
About budget cuts and the need to transform student/learning supports

OPEN LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS, SCHOOL BOARDS, PRINCIPALS

COVID- 19 has worsened the school budget situation and made layoffs necessary. This will make it more difficult to find and reengage the many students who have disappeared from school rolls, as well as reengaging those students who currently are not connecting effectively with instruction. As schools reopen, how can schools appropriately provide supports for the increased number of students with learning, behavior, and emotional problems? And how will schools stem a high tide of unnecessary referrals for special education and 504 accommodations?

Whatever the state of affairs in your school district, the negative impact of tight budgets on student/learning supports begins with taking steps toward transforming how local schools address factors interfering with learning and teaching. For a perspective on this, see:

- (1) Our Center's recent policy brief prepared at the request of PACE:

*Restructuring California Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching
in the COVID 19 Context and Beyond*

<https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/restructuring-california-schools-address-barriers-learning-and-teaching-covid-19>

While the brief was prepared for California, it has relevance for every state.

- (2) *Finding and Reengaging Students who Went Missing During the COVID Pandemic*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Findingdisconnectedstudents.pdf>

- (3) Three recent free books from the Center that stress ways to move forward:

>*Improving School Improvement*

>*Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*

>*Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*

All three can be accessed at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.htm

Taking steps to transform student and learning supports is essential if schools are to avert a widening of the opportunity and achievement gaps.

For those working to transform student/learning supports, the Center provides a variety of other resources online, as well as free TA and coaching via email. Website: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>
Email: Ltaylor@ucla.edu adelman@psych.ucla.edu

Best wishes,
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