



*From the Center's Clearinghouse ...**

An introductory packet

Financial Strategies to Aid in Addressing Barriers to Learning (Revised 2015)

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/financial/fund2000.pdf>



This Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspice of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA.

Address: Center for Mental Health in Schools, Box 951563, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

Phone: (310) 825-3634 Website: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

For Information email: Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Preface

While it's true that throwing money at problems doesn't solve them, it is also true that complex problems can't be dealt with effectively without financial resources.

With tight budgets, a critical focus of all reform efforts is how to underwrite the costs of new intervention approaches. Local, state, federal, public, private — all sources are being tapped and there is increasing discussion of how to develop new relationships/partnerships and blend resources. As noted by the Center for the Study of Social Policy,* the discussions focus on "political and financial strategies that use current and future resources in new ways and that maximize all available sources of revenue." That Center begins by stressing the following essential points:

First is the central principle of all good financial planning, that programs drive financing, not the other way around. Financial strategies must be used to support improved outcomes for families and children. And financing strategies which cannot be adequately adapted to program ends should not be used, even when they happen to generate more money than other approaches.

Second, **no single financing approach will serve to support an ambitious agenda** for change. Financing packages should be developed by drawing from the widest possible array of resources. Many individuals or organizations are stuck on one approach to financing (usually the one that involves asking for more state or local general funds). Yet there are many alternatives. Financing is an art not a science, and creativity is the order of the day. In the end, more general funds may be necessary to support system changes, but these will only be forthcoming and deserved if (we) first make the best use of existing resources. . . .

With these points in mind, the Center for the Study of Social Policy offers the following four part framework as a guide to thinking about financing efforts to enhance programs and services for children.

- Redeployment: using available funds (e.g., investment based, capitation based, cut based, and material redeployment)
- Refinancing: freeing funds for reinvestment
- Raising revenue: generating new funding
- Restructuring financial systems: using financial structures to effect change.

At times, the challenge of financing needed reforms seems overwhelming, but each day brings new opportunities and information on successful efforts. This packet is designed as an aid in identifying sources and understanding strategies.

**Financing reform of family and children's services: An approach to the systematic consideration of financing options or "The Cosmology of Financing."* Document from The Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1575 Eye Street, Suite 500, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

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Rethinking District Budgets to Unify and Sustain a Critical Mass of Student and Learning Supports at Schools

With each year's budget projections getting smaller and smaller, we are forced to think of more efficient ways to do business. We know the tremendous responsibility we have to do the right thing for our children. ... and we have to make tough choices.... The key is integrating educational funds to achieve the sustainability of "system change" for improved student outcomes.

*From Tools for Integrating Education Funds,
Louisiana Department of Education*

Districts across the country have had to cut staff and other resources to balance their budgets. Clearly, this is not a situation that is likely to facilitate school improvement. Indeed, the probability is that it will set back improvement efforts. While money is not the only factor in making schools better, drastic budget cuts certainly are not a tenable path to improvement. As administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and other stakeholders consistently caution: "Wherever you cut, you are going to hurt the kids."

The nation's commitment to ensuring every student has an equal opportunity to succeed at school requires balancing budgets in ways that do not completely undermine this ideal. Cutbacks increase the challenge of using every dollar and every resource in the most productive ways to improve outcomes for *all* students. Unfortunately, in many instances, budget cuts are decimating the capacity of schools to provide essential student and learning supports. In turn, this is subverting teachers' efforts to build effective learning connections with their students.

Education cut-backs are likely to worsen over the short run. This makes it imperative for policy makers to reverse trends toward lopsided cutbacks that counter efforts to address factors interfering with learning and teaching. Furthermore, it is essential to move forward in more cost-effective ways by unifying student and learning supports and braiding remaining categorical funding in ways that reduce redundancy and counterproductive competition for sparse resources. This brief highlights these matters.

Lopsided Cutbacks

If any major enterprise (corporation, hospital, legislature, school) disproportionately cuts segments of its staff, it risks undermining its mission and may completely immobilize itself.

In practice, there are three primary and overlapping components in ensuring students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school:

- *the instructional component* – which includes all direct efforts to facilitate learning and development
- *the enabling or learning supports component* – which embraces direct efforts to address factors interfering with learning and teaching
- *the management component* – which encompasses managerial and governance functions.

In *policy*, however, the enabling/learning supports component is not given the same priority and attention as the other two. Efforts to address interfering factors are enacted in a piecemeal and ad hoc fashion and implemented in fragmented ways. And, as budgets tighten, the trend often is for such supports to be among the early cuts and for the cuts to be lopsided. That is, student support staff (as compared to other staff) often are disproportionately laid off. In some instances, the ranks of school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and other support staff are decimated. Examples abound. Last year in Spokane, out of 238 layoff notices, 55 went to school counselors. In Cleveland, layoff notices went out to all 15 district social workers and 32 nurses (about half the total of nurses). In Seattle, the school board voted to eliminate the position of elementary school counselors to help close its budget gap. And these are not anomalies.

In schools serving high numbers of students who are not doing well, learning supports are inequitably underwritten.

What makes all this especially unacceptable is that, in schools serving high numbers of students who are not doing well, learning supports already are inequitably underwritten. For example, Heuer & Stulich (2011) report finding “from 42% to 46% of Title I schools (depending on school grade level) had per-pupil personnel expenditure levels that were below their district’s average for non-Title I schools at the same grade level.”

As can be seen in recent reports from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the focus on student supports is highly circumscribed and poorly defined and the budget allocation is small. The NCES (Cornman, & Noel, 2011) categorizes district level expenditures as follows:

- Instruction and instruction-related: Salaries and benefits for teachers, teaching assistants, librarians, in-service teacher trainers, curriculum development, student assessment, technology, and supplies and services related to these activities.
- Student support service: Attendance and social work, guidance, health, psychological services, speech pathology, audiology, and other student support services.
- Administration: Expenditures for school and school district administration (school principal’s office, the superintendent and board of education and their immediate staff, and other local education agency staff.
- Operations: Expenditures for the operation and maintenance of school and school district facilities, and expenditures related to student transportation, food services and enterprise operations.

In the period from 1990 through 2008, the proportion of expenditures in each of these categories has changed very little:

- Instruction and instruction staff services represent about 65% of public school expenditures
- Student supports is about 5% of expenditures
- Administration, operations, transportation, food services is about 22% of expenditures (NCES, 2010).

The apparent reason for the small amount of student support expenditures is the tendency to think of such supports mainly as supplementary assistance for compensatory and special education populations. As Baker (2001) notes:

“The compensatory needs of at-risk students were formalized in federal legislation in 1965 as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. States responded to the federal program by creating state level policies to recognize and provide financial support for local districts to provide compensatory programs ... for at-risk children in predominantly low-income schools.... The case of limited English proficient children is ... similar to compensatory education in that the impetus for most state policy and local district program expansion was the implementation of Title VII of ESEA in 1976.”

Moreover, population and school finance equity research has long stressed that it is low-income students, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency who “require more inputs” (Wilson, Lambright, & Smeeding, 2004). And it is this body of research that has made the case that “equal dollars do not buy equally productive inputs” or results.

The tendency to think of student and learning supports mainly in terms of compensatory and special education has been challenged, and approaches that address the needs of all students have been formulated (e.g., see Adelman & Taylor, 2006). However, efforts to develop such approaches are hampered by the trend to skew budget cuts in ways that eviscerate student and learning supports (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2010; 2011a).

Cuts to student and learning supports exacerbate inequities among schools and further limit availability of essential supports.

In sum, school finance inequities are well documented (Addonizio, 2009; Baker & Elmer, 2009; Baker & Ramsey, 2010; Duncombe & Yinger, 2004). And cuts to student and learning support resources exacerbate the inequities among schools and further marginalize and limit availability of essential inputs. Given this, districts and schools need to revisit the problem of lopsided cuts. By now it should be evident that no major urban district can ensure equity of opportunity for all students to succeed without developing a unified and comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.

A major irony related to cutbacks that work against developing a potent system of learning supports is that such a system can help a district enhance its finances. For instance, it is clear that “while enrollment propels district costs, ... revenues are largely driven by the yearly average of students who attend” (EdSource, 2007). Given that absences drive down revenue, they not only jeopardize the ability of students to succeed at school, they undermine the capacity of schools to achieve their mission (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2011a). Absenteeism arises from a variety of factors, many of which can be countered by a unified and comprehensive system of student and learning supports.

Moreover, such a system can reduce the amount of resources expended in reacting to behavior problems and can decrease the number of inappropriate referrals for special assistance and special education. And all this can help increase graduation rates and counter teacher dropout.

Braiding Categorical Funds to Better Address Barriers to Learning and Ensure Engagement (and Re-engagement) in Instruction

Within the constraints of government budgets, policy makers have addressed barriers to learning through categorical funding streams (e.g., targeted programs, “silos”), some of which were designated as entitlements (i.e., the dollars follow the students) and others were designed as competitions for funding. As Reyes & Rodriguez (2004) stress, such categorical programs are intended to “address either a particular or targeted education policy goal or the special needs of a category of eligible student populations.” As part of a school finance formula, these tend to reflect an acknowledgment by policy makers of the need for additional resources at certain schools and for certain student populations.

The widespread failure related to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and the impact of special education encroachment on a district’s general operating funds have led to policy backlash. Categorical funding has been designated as too inflexible and as perpetuating a reactive “waiting for failure” approach. There have been increasing calls for block funding or at least waivers from categorical silos and for strategies that can stem the tide of students requiring additional funding (Baker, 2001). Examples of the latter include calls for an expanded focus on prevention, greater emphasis on early intervening and use of response to intervention, and renewed concern for enhancing classroom/school climate (Adelman & Taylor, 2006; Brown-Chidsey, & Steege, 2010; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2012; National School Climate Council, 2007).

While it is illegal simply to ignore categories and blend all incoming funds, it is legitimate and feasible to braid certain resources across categories to achieve better outcomes and enhance cost-effectiveness. As work undertaken by the Louisiana Department of Education (2011) stresses:

We must put aside our "turfs" and our "purse-strings," in order to overcome the challenges that dwindling resources present for school improvement planning. It is critical for all leaders at the district level to support this effort, in order to empower all personnel to collaborate in new and effective ways. Leaders must remain engaged in this new way of planning and allow personnel the flexibility to think outside of the box to transform the way we do business. ... Managing change is difficult and to be successful, we have to meet the needs of all children, regardless of the ways we choose to fund programs. Far too often, in our silos we have said, "No, we can't do that because...", rather than working together to eliminate the silos. We are [too] comfortable with the inflexibility we have created.

With respect to student and learning supports, braiding for overlapping goals can be done related to special education, dropout prevention, family and home involvement, crisis response and prevention, support for transitions, community outreach, assistance for students and families with social and emotional needs, and more. And, besides school funds, strategic system-building can weave in community resources (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2011b).

Examples of Flexible Use and Braiding of Resources

From California: "The average school district in California gets about 30% of its funding from programs targeted to particular programs, such as Student Assessment, and to students with special needs, such as Special Education. There are currently about 20 state programs whose regulations have been left intact. ... In 2008-09, leaders in Sacramento reduced funding for about 40 state categorical programs and made them discretionary through 2012-13. This means that the funds may be spent for any educational purpose during that time. The flexibility was granted to help districts manage their budgets in a time of revenue downturns."

EdSource (2011)

From Louisiana: The Louisiana Department of Education analyzed the range of funding sources for learning supports (e.g., funds personnel, and programs from No Child Left Behind Titles I, II, III, VI and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). They then developed a manual and tools to guide and assist local education agencies in understanding how to integrate multiple funding sources to accomplish efforts such as the development of the state's design for a Comprehensive Learning Supports System.

Louisiana DOE (2011)

Unifying What's Left to More Effectively Address Factors Interfering with Learning and Teaching

Shortcomings in distribution of dollars are exacerbated at the district and school levels by unimaginative and unproductive resource allocation and use practices.... The major findings are that dollars are not used in ways that directly raise student achievement. Districts tend to use most of any increased revenues to hire more teachers, typically to reduce class size or provide more out of classroom services. Neither strategy boosts students achievement very much.

Odden & Clune (1995)

Despite cuts, resources will continue to be deployed to address learning, behavior, and emotional problems, especially in schools serving low income families. This reality underscores the importance of improving how factors that lead to such problems are addressed and how such problems are handled after they arise.

By balancing cuts, braiding categorical resources, and strategically weaving in community resources to fill gaps, districts and their schools can still proactively pursue, over the coming years, development of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports at schools. This can be accomplished by strategically:

- reducing fragmentation and redundancy and redeploying how existing resources are used
- reframing the roles and functions of remaining student support staff
- implementing “Response to Intervention” (RTI) in ways that appropriately reduce the need for out-of-classroom referrals and the related overemphasis on expensive services (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2012).

Development of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports also requires reworking district and school operational infrastructures to ensure dedicated and nonmarginalized leadership and work groups (Adelman & Taylor 2006; 2008; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2011c,d,e,f). Finally, the work calls for establishment of an effective school-community collaborative to provide a mechanism for weaving together related school and community resources (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2011b).

To these ends, every school improvement plan needs a substantial focus on addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. The aim should be to unify current ad hoc, piecemeal activity and redeploy sufficient resources to begin the process of developing a comprehensive system of learning supports (e.g., see Education Development Center, 2012; Louisiana Department of Education, 2010). In this respect, it should be noted that provisions in both the *No Child Left Behind Act* and in the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* allow use of some allocated federal funds for integration of programs and services.

(Appended to this brief is a brief discussion of why schools should develop a unified and comprehensive system of student and learning supports.)

Concluding Comments

In the face of dwindling education funding and cutbacks of personnel and other resources, recent data reports also make it clear that barriers to learning and teaching are on the rise and are exacerbated by the economic downturn. For example, the 2012 *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Teachers, Parents and the Economy*,

The impact of the economic downturn is widespread among schools across the country. ... Many teachers, as well as students and parents themselves, note an increase in need among students and their families. ... A majority (64%) of teachers report that in the last year, the number of students and families needing health and social support services has increased, while 35% of teachers also report that the number of students coming to school hungry has increased. At the same time, many teachers have seen reductions or eliminations of health or social services (28% overall, including 34% of high school teachers) and after-school programs (29% overall, including 32% of high school teachers).

From a civil rights perspective, a 2012 report from the U.S. Department of Education focuses light on continuing school disparities related to many students of color in general and especially those in schools serving low income families. In this respect, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stated that:

The undeniable truth is that the everyday educational experience for many students of color violates the principle of equity at the heart of the American promise. It is our collective duty to change that.

This brief underscores the need to rethink district budgets to unify and sustain a critical mass of student and learning supports at schools. Long-term budget policy and current budget cutbacks marginalize such supports. Initiatives, programs, and services are not well-conceived, are stuck onto schools and districts, and are implemented in piecemeal and fragmented ways. As a result, while each may have a small positive effect, the tendency is to see the work as dispensable when budgets must be cut.

What gets lost in all this is that so many schools must address a multitude of barriers to learning and teaching if they are to ensure equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school and thus increase graduation rates (and reduce teacher dropouts). Available outcome data and the scale of need both underscore that relying solely on instructional improvement is insufficient. Clearly every school must offer the best instruction possible, but for many students to benefit from good instruction, schools must also develop a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports.

Despite budget cuts, pioneering initiatives across the country are showing how to improve instruction and also move forward in reworking student/learning supports. For example:

- the Gainesville City School District in Georgia has created new policies and modified or expanded existing strategies, policies and practices to develop a system of student and learning supports that enables learning

and enhances equity of opportunity for succeeding at school. Results-to-date: Graduation rates have increased from 73.3% in 2009 to 81.3% in 2010 and 84.9% in 2011. Referrals for disciplinary action in the middle and high schools have dropped from 91 disciplinary tribunals in 2008-09 to 47 in 2010-11, and the elementary schools saw a 75% decrease. (Education Development Center, 2012).

- Over the past two years, Louisiana's Department of Education (2010) has developed its design for a *Comprehensive Learning Supports System* and has begun district-level work. The design has been shared widely throughout the state; a position for Regional Learning Supports Facilitators has been outlined; and implementation is underway with the first adopter. And the department has developed a manual and tools to guide and assist local education agencies in understanding how to integrate multiple funding sources to accomplish the work (Louisiana Department of Education, 2010).
- A nationwide initiative by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) in collaboration with our center at UCLA and Scholastic Inc. aims at expanding leaders' knowledge, capacity, and implementation of a comprehensive system of learning supports (<http://www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=7264>).
- In the Tucson Unified School District, the process of unifying student and learning supports into a comprehensive system has begun with the employment of a cadre of Learning Supports Coordinators to help with the transformation at each school (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/tusdbrochure.pdf>).

These trailblazing efforts are moving forward by balancing cut-backs so that remaining resources can be used to improve both instruction and build an effective system that addresses barriers to learning and teaching and re-engages disconnected students. Policy makers need to encourage others to do the same.

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Appendix

Why Schools Should Develop a Unified and Comprehensive System of Student and Learning Supports

*Unifying student and learning supports is long overdue;
cut-backs make it essential to do it now!.*

It is time to go beyond thinking in terms of providing traditional services, linking with and collocating agency resources, and enhancing coordination. These all have a place, but they do not address how to unify and reconceive ways to better meet the needs of the many rather than just providing traditional services to a relatively few students.

It is time to fundamentally rethink student and learning supports. The intent is to develop a comprehensive and cohesive system. Such a system encompasses a full continuum of interventions and covers a well-defined and delimited set of classroom and schoolwide supports (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/towardnextstep.pdf>).

Developing the system entails

- unifying all direct efforts to address factors interfering with learning and teaching at a school
- connecting families of schools (such as feeder patterns) with each other and with a wider range of community resources
- weaving together school, home, and community resources in ways that enhance effectiveness and achieve economies of scale.

Starting points include ensuring that the work is fully integrated into school improvement policy and practice, reworking operational infrastructure, setting priorities for system development, and (re)deploying whatever resources are available to pursue priorities (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/7steps.pdf>).

The best way to approach the topic of evidence related to why districts and schools should develop a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports is to stress two sets of data:

- data showing the need for such systemic changes related to school improvement efforts
- data on the value of moving toward a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports. (See Exhibit on next page.)

Exhibit

Data on Why Schools Should Develop a Unified and Comprehensive System of Student and Learning Supports

(1) Data pointing to the shortcomings of current school improvement efforts

- excessive absences,
- high student dropout rates,
- high teacher dropout rates,
- the continuing achievement gap,
- the plateau effect related to efforts to improve achievement test performance
- the growing list of schools designated as low performing,
- the degree to which high stakes testing is taking a toll on students

Related to this is the evidence that current school improvement planning does not adequately focus on the need for schools to play a significant role in addressing barriers to learning and teaching. See:

>"*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>

The above all indicate the need for new directions in how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and moving school improvement policy from a two- to a three-component framework.

(2) Moreover, the combined data from a variety of efforts that have been undertaken provide an extensive and growing body of research indicating the value of moving toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports. *The various studies show improvements in school attendance, reduced behavior problems, improved interpersonal skills, enhanced achievement, and increased bonding at school and at home.*

See, for example:

>*Rebuilding for Learning -- Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching, and Re-engaging Students* online at -- <http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/casestudy.pdf>

This report from the Education Development Center (EDC) highlights the processes and outlines the successes of Gainesville City Schools (GA) as they create a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports.

>"*Addressing Barriers to Student Learning & Promoting Healthy Development: A Usable Research- Base*" online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/BarriersBrief.pdf>

>Lists of Empirically Supported/evidence Based Interventions for School-aged Children and Adolescents annotated at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/aboutmh/annotatedlist.pdf>

>CASEL – http://www.casel.org/downloads/SEL_and_Natl_Policy_Final.pdf

>Statewide example of data indicating a significant relationship across secondary schools between California's *Academic Performance Index* (API) scores and three-quarters of the survey indicators on the Healthy Kids Survey – <http://www.wested.org/chks/pdf/factsheet.pdf>

>Excerpts from the Executive Summary of an American Institutes for Research (AIR) evaluation that gathered data related to Iowa's first implementation steps – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/airiowa.pdf>

Funding Stream Integration to Promote Development and Sustainability of a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fundingstream.pdf>

The Louisiana Department of Education is one of the states pioneering development of a *comprehensive system of learning supports* that transforms its approach to providing student and learning supports. As Paul Pastorek, the state superintendent of Education, has stressed:

If we really want to eliminate the achievement gap, we must also ask schools to develop comprehensive plans to address the [many] needs of our students. ... Most of our schools have resources in place, but we need to reorganize those resources to proactively meet the needs of the entire student body....

Louisiana's reorganization of its student and learning supports began with the development of a design for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach to addressing barriers to teaching and learning and re-engaging disconnected students. The design (1) unifies the various interventions fragments and (2) ends the marginalization of student and learning supports by (a) moving school improvement policy and practice from a two- to a three component approach and (b) designating implications for reworking the operational infrastructure at schools, districts, regional units, and the state department. See the design at <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/15044.pdf>.

Moving student and learning supports out of a marginalized and fragmented status in school improvement policy and practice always has required integrating and redeploying existing resources. Education funding cutbacks are making such efforts even more pressing. With this in mind, the Louisiana Department of Education has gone on to develop a manual and tools to assist local education agencies in understanding how to integrate multiple funding sources to accomplish efforts such as the development of the state's design for a Comprehensive Learning Supports System (see http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/comm/fiscal_model_training.html)

An introduction to the work states:

With each year's budget projections getting smaller and smaller, we are forced to think of more efficient ways to do business. We know the tremendous responsibility we have to do the right thing for our children. ... and we have to make tough choices - and make them now. ... Leadership is the key in integrating educational funds to achieve the sustainability of "system change" for improved student outcomes. We must put aside our "turfs" and our "purse-strings," in order to overcome the challenges that dwindling resources present for school improvement planning. It is critical for all leaders at the district level to support this effort, in order to empower all personnel to collaborate in new and effective ways. Leaders must remain engaged in this new way of planning and allow personnel the flexibility to think outside of the box to transform the way we do business. ... Managing change is difficult and to be successful, we have to meet the needs of all children, regardless of the ways we choose to fund programs. Far too often, in our silos we have said, "No, we can't do that because...", rather than working together to eliminate the silos. We are [too] comfortable with the inflexibility we have created.

In the documents to guide local education agencies, the department presents templates related to various promising initiatives for meeting the state priority goals for education. The emphasis is in clarifying ways that federal, state, and local funding sources can work together to implement and sustain the initiatives effectively. The templates offer a framework for district/school review of current and future planning for improving integration of resources.

The template related to a Comprehensive Learning Supports System is on the next two pages.

Comprehensive Learning Supports System (CLSS)

LDOE Critical Goals: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Purpose To ensure all students have opportunity to succeed at school by aligning and redeploying resources to develop a comprehensive system of learning that addresses students' academic, emotional, physical, and social needs.

Possible Funding Sources Title I, II, III, IV, VI, X, School Improvement, MFP, IDEA.

Targeted Population Students with physical, social, or emotional barriers to learning.

Detail how this LDOE initiative supports academic achievement Students learn best when their academic, emotional, physical, and social needs are met. By addressing all of these needs, we are educating the whole child and ensuring that he/she is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Anticipated outcomes are (1) increased graduation rates and reduced student dropout rates; (2) re-engaged students; (3) reduced number of low-performing schools; (4) narrowing of the achievement gap; and (5) countering of student achievement plateau effect.

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY: Implement a fully developed Comprehensive Learning Supports System

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: The Comprehensive Learning Supports System is a comprehensive and systemic approach to ensuring all students have equal opportunity to succeed at school. Learning Supports are the resources strategies and practices that provide physical, social, and emotional support to directly address barriers to learning and teaching and to re-engage disconnected students.

ACTIVITIES NEEDED FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT/IMPLEMENTATION/EVALUATION:

Personnel

- » District CLSS Facilitator - directs, guides, and facilitates the development of a cohesive and coherent district-wide support with the intent of addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students.

Professional Development

- » Job Embedded professional development to model appropriate learning supports strategies to improve student academic achievement.
- » Stipend and Substitute allowances for teacher and support staff participation in professional development.

Travel

- » In-state - travel to schools by facilitators to improve student achievement by providing technical assistance and job-embedded professional development. Travel to other districts to view model schools and to attend state-level training.
- » Out of state - Travel to conferences that focus on strategies to implement a comprehensive system of learning supports designed to improve student achievement by eliminating barriers to learning and teaching and providing equal opportunity for all students.

Materials/Supplies

- » Supplies to facilitate professional development activities.

Other

- » None.

RESEARCH: The work of Drs. Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor through the UCLA School Mental Health Project, (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>) indicates the need for developing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system of learning supports. There are many barriers that interfere with ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. A comprehensive learning supports system is essential to ensuring higher academic achievement, closing the achievement gap, and preparing students to be effective citizens in a global market. The research-base for initiatives to pursue a comprehensive focus on addressing barriers indicates the value of a range of activity that can enable students to learn and teachers to teach. The findings also underscore that addressing major psychosocial problems one at a time is unwise because the problems are interrelated and require multifaceted and cohesive solutions. In all, the literature supports the need for new directions, offers content for learning supports, and stresses the importance of integrating such activity into a comprehensive, multifaceted approach.

COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING SUPPORTS SYSTEM (CLSS)

State Initiatives		No Child Left Behind									Perkins	Individuals With Disabilities Education Act		
		Title I			Title II		Title III	Title IV	Title VI	Title X		Part B	Early Intervening	Preschool
Budget Code	Activity	Part A		Part C	A: Teacher Quality	D: Tech	LEP	B	B: REAP-RLIS	McKinney-Vento				
			1003A	1003G							Migrant			
100	Salaries													
	CLSS Leader: to support existing or new employee	X	X	X		X				X				
	Stipends - Teacher PD	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			X	
	Sub Pay Teacher CLSS PD	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			X	
200	Employee Benefits													
		X	X	X	X	X		X		X			X	
300	Purchased Professional /Tech SVC													
	Capacity Building PD: Admin/teach	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			X	
	Capacity Building: PA and Support*	X	X	X	X			X		X			X	
400	Purchased Property Services													
500	Other Purchased Services													
	Travel -In State	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			X	
	Travel-Out of State	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			X	
600	Supplies (Less Than \$5,000)													
	PD Materials/Supplies	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			X	
	Outreach Materials/Supplies	X	X	X	X			X		X			X	
700	Property (Greater Than \$5,000)													
800	Other Objects													

*School Psych/SW/S Counselors

Analyzing What is Being Spent in Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

Mapping and analyzing resources is a critical step in school improvement. In-depth mapping and analyses provide essential information about cost-effectiveness, gaps, redundancies, etc. A special facet of mapping and analyzing resources is estimating dollars spent.

The specific question with respect to *addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students* is:

What percentage of a school and district budget (including what the community links to a school and district) goes to these matters?

Introduction to Gathering the Information

- >Talk with superintendent/principal and determine how they want to proceed. (May want only to give some input and then designate who should be interviewed.)
- >Whoever the interviewee, start with a general description of the information that is needed and why.
- >Leave this description and the attached form for their reflection and set up a time for the interview.
- >Conduct the interview where they can delve into files or contact others to supply the data.

(1) Start by reviewing the current budget.

(2) Move on to the interview. The interview is designed to look beyond the way the budget categorizes expenditures.

- (a) First identify those expenditures related to student and learning supports that are evident (e.g., personnel and material costs directly designated for student support staff, alternative/continuation schools, special programs for pregnant and parenting students, dropout recovery programs, special education costs).
- (b) Then, elicit educated estimates of what proportion of other personnel time (e.g., regular teachers, administrators) and related materials are drained off to address students' learning, behavior, and emotional problems.*

*Consider:

What percent of each day do regular teachers', general administrators', academic counselors', etc. devote to dealing with "problem" students and their families?

How much substitute teacher expense is related to teacher absences stemming from the stress of working with such students?

How much of the expenditures for federal programs such as Titles I, III, VI, X, and the child nutrition program are used for student and learning supports?

How much is expended on school wide initiatives to prevent specific problems (e.g., bullying, substance abuse, violence, pregnancy, truancy, dropouts)?

How much of the expenditures for professional development and other capacity building activity are devoted to matters specifically related to addressing barriers to learning and re-engage disconnected students?

The attached form is intended to help structure information gathering.

Feel free to modify it to fit a particular setting.

Expenditures for addressing student learning, behavior, and emotional problems	<i>Levels</i> Prevention of Problems	<i>of</i> Early-After-Problem-Onset	<i>Intervention</i> Chronic/Severe Problems & Disabilities	Costs for Materials, Professional Development, General Administrative and Capacity Building, operations, maintenance, transportation
Counselor(s) Psychologist(s) Social Worker(s) Nurse(s) Support Program Coordinator(s) Support Staff Administrator(s) Title I staff (or related to this concern if no federal funding) Title III staff (or re. this concern) Title VI staff (or re. this concern) Title X staff (or re. this concern) Federal nutrition program staff Special education NPS funding Regular teachers General administrators Substitute teachers for stressed absentees Staff for programs to prevent specific problems (e.g., bullying, substance abuse, violence, pregnancy, truancy, dropouts) Alternative/cont. school staff Dropout recovery	\$	\$	\$	\$

Expenditures for addressing student learning, behavior, and emotional problems	<i>Levels</i> Prevention of Problems	<i>of</i> Early-After-Problem-Onset	<i>Intervention</i> Chronic/Severe Problems & Disabilities	Costs for Materials, Professional Development, General Administrative and Capacity Building, operations, maintenance, transportation
Other	\$	\$	\$	\$

Litigation costs re. learning, behavior, and emotional problems. \$

Comments (include any examples for clarification and illustration)

Note: As a follow-up, it is useful to cross-map the expenditure breakdown across the cells of the matrix that has been developed for mapping & analyzing student/learning supports interventions.*

*See the intervention matrix.

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/tool%20mapping%20current%20status.pdf>

Using Grant Opportunities to Move Forward (even if you don't get the grant)

The Promise Neighborhoods program provided federal validation that traditional reform strategies are insufficient. As indicated by Paul Reville, the Massachusetts secretary of education, traditional strategies *will not, on average, enable us to overcome the barriers to student learning posed by the conditions of poverty.*

In July 2012, the U.S. Department of Education announced that 242 applications were submitted to compete for a share of the nearly \$60 million in 2012 Promise Neighborhoods funds. As stated by the Department: the vision of the program “is that all children and youth ... have access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career.” The purpose “is to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in our most distressed communities and to transform those communities.”

(<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html> ; also see Komro, Flay, Biglan, et al., 2011.)

Such a vision and purpose, of course, is not limited to a federal grant program. Many efforts to improve outcomes for young people are concerned with strengthening schools, families, and neighborhoods. And, many reflect the objectives of the Promising Neighborhoods program which include:

- Identifying and increasing the capacity of eligible organizations that are focused on achieving results for children and youth throughout an entire neighborhood
- Building a complete continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions of both educational programs and family and community supports, with great schools at the center
- Integrating programs and breaking down agency "silos" so that solutions are implemented effectively and efficiently across agencies
- Developing the local infrastructure of systems and resources needed to sustain and scale up proven, effective solutions across the broader region beyond the initial neighborhood

While few initiatives have the resources to be as ambitious as the Promise Neighborhoods program, valuable work is in play across the country and has generated lessons worth learning (see Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2004; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; McMahan, Ward, Pruett, Davidson, & Griffith, 2000; Medriatta, Shah, & McAlistar, 2009). Of particular note is what has been learned about establishing and sustaining (1) a unifying intervention framework and (2) formal and effective school, home, and community collaboration.

These matters are fundamental to all efforts to improve outcomes for young people and are the specific focus of this brief.

A Unifying and Comprehensive Intervention Framework

Comprehensive efforts to improve outcomes for young people go beyond thinking mainly in terms of providing traditional services, linking with and collocating agency resources, and enhancing coordination. Such concerns all have a place, but they do not address how to unify and reconceive ways to better meet the needs of the many rather than just providing traditional services to a relatively few young people. Moreover, they tend to perpetuate a policy approach that is piecemeal and ad hoc and contributes to fragmented practices.

The focus should be on developing a comprehensive and cohesive system by

- (1) unifying all direct efforts to promote healthy development and facilitate learning
- (2) unifying all direct efforts to address factors interfering with learning, teaching, and parenting
- (3) connecting families of schools (such as feeder patterns) with each other and with a wide range of community resources
- (4) weaving together school, home, and community resources in ways that enhance effectiveness, achieve economies of scale, and provide a base for leveraging additional financial support.

To guide the work, it is essential to adopt a unifying and comprehensive framework that (a) outlines a full intervention continuum and emphasizes weaving together school-community-home resources into integrated subsystems and (b) organizes programs and services into a circumscribed set of arenas reflecting the content focus of the activity. In keeping with public education and public health perspectives, such an intervention framework encompasses efforts to enable academic, social, emotional, and physical development and addresses concerns about factors interfering with healthy development and learning.

What is a Full Continuum?

As illustrated in Exhibit 1, a full continuum ranges from primary prevention (including a focus on wellness or competence enhancement), through approaches for treating problems early-after-onset, and extending on to narrowly focused treatments and specialized help for severe/chronic problems. Such a continuum provides one template for assessing the degree to which the set of community and school programs serving local geographic or catchment areas is comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated.

Exhibit 1. From primary prevention to treatment of serious problems: A continuum of community-school programs to address barriers to learning and enhance healthy development

<i>Intervention Continuum</i>	<i>Examples of Focus and Types of Intervention</i>
	(Programs and services aimed at system changes and individual needs)
Systems for Health Promotion & Primary prevention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Public health protection, promotion, and maintenance to foster opportunities, positive development, and wellness</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economic enhancement of those living in poverty (e.g., work/welfare programs) • safety (e.g., instruction, regulations, lead abatement programs) • physical and mental health (incl. healthy start initiatives, immunizations, dental care, substance abuse prevention, violence prevention, health/mental health education, sex education and family planning, recreation, social services to access basic living resources, and so forth)
Systems for Early-after-problem onset intervention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. <i>Preschool-age support and assistance to enhance health and psychosocial development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • systems' enhancement through multidisciplinary team work, consultation, and staff development • education and social support for parents of preschoolers • quality day care • quality early education • appropriate screening and amelioration of physical and mental health and psychosocial problems
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. <i>Early-schooling targeted interventions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • orientations, welcoming and transition support into school and community life for students and their families (especially immigrants) • support and guidance to ameliorate school adjustment problems • personalized instruction in the primary grades • additional support to address specific problems • education and social support for parents & parent involvement in problem solving • comprehensive and accessible psychosocial and physical and mental health programs (incl. a focus on community and home violence and other problems identified through community needs assessment)
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. <i>Improvement and augmentation of ongoing regular support</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance systems through multidisciplinary team work, consultation, and staff development • preparation and support for school and life transitions • teaching "basics" of support and remediation to regular teachers (incl. use of available resource personnel, peer and volunteer support) • education and social support for parents & parent involvement in problem solving • resource support for parents-in-need (incl. assistance in finding work, legal aid, ESL and citizenship classes, and so forth) • comprehensive and accessible psychosocial and physical and mental health interventions (incl. health and physical education, recreation, violence reduction programs, and so forth) • Academic and career guidance and assistance • Emergency and crisis prevention and response mechanisms
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>Other interventions prior to referral for intensive, ongoing targeted treatments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance systems through multidisciplinary team work, consultation, and staff development • short-term specialized interventions (including resource teacher instruction and family mobilization; programs for suicide prevention, pregnant minors, substance abusers, gang members, and other potential dropouts)
Systems for Treatment of severe/chronic problems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. <i>Intensive treatments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • referral, triage, placement guidance and assistance, case management, and resource coordination • family preservation programs and services • special education and rehabilitation • dropout recovery and follow-up support

The programs cited in Exhibit 1 are seen as integrally related. Therefore, it seems likely that the impact of each can be exponentially increased through organizing them into subsystems. These can be conceived as three interconnected levels of intervention:

- (1) subsystems to promote healthy development and prevent problems (including economic well-being)
- (1) a subsystem for intervening as early after the onset of a problem as is feasible
- (2) a subsystem to assist with chronic and severe problems.

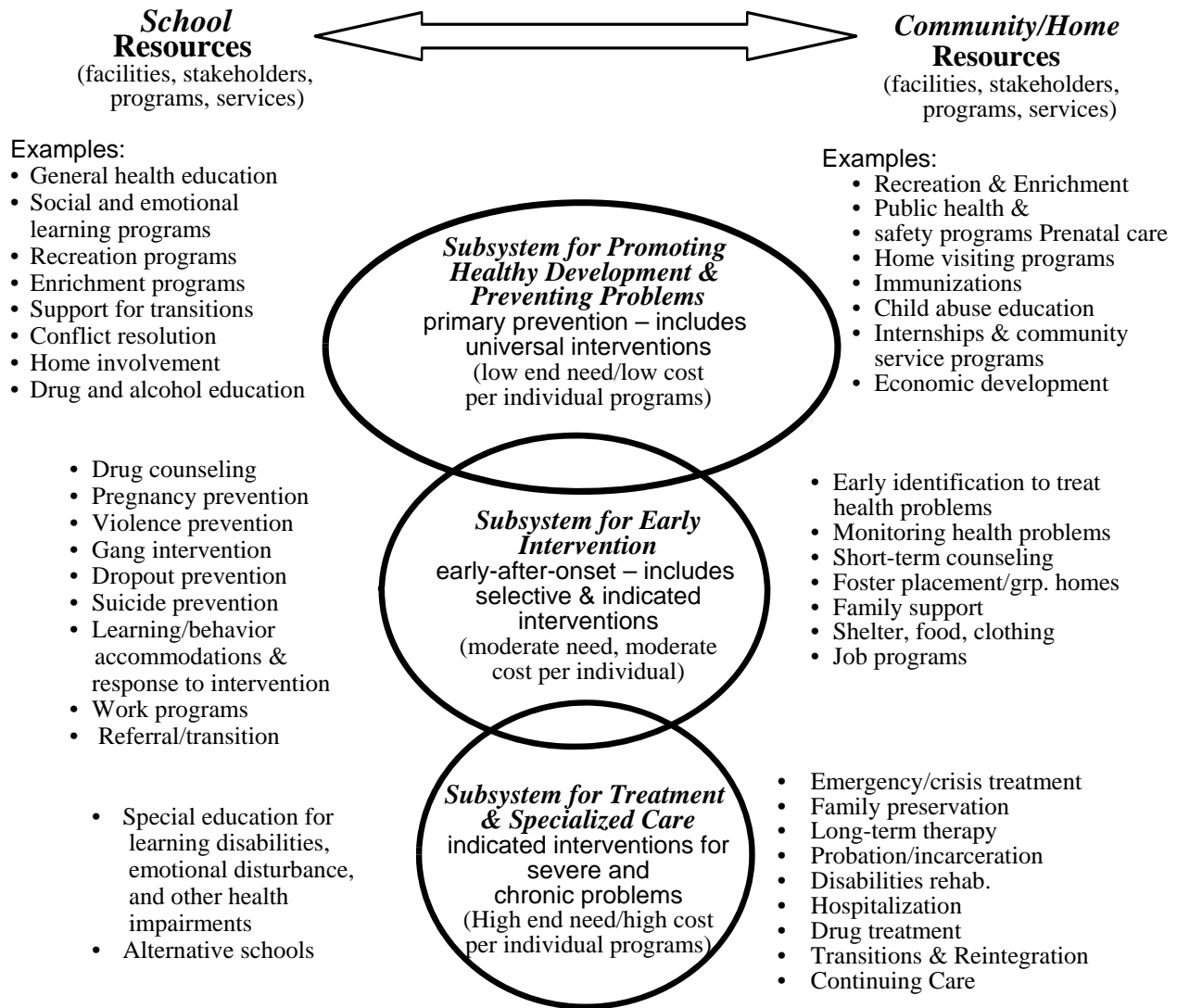
As suggested by the diminishing size of the ellipses in Exhibit 2, the assumption is that effectiveness at the upper levels will result in fewer persons requiring intervention at lower levels. Note that the continuum encompasses the concepts of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, as well as the Institute of Medicine's classification of a continuum of care which groups prevention approaches according to target population into a three-tiered categorical schema: universal, selective, and indicated (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994).

Also note that (a) each level represents a subsystem, (b) the three subsystems overlap, and (c) all three require integration into an overall system that encompasses school and community resources. Educational, physical and mental health, and psychosocial concerns over the life-span are a major focus of such a continuum. Special attention is paid to maintaining and enhancing physical health and safety. And, of course, economic concerns run throughout.

*So much more
is involved than
health and
human services*

While much of the focus of interagency collaboration has been on improving access to health and human services, the continuum stresses that so much more is involved. Interventions at each level encompass a focus not only on individuals, but on ways to enhance nurturing and support at school, at home, and in the neighborhood. A major aim is to increase conditions and opportunities for personal and family development, empowerment, and resilience by fostering and strengthening positive attitudes and capabilities (e.g., enhancing motivation and ability to pursue positive goals, resist negative influences, and overcome personal and economic barriers).

Exhibit 2. A Full Continuum of Interconnected Intervention Subsystems.*



Systematic school-community-home collaboration is essential to establish cohesive, seamless intervention on a daily basis and overtime within and among each subsystem. Such collaboration involves horizontal and vertical restructuring of programs and services.

*Various venues, concepts, and initiatives permeate this continuum of intervention systems. For example, venues such as day care and preschools, concepts such as social and emotional learning and development, and initiatives such as positive behavior support, response to intervention, and coordinated school health. Also, a considerable variety of staff are involved. Finally, note that this illustration of an essential continuum of intervention systems differs in significant ways from the three tier pyramid that is widely referred to in education circles in discussing universal, selective, and indicated interventions (see the Center 2011 report entitled “Moving Beyond the Three Tier Intervention Pyramid Toward a Comprehensive Framework for Student and Learning Supports” at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/threetier.pdf>).

Unifying the Content Focus of the Continuum

Focusing only on a continuum of intervention is insufficient. For example, “mapping” done using only the continuum does not do enough to escape the trend to generate laundry lists of programs and services at each level. Thus, in addition to the continuum, it is necessary to organize programs and services into a circumscribed set of arenas reflecting the content purpose of the activity. Thus, pioneering efforts across the country not only are striving to develop a full continuum of programs and services, they are framing the content by clustering the work into a circumscribed set of arenas of intervention (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2011).

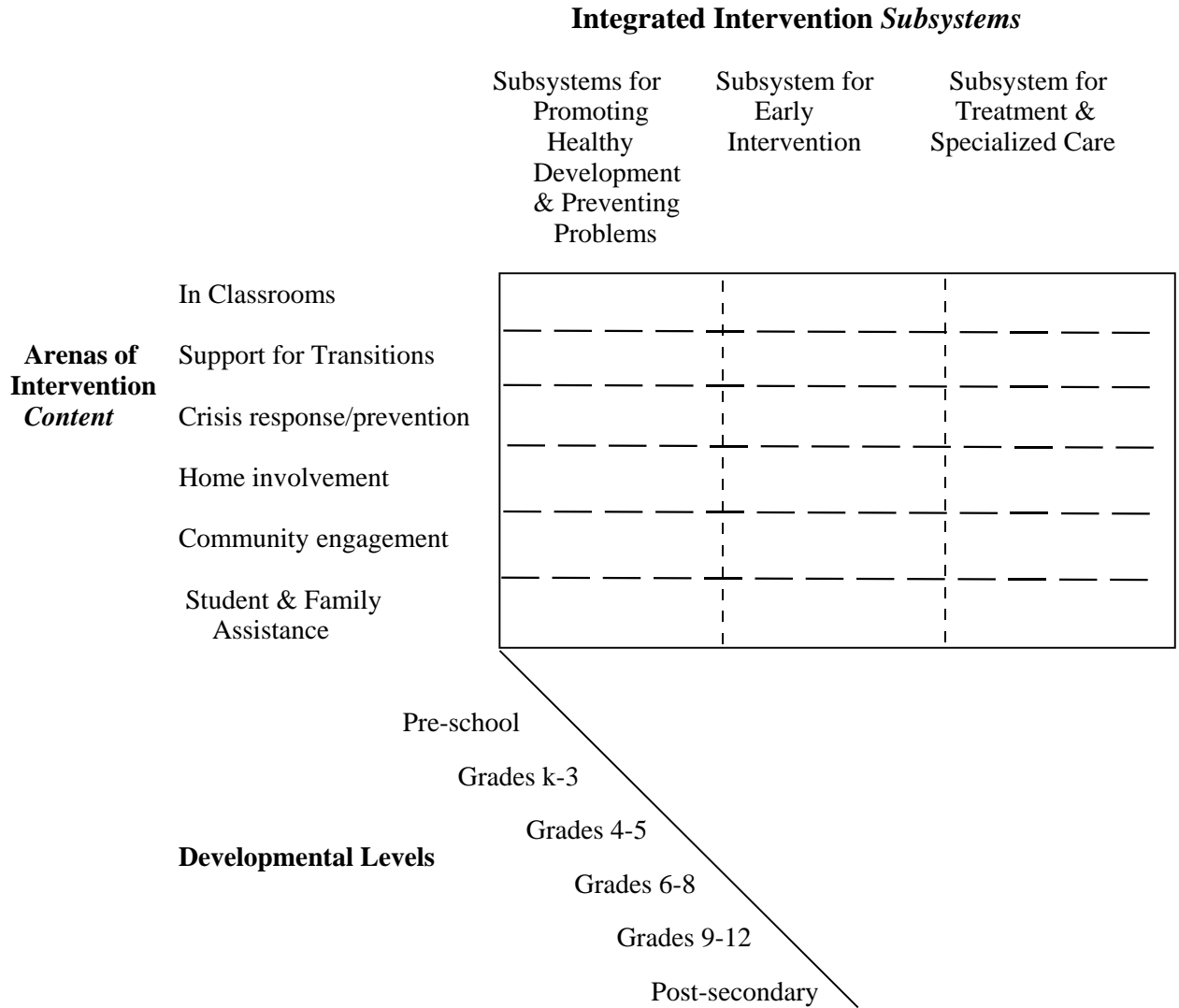
For example, in our work with schools, we stress six clusters:

- (1) Direct strategies to enable learning in the classroom (e.g., improving instruction for students who have become disengaged from learning at school and for those with mild-moderate learning and behavior problems; includes a focus on prevention, early intervening, and use of strategies such as response to intervention)
- (2) Supports for transitions (e.g., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes and many other transitions)
- (3) Increasing home and school connections
- (4) Responding to, and where feasible, preventing crises
- (5) Increasing community involvement and support (outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers)
- (6) Facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed.

Continuum + Content

As illustrated in Exhibit 3, the result of combining the continuum and the six arena example is a unifying, comprehensive, and cohesive framework that captures many of the multifaceted concerns schools, families, and neighborhoods must address each day (e.g., see Adelman & Taylor, 2006a b; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2008b).

Exhibit 3. A Unifying Intervention Framework to Aid Schools, Families, and Neighborhoods in Providing a Comprehensive and Cohesive System of Supports.



School, Home, and Community Collaboration

Operationalizing a unifying, comprehensive, and cohesive intervention framework requires substantial school, home, and community collaboration over time.

The current reality is that many schools are islands with no bridges to the community. Families may have little connection with each other or their children's schools. And it is commonplace for neighborhood resources such as agencies, youth groups, and businesses to operate in relative isolation of each other and local schools.

Schools and community agencies can and need to play a fundamental role in developing connections and collaborations with home and community. However, the objective must be to establish and sustain formal collaborations.

Informal linkages are relatively simple to acquire; establishing major long-term connections requires committed and organized outreach and a productive operational infrastructure. This is particularly so when the aim is to develop a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated system. Such a system involves much more than informally linking a few community services and activities to schools. The work requires weaving a wide range of school and community resources together and doing so in ways that formalize and institutionalize working relationships among stakeholders (e.g., Adelman & Taylor, 2002, 2003, 2007; Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2004; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2005, 2008a; Forum for Youth Investment, 2011; Honig, Kahne, & McLaughlin, 2001; Southwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001; Taylor & Adelman, 2003).

Collaborations flounder without a sound operational infrastructure

Many efforts to collaborate have floundered because too little attention was paid to establishing a sound operational infrastructure for working together. An effective collaborative is the product of well-conceived mechanisms that are appropriately sanctioned and endorsed by governing bodies (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2009a). Key elements are mechanisms for governance and leadership, planning, steering oversight, ongoing capacity building, monitoring, supporting improvement, and accomplishing specific tasks on a regular basis. The process of initially establishing such a collaborative infrastructure may begin at any level; however, it is good to think first about what is needed locally and then what is necessary to support the local work.

Exhibit 4 graphically illustrates the basic facets of a sound collaborative operational infrastructure. It is important to ensure that all key stakeholders are represented. And, there must be

- (1) authority to act and adequate resources (time, space, materials, equipment) to support the infrastructure
- (2) capacity building (e.g., training and support) to ensure participants have the competence to perform their roles and functions
- (3) ways to address personnel turnover quickly so new staff are brought up to speed.

*It's relatively easy
to convene a
"collaborative" . . .
it's developing
and maintaining
an effective
infrastructure
that's hard to do.*

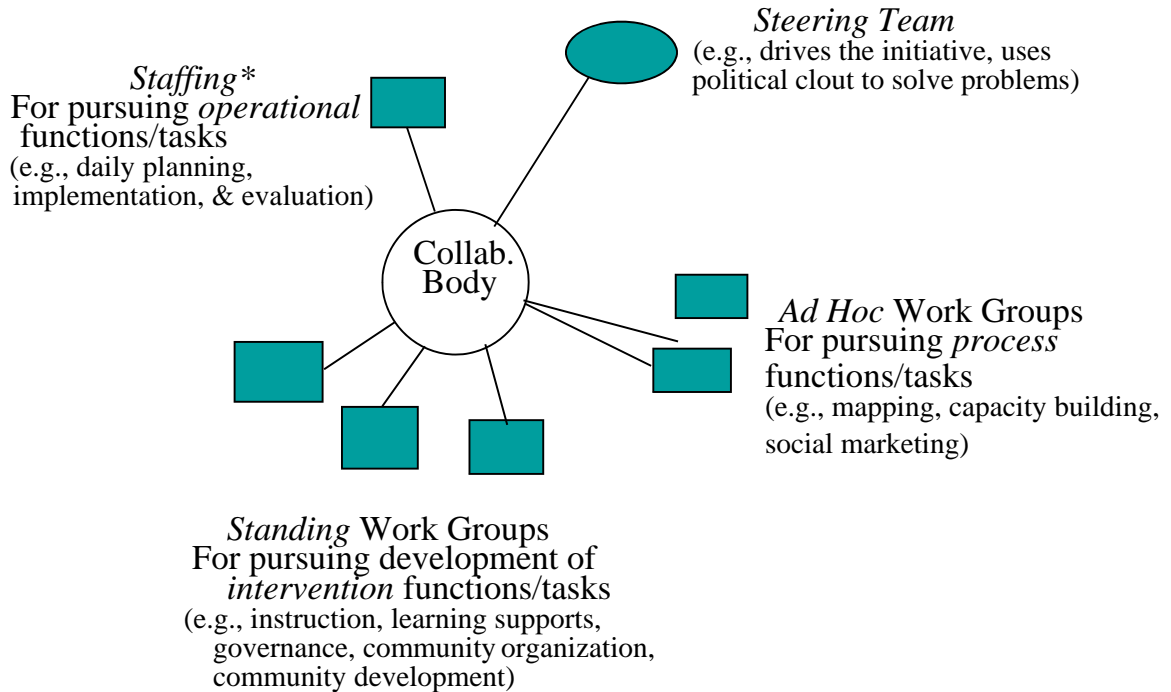
Because work groups usually are the mechanism of choice, particular attention must be paid to increasing levels of competence and enhancing motivation of all stakeholders for working together. (Stakeholder development spans four stages: orientation, foundation-building, capacity-building, and continuing education.)

Note the need for a *Steering Team*. This group champions, guides, supports, and nurtures the process. It must consist of high level individuals who are highly motivated – not just initially but over time. The complexity of collaboration requires ongoing personalized guidance and support to operationalize the collaborative's vision, enhance capacity, and address barriers to progress, including stakeholder anxiety, frustration, and other work-related stressors. This entails close monitoring and *immediate* follow-up to address problems. The other key mechanisms are designated *staff* (operational leaders and staff), and *ad hoc and standing work groups* (e.g., resource-oriented and intervention development teams).

Locally, the focus is on phasing-in processes to connect families and community resources. This may start with one school. Then, collaborative connections can expand to encompass a cluster of schools. For example, many natural connections exist in catchment areas serving a high school and its feeder schools. The same family often has children attending all levels of schooling at the same time. Some school districts and agencies already pull together several geographically-related clusters to combine and integrate personnel and programs. In a small community, a cluster often is the school district.

Exhibit 4

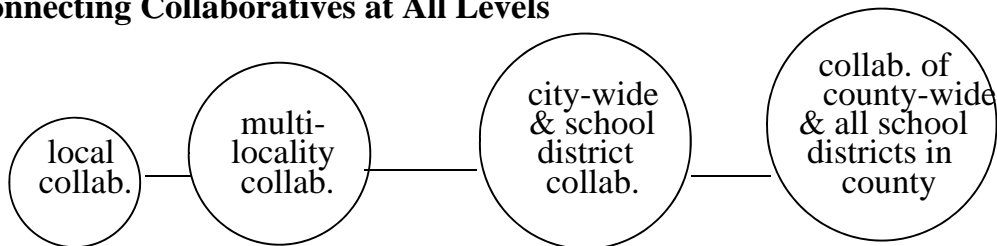
Basic Elements of a Comprehensive Collaborative Operational Infrastructure



**Staffing*
>Executive Director
>Organization Facilitator (change agent)

Who should be at the table?
>families
>schools
>communities

Connecting Collaboratives at All Levels



Over time, several collaboratives may coalesce to increase efficiency and effectiveness and achieve economies of scale. Because adjoining localities have common concerns, they may have interventions that can use the same resources. Through coordination and sharing, redundancy can be minimized and resources can be deployed equitably and pooled to reduce costs. Toward these ends, a multilocality collaborative can help

- (1) coordinate and integrate programs serving multiple schools and neighborhoods
- (2) identify and meet common needs for stakeholder development
- (3) create linkages and enhance collaboration among schools and agencies.

Such a group can provide a broader-focused mechanism for leadership, communication, maintenance, continuum of programs and services. Multilocality collaboratives are especially attractive to community agencies that often don't have the time or personnel to link with individual schools. Finally, "systemwide" (e.g., district, city, county) mechanisms can be designed to provide support for what each locality is trying to develop.

Any effort to connect school, home, and community resources must embrace a wide spectrum of stakeholders

Keep in mind that the focus is on all institutionalized entities that can bring public and private money, facilities, and human and social capital to the table (Kretzmann, 1998; Kretzmann, & McKnight, 1993). The aim is to weave together a critical mass of the resources (e.g., family members, service agencies, businesses, unions, community and economic development organizations, recreation, cultural, and youth development groups, libraries, juvenile justice, law enforcement, faith-based institutions, service clubs, media, postsecondary and vocational education institutions, among others). The political realities of local control have further expanded collaboratives to include policymakers, representatives of families, nonprofessionals, volunteers, and anyone else willing to contribute their talents and resources. And, as the collaborative develops, outreach to disenfranchised groups is important.

Finally, we need to note several factors that can undermine effective collaboration::

- (1) Policies that mandate collaboration but do not enable the process (e.g., a failure to reconcile differences among participants with respect to the outcomes for which they are accountable; inadequate provision for braiding funds across agencies and categorical programs)
- (2) Policies for collaboration that do not provide adequate resources and time for leadership and stakeholder training and for overcoming barriers to collaboration
- (3) Leadership that does not establish an effective infrastructure, especially mechanisms for steering and accomplishing work/tasks on a regular, ongoing basis
- (4) Differences in the conditions and incentives associated with participation such as the fact that meetings usually are set during the work day which means community agency and school personnel are paid participants, while family members are expected to volunteer their time.

At the personal level, barriers mostly stem from practical deterrents, negative attitudes, and deficiencies of knowledge and skill. These vary for different stakeholders but often include problems related to work schedules, transportation, child care, communication skills, differences in organizational culture, accommodations for language and cultural differences, and so forth.

Clearly, extensive effort is involved in establishing and sustaining an effective school, home, and community collaboration. This is especially so when the aim is to address the most pressing overlapping concerns in schools, homes, and communities because such an agenda requires a comprehensive intervention approach.

With these matters in mind, see the discussion on the next page of lessons learned about collaborations. Then, see the Appendix to this brief for a discussion of lessons learned from an analysis by the Alliance for Children & Youth of the Promising Neighborhoods Planning Grant Applications.

Lessons Learned

In developing effective collaborations, keep in mind the following lessons – most of which were learned the hard way. First, *strategic capacity building* is essential. This includes ensuring participants have the authority, training, time, resources, and ongoing support to carry out roles and functions. And, when newcomers join, well-designed procedures must be in place to bring them up to speed.

A second lesson relates to *how agreements are made*. In negotiating agreements to connect, the tendency is just to ask decision makers to sign a memorandum of understanding, rather than involving them in processes that lead to a comprehensive, informed commitment. Often, the signing is done on the basis of some personal relationship. The problem is that the signature is often treated as a ploy (e.g., to obtain extramural funding) and is more cosmetic than substantive. Substantive agreements delineate stable and sustainable *institutional working relationships*, including clear roles, responsibilities, and an institutionalized infrastructure with well-designed mechanisms for performing tasks, solving problems, and mediating conflict. Agreements based simply on personal relationships are vulnerable to the mobility that characterizes many professionals.

Third, collaborative efforts rarely live up to the initial hope in the absence of *skillfull planning, implementation, and ongoing capacity building*. For example, all general and workgroup meetings require adroit facilitation. Otherwise initial enthusiasm for the work quickly degenerates into more talk than action and a waste of time. This is particularly likely to happen when the primary emphasis is on the unfocused mandate to “collaborate,” rather than on moving an important vision and mission forward through effective working relationships and well-defined functions and tasks.

Finally, *collaboration is a developing process*. Collaboratives must be continuously nurtured, facilitated, and supported, and special attention must be given to overcoming institutional and personal barriers. A fundamental institutional barrier to school-community collaboration is the degree to which efforts to establish such connections are *marginalized* in policy and practice. The extent to which this is the case is seen when existing policy, accountability, leadership, budget, space, time schedules, and capacity-building agendas do not support efforts to use collaborative arrangements effectively and efficiently to accomplish desired results. This may simply be a matter of benign neglect. More often, it stems from a lack of understanding, commitment, and/or capability related to establishing and maintaining a potent infrastructure for working together and sharing resources.

Concluding Comments

The federal Promise Neighborhoods program represents a potential good for funded locales. And, the hope is that what is demonstrated will stimulate and guide others to action.

There is no reason, however, to wait. Any locale, with informed and dedicated leadership, can promote efforts (albeit with sparse dollars) to establish a school, home, and community collaborative designed to improve outcomes for young people. And the work of all such initiatives can be enhanced by adopting a framework that unifies and reconceives intervention.

Ironically, the need for system transformation has taken on greater urgency as resources dwindle. With budget cuts, it is essential to reduce redundancy, redeploy allocated school and community resources, and weave together different funding streams.

The challenges are considerable and call for a high degree of commitment and relentless effort. And while a grant would certainly help, no economically depressed locale can wait for special funding before moving forward.

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- For more references and resources, see our Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Find on the matter covered – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>*

What do you think makes for good collaboration?



Good collaboration is when everyone agrees with me!



Appendix

About the Promising Neighborhoods Grants

In December 2010, the Alliance for Children & Youth issued *What It Took: Lessons Learned from the First Cohort of Promise Neighborhoods Planning Grant Applications* (http://alliance1.org/sites/default/files/pdf_upload/report_pp/what_it_took.pdf). The Alliance states the analysis is based on “a review of all 21 Promise Neighborhoods grantee applications, their peer review comments, and memoranda of understanding (MOUs), it covers such topics as project design, organizational capacity, community involvement, work with local schools, project funding, and replicability. It also incorporates peer reviewer comments for 19 applications that were not chosen as grantees as well as both published and unpublished information from our interviews with 47 Promise Neighborhoods planning grant applicant groups and 10 of the peer reviewers.”

The report indicates 941 organizations filed Notices of Intent to Apply, 339 applied, and only 21 were chosen. As general themes, the analysis concludes that successful applicants had the following (all of which were necessary, but no one of which was sufficient):

- (1) *Significant organizational capacity* (e.g., considerable financial and staff resources to devote to grant preparation, including in-house staff, outside grant writers, other outside experts, and lawyers – some offering services on a pro-bono basis)
- (2) *Access to sophisticated evaluation and data expertise* (either in-house or in partnership with other organizations such as local universities, national organizations like the Urban Institute, Promise Neighborhoods Research Consortium, Mathematica and Social Solutions)
- (3) *Substantial experience with local schools* (buy-in of neighborhood schools was associated with having expertise and relationships with local schools; some had substantial roles in the operation of charter and/or community schools; some worked with outside education experts like Mass Insight)
- (4) *Substantial community, political, and fund-raising-related relationships*
- (5) *Solid grant-writing skills and a little luck*

The report goes on to suggest the author’s beliefs about what it will take for successful implementation. (Note: In announcing the next round of the program, the U.S. Department of Education indicates that it expects to award first-year funds for four to six implementation grants with an estimated grant award of \$4 million to \$6 million.)

In reviewing the Alliance for Children & Youth’s analysis about successful implementation, we find a great deal with which to agree. But, as our Center’s brief indicates, we also find fundamental matters unaddressed or given short shrift. Specifically, little attention is given to the interrelated needs for

- establishing a *high policy priority* (along with an *expanded* accountability framework) for schools and communities to address factors interfering with equity of opportunity in a collaborative way and with funds braided to pursue overlapping concerns
- developing a *unifying intervention framework* to guide long-range planning and implementation
- reworking the existing *operational infrastructure* for school, home, and community collaboration to ensure there are representative and effective mechanisms for such functions as governance, planning, steering, ongoing capacity building, monitoring, supporting improvement, and for carrying out everyday tasks

- making substantial *systemic changes* (e.g., transforming organizational cultures such as those associated with schools and community agencies).

With respect to these critical matters, in addition to the citations in our brief, see the references offered in *Transforming the Network of Supports for Children and Adolescents: Policy and Practice Analyses and Prototype Frameworks from the Center at UCLA* – online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/transformingnetwork.pdf> and also see the relevant topics listed in our Center’s Online Clearinghouse Quick Find menu, such as the one on *Systemic Change, and the Diffusion of Innovation in Schools (the Implementation Problem)* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/systemicchange.html>

Note: Launched in 2010, Promise Neighborhoods grants invest in locally driven efforts to improve the lives of families and children living in impoverished communities. Funds support community-led work to build partnerships, secure needed social services, and strengthen schools. The U.S. Department of Education indicates that the Promise Neighborhoods program is a piece of a larger Obama Administration initiative to revitalize high-poverty communities through integrated resources to transform them into neighborhoods of opportunity.

On July 30, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education reported that, to date, Promise Neighborhoods has received over 850 applications from 48 states and the District of Columbia, American Samoa and Puerto Rico and 242 applications were submitted to compete for a share of the nearly \$60 million in 2012 Promise Neighborhoods funds.

"The huge response from the field shows the widespread need for comprehensive strategies to address poverty's effect on educating children," said Assistant Deputy Secretary for the Office of Innovation and Improvement Jim Shelton. "This year's funding will build on President Obama's commitment to focusing on results by meeting the larger social challenges outside the classroom so that we can enable children to succeed inside the classroom."

The Department expected to award around \$27 million in first-year funding for up to seven new implementation grants, and \$7 million for up to 14 new planning grants. Of the 242 applications, 60 were for implementation grants, and 182 were for planning grants. Implementation grants will range from 3 to 5 years with estimated first-year awards totaling \$4 to \$6 million each. New one-year planning grantees will be awarded up to \$500,000 each.



Surfin' for Funds

Those working in the best interests of youngsters always are on the look out for funding opportunities. The picture is constantly changing. We have moved into an era of creative financing. Fortunately, the Internet now provides a major tool for identifying many funding opportunities and offers access to helpful documents and organizations that share expertise related to relevant financial strategies.

This document is meant to help as you use the Internet to learn about what is available at the moment. It is meant to be a general do-it-yourself aid and as a supplement to seeking specific technical assistance from centers such as ours. (If you are not personally connected to the Internet, hopefully you have access through your work site, local libraries, or a friend.)

I. Accessing Information through Sites Compiling Information on Funding Opportunities

Grants.Gov - <http://www.grants.gov>

See the electronic storefront for Federal Grants at the above site.

Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs) are announcements that appear in the Federal Register, printed each business day by the United States government, inviting applications for Federal grant programs. This page allows you to generate a customized listing of NOFAs.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance - <http://www.cfda.gov/>

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance is a government-wide compendium of Federal programs, projects, services, and activities which provide assistance or benefits to the American public. It details every federal grant, including description, eligibility, deadlines, and award procedures. It contains financial and nonfinancial assistance programs administered by departments and establishments of the Federal government.

eSchool News Technology Solutions Center - <http://www.eschoolnews.com/funding/>

Information on up-to-the minute grant programs, funding sources., and technology fund.

Federal Register - <https://www.federalregister.gov/>

The Federal Register is the "main" resource listing federal funding opportunities. It is published Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The current year's Federal Register database is updated daily by 6 a.m. Documents are available as ASCII text and Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) files.

GrantsAlert - <http://www.grantsalert.com/>

GrantsAlert is a website designed to help in searching for grants and funding opportunities for organizations, schools, districts and other agencies.

National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention- <http://www.promoteprevent.org/>

A resource page containing links to selected publications, websites, online events, and other resources.

Snapshot from SAMHSA - <http://www.samhsa.gov>

Snapshot is a new series dedicated to simplifying and amplifying information about SAMHSA's grant programs.

62The Foundation Center - <http://www.foundationcenter.org/>

The mission of the Foundation Center is to foster public understanding of the foundation field by collecting, organizing, analyzing, and disseminating information on foundations, corporate giving, and related subjects. It publishes the *Philanthropy News Digest*, a weekly listing of requests for proposals (RFPs) from U.S. grantmakers. (See - <http://www.foundationcenter.org/pnd/rfp/>)

American Psychological Association - <http://www.apa.org>

Go to *Search*; type in Grants. Provides a useful summary listing of many funding opportunities.

II. Major Public Funding Agencies

Department of Health & Human Services - <http://www.hhs.gov/agencies/>

The simplest way to check for grants in the various agencies of this Department is to go to the Catalog of Federal Administrative Assistance as listed in the previous section of this document - <http://www.cfda.gov/>. Alternatively, go to the Department's web address and click on the agency you want to check out (e.g., Administration for Children and Families [ACF], Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], Health Resources and Services Administration [HRSA]; National Institutes for Health [NIH]; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA]). Once at the site, you can go to the Grants pages and find out about agency grants, including what the various units are offering.

For example:

On SAMHSA's grant page (<http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/>), you will find information on grants from the Center for Mental Health Services, the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.

On HRSA's grant page (<http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/default.htm>), you will find information on the Bureau of Primary Health Care, the Bureau of Health Professions, Bureau of Maternal and Child Health and the HIV/AIDS Bureau.

On NIMH's grant page (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/funding/index.shtml>), you will find program announcements and requests for application.

On NIDA's funding page (<http://www.drugabuse.gov/funding>), you will find announcements.

On NIAAA's grant page (<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/grant-funding>), you will find program announcements, requests for applications and other relevant information.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)- <http://cms.hhs.gov/>

Provides general information on service funding related to Medicaid/EPSTDT and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Specific information can be found on each state's website, which can be accessed via the U.S. State & Local Gateway - http://www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/State_and_Territories.shtml

Department of Education - <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html>

The simplest way to check for grants in the various units of DOE is to go to the site listed above or go to <http://www.ed.gov/fund/landing.jhtml> or to the Catalog of Federal Administrative Assistance as listed in the previous section of this document - <http://www.cfda.gov/>.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Department of Justice – <http://www.ojjdp.gov>

This site also offers a gateway to other Department of Justice and federal agency funding opportunities (i.e., Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, Transportation)

Note: To Foster service coordination, there are several ways to use existing dollars provided to a district by the federal government. See: *Using Federal Education Legislation in Moving Toward a Comprehensive, Multifaceted, and Integrated Approach to Addressing Barriers to Learning*” – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/federallegislation.pdf>

6III. Foundations

As noted in Section I of this document, **The Foundation Center** - <http://www.foundationcenter.org/> collects, organizes, analyzes, and disseminates information on foundations, corporate giving, and related subjects. It publishes the *Philanthropy News Digest*, a weekly listing of requests for proposals (RFPs) from U.S. grantmakers. (See -- <http://fdncenter.org/pnd/>). Many foundations include a focus on health, mental health, and schools. For example, Annie E. Casey Fdn., Robert Wood Johnson Fdn., W. K. Kellogg Fdn., Charles Stewart Mott Fdn., Commonwealth Fund, Pew Charitable Trusts, DeWitt-Wallace/Readers Digest Fdn., W. T. Grant Fdn., Rockefeller Fdn., Harris Fdn., Public Welfare Fdn., R. G. Hemingway Fdn., Carnegie Corp. You can, of course, go directly to the websites for any foundation and find the information about what they currently fund. However, direct contacts to discuss what one wants to propose often is a strategically good step.

IV. Accessing Information Through Our Center

Whenever we learn about funding opportunities, we add them to the grants section on our website -- access this from the link at the bottom of our homepage – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/> .

Also see our *Quick Find on Financing and Funding* (http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p1404_02.htm). The Quick Find provides links to Center developed resources and works from many other sources. See, for example:

>*Financial Strategies to Aid in Addressing Barriers to Learning* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/financial/fund2000.pdf>

>*Funding Stream Integration to Promote Development and Sustainability of a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fundingstream.pdf>