

July, 2005

To: Network for the National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support

Responses from members of the network indicate many are ready to take some next steps to move the initiative forward. Here are a three specific suggestions.

(1) **Focus on School Improvement Planning Guides.** Work with us on efforts to ensure that school improvement planning guides fully incorporate learning supports to address barriers to student learning and development. From the responses to our Center's recent policy reports on this matter, it seems clear many leaders in the field are ready to tune in to this need. The two documents focused specifically on incorporating new directions thinking into school improvement planning have been circulated widely (including through the "Support for School Improvement e-Newsletter" sent out by the Council for Chief State School Officers – CCSSO to approx. 1600 folks working on school improvement issues).

We hope you have had a chance to review the reports. If not, you can access them as follows:

- < School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsmissing.htm>
- < Addressing What's Missing in School Improvement Planning: Expanding Standards and Accountability to Encompass an Enabling or Learning Supports Component
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/enabling/standards.pdf>

We think if you will play a role in getting these into the hands of decision makers and other key stakeholders, the impact will be considerable. You can use the Executive Summary and Abstract or the whole document and refer them to the web to download the complete document or we can send you copies to share with others. Alternatively, let us know who you want us to send them to. Remember to tell folks that our federally funded Center provides, at no cost, strategic support for enhancing learning supports to address barriers to student learning and development. This includes resource materials and leadership training. Encourage them to contact us.

(2) **Focus on the need for a Unifying Framework.** The frustration with so many separate initiatives is growing. As you know, we have focused on this in a recent report.

- < Another Initiative? Where Does it Fit? A Unifying Framework and an Integrated Infrastructure for Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Promote Healthy Development
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf>

Here, too, you can play a role in getting these into the hands of decision makers and other key stakeholders. Let us know if you need copies to share with others or if you want us to send it directly to someone. And, again, remember to encourage folks to contact us..

We might note that the two books just published by Corwin Press in support of the New Directions Initiative will be sent to a sample of leaders who could play a key role in moving the Initiative forward. If there is someone to whom you think it would be valuable to send copies of the books, please let us know.

(3) Let us know what you think about a Leadership Institute on New Directions for Student Support. Based on the input we have received, it is clear that the next phase in states that have held statewide summits is to expand leadership capacity building and networking.

Therefore, starting in August, we will begin conducting Leadership Institutes for New Directions for Student Support.

The first is on Tuesday, August 16th in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota The second is on Monday, September 19 in Dallas Texas.

While the original intent was to work specifically with teams from schools and education agencies in those two states, we have agreed to open the Leadership Institutes to individuals and teams from other states who are ready to move in New Directions for Student Support. The meetings are held to about 60-70 people. There is no cost to attend (other than personal travel costs). The Institute agenda focuses on how teams can work with key stakeholders to:

- < clarify why New Directions for Student Support are an imperative
- < frame the full continuum of comprehensive and integrated interventions
- < build the infrastructure to develop new directions for learning supports
- < move forward with essential systemic changes

The responses we have received from around the country make it clear there is significant interest in having such special Leadership Institutes on New Directions for Student Support. Let us know whether you think it would be good to have one in your state.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor

Indicate your responses to each of the above matters and send back to us:

- (1) Focus on School Improvement Planning Guides.**
- (2) Focus on the need for a Unifying Framework.**
- (3) Leadership Institute on New Directions for Student Support.**