

# Progress Report on Activities

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July 1, 2002 - July 1, 2003



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## Mission and History

Founded in 2002, the Center for Teaching and Learning at the Michael D. Eisner College of Education, California State University, Northridge (CSUN), serves as an enduring site for educational change and development. It is the mission of the Center for Teaching and Learning to keep CSUN at the forefront of cutting edge innovations in preparing teachers, educational administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, and other school-related personnel.

The Center for Teaching and Learning has an initial charge of exploring the work of Dr. Mel Levine and his organization the *All Kinds of Minds* nonprofit institute, as well as investigating the impact of the institute's *Schools Attuned* professional development and service delivery program on student learning outcomes, teacher knowledge and instructional practices, and systemic school change.

Dr. Mel Levine, a Rhodes Scholar and graduate of Harvard Medical School, is a professor of pediatrics at the University of North Carolina Medical School and the director of the university's Clinical Center for the Study of Development and Learning. He is also the cofounder and co-chair, along with Mr. Charles Schwab, of the All Kinds of Minds nonprofit institute. Established in 1995, the mission of All Kinds of Minds "is to help students who struggle with learning measurably improve their success in school and life by providing programs that integrate educational, scientific and clinical expertise" (AKOM, 2003).

The creation of the Center for Teaching and Learning, as well as a new position of Executive Director and The Eisner Chair of Teaching and Learning, was made possible by a generous gift received from The Eisner Foundation in spring 2002. Michael D. Eisner, Chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company, his wife Jane, and their sons Breck, Eric, and Anders, have greatly assisted at-risk children and their families through their numerous contributions to non-profit organizations in the Los Angeles and Orange County areas of Southern California.

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## Report of the Executive Director

With the creation of the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Michael D. Eisner College of Education and California State University, Northridge, have embarked on an exciting mission. The physical Center itself has been constructed as a wing of the College, complete with administrative offices, a family friendly reception area, a research office, and a conference room that is video-conference ready. A website has been established at <http://www.csun.edu/education/ctl/> along with an associated email account at [centerl@csun.edu](mailto:centerl@csun.edu) to address questions and impart information on the Center.

This report offers a review of activities and accomplishments of the Center over the past year. Each section is organized according to the original initiatives specified in the Gift Grant Agreement between The Eisner Foundation and California State University, Northridge, as authorized on March 21, 2002.

Some of the highlights of this report:

- Over the course of the academic year 2002-2003, **154** pre-service teacher candidates were trained in the foundational philosophy of Dr. Mel Levine and were introduced to the concepts and methodologies associated with the Schools Attuned professional development program developed by the All Kinds of Minds Institute. Many of these candidates have now taken jobs as fully credentialed teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District.
- From July 2002 through July 2003, 370 total teachers received Schools Attuned training in Southern California. From this group, **127** total professionals were recruited through the partnership between the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Etta Israel Center Los Angeles Regional Training Site for Schools Attuned. This number includes 18 CSUN faculty from the Michael D. Eisner College of Education.
- In order to facilitate the in-service training of teachers and school related professionals, the Center for Teaching and Learning has hired **Richard Goldman** as the Assistant Director and Regional Training Liaison with the Etta Israel Center.
- In order to facilitate the creation of and staffing for a comprehensive Student Assessment Center, **Dr. Shari Tarver Behring**, a Professor of Educational Psychology and Counseling, has been hired to consult on the project.

- The Center for Teaching and Learning, in collaboration with Dr. Tarver Behring and the STARS leadership team, has built a wider network of university and community professional contacts, including the **San Fernando Valley Collegial Consortium** and **District B of the Los Angeles Unified School District**, to name a few.
- Conversations have begun with several sister California State Universities, located in both Southern and Northern California, including **California State University, Dominguez Hills**, **San Jose State University**, and **Sacramento State University**, to disseminate information related to the work of the Center for Teaching and Learning.
- On the research front, **preliminary data collection efforts are already underway** at the Center for Teaching and Learning, studying the impact of Schools Attuned training on student outcomes, special education, and teacher instructional practices. An early finding that bears more scrutiny is that teachers who have received training tend to not refer students in their classrooms for special education and related services.

Since July of last year, the Center for Teaching and Learning administrative team has been involved in numerous presentations and meetings. These presentations have ranged from awareness workshops with public schools to development sessions with district administrators. Meetings have been conducted with Non Public School administrators, parent groups, Los Angeles and Las Virgenes Unified School District superintendents, the directors of all eight (8) Schools Attuned regional training sites, and directors of the two (2) state-funded Schools Attuned programs in Oklahoma and North Carolina. In order to ensure direct and open communication with all strategic partners, the Executive and Assistant Directors participate in monthly meetings and phone conferences with the Dean of the Michael D. Eisner College of Education, Philip Rusche, the Executive Director of the Etta Israel Center, Michael Held, and the CEO of All Kinds of Minds, Mark Grayson, and the National Director of Schools Attuned, Mary Dean Barringer.

Looking forward to upcoming events and activities, the Center for Teaching and Learning has already arranged to host the next Schools Attuned Facilitator Development Academy (SAFDA) along with a second planned training for interested College faculty and LAUSD teachers in January 2004. A second cohort of ACT pre-service teachers will receive foundational training in the upcoming academic year. College faculty are already reviewing existing curriculum for possible articulation points with Schools Attuned content. Final planning for the construction of the Student Assessment Center will take place in the upcoming academic year. And the Center for Teaching and Learning research team will focus on the first Schools Attuned impact area (i.e., effect on special education referrals) for the beginning of the 2003-2004 academic year.

**Michael E. Spagna**  
**July 2003**

## **Progress Report on Initiative #1:**

### **Teacher Education**

The Teacher Education Initiative is focused on embedding Schools Attuned philosophy and methodology into professional development (including pre-service and advanced) programs at the Michael D. Eisner College of Education, California State University, Northridge. Additionally, as programs are developed and implemented at the College, to train professionals before they reach schools and classrooms (pre-service), during their employment (in-service), and as continuing education and professional development, information on their design and implementation will be gathered and shared first with select sister institutions of higher education in the California State University system, then with University of California colleagues, and finally with interested private colleges and universities. These goals are consistent with those demarcated in the March 21, 2002, Gift Grant Agreement with The Eisner Foundation.

During the 2002-2003 academic year, the Executive Director developed and implemented the initial experimental program for pre-service teachers. This curriculum for the Accelerated Collaborative Teacher (ACT) Preparation program was delivered over the course of two semesters (Fall Semester, 2002, and Spring Semester, 2003) to 154 pre-service teacher candidates (70 elementary education, 54 secondary education, and 30 special education). Over the course of two semesters, candidates were exposed to the foundational philosophy of Dr. Mel Levine and the All Kinds of Minds Institute; additionally, candidates were taught the nine principles of Schools Attuned, were introduced to the eight neurodevelopmental constructs, had some initial experience with using a student case study to develop a profile of learning strengths, affinities, and needs, and began the initial process of choosing accommodations and interventions at the breakdown points using these same case studies. Behavioral implications were also addressed using the Schools Attuned paradigm, with candidates considering how behavioral complications such as acting out, angry and aggressive behavior, lack of social skills, and noncompliant behavior can all be viewed and addressed using the neurodevelopmental constructs as a frame of reference.

The learning objectives for ACT candidates are listed in Appendix A. (Note that all course objectives were aligned with overall course objectives as well as with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.)

ACT candidates were evaluated via exams and surveys to determine the degree to which they had acquired these new concepts as well as their ability to apply both the philosophy and skills taught to individual students. Examples of evaluation questions can be found in Appendix B; the survey questionnaire is located in Appendix C.

Results gathered from the exams and surveys indicated that ACT candidates achieved mastery of the skills taught and generally expressed agreement that they had gained an adequate understanding of foundational Schools Attuned philosophy and methodology.

## Progress Report on Initiative #2: Regional Training

The Regional Training Initiative involves supporting and building upon the efforts of the existing Los Angeles Regional Training Site for Schools Attuned, directed by Mr. Richard Goldman, and affiliated with the Etta Israel Center. It is the intention of the Center for Teaching and Learning that expansion of the regional in-service training of teachers, administrators, and school-related personnel take place in Southern California. The *Etta Israel Los Angeles Regional Training Site for Schools Attuned* (hereafter, the Regional Training Site) has established itself as a premiere professional development site, having trained approximately 1,000 professionals as of Summer 2003. This Regional Training Site has been committed to expanding Schools Attuned training to public schools: During the past four years, 429 of the 1,005 teachers trained have come from the public sector—this represents 43% of the total professionals trained. In 1999, the first year of the Regional Training Site's operation, 19 out of 94 teachers were from the public schools; by comparison, in 2003, the most recent year of training, 140 out of 370 teachers were from the public sector (this represents an increase of 637%).

According to the Gift Grant Agreement with the Eisner Foundation, the Center for Teaching and Learning was charged with facilitating the training of 50 teachers and other school personnel during the first year of the agreement. Out of the 370 total teachers trained during the first in-service training conducted since receipt of the gift grant, 127 total professionals were recruited through the partnership between the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Etta Israel Center Los Angeles Regional Training Site for Schools Attuned. Of these 127 professionals, 75 were recruited from District F of Los Angeles Unified School District (CSUN has enjoyed a long standing professional partnership with LAUSD in general and District F Superintendent, Richard Alonzo, in particular), 6 were from the CHIME (Community Honoring Inclusive Model Education) Charter Elementary and Middle Schools (all teachers at the CHIME Charter Elementary School have now been Schools Attuned trained), 20 were from Fulton Middle School (these teachers were recruited as a direct result of attending a presentation by the Executive Director on February 12, 2003), 6 teachers from Vaughn Next Century Learning Center (this makes a total of 32 teachers trained from this site and currently mentored by the Executive Director), and 18 CSUN faculty from the Michael D. Eisner College of Education (representing the



Departments of Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Education Leadership and Policy Studies, Special Education, and Educational Psychology and Counseling), and 2 additional professionals who have taught part-time in the Departments of Special Education and Educational Psychology and Counseling attended the week long training.

The implications of this training, both for the preparation of current and future teachers as well as for direct work with preK-12 students, are substantial: the Michael D. Eisner College of Education trains an average of 3,750 teachers per academic year, and teachers from Districts B and F of the Los Angeles Unified Schools District work with approximately 144,000 students per year.

In order to facilitate the training of professionals, the Center for Teaching and Learning has hired Richard Goldman as the Assistant Director and Regional Training Liaison with the Etta Israel Los Angeles Regional Training Site for Schools Attuned. Mr. Goldman's responsibilities, under the supervision of the Executive Director, include serving as a member of the Center for Teaching and Learning administrative team and acting as liaison between the Center for Teaching and Learning and existing Schools Attuned regional training sites. To be more specific, a description of this position's duties can be found in Appendix D.

## Progress Report on Initiative #3:

### Instructional Assessment

The Instructional Assessment Initiative positions the Center for Teaching and Learning to be a West Coast site for assessment services consistent with the existing Student Success Center established at the All Kinds of Minds Institute in North Carolina. The establishment of this comprehensive Student Assessment Center will provide students attending the Michael D. Eisner College of Education with multiple opportunities for hands-on experience in the areas of assessment, interventions, and counseling. Consistent with the Gift Grant Agreement with The Eisner Foundation, this on-campus full service facility will attract families from the West Coast who desire individualized access to assessment tests and intervention strategies consistent with the philosophy and methodology espoused by the All Kinds of Minds Institute.

In order to facilitate the creation of and staffing for such a Student Assessment Center, Dr. Shari Tarver Behring, a Professor of Educational Psychology and Counseling, has been hired to consult on the project. During the past year, Dr. Tarver Behring, who is also one of the Co-coordinators of the existing STARS (Support Training Assessment and Resource Services) Community Center at the Michael D. Eisner College of Education, has directed monthly meetings with faculty and members of the community with the purpose of designing the newly envisioned Student Assessment Center. The present STARS Community Center includes the following programs: (a) the **CHIME Institute for Children with Special Needs** (programs provide early intervention for young children with disabilities and those at risk for delayed development and/or disabilities), (b) the **Community Counseling and Resource Institute** (programs provide individual, couple, and family counseling services; group therapy for a variety of populations including trauma survivors and youth-at-risk; grief and bereavement counseling; crisis intervention; etc.), (c) the **Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling Workshop Center** (offers workshops throughout the academic year to graduate students and practicing counselors), (d) the **Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling Early Childhood Education program** (offers free consultations to support improvement in early childhood center-based programs in the San Fernando Valley in collaboration with the Child Care Resource Center), (e) the **Family Focus Empowerment Center** (programs serve families of children aged 3 to 22 who have individualized education programs; provides comprehensive information about

disabilities, laws, and public and private services), (f) the **Los Angeles Times Literacy Center** (programs provide assessment and literacy instruction for elementary students and secondary students having difficulty in reading and writing), (g) the **Special Education Literacy Center** (programs provide individualized reading programs for school-age students with disabilities and students who are deaf or hard of hearing), and (h) **The Valley Trauma Center** (programs provide individual, group and family counseling for survivors of rape, sexual assault and child sexual abuse).

Many of these STARS programs would be housed in a planned new facility (target opening date of mid-2006). This comprehensive Student Assessment Center would also incorporate the activities of the All Kinds of Minds Institute's Student Success Center in North Carolina, effectively linking diagnostic services with Schools Attuned recommended accommodations and interventions.

As a direct result of the previously mentioned monthly meetings, Dr. Tarver Behring and the STARS group have consulted with the university architect, Mr. Colin Donahue, to determine how space will be used in the proposed new Student Assessment Center (these blueprints are in the final stages of completion). Additionally, members of STARS have built a wider network of contacts both within the university and with interested community groups, including some of the following:

1. **San Fernando Valley Collegial Consortium**—a group of physicians, psychologist, educational therapists, and speech and language therapists led by pediatrician Dr. Shari Pollock and located in the San Fernando Valley who have long been fans of Dr. Levine's work.
2. **Teacher Curriculum Center**—headed by Ms. Karin Duran, this program, located at CSUN's Oviatt Library, stocks educational materials and curricula that could be accessed by the Student Assessment Center; assistance has also been given to STARS concerning the use of a universal bar code system for materials organization.
3. **Student with Disabilities Resource (SDR) Center**—located on the CSUN campus, Ms. Jodi Johnson, one of the program counselors, has discussed ways that activities might be coordinated between the planned Student Assessment Center and SDR.
4. **Northpoint Nonpublic School**—the director, Mr. Rick Honeywell, has met on several occasions with the STARS group to discuss how a larger professional network might be developed between the planned Student Assessment Center and Northpoint.

Final planning for the construction of the Student Assessment Center will take place during the 2003-2004 academic year and recruitment for a manager of the Student Assessment Center will take place in Spring 2005.

## Progress Report on Research Activities

Consistent with the Gift Grant Agreement between California State University, Northridge, and The Eisner Foundation, the Center for Teaching and Learning has been charged with developing a research program to empirically document and study the work of Dr. Levine as it is delivered via the Schools Attuned professional development program and the diagnostic services employed at the Student Success Center. There are two primary goals of this research program:

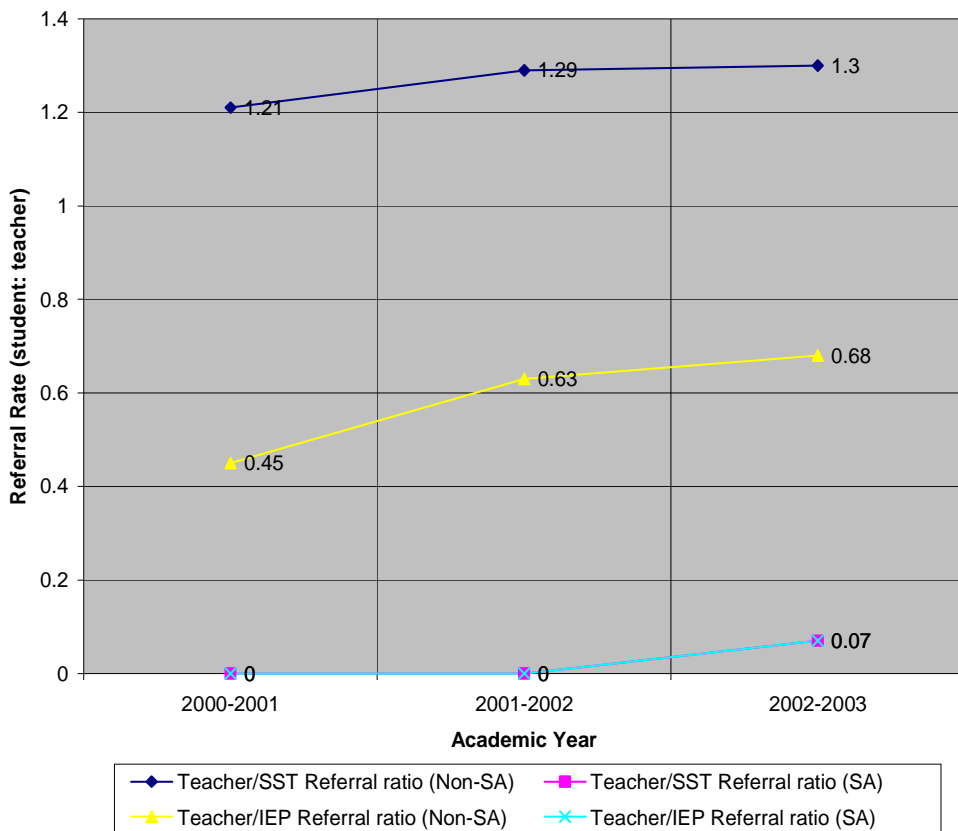
1. To study the philosophy and methodology incorporated into the Schools Attuned and Student Success Center programs designed by the All Kinds of Minds Institute.
2. To investigate the **impact** of these programs, beginning with Schools Attuned, **on student outcomes** (e.g., academic achievement), **on special education** (e.g., referral rates to special education and related services), and **on teacher knowledge and instructional practices** (e.g., providing accommodations to students in the classroom).

This research program is aligned with similar activities underway at the All Kinds of Minds Institute in North Carolina. As reported on the All Kinds of Minds website (see <http://www.allkindsofminds.org/ResearchEvaluation/reports.aspx>), “research faculty at The Center for Teaching and Learning at California State University-Northridge (CSUN) will examine the impact of Schools Attuned in California schools and act as a clearinghouse for other independent researchers in the state.” The Center for Teaching and Learning administrative team is also committed to coordinating efforts with the All Kinds of Minds Institute’s current focus on identifying and supporting up to six (6) independent research studies investigating program impact on a national level.

In order to build a team of top educational researchers to participate in the activities of the Center for Teaching and Learning, an aforementioned 18 faculty from the College have been sent through the School Attuned core course training this past June; from this core group, four (4) faculty will be selected to coordinate research efforts in collaboration with the Executive Director and the Assistant Director (Regional Training Liaison). This team will begin work this summer, formulating specific research questions and hypotheses, and gathering graduate and research assistants to participate in data collection and analysis.

Preliminary data collection has already taken place at the Center for Teaching and Learning: In Spring Semester, 2003, the Executive Director collected referral rate data from one of the Schools Attuned participating sites (Vaughn Next Century Learning Center where 34 teachers have received Schools Attuned training). Since 2000, the first year that Vaughn Next Century Learning Center sent teachers to the Schools Attuned training, and over the course of the past three (3) years, overall referral rates to school Student Study Teams and special education have dropped in total numbers, with the average referral rate at Vaughn being 1.3 pupils referred by teacher per year (this compares with a 0.07 referral rate by Schools Attuned trained counterparts). Figure 1, appearing below, depicts these referral rates over time.

**Figure 1. Referral rates of Non-Schools Attuned (Non-SA) and Schools Attuned (SA) trained teachers at Vaughn Next Century Learning Center (2000-2003).**



Although it is too early to draw any conclusions from this information, the noted drop in referrals appears to be consistent with a similar finding in District F of Los Angeles Unified School District where approximately 170 teachers have received Schools Attuned training (personal communication with District F Superintendent, Richard Alonzo, 2003).

The Center for Teaching and Learning research team will continue to focus its work on the first impact area (effect on special education referrals) for the beginning of the 2003-2004 academic year.

## **Appendices**

## APPENDIX A

### ACCELERATED COLLABORATIVE TEACHER (ACT) PREPARATION PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

EDUC 541: *Getting Started—Introduction to Teaching in Urban Schools*  
(August 26-December 9, 2002)

#### **Objective**

By the end of these sessions, ACT candidates will be able to do the following:

- Describe individual learner differences from the *Schools Attuned* perspective and discuss the implications for classroom teaching (California Standards for the Teaching Profession 1 & 2, Course Objectives 2 & 6).

EDUC 542: *Meeting the Needs of All Students in Urban Schools*  
(January 27-May 19, 2003)

#### **Objectives**

By the end of these sessions, ACT candidates will be able to do the following:

1. Identify and apply effective problem solving, assessment, and instructional strategies, using the *Schools Attuned* framework, to facilitate teaching and learning (California Standards for the Teaching Profession 4, Course Objective 7).
2. Describe and apply instructional modifications, adaptations, and accommodations for students, including those identified as gifted using the *Schools Attuned* framework (California Standards for the Teaching Profession 4, Course Objective 8).
3. Analyze and apply research-based theories and principles, such as those incorporated in *Schools Attuned*, related to motivation, effective classroom environments, and positive behavior supports in making sound instructional decisions for diverse populations, including students identified as gifted (California Standards for the Teaching Profession 1 & 2, Course Objective 9).

## APPENDIX B

### ACCELERATED COLLABORATIVE TEACHER (ACT) PREPARATION PROGRAM SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

EDUC 541: Getting Started—Introduction to Teaching in Urban Schools  
(August 26-December 9, 2002)

#### **Midterm—Fall 2002**

Essay #3 (10 points): *Schools Attuned*

- a) *Present Levine’s eight neurodevelopmental systems* (0.5 points each), and *explain how they are used to develop learner profiles* (1 point)
  - Eight Neurodevelopmental Systems—Attention, Memory, Social Thinking, Visual-Spatial, Higher Thinking, Motor, Sequential Ordering, Language
  - Explanation could include process of determining strengths, affinities, and areas of need; leveraging strengths, demystification, providing accommodations and/or interventions at the breakdown point
- b) *Complete attached balance sheet* including at least *one strength* (1 point), *one affinity* (1 point), *one area of need* (1 point), and *two accommodations or interventions* (2 points).
  - Eight Neurodevelopmental Systems—Attention, Memory, Social Thinking, Visual-Spatial, Higher Thinking, Motor, Sequential Ordering, Language
  - Explanation could include process of determining strengths, affinities, and areas of need; leveraging strengths, demystification, providing accommodations and/or interventions at the breakdown point



## APPENDIX B (cont'd)

### ACCELERATED COLLABORATIVE TEACHER (ACT) PREPARATION PROGRAM SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

EDUC 542: Meeting the Needs of All Students in Urban Schools  
(January 27-May 19, 2003)

#### **Final—Spring 2003**

Question #3: Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments—  
Schools Attuned (10 points)

Scenario:

Trevor and Max have been in your class since the beginning of the year and have been exhibiting the following behaviors:

Trevor loves making other classmates laugh and seems to enjoy his reputation for being “weird.” He reports to you that he has lots of energy that he cannot control and this is evidenced by his behaviors in class, such as getting out of his seat and making strange noises.

Max, on the other hand, seems to be in his own world—avoiding any type of effort in class whatsoever, preferring to keep to himself, and generally withdrawing from teacher-student and student-student interaction. He tells you that he is constantly worried about getting into trouble and, therefore, avoids contact with others.

Question:

Given these student descriptions, address each of the following:

- a. Classify these student behaviors as indicative of one of the behavioral complications (1 point) presented in the seminar (i.e., acting out, anger and aggression, noncompliance, or lack of social abilities). Offer at least two more signs of these behavior problems that you might expect from Trevor and two more from Max (2 points).
- b. Describe at least two teacher strategies to be implemented with each student (4 total strategies) that were presented either in the video *Behavioral Complications* or in the handouts distributed in class (4 points).

Using the materials distributed in Home Teams on May 5<sup>th</sup>, discuss at least three (3) ways parents and teachers might communicate more effectively about behavioral problems that are encountered in the classroom (3 points).

APPENDIX C

SCHOOLS ATTUNED FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE SURVEY

May 5, 2003

Specialization: \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this survey is to collect information on how ACT candidates understand the philosophy, underlying vocabulary, and foundational concepts of Schools Attuned.

Directions: Please mark an X in the appropriate box for each item listed below.

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. I am familiar with the nine (9) principles of Schools Attuned.				
2. I can list and generally describe each of the eight (8) neurodevelopmental constructs.				
3. I can adequately define all of the following terms: accommodations, neurodevelopmental functions, dysfunction, and demystification.				
4. I can recognize the signs of impending behavior problems in my students.				
5. I feel that I can select and implement strategies to directly address student behavior problems.				
6. I can effectively communicate with families regarding the learning needs of their children.				
7. I am confident that I can make a difference in the lives of my students.				

## APPENDIX D

### DESCRIPTION OF REGIONAL TRAINING LIAISON DUTIES

1. Support the development of Schools Attuned sites with a specific focus on the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) as well as contiguous districts (e.g., La Canada/Flintridge, Las Virgenes, Santa Clarita, etc.).
2. Under the direction of the Executive Director, work with CSUN faculty to advance the philosophy and methodology of All Kinds of Minds and Schools Attuned.
3. Collaborate with the Executive Director and other members of the administrative team to implement and evaluate the research program investigating the effectiveness of All Kinds of Minds and Schools Attuned philosophy and methodology.
4. Communicate activities of all existing regional training sites for Schools Attuned to the Executive Director and the rest of the administrative staff.
5. Collaborate with the Executive Director on the continued preparation of CHIME Charter School administrator, teachers, and staff using the Schools Attuned core curriculum.
6. Assist the Executive Director with the development and marketing for additional training for administrators and related school level personnel.
7. Provide awareness workshops throughout Southern California to advance All Kinds of Minds and Schools Attuned philosophy and methodology.