Resources for Principals to Improve
How a School Addresses Barriers to Learning/Teaching

The characteristics of effective principals have been widely discussed. As to their functions, principals are expected to play a key role in improving schools.

For the most part, the focus on school improvement has stressed learning and teaching, with concern for ensuring a safe environment. Not enough attention has been paid to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students. (See *What Do Principals Say about Their Work? Implications for Addressing Barriers to Learning and School Improvement*.)

Over the years, principals have drawn on many of the freely accessible resources our Center provides to enhance professional development and facilitate system change related to improving student/learning supports. Given the archaic system of student/learning supports at most schools, there is a growing awareness about the need to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching. Such a transformation is essential for addressing the increasing volume of learning, behavior, and emotional problems, and reducing absentees.

So, along with all the others challenges schools are facing, principals (superintendents, board members) need to start making the fundamental systemic changes required. The call is for immediately expanding school improvement policy and practices to ensure there is a substantial focus on fundamentally rethinking student/learning supports.

Below are examples of resources we have developed as we have worked with principals.
>*Another Initiative? Where Does it Fit? A Unifying Framework and an Integrated Infrastructure for Schools to Address Barriers to Learning*
>*Learning Supports Initiative: A Compendium of Practice and Findings*
>*Establishing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports at a School: Seven Steps for Principals and Their Staff*
>*Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions*
>*Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Starting the Process*
>*Building on MTSS to Enhance How Schools Address Barriers to Learning*
>*Leadership Infrastructure: Is What We Have What We Need?*
>*Key Leadership Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Student/ Learning Supports*
>*Resource Mapping and Management to Address Barriers to Learning: An Intervention for Systemic Change*
>*Funding Stream Integration to Promote Development and Sustainability of a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports*
>*Connecting Schools in Ways that Strengthen Learning Supports*
>*New Directions for School Counselors, Psychologists, & Social Workers*

More on all this can be accessed from our Center's online clearinghouse Quick Finds. For example, see

>*Cost-Benefit Analyses Relevant to Addressing Barriers to Learning and MH in Schools*

>*School Improvement Planning*

**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 principal 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*

For system change examples and tools related to transforming student supports into a unified, comprehensive, equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, see

>*System Change Toolkit*

And there is 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. **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*