

## **Just Adopting Buzzwords and Tinkering with Student/Learning Supports is a Recipe for Maintaining an Unsatisfactory Status Quo (or Worse)**

Much of school reform has been described as *Tinkering toward Utopia*

However, with social media, it seems more like *Twittering toward Utopia*.

Back in 2002, the mission statement of the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) stated:

“It is not enough to say that all children can learn or that no child will be left behind; the work involves . . . *achieving the vision of an American education system that enables all children to succeed in school, work, and life.*”

It’s essential for society to have high aspirations for public education. At the same time, it is not enough to endorse ideals such as educating the whole child, ensuring equity of opportunity for all students, ending the achievement gap, making all schools safe, turning schools into community schools, etc.. Worse yet, school improvement suffers when such important ideas are reduced to buzzwords.

Ideals stated for public education must be perceived as *emergent* qualities -- to be pursued with commitment over time. And policy makers must ensure that school staff have sufficient economic and political support to move forward. (Without such support, it’s not fair to demand that the staff at any school be accountable for fundamental system improvements.) Whatever one’s agenda for transforming schools, complex systemic changes are involved and require comprehensive interventions and capacity building.

All this is coming into better focus as the field of education draws on Improvement Science and Implementation Science. (In education, improvement science focuses on efforts to make practices, processes, and systems better; implementation science focuses on how to increase the adoption/adaptation of improvements.) Our Center has worked on these matters for many years, and we share some strategies and lessons learned in:

### ***Implementation Science and Complex School Changes***

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

With respect to transforming how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students, we provide overviews and in-depth details in the following free books:

- >***Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide***
- >***Improving School Improvement***
- >***Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change***

all three books can be accessed at

[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

NOTE: As part of the *National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports*, a national online summit is being planned focused on unifying student/learning supports with mental health concerns fully embedded.

We are seeking widespread input as we plan the summit .

Click on the URL for the brief article indicated below.  
On p. 3 you will find the first set of input we are seeking.

*Reversing the Fragmentation of Student/Learning Supports:  
Are You Part of the Problem?*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/summer2022.pdf>