School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
February 7, 2018

Some Resource Updates From the Field
Links to the following from the Education Commission of the States:

(1) School Discipline Policy Snapshot Series
>*Alternative School Discipline Strategies*
>*Restraint and Seclusion*
>*Suspension and Expulsion*

(2) *Key research studies on the impact of social emotional learning interventions on student outcomes*

Discussion Topics:
>**How to more effectively identify/prevent child abuse and neglect**
>**More on MTSS and working with a continuum of interventions at schools**

Center Resources relevant to these concerns

Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

Note: Go to http://smhp.psych.ucla **for links to other resources including**
>**Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops**
>**Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers**
>**Training and job opportunities**
>**Upcoming webcasts & other professional development opportunities**

This resource is from the
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA

######################################

Given shrinking education budgets, we have been asked to increase our outreach to make our free resources more available (e.g., for planning, professional development, etc.).

So please feel free to share with anyone you think might benefit (e.g., forward our resources to individuals and share on listservs and websites).

****

For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

For previous postings of community of practice discussions, see
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm

######################################

Some Resource Updates From the Field

From the Education Commission of the States:

(1) School Discipline Policy Snapshot Series
>*Alternative School Discipline Strategies* – https://www.ecs.org/alternative-school-discipline-strategies/
>*Restraint and Seclusion* – https://www.ecs.org/restraint-and-seclusion/
>*Suspension and Expulsion* – https://www.ecs.org/suspension-and-expulsion/

(2) *Key research studies on the impact of social emotional learning interventions on student outcomes* – https://www.ecs.org/state-information-request-social-emotional-learning/

This week's Topics:

>How to more effectively identify/prevent child abuse and neglect

>More on MTSS and working with a continuum of interventions at schools

Topic: *How to more effectively identify/prevent child abuse and neglect*

Request from a colleague: "I'm sure you are as horrified as everyone else about the news of the Turpin family (13 children in Riverside, CA). It bothers me that the checks on a child's well-being that occur on an regular basis with children who physically attend school do not also occur with home-schooled children. In the wake of this tragedy I'm wondering what your readers are thinking about it. It would be very interesting to hear any ideas they may have about how this tragedy could be more effectively prevented. I think it would be a worthy goal to promote some type of proactive legislation at the state or federal level that would require parents who register their child in a home-schooling curriculum bring their child with them to the educational service region office and submit to having their child interviewed by a professional child care worker? Even though many may argue that a requirement of an interview as I am suggesting would be an intrusive infringement upon a parent's liberty to raise their child as they wish, from what I can tell there seems to be widespread concern and support by the public to prevent this from happening again in some other household. Safeguarding a parent's right to raise their child as they see fit should be secondary to anything that safeguards a child's well-being. Your thoughts?"

Center Comments: Certainly society has a responsibility to both appropriately help and socialize, especially when the wellness of children is involved. Many issues arise, however, with respect to the appropriate role of schools in all this. You may find of interest our article entitled:

>*Addressing student and schooling problems: Not another project!: Child safety should be embedded in the missions of schools* –

   https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213414000180

Here's a brief excerpt:

Children who are abused and neglected represent yet one more designated group for whom schools have a variety of roles to play. Reporting child abuse, of course, is a mandate for school personnel. Mandates aside, school staff are concerned about child maltreatment because it is among a wide range of problems that are potential barriers to learning and teaching....

In meeting the challenge, too often the tendency is to think mainly about specific problems experienced by individual students. Certainly, schools need to continue to broaden what they do about specific problems such as child maltreatment and trauma. But the complex array of factors interfering with schools achieving their mission calls for more than enhancing services for an array of separate problems. We suggest that meeting the challenge requires embedding all agenda for specific problems

into the mission of schools by embracing an expanded vision for school improvement policy and practice that establishes new directions for student and learning supports....

As the article discusses, such new directions involve a continuum of interventions that equitably promotes wellness and addresses problems. And this brings us to the continuing exchange about MTSS which is the second topic for this week's School Practitioner.

<center>###</center>

Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

How does your local school/district outreach to families when there is concern about a student's well being?

Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

<center>##################################</center>

Topic: *More on MTSS and working with a continuum of interventions at schools*

The following are excerpts from a response from Howard Knoff, Director, Project ACHIEVE, to the open letter in the 1/17/18 School Practitioner from several superintendents regarding MTSS:

I know that virtually every school has Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III services now-a-days. But honestly, of the hundreds of schools that I work with each year, the vast majority have adopted approaches that:
> ** They do not understand and cannot fully staff*
> ** Violate assessment and intervention science (and, sorry!!!, common sense)*
> ** Are not implemented with the integrity and/or intensity needed for student success*
> ** Do not link instructional and intervention strategies with the diagnostic assessments that determine the underlying reasons for students' problems*
> ** Delay services to the most-needy students, sometimes delivering them at the Tier III level. . . but only after requiring these students to fail at Tier I and Tier II*

Significantly, these schools are not trying to be ineffective. They simply believe that they have no time to create their own approaches . . . and so, they adopt approaches from "nationally-regarded" individuals and organizations whom they assume are "the experts."

Next, they don't know what they don't know. That is, they don't have the technical expertise to evaluate and realize that what some of "these experts" recommend has not been field-tested, will not be effective, and does not make sense for students or staff.

And let's remember, on the issue of time:

Ultimately, schools spend more time at the "back-end," often over many years and grade levels, in (a) re-evaluating and re-remediating students, and (b) having to use more resources and specialists when their multi-tier systems have failed because they did not invest their research, planning, training, and effective implementation time on sound approaches at the "front-end".

And the most-tragic loss of time and function occurs when persistent student failure results in (a) students enrolling in other schools or dropping out; (b) parents publicly disparaging their schools or taking them to court; and/or (c) schools being labeled "failing schools," resulting in districts or state department of education oversight, supervision, and management.

What Does the Federal Law Say?
The term "response-to-intervention" (or any of its derivatives) does not appear in the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act/Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA/ESSA).
Instead, ESEA/ESSA requires schools and districts to develop a "multi-tier system of supports" . . . and it defines this as "a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making."
Critically, the term "multi-tier system of supports" appears only five times in the entire law. Moreover, the term is always written in lower case (except where the term is the title for a section of the law), and the acronym "MTSS" (designating a particular framework or model of multi-tier services) NEVER appears.

Right from the beginning: This means that the current or any forthcoming U.S. Department of Education MTSS framework (usually disseminated through its Office of Special Education Programs; OSEP) is not required by ESEA/ESSA nor can any other national or state MTSS approach be mandated unless it has been codified in law and statutory regulation. Relatedly, any MTSS Guidance document disseminated by the U.S. Department of Education or OSEP is just that: guidance and NOT regulation.

Moving on: *Relative to the five times the term appears in the law, two appearances are in the definition as above. The other three citations appear in sections where the law talks about the need for all districts receiving ESEA/ESSA funds to:*

> ** "(D)evelop programs and activities that increase the ability of teachers to effectively teach children with disabilities, including children with significant cognitive disabilities, and English learners, which may include the use of multi-tier systems of support and positive behavioral intervention and supports, so that such children with disabilities and English learners can meet the challenging State academic standards."*
>
> ** "Provid(e) for a multi-tier system of supports for literacy services."*
>
> ** Offer professional development opportunities that "are designed to give teachers of children with disabilities or children with development delays, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and academic support services, to those children, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, multi-tier system of supports, and use of accommodations. . ."*

Thus . . . nowhere in ESEA/ESSA does it specify:

> ** The number of tiers needed in a multi-tier system;*
> ** The number of students to be targeted at each tier;*
> ** How students at different tiers should be grouped, and who should work with them and where;*
> ** What assessments should be done with students at different tiers, when they should occur, and what decision rules should be used relative to moving students up and down the multi-tier continuum.*

Significantly, each school or district in this country that receives ESEA/ESSA and other federal funds has the opportunity to design, detail, and implement its own multi-tier system (within the confines of state law). Parenthetically, some MTSS systems written into some state laws have serious flaws, mainly because they adopted the U.S. Department of Education's framework.

Moreover, according to the law, most schools and districts will need to write the details of their multi-tier system into their ESEA/ESSA "School-wide Program Plan," particularly when they are using ESEA/ESSA funds to implement school-wide programming.

What all of this means is: that schools and districts need to complete a formal strategic planning and needs assessment process, involving school and support staff, parents, and students, that results in a multi-tier system of supports that targets (a) their own students" needs; (b) the local resources, strategies, and professional development required to meet all of their students' needs; including (c) their academic and non-academic needs and outcomes.

Said a different way: Schools and districts need to create a personalized system to fit their student goals and needs, rather than adopt an external system that forces their student goals and needs into THAT system.

The "bottom line" is that all districts and schools need to understand what is in the federal law, and what is not. Moreover, they need to make sure that they have the science-to-practice technical assistance available to them so that they can independently evaluate others' multi-tiered approaches. . . or so that they can create the best one that best fits their own students.

(For more, Dr. Knoff refers you to three of his blogs
> http://improvingourschools.blogspot.com/2017/01/esea-essa-tells-schools-and-districts-to-build-their-own-multi-tier-system.html
> http://improvingourschools.blogspot.com/2017/10/improving-student-outcomes-when-your-state-department-of-education-adopts-failed-MTSS-RtI-PBIS-frameworks.html
> http://improvingourschools.blogspot.com/2017/10/improving-student-outcomes-when-your-state-department-of-education-adopts-failed-MTSS-and-PBIS-approaches-Part-II.html)

Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

What can you add to this intechange about MTSS?

Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Center Resources Relevant to These Concerns

The Center's online clearinghouse has several Quick Finds related to discipline, social emotional development, abuse, and the continuum of interventions. Each Quick Find offers links to a range of resources from the Center and from other sources. See the following:

>*Disciplinary Codes and Policies* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/Discip.htm
>*Disciplinary* Practices – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/discpractices.htm
>*Classroom Management* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/clssroom.htm
>*Behavior Problems* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p3022_01.htm

>Social Emotional Development – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2102_05.htm

>*Abuse Prevention* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/sexassault.html
>*Child Abuse and Neglect* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p3007_01.htm
>*Child Traumatic Stress* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/ptsd.htm
>*Domestic Violence* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/domestic.htm

>Continuum of interventions – covered in many of the Quick Finds, e.g., see
>>*School Improvement Planning* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/improvement.htm
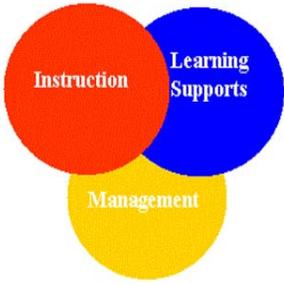

Did you miss?

>**The February *ENEWS'* discussion of improving graduation rates**

>**The *quarterly ejournal* for Winter 2018 articles on**

1. *Evolving School Improvement Plans to Better Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching*
2. *Updates on Advancing Efforts to Transform Student & Learning Supports*
3. *Who Else is Working to Transform Student/learning Supports*
4. *Two Cautionary Notes:*
    >*About Piecemeal Approaches*
    >*About Settling for an Integrated Services Initiative*
5. *Center Assistance for Transforming Student/ Learning Supports*

>The new free book on *Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*

You can access this resource and more from the Center's homepage
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/

**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND
INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!
For new sign-ups – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu
Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.
We post a broad range of issues and responses to the *Net Exchange*
on our website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm
and on *Facebook* (access from the Center's home page http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/)**

---

*Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights;
transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to
enabling equity of opportunity, promoting whole child development,
and enhancing school climate.*
        National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

*School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students"
But when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.*
                                                Carnegie Task Force