**ESSA and Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching:
Is there Movement toward Transforming Student/Learning Supports?**

Abstract

This report is meant as an imperative wake-up call for expanding the prevailing focus of school improvement policy and practice. The report provides analyses of responses from state departments of education, school districts, and leadership organizations about how they are pursuing the opportunity the *Every Student Succeeds Act* provides to *transform* the way schools address barriers to learning and teaching. The analyses highlight the current state of affairs and the degree to which there are indications of innovative new directions. Major concerns are raised about the way efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching are conceived, implemented, and continue to be marginalized in school improvement policy and practice. The report concludes with a discussion of new directions.

ESSA and Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching: Is there Movement toward Transforming Student/Learning Supports?

We keep looking for evidence that efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching are being moved out of the margins of school improvement policy. At this point in the transition to the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), the key question we are asking is:

Are transformative efforts being formulated to evolve how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students?

Our analysis of ESSA itself recognized that the act clearly underscores that barriers to learning need to be addressed so that many more students are able to meet challenging state academic standards. A critical problem, however, is that the act addresses such barriers in a piecemeal and mostly indirect manner. Consequently, as a guide for state and local planning, ESSA conveys a fragmented picture and a lack of coherence with respect to essential student/learning supports. At the same time, ESSA's devolution of power to states and districts can be viewed as providing an invitation to states and LEAs to move away from existing fragmented and marginalized approaches for dealing with factors interfering with equity of opportunity and student success.

To gather data on this matter, in October 2017 we used the U.S. mail to send out a personally addressed letter to school districts, state departments of education, and leadership organizations (see Appendix A). We indicated our interest in how they were pursuing the opportunity to transform the way schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.

As indicated below, the letter went to 230 executives, and we received 47 responses.

	Number Contacted	Number of Respondents
State and Territory Departments of Education	54	18
Selected School Districts (e.g., great city schools)	85	7
Relevant Organizations/ Associations/Centers/ Foundations	91	22

The letter asked for links to any online material or for copies of available information with respect to how they are pursuing the opportunity to transform the way schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. We stressed that our intent was to analyze what leaders across the country indicate about transforming student and learning supports as a key facet in enhancing students' equity of opportunity for success at school and beyond.

Subsequently, we sampled websites of 50 of the nonrespondents to gather and analyze additional data.

This report discusses (1) the degree to which there are indications of new directions afoot for improving how schools *directly* address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students, (2) major concerns about the way efforts to address student's learning, behavior, and emotional problems are conceived and implemented, and (3) new directions.

To embellish and strengthen our analyses, we also drew on two recent reports that reviewed and analyzed ESSA consolidated state plans.

What's the Current State of Affairs?

State Plans

Not surprisingly, given the nature of ESSA, all state plans recognize that schools and students must address barriers to teaching and learning. For example, there are regular statements of concern about school safety and climate (e.g., bullying and violence prevention, substance abuse prevention), the opportunity gap, racial and economic disparities, diversity, cultural responsiveness, English Language Learners (ELL), migrant, neglected, delinquent, homeless, and foster care students, students with mental health problems, students designated as "at risk," students with disabilities, family, youth, and community engagement, character development, social emotional learning (SEL), career and technical education, crisis and trauma response, the school-to-prison pipeline, and more.

In keeping with the template established by federal legislation, the state plans have sections on attending to (a) migrant children, (b) prevention and intervention programs for children and youth who are neglected, delinquent, or at-risk, (c) support for effective instruction, (d) English language acquisition and language enhancement, (e) student support and academic enrichment, (f) 21st century community learning centers, (g) rural and low-income school programs, and (h) education for homeless children and youth program.

Plans also commonly mention addressing related matters such as

- school safety and climate
- pathways to postsecondary education, training, and careers
- afterschool programs
- social emoitional learning
- special education
- family and community engagement
- effective school-based leadership
- high-quality professional learning

However, the amount of related planning varies substantially with respect to delineating how such barriers are and will be addressed. Here are few examples:

- school safety and climate (e.g., "LEAs or schools will prioritize safety, community, and collaboration amongst all stakeholders including faculty, parents and caregivers, and the community")

- pathways to postsecondary education, training, and careers (e.g., "Advancing Pathways to Education and Workforce Opportunities for Systems-Involved Youth – three key lessons that AYPF has identified as critical for promoting pathways to postsecondary education, training, and careers for youth involved in the juvenile justice system and/or youth in foster care ... leveraging authentic youth voice, providing youth with a diversity of comprehensive supports and transitional services, and strategically aligning youth-serving systems and policies")

- afterschool programs (e.g., will "play a role in disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline")

Websites

Analyses of state and district websites with respect to student/learning supports is complicated by the variability in how they organize the sites. Only a few feature such supports as a major section on their homepage. A search of most sites yields links to specific pages that provide lists of initiatives and programs aimed at discrete needs/problems (e.g., chronic absenteeism, anti-bullying/anti-harassment, dropout prevention, positive behavior supports, special education). The influence of federal legislation is widespread (e.g., the sites often have pages organized around federally-funded [title] programs).

Special Intervention Frameworks

The material cited by the majority of respondents and on the websites of nonrespondents indicated a widespread adoption by states/districts/schools of some form of multitiered system of support (usually referred to as MTSS, although some places are using other acronyms). This is not surprising given this framework's emphasis in federal legislation.

In *ESSA*, for example, a schoolwide tiered model (also referred to as a multitier system of supports) is referenced for preventing and addressing behavior problems. The tiered model is defined 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." The tiered model (including use of early intervening services) and specific approaches such as positive behavioral intervention and supports are presented as strategies for enabling children with disabilities and English learners to meet challenging state academic standards and are to be coordinated with similar activities and services carried out under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* (While all websites and documents mention special education, only a few of the ESSA plans reviewed discuss specific ways to enhance collaboration and communication between regular and special education.)

Some states added other special intervention frameworks. For example, Maryland's plan notes that the Maryland State Board of Education has adopted regulations requiring local school systems to use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines and principles in the development and provision of curriculum, instructional materials, instruction, professional development, and student assessments.

About Reorganizing Operational Infrastructure

While most of the state plans we reviewed indicated mechanisms for working with districts, they did not delineate any operational infrastructure reorganization for specifically enhancing how schools address the many barriers to learning and teaching encountered daily.

None of the districts indicated plans for organizational restructuring to develop a more unified and comprehensive approach to student/learning supports. Instead, districts continue to designate separate leads (e.g., directors) for specific programs and initiatives (e.g., federal programs, attendance, student health services, crisis coordination, 504 plans, student placement services, alternative education, foster and homeless youth) and for service personnel (nurses, psychologists, counselors, social workers). Some districts have directors who oversee the range of student support services, but there is no indication of new directions.

Concerns Raised by Two Recent Reviews

Bellwether Education Partners, in partnership with the Collaborative for Student Success conducted an independent review of ESSA state plans (https://bellwethereducation.org/sites/default/files/Bellwether_ESSAReview_ExecSumm_1217_Final.pdf). Here is an excerpt from their report relevant to new directions:

The founding principle of ESSA was that states, unbound by federal oversight, would develop stronger, more creative education systems that in the end would better serve students and increase equity. The law was intended to act as a floor upon which states would build compelling and innovative systems. As such, compliance with the federal law is necessary, meeting the law's minimum requirements will not be enough to improve education for all students. With that in mind, our reviewers were looking for states to go beyond simply checking the boxes. ... We were interested in identifying best practices, not judging states against our own preferences, and we created a simple rubric to evaluate state plans based on nine key elements of what we considered to be foundational aspects of high-quality accountability systems.

Unfortunately, we found that states were not taking full advantage of the opportunities ESSA presented. Instead, with the few exceptions noted below, we found state ESSA plans to be mostly uncreative, unambitious, unclear, or unfinished. This was especially disappointing for states that submitted their plans this fall, whose leaders did not take advantage of the additional time and resources that were made available to them as the result of a later submission date. It's possible that states may go back and bolster their plans over time, but it does not inspire confidence that states chose not to submit plans that advanced educational opportunities in bold and innovative ways for all students.

Here are a few of their conclusions that are most relevant to addressing barriers to learning and teaching:

student subgroups

- **Failure to incorporate student subgroups**: ... we counted only four states—Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, and Texas—that were planning to incorporate individual subgroup performance in some way into each school's rating. ESSA also requires states to identify schools with low-performing subgroups, but only one of the 34 states—Minnesota—provided estimates for what its rules would mean in practice. The rest gave promises without specificity. Next summer, when states begin identifying schools based on their ESSA plans, school leaders may be surprised to find out they're being identified as a school in need of "targeted support" due to low-performing subgroups of students.

low-performing schools

- **Failure to intervene in low-performing schools**: Instead of taking the opportunity to design their own school improvement strategies, states mostly produced plans that are vague and noncommittal about how they will support low-performing schools. Some states identified a list of evidence-based interventions that "may" happen in low-performing schools, but very few outlined specific timelines and interventions that would occur in those schools. Nationally, the federal government will be investing about $1 billion a year specifically to support low-performing schools, and the law gives states wide flexibility about how they use their share of this money, including whether they want to distribute it to school districts via formula or through a competition, or if the state wants to embed its own priorities in those distributions. The Department of Education did not ask states how they were planning to spend these funds—which in itself is a lost opportunity—and only 12 of the 34 states voluntarily disclosed their plans for how they were planning to use all their school improvement funds. The law also allows states to set aside an additional 3 percent of Title I funds to provide "direct student services" to students in low-performing schools, but none of the ... states said they planned to take up this option.

English learners

- **Lack of attention to English learners**: While there are a number of innovative proposals in state plans pertaining to English learners, there are also many remaining uncertainties about how these would work in practice, including missing targets or unclear descriptions of how raw data would be converted into ratings for schools. ESSA requires states to define "languages other than English that are present to a significant extent" (including at least the most common non-English language in the state) and then explain the steps they are taking, beyond providing

accommodations on English-language assessments for those students, to develop tests in these native languages. A number of states, however, declined to name any languages commonly spoken by setting thresholds just beyond the point where they'd have to take action. A number of "English-only" states declined to make any effort at all to explore native language tests. In addition, a handful of states included English language proficiency in only minor ways, and Florida, a state with a significant English learner population, declined to incorporate English learners at all into its school ratings.

- **Lack of attention to students with disabilities**: While the Department of Education did not ask states to discuss in their plans how they were working to ensure students with disabilities are taught grade-level content standards and measuring their progress, states missed an opportunity to explain how their ESSA plans align with other work they're doing to support students with special needs. All states have alternate academic achievement standards and assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, but states barely mentioned them in their plans. ESSA also codified a rule that only 1 percent of students could take these assessments, but no state took the opportunity to articulate how it would manage that process and ensure that this cap was not exceeded.

The Center on Educational Policy surveyed states and reported *Planning for Progress: States Reflect on Year One Implementation of ESSA* (https://www.cep-dc.org/cfcontent_file.cfm?Attachment=Rentner%5FFrizzell%5FKober%5F12%5F11%5F17%2Epdf). Of relevance to addressing barriers to learning and teaching, the report authors caution that:

- Shifting more control to the states brings greater demands and may strain state capacity.

- Eliminating funding for ESSA Title II-A programs would present challenges in most states.

- While states are planning actions to help school districts improve low-performing schools, the most commonly cited actions include developing templates and supports for local needs assessments, creating a process for state approval of improvement plans for low-performing schools, and providing technical assistance to districts.

While both reviews indirectly touch upon matters that we consider relevant to addressing barriers to learning and teaching, it must be stressed that both analyses fail to deal directly with these concerns. That is, neither study looked at whether the ESSA plans have a *direct* focus on addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. Thus, they do not adequately analyze how well these critical concerns are attended to by states, never mind whether there are indications of new directions for doing so. From this perspective, the reviews provide another illustration of the continuing marginalization in school improvement analyses of this critical facet of school improvement.

Major Concerns from Our Analyses

As indicated, our focus here is on the degree to which there are indications of transformative new directions for improving how schools *directly* address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. In reviewing responses, websites, and the two recent reviews from that perspective, the bottom line is that new directions are not evident.

Clearly, the primary focus is on how to improve instruction/curriculum and enhance facets of management/governance that support such improvements. All the information stresses plans to enhance effective school-based leadership, student achievement, high-quality instructional practice, high-quality professional learning, and family and community engagement.

In comparison, short shrift is given to improving *direct* interventions to address barriers to learning and teaching, including the role of student and learning supports personnel.

> **short shrift is given to *direct* interventions to address barriers to learning and teaching, including the role of student and learning supports personnel**

- While programs and initiatives for designated populations and discrete problems are included, they are covered in a fragmented and marginalized manner.
- Little attention is paid to *structural changes* for improving student and learning supports. Specifically, there is no mention of the need for dedicated leadership and an effective operational infrastructure for unifying and developing a comprehensive and equitable system of student/learning supports.
- And given that *direct* interventions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching mostly rest with those whose role and functions are related to student and learning supports (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, student assistance staff, Title I coordinators, etc.), it is striking how little attention is paid to such personnel in terms of reorganizing and redeploying them more effectively to improve school outcomes.

Also of concern is the trend to present some form of a multitiered system of support (MTSS) in framing the lists of interventions. Adoption/adaptation of the multitiered concept ignores the limitations of the framework as an organizing guide for improving how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. Enhancing equity of opportunity for success at school and beyond requires considerable expansion of MTSS. The need is for a much more comprehensive and transformative framework.

Limitations of MTSS in Framing Intervention to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching

Current discussions of a multitiered support system do not recognize that it

- is an inadequate depiction of a continuum of student/learning supports (e.g., it simply delineates levels of school interventions, rather than subsystems of school-community student/learning supports)
- does not clarify the contribution each level can make to reducing the number of students in need of special assistance (and relatedly how the continuum applies the principle of using the least intervention necessary and the practice of using response to intervention)
- does not systematically organize the arenas of intervention (i.e., what schools do each day to address learning, behavior, and emotional problems) and map them into the continuum of supports.

Finally, we note that several other facets of ESSA planning may work against efforts to unify and develop a comprehensive and equitable system of student/learning supports. These include

- accentuating the adoption of science/evidence-based practices while ignoring the need for structural and system development – see http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/empircally-supported.pdf

- mainly stressing the addition of a nonacademic accountability indicator rather than significantly expanding the accountability framework to more fully include a set of standards and indicators for student/learning supports – see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/accountrep.pdf

- overemphasizing the coordination and integration of services rather than calling for development of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable learning support system that is fully integrated into school improvement policy and practice – see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/integpolicy.pdf

---

About the ESSA Template

The template (even when slightly revised by the state) creates fragmented planning. Even states that have been moving to end the fragmentation and marginalization of student/learning supports reverted to responding with discrete approaches to addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Two examples:

- Alabama was in the midst of implementing its "Comprehensive System of Learning Supports" (http://web.alsde.edu/general/ALDOEDesignDocument.pdf), but there is no mention of this in its ESSA Consolidated State Plan – https://www.alsde.edu/dept/essa/State%20Plan/ESSA%20Plan,%20Submitted% 2010-12-2017.pdf#search=ESSA%20Plan.

- On its website, the California Department of Education (CDE) states that it is

    "committed to aligning a system of supports to better meet the needs of the whole child (from cradle to career). Within CDE, we have created a One System Action Team (OSAT) made up of CDE division representatives to support and continue to build the basis for "whole child" support systems and drive the CDE-wide integration of the "one system" concept. The OSAT will provide the internal mechanism to ensure a collaborative, department-wide focus on supporting and building the capacity of LEA's to implement proven or promising research-based programs and practices, specifically targeted at one system serving the whole child"
    (https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/onesystem.asp).
    Here, too, there is no mention of this in the state's ESSA Consolidated Plan (https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/es/documents/caessastateplansubmitted.doc).

Given all this, it seems clear that:

- There is widespread awareness and concern about the need to address a range of learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

- However, the evidence over the last few decades suggests that what we currently see in ESSA plans and on websites is grossly insufficient for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students, especially in schools where the majority of students are not doing well.

Clearly, there remains a fundamental gap in school improvement policy and practice.

Thus, we anticipate that *direct* efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students will continue to be marginalized and pursued in a piecemeal, fragmented, and sometimes redundant manner. And , as long as this is the situation, it is likely that student/learning supports will continue to be sparsely funded, with resources inequitably distributed and pursued with counterproductive competition.

It's Time for New Directions

Our hope is that this report will be an imperative wake-up call for expanding the focus of school improvement policy and practice. ESSA stresses a devolution of power to states and districts; this is the time to use that power to transform student/learning supports.

Our Center at UCLA and the National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports are dedicated to mobilizing direct actions for

*The real difficulty in
changing the course of
any enterprise lies not in
developing new ideas
but in escaping old ones.*
John Maynard Keynes

(a) elevating school improvement policy discussions in ways that lead to ending the marginalization of student/learning supports
and
(b) moving toward transformation of such supports (see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html).

It is noteworthy that a variety of states and districts have flirted with transforming the way they think about addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. (See examples at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm and lessons learned at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/lessonslearned.htm.)

These trailblazing efforts provide examples of ambitious and comprehensive "escaping old ideas" thinking and have helped clarify the type of systemic changes that are required to succeed. Of considerable importance, the work highlights four key interacting considerations involved in moving in new directions for student/learning supports. These involve the need to

- revisit school improvement policies to expand them in ways that end the marginalization of student and learning supports

- adopt intervention frameworks that unify and guide development of a comprehensive, equitable, and systemic learning supports component at every school

- reframe the infrastructure at school, complex, and district levels to ensure effective leadership, redefine roles and functions, and establish resource oriented mechanisms

- develop strategic approaches to enable effective systemic change and replication to scale.

An in-depth discussion of each of these matters is presented in two recent books:

> *Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide* –

> Available at this time as a free resource –
> http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf

> *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System*
> –https://titles.cognella.com/transforming-student-and-learning-supports-9781516512782.html

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

Let us know your reactions to this report. Also, let us know about any new directions that are being developed to directly address barriers to learning and teaching as a major component in efforts to enhance equity of opportunity. (Send info to ltaylor@ucla.edu.)

New Directions: Resources, Coaching, and Technical Assistance

As demand increases for transforming student/learning supports, our Center at UCLA continues to provide free resources, coaching, and technical assistance. Here are links to some quick information about how we can help.

(1) To clarify the need for and nature of a transformed system of student/learning supports, see the following brief discussion - http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/whatiscomp.pdf

(2) To clarify why and how we provide free resources, coaching, and technical assistance, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/coach.pdf

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES   **UCLA**

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO   SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

<div align="right">
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
1257D FRANZ HALL
BOX 951563
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90095-1563
</div>

October 30, 2017

Dear ,

As you may know, our Center has been facilitating the *National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports.** The initiative's recent Call to Action has stimulated inquiries to us about how school districts, state departments of education, and leadership organizations are pursuing the opportunity to transform the way schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.

In response, we are in the process of preparing a report for wide circulation about this matter. Our intent is to analyze what leaders across the country indicate about how to transform student and learning supports as a key facet in enhancing students' equity of opportunity for success at school and beyond. We will connect the analysis to our previous reports on ESSA and addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

We very much want to account for Children Now' perspective on this critical facet of school improvement.

To this end, we are asking you to direct us to any online material or send us copies of what is available from Children Now on this set of concerns.

Please send the information to us at Ltaylor@ucla.edu.

With our highest regards,

Howard and Linda

Howard Adelman, Ph.D
Professor of Psychology &
Center Co-director

Linda Taylor, Ph.D.
Center Co-director

Dept. of Psychology, UCLA
Los Angeles, CA.   90095-1563
Phones: 310/825-1225 310/825-3634
Emails: adelman@psych.ucla.edu
         Ltaylor@ucla.edu
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

*For information about the Center for MH in Schools and Student/Learning Supports, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/. For information about the National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html.

Appendix B

Excerpted Highlights from Responses

All respondents were gracious in their replies; most indicated support for enhancing the focus on learning supports; several wanted follow up discussions. As noted and as will be apparent below, they varied in the nature and scope of the information referenced. What follows are excerpts pared down to highlight the essence of what they shared.

I. From state departments of education

(1) **KS:** Referred to link that describes and supports the state's educational vision.
http://www.ksde.org/Agency/Fiscal-and-Administrative-Services/Communications-and-Recognition-Programs/Vision-Kansans-Can

(2) **AR:** "I have compiled a list of initiatives implemented and supported by ADE."
>Executive Summary of Arkansas's ESSA Plan –
http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/ESEA/ESSA_Executive_Summary_for_Draft_3_82117.pdf
>Statewide Reading Initiative – http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/learning-services/r.i.s.e.-arkansas
>Equitable Access to Effective Educators –
http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/educator%20effectiveness/education-workforce-resources-data/equitable-access-to-effective-educators
>Alternative Education – http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/learning-services/alternative-learning-environmentEquity Assistancehttp://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/public-school-accountability/equity-assistance

(3) **MS:** "A few Mississippi resources that may help inform your report on transforming student and learning supports."
>Mississippi Succeeds plan – www.mdek12.org/essa
>Guidance on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Family Success Guides –
http://www.mdek12.org/ESE/links/response-to-intervention-teacher-support-team
>Changes to graduation requirements to offer students opportunities to be recognized for academic and career/technical excellence –
http://rcu.msstate.edu/Portals/0/Media/Fall%202017%20Regional%20Trainings%20Final.pptx
>Online courses to address the needs of students, especially in smaller schools that may struggle to find staff qualified to teach all advanced courses – Http://www.mdek12.org/moca

(4) DC: "Our website has information on the ReEngagement Center (REC) with a link to BackonTrack DC, a one-stop resource for District residents of all ages who want to get back on track with their plans to pursue a secondary education credential and a career pathway" – https://osse.dc.gov/service/dc-reengagement-center

(5) HI: "The Hawaii Department of Education is pursuing the following in order to transform the way schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.
>The School Transformation Branch helps to facilitate a system and culture of public education work to effectively organize financial, human, and community resources in support of student success [HIDOE/BOE Strategic Plan, Goal 3]. Its focus is on a multi-tiered system of supports. The School Transformation Branch will provide schools support directly and through the complex areas and the Commission's Federal Programs team by providing them with Complex/Charter Academic Officers, who facilitate school improvement efforts and provide technical assistance to schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support and improvement; complex area resource teachers, who provide support and technical assistance to schools implementing support and improvement plans; and Title I Linkers, who monitor the use of Title I funds.
>You can also access the department's strategic plan on the HIDOE internet site."

(6) OK: "The links below provide information on how our state department of education works to *transform the way schools address barriers to learning and teaching* and provide *equity of opportunity* for student success."
>Curriculum Frameworks – http://sde.ok.gov/sde/oklahoma-curriculum-frameworks
>Nine essential elements of effective schools – http://sde.ok.gov/sde/documents/2017-10-30/oklahoma-9-essential-elements-effective-schools-needs-assessment-checklist
>Tiered intervention system support – http://sde.ok.gov/sde/oklahoma-tiered-intervention-system-support-otiss
>Annual incident and suspension report – http://sde.ok.gov/sde/documents/2017-10-20/2017-statewide-annual-incident-and-suspension-report
>Professional learning focus – http://sde.ok.gov/sde/professional-learning-focus
>Counseling resources – http://sde.ok.gov/sde/counseling#Resources-Counselors
>Prevention education – http://sde.ok.gov/sde/prevention-education
>Alternative Education – http://sde.ok.gov/sde/alternative-education-programs

(7) VT: "All published materials related to student learning and supports are found on our website http://education.vermont.gov/ When you land on the page you will see a tab for student support. These include a wide array of supports to facilitate student success."

(8) MA: "On our website we have posted several research reports and resources that identify best practices in school turnaround in our state. Throughout this research you can find resources that address how our turnaround schools are transforming student and learning supports. We have an impact study in 2016 that shows our turnaround approach using SIG funding had statistically significant impacts on student achievement, with an implementation study that digs into the 'how.' Also, we have several schools highlighted in a field guide and videos on their implementation of specific turnaround strategies, as well as recently published research on high school turnaround and supporting EL/SWD students."

(9) CO: "Colorado is addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students, below are two links with the information that is relevant to you request.
>Dropout prevention & engagement – http://www.cde.state.co.us/offices/dropoutpreventionengagementoffice
>State Accountabilities – http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountabilityaecs

(10) IA: "On our website see the document of links to resources organized into two main categories:
>Information Specific to the Iowa Department of Education
>Resources Used and Shared by the Iowa Department of Education."

(11) SC: The Profile of the SC Graduate is the umbrella for our efforts. Also see: Profile of SC graduate.
>Early learning and literacy – https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/early-learning-and-literacy/
>Personalized learning – https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/personalized-learning/
>Learning standards – https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/
>Career and technology education – https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/career-and-technology-education/
>School improvement – https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/school-improvement/
>Special education services – https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/special-education-services/
>Student intervention services – https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/student-intervention-services/
>Virtual education – https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/virtual-education/
>School choice – https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/school-choice/
>District strategic and school renewal plans – https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/state-accountability/district-strategic-and-school-renewal-plans/
>ESSA plan – https://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/every-student-succeeds-act-essa/sc-draft-essa-plan-submitted-10-13-2017/

(12) FL: "Please see Continuous Improvement Management System http://www.floridacims.org"

(13) TX: "The agency would like to point you and your teams in the direction of the following two websites: https://tea.texas.gov/schoolimprovement/ and http://www.taisresources.net/.

(14) ND: "We have several initiatives and State work that supports schools in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. North Dakota's State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) focused on building a North Dakota Framework of Multi-Systems of Supports (NDMTSS). http://www.ndmtss.org
ND has adopted the AdvancEd School Improvement Accreditation platform for Continuous School Improvement. The State is also using the AdvancED platform for measuring student engagement which is one of our accountability indicators within the ESSA Plan."

(15) WA: "Washington's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction completed the state's ESSA Accountability Plan and has addressed your topic within the plan. To access, go to http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/ESSA/pubdocs/WashingtonESSAConsolidatedPlanPurple-lined.pdf. Please see the section on the Statewide Accountability System and School Support and Improvement Activities, starting on page 15 for a description of the state''s plan to support all schools and specifically those schools that are identified as in need of Comprehensive Support and Targeted Support. You may also want to review these additional two sections, School Conditions and School Transitions. As these sections describe many of the services and support structures we have implemented within the state."

(16) NY: "See our website for the State Every Student Succeeds Act plan that was submitted for approval to the United States Department of Education on September 17, 2017."

(17) MD: "Maryland's plan was submitted to the U. S. Department of Education. This plan addresses the issue of equity, as required by the law."

(18) WV: "unable to assist you at this time"

##

II. From districts

(1) Jefferson County, KY: "See JCPS Strategic Plan Vision 2020 – This document provides the foundation to our work and describes the multiple strategies being implemented to achieve our goal of >"Excellence with Equity": https://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/sites/default/files/Vision-2020-Brochure.pdf >Deeper Learning Website- Our fundamental strategy to re-engaging disconnected students (and engaging all students) is through deeper learning. The framework for the work (Caring, Thinking and Communicating), as well as the strategies and infrastructure is described here: https://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/node/30107

>Academic Support Programs-In Jefferson County, we have a multitude of support for students to address the basic needs, as well as the social and emotional needs of students. These programs are through a variety of services and in conjunction with community organizations. Please see the following page for a description of these services: https://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/node/1200 >Diversity, Equity, and Poverty- We also have specific work to address the diverse needs of a multicultural population. The basis of this work is the emphasis on equity and ensuring students have what they need to succeed, and teachers/staff are given the support to implement culturally responsive practices: https://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/node/1080"

(2) Cincinnati Public Schools: "See our My Tomorrow, and Vision 2020 >https://www.cps-k12.org/academics/mytomorrowed >https://www.cps-k12.org/about-cps/district-initiatives/vision-2020"

(3) Seattle: "See on our website Smart Goals, Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity, Formula for Success, Support of Ethnic Studies."

(4) Orange County (FL) Public Schools: "Relevant resources are from the School Improvement Plan on our website and Florida Department of Education resources that we link schools to on our internal site."

(5) Portland (OR) Public Schools: "See our Student Supports, Health and Wellness website. >https://www.pps.net/Domain/44 >Student Support, Health and Wellness – http://www.pps.net"

(6) Madison Metropolitan School District: "There is a lot of information on our website: Strategic Framework (which describes our strategy as a district), that may be of interest to you, as well as information on our School Improvement Plans (SIPs)."

(7) Clark County NV: "Decline to participate"

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

III. From organizations

(1) Success for All: "We do a great deal of research, development, and dissemination of programs to help students overcome barriers. You can find a broad range of reviews of effective programs at www.bestevidence.org"

(2) William T. Grant Foundation: "As funders of academic research, we are committed to using research evidence to find responses to social problems. Our current research interests are reducing inequality in youth outcomes, and improving the use of research evidence in ways that benefit youth. Our perspective is that research should not take place in a vacuum, but should inform practice and policy. We have compiled a number of articles, reports, and blog posts that are representative of our perspective on how to address barriers to learning and teaching." http://wtgrantfoundation.org

(3) American Youth Policy Forum: "Links to various reports on our website that might be of interest to you: >social emotional learning – http://www.aypf.org/resources/sel-special-populations/ >pathways to success -- http://www.aypf.org/resources/supporting-pathways-to-long-term-success/ >foster youth – http://www.aypf.org/resources/foster-juvenile-justice-and-crossover-youth/ >juvenile justice – http://www.aypf.org/programareas/alternative-education-pathways/ >alternative education – http://www.aypf.org/blog/"

(4) Pathways to Positive Futures RTC: "Several research projects here have addressed the issue in different ways. The **Achieve My Plan (AMP)** study tested an intervention focused on re-engaging youth aged 11.5-18. The **Better Futures** study developed a validated model for increasing post-secondary preparation and engagement of youth. **Project Futures,** focuses on enhancing self-determination and community participation. Additional information and resources are also available on our website, https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu ."

(5) School Social Workers Association: "I have attached 3 sample documents about SSWAA's position on this topic. See SSWAA's university liaison, Leticia Villarreal Sosa's book on providing students multi-tiered systems of support: https://global.oup.com/academic/product/school-social-work-9780190273842?q=villarreal%20sosa&lang=en&cc=us."

(6) SERRC "has been involved in developing and creating a Teacher Evaluation Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching. Culturally Responsive pedagogy is responsible for assuring that barriers to learning and teaching are greatly reduced, if not eliminated, in order to provide equitable access for learning for all students."

(7) Rand: "We have a broad portfolio of research that addresses policies and practices in educational contexts ranging from pre-K through postsecondary, and an interest in promoting equity of opportunity has characterized much of this work. Our website (https://www.rand.org/education.html) provides a good overview and has links to specific products and topics. We have a few strands of research that seem especially relevant.
>Personalized learning: (https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1365.html) and (https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2005.html).
>Out-of-school time: (https://www.rand.org/education/research/out-of-school-time.html).
>Addressing the whole child: (https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR863.html) and an early implementation report on NYC's Community Schools. (https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2100.html)."

(8) NEPC: "See our Schools of Opportunity project http://schoolsofopportunity.org The Schools of Opportunity project recognizes public high schools that are creating remarkable opportunities to learn for all their students. Two criteria are required of all applying schools: (1) broadening and enriching learning opportunities and (2) creating and maintaining a healthy school culture."

(9) The Brookings Institution: "See our website for links to these relevant reports and blog posts. Consensus Statement on Pre-Kindergarten Effects; Integrating charter schools and choice-based education systems; Designing accountability systems to avoid NCLB-era mistakes; With DACA's uncertain future, how will states address access to higher education?; One third of a nation: Strategies for helping working families; Memo to the President: Improving student achievement by meeting children's comprehensive needs; How the quality of school lunch affects students' academic performance; Wraparound services still worth it even after accounting for all costs; Children who take the school bus have fewer absences; Want to increase childhood literacy rates? Getting kids to school may be a good place to start; Choosing between teachers and technology; Are school internet connections fast enough to support personalized learning?; A better future for rural communities starts at the schoolhouse; Where you live rather than what you know? The problem with education deserts; Idea to retire: Technology alone can improve student learning; Helping parents help their children."

(10) American's Promise: "See
>2017 Building a Grad Nation Report – http://gradnation.americaspromise.org/report/2017-building-grad-nation-report
>Barriers to Wellness: http://gradnation.americaspromise.org/report/barriers-wellness
>I Came Here to Learn: http://gradnation.americaspromise.org/report/i-came-here-to-learn
>Barriers to Success: http://www.americaspromise.org/report/barriers-success
>Don't Quit on Me: http://www.americaspromise.org/report/dont-quit-me
>Don't Call Them Dropouts: http://www.americaspromise.org/report/dont-call-them-dropouts."

(11) Education Week: "See these Commentaries on our website
(a) how schools should improve the way they directly address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students: Student Trauma Is Real. But Connection Can Heal. Study: 9th and 10th Grades Offer Key Chance to Re-Engage Disengaged Students. A 'Neglected' Population Gets Another Chance at a Diploma. Credit Recovery May Be Flawed, But It's Fixable. To Fill a 'Mentoring Gap,' Schools Get Creative
(b) how student and learning supports should be reorganized to meet the needs of the many students who are not doing well: Happiness Before Homework: Focusing on Feelings in the Classroom. A District That Ditched In-School Suspensions. Competency-Based Learning: A Dropout Prevention Strategy? Studies Link Students' Boredom to Stress. The Paradox of Classroom Boredom
(c) whether the plan's intervention framework for addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems goes beyond the simplicity of the tiered presentation that is widely discussed as a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS): RTI May Fall Short in Flagging Certain Students. RTI Expands, Encounters Growing Pains. Tackling School Climate, Student Behavior as a Route to Improvement. Ky. District Uses RTI-Like Approach on Social Skills.
    With reference to ESSA, we would be interested in whether Education Week has offered an analysis of ESSA with respect to improving student and learning supports: No State Will Measure Social-Emotional Learning Under ESSA. Will That Slow Its Momentum? Why Did So Many States Choose to Use These Two ESSA Indicators? Inside ESSA Plans: How Are States Looking Beyond Test Scores? Which School Quality Factors Are States Including in Their ESSA Plans?"

(12) McREL "has focused quite a bit on two key approaches to school transformation and student engagement. First is the idea of "inside out" improvement and innovation. That is, change in teacher and school practices that are researched, developed, and initiated by teachers and leaders at the school level, rather than being "top down" imposed by an external authority. Second is the idea of leveraging the power of curiosity to engage students in their learning and engage teachers with their professional practice and growth. Here are several free, publicly available publications that explore these ideas in more depth:
>Peer coaching that works – https://www.mcrel.org/peer-coaching-that-works/
>Changing Schools – https://issuu.com/mcrel/docs/20160407_cs_final
>The Road Less Traveled – https://www.mcrel.org/the-road-less-traveled/"

(13) National Association of Pupil Services Administrators: "NAPSA members enjoy the unique benefit of being part of a progressive and nationally recognized organization that supports the implementation of a well-integrated and multidisciplinary configuration of student support services. See our Vision and Mission statements on our website at http://www.napsa.com."

(14) Illinois Center for School Improvement: "See the following documents: Fact Sheet an overview of who we are and what we do. Service Line how Illinois CSI engages with districts and schools. District Leadership Team Learning Network Research Brief one of the anchors of our work with districts"

(15) Alliance fro Excellent Education: "A few resource examples are below.
Policies, procedures and practices that deepen learning for all students –
     https://all4ed.org/policies-procedures-and-practices-that-deepen-learning-for-all-students/
Deeper learning in ESSA implementation and school intervention – https://all4ed.org/webinars-
     events/deeper-learning-in-essa-implementation-and-school-intervention/
School interventions fact sheets – https://all4ed.org/reports-factsheets/schoolinterventions/"

(16) American School Counselor Association: "has produced and produces a number of resources you might find helpful. You might search http://www.professionalschoolcounseling.org
The ASCA National Model is the standard for comprehensive school counseling programs:
https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors-members/asca-national-model."

(17) National Association of Elementary School Principals: "NAESP has long supported the concept of a well-rounded and complete education for children, which includes addressing barriers to learning and providing opportunities for all students to thrive.
>Supports for English Learners
     https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/26-31%20F-Nemeth.pdf
     https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Klein-etal_SO17.pdf
>Students Experiencing Grief: https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Schonfeld_Demaria_MA15.pdf
>Wellness: https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Wheatfall_SO17.pdf
>Social Emotional Learning: https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Dusenberyetal_SO16.pdf
>Afterschool: https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Templeman_SO16.pdf
>School Safety and Mental Health: https://www.naesp.org/school-safety-and-mental-health"

(18) Center for School-Based Mental Health. "Some of the central themes and tenets that guide our work include: Best practice strategic planning and collaboration processes guided by data-driven decision-making. Evidence-based programs and practices. Strength-based and asset-driven approaches. Bridging the research-to-practice gap. Raising awareness and reducing stigma about mental health. http://miamioh.edu/cas/academics/centers/csbmhp/index.html."

(19) Bad Ass Teachers: "Start with our mission and vision - this drives all we do online and on the ground http://www.badassteacher.org/mission-statement/ . We had an action around ESSA http://badassteacher.org/files/BATStateToolkit.docx.pdf."

The following organizations indicated receipt of letter but did not provide specific resources

(20) American Institute of Research. "We have a large variety of materials from our work at the state, district and school level."

(21) Council of Chief State School Officers. "We would love to offer my help to help review the report."

(22) PREL. "We just got a letter that appears to have been delayed reaching us."