From: Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor
Center Co-directors

As our collaboration with Scholastic moves into action, we want to take the opportunity to reintroduce the initiative.

ABOUT THE REBUILDING FOR LEARNING INITIATIVE

Scholastic’s Rebuilding for Learning initiative is a strategic and personalized approach designed to move school improvement efforts forward in developing a comprehensive and cohesive system to address barriers to teaching and learning. The aim is to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school and a strong start toward being productive societal contributors. The immediate goal is to help school leaders “rebuild” systems and practices to better enable learning for all children.

Initially, the Rebuilding for Learning initiative was conceived as a way to provide support for Gulf Coast schools after the 2005 hurricanes. However, during Scholastic’s initial research for the initiative, it became obvious that Gulf Coast districts were not the only ones facing serious “learning infrastructure” problems impeding teaching and learning. Education leaders across the country are struggling to

- reduce student dropout rates and delinquency
- reduce teacher dropout rates
- re-engage students in classroom learning
- narrow the achievement gap
- eliminate the plateau effect related to student achievement,
- reduce the growing list of schools designated as low performing

Clearly, districts in every state are at a crossroads in their continuing efforts to improve schools. From this perspective, the initiative was reconceived as a nationwide endeavor. Thus, while Rebuilding for Learning certainly will be serving educators from the Gulf Coast region, Scholastic is excited about expanding the scope of the work to make strategic investments focused on enabling all children to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO LEARNING IS ESSENTIAL

Most schools strain to address the various challenges faced by students, their families, and school staff – challenges that often seriously interfere with learning and teaching. The notion of “barriers to learning” encompasses both external and internal factors that negatively affect student motivation and ability to benefit from classroom instruction. These factors include the wide range of problems stemming from restricted opportunities associated with poverty and disability, neighborhood violence, difficult family conditions, inadequate physical and mental health care, acquiring English as a second language, experiencing crises and disasters, and more.

Currently, student and learning supports are so highly fragmented and marginalized in policy and practice that the resources allocated to address barriers to learning are not playing a cost-effective role in improving schools. Schools, districts, and state education agencies need to redeploy existing resources and programs that are allocated for addressing barriers to learning and must weave these together with the invaluable resources that can be accessed from students, family members, and community stakeholders.

As part of the initiative, state and large district education leaders will be provided with professional development and technical assistance resources to help them substantively rethink and comprehensively restructure how they address barriers to learning and teaching.
**APPROACH AND IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY**

The *Rebuilding for Learning* initiative provides education leaders with meaningful and ongoing learning opportunities around planning and implementing improved systems for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

District or state teams interested in participating apply to receive a *Rebuilding for Learning* planning grant. The grant serves as a catalyst for engagement with this work. It covers participation by district or state teams in the *Rebuilding for Learning Institute*. Specifically, the grant covers travel and accommodations costs for Institute attendees. It also covers staff time, and stipends for participants.

Participating teams that demonstrate a serious commitment to *Rebuilding for Learning* by moving toward developing plans for their schools or states and need assistance with aspects of plan consultation or implementation would be eligible to apply for an implementation mini-grant that supports additional technical assistance from *UCLA* and/or members from the *Rebuilding for Learning Team*.

The intent is to aid district and state level capacity building by offering information, guidance and support through the auspices of Scholastic and the *UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools*.

This includes

- In person professional input and interchange (e.g. Rebuilding for Learning Institute and on-site technical assistance)
- Online professional development and guidance (e.g. continuing education and online technical assistance)
- Print and online supplemental resources

*Rebuilding for Learning Institute* – orients school leaders to the need for student learning supports, the full continuum of essential school-community interventions, and the core principles and tenets of comprehensive learning support systems. District or state leadership teams leave the Institute with an emerging "blueprint" that enables them to more deeply investigate student learning supports and the feasibility for instituting change in their districts or states.

*Rebuilding for Learning Online Institute* – available to Institute participants, this resource allows users to probe deeper with theory and practice content. The online resources are especially designed as aids for moving forward.

*Technical Assistance* – Institute participants pursuing implementation of comprehensive learning support systems have access to the initiative's team of specialists who are available to provide strategic guidance as districts move from planning to implementation.

*Rebuilding for Learning Core Materials* – provide administrators with information on student learning supports policies and practices. Core materials include the *Rebuilding for Learning Institute Handbook*. The handbook is provided to all in person institute participants.

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For info on Scholastic’s Community Affairs unit, see
http://www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/community/index.htm
or contact: Karen Proctor, Vice President (kproctor@scholastic.com – phone: (212) 343-6157)

For more info on our Center at UCLA, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/
or contact: Howard Adelman or Linda Taylor, Co-directors
(adelman@psych.ucla.edu –(310) 825-1225; Ltaylor@ucla.edu – (310) 825-3634)
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EFFECTIVELY ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO LEARNING IS ESSENTIAL

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For more info, contact: Karen Proctor, Vice President of Scholastic's Community Affairs unit kproctor@scholastic.com - phone: (212) 343-6157 http://www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/community/index.htm or Howard Adelman or Linda Taylor, Co-directors adelman@psych.ucla.edu -(310) 825-1225; Ltaylor@ucla.edu - (310) 825-3634 http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu
As part of the *Rebuilding for Learning* initiative, leaders of national, state, and large district education agencies and organizations will be provided with professional development and technical assistance resources to help them *substantively rethink and comprehensively restructure* how they address barriers to learning and teaching. Those who choose to move forward with systemic changes for addressing barriers to learning and teaching will be provided ongoing learning opportunities to guide planning and implementation.

The intent is to enhance school improvement capacity building by offering information, guidance and support through the auspices of Scholastic and the UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools.

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Response Form

Interested in Exploring Participation in the Rebuilding For Learning Initiative?

We invite state and district superintendents, school boards, education associations, and chairs of university departments of education to express their interest in exploring ways to connect with the initiative.

Check all that apply:

____ I would like to discuss convening a Leadership Institute focused on Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching and Re-engaging Students?

____ I want more details.

____ I would like to receive regular information about the initiative as it moves forward.

Other comments:

If there are others to whom you would like us to send the announcement, indicate their names and contact information below:

Finally, if you are in the process of taking any strategic local action related to these matters, please share it with us to share what is happening with others as a catalyst for change.

Your Name _______________________________  Title _______________________________
Organization  _________________________________________________________________
Address ______________________________________________________________________            City ___________________________________  State ___________  Zip __________________
Phone (____)________________  Fax (____)________________  E-Mail

Thanks for completing this form.  Return by FAX to (310) 206-8716.

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