

What's a Teacher to Do?

Policies aimed at teacher evaluation reflect the myth that teachers alone are responsible for closing the achievement and equity gaps, increasing graduate rates, and ensuring students are career and college ready. This convenient mythology takes a whole lot of folks off the hook when it comes to improving school outcomes. It also contributes to the undermining of public education.

Teaching in public schools is extremely important to society and is an exceedingly difficult job. Indicators of how difficult teaching can be include the many students manifesting learning and behavior problems and the number of students and teachers who dropout.

Teachers and everyone else want better student outcomes. To this end, considerable attention is focused on a limited set of strategies intended to improve teaching. Prominent among these are approaches such as increasing curriculum standards, making teachers more accountable, and improving teacher and principal preparation and licensing. Such improvements all have merit; but the strategies are insufficient for addressing many everyday barriers to learning and teaching. Thus, efforts to improve teaching must go beyond the prevailing agenda.

Even the best teacher can't do the job alone. What goes on in the classroom is critical in ameliorating or exacerbating the learning, behavior, and/or emotional problems manifested by students. This reality, however, does not make addressing the problems the sole responsibility of teachers.

Teachers need a system of supports in the classroom and school-wide to help when students are not responding effectively to instruction. Our analyses indicate that school improvement policy and practice must add a focus on developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of supports that enable teachers to teach and students to learn.

We have underscored this matter over the years, and at this point, our view is that it no longer can be ignored. See for example:

- >*Improving Student Outcomes, Enhancing School Climate: Teachers Can't Do it Alone!*
- >*Enhancing Student/Learning Supports in Classrooms*

And here are some of the resources we have developed for teachers and those working with teachers in classrooms to enhance student success.

- >*What can I do right away?* This series of resources includes the following topics:
 - >**Bullying**
 - >**Disengaged Students**
 - >**Fidgety Students**
 - >**Homework Avoidance**
 - >**Students in Distress**
 - >**Minimizing Referrals out of the Classroom**

Examples of General Practice Guides

- >*Improving Working Relationships Inside the Classroom*
- >*Learning Supports: Enabling Learning in the Classroom*
- >*Response to intervention and Classroom & Schoolwide Learning Supports: A Guide for Teachers and Learning Supports Staff*
- >*Classroom-based Approaches to Enable and Re-engage Students in Classroom Learning: A Self-Study Survey*
- >*Working with Disengaged Students*

And there is so much more available

The above are just a few examples of the many free resources developed by our Center. For more from us and from a variety of other sources, our online Clearinghouse menu offers over 130 Quick Find topics. For example, see:

- >*Classroom Climate/Culture and School Climate/Culture and Environments that Support Learning*
- >*Classroom Focused Enabling*