
School Improvement, ESSA, and Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

Now that the ESSA consolidated state plans have been prepared, we suggest the following action by those concerned with enhancing students' equity of opportunity:

- (1) Review our analyses of ESSA's focus on addressing barriers to learning and teaching – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/essaanalyses.pdf> .
- (2) Analyze one or more state plans and share your analyses of what is articulated about
 - (a) school improvement planning to improve the way schools *directly* address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students,
 - (b) how student and learning supports should be *reorganized* to meet the needs of the many students who are not doing well,
 - (c) an intervention framework for addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems that goes beyond the simplicity of the tiered presentation that is widely discussed as a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS),
 - (d) prioritizing ways to end the marginalization and fragmentation of student and learning supports in school improvement efforts.
- (3) Share your analyses with key policy makers and other stakeholders and send to us so we can convey the findings widely as part of the call to action related to the National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/call.htm>).

Note: We currently are sampling school districts, state departments of education, and leadership organizations across the country to learn about how they are pursuing the opportunity to transform the way schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. Let us know if there is someone we should add to the sample.

As places begin making systemic change, we encourage them to let us know so we can help.

Best Wishes,

Howard & Linda

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