To: Our Colleagues Across the Country

From: Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor at UCLA

Below for your information is a Policy Analysis Brief Update entitled: The 2011 Budget Proposal for the U. S. Department of Education: Implications for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching and Re-engaging Disconnected Students.

The brief can also be found on our website at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/2011budget.pdf

Policy Analysis Brief Update

The 2011 Budget Proposal for the U. S. Department of Education: Implications for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching and Re-engaging Disconnected Students

Our reading of the “Summary and Background Information” and related discussions about the 2011 budget proposal is that the consolidation of programs and the increase in competitive funding provides significant opportunities for developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* at state, district, and school levels. This is critical not only for the budget year, but because the proposed changes reflect the blueprint the department is designing for the ESEA reauthorization deliberations.

The big picture continues to emphasize improving the success of all students, with an increased commitment to a focus on "College- and Career-Ready Students." Changes are intended to promote the alignment of resources to enhance successful outcomes for students. (The proposed budget consolidates a number of programs and eliminates others.)

Examples of Opportunities to Develop a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Strengthening What Goes on in the Classroom to Ensure Equity of Opportunity for Success at School: The emphasis on enhancing teaching quality can be viewed as involving both better instruction and enabling teaching and learning through a well-designed system of learning supports. The learning supports system increases a teacher’s ability to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. This, of course, is critical for reducing learning and behavior problems, lowering absentee rates, closing the achievement gap, reducing dropouts, and increasing graduation rates. It also is critical to stemming the flow of inappropriate referrals for specialized services and special education and enhancing the effectiveness of special education.

Professional Development: Related to learning supports in the classroom and schoolwide is the extension of professional development to encompass teachers and other staff. This provides opportunities to prepare support staff to work more often with teachers in classrooms and for all staff to play a role in implementing strategies for early intervening, RTI, positive behavioral support, and so forth.

Title I: Title I continues to underscore both the clear need for a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports
(e.g., support for English learners, migrant students, homeless students) and the source for resources that can be redeployed to develop the system.

**Special Focus on Supporting Student Success:** The section entitled "Supporting Student Success" is of special interest for developing a *Comprehensive System of Learning Supports*.

The consolidated and new programs aim at strengthening what goes on “outside the classroom and the regular school day” to support success in the classroom. The emphasis is on (1) “neighborhood-based projects in distressed communities designed to combine effective schools with strong systems of support that address the comprehensive educational, health, and social needs of children from birth through college and career” (Promise Neighborhoods), (2) “improving school climate; reducing or preventing drug use, violence, or harassment; and supporting the health, fitness, and mental well-being of students” (Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students), and (3) “the redesign and extension of the school day, week, or year to provide additional time for academic and enrichment activities and for teacher collaboration to improve instruction, as well as programs that support full-service community schools that coordinate access to comprehensive services” (a reauthorized 21st Century Community Learning Centers program). All these address pieces that can be pursued in ways that advance a school’s efforts to develop a *Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* to address barriers to learning and teaching. (Alternatively, they can end up further fragmenting and marginalizing learning supports.) Whatever funding emerges related to such programs may be less important than the growing recognition that such supports are essential.

**What’s your analysis?**

We want to follow up this brief with analyses from stakeholders across the country. Please send your analyses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

*For a brief intro to the concept of a *Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* to address barriers to learning and teaching, see:*

*Toward Next Steps in School Improvement: Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching*

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdftdocs/systemic/towardnextstep.pdf

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