

FROM CENTER AT UCLA – 2015 Initiative*

Equity of Opportunity at School: A Civil Right

On the 50th anniversary of the ESEA, Wade Henderson, president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights cautioned that the proposed Every Child Achieves Act of 2015 (the ESEA reauthorization) would "turn back the clock" on protecting children and their civil rights. Whatever Congress ends up doing, it seems likely this will be the case.

To counter the negative impact on efforts to advance equity of opportunity, widespread action is needed. Particular attention must be paid to enhancing how school improvement plans address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. This is especially critical given that the capacity building efforts related to the Common Core Standards and STEM movements fail to adequately focus on these concerns and are likely to increase inequities.

Making It Happen

(1) *Revisit School Improvement Plans.* Concerned school boards, superintendents, principals, school staff, and other stakeholders need to move quickly to revisit school improvement plans with an eye to avoiding further set-backs. It is time to make substantive and lasting school improvements that enhance equity for all students to succeed at school and beyond. This requires transforming rather than just tweaking current plans.

(2) *Add a Learning Supports Component:* From our perspective, we suggest adding a strategic plan for unifying student and learning supports into a primary component and then developing the component into a comprehensive and equitable system of learning supports. (See the 2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports -- <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>). As the initiative emphasizes:

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to enabling equity of opportunity and promoting whole child development.

What are your views about all this. We look forward to sharing your responses, Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

>Need resource aids and/or technical assistance for addressing barriers to learning and teaching? Let us know by emailing adelman@psych.ucla.edu or Ltaylor@ucla.edu .

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Please forward this to a few colleagues you think might be interested.

For those who have been forwarded this and want to be part of the ongoing exchanges, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu .