28 years
& counting

School Practitioner Listserv

Mental Health in Schools
UCLA Center
Program and Policy Analysis*

**A Weekly Community of Practice Network
for Sharing and Interchange**

April 28, 2014

Special Edition:

Improving Systems for Student and Learning Supports

Request

>*Help needed to avoid band aid approaches to student and learning supports*

Sharing Progress:

> *Publicizing progress from around the country as efforts are made to move in new directions to improve student and learning supports*

Featured Center Resource

>*Frameworks that can be adapted to fit school/district/community/state*

Request: About whether to back a quite limited piece of proposed (state) legislation related to student supports. The act is entitled: *Healthy Kids, Healthy Minds Demonstration.* Key facets of the bill are:

>a demonstration supported for 3 years

>participating schools would employ a school nurse and a mental health professional and extend library hours

>the State Department of Health Care Services and the State Department of Education would cooperate and coordinate efforts in order to maximize receipt of federal matching funds

>the State Department of Health Care Services, through an interagency agreement with the State Department of Education, would provide technical advice and consultation services to local educational agencies

>a participating local educational agency, with assistance from the department, would collect and aggregate data from school-sites under the jurisdiction of the local educational agency. The emphasis would be on measuring changes in "absenteeism, school climate, reductions in incidence of violence, successful intervention against suicide attempts and pupil bullying, changes in health status among high-needs pupils, such as low income, English learners, and foster youth, general pupil outcomes and achievement, and other relevant benchmarks as defined and determined by the state board."

An influential colleague is wrestling with whether or not his organization should support the legislation. He recognizes that it is an attempt to improve a facet of student and learning supports but is concerned about the piecemeal approach. And he worries about the ongoing lack of real collaboration between student/learning supports professionals. He states:

"It seems well intentioned and home spun. ... [However,] looking at this in a wider perspective, it doesn't seem like it has a long term goal or plan. It seems like a band aid approach to a large, persistent social-educational condition. Hard to say we should support it. In the larger scheme of things I would hate to oppose it since it should obviously help students where these demonstration projects are located. On the other hand, it seems like an oblique path to a systematic approach to developing an integrated student and learning supports component at all schools."

Relatedly, he notes:

"I have been interested in learning more about your views on how RTI, School wide PBIS, Restorative Justice, Social Emotional Learning, etc. fit into the grand scheme of a Student and Learning Supports (SLS) component. Many push the idea that PBIS and or RTI is it: 'We don't need anything else. We have arrived.' I can't buy this narrow approach. I believe that these are excellent methods that can be incorporated into the grand scheme of a truly unified ... student and learning supports component."

Center Response: As a noted leader stated about another recent attempt to address a complex social problem with a simple solution: "This is a band aid. While I don't have anything against band aids, it not sufficient for a gun shot wound."

From our perspective, the context for any discussion of student and learning supports is
    (1) the importance of minimizing policies and practices that are likely to continue the fragmentation and marginalization of school based student and learning supports and
    (2) the need to unify and then develop a comprehensive and systemic approach that weaves together all that a school has with all that the community can bring to the table in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

Underlying all this is a concern for enhancing equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school and beyond.

Accomplishing these objectives requires moving away from highly limited and piecemeal programs (e.g., just connecting sparse community agencies to a few schools, adding one more professional to the school, establishing another short-term project, etc.); and it means moving toward expanding school improvement policy to include development of a unified and comprehensive system of student and learning supports.

With specific respect to countering band aid legislation, it is essential to provide concerned legislators with examples of legislation that are crafted with the intent of feasiblely developing a unified, comprehensive, systemic, and equitable approach.

Two such examples are:

>Hawaii's Legislation for its Comprehensive System of Student Support
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/hilegislation.pdf

>a California bill for a Comprehensive Pupil Learning Support System (that was killed for financial reasons) – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ab171(1-20-05).pdf

Other examples that emphasize expanding school improvement policy can be accessed through the Center's System Change Toolkit –
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm

(2) With respect to the embedding programs such as RtI and PBIS into a broad learning supports component, the following Center resources were developed with that in mind:

>*Moving Beyond the Three Tier Intervention Pyramid Toward a Comprehensive Framework for Student and Learning Supports* –
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/threetier.pdf

>*Implementing Response to Intervention in Context*
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/implementingrti.pdf

Listserv Participants: What do you advise? Support the limited legislation in hopes that some students will get a bit of help for a short time, or????   Let us know how you handle such dilemmas. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Sharing Progress:

>*Publicizing progress from around the country as efforts are made to move in new directions to improve student and learning supports*

As the end of the school year nears, it is a natural time for folks to reflect on progress and to plan next steps related to moving in new directions to improve student and learning supports. What have you participated in or seen or heard about along these lines?

If there are any overviews/reports/summaries, please send us a copy so we can add to the "Where's It Happening" section of our website.

If there has been progress but nothing written up as yet, consider helping to draft something. In doing so, think about how it can be used to inform key stakeholders (e.g., school board, Superintendent's cabinet, staff, community, families, students). As feasible, describe:
>the new approach
>who is involved in making it a reality
>how it is being effectively implemented and sustained
>the processes used to map, analyze, and strengthen student and learning supports
>how student and learning supports' staff are partnering with teachers to prevent and minimize student problems
>initial indicators of impact (improved attendance of students, enhanced involvement of families, teachers reports of enhanced engagement and success of students, etc.)

We look forward to hearing from you. And as always, if you would like any assistance from our Center, feel free to contact us via email Ltaylor@ucla.edu or phone 310/825-3534.

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Featured Center Resource

>*Frameworks that can be adapted to fit school/district/community/state*

A major function of our Center is development of prototype frameworks related to unifying and developing, over time, a comprehensive system of student and learning supports. Each prototype is designed for ready adaptation to fit local situations and priorities.

We have many resources that present the prototypes. The latest resource is an:

>*Education Leaders' Guide to Transforming Student and Learning Supports*
    http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/transguide.pdf

This free guide incorporates years of research and prototype development and a variety of examples from trailblazing efforts at local, district, regional, and state levels. The prototypes and examples can be adopted/adapted to design and plan ways to transform the role schools play in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

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For an example of how the prototypes are being used, see

>*Alabama's Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports*

This and other examples can be found at *Where's it Happening– Trailblazing and Pioneering Initiatives –* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm

A different type of adaptation and application of one of our prototype frameworks can be seen in the March 2014 resource from the U. S. Dept of Education entitled:

>*Handbook for Sustaining Standards-Based Education in Adult Education*
     http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/SustainingStandards-BasedEd.pdf

This handbook was prepared by RTI International as part of the Promoting College and Career Readiness Standards in Adult Basic Education project under contract to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. It is designed to "help state leaders improve the odds of generating sustained organizational support for standards-based reforms, so that leaders can develop long-lasting roots for promising reforms and propagate them system-wide...." The authors note that the stages of sustainability they use come largely from the UCLA Center's research, as complemented by the research of Paul Light and the National Implementation Research Network.

Please share relevant resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences!

Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Note: Responses come only to the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA for possible inclusion in the next week's message.

We also post a broad range of issues and responses to the *Net Exchange* on our website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm and to the *Facebook* site (which can be accessed from the Center's website homepage http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/