

**Farmers have a saying: *Weighing the Pig, Doesn't Fatten it.***

As all the news this week about new testing policy and the plateauing on reading and math scores on the nationwide tests points out, *we can't live with testing, and can't live without it!*

BUT as long as that's where the primary focus is, we won't do much more than keep the current status quo with respect to addressing the lack of equity of opportunity for succeeding at school that exists in too many districts.

Everyone knows that the broader context for all this is improving policies to address "housing, employment, wealth inequality and the social safety net." However, schools are an important facet of this and must play an expanding role in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

While almost everyone voices a belief that schools need to do more to enhance equity of opportunity for all students, unfortunately, relatively little attention is given to doing anything major and systemic to move beyond the marginalized, ad hoc, and fragmented interventions implemented in most districts. If you think otherwise, take some time to review school improvement plans. In addressing barriers to learning and teaching, few do more than focus on school safety and ESEA's Title obligations.

We understand why this is the case. But it is self-defeating with respect to improving test scores, never mind enhancing student (and staff) well-being.

***Want to make it different?***

>Don't settle for some positive sounding efforts that amount to a few cosmetic changes.

>Don't settle for implementing a few special initiatives at a few sites.

>Don't settle for less than transforming existing student and learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports that will be taken to scale and sustained.

**>Begin to familiarize yourself with frameworks and prototypes for moving forward. A good starting place is to browse:**

>>*Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System\** – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf>

>>Alabama's design document --  
<http://www.alsde.edu/ofc/ols/Documents/ALDOEDesignDocument.pdf>

And if you have questions or want some assistance, contact [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu) or [adelman@psych.ucla.edu](mailto:adelman@psych.ucla.edu)