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In this Issue:

English Language Learners, No Child Left Behind, and Special Education 2
Thomas Hehir

Building Collaboration for Assistive Technology: The ATSTAR Program 6
Gloria Young, Austin Independent School District

Partner Project Updates
NIUSI 4
EPRRI 4
Dropout Center 5
LASER 5
ILIAD 8
NCCRESt 8

School-Wide Behavior Supports: Lessons for Urban Schools

Robert March, Senior Program Advisor



Robert March

Today's urban educators face a growing challenge to meet both the instructional and behavioral needs of a student population that is becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse (Sprague, Sugai, & Walker, 1998). One of the most troubling responses to the challenges of an increasingly diverse student population has been the use of zero tolerance policies, which often serve as a mechanism for removing those students most in need of the educational services we provide. The trend in school discipline towards more frequent use of suspension, exclusion, and expulsion, especially with students served in special education and those from low socio-economic backgrounds and culturally and linguistically diverse populations, clearly leads to lower academic success and higher dropout rates (Ayers, Dohrn, & Ayers, 2001; Casella, 2001; Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

School-Wide Behavior Support Programs

Current educational research suggests that discipline policies that rely primarily on punishment are not only ineffective in achieving long-term suppression of problem behavior, but they rarely support or enhance pro-social behavior. Therefore, instead of focusing on a continuum of reactive behavioral strategies (e.g., detention, suspension, and expulsion), schools can be more successful if they employ a proactive and positive behavior support plan that addresses the entire school, classrooms, areas outside the classroom (such as hallways and restrooms), and individual students with challenging behavior.

The goal of a school-wide behavior support plan is to create an educational environment that focuses on positive, pro-social behaviors and includes mechanisms for teaching and acknowledging socially competent behavior. A positive school-wide behavior plan calls on educators to regularly teach, review, and acknowledge desired social behaviors, instead of merely punishing and excluding the students who display chronic, challenging behavior and are at greatest risk for school failure. School-wide behavior support programs include proactive and positive discipline practices that focus on

continued on page 3

English Language Learners, No Child Left Behind, and Special Education



Thomas Hehir

Thomas Hehir, Senior Policy Advisor

The identification of students with disabilities, particularly those with high-incidence disabilities, who are English language learners (ELLs), has been a vexing issue for special educators for decades. Scholars and educators have invested a good deal of effort into developing non-biased psychometric tests and pre-referral strategies to assure that children who come from non-English speaking backgrounds are identified appropriately. Most of this research has involved Spanish speakers, as they represent the largest group of ELL students in the country. This work has taken on further urgency as many in the field address issues of racial equity. The issue is even more likely to come to the forefront due to recent research, as well as changes in policy brought on by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the likely changes around eligibility determination in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reauthorization bills currently moving through Congress. As a result, new challenges and opportunities will be created for special education leadership.

On the research front, Alfredo Artiles and Alba Ortiz have co-edited an excellent new book, *English Language Learners with Special Education Needs: Identification, Assessment, and Instruction* (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2002), that provides a synthesis of the research to date in the field. It is impossible to do justice to this fine book in this brief article. However, I would like to share several major findings that I believe have direct bearing on current policy and practice.

Addressing the issue of eligibility, Richard Figueroa's chapter states flat out that traditional psychometric evaluations are not valid to determine high-incidence disability in children due to the influence

of bilingualism on test validity. In short, we will never develop the perfect test. Figueroa goes on to assert that disabilities should be determined through an assessment of the child in the context of an enriched, effective classroom. In other words, before you can determine the existence of a disability and its relationship to bilingualism, you must provide high-quality instruction to the child.

Figueroa's approach is consistent with an emerging approach in the field concerning learning disability identification—that of "treatment resistance" or "resistance to intervention." Simply put, this research-based approach requires that, prior to the identification of a child with a learning disability, the student should receive research-based intervention in reading (see my article, "Rethinking Learning Disabilities," in the Summer 2001 issue of *Urban Perspectives*). This approach has been incorporated into both IDEA reauthorization bills moving through Congress. However, the question arises of what constitutes an enriched educational environment for the ELL student?

Although the answer to this question will vary by student and would be greatly enhanced by additional research, there is significant empirical work that can guide educators in promoting learning among second language learners. According to Figueroa, this includes the principle of constructivism—that ELLs learn best when activities build on their home language and culture. In addition, English language learning occurs best in contexts rich in language input utilizing multiple forms of literacy with multiple forms of instructional strategies. Citing the work of Tarp, Figueroa goes on to list the following five empirically based principles on how to create enriched, effective instructional contexts.

continued on page 9

Continued from page 1

School-Wide Behavior Supports: Lesson for Urban Schools

the development of a climate that places the students' well-being as a top priority. For the students who do not respond to the school-wide system of positive behavior supports, typically 5 to 20 percent of a student population, the implementation of a continuum of positive behavior supports based on the severity of the problem behavior should be part of the school's behavior management plan. This school-wide approach can provide the context that is necessary for establishing a continuum of positive behavior supports for all students (Sprague, Sugai, & Walker, 1998).

Examples of Districts that Have Implemented School-Wide Behavior Support Plans

Three Collaborative member districts—Humble Independent School District (TX), New Bedford Public Schools (MA), and Flossmoor School District 161 (IL)—have been successful in implementing school-wide behavior supports that have resulted in a reduction in the number of behavioral disruptions in non-classroom settings such as hallways, playgrounds, and cafeterias. These districts have created proactive and positive school-wide supports by employing the following common strategies:

- 1) Adopting expectations that are few in number, brief, and positively stated and that promote social competence and student academic achievement
- 2) Teaching these expectations and regularly reviewing them with all students
- 3) Using a system for encouraging and acknowledging pro-social behavior
- 4) Creating a clear understanding among staff and administrators of which challenging behaviors will be managed by the teacher in the classroom and which by an administrator outside the classroom
- 5) Consistently addressing consequences for rule infractions and not excluding the student from the academic environment
- 6) Having a school-based behavior support team regularly collect, organize, and review data, such as office discipline referrals and results from staff surveys, in order to make decisions about where ongoing behavior support is most needed (Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002; Sprague, Sugai, & Walker, 1998)

As a result of the Collaborative's ongoing professional development efforts with these urban school districts:

- One middle school in Humble, with a student enrollment of 1,150 students, reported a drop in office referrals from over 6,000 in 2000-2001 to less than 1,800 in 2002-2003.
- A middle school in New Bedford, with a student enrollment of 800 students, reported a decrease in the number of suspensions from an average of over three per week to less than one per week. At the school district's alternative school, one teacher reduced use of office referrals for problem behavior from an average of over five per week to less than one per week.
- In the first year of implementation of school-wide behavior support plans in Flossmoor, office discipline referrals dropped by one-third at the junior high school and between 21 and 44 percent at the four participating elementary schools.

While part of the Collaborative's evaluation of training effectiveness is the ongoing examination of office discipline referrals, we are also seeing increases in teacher and administrator satisfaction with their jobs as measured through staff surveys and interviews.

Conclusion

Research has clearly identified school characteristics that lead to increases in problem behaviors (e.g., reactive strategies that rely primarily on punishment and

continued on page 11

Ineffective behavior management practices that focus on removing students from the educational environment only serve to increase the number of children left behind; thus, increasing the number of future adults who lack the skills necessary to be positive and productive citizens.



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
URBAN SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT

Leadership Academy Manual

Training Module Topics:

- Promise of inclusive schools
- Building leadership teams
- Data mining
- Inclusion
- Universal design
- Co-teaching
- Assessment
- Management
- Literacy
- Technology
- Numeracy
- Pedagogy



Office of Special
Education Programs

National Institute Releases Training Module

The complexity and ongoing challenges of school improvement efforts sometimes result in outcomes that are not as successful as had been hoped for or anticipated. Efforts may have minimal impact, fail to be maintained over time, or even create more problems and dissonance than existed in the beginning. The National Institute for Urban School Improvement's new Leadership Academy Manual provides salient strategies for developing capacity for successful and sustainable systems change within urban schools and school districts. This manual provides 12 professional development modules of the National Institute's work with the leadership academy model.

The first module, *The Promise of Inclusive Schools*, is currently available on the National Institute's Web site:

www.inclusiveschools.org. It contains materials for two Leadership Academies: Academy 1, Understanding Inclusion, and Academy 2, Exploring Inclusive Practices. The module is based on the National Institute's popular publication: *Improving Education: The Promise of Inclusive Schooling*, which may be downloaded free of charge in English and Spanish from the National Institute's Web site.

Later this spring, the National Institute will publish its second module, *Building Leadership Teams*. The National Institute plans to release a new module on its Web site each month. Ten additional modules are in production and will address a variety of critical areas (see side bar). ■

For more information, visit the National Institute's Web site: www.inclusiveschools.org.

Urban Leaders Weigh In on NCLB



According to a recent study conducted by the Education Policy Reform Research

Institute (EPRRI), many urban school systems continue to struggle with implementing the sweeping changes of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

Many Collaborative members participated in the study, the results of which will be published in EPRRI's latest issue brief, "Opportunities and Challenges: Perspectives on the No Child Left Behind Act from Special Education Directors in Urban School Districts." The brief presents the views of 13 special education leaders of urban school districts and focuses on the opportunities and challenges their districts face in implementing key NCLB requirements for students with disabilities. Qualitative results from two focus groups and an online survey reveal that although district leaders see opportunities for students with disabilities, many are facing similar challenges, including:

- Participation and performance of students with disabilities on state assessments

- Personnel issues—specifically, recruiting, retaining, and training teachers, principals, and paraeducators
- Finances and resources
- Alignment of IDEA and NCLB
- Longevity of reform and timely access to policy guidance (i.e., many participants questioned the staying power of NCLB and whether the law would continue in its current form under the present and/or future administrations)

Even with these concerns, school district leaders were cautiously optimistic about NCLB, anticipating positive effects predicated on improved funding and staying power of the reform. Recommendations for ensuring effective implementation of NCLB will be included in the issue brief, which will be available on EPRRI's Web site this summer.

EPRRI's research team extends its thanks to the members of the Collaborative who participated in this study. ■

For more information, visit EPRRI's Web site: www.eprri.org.

Collaborative Helps Launch Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities



In 1999-2000, 29.4 percent of students with disabilities dropped out of school (U.S.

Department of

Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 24th Report to Congress, 2002). As a result of ongoing concerns related to this issue, Clemson University was recently awarded a five-year, \$3.5 million grant by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs to launch the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD). The Collaborative is pleased to be serving as one of NDPC-SD's primary partners.

The goal of NDPC-SD is to support state and local education agencies in increasing

rates of school completion for students with disabilities. NDPC-SD will also provide a one-stop resource for information, technical assistance, program replication, and dropout prevention strategies for students with disabilities for state education agencies, policymakers, administrators, researchers, parents, teachers, and other practitioners.

Clemson University brings to this center 18 years of experience in dropout prevention programming, research, project evaluation, and consultation. The Collaborative is one of the center's partners, along with its host organization, Education Development Center (EDC), and the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA). The Collaborative will serve as the expert on critical issues facing the special education community and assist in the identification of model

programs in districts across the country. It will also perform critical planning, networking, and dissemination functions in support of the project's mission. EDC brings more than 15 years of experience in research, development, training, and technical assistance designed to improve access and outcomes for students with disabilities. EDC and the Collaborative are developing NDPC-SD's new Web site. IDRA provides NDPC-SD with substantial experience in support of educational equity for traditionally underserved groups, development and implementation of intercultural and multi-linguistic educational interventions, parent training, and services to students with disabilities.

The Economic Impact of High School Dropouts*

- Students from low-income families have a dropout rate of 10%; students from middle income families have a dropout rate of 5.2%; and, 1.6% of students from high-income families dropout (NCES, 2002).
- The cost of adult illiteracy to taxpayers is \$224 billion per year (National Reading Panel, 1999).
- U.S. companies lose nearly \$40 billion annually because of illiteracy (National Reading Panel, 1999).
- Between October 2001 and October 2002, about 400,000 youth dropped out of high school. The unemployment rate for this group was 29.8%, almost 13% higher than the unemployment rate for recent high school graduates who were not enrolled in college (U.S. Department of Labor, 2003).
- 75% of America's state prison inmates and 59% of America's federal prison inmates are high school dropouts (Harlow, 2003).

*Statistics from www.dropoutprevention.org.

Save the date!

4th Annual LASER Urban Education Research Conference

September 23-25, 2004
(Pre-conference: September 22)
San Diego, California

Conference highlights:

- ▶ Dynamic presenters
- ▶ Youth cultural night
- ▶ Community town hall meeting
- ▶ Professional issue debate
- ...and much more

For more information, please visit <http://www.coedu.usf.edu/LASER> or contact LASER Project Director Dr. Brenda L. Townsend (btownsen@tempest.coedu.usf.edu or 813-974-1385), or LASER Project Coordinator Mrs. Anh-Ray Pizano (apizano@tempest.coedu.usf.edu or 813-974-9890).




continued on page 10

Building Collaboration for Assistive Technology: The ATSTAR Program



Gloria Young

Gloria Young, Special Education Instructional Coordinator & Supervisor of the Assistive Technology Team, Austin Independent School District

How does an urban school district with 78,000 students comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 in considering the assistive technology needs of each of its more than 10,000 students identified with disabilities? When Austin Independent School District's (ISD) four assistive technology facilitators pondered the challenge, the answer became apparent: Collaborate!

In January 2000, a \$2.2 million grant from Technology Integration in Education, a program of the Texas Education Agency, allowed Austin ISD to establish ATSTAR (Assistive Technology: Strategies, Tools, Accommodations, and Resources). ATSTAR provides a Web-based curriculum and collection of resources that address Austin ISD's need for an effective, research-based, campus-level system for assessment and delivery of assistive technology (AT) services. The implementation of the grant involved many components of collaboration:

- Fourteen campuses selected 46 staff to receive 66 hours of training in developing and using the ATSTAR curriculum.
- Selected local private schools for students with special needs received training in developing and using the curriculum.
- Area colleges and universities participated in the curriculum development.
- Six national consultants conducted training and assisted with the development of the online curriculum.
- Over 60 students in the Lyndon B. Johnson High School's Magnet Program gained real-world experience in network planning, software installation and management, accessible Web and software design, and closed captioning.

- Sixty-four administrators from the Austin region attended training on administrative responsibilities related to AT.
- Campus teams conducted presentations to their campuses about the ATSTAR process, impacting 980 teachers.
- An Austin-based technology company was hired to complete the technical development of the online curriculum and Web site.

A five-year plan targeting the goals of curriculum development, outreach, pilot efforts, and technical revisions and improvements began in the summer of 2001. The curriculum was delivered in September of that year and implementation began that fall.

Austin ISD is a diverse district with a large Hispanic population, an important factor in the pilots' design. The pilots were conducted with a diverse student population, and all of the documents associated with the project can be provided in Spanish when requested.

ATSTAR consists of eight lessons covering the following six step process:

- 1) "Building the Student Team": Using a dynamic, student-centered, multi-disciplinary team that begins with the IEP team and engages additional experts, as needed, to create a comprehensive support team
- 2) "Framing the Question" to help collect and consider information about the student, environments, and tasks that the student needs to complete
- 3) "Collecting Information": Identifying what the team needs to know and where to find it
- 4) "Analyzing Information": Building a list of features based on student needs that will define the AT solution features
- 5) "Generating Solutions" through brainstorming, comparing, and prioritizing different solutions to find

the best match with the student, environments, and tasks

- 6) "Selecting Solutions": Creating a trial plan and evaluating the effectiveness of the solutions used in the trial. The team then comes to consensus on solutions to recommend to the IEP team

A separate module for administrators serves to raise awareness of legal issues, administrative responsibilities, and strategies for leadership in the campus-based process for AT assessment and service delivery.

Other state and local districts have requested training and consultation through Austin ISD's ATSTAR project. Dallas Independent School District, the Montana Collaborative Empowerment Project, and Valdosta State University in Georgia initiated their own pilot projects after learning about Austin's efforts.



ATSTAR has garnered numerous awards and much recognition, including the following:

- Texas House Resolution 629 recognized ATSTAR for effective community collaboration in its efforts to give "vital aid to Texas students with disabilities."
- Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities presented Henry McMahon, a parent volunteer, with an Honorable Mention Award for his work with ATSTAR.
- The 2002 Texas Interactive Media Achievement Award at the South by Southwest Conference for Outstanding Achievement in Training and for Notable Achievement in Education.
- Telecommunications Infrastructure Funds grant of \$500,000 awarded to provide disability-specific instructional resources for students with emotional and behavioral disorders.
- Chapter 13 in the textbook, "Maximum Accessibility," was dedicated to the ATSTAR project. The text was

written by Dr. John Slatin, Director of the Accessibility Institute at the University of Texas and Sharron Rush, Executive Director of Knowbility, an organization that provides AT for people with disabilities.

- Certificate of Appreciation from the Montana Collaborative Empowerment Project for "Outstanding Efforts" in support of their pilot.
- Youth/Education, Austin Under 40 Award presented to Jan McSorley, ATSTAR project director.

The far-reaching impact of ATSTAR is felt in numerous additional activities engaging the curriculum and its developers. ATSTAR provided the only AT representative on the State Board of Educator Certification's committee for the development of standards for the Master Technology Teacher Certification and the only public school AT representative on the Texas Examination of Educator

Standards Special Education EC-12. In the fall of 2001, the ATSTAR team demonstrated the use of the ATSTAR assessment process for workforce personnel at the Texas Rehabilitation Action Network. Texas A&M University invited the team to write the AT component of their Master Technology Teacher certification program. The ATSTAR team has also provided supervision of graduate students in technology from a variety of universities. Most recently, the members of the team were invited to serve on Texas Education Agency's committee to develop the Texas Teacher StaR Chart, the Texas response to Title II-Part D, Enhancing Education Through Technology in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The ATSTAR project has been presented in a variety of venues, including the California State University at Northridge (CSUN) conference, Texas Center for Educational Technology, Texas Speech and Hearing Association, Texas Regional Education

continued on page 11



IDEA ILIAD Partnership Comes to a Close after Five Groundbreaking Years

The IDEA Local Implementation by Local Administrators Partnership (ILIAD), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, came to a close in the fall of 2003. This partnership delivered support to the ongoing efforts of local education leaders as they continued to improve their district's implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA). The IDEA ILIAD Partnership brought together preeminent educational leadership associations, including the Collaborative, and built upon their strengths and expertise. The five years of intense collaboration among the partners resulted in innovative product development, co-sponsored technical assistance activities and events, and an ongoing dialogue for administrators in education.

During this final year of the IDEA ILIAD Partnership, the Collaborative initiated several projects to address some critical issues of interest to its members and other special and general education administrators.

A Symposium on the Combined Implications of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 on Students with Significant Disabilities in Urban Schools

In response to an increasing need for more information about the combined implications of NCLB and IDEA, the Collaborative sought to find out what educators and families understand and are experiencing related to outcomes for children with significant disabilities. The Collaborative, along with TASH, the IDEA ILIAD Partnership, and other partner organizations,

convened a group of educators and family members who work closely with students with significant disabilities to discuss the most critical issues facing these students' education in the implementation of NCLB and IDEA. In addition, the symposium highlighted OSEP-funded research that supports the education of children with the most significant disabilities. Symposium proceedings will be available this spring on the Collaborative's Web site—www.urbancollaborative.org.

Working with Families of Children in Need of Mental Health Support: A Tip Sheet for School Administrators

In an effort to provide essential information about addressing the needs of students with mental health needs within public schools, the Collaborative worked with Trina W. Osher of

continued on page 10



The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems presents...



Special Education & Brown vs. Board of Education, 1954: Still Separate, Still Unequal

April 26-30, 2004

A free online discussion facilitated by NCCREST's principal investigators, Drs. Alfredo Artiles, Janette Klingner, Elizabeth Kozleski, and Cheryl Utley, and several special guests.

For more information or to log onto the discussion, visit NCCREST's Web site: www.nccrest.org.



Continued from page 2

ELLs, NCLB, and Special Education

- 1) Use of experts and novices working jointly on a task
- 2) Academic language development as an integral part of instruction building on student strengths in their native language
- 3) Instruction and curriculum built on experiences in the home and community
- 4) School work that is cognitively complex and challenging rather than rote learning
- 5) Instruction in teacher-student dialogue

Although this emerging research consensus is promising and changes in disability identification provides potential opportunities to address the needs of ELLs more effectively, the gap between best practices and reality can be great. For instance, research by Artiles et al. in California found that elementary ELLs in straight immersion programs were twice as likely to receive special education services as those in modified immersion programs and three times more likely than ELLs placed in bilingual programs. This research further documented considerable over-representation of ELLs in special education in the secondary grades.

Clearly, the practice of straight English immersion is inconsistent with research synthesized by Figueroa and appears to be associated with over-placement in special education. Artiles' research should cause considerable alarm among special education leaders given our historic concerns with over-representation. It may take on even greater importance as we move to a treatment resistance model of disability identification and as we implement NCLB. The movement toward a treatment resistance identification model is dependent upon regular education implementing effective practices. In the case of learning disability identification of English speakers, research-based early intervention reading programs are becoming more widespread and are receiving considerable support. There is reason to be optimistic that this approach may indeed be more effective for students with disabilities and prevent inappropriate referrals to special education.

However, as Artiles' research indicates, practices in general education for ELLs may not be research based and, therefore, may greatly complicate the issue of special education assessment for these students. This may limit the use of a treatment resistance model. Further, the result of inappropriate regular education practices will likely result in over-placement of ELLs in special education. This will exacerbate the already unacceptable racial inequity in special education.

The ongoing implementation of NCLB with its emphasis on testing students in English adds further urgency to this issue. Although the vast majority of educators and parents support the goal of speedy acquisition of English language proficiency in these students, the means that school districts employ to achieve this goal may be at odds with the research, and with some approaches appearing more ideologically driven than research driven. Full English immersion is an example of this. Therefore, special education leaders must pay careful attention to how general education is addressing the needs of ELLs. We cannot allow special education to be used inappropriately to address the failings of the general education system. In my view, the problem of over-placement of culturally and linguistically diverse students reflects this well-worn path we have been seeking to steer away from.

The movement toward treatment resistance models of disability identification is a hopeful development that begins to put the responsibility for appropriate special education identification and placements more in the court of general education. More than ever, we must join with our general education colleagues to implement the types of programs that all children need to succeed. ■

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Special education leaders must pay careful attention to how general education is addressing the needs of ELLs. We cannot allow special education to be used inappropriately to address the failings of the general education system.

Continued from page 8

ILIAD Partnership Comes to a Close After Five Years

the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health to develop a succinct tip sheet for school administrators. The tip sheet provides an overview of the issues families face when supporting a child with mental health needs, as well as strategies to assist school administrators in working collaboratively with the child and family. The tip sheet will be distributed at the Collaborative's spring meeting, "Mental Health Services in Urban Schools: Challenges and Opportunities," May 13-15, 2004. Downloadable copies will also be available on the Collaborative's Web site in May.

Special Thanks to our 2003 Corporate Partners!

JDL Associates, Inc.

JDL Associates, Inc., is an educational consulting company that provides personalized services and trainings to state and local education agencies on the development and implementation of effective special education programs. For more information, visit JDL's Web site at www.jdlassociates.com.



4GL School Solutions, Inc., is a leading provider of proven, data-driven solutions for managing information, relating to special education, Section 504, English language learners, and at-risk students. For more information, visit 4GL's Web site at www.4glschools.com.

Bullying and Students with Disabilities

In partnership with colleagues at Education Development Center, Inc., and in collaboration with the Federation for Children with Special Needs, the Collaborative set out to investigate the impact of bullying on students with disabilities in public schools. Two focus groups were held in Boston and Worcester, MA, with approximately 40 family members of children with disabilities. The family members shared their perspectives on the severity of the problem and whether or not it was an issue for their children. The findings of the two focus groups are outlined in a document titled "Bullying and Students with Disabilities: A Sum-

mary Report of Family Focus Groups," which will be available on the Collaborative's Web site this spring.

As educators await the reauthorization of IDEA and continue to implement IDEA 1997, a wealth of resources and materials developed by the IDEA Partnerships is available at www.ideapractices.org. Included on the site is the popular Collaborative/ILIAD publication, "Parentally Placed Students with Disabilities," which offers a succinct overview of IDEA regulations and relevant case law regarding parentally placed students with disabilities in private schools. ■

The products featured in this article will be available on the Collaborative's Web site: www.urbancollaborative.org.

Continued from page 12

Collaborative Celebrates Anniversary

meeting was held in Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1994, with 12 members gathered to learn about the Clinton Administration's plans for IDEA reauthorization. Today, the Collaborative is 83 member districts strong, and our meetings consistently attract more than 200 special and general education leaders. We thank

our members for their continued support and commitment to our mission: *to improve educational results and life opportunities for children and youth with disabilities in urban schools.* ■

To learn more about the Collaborative, please visit www.urbancollaborative.org.

Continued from page 5

New Dropout Prevention Center

NDPC-SD will capitalize on the extensive expertise and experience of these national partners and other collaborators, including the What's Working Clearinghouse, Promoting What Works Synthesis Center, and National Center for Secondary Education and Transition. Programs and services of the center will be

further informed by guidance from a broadly representative National Advisory Committee, including members from special education and general education at state and local levels, parents, and researchers. ■

To learn more about NDPC-SD, please visit www.dropoutprevention.org.

Continued from page 3

School-Wide Behavior Supports: Lessons for Urban Schools

assume that the student knows what is expected, how to do it, and is properly motivated). However, reactive and punitive strategies typically fail to teach and support expected behaviors. Ineffective behavior management practices that focus on removing students from the educational environment only serve to increase the number of children left behind; thus, increasing the number of future adults who lack the skills necessary to be positive and productive citizens. Implementing proactive universal strategies for improving school discipline in urban schools is a first step toward addressing the many challenges that exist in our society, such as poverty, transience, and high incidence of abuse, to name but a few (Casella, 2001; Sprague, Sugai, & Walker, 1998).

In order for schools to create safe and effective school environments, we need to stop looking for “quick fixes,” such as zero tolerance policies that remove students and prevent educators from using their most powerful intervention—

teaching. Schools can play a vital role in the development of pro-social behavior by developing and implementing a school-wide behavior support program. However, school-wide behavior supports are not intended to be a “silver bullet” solution that will eliminate problem behavior in the schools. Rather, it is a promising place to start creating educational environments that are focused on teaching and supporting academic achievement and social competence (Zins & Ponte, 1990). ■

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For more information about the Collaborative's professional development offerings on school-wide behavior supports, contact Kristen Layton at klayton@edc.org.

Continued from page 7

The ATSTAR Program

Service Center XIII in Austin, and Texas Computer Education Association. ATSTAR was also featured at “Closing the Gap,” an international conference on computer technology in special education and rehabilitation assistive technology.

As teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech pathologists, and administrators all increase their awareness of the benefits of using the various AT tools, Austin ISD is better able to meet the needs of our students. ATSTAR has raised the standard and improved the quality and efficiency of AT with a dynamic model designed and implemented by a

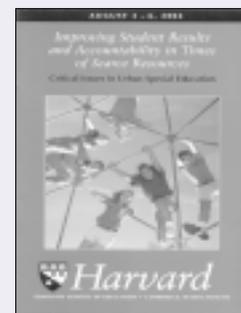
strong team of professionals. During the 2004-2005 school year, 30 of the district's campuses will be trained in the curriculum. ATSTAR will be gathering quantitative data about student progress during this next iteration of the pilot.

The ATSTAR curriculum is available to all Texas districts free of charge. Organizations and districts outside of Texas can purchase it. For more information, please refer to ATSTAR's Web site: www.atstar.org. ■

The ATSTAR team may be contacted by email: gyoung@austin.isd.tenet.edu.

2004 Harvard Institute on Critical Issues in Urban Special Education

Improving Student Results and Accountability in Times of Scarce Resources



August 2-6, 2004

For more information, visit www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe or call 1-800-545-1849.

You're Invited!
Collaborative Member Dinner
at the Harvard Faculty Club
August 3, 2004



Collaborative Celebrates 10th Anniversary at Spring Meeting

Urban Perspectives

is a publication of the *Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative*. The Collaborative is a leadership development and networking organization for urban special education leaders.

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Visit the Collaborative's Web site at www.urbancollaborative.org.

Mental Health Services in Urban Schools: Challenges and Opportunities May 13–May 15, 2004 Chicago, Illinois



Karl Dennis



Mark Weist

The Collaborative's mid-May meeting in Chicago, Illinois, will focus on the development of a shared vision for the future of mental health services in urban schools. To help Collaborative members reflect on current research, evidenced-based practice, and results, Karl Dennis, founder of the Chicago-based Kaleidoscope, Inc., and "grandfather" of the concept of wrap-around services, and Mark Weist from the University of Maryland School of Medicine and Director of the Center for School Mental Health Assistance, will serve as keynote speakers. The meeting will also highlight member school districts' organization and support for programs and services for students with and without disabilities who have mental

health support needs. In the aggregate, the meeting will offer presentations that cover the complete range of mental health offerings and service delivery options: school-based, wrap-around, student support service teams, early childhood, and family engagement and supports.

The spring meeting marks the Collaborative's 10th anniversary! The first Collaborative

continued on page 10

Welcome New Member Districts

The Collaborative currently links 83 school districts from 26 states plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Five new member districts have joined the Collaborative since September 2003. Please join us in welcoming:

- Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta, GA
- Metropolitan School District of Warren Township, Indianapolis, IN
- Newport Public Schools, Newport, RI
- Racine Public Schools, Racine, WI
- Salem Public Schools, Salem, MA

For a complete list of Collaborative members and enrollment information, please visit our Web site at www.urbancollaborative.org.

Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative

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