

School Practitioner Community of Practice

(A network for sharing & exchange)

July 18, 2018

Some Resource Updates from the Field

This practitioner provides links to the following resources:

- (1) **New, free book: *Improving School Improvement***
- (2) **Unlocking your federal funds**
- (3) **Community Schools federal funding sources**
- (4) **Revenues and expenditures for public school districts**
- (5) **Kids Count Data 2018**
- (6) **Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance 2017**

Topic for Exchange:

>Limited budgets make for difficult choices about priorities

Learning from Others:

>What the 2018 Kids Count Data underscore about the challenges for school improvement

Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

Note: Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla> for links to other resources including

- >Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops
- >Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers
- >Training and job opportunities
- >Upcoming webcasts & other professional development opportunities

This resource is from the

Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA

Given shrinking education budgets, we have been asked to increase our outreach to make our free resources more available (e.g., for planning, professional development, etc.).

So please feel free to share with anyone you think might benefit (e.g., forward our resources to individuals and share on listservs and websites).

For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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

Some Resource Updates From the Field:

- (1) **New free book: *Improving School Improvement***
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html
- (2) **Unlocking your federal funds**
<https://www.state.nj.us/education/ESSA/guidance/njdoe/UnlockingYourFederalFunds.pdf>
- (3) **Community Schools federal funding sources**
http://www.communityschools.org/policy_advocacy/federal_funding.aspx
- (4) **Revenues and expenditures for public school districts**
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2018303>
- (5) **Kids Count Data 2018**
<http://www.aecf.org/resources/2018-kids-count-data-book/>
- (6) **Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance 2017**
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2017/ss6708.pdf>

Topic for Exchange:

>Limited budgets make for difficult choices about priorities

Across the country, schools and districts are facing difficult decisions about priorities when funding is tight. Here are some examples:

(1) *What Budget Cuts Mean for Third Graders in a Rural School*

... West Greene Elementary School in Snow Hill is a town of 1,500 in rural Greene County, N.C. Of the 100 counties in the state, Greene is one of the poorest. About four out of five public school students come from low-income families. Only three counties in North Carolina spend less on public education....There used to be a full-time library assistant here to help students select books and check them out. The assistant now works half time. The district once paid for teachers to participate in National Board Certification, a prestigious professional development program, but no longer has the money to do so....

An after-school tutoring program recently ended when the grant that was paying for it ran out. Now there are no after-school activities, though the district does partner with the Boys and Girls Club to run a summer science program, paid for by a philanthropy....

With more money, the Superintendent might restart the after-school program or hire a school psychologist. Or, with all the school shootings in the news, she could address safety needs by installing a buzz-in system or hiring a school resource officer...

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/05/us/school-funding-north-carolina.html?emc=edit_th_180606&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=191442830606

(2) *Cuts loom in Harford school budget to erase \$17.6M 'funding gap'*

... As in prior years, the need to reconcile what school officials have approved spending and what is available to spend from the county, state and federal governments, has unleashed a torrent of concern.... During the work session, proposed initial reductions, totaling \$6.7 million, were presented to the board by the school system finance staff. Included were the elimination of all remaining teacher mentor positions and many special education inclusion helper positions, as well as other staff cuts and expense reductions....

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/harford/aegis/ph-ag-school-budget-shortfall-0606-story.html>

(3) *Wake County schools warn that severe cuts will be needed to close \$23.9 million budget gap*

... this year's budget gap has now reached nearly \$24 million, because of unanticipated changes in the state budget. That gap will lead to "significant" and painful cuts that will affect school employees and families.

Our community, I think, is going to be very surprised at what their children are not going to receive in services when we end up taking that red pen and it's gone," one school board member said during the budget discussion ... potential cuts include reducing bus service to families, eliminating classroom choices, increasing class sizes after third grade and reducing custodial services. ... The school system in recent years has closed budget shortfalls by taking steps such as reducing how often schools are cleaned, raising class sizes, changing school temperature settings and raising the amount charged for student parking passes.

<http://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article212520829.html>

The danger in all this is that decision makers will be tempted to continue to assign too low a priority to the need to unify student/learning supports and develop an effective system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. Relatedly, the tendency will be to cut-back of student/learning supports.

Here are a few Center resources we try to share with decision makers to counter trends to assign a low budget priority to improving student/learning supports.

>For Consideration in Setting Budget Priorities

>>*Rethinking District Budgets to Unify and Sustain a Critical Mass of Student and Learning Supports at Schools* – Education cut-backs are likely to worsen in the short run.

This makes it imperative for policy makers to reverse trends toward lopsided cutbacks that decimate efforts to address factors interfering with learning and teaching. Furthermore, it is essential to move forward in more cost effective ways by unifying student and learning supports and braiding remaining categorical funding in ways that reduce redundancy and counterproductive competition for sparse resources.

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

>>*Balancing Cut-backs at Schools is Essential to Ensuring Equity of Opportunity* –

Lay-offs, cut-backs, increased class size, austerity measures. Each day there is another story about how the troubled economy is hurting education. Chief state school officers, district superintendent, principals, education associations, and unions have detailed the impending crisis. As has always been the case when education budgets tighten, the tendency is to trim student support efforts more severely than other budget items. This reflects the long-standing marginalization in policy and practice of efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching. Given the pressing need for learning supports to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school, it is time for everyone to recognize that current cut-backs are so unbalanced that essential efforts to address factors that interfere with learning at school will be subverted. While all cuts are harmful, the extreme cuts related to student and learning supports will undermine the hope of ensuring equity of opportunity. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/cut-backs.pdf>

>>*Cut-Backs Make it Essential to Unify and Rework Student and Learning Supports at Schools and Among Families of Schools* – It is time to go beyond thinking in terms of

providing traditional services, linking with and collocating agency resources, and enhancing coordination. These all have a place, but they do not address how to unify and reconceive ways to better meet the needs of the many rather than just providing traditional services to a relatively few students. It is time to fundamentally rethink student and learning supports. The intent is to develop a comprehensive and cohesive system. Such a system encompasses a full continuum of interventions and covers a well-defined and delimited set of classroom and schoolwide supports.

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

>>**Analyzing What is Being Spent in Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching** – Mapping and analyzing resources is a critical step in school improvement. In-depth mapping and analyses provide essential information about cost-effectiveness, gaps, redundancies, etc. A special facet of mapping and analyzing resources is estimating dollars spent.

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

>>**What will it cost? – No New Dollars!** – The processes of rethinking student supports and moving to develop a comprehensive system of learning supports at schools can be started without any new allocation of funds. The emphasis in moving in new directions for student support is on redeploying existing resources by

- >reframing the roles and functions of existing student support staff
- >reducing fragmentation and redundancy
- >reducing the overemphasis on expensive services. (As an improved systems of learning supports emerges in classrooms and school-wide, the need for out of classroom referrals will decline.)

That is, a comprehensive learning support system can be established over time by reworking how existing student support resources are used. True accountability and analyses related to currently deployed resources will clarify that a significant proportion of the budget in many schools already is expended for learning supports.

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/what%20will%20it%20cost.pdf>

>>**Funding stream integration** – The Every Student Succeeds Act calls for state plans to include assurances that the SEA will modify or eliminate state fiscal and accounting barriers so that the schools can easily consolidate funds from other federal, state and local sources to improve educational opportunities and reduce unnecessary fiscal and accounting requirements. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fundinginteg.pdf>

>>**Financial Strategies to Aid in Addressing Barriers to Learning** – Designed as an aid in conceptualizing financing efforts, identifying sources, and understanding strategies related to needed reforms. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/financial/fund2000.pdf>

#####

Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

Now it's your turn!

What can you share about efforts to ensure that decision makers assign a high budget priority to unifying student/learnng supports and developing an effective system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching?

Are current budget priorities marginalizing efforts to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports?

Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

#####

Learning from Others:

>What the 2018 Kids Count Data underscore about the challenges for school improvement

From *2018 Kids Count Data Book* –

<http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2018kidscountdatabook-2018.pdf>

... The KIDS COUNT index uses four domains to capture what children need most to thrive: (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community. Each domain includes four indicators, for a total of 16. These indicators represent the best available data to measure the status of child well-being at the state and national levels....

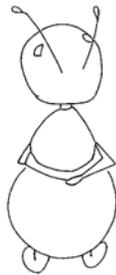
Especially troubling is the number of kids growing up in high-poverty neighborhoods. Although the percentage of children in these neighborhoods declined compared with last year's measure, 13 percent of the nation's children continued to live in communities where poverty rates were at or above 30 percent in 2012–16. ...

The nation's racial inequities remain deep, systemic and stubbornly persistent despite gains during the economic recovery for children of all races and income levels. On nearly all index measures, African-American, American, Indian and Latino children continued to fare worse than their peers....

National data mask a great deal of state and regional variations in child well-being. A child's chances of thriving depend not only on individual, family and community characteristics but also on the state in which she or he is born and raised. States vary considerably in their wealth and other resources. State policy choices and investments also strongly influence children's chances for success....

We know our approach to providing student and learning supports is too marginalized, piecemeal, fragmented, and ineffective. Why aren't efforts to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system a higher budget priority?

(Fill in your answer here)



From our perspective, this is an important time for schools to avoid undercutting school improvements that are essential to addressing barriers to teaching and learning and re-engaging disconnected students. A high budget priority is transforming student/learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system.

***For information about the**

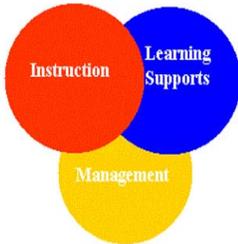
National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Recent publication related to the initiative:

>*Transforming Student and Learning Supports:*

Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System –

<https://titles.cognella.com/transforming-student -and learning -supports -9781516512782.html>



If you missed the following, you can access them and more from the Center's homepage –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

>*The quarterly ejournal for Summer 2018.*

Excerpts from a new, free book.

Online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.htm>

Contents:

Part I: Good Schools and Classrooms

Part II: Moving toward Personalized Instruction and Special Assistance

Part III: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

Part IV. Moving Forward

>*The July ENEWS' discussion of: Staff Development & Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching and Re-engaging Disconnected Students*

Also the 2017 free book on:

Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom & Schoolwide

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!

For new sign-ups – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.

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