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## School Choice Discussions are Masking What's Really Involved in Enhancing Equity of Opportunity at School

What seems to be getting lost in the discussions about school choice is the reality of how many schools (public, private, charter, etc.) are failing to enhance equity of opportunity for students to succeed at school and beyond.

This is most evident in schools serving students from middle and lower income families. However, there also are a significant number of students from wealthy families who are not well-served by their schools.

Clearly, some of the problem stems from societal and cultural factors that are beyond a school's power to counter.

Nevertheless schools have a critical role to play in leveling the playing field for whole child development and student well-being at school every day.

Our research analyses indicate that doing so requires facing up to a fundamental deficiency in school improvement thinking. Namely, prevailing practices continue to approach school improvement primarily as a two-component problem -- fix instruction, fix management/governance.

This has been the emphasis for many years. The two components, of course, are essential. However, despite all the work done related to each, this limited focus has proven grossly insufficient for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

*What's missing is the adoption of a third primary and essential school improvement component for enhancing equity of opportunity by unifying student/learning supports and then developing them into a comprehensive and equitable system at every school. All schools committed to ensuring equity for all need such a system.*

Our Center has done in-depth work on this and has developed frameworks for developing such a system by re-deploying and weaving together existing school and community resources.

See the "Education Leaders' Guide to Transforming Student and Learning Supports" -  
- <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/transguide.pdf>

Please share this resource with relevant stakeholders.\*

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And if you haven't done so, feel free to access the new free book entitled:  
"Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide"  
and other free resources by going to the Center's homepage at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>

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For those who have been forwarded this and want to be included to receive resources that the Center regularly shares, send an email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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\*Center resources are free and sent to school and community stakeholders across the country who are concerned about (1) daily matters confronting schools, (2) promoting whole child development and positive school climate, and (3) the transformation of student and learning supports. The Center at UCLA is co directed by Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor.