

## **Students Benefit from and Contribute to Improving Student/Learning Supports**

**Y**outh participation in planning and decision making, helping peers and teachers, and service learning can promote positive development and help ameliorate problems

As steps are taken to improve student/learning supports, the primary concern is to enhance student learning and well-being. Toward these ends, students can contribute by playing a role in planning systemic changes and helping themselves and others.

With respect to planning new directions for student/learning supports, thanks to advocacy for and by youth leaders, it is now commonplace to hear education leaders state: “If we are going to plan for young people, we need their voices at this table.” However, reasons for bringing young people to the table vary. Advocates range from those who appreciate the importance of understanding the perspective of youth, on through those who also are dedicated to promoting youth development and empowerment, and on to those who stress that youth participation benefits families, adults, organizations, planners, policy makers, communities, and society in general. There is particular concern about empowering youth voices to ensure hearing and understanding of concerns raised by those segments of the population that have little power to influence policy.

Student engagement in efforts to improve student/learning supports involves playing a direct role in focusing the agenda on redesigning classrooms to enable teachers to personalize and blend instruction for all students, provide a greater range of accommodations and enrichment options, and implement special assistance immediately as needed.

*Below are examples of resources developed as part of our work on enhancing student involvement in benefitting from and contributing to improving student/learning supports.*

- > *Engaging the Strengths of Families, Youth, and Communities in Rebuilding Learning Supports*
- > *Youth Participation: Making It Real*
- > *About Student Voice and Participation*
- > *About Promoting Youth Development in Schools*
- > *Peer Tutoring: Part of Learning Supports*
- > *Cross-Age Peer Mentorship Programs in Schools*
- > *Service-Learning and Community Service Clubs in Schools*

More on all this can be accessed from our Center’s online clearinghouse Quick Finds. Here are just two examples:

- > *Youth Development*
- > *Peer Relationships, Peer Support, and Peer Counseling*

## **Student Voices**

Graduate and Undergraduate Students Working at our Center have offered a variety of ideas for improving how schools address learning, behavior, and emotional concerns. See, for example:

- > *About Addressing Behavior Problems Broadly*
- > *About Addressing Poverty: What’s a School’s Role?*
- > *About Anxiety Attacks*
- > *About Childhood Trauma and What Schools Can Do*
- > *About Conducting Crisis Exercises and Drills*

(Continued)

- >*About Dress Codes and School Uniforms*
- >*About Gamified Learning and Intrinsic Motivation for Classroom Learning*
- >*About Homeless Youth*
- >*About Native American Students and Substance Abuse*
- >*About Teacher Mental Health*
- >*About Police on School Campuses*
- >*A Student's Proposal for Using an Online Chat Room to Facilitate Student Discussion*

For more, go to <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/materials/trainingpresentation.htm#fact> and scroll down to the section labeled "Some Resources developed from special projects undertaken by Graduate and Undergraduates Students Working in the Center."

### **And there is much more available**

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

<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm>

We also have put online for free and easy access the following three books:

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

### **Pioneering Examples of State and District Work on Transforming Student/Learning Supports are Documented in**

- >*Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Lessons Learned from Trailblazing and Pioneer Initiatives*

These examples underscore how essential student and learning support leadership is for such work. Unfortunately, we have found that places that moved forward to transform student/learning supports ended their transformative efforts as superintendents changed. When new superintendents arrive, sustaining promising system changes requires leaders who recognize the importance and support their ongoing development and implementation. (See *Leadership Changes: Minimizing the Downside* .)

Recently, we reported major lessons we have learned about sustaining system changes. See

- >*Transforming Student/Learning Supports & Enhancing Equity of Opportunity: A Journey of Lessons Learned*

And, of course, a fundamental lesson learned is that those involved in making systemic change, must pay closer attention to implementation science. See >*Implementation Science and School Improvement*