

## Controversies About School Improvement Efforts

We were struck this week by (1) the backlash to personalizing learning and (2) the old ideas for embedding mental health in schools offered in the Federal Commission on School Safety's report.

Here's what ASCD Smartbrief reported about a Chalkbeat article on personalization:

*Amid a push for personalized learning in schools, several stakeholders are questioning the approach, including some of the groups who opposed the Common Core State Standards. The critics include teachers' unions, who are wary of the influence of private foundations, and some conservative organizations, who question the outsized role of technology.*

With respect to mental health in schools, the Federal Commission's main suggestion is that school districts look for "new and creative ways;" BUT frames the discussion in the old narrow and unfeasible framework that limits the focus to increasing access to mental health services.

It is inevitable that proposals for school improvement will raise controversies. For some time, we have focused on broadening understanding of the appropriate way to approach personalized instruction and how to effectively embed mental health concerns into school improvement. Our most recent syntheses about these matters can be freely accessed: see

>*Improving School improvement*

and

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

at [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

Please share with relevant stakeholders.

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