

## How well are schools addressing barriers to learning and teaching?

*Efforts to enhance equity of opportunity for success at school and beyond continue to give short shrift to the need to expand school improvement policy and practice.*

As we emphasize in our latest analyses, it is evident that current school improvement planning (in general and as specifically related to ESSA) continues to ignore the need for a fundamental transformation of the way schools address barriers to learning and teaching.\*

\*See ESSA and Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching: Is there Movement toward Transforming Student/Learning Supports?

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/2018%20report.pdf>

If schools are to play a more effective role in enhancing equity of opportunity, it is imperative to do something about this starting now.\*\*

\*\*See the National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports --

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

In response to inquiries from across the country, we stress the need is to expand current school improvement policy with the intent of

(1) unifying a school's fragmented and marginalized efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students

and

(2) reworking the operational infrastructure to establish a leadership team to develop the efforts into a comprehensive and equitable system over several years.

Note that the emphasis is on more than just enhancing "student access and supports (counseling, recruitment and enrollment practices, tutoring, after school or Saturday school, early warning, personalized relationships, special education, and English language learners)" and certainly more than just coordinating and integrating services. The need is to unify all relevant interventions as a third primary and essential component of school improvement.

Also note that limiting the focus of school professional preparation to teacher preparation ignores all those in a district and at schools who are expected and needed to directly address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.

We recognize the importance of improving instruction and how schools are governed/managed; we also know that efforts to enhance equity of opportunity for success at school require equal priority being given to ending the ongoing marginalization and fragmentation of efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching by transforming student/learning supports.

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Let us know if you want some help in improving what is being done in your locale to directly address barriers to learning and teaching as a major component in efforts to enhance equity of opportunity. Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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\*Center resources are free and sent to over 100,000 school and community stakeholders across the country who are concerned about (1) daily matters confronting schools, (2) promoting whole child development and positive school climate, and (3) the transformation of student and learning supports. The Center at UCLA is co-directed by Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor.