

Child Poverty is Increasing:

That's Another Reason Schools Need to *Transform* Student/Learning Supports

According to the Census Bureau recent report on poverty in the U.S., 5 million more children experienced poverty in 2022 than in 2021.

Following expiration of COVID-era economic relief, “the rate of child poverty in the United States has more than doubled, from 5.2 percent in 2021 to 12.4 percent in 2022,, translating to 5.2 million more children living in poverty than in 2021.”

<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2023/demo/p60-280.pdf>

If nothing is done, this translates into additional major problems for schools.

So rather than waiting for a further increase in learning, behavior, and emotional problems, a pressing question is:

What role will schools choose to play in efforts to enhance equity of opportunity so that these children can succeed in school and beyond?

One way is for stakeholders immediately to start a process focused on ***transforming*** student/learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

This is especially important as budgets tighten. The task ahead is to stop fantasizing about more support staff and go beyond tinkering with what already is in place.

For a way to move forward, see

>Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions

<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefguide.pdf>

And while our Center's work has produced many resources related to these matters, the work is detailed in three free books all of which can be accessed at

https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

>Improving School Improvement

>Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide

>Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change

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