
Update re. our emails to state legislators re. moving to a three component approach to school improvement

Hi,

We are encouraged as we are starting to receive responses from state legislators.

The nature of one response, however, points to the very problem we are trying to address.

Here is what it states:

... we've already done quite a bit on social-emotional learning. I'm the co-chair of the Children's Mental Health Work Group and we'll have new topics to take on after the session is over, starting in May. You're welcome to contact me leading up to that date if it makes sense to review your work in that context. Thanks!

We will follow up on this with the following clarification:

School policy analyses stress that efforts to expand how schools address mental health, social emotional learning, and school climate need to be embedded into a broad concept such as *Learning Supports* as an essential step in countering the continuing marginalization, fragmentation, and counterproductive competition for sparse resources related to such endeavors.

With specific reference to the three roles schools need to play in promoting social and emotional development/learning, we emphasize that:

- (1) the school day provides many natural opportunities,
- (2) as a facet of the instructional component, social and emotional learning can be embedded into much of the day in pursuing the regular curriculum (e.g., social studies, literature, science) and through various instructional processes (e.g., all group work, cooperative learning, class interchanges).
- (3) the need to and ways to promote social and emotional development/learning arise in pursuing every facet of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable learning supports component.

Thus, rather than designating initiatives such as SEL (mental health, school climate, etc.) as additional and separate policy matters, the need it to fully embed them as overlapping facets in a school improvement policy that moves from a two to a three component approach.

A brief discussion of this is offered in:

>*Embedding Mental Health into a Learning Supports Component: An Essential Step for the Field to Take Now* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingmh.pdf>

The matter is also reviewed in an article in the International Journal of School Health; see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/intjournal.pdf>

And, of course, the latest works from the Center cover all this in great detail. http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

If you have additional thoughts about all this, please let us know. Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu