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## FROM CENTER AT UCLA – 2015 Initiative\*

### 2015 State Teachers of the Year Identify Barriers to Learning & Teaching

In a recent survey, released by the Council of Chief State School Officers and Scholastic Inc., a group of the country's best teachers identified what they viewed as the greatest barriers to student academic success. 56 State Teachers of the Year were polled, 46 responded in identifying a range of problems affecting public education. They ranked family stress highest, followed by poverty, and learning and psychological problems.

While it's unfortunate that the survey wasn't structured to systemically assess their view of a fuller range of factors that can interfere with learning, we are heartened by the recognition that nonacademic barriers to learning and teaching are receiving greater attention. Such attention is especially timely given the new analysis of 2013 federal data indicating that public schools have reached the point where a majority of U.S. public school students come from low-income families.

CCSSO's involvement in the survey is ironic given that their updating of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards fails to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. It is inexplicable that nowhere in this set of core standards is there a focus on inequities of opportunity for success at school.

Addressing barriers to learning and teaching continues to be at the core of our Center's long-standing efforts to enhance equity of opportunity and our current 2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html> .

The initiative emphasizes that equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights and that transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to enabling equity of opportunity and promoting whole child development. Toward enhancing equity of opportunity, the initiative provides prototypes and resource aids and highlights trailblazing efforts underway to unify and develop a comprehensive and equitable system of student and learning supports.

For a quick overview of what such a system entails, take 30 minutes to look at an introductory webinar we put together recently. (The narration still needs some work, but the basics are there.) The webinar is at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/powerpoint/briefintroslicesrec.pptx> . An accompanying set of handouts are online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/intropphandouts.pdf>

For a more detailed presentation, see the new, free online book entitled: *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf>

#### Making It Happen

(1) Use the survey findings and the growing concern about barriers to learning and teaching to stimulate discussion about the disconnect between such data and the prevailing focus of most school improvement policy and practices.

(2) Help establish a process for

a) mapping and analyzing all supports being used to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students

b) making recommendations about unifying such supports into a learning supports component that is fully integrated into school improvement policy and practice

(See free aids and guides accessible from the Center’s System Change Toolkit –

-- <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

>Need help in planning ways to move forward? Send an email to [adelman@psych.ucla.edu](mailto:adelman@psych.ucla.edu) or [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu) .

>Want to add your perspective to that of the State Teachers of the Year? Send to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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\*For more information on the 2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html> .

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transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to  
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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](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu) .**

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Note: Responses come only to the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA.

We post a broad range of issues and responses to the Net Exchange on our website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

The Center’s Facebook site can be accessed from our website homepage.

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**Looking forward to hearing from you.**