

July 12, 2006

RE End of the School Year Update on the Aftermath of the Hurricanes

From Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA

The end of the school year seemed like an auspicious time to do another update on what has happened to students, schools, etc.

Attached is a beginning draft. We are sending it out to share what we have amassed so far.

And, we are also hoping it provides a stimulus to elicit more information and perspectives and remind everyone about matters that remain to be addressed.

If you have something you think we should incorporate about students and schools as we enhance and circulate the update, please let us know. We are particularly concerned about finding relevant reports and analyses.

At this point, we are structuring the report around three topics

I. Students and Their Schools Current State of Affairs

Including

- >Data on how many affected and dislocated; clarifying different groups in order to address different needs (e.g., differences related to severity, pervasiveness, chronicity of previous and current problems; conditions related to disaster trauma, dislocation, and relocation; numbers affected in a given locale; factors related to poverty, race, immigrant status, language

- >What's Happening that Seems to be Exacerbating Student/Family and School Problems?

- >>impact of dislocation (including declining hope of going "home")

- >>impact of continuing mobility (e.g., changing residences, ending of housing vouchers)

- >>impact of student accountability testing (e.g., on students who score poorly, on schools that have accepted large numbers of relocated students, on dropout rates)

- >What has and is being Done to Help? (What's been effective? ineffective?)

II. Lessons Learned and the Challenges Ahead

III. Some Implications for Policy and Practice

(What Needs to be Done at this Time? And who needs to do it?)

We hope you find this informative and that anyone who can will provide guidance about what else we should be referencing as we complete this update.

Clearly, there is much more to do, and it is important to keep a focus on the continuing needs of students and schools.

School Mental Health Project/
Center for Mental Health in Schools
UCLA Dept. of Psychology
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563
(310) 825-3634 / Toll Free(866) 846-4843 / Fax(310) 206-8716
Email smhp@ucla.edu
Web <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

Addressing the Needs of Students and Schools in the Aftermath of Katrina: An Update

As with many aspects of the disasters, responses to the needs of students/families, schools, and staff left a great deal to be desired. Concerns were transferred into action too slowly, and what was done was planned and implemented in an ad hoc and fragmented manner. Not surprisingly, while most education agencies and local schools had some form of emergency plan, few had the type of guidance and infrastructure necessary to respond effectively to the pressing and continuing problems arising from this disaster.

There were many heroic efforts made in the initial response periods, including the highly publicized efforts to welcome and provide support for those students who were displaced. Also, noteworthy were the efforts of local, regional, state, and national groups concerned with schools who mobilized to help. The problem with all these efforts was that they, too, were ad hoc and fragmented, with no infrastructure to link them.

In the ensuing months, many anticipated and some unanticipated consequences for students, schools, and staff have become painfully clear. The impact on individuals is captured in many poignant stories; the impact on schools can be gleaned from a variety of data reports; the impact on public education in several geographic areas is seen in public policy decisions.

From the perspective of our concern for the well-being of students and their schools, this report represents our Center's attempt to (1) capture the current state of affairs, (2) update lessons learned so far, and (3) suggest a few fundamental implications for policy and practice.

Students and Their Schools: Current State of Affairs

The dramatic loss of so many schools in New Orleans continues to capture the attention of the media. As important as the problem in New Orleans is, it is essential to remember that, to some degree, almost every school in Louisiana and Mississippi has felt the impact of the disasters. And, some school districts in Alabama, Texas, Georgia, and Arkansas also have been seriously affected. The impact on some is the result of the altruistic act of reaching out to enroll displaced students. (For example, by the middle of September, Houston had enrolled over 5,000 displaced students. On a smaller scale, the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Shreveport, Louisiana integrated several hundred displaced students free of charge.)

Many students, their families, and many staff have been displaced, with all the implications this has brought. One estimate is that more than 372,000 public and private school students in Louisiana and Mississippi were displaced. Eventually, most were absorbed at least temporarily in other schools in-state or in other states. It is unclear how many have been able to return to their home schools or how many are not in school (including those who were made homeless).

"Of the 560 children who are evacuees and were enrolled in the Baker, LA. school district in mid-September, only 190 were still attending when the school year ended on May 19. Part of the decline occurred because some families moved, but as of April there were still more than 800 children under 18 at Renaissance Village and other trailer parks run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency."

New York Times, June 1, 2006.

Receiving schools are still determining how best to cope with displaced students. These schools and their districts have had to wrestle with such matters as helping address the basic survival needs of students, transition and ongoing mobility problems, arranging for waivers, coping with increased student-staff ratios and learning, behavior, and emotional problems, the additional drain on already sparse resources, hiring, scheduling problems and make-up days, complications related to accountability testing, and so much more.

“Families displaced by Hurricane Katrina are suffering from mental disorders and chronic conditions like asthma and from a lack of prescription medication and health insurance at rates that are much higher than average. The study, conducted by the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University and the Children’s Health Fund, is the first to examine the health issues of those living in housing provided by FEMA (650 families living in trailers or hotels.) 34% of displaced children suffer from conditions like asthma, anxiety and behavioral problems, compared with 25 percent of children in urban Louisiana before the storm. Nearly a quarter of school-age children were either not enrolled in school at the time of the survey or had missed at least 10 days of school in the previous month. Their families had moved an average of 3.5 times since the storm.”

New York Times, April 18, 2006

Where schools were devastated, the financial and logistical problems have created a host of challenges and controversies. Again, this was dramatically the case in New Orleans where the district had a negative history and influential stakeholders decided that the disaster provided an opportunity to start over. In that school district, the student population has gone from 62,665 pre-Katrina to 11,000 and from 128 public schools to 25 as of spring 2006. And 18 of the 25 were newly established charter schools. In late June, 2006, the “Recovery School District” in New Orleans announced that “Jointly, the Recovery School District (RSD) and the Orleans Parish School Board plan to open 56 schools in August and September to accommodate 34,000 students. School locations are based upon demographic projections on New Orleans’ returning population and the ability to repair buildings during the summer. Work is continuing on 9 additional school sites that could be available later this fall.”

On June 13, 2006, the New York Times reported:

Education Secretary Margaret Spellings announced that \$24 million in federal aid had been awarded to Louisiana for the Development of charter schools.... The grant is likely to cement the role of New Orleans ... as the nation’s pre-eminent laboratory for the widespread use of charter schools.

On June 22, 2006, the New Orleans Picayune reported:

New Orleans area school systems will lose more than \$200 million in state funding under a revamped financing formula passed by the Legislature this month, cuts prompted largely by drastic swings in enrollment and a statewide loss of more than 70,000 students.

Diversity is another matter that must not be lost in the general discussion of students affected. In this respect, it is always tempting to focus on low-income children and children from racial and ethnic minorities. This is understandable considering how many such children suffered the

consequences of the disasters. However, the problems of diversity and student needs resulting from the disaster go beyond poverty, race, and ethnicity. Many students are marginalized in schools, and many suffer from inequities (e.g., immigrants, those for whom English is second language, those with disabilities, those who identify as homosexuals, and so forth).

In order to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed in school, it is essential to differentiate those who are experiencing learning, behavior, and emotional problems and to do so in terms of severity, pervasiveness, and/or chronicity of previous and current problems. Some of these problems will be the result of or have been exacerbated by conditions associated with disaster trauma, dislocation, and relocation; some will stem from other causes. All need to be addressed. And, of course, the numbers affected in a given locale will vary and, thus, so will the resources needed to address problems.

The National Governors Association office indicates that they have been gathering information on the number of displaced students anticipated in the 2006-2007 school year. In April, they indicated that states had welcomed in more than 157,000 elementary and secondary students who had been displaced by the disasters. At this time (July, 2006), they indicate: "As expected, many southern states are projecting large numbers of the students to stay. But we'll probably have an even better sense of the scope in August."

What's Happening that Seems to be Exacerbating Student/Family and School Problems?

It is important not to generalize about the impact of traumatic events. We can't predict how individuals will react to disasters or how they will be effected in the short-run or long-term. The same is true about factors that may exacerbate the impact of initial traumatic events.

At the same time, it is important to promote healthy coping in response to the events, identify those who are having difficulty coping, and minimize factors that can exacerbate problems. With respect to this last matter, there are a variety of common concerns that have been described in the trauma literature (e.g., see <http://www.apahelpcenter.org/articles/article.php?id=22>).

For students in this disaster, several matters have been of special concern. One has been the impact of major dislocation, relocation, and the uncertainty, followed by declining hope about going "home." Related to this has been the impact of subsequent mobility, including changes stemming from the end of housing vouchers. (It is unclear at this point how many youngsters never re-enrolled in school or how many are homeless.)

New students in schools always must deal with the stress of transition. This is a particular problem for students who have learning, behavior and emotional problems. And, in the case of the type of mass re-locations that occurred, some schools have experienced significant social disruptions resulting from conflict between "newcomers/outsideers" and the home student population.

Another stress comes from accountability testing related to the demands of the No Child Left Behind Act. Reports indicate that many relocated students have done poorly, leading to threats of grade retention, increased instructional demands, and more pressure to perform better. There is insufficient data at this point, but there are anecdotal reports that all this is leading a significant number of these student to dropout.

What's Being Done to Help Students?

Given the magnitude of the problems confronting so many of the schools in the impacted states (even before the hurricanes), it is evident that many of the concerns about the current state of affairs are not new. That is, beyond the problems of physically rebuilding schools, school stakeholders are confronted with long-standing barriers to learning and teaching which have become greatly exacerbated by the disasters.

From a policy perspective, it is relevant to note that on September 27, 2005, the National Governors Association (NGA) indicated the following to Congress:

Across the country, states opened their schools to address the unprecedented displacement of approximately 370,000 students. States quickly moved to welcome students by ... removing regulatory barriers.... The nation's governors are very supportive of the overall framework included in [Congress'] education proposal. ... In particular, governors favor provisions that would provide full reimbursement based on the average pupil expenditure in the state, differentiate reimbursement rates for special education, provide broad flexibility for affected highly qualified teachers, ensure access to Head Start and higher education for students, and provide temporary relief for institutions of higher education.

To these ends, the NGA, proposed several specific, substantive changes and clarifications in the "rescue" legislation. Some of the change were addressed in the legislation. However, on April 10, 2006, the GPA again appealed to Congress to include:

additional resources to support students displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as part of the *Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror and Hurricane Recovery, 2006* (H.R. 4939).. Specifically, we support the additional \$650 million included in the Senate Bill to reimburse states for the cost to educate displaced students in the 2005-2006 school year and the 2006-2007 school year. ... Governors urge Congress to support the inclusion of an additional \$300 million in the final supplemental to fully reimburse state education agencies for every student displaced It is critical that the 49 states that assisted displaced students are able to recoup the additional approximately \$2,000 per student in general education and \$2,500 per student in special education that was reduced from the 2005-2006 authorized payment. In addition, ... many students will remain displaced in the 2006-2007 school year. Governors also support the inclusion of \$350 million in the final supplemental to provide additional resources to assist states ... until all students are able to return to their homes and schools or establish residence in their new states.

It is unclear at this time just how much states and districts will ultimately receive in compensation for the added costs related to schooling these students. Data on the amounts awarded to states through "Emergency Impact Aid for Displaced Students" are provided by the U.S. Department of Education (see Cumulative Awards for Quarter 1, Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 at <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/DMGetDocument.aspx/eiap-date%5b1%5d.pdf?p=39EF345AE192D900F620BFDE9C014CE65F48E7E4CC65324041275C40834C862E6B68B0900C9D50F2&Type=D>).

The nature and scope of the emergency has generated some ambitious, broadband efforts to reach all students and to sensitize teachers to identifying students who have been seriously traumatized. For example, the Louisiana state department of education reports that they created and distributed to every school a resource packet to "provide initial information toward creating

and maintaining appropriate environments for developing healthful coping strategies for the trauma and stress caused by disasters” (see <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/8043.pdf>). In addition to discussions of normal reactions to trauma and "red flags" indicating the need to refer to a mental health professional, units include "Creating Safe Environments," "Creating Classroom Communities," "Healthy Responses to Life Changing Events" and "Training and Teaching Techniques for Trainers." The department worked with four members of the U.S. Public Health Service for two weeks and with the Governor's Office, the Department of Health and Hospitals, the Office of Mental Health, the Office of Addictive Disorders, Office of Public Health and Department of Social Services to develop a short term roll out plan to train teachers. The plan led to contracting 30 teams (consisting of 3 members, a licensed clinical social worker, school counselor or school psychologist, and a teacher) to implement a training of trainers approach for school personnel.

While various broadband strategies were brought into play initially, the poignant fact is that, despite burgeoning problems, the schools are continuing to apply inadequate, long-standing intervention frameworks in designing how to address such problems. That is, for the most part, they are relying daily on interventions that are more appropriate to assisting a few rather than the many students whose problems are interfering with their learning and well-being. Thus, it is inevitable that important assistance is and will not be provided to many students. Yet, as has long been the case, a considerable amount of activity is taking place and substantial resources are being expended. And, because of ad hoc planning and implementation, the previous fragmentation of efforts continues (see Figure 1).

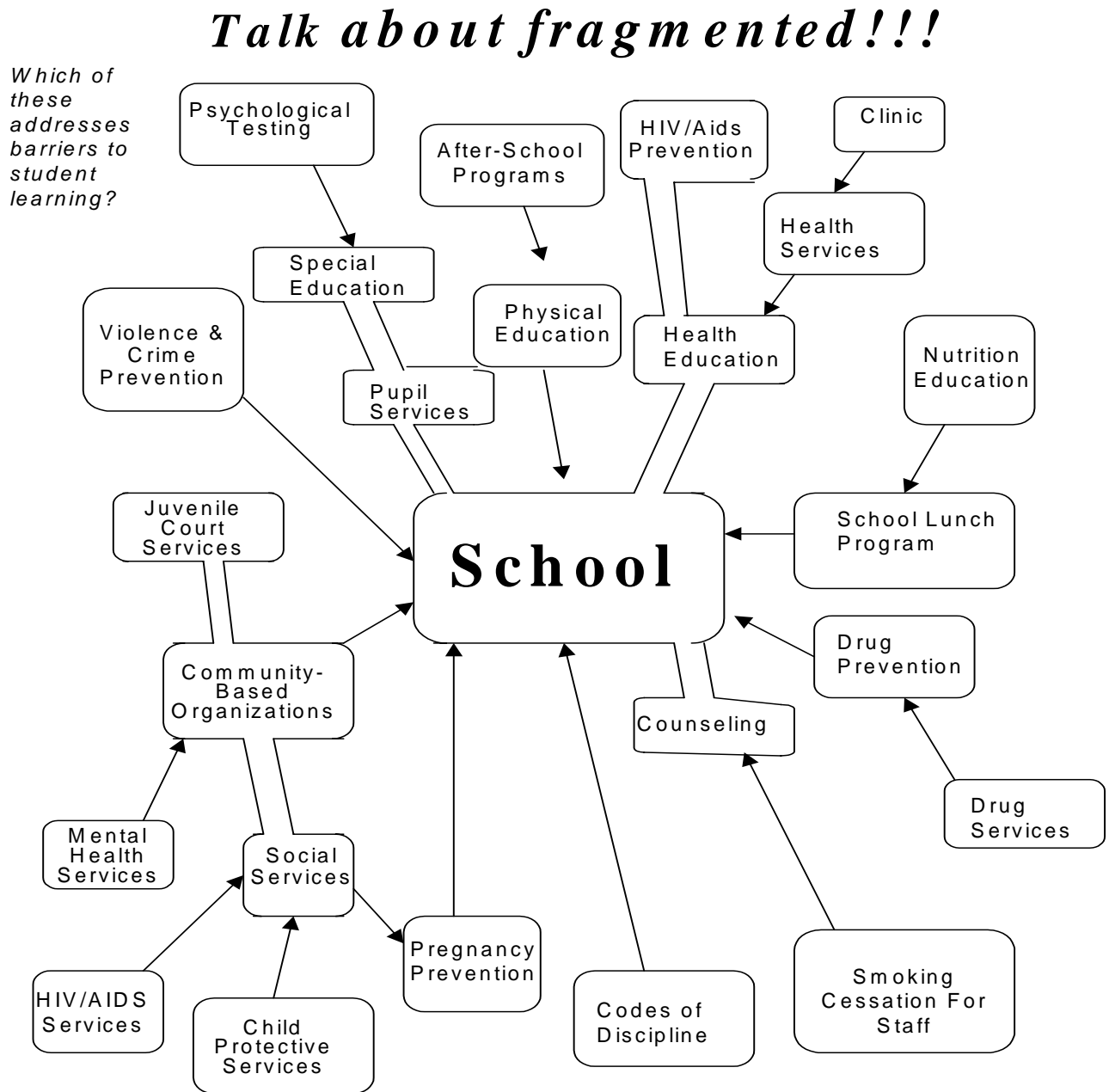
While the immediate needs after the disasters also led to greater emphasis on joint crisis response, there has been no indication of major changes in organizational infrastructure of education agencies and schools. The long-standing trend has been for different divisions and their staff to overlap in dealing with common concerns, such as behavior and learning problems, violence and unsafe schools, poor support for student transitions, students with disabilities, and so forth. There are occasional pressures for greater coordination. But, this usually is done on an ad hoc operational basis in meeting the demands of a special project. No major institutional infrastructure exists to ensure coordination and cohesive integration, and there is no indication that such systemic changes are in the works in affected areas.

An even more fundamental problem stems from the ongoing *marginalization* of student/learning supports in all efforts to improve schools. As the initial elevated concern about students affected by the disaster ebbs, the marginalization of efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching once again is taking a back-seat to the direct focus on improving instruction and concerns about school governance and management.

Schools confronted with a large number of students experiencing barriers to learning pay dearly for the fragmented and marginalized status of daily efforts to address such barriers. All this has been described in several policy and program analyses from our Center – 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>

Figure 1. Fragmented programs and services.



Adapted from: *Health is Academic: A guide to Coordinated School Health Programs* (1998). Edited by E. Marx & S.F. Wooley with D. Northrop. New York: Teachers College Press.

A Few Updates from Colleagues in the Texas Schools (July, 2006)

>Regarding Katrina students and families, our district like many others in Texas received a very large amount of money to off-set the cost of educating [relocated] students. ... I am sad to say that the district spent the bulk of the money buying additional ... hardware that does not provide direct services to students especially in the mental support area. ... I had planned on spending for free summer school to middle school students (all students not just Katrina) free summer school tuition for high school Katrina students, a top notch summer camp for all the Katrina kids, a summer internship working program for Katrina high school juniors to work at the administration building and be mentored on job skills, greeting the public etc. and individual counseling and therapy for families wishing to have this service. My money was cut last minute because someone forgot that they had to share part of this money with the private schools in our area. I was able to do the summer school and the camp, but not the internship program. Only two families asked for the counseling. This really surprised me. We will reassess the summer school grades and progress of the Katrina students who attended and put in place some academic support systems for them. Our long term challenges will be both academic and continuity in their education. We continue to have a huge challenge with the weak academic foundations of these students. Only 20% or 1 out of 5 of our Katrina students performed satisfactorily on the TAKS state assessment. We did have some seniors who were not able to pass the LA state test or the Texas TAKS test, fortunately, not that many. Continuity in their education is a big issue, we have many withdraw saying they are going back, only to return without having enrolled in school for 2 to 3 months, again a huge impact in their academic deficits.

>I am proud to share that [our district] really did a top notch job in efforts to identify and serve our Katrina and Rita guests. Throughout the school year we provided individual and family services both at school, through our Family Resource Centers and through referrals to our community agencies and private practitioners. We offered parent information nights, family mentors etc. to help our guests navigate a new community. We are anticipating a process for follow up with those who have chosen to stay in our area. Some have relocated within our community which means they may change schools. We want to be able to continue contact and support to those families. Some of these families remain homeless and our funding for our homeless program has been reduced significantly. We were not awarded the McKinney-Vento funds this year.... We will be looking for other funding sources as we know some of the families who have relocated still struggle and live in shelters etc. We know we need to continue to help others to be mindful of the trauma and stress experienced by those in and those connected to people from the Gulf Coast area. As time lapses between the disaster, people forget about the tragic and horrific experiences. We know research indicates that some of these people will never be the same. Anything you can do to remind school districts to be mindful and nurturing for these folks, to encourage additional training or to revisit stress and trauma symptoms, reactions and healing processes would be helpful. I know personally - as an Aunt and sister to a family evacuated from New Orleans how devastating the disaster was and still is.

>Ultimately, we wound up with less than 30 students finishing the year in our district. The rigor of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) far surpasses what the students were learning in Louisiana. The students were exempt from the state level test this year, but if they are back in the fall, they will be expected to take it. The national curriculum must be standardized. The students very easily appear to be disabled due to their poor academic performance. Not all of them are truly disabled, but many who came here were ultimately placed in special education or were already special education. Records however were lost and we had to start from scratch. We need parents to assume more responsibility nationwide for keeping their children's records or copies of records. So many that moved here had more needs than just academics....they needed a lot of social services and financial help even without the hurricane. A lot of the families were poor and uneducated themselves. Many of the students were minority students which was a challenge in a 70% white community with 27% hispanic. Many of the students brought with them a different culture of "respect" for adults in the school and community. They were more "aggressive" verbally than most of our students. This was a challenge to Principals who were trying to be compassionate but still follow the student code of conduct.

Lessons Learned: the Challenges Ahead

Last November, our Center contacted stakeholders around the country and asked for their perspective on lessons learned for schools from aftermath responses.

The following was our summary of the big points shared at that juncture:

- (1) As always, there was an outpouring of talent and resources who expressed a desire to help. These included national Centers and organizations with expertise and resources relevant to addressing the problems (see links at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/crisisresp.htm>).
- (2) From the various accounts, a significant proportion of those ready to volunteer assistance did actually attempt to help initially. However, in many cases, the mechanisms for linking resources to where they were needed often wasn't in place.
- (3) The focus seems to have been mainly on using sparse resources to provide clinical services (e.g., triage and counseling) to individual students in need, but the numbers in need far outweighed the available clinical services.
- (4) In some, but not enough situations, school districts and specific schools did move quickly to develop systemic plans and implement broad-band programs to address the needs of the many. These places seemed to have leadership and line staff with a breadth of understanding about how to go beyond immediate crisis responses to address the multifaceted and ongoing needs of students, families, and staff.
- (5) Those schools where crisis response training had been done effectively in recent years apparently were able to respond better than those without such training. A few districts and schools did the type of systemic planning and responding necessary to effectively (a) address the transition needs of many students, families, and staff who had to move into new schools (often in new states) and (b) deal with the longer-term psychological and social aftermath effects that continue to interfere with students learning and teachers teaching.
- (6) In all cases, a major burden fell on a relatively few people, and they continued over the longer term to bear the responsibility and often overwhelming stress. Their plight underscores the need for systemic changes that enhance how school and community resources are woven together to broaden the base of support and provide support for those bearing the brunt of helping others.
- (7) In some places the response was particularly bad. One volunteer reported feeling that: "The bottom line [was] ... NO ONE was prepared, not one agency!" Another emphasized there was no effective coordination. The situation was described in the feedback as the "disaster within the disaster."

Based on what was reported, it is clear there was an overwhelming impulse to help. At the same time, it was evident that there was a dearth of planning and resources upon which to implement well-conceived actions. And, there was not an effectively interconnected set of infrastructure mechanisms to facilitate communication and action. Thus, the emphasis here is on lessons learned to date about deficiencies in preparedness and in actions taken over the last year. These provide a basis for understanding what needs to be addressed.

Besides the usual difficulties in communication of information, major factors that interfered with effectively responding to student needs arose from

- school and agency closures and were compounded by uncertainty about re-opening
- the overwhelming numbers who had to be accommodated in some situations (e.g., Baton Rouge, Houston)
- problem severity producing significant barriers to school/classroom functioning (e.g., students dislocated from parents; students who were too upset to participate in regular school program; students who were far behind academically; increases in individual student learning, behavior and emotional problems; social disruptions resulting from conflict between “newcomers/outsiders” and the home student population)
- immediate responses that were heroic but not systemic
- inadequate capacity/resources for handling problems and for building the necessary capabilities
- ongoing mobility

Many of these problems of implementation were the result of deficiencies in preparedness planning. Thus, in preparing for future disasters and relocations:

- The need is not only for coordinated local, regional, state, national roles with respect to the schools, but also for development of an interconnected infrastructure among all levels and between education and other agencies.
- Planning must
 - > detail ways to respond to the special needs (physical *and* psychological first aid and other basic needs) of specific subgroups (e.g., students in special education; those for whom English is not their primary language; low-income students).
 - >clarify what waivers will be needed and how to access them
 - >delineate systems that must be in place for immediate follow-up
 - >delineate systems that must be in place for longer-term interventions

Additional lessons learned are emerging from current problems arising at this stage of efforts to support the recovery of students, staff, and schools. Some of these lessons are repeats from former disasters. For example, as always seems to be the case, the immediate largesse of support dwindles, and there is a dearth of resources for longer-term supports to address the problems of students and staff. Other lessons are new. For example, policy decisions about support for re-building and re-opening schools are being shaped by positions about alternative governance considerations such as charter schools.

Some Implications for Policy and Practice

We come now to what needs to be done at this time and who needs to do it. The policy and practice question at this point is: What changes will be made given what has been learned?

Hopefully, the answers will not be limited to enhancing crisis response. Those districts and schools that responded well understood and often had been working on evolving a broad systemic approach to addressing barriers to learning and teaching. They had the mechanisms in place not only for immediate crisis response, but for implementing plans to provide for a wide range of student, family, and staff needs.

Our ongoing analyses of how schools address barriers to learning and teaching suggest that crisis response is but one of six areas that schools must build into school improvement plans. All available data have indicated that major systemic changes are urgently needed. The recent disasters simply underscore that urgency.

With the problem outlined above in mind, we would underscore two major implications.

(1) *Needed: Sophisticated, integrated, and forward-thinking planning* – The most straightforward implication is that education agencies at every level need to develop strong aftermath action plans to address the immediate and longer-term needs of students/families, schools, and staff. Such planning should:

- integrate education agency efforts at all levels
- formulate ways to develop ongoing working partnerships with public/private community agencies and resource
- explore new directions for systemic changes that will enhance the ongoing capacity of student support systems
- detail specific plans to account for the special needs (physical *and* psychological first aid and other basic needs) of specific subgroups (e.g., students in special education; those for whom English is not their primary language; low-income students).
- clarify waivers needs and how to access them
- delineate systems that must be in place for immediate and longer-term follow-up

(2) *Needed: Policy Impetus for:*

- infrastructure redesign and resource enhancement – Minimally, policy makers need to pursue redesign of education agency and school infrastructure to elevate the role of student support staff in school improvement planning (with a view to ensuring an effective focus on the type of ongoing student problems that have become a high priority in the aftermath). A specific focus of the restructuring should be on enhancing resource use.
- ending the marginalization of student supports – This involves enabling the development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system of learning supports to address barriers to learning as a primary and essential component of school improvement.

Three reports from the Center highlight the type of major systemic, policy changes that are recommended.

>Another Initiative? Where Does it Fit? A Unifying Framework and an Integrated Infrastructure for Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Promote Healthy Development
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf> This report was developed to highlight the current state of affairs and illustrate the value of a unifying framework and integrated infrastructure for the many initiatives, projects, programs, and services schools pursue in addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Specifically, it highlights how initiatives can be embedded into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive framework and outlines how existing infrastructure mechanisms can be integrated to address marginalization, fragmentation, counterproductive competition, and wasteful redundancy.

>School Improvement Planning: What's Missing? <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsmissing.htm>
This report analyzes current school improvement planning guides. The lens used is how well the guides focus on addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

>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>

Concluding Comments

The aftermath of the disasters is far from over, and indeed, matters such as the housing problem and the re-opening of schools will continue to exacerbate the state of affairs. As with all crisis response, the danger is that the attention of school decision makers will drift after applying the “band aids.” When this happens, they ignore the need to substantively address long overdue systemic changes related to student support systems.

In the coming months, it will be essential to remind policy makers and education leadership about the need for a much more systemic and programmatic approach to addressing barriers to student learning (e.g., a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach that is fully integrated into school improvement planning and implementation). This will require a strategic and unified approach.

The challenges are many. And, with the challenges come opportunities for positive systemic changes. All stakeholders can all play a role in shaping the changes being discussed across the country in the wake of the disasters. We certainly plan to continue promoting policies and practices that will ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Note: As we develop this draft, we also are soliciting more information and analyses. Soon, we will send out an early draft and ask for additions, modifications, etc. And, we will continue to communicate what we learn