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To: Our Colleagues

From: the national Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Re: **Moving Forward: An Urgent Priority**

Recent legislation—and the likelihood of future litigation—has sparked widespread concern about who may lose access to publicly funded health insurance and how this will impact schools. The strong response to our July 10, 2025, commentary underscores the urgency of the situation -- <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/7-10-25.pdf>

*At the same time, our point about school budgets seems to have been lost* (i.e., that any cuts in available school funding for student and learning supports only exacerbates the fact that there never has been enough to address the need).

Our central message was and remains: “the immediate challenge is to **rethink** how existing student and learning supports—at school, district, and community levels—are used. In our commentary, we outlined a roadmap and shared practical guides to help move this work forward. We reiterated these ideas in this week’s Community of Practice Practitioner post: <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

We hear daily from school administrators and staff about the increasing proportion of students manifesting learning, behavior, and emotional problems. And the field has long recognized that prevailing approaches to student/learning supports can’t address the nature and scope of need, especially at schools in many urban settings and poor rural communities. A systemic transformation of student/learning supports is urgently needed.\*

**We need to hear from you!**

*>Do you agree that rethinking student/learning supports is an urgent priority?*

*>Are you aware of places that are starting to consider how to transform their student/learning supports? (If so, please share.)*

Note:

\*Transformation means shifting thinking beyond services and special initiatives. While adopting a continuum of interventions (such as MTSS) is a necessary step, it is not enough. A truly effective system must also define and integrate the domains of support within that continuum. See: ***Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions***  
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefguide.pdf>

We stress that it is feasible to *start* the transformation with whatever resources are currently available. The core and heart of available resources are those student and learning support staff at district and school levels that are still on the staff. It is time to revise the roles and functions of such personnel so that they can pursue the steps highlighted in the above Exhibit. (For a perspective on how job descriptions might be reworked to support transforming student/learning supports, see Part III of ***New Roles and Functions for Student/Learning Support Staff*** –  
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/framingnewdir.pdf>.)