

Increased Attention to Mental Health in Schools is an Opportunity to do More than Address the Immediate Needs of a Few Students

From the Washington Post's editorial board (8/16)

Schools are not just places where students learn to read, write and do math. Children need to socialize and build emotional skills. Teachers are now first responders addressing the pandemic generation's deficits in learning and experience. Schools need help to get through this new challenge — and, in the process, to build a better student support system for years to come.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/08/16/student-behavior-covid-pandemic-depression/>

Concern about mental health in schools is everywhere, *and there are competing views about how to approach the matter.*

Currently, much of the emphasis is on mainly using relief funds to provide more “counseling” services for students in immediate need.

We never argue against providing specialized help when needed.

We do, however, caution about mainly focusing on using all of temporary funding in this way.*

Most school professionals know that when temporary funding is used up, they will still not have a system in place to address the many problems interfering with student and staff well-being.

An alternative course of action is to (1) embed concerns about mental health into the broader set of concerns related to student and staff well-being and (2) use a portion of the funding earmarked for mental health to start building a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports.**

Let's not lose the opportunity to move forward boldly with the type of systemic improvements that can improve what goes on in classrooms and schoolwide to (a) prevent problems, (b) identify and provide supports as soon as problems arise, and (c) ensure severe and chronic problems are properly addressed.***

**Integrated SERVICES, MTSS, SEL, COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, and???* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/3-10-22.pdf>

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/3-10-22.pdf>

***Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mh20a.pdf>

****First Steps in Transforming Student and Learning Supports into a Unified and Comprehensive System to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/1ststeps.pdf>

Please share this information with those who may find it helpful.

If you missed this week's community of practice Practitioner, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm> .

