
Integrated Student Supports (ISS) initiatives need to be embedded into a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System of Learning Supports

Don't Stop with an Integrated Student Supports (ISS) Initiative!

Transform efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching into a *Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System of Learning Supports*

Those who want to better coordinate and integrate supports for students have long been concerned about the poor linkages between communities and schools and within schools. (Early concern was seen in the human-service integration movement of the 1960s.)

From an intervention perspective, it is evident that dealing with multiple, interrelated concerns, such as poverty, healthy and whole child development, education, violence, crime, safety, housing, and employment requires multiple and interrelated solutions. Interrelated solutions require various forms of collaboration. Thus, schools, homes, and communities must work together in pursuing shared goals related to the general well-being of the young and society.

Over the last 30 years, the fragmentation of community and school practices for supporting families and their children has been the focus of many initiatives and policy reports. These have generated terms such as school-linked services, integrated services, one-stop shopping, wraparound services, seamless service delivery, coordinated school health, co-location of services, integrated student supports, full-service schools, systems of care, and more. Referencing the Every Student Succeeds Act, a report currently being circulated stresses the term “Integrated Student Supports” and advocates for its widespread adoption.

While most of the discussion of integrated student supports is well-intentioned, the program examples most frequently cited do little to address fundamental concerns that arise in efforts to *integrate school, family, and community resources into school improvement policy and practice*.

As a result, the approach as advocated has little chance of significantly enhancing equity of opportunity for students across the country. Moreover, as practiced, serious unintended negative consequences have been observed with respect to policy, intervention design, and system change. From the perspective of school improvement, dealing with these concerns is essential to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students and their families.

Our work stresses that initiatives to integrate community resources into the daily operation of schools need to be embedded into efforts to transform student/learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system that is a **primary component** of school improvement policy.

We have addressed these matters in various Center reports and resources over many years. In 2014, we specifically highlighted concerns about the advocacy for “Integrated Student Services” in a set of policy notes entitled: *Integrated Student Supports and Equity: What's Not Being Discussed?* (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/integpolicy.pdf>).

Also see: *Moving Beyond the Concept of Integrated Student Supports* (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/movingbeyond.pdf>).

Since 2015, the types of transformative policy, intervention design, and systemic changes that need to be implemented are being pursued as part of the *National Initiative to Transform Student and Learning Supports* (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>).

And we have highlighted the work in two recent books:

>*Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide* (2017). This resource can be accessed at no cost from the Center's homepage at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/> .

>*Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System* (just published by Cognella)
<https://titles.cognella.com/transforming-student-and-learning-supports-9781516512782.html> .

Places where efforts are being made to implement such a system are highlighted on our Center's website in a section entitled *Where's it Happening? – Trailblazing and Pioneering Initiatives* (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm>).

Of particular note is the work currently underway in Alabama where the state education agency has developed a design for a *Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* and has begun implementation in over 100 districts (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/aladesign.pdf>).

It is also noteworthy that *Scholastic Inc.* has adopted the Center's work on transforming student/learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. (See <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/learningsupports/index.htm> .)

For more on all this, feel free to contact the Center (email Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

As always, we look to hear from the field.

Best wishes and thanks for all you do to enhance equity of opportunity for success at school and beyond.

Howard & 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