Concerned about the backlash to student support services?

(http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/10-7-22.pdf)

Consider the following:

It is essential to advocate for more than more personnel.

The focus needs to be on showing how schools can transform current student/learning supports into a more unified, comprehensive, and equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students and families. For example, see

>*Rethinking Student and Learning Supports* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fall22.pdf

>*Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions*
   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefguide.pdf

In our experience, there always are stakeholders who want to make major improvements in how schools address barriers to learning and teaching. Below are some first steps that can be adapted at any level. A list of aides for accomplishing these steps is provided in the above documents.

Step 1. *Establish the interested stakeholders as a workgroup and proceed to*

   (a) *map existing resources being used to address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students*

   (b) *with respect to available data on needs, analyze what's working, what requires strengthening, and what critical gaps exist*

   (c) *identify immediate priorities for moving forward with improvement and system development*

   (d) *develop a set of prioritized recommendations for moving toward a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports* (emphasizing redeployment of resources to meet priorities in a cost-effective manner)

   (e) *develop and implement a plan to build readiness and commitment among key stakeholders for moving forward*

Step 2: *Have prioritized recommendations approved by appropriate authorities.*

Step 3: *Appoint a high level steering group to champion and monitor the work.* Establish an official Steering Group of *high level* power leaders to steer, champion, problem solve, clear barriers to moving forward, and provide essential guidance to keep the work flowing.

Step 4. *Appoint an administrative leader for system development.* Assign an administrative-level *Student/Learning Supports Lead* to begin development of the component. Be sure the leader's job

description is revised to reflect the new responsibilities and accountabilities and provide appropriate professional development. Be sure this leader is at administrative planning and decision making tables and the system's development is a regular part of the agenda.

Step 5: *Establish a development team to work with the administrative lead.* Assign key staff to a system development team (i.e., a *Learning Supports Leadership Team*) to work with the leader to prepare a ***design "document"*** and a ***strategic plan*** for unifying interventions and then developing the system. In the process, the team helps clarify, analyze, identify priorities, recommend resource redeployment, and establish and guide workgroups for developing each facet of the system over a period of several years. Be sure the strategic plan for the system is fully integrated into the overall strategic plan.

Step 6. *Establish an operational infrastructure designed to ensure effective planning, initial implementation, capacity building, formative evaluation, and ongoing development.* As noted in Part II, the mechanisms that constitute operational infrastructures are critical drivers for effective implementation and system change. And the reality is that the current operational infrastructure at all levels requires major reworking in order to facilitate the desired system changes.

Step 7. *Expand formative evaluation and accountability indicators.* Initial data gathering should be designed to provide guidance and support to foster progress. This means monitoring all factors that facilitate and hinder progress and then ensuring actions are taken to deal with interfering factors and to enhance facilitation. As significant progress is made in developing the system, outcome monitoring and accountability measures should evaluate the impact on student outcomes with respect to *direct* indicators of the effectiveness of student/learning supports (e.g., increased attendance, reduced misbehavior, improved learning).

Here are two first step resource aids for use in situations where administrators are ready to lead the way:

>*First Steps for Superintendents Who Want to Get Started*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/superstart.pdf

>*Seven Steps for Principals and Their Staff*   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/7steps.pdf

Please share with interested colleagues. And if you want us to send information to anyone, just let us know.

At a minimum, let us know your thoughts about direct action to elevate student and learning supports in policy as a nonmarginalized and unified system. That will help us in mobilizing others.
Website: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu
Send your ideas for action and any information about what you see happening to Ltaylor@ucla.edu or to adelman@psych.ucla.edu