ESEA reauthorization process continues to marginalize equity of opportunity for students to succeed at school and beyond

The Disconnect Between School Improvement Politics and What Schools Need to Succeed

Everyone recognizes that in spite of nice instructional improvements and high stakes accountability:

- too many students and schools continue to experience major factors that interfere with learning and teaching
- too many students continue to be disconnected from instruction
- efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students continue to be fundamentally *marginalized* in school improvement policy.

Discussions that view student and learning supports *mainly* in terms of health and social services, integrated student services, wraparound services, etc. perpetuate the marginalization and work against transforming student and learning supports.

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Anyone who doubts that the politics and media discussion of school improvement are significantly disconnected from the reality at schools need only look at the February 23 *Education Week/Politics K-12 blog* (http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2015/02/lawmakers_file_amendments_ahea.html?r=1691354624&preview=1).

Here is an excerpt from a section entitled: *Social/Wraparound Services Issues*

"Members on both sides of the aisle also filed amendments on various social issues, as well as amendments that seek to improve wraparound services like student health. The social issues, which touch on things like abortion, have a tendency to gum up the works. Some aren't likely to be considered during the debate. Here's a quick run-down of those offerings:

•An amendment from Rep. Alan Grayson, D-Fla., that would require the education secretary to conduct an assessment of the impact of school start times on student health, well-being, and performance.

•Another amendment from Grayson that would require the implementation of policies ensuring that a child in foster care who changes schools is able to transfer school credits.

•An amendment from Rep. Frederica Wilson, D-Fla., that would provide funding for school dropout prevention and reentry.

•An amendment from Rep. Doug Lamborn, R-Colo., that would prohibit federal funds to any school that distributes or provides emergency contraception or a prescription for such contraception on the premises or in the facilities of an elementary or secondary school.

•An amendment from Rep. Donald Payne, D-N.J., that would allow the secretary to fund states and local school districts to develop emergency operations plans and to provide school security training.

•An amendment from Rep. Randy Neugebaurer, R-Texas, that would restrict federal K-12 funds from school districts that contract with third-party "school-based health centers" unless they certify they will not perform abortions and will not provide abortion referrals or materials to students.

•An amendment from Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, that would fund

programs to enhance school safety, including bullying prevention, cyberbullying prevention, disruption of recruitment activity by groups or individuals involved in violent extremism, and gang prevention programs.
 •An amendment from seven Democrats led by Rep. Jared Polis, D-Colo., that would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in public schools."

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Reminder: Anyone interested in transforming student and learning supports will find information at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

And the new, free online book entitled: *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System* can be easily accessed at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf . (The chapters provide protocol frameworks and many specifics for a systemic learning supports component to replace the existing marginalized and fragmented set of student and learning supports in districts and schools. The work also stresses that transformation can be done by redeploying existing resources and garnering economies of scale.)