abused by middle school students has sparked a great deal of media and public interest. Given the focus on bullying in schools in the past years, the question arises:

> ***Do we need to expand our thinking about the dynamics of bullying
> and the implications for intervention?***

Often bullying is conceptualized as a dynamic between two individuals (*a* bully and *a* victim) with others seen as a group of bystanders. Prevailing interventions tend to reflect this conceptualization in raising awareness of the problem, pursuing prevention, and implementing sanctions. As we understand more about peer dynamics related to bullying, our interventions need to expand to account for the social context.

What do you think? How effective have interventions to stop bullying been in your locale? Do we need to focus more on the social dynamics?

As always, we look forward to hearing from you.

Please send your information for sharing and comments to: Ltaylor@ucla.edu