

## **NEW DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENT & LEARNING SUPPORTS**

### **(1) GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

As we have noted in the past, applying for a major grant is an opportunity to develop a broad plan for districts to move forward with unifying student/learning supports and developing them into a comprehensive system of interventions to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. And even if the proposal is not funded, much of the plan can be implemented (see *Pursuing Promise Neighborhoods: With or Without the Grant Program* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/purpromneig.pdf>).

The Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Programs' Grant provide such an opportunity. Here's information about the grant competition: "The Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Programs ... grant competition will provide funds to local educational agencies (LEAs), including charter schools that qualify as an LEA, to enable schools to develop promising and innovative approaches for initiating or expanding counseling programs in elementary and secondary schools. Each grant project will contribute to the personal growth, educational development, and the social-emotional well-being of students served at this critical time in their lives."

Application Deadline Date: April 28, 2014. Project Period: Up to 36 months

Application Submission: Applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov  
<http://www.grants.gov/search-grants.html?fundingCategories%3DED%7CEducation>

#### ***Brief excerpt from grant instructions:***

"From time to time, all children face challenges that can affect their learning and behavior. As such, when they arrive at school, some students also bring with them concerns such as stress over academics and grades, concerns about relationships with family, friends, or teachers, bullying or harassment, and/or more serious behavioral, health, or safety concerns. Moreover, during the course of their school years, it is estimated that one in five children and adolescents will experience a significant mental health problem.<sup>1</sup> While school systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students, schools must meet the challenge when the need directly affects learning as these do. Growing evidence shows that school-based initiatives to promote mental health can help students cope with these common issues, support healthy development, and improve educational outcomes.<sup>2</sup> To address barriers to learning, schools need to integrate resources into a comprehensive, cohesive continuum of support that promotes healthy, positive youth development and prevents problems, allows for early intervention to address problems as soon after onset and provides assistance to those with more chronic and severe problems.<sup>3</sup> . . .

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1999). *Mental Health: A report of the surgeon general. Executive summary*. Rockville, MD: National Institute of Mental Health.

<sup>2</sup> Fleming, CB, Haggerty, KP, Brown, EC, Catalano, RF, Harachi, TW, Mazza, JJ, & Gruman, DH. Do social and behavioral characteristics targeted by preventive interventions predict standardized test scores and grades? 2005; *Journal of School Health* (75), 342-349.

<sup>3</sup>Adelman, HS, & Taylor, L. (2006). *The current status of mental health in schools: A policy and practice brief*. UCLA School Mental Health Project; Los Angeles, CA

**Note:** The Elementary and Secondary School Counseling program supports hiring various types of personnel (e.g., counselor, social worker, psychologist, psychiatrist) and implementing a range of interventions, including developmental and prevention approaches to support students.

## (2) WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE

The UCLA Center was invited to be on a policy forum panel by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics and its President's Advisory Commission's on "Integrated Student Supports" on March 27. Preparation for this involved discussions with Child Trends and with Communities in Schools regarding the Child Trends' report on Integrated Student Supports with a focus on expanding the vision to include facilitating development of a unified and comprehensive system of student and learning supports that weaves together school, home, and community resources. For more on this, see

> **Integrated student supports and equity: What's not being discussed?**

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

## (3) A FEW UPDATES FROM PLACES MOVING FORWARD

>From Chickasaw (AL) Superintendent: [Chickasaw City School System is one of the 10 pilot systems in Alabama's Comprehensive System of Learning Supports.] "Let me begin by thanking you and your staff for the work you do with Learning Supports throughout our nation. Our school system is in its second year of existence, we serve 880 students in grades K-12 of which 92% qualify for free or reduced lunch. Being a new system, we are able to approach the Comprehensive System of Learning Supports as a way to develop new resources rather than consolidating existing resources. Our goal as a district is that 100% of our graduates are prepared for college or work with no need for remediation. As a system, we are dedicated to addressing barriers that may be preventing our students from meeting our goal. As a pilot school system in Alabama, we have used the Comprehensive System of Learning Supports as an avenue to help our students overcome some of these barriers."

>From Phoenix (AZ) – The district is continuing with its professional development related to new directions for student and learning supports and with its resource mapping and analyses (go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/inventory-survey.pdf> to see the tools it has developed).

>From Bloomington, MN – The district sent a delegation of six staff members who have been leading the learning supports efforts to see the work in Gainesville (GA). The Gainesville superintendent and learning supports director hosted some implementation discussions, working sessions, and site visits to schools.

>From Gainesville, GA – sample of a week's focus on learning supports:

3/10 Incoming superintendent meet with Learning Supports Leadership Group

3/11 Visit from the Bloomington, MN Learning Supports Leadership Team

3/14 Filming for Learning Supports

Update from Superintendent Dyer: "We had a very productive visit [with the staff from Bloomington] and were able to share our practices and challenges. ... Our middle school principal and I were asked to present at the Georgia Association of Special Education Leaders Conference on how we are using the Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports frame work to align the improvement work at our middle school."

For more on the

*National Initiative and Networks for New Directions for Learning Supports,*

see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ninhome.htm>

**LET US KNOW HOW YOU ARE MOVING LEARNING SUPPORTS TOWARD BEING A UNIFIED AND NONMARGINALIZED SYSTEM AND ABOUT ANY HELP YOU NEED**