



**30 years  
& counting**

**School Practitioner  
Listserv**

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



**February 8, 2016**

**Concern from the Field:**

**>How will the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) affect student support services?**

- Perspectives from:
  - >>American School Counselor Association
  - >>National Association of School Psychologists
  - >>UCLA Center

**Invitation to Listserv Participants:**

**>Help clarify the future of student and learning supports in the transition to ESSA**

**Featured set of center resources:**

**>Aids for considering the transformation of learning supports during the transition to ESSA**

#####

**Please forward this to a few colleagues you think might be interested. The more who join, the more we are likely to receive to share.**

**For those who have been forwarded this and want to be part of the weekly exchange, send an email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

**For previous recent postings of this community of practice, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>**

#####

*Note:* In keeping with the *National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports*,\* this community of practice network has expanded in number of participants and topics discussed.\* The thematic emphasis is on (1) daily concerns confronting those working in and with schools, (2) the transformation of student and learning supports, and (3) promoting whole child development and positive school climate.

## **C**oncern from the Field

### **“How does the *Every Student Succeeds Act* change things for student support staff?”**

This is a concern being raised across the country. And the answers being provided include facts, opinions, and hopes.

As examples, below are statements from the American School Counselor Association and the National Association of School Psychologists.

We follow these two perspectives with our Center’s view that the new education act provides an opportunity for making changes that can end the marginalization and fragmentation of student and learning supports by establishing them as a primary force for enhancing equity of opportunity.

#### **(1) From the *American School Counselor Association (ASCA)* website:**

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors-members/legislative-affairs>

... ASCA has worked diligently to preserve many of the school counseling provisions that were in NCLB and to support expanded language incorporated into ESSA.

*What school counselors need to know:* The bulk of school counseling provisions and opportunities for funding are found in Title IV, part A: “Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants” of ESSA. ASCA is pleased with the Senate and House negotiations and believes this section has many opportunities for districts to expand their school counseling programs.

The purpose of Title IV is to increase the capacity of states, school districts, schools and communities to:

- Provide all students with access to a well-rounded education (This section refers to STEM, the arts, PE and other subject areas.)
- Improve school conditions for student learning (This section has several school counseling provisions, including the language “provide mentoring and school counseling to all students.”)
- Improve the use of technology to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students

In NCLB, this same section was composed of multiple competitive grant programs, allowing very few school districts an opportunity to implement new programs.

In ESSA, Title IV will now be formula funded much like Title I. Its expected authorization, which is based on law outlined in the Budget Control Act, should include a sizeable amount of money that would be formula funded to the states and in turn formula funded to school districts. At least 20 percent of these funds must be spent on the “well-rounded” students programs, and at least 20 percent must be spent on the “school conditions and student learning” programs. Additionally, any school district receiving at least \$30,000 will be required to complete a needs assessment to show where the funds are needed most and to outline the district’s plans for these funds. ASCA is extremely pleased with the dedicated funding provision as well as the addition of a needs assessment.

Additionally, school districts receiving Title I dollars will be required to fill out a state plan. That plan will now include explicit language around comprehensive school counseling services, professional development for school counselors and career counseling services. Furthermore, language was added to include input from school counselors and other school staff on the required School Wide Program Plan, which will replace the current School Improvement Plans.

ASCA is also pleased that Title II will now explicitly list school counselors as allowable recipients of federal professional development dollars.

Finally, the title “pupil personnel service provider” has been replaced with “Specialized Instructional Support Personnel,” which includes school counselors and other support professionals working in schools.

*What happens next?* Now that the ESSA is law, many of the provisions will be introduced slowly into states and districts. All provisions should be fully integrated by 2017-2018 school year.”

**(2) From the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP):** *Excerpts from a blog:*  
<https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/policy-matters/the-every-student-succeeds-act-and-school-psychologists>

... this legislation acknowledges the importance of comprehensive learning supports and positive conditions for learning and contains many policies that NASP fought long and hard for... A lot of (hopefully positive) changes are on the horizon and NASP will need your help in making sure that states and districts implement high quality evidence based school improvement efforts, that utilize the skills and expertise of school psychologists. These opportunities don't come around very often, and we have to take advantage of it. If we don't, someone else will. That's not good for school psychology, and most importantly, it is not good for kids!

In order to leverage this opportunity, it is important that school psychologists understand the major provisions in this law so that we can advocate for effective policy and practice. One key change is the inclusion of a new [term]: **specialized instructional support personnel** – [includes] “(i) school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists; and (ii) other qualified professional personnel, such as school nurses, speech language pathologists, and school librarians, involved in providing assessment, diagnosis, counseling, educational, therapeutic, and other necessary services (including related services as that term is defined in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401) as part of a comprehensive program to meet student needs.”

Importantly, ESSA explicitly references specialized instructional support personnel, and the services we provide more than 40 times in policies related to: the development of state and district school improvement plans; identifying and supporting students most at risk of school failure; improving student literacy; addressing school climate and school safety; supporting the mental and behavioral health of students, among other things. Policy makers acknowledge the broad range of services we can provide, and it is imperative that we make sure that states and districts implement policies and practices that allow us to do so.

Another critical change is the shift in oversight authority from the federal Department of Education to states and local districts. ESSA authorizes significant investments to support state and district efforts to support the needs of students. Under the policies of NCLB, the Department of Education was allowed dictate specific goals for students, the school improvement strategies and practices that states, districts, and schools were required to implement, and impose consequences if states and districts failed. Under the new law, there are certain things that states must help districts address. However, states and districts can decide how they want to help schools improve, and which professionals to involve. We must advocate for our role, and make sure that states and districts use available funds to go beyond the basic mandates, and engage in efforts that will truly improve school and student outcomes for all. Here are just a few of policies outlined in ESSA where school psychologists can, and should play a critical role. ESSA:

- Requires that States/LEAs engage in meaningful consultation with diverse stakeholders, including specialized instructional support personnel, when developing state/local Title I plans to improve student outcomes and school success;
- These plans must include a description of how the State and LEAs will support struggling schools and students most at risk of school failure through implementation of comprehensive learning supports and other interventions.

- Allows States/LEAs to use Title I funds to implement multi-tiered systems of support, positive behavior interventions and supports, and early intervening services;
- Requires states to describe how they will support district efforts to improve school climate, address bullying and harassment, and reduce the use of aversive behavior interventions;
- Requires that states include at least one indicator of school quality (e.g school climate and safety) in their accountability system;
- Authorizes a \$1.6 Billion formula grant for states and districts to improve: 1) well-rounded education opportunities; 2) conditions for learning to create healthy and safe school environments, and 3) effective use of technology.
  - States must spend at least 20% of funds to create healthy and safe learning environments, which can include mental and behavioral health services
- Defines 'school-based mental health services provider' as a State-licensed or State-certified school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, or other State licensed or certified mental health professional qualified under State law to provide mental health services to children and adolescents;
- Allows schools to use Title I funds to implement school based mental health programs as part of a schoolwide program to address the needs of students most at risk for school failure.

This is a really exciting time for school psychology and we must do everything we can to take full advantage of these opportunities. No one else will do it for us.

**(3) Our Center's perspective:** <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/essaequity.pdf>

One intent of the new law is to replace the outdated patchwork of programs and services used in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. The new block grant funding will open up discussions about the best way to allocate these resources.

It will be unfortunate if the talk about equity and school improvement continues to pay little attention to addressing barriers to learning and teaching by *TRANSFORMING* student and learning supports. It is time to end the fragmentation and marginalization of such supports. Doing so involves unifying and then developing a comprehensive and equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students and families.

The Center's new policy brief highlights research relevant to enhancing equity of opportunity through such a transformation. See: *Student and Learning Supports: Moving Forward* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/suppbrief.pdf>

This brief outlines a necessary shift in school improvement policy and provides a prototype for a unified, comprehensive, and equitable component to replace the existing fragmented and disorganized set of student and learning supports.

## Invitation to listserv participants

**>Help clarify the future of student and learning supports in the transition to ESSA**

Please share additional perspectives on how the new education act affects student and learning supports. What opportunities are districts/states providing for input on new directions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students? If this is not happening, can you help create a venue for input? Now is the time to discuss new directions and clarify that transforming student and learning supports is essential to enhancing equity of opportunity.\*

Send ideas (or concerns) to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

#####

## Featured set of center resources

### >Aids for considering the transformation of learning supports during the transition to ESSA

Over the last two decades, work on transforming student and learning supports has begun to blossom across the country. Changes being discussed include (a) a fundamental shift in school improvement policy, (b) development of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of intervention, (c) reworking of operational infrastructure, and (d) strategic implementation that accounts for replication to scale and sustainability.

The Center has developed a toolkit to provide materials, tools, specific guides, and other resources as aids and to deepen learning about the substance and processes of the work to be done.

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm> . We have grouped the tools in ways that roughly approximates moving from creating readiness, through initial implementation, to sustaining and scaling-up. This set of resources is in under continuous development as new lessons are learned.

Here are a few of the aids in the toolkit that can be helpful in considering new directions.

>**Introduction.** To provide a brief introduction, there is a 30 minute *Introductory webinar* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/powerpoint/briefintrosldesrec.pptx> and a set of accompanying Pdf formatted handouts – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/intropphandouts.pdf>

>**Policy Brief.** See *Student and Learning Supports: Moving Forward* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/suppbrief.pdf>

>**School Board Policy Protoype.** <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/announcefeb.pdf>

>**Starting the Process.** For a quick overview of how to get started, see the seven steps outlined for a school – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/7steps.pdf> and the first steps outlined for State Education Agencies and School Districts – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/firststeps.pdf>

>**In-depth Overview.** For an overview guide, see *Education Leaders' Guide to Transforming Student and Learning Supports* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/transguide.pdf> or the new book entitled *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System* which can be freely accessed at – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf>

>**About Trailblazing States and Districts.** See documents online at – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/whereupdate.pdf> and <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm>

NEED MORE INFORMATION? NEED COACHING? See

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/coach.pdf>

#####

\*\*\*\*\*

**\*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.**

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

\*\*\*\*\*

***THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THIS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE BECOMES!***

**Send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences to  
[ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

**We 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 *Facebook* (access from the Center's home page  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>)**