The Case for Making Student/Learning Supports a Primary Component of School Improvement

The hope at the beginning of every new school year is to build on what has been going well and also to develop better ways to help more and more students succeed.
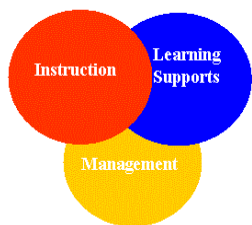
In this respect, we all know that

- at every school there are students who are not doing well
- there are many schools where the majority of students are not doing well
- current efforts are inadequate for addressing factors that interfere with students doing well.

At the same time, because of the widespread presumption that improving instruction is all that really matters, *direct* efforts to improve student/learning supports are given short shrift in school improvement policy and planning.

- This presumption is counterproductive for any school with a significant number of students who are not doing well.
- The evidence from such schools is that improving instruction is an insufficient approach to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

So as the new school year begins, it is essential to focus on improving student/learning supports.

That is, in addition to improving the instructional and management components, schools also need to develop a
   primary and essential component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Some states and districts are moving in the direction of developing such a component, but most places continue to marginalize student and learning supports in school improvement policy and planning (and the marginalization has been identified as contributing to limited direct efforts, fragmentation, counterproductive competition, and lack of effectiveness).

As states and districts revise school improvement policy and planning in the wake of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), it is time to make student and learning supports a primary component of school improvement and move toward development of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system for directly and potently providing learning supports.*

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*For details about a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System of Learning Supports, see

>*ESSA, Equity of Opportunity, and Addressing Barriers to Learning* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/essaanal.pdf

>*Piecemeal Policy Advocacy for Improving Schools Amounts to Tinkering and Works Against Fundamental System Transformation* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/tinkering.pdf

>All this is discussed in detail in a new book that is in press entitled: *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System.* For a preview look at this book, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

For information about all this, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

And if you need some free coaching and TA in moving forward, we can help.

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Please forward this to a few colleagues you think might be interested.

For those who have been forwarded this and want to be part of ongoing exchanges, send an email to ltaylor@ucla.edu .

Looking forward to hearing from you.
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