

**Attachment 8**

Required Letters of Concurrence:

Memoranda of understanding from Tina Cheng, Director, Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, Johns Hopkins University to the following:

Betty Donaldson, Principal, Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School

Veronica Dixon, Principal, Highlandtown Middle School

Deborah King, Principal, Chinquapin Middle School

# JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

## School of Medicine

600 North Wolfe Street / Park 351  
Baltimore, MD 21287-3144  
410-614-3865 / Fax 410-502-5440

Division of General Pediatrics and  
Adolescent Medicine

March 12, 2003

To: Betty Donaldson, Principal  
Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School

From: Tina L. Cheng, MD, MPH, Director, Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent  
Medicine  
Barry Solomon, MD, MPH, Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine  
Marie C. D'Amico, MPH, Project Coordinator

Re: Memorandum of Understanding

We are pleased to invite Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School to participate as the vanguard school for the "Steppin' Up" project. We look forward to a dynamic and creative collaborative relationship with the administration and faculty at Dunbar, and anticipate this collaboration to be mutually rewarding. With these expectations, we have summarized below our understanding about the nature of this relationship.

### Project Summary

The "Steppin' Up: Positive Youth Development Program" is a collaborative project involving The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine in The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School. Activities between mentors and students will focus on improving students' attitudes and skills pertaining to nonaggressive behavior and academic engagement. Parents will become agents of change through the development and communication of important health messages for parents of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students.

The study will be conducted as a randomized trial. Accordingly standard procedures will be used to assure that each participating 6<sup>th</sup> grade student will have an equal chance of being assigned to either of the two groups, the special intervention or the informational enhancement group. Students randomized to the special intervention group will participate in training conducted by project staff and mentors addressing school motivation and engagement, problem solving, and self-control. Students randomized to the informational enhancement group will receive similar information about the importance of school engagement and self control but will not participate in the group sessions with mentors.



### **Benefits of Being the Vanguard School**

The faculty and administration will have access to the resources of the study team and have the opportunity to learn about new applications of learning theory and behavior change principles. Teachers, administrators, and students will take part in the implementation and evaluation of an important project to increase students' motivation for school engagement and skills to recognize and avoid unsafe interpersonal interactions. The *Steppin' Up* program is particularly exciting because it provides students with the opportunity to interact closely with a caring adult. Students at the vanguard school are likely to benefit by learning new skills and bonding more closely with the school. School administration and faculty are likely to benefit from students' increased engagement by experiencing improvements in the operation of their school.

### **Participation of the Vanguard School**

The requirements of a research design govern certain aspects of this project to ensure usable outcome data. For example, the assignment of students to groups must be decided by chance, and data collection and intervention implementation must be systematic and consistent. Nevertheless, the collaborative nature of the project offers opportunities for teachers and administrators to contribute to the development, evaluation, and refinement of the intervention. While we are sensitive to the workload of teachers and administrators, we seek their active involvement and input. At the same time, the actual demands on teachers and staff will be kept to a minimum. The research team anticipates that the vanguard site will be flexible with respect to any changes and additions that arise and will work with us to explore various options for optimal implementation. Equally, it is the intention of the research team to respect fully the constraints determined by ongoing school activities and procedures.

### **Dunbar Middle School Responsibilities**

Recognizing that this research project must be developed and implemented with full respect for the school's primary academic responsibilities, in its role as the vanguard site, the teachers and administrators at Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School agree to assume the following responsibilities:

1. Assist in the identification and recruitment of students who will attend Dunbar Middle School for 6<sup>th</sup> grade and their parents;
2. Allow opportunities to explain the program to students and parents and obtain consent;
3. Facilitate opportunities for our staff to meet and discuss program goals and activities with teachers and school administrators;
4. Identify a qualified school staff member to serve as the program liaison;
5. Arrange time and space for the program's activities, including weekly program conduct, semiannual data collection, and possible parent meetings;
6. Facilitate research staff access to participating students' school records for which their parents have provided consent, including attendance, grades, and disciplinary information;
7. Encourage Dunbar teacher and staff involvement in the study, including providing input and assisting with recruitment, obtaining consent, and data collection.

***Steppin' Up Staff Responsibilities***

Recognizing that implementation of the *Steppin' Up* program depends on the approval of the school and that the staff are guests of the school, within the available resources, institutional considerations, and study requirements, the *Steppin' Up* investigators and staff agree to the following responsibilities:

1. Ensure parental consent for study participation;
2. Provide status reports to the school on the progress and activities of the program;
3. Develop and implement the youth program activities within the school structure, schedule, and requirements;
4. Provide education designed to increase parental involvement;
5. Serve as a resource to Dunbar teachers and staff;
6. Provide qualified and trained staff to conduct measurement and intervention;
7. Involve school staff in program activities and provide school staff training to the extent possible and desirable;
8. Identify and provide resources as possible to offset the cost of the program on staff time, facilities, and resources;
9. As possible, serve as a resource for school improvement initiatives.

*Please refer to the attached document, Program Description and Timeline, for further description of project activities.*

The signatures below acknowledge institutional and personal endorsement of this Memorandum of Understanding.

Betty J. Donaldson  
Betty Donaldson, Principal  
Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School

3/12/03  
Date

Tina Z. Cheng  
Tina Cheng, MD, MPH, Director, Division  
of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine,  
The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

3/12/03  
Date



## *Steppin' Up*

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND TIMELINE**

#### **Program Development**

The program development phase of the project will involve formulating cohesive classroom activities involving community mentors centered on students' attitudes and expectations toward themselves, peer deviance, school engagement, self-control, and interpersonal behavior. Activities also will build social competence and problem-solving skills. Research staff from the NICHD and The Johns Hopkins University will develop the program activities, providing ample opportunities for review by teachers, administrators, parents, and others.

#### **Mentor sessions**

Throughout the school year special intervention students will attend weekly group-mentoring sessions involving program staff and mentors who are fully trained in the goals and objectives of the program. These sessions will occur every day during students' spar period and will involve groups of 10 – 20 students meeting on any given day. Weekly activities will be organized and designed to motivate students to try hard in school and to resolve interpersonal problems without aggression. They will also include one-on-one sessions between individual children and a staff or mentor where they can share their recent experiences and identify problems and possible solutions.

#### **Parent Intervention Component**

All parents will receive information encouraging them to clearly communicate their expectations for their children's behavior regarding school engagement and safe behavior. In addition, some willing parents will be involved in the development of a media product about ways parents of middle school students can best foster their children's development, motivation, and behavior. This group of parents will also participate in dissemination of the chosen message to parents of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students using various communication methods. Parents will also be asked to complete brief surveys.

#### **Time Line**

The overall time line is shown below. As with other elements of the research study, the scheduling of these specific activities will be negotiated to the mutual benefit of the school, the research team, and the timely development of the project.

<i>Fall, 2003-05</i>	Recruitment; baseline assessment; initiation of program activities
<i>Spring, 2004-06</i>	Annual post assessment

# JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

## School of Medicine

600 North Wolfe Street/Park 392  
Baltimore, MD 21287-3144  
(410) 614-3862/FAX (410) 502-5440

## Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine

March 3, 2004

To: Veronica Dixon, Principal  
Highlandtown Middle School

From: Tina L. Cheng, MD, MPH, Director, Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent  
Medicine  
Barry Solomon, MD, MPH, Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine  
Marie C. D'Amico, MPH, Project Coordinator

Re: Memorandum of Understanding

We are pleased to invite Highlandtown Middle School to participate in the "*Steppin' Up*" project. We look forward to a dynamic and creative collaborative relationship with the administration and faculty at Highlandtown, and anticipate this collaboration to be mutually rewarding. With these expectations, we have summarized below our understanding about the nature of this relationship.

### Project Summary

The "*Steppin' Up*: Positive Youth Development Program" is a collaborative project involving The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine in The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (JHU), and Highlandtown Middle School. Activities between mentors and students will focus on improving attitudes pertaining to school engagement, strengthening social skills and decreasing aggressive behavior. Parents will be invited to participate in developing and communicating important health messages for other parents of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. This project has been approved by Baltimore City Public Schools and the Institutional Review Boards at JHU and NICHD.

The study will be conducted as a randomized trial. Accordingly standard procedures will be used to assure that each participating 6<sup>th</sup> grade student will have an equal chance of being assigned to either of the two groups, the special intervention or the informational enhancement group. Students randomized to the special intervention group will participate in weekly sessions conducted by project staff and mentors addressing school motivation and engagement, problem solving, and goal setting. Students randomized to the informational enhancement group will



receive similar information about the importance of school engagement and problem solving but will not participate in the weekly sessions with mentors.

### **Benefits of Participating in the *Steppin' Up Program***

The faculty and administration will have access to the resources of the study team and have the opportunity to learn about new applications of learning theory and behavior change principles. Teachers, administrators, and students will take part in the implementation and evaluation of an important project to increase students' motivation for school engagement and skills to recognize and avoid unsafe interpersonal interactions. The *Steppin' Up Program* is particularly exciting because it provides students with the opportunity to interact closely with a caring adult. Students at Highlandtown Middle School are likely to benefit by learning new skills and bonding more closely with the school. School administration and faculty are likely to benefit from students' increased engagement by experiencing improvements in the operation of their school.

### **Participation in the *Steppin' Up Program***

The requirements of a research design govern certain aspects of this project to ensure usable outcome data. For example, the assignment of students to groups must be decided by chance, and data collection and intervention implementation must be systematic and consistent. Nevertheless, the collaborative nature of the project offers opportunities for teachers and administrators to contribute to the development, evaluation, and refinement of the intervention. While we are sensitive to the workload of teachers and administrators, we will seek their active involvement and input. At the same time, the actual demands on teachers and staff will be kept to a minimum. The research team anticipates that administrators and staff at Highlandtown will be flexible with respect to any changes and additions that arise and will work with us to explore various options for optimal implementation. Equally, it is the intention of the research team to respect fully the constraints determined by ongoing school activities and procedures.

### **Highlandtown Middle School Responsibilities**

Recognizing that this research project must be developed and implemented with full respect for the school's primary academic responsibilities, the teachers and administrators at Highlandtown Middle School agree to assume the following responsibilities:

1. Assist in the identification and recruitment of students who will attend Highlandtown Middle School for 6<sup>th</sup> grade and their parents;
2. Allow opportunities to explain the program to students and parents and obtain consent;
3. Facilitate opportunities for our staff to meet and discuss program goals and activities with teachers and school administrators;
4. Identify a qualified school staff member to serve as the program liaison;
5. Arrange time and space for the program's activities, including weekly program conduct, semiannual computer-based data collection for all participating students, and possible parent meetings;
6. Facilitate research staff access to participating students' school records for which their parents have provided consent, including attendance, grades, and disciplinary information;

7. Encourage Highlandtown teacher and staff involvement in the study, including providing input and assisting with recruitment, obtaining consent, and data collection.

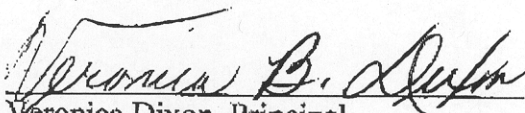
***Steppin' Up Staff Responsibilities***

Recognizing that implementation of the *Steppin' Up Program* depends on the approval of the school and that the staff are guests of the school, within the available resources, institutional considerations, and study requirements, the *Steppin' Up* investigators and staff agree to the following responsibilities:

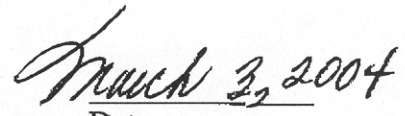
1. Ensure parental consent for study participation;
2. Provide status reports to the school on the progress and activities of the program;
3. Develop and implement the youth program activities within the school structure, schedule, and requirements;
4. Provide education designed to increase parental involvement;
5. Serve as a resource to Highlandtown teachers and staff;
6. Provide qualified and trained staff to conduct measurement and intervention;
7. Involve school staff in program activities and provide school staff training to the extent possible and desirable;
8. Identify and provide resources as possible to offset the cost of the program on staff time, facilities, and resources;
9. As possible, serve as a resource for school improvement initiatives.

*Please refer to the attached documents, **Program Description and Timeline** and approved consent forms, for further description of project activities.*

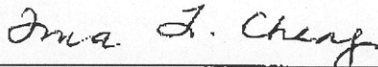
The signatures below acknowledge institutional and personal endorsement of this Memorandum of Understanding.



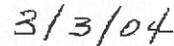
Veronica Dixon, Principal  
Highlandtown Middle School



Date



Tina Cheng, MD, MPH, Director, Division  
of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine,  
The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine



Date



## *Steppin' Up*

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND TIMELINE**

#### **Program Implementation**

Program implementation will involve delivering cohesive classroom activities involving community mentors centered on students' attitudes and expectations toward themselves, school engagement, interpersonal behavior, and goal setting. Activities also will build social competence and problem-solving skills. Other voluntary activities such as field trips or special events may be offered. Research staff from the NICHD and The Johns Hopkins University will develop the program activities, providing opportunities for review by teachers, administrators, and others.

#### **Mentor sessions**

Throughout the school year special intervention students will attend weekly group-mentoring sessions involving program staff and mentors who are fully trained in the goals and objectives of the program. These sessions will occur every day during students' SPAR period and will involve groups of 10 – 20 students meeting on any given day. Weekly activities will be organized and designed to motivate students to try hard in school and to resolve interpersonal problems without aggression. They will also include one-on-one sessions between individual children and a staff or mentor where they can share their recent experiences and identify problems and possible solutions.

#### **Parent Intervention Component**

All parents will receive information encouraging them to clearly communicate their expectations for their children's behavior regarding school engagement and safe behavior. In addition, some willing parents will be involved in the development of a media product about ways parents of middle school students can best foster their children's development, motivation, and behavior. This group of parents will also participate in dissemination of the chosen message to parents of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students using various communication methods. All participating parents will also be asked to complete brief surveys by phone.

#### **Time Line**

The overall time line is shown below. As with other elements of the research study, the scheduling of these specific activities will be negotiated to the mutual benefit of the school, the research team, and the timely development of the project.

<i>Fall, 2004 &amp; 2005</i>	Recruitment; baseline assessment; initiation of program activities
<i>Spring, 2005 &amp; 2006</i>	Annual post assessment

# JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

## School of Medicine

600 North Wolfe Street/Park 392  
Baltimore, MD 21287-3144  
(410) 614-3862/FAX (410) 502-5440

## Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine

November 18, 2005

To: Deborah King, Principal  
Chinquapin Middle School

From: Tina L. Cheng, MD, MPH, Director, Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent  
Medicine  
Barry Solomon, MD, MPH, Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine  
Nadine Finigan, MA, Project Manager

Re: Memorandum of Understanding

We are pleased to invite Chinquapin Middle School to participate in the *"Steppin' Up"* project. We look forward to a dynamic and creative collaborative relationship with the administration and faculty at Chinquapin, and anticipate this collaboration to be mutually rewarding. With these expectations, we have summarized below our understanding about the nature of this relationship.

### Project Summary

The *"Steppin' Up: Positive Youth Development Program"* is a collaborative project involving The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine in The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (JHU), and Chinquapin Middle School. Activities between mentors and students will focus on improving attitudes pertaining to school engagement, strengthening social skills and decreasing aggressive behavior. Parents will be invited to participate in developing and communicating important health messages for other parents of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. This project has been approved by Baltimore City Public Schools and the Institutional Review Boards at JHU and NICHD.

The study will be conducted as a randomized trial. Accordingly standard procedures will be used to assure that each participating 6<sup>th</sup> grade student will have an equal chance of being assigned to either of the two groups, the special intervention or the informational enhancement group. Students randomized to the special intervention group will participate in weekly sessions conducted by project staff and mentors addressing school motivation and engagement, problem solving, and goal setting. Students randomized to the informational enhancement group will



receive similar information about the importance of school engagement and problem solving but will not participate in the weekly sessions with mentors.

### **Benefits of Participating in the *Steppin' Up Program***

The faculty and administration will have access to the resources of the study team and have the opportunity to learn about new applications of learning theory and behavior change principles. Teachers, administrators, and students will take part in the implementation and evaluation of an important project to increase students' motivation for school engagement and skills to recognize and avoid unsafe interpersonal interactions. The *Steppin' Up Program* is particularly exciting because it provides students with the opportunity to interact closely with a caring adult. Students at Chinquapin Middle School are likely to benefit by learning new skills and bonding more closely with the school. School administration and faculty are likely to benefit from students' increased engagement by experiencing improvements in the operation of their school.

### **Participation in the *Steppin' Up Program***

The requirements of a research design govern certain aspects of this project to ensure usable outcome data. For example, the assignment of students to groups must be decided by chance, and data collection and intervention implementation must be systematic and consistent. Nevertheless, the collaborative nature of the project offers opportunities for teachers and administrators to contribute to the development, evaluation, and refinement of the intervention. While we are sensitive to the workload of teachers and administrators, we will seek their active involvement and input. At the same time, the actual demands on teachers and staff will be kept to a minimum. The research team anticipates that administrators and staff at Chinquapin will be flexible with respect to any changes and additions that arise and will work with us to explore various options for optimal implementation. Equally, it is the intention of the research team to respect fully the constraints determined by ongoing school activities and procedures.

### **Chinquapin Middle School Responsibilities**

Recognizing that this research project must be developed and implemented with full respect for the school's primary academic responsibilities, the teachers and administrators at Chinquapin Middle School agree to assume the following responsibilities:

1. Assist in the identification and recruitment of students who will attend Chinquapin Middle School for 6<sup>th</sup> grade and their parents;
2. Allow opportunities to explain the program to students and parents and obtain consent;
3. Facilitate opportunities for our staff to meet and discuss program goals and activities with teachers and school administrators;
4. Identify a qualified school staff member to serve as the program liaison;
5. Arrange time and space for the program's activities, including weekly program conduct, semiannual computer-based data collection for all participating students, and possible parent meetings;
6. Facilitate research staff access to participating students' school records for which their parents have provided consent, including attendance, grades, and disciplinary information;

7. Encourage Chinquapin teacher and staff involvement in the study, including providing input and assisting with recruitment, obtaining consent, and data collection.

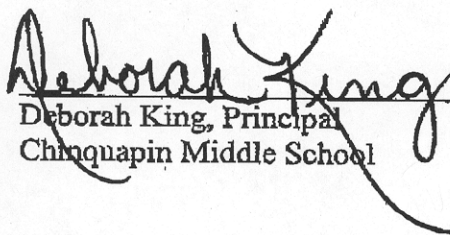
### ***Steppin' Up Staff Responsibilities***

Recognizing that implementation of the *Steppin' Up Program* depends on the approval of the school and that the staff are guests of the school, within the available resources, institutional considerations, and study requirements, the *Steppin' Up* investigators and staff agree to the following responsibilities:

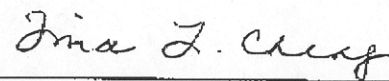
1. Ensure parental consent for study participation;
2. Provide status reports to the school on the progress and activities of the program;
3. Develop and implement the youth program activities within the school structure, schedule, and requirements;
4. Provide education designed to increase parental involvement;
5. Serve as a resource to Chinquapin teachers and staff;
6. Provide qualified and trained staff to conduct measurement and intervention;
7. Involve school staff in program activities and provide school staff training to the extent possible and desirable;
8. Identify and provide resources as possible to offset the cost of the program on staff time, facilities, and resources;
9. As possible, serve as a resource for school improvement initiatives.

*Please refer to the attached documents, Program Description and Timeline and approved consent forms, for further description of project activities.*

The signatures below acknowledge institutional and personal endorsement of this Memorandum of Understanding.

  
Deborah King, Principal  
Chinquapin Middle School

11/23/05  
Date

  
Tina Cheng, MD, MPH, Director, Division  
of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine,  
The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

11/23/05  
Date



## *Steppin' Up*

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND TIMELINE**

#### **Program Implementation**

Program implementation will involve delivering cohesive classroom activities involving community mentors centered on students' attitudes and expectations toward themselves, school engagement, interpersonal behavior, and goal setting. Activities also will build social competence and problem-solving skills. Other voluntary activities such as field trips or special events may be offered. Research staff from the NICHD and The Johns Hopkins University will develop the program activities, providing opportunities for review by teachers, administrators, and others.

#### **Mentor sessions**

Throughout the school year special intervention students will attend weekly group-mentoring sessions involving program staff and mentors who are fully trained in the goals and objectives of the program. These sessions will occur during students' SPAR period and will involve groups of 10 – 20 students meeting on any given day. Weekly activities will be organized and designed to motivate students to try hard in school and to resolve interpersonal problems without aggression. They will also include one-on-one sessions between individual children and staff or mentor where they can share their recent experiences and identify problems and possible solutions.

#### **Parent Intervention Component**

All parents will receive information encouraging them to clearly communicate their expectations for their children's behavior regarding school engagement and safe behavior. In addition, some willing parents will be involved in the development of a component designed to address ways parents of middle school students can best foster their children's development, motivation, and behavior. This group of parents will also participate in dissemination of the chosen message to parents of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students using various communication methods. All participating parents will also be asked to complete brief surveys by phone.

#### **Time Line**

The overall time line is shown below. As with other elements of the research study, the scheduling of these specific activities will be negotiated to the mutual benefit of the school, the research team, and the timely development of the project.

<i>Fall, 2005 &amp; 2006</i>	Recruitment; baseline assessment; initiation of program activities
<i>Spring, 2006 &amp; 2007</i>	Annual post assessment