

July, 2008

From: Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor
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Re: Update *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*

New: HIGHER EDUCATION INITIATIVE

As schools, districts, and state departments around the country grapple to prevent and ameliorate the many barriers to effective learning and teaching, there is a growing need to transform policy and practice related to school improvement and personnel development. In this context, a frequently asked question is:

How are pre-service preparation programs for teachers, support staff, and administrators focusing on addressing barriers to learning and teaching?

With a view to clarifying implications for policy and practice related to the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*, our Center has begun to focus on this matter. To anchor our efforts in the reality of current personnel preparation programs, we are initiating a series of Leadership Institutes for representatives from university departments of education. The first of these was held on Friday, June 27, 2008.

Attached is a report entitled: *Preparing All Education Personnel to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching*.

The report is designed both to provide a general conceptual overview and a snapshot of practice considerations and concerns. It begins by reiterating the case for why it is essential to fundamentally and systemically *transform* how schools (working with families and communities) address barriers to learning and teaching. This is followed by a discussion of the general challenges confronting personnel development for education.

Then, we provide a synthesis of findings gleaned from the Leadership Institute our Center conducted in June 2008 for representatives from university departments of education. (The Appendix to the attached report includes the invitation letter, agenda, and participant list.) Participants at the Institute were presented an overview of the need to enhance personnel preparation for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, and then they discussed and provided input on (1) implications for school improvement and thus for pre- and inservice personnel preparation programs and (2) how personnel preparation programs can deal with such implications.

Throughout, the report offers major implications for transforming personnel preparation for teachers, student support staff, administrators, and other stakeholders involved in addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Our intent is to use this report as the beginning of a higher education initiative across the

country designed to stimulate discussion, sharing, learning, and systemic changes related to how personnel preparation focuses on addressing barriers to learning and teaching. To this end, we have attached a brief response form. Please take a few minutes to return it to us.

We hope you will forward the report to colleagues to stimulate widespread discussion about these important matters. (The response form also invites you to indicate any other folks to whom you think we should send the report.)

We look forward to continuing to work with you in the best interests of children, their families, neighborhoods, and schools.

The report also is online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/preparingall.pdf>



***ABOUT THE NATIONAL INITIATIVE:
NEW DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENT SUPPORT**

For details about the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*, go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ndannouncement.htm>

A brief overview is provided below:

In 2002, our Center at UCLA launched the National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support. We began with a national Summit and followed this (in 2003) with several regional Summits to raise awareness and create readiness for change. In 2003 we also began a targeted set of state Summits (these have occurred in 13 states to date)

Then, in 2005, we added strategies not only to enhance dissemination but to encourage and support diffusion as we provide indepth follow up for those places indicating readiness to move forward in developing a comprehensive new directions approach. To date, this work has included providing (1) Leadership Institutes for district teams and (2) onsite capacity building with specific state departments of education and districts.

In 2006, encouraged by the growing success of the New Directions initiative, the Center at UCLA established a public-private collaboration with Scholastic, Inc. as part of Scholastic's Community Affairs *Rebuilding for Learning* initiative. In 2007 and the first part of 2008, Scholastic has been (1) preparing a handbook based on our work related to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging students and (2) developing a special website. In the last part of 2008, we will begin to conduct a series of Leadership Institutes beginning in the Gulf states and also for national and state superintendents/administrators associations, Council of Chief State School Officers, etc.

Over 2007 and 2008, we increased our outreach to district superintendents/leaders and began to focus on higher education's role in personnel preparation for educators.

Superintendents Initiative. With respect to district leaders, widespread outreach mailings

were sent including a range of brief resources and with follow up materials sent to those who responded. As of August, 2008, the focus on connecting with superintendents will be expanded into a formal *Superintendents Initiative*. The initiative will be inaugurated with national distribution of a Center report entitled: *Transforming School Improvement to Develop a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: What District Superintendents Say They Need to Move Forward*.

Higher Education Initiative. With respect to higher education's role in personnel preparation for educators, July 2008 inaugurated a *Higher Education Initiative*. This began with a first Leadership Institute for Higher Education Personnel Preparation and with the national distribution of the report entitled: *Preparing All Education Personnel to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching*. In addition to policy makers, a key audience for this report is deans, department chairs, and faculty in personnel preparation and leadership programs, district personnel responsible orientation/induction, inservice, and continuing education.

Each year, the Center has continued to produce resources and tools for those ready to move in New Directions for Student Support (e.g., see the online toolkit at

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

