Moving Forward

Editorial Comments

More Services are Good, but Comprehensive Help Requires Transforming Student/Learning Supports

Despite the many efforts to improve schools, the attack on public education is escalating. Long standing concerns about the achievement and opportunity gaps, low performing schools, and student dropouts continue to be frustrations. Confrontations about what is and isn't being taught are increasing. Teachers, administrators, and school board members are regularly assailed, are dropping out, and recruitment is suffering.

Many societal problems clearly hamper school improvement. For example, legislative bodies regularly recognize and wrestle with the many barriers arising from being raised in poverty, being a newly arrived immigrant, and being homeless. But when these and other factors interfering with successful schooling are pointed out, the concerns often are branded as excuses.

Leaders for school improvement do try to address the school's role in addressing barriers to learning and teaching. However, analyses of school improvement guides and planning indicate that the trend is to tweak current policies and practices rather than facing-up to the type of systemic transformation of student/learning supports that is imperative.

Current discussions about the student mental health crisis highlight the trend. The long-standing inability of schools to play a potent role in addressing mental health concerns has led mainly to calls for hiring and/or contracting more and more staff (e.g., counselors, psychologists, social workers) to provide mental health services.

As a solution, this represents a fundamental disconnect from reality.

One reality is that only a relatively few of the over 98,000 public schools in the U.S.A. will benefit from federal funding limited to mental health services, and such funding will increase the opportunity gap across the country.

A related reality is that sparse district budgets make it unlikely that schools will ever be able to afford hiring all the student support professionals advocates say are needed.

After the influx of relief funds, school budgets again are tight,
and there is no indication that future sources of funding
can meet the nature and scope of need.

And with specific respect to need, the reality is that schools are confronted daily with multiple, interrelated student learning, behavior, and emotional problems. Student surveys consistently indicate widespread alienation, bullying, harassment, and academic failure. While these problems raise mental health concerns, the solution isn't *just* increasing mental health *services*.

When we ask teachers: "Most days, how many of your students come to class motivationally ready and able to learn what you have planned to teach them?" The consistency of response is surprising and disturbing. Before the pandemic, in urban and rural schools serving economically disadvantaged families, teachers told us that about 10 to 15% of their students fell into this group. In suburbia, teachers usually said 75% fit that profile. After the pandemic, the situation has worsened in all schools.

> *Why so many?* While both the external and internal factors can be barriers to learning and teaching, it is important to stress that internal factors are not the primary instigators for the majority of students' not being ready and able. Many youngsters manifest learning, behavior, and emotional problems stemming from restricted opportunities associated with poverty, difficult and diverse family conditions, high rates of mobility, lack of English language skills, violent neighborhoods, problems related to substance abuse, inadequate health care, and lack of enrichment opportunities.

It is time to accept the reality that good teaching and other efforts to enhance positive development are not enough to solve students' (and teachers') problems. Schools must play a more effective *direct* role in removing or at least minimizing the impact of barriers to learning and teaching.

The emphasis in federal, state, and local school policy needs to shift. Concerns about mental health at schools must be folded into the broader agenda of enhancing well-being and equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school (and beyond). Achieving this agenda involves supporting the development by schools of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports that embeds a full range of mental health concerns. Such a system can weave together existing (fragmented and marginalized) school and community resources for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. And, if and when opportunities arise to increase the number of student support professionals at schools (e.g., counselors, psychologists, social workers), whoever is added can help enhance the whole system's impact as well as providing mental health services to a few more students.

Community schools and MTSS provide a platform for transforming student/learning supports

Current efforts related to community schools and MTSS are just a beginning. While the way these initiatives are implemented is important, it is the way that they *evolve* that will determine whether they significantly improve schools.

With specific reference to community schools, defining the initiative as a "community based effort to coordinate and integrate ... services" raises some concerns that limit their evolution. Of particular concern, the narrow focus on services and the emphasis on linking community services to schools inadvertently has worked against efforts to catalyze a much needed transformation in how schools address barriers to learning and teaching.

This need not be the case.

Our Center highlights how Community Schools and MTSS can be platforms for transforming student/learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system that weaves together school and community resources. See

> *>Evolving Community Schools and Transforming Student/Learning Supports*

> *>Rethinking MTSS to Better Address Barriers to Learning*

> *Given the current threats to public education, current initiatives must evolve into the type of fundamental systemic changes that are essential for enhancing the potency of schools in addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems.*

Toward transforming student/learning supports

School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students. But when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.

Carnegie Task Force on Education

Schools have long wrestled with how best to deal with student and schooling problems. The COVID-19 pandemic and other recent events have increased the number of such problems. This pressing reality along with growing concerns about social injustice and increasing criticism of public education have heightened calls for changes in how schools play a role in addressing such matters. This is a pivotal time for making fundamental system changes. And given the nature and scope of the challenge, the time is long overdue for escaping old ways of thinking about student/learning supports.

Increasingly, school policy makers and administrators are being called upon to enable all students to have an equal opportunity to learn at school. Advocates differ in what they want to have happen. So, let us state for the record that we are advocating for fundamental changes in how districts and schools use student and learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching. Specifically, we are calling on schools to develop *a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System of Student/Learning Supports.*

Our Center has developed a variety of resources to aid schools, working with communities, families, and youngsters, to transform student/learning supports. Most recently, we prepared

Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions

About The Guide

Some time ago, John Maynard Keynes cogently stressed:

The real difficulty in changing the course of any enterprise lies not in developing new ideas but in escaping old ones.

His point was that, in order for new ideas to take root, one first has to escape prevailing thinking.

So, before discussing new directions,

Part I of the guide highlights the current state of affairs and old ideas that must be escaped. (This material is intended as an aid in helping other stakeholders understand why major changes are needed.)

Then,

Part II provides prototypes for rethinking how districts and schools – working with communities – address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage students and families.

Part III outlines major phases in making sustainable systemic changes and first steps to take in making the changes a reality.

Minimizing Referrals Out of the Classroom

Schools ask: *What more can be done in a classroom so that referrals are only necessary for the few students whose problems are relatively severe?*

All efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching build on the promotion of healthy development and personalized instruction. Then, to further reduce inappropriate referrals, schools need to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports.

One facet of such a system is establishing a full continuum of interventions (from prevention, to responding to the first signs of problems, to effective interventions for chronic problems). The continuum encompasses enhanced classroom efforts and schoolwide interventions and weaves together school and community efforts. An effective continuum helps:

Prevent problems – Rather than waiting to react to problems that can lead to out of class referrals, staff development focuses on helping teachers redesign classroom to enhance student engagement. Engagement is key to eliminating common problems (e.g., engaged students learn better and are less likely to misbehave). Authentic engagement involves strategies that avoid over-reliance on rewards and consequences and that promote intrinsic motivation for learning. Outside the classroom, preventing problems requires engaging activities and a range of effective supports (e.g., for transitions before and after school, for home involvement).

Reduce the need for referral by responding as soon as a problem arises – When problems can't be prevented, it is essential to have positive interventions that can respond as soon as feasible after problems appear. As a first step, the focus is on making personalized changes in the classroom to better account for the student's motivation and capabilities (e.g., appropriate accommodations, changes in schedules and activities to minimize the problems). Then, if necessary, it is time to add personalized special assistance in the classroom. Such strategies not only reduce the need for referral to specialized services, they counter suspensions and expulsions.

Minimize referrals in ways that enable the referral system to function properly – After classroom efforts and other general school supports have been enhanced, considerably fewer students will need referrals for special out of class school and community-based interventions. This allows the school's referral system to counter disproportional referrals and respond better to those who do need more than the classroom can offer.

****

A note about referrals to alternative programs (including special education placements).

In extreme cases, alternative program referrals are made. For these to produce positive outcomes, the program must account for the individual's motivation and capabilities and provide personalized assistance that enhances motivation and competence.

One caution about alternative programs involves the downside of grouping students who manifest deviant behavior. Research stresses that deviant behavior can be exacerbated when deviant youth are together in programs.

A second caution involves the tendency not to plan for reintegrating students (despite policies that stress students should be in regular school settings to the degree that these can be effective). It is essential to ensure a strong emphasis on (a) enhancing the students' intrinsic motivation for returning and succeeding in a regular school setting and (b) providing supports for transitioning them back from alternative programs. A successful transition includes specially designed welcoming and social supports for reentry. It also usually calls for some changes in the regular school program to accommodate the needs of the returning student (more academic support, a peer buddy, a one-to-one staff contact person, etc.).

****

Four Immediate Steps to Take

(1) *Open the classroom door to bring extra hands into the classroom.* Invite in support staff, peer tutors, parent volunteers and volunteer from colleges, service clubs, senior centers, etc., to help provide additional student support and guidance.

(2) *Enhance engagement strategies*. In particular, consider additional ways to personalize instruction and learning – focusing on both academic and social-emotional learning and increasing enrichment opportunities.

(3) *Use Response to Intervention (RtI) strategies.* The aim is to use such strategies to personalize instruction and, if necessary, provide accommodations and special assistance to respond as soon as a problem appears.

(4) *Use referral as a last resort.* See Practice Notes on *Students in Distress* for immediate next steps to take when referral is necessary.

The following Center resources provide detailed strategies related to the above:
>*Personalizing Learning and Addressing Barriers to Learning*
     (two modules for continuing education)

>*RTI and Classroom & Schoolwide Learning Supports*
     (four modules for continuing education)

For more about referral and related processes at schools, see:
>*School-Based Client Consultation, Referral, and Management of Care*

Two free books are have been developed to bring all this together.
>*Improving School Improvement*
>*Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*

The Relationship Between Student Behavior and Engagement
By Brian Stack

"...Over the last 10 years as a school administrator, I have seen a dramatic decline in classroom disruptions and general student misbehavior that I believe is correlated to increased student engagement in school... My staff quickly discovered that the more we engaged in student-centered, project-based, and hands-on activities in the classroom, the more students would be engaged and less likely to act out. Additionally, we discovered that adding choice and voice options for students continued to reverse the trend of student disengagement.

We stopped offering students the choice to stay in class or leave when there was a behavior problem. We found other ways to support them when they were disengaged. Instead of asking teachers to send disruptive students out to receive supports, we brought the supports to the student in the classroom. We call these supports "push ins," and they were adults who didn't have teaching roles such as social workers, deans, and academic advisers. A new cycle was formed where students stayed in class and found ways to re-engage in their learning. The model shows promise and may serve as inspiration for other school leaders looking to change the culture at their school."

Addressing Classroom Problems:
A Learning Supports Practice Series for Teachers

Teachers ask: ***What can I do right away?***

Often the best way to learn is by addressing a specific concern that needs an immediate response.

With this in mind, the Center is producing a series of resources focused on daily classroom dilemmas teachers experience and some initial ways to deal with such concerns. The emphasis is on engaging and re-engaging students in classroom learning.

As a school moves to develop a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports, this series can help augment professional development by providing a stimulus for discussion by teachers and other staff.

Among others, the Center's learning supports practice series for teachers includes the following topics:

> *>Bullying*
> *>Disengaged Students*
> *>Fidgety Students*
> *>Homework Avoidance*
> *>Students in Distress*
> *>Minimizing Referrals out of the Classroom*
> *>Prereferral Interventions*
> *>Addressing Neighborhood Problems that Affect the School* –

See the complete series and other resources for professional development at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu
(Click on "Online Resources Catalogue")

Feel free to email similar concerns to the Center for discussion as part of our weekly Community of Practice listserv.

You aren't paying attention to me.
Are you having trouble hearing?

I hear O.K.
I'm having trouble listening!

How Does Media Consumption Affect Racial Minority Children?

Editor Note: This document builds on work done by Jordan Hoang as a participant with the national Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA in 2022. In the paper she prepared, she stated her concern as follows:

> "Media is saturated with people of the same racial background, specifically those of a Eurocentric heritage. It is very rare that other minority groups are depicted as a main or lead character. When they are given representation however, they are often displayed controversially with stereotypes and harmful characteristics. If minority children are constantly surrounded by this form of media, it can have significant negative effects on their ethnic racial identity as well as their perceptions of themselves. In addition, it can harm how they are perceived by their Caucasian peers by building these inaccurate characteristics about POC (people of color) groups." Jordan Hoag

Child and adolescent consumption of media in recent years has increased exponentially. For example, 46% of teens say they use the internet almost constantly, up from 24% in 2014-15 (**Pew Research Center, 2022**). On the positive side, media contributes to desired educational and social outcomes. On the negative side, media use is associated with increased violent behavior, exposure to inappropriate sexual content, and problems such as depression, obesity and sleep deprivation.

And there is the matter of the institutionalized racism and sexism that permeates media content. "Minority" racial and gender groups have long been underrepresented and, when present, too often continue to be portrayed in ways that perpetuate negative stereotypes.

This brief resource highlights the problem and suggests ways for schools to play a role in countering it.

About the Problem

While TV and magazines are responsible for some of the negative outcomes, it is the internet that has become the source of most concern. Children and teenagers have the ability to "download violent videos, send sexual text messages or explicit photographs to their friends, buy cigarettes and beer on the Internet, and post enticing profiles" (Singh, 2020). They can perpetrate and experience cyberbullying and manifest other distressing behaviors. They are exposed to content that can distort emotional and psychological development and endanger well-being.

With specific respect to racial concerns, a study on cyberbullying found that an alarming 10% to 20% of their sample were cyberbullied based on their racial background. Such racially motivated bullying is related to insecurities about one's race and self-loathing (Hamm, et.al, 2015).

More broadly, while minority representation in media has increased, negative and stereotypical images often are perpetuated (Greenburg, 1988; Greenberg & Mastro, 2011; Schlote & Otremba, 2010). For instance, minorities continue to be characterized as criminals and depicted as inarticulate and uncultured.

Stereotypical Roles and Harmful Generalizations

Categorizations are groupings we create about people; stereotypes are defined as large generalizations made for a group which ignore individual characteristics. Both are crucial in identity development. Children often associate with the roles they see on the screen, especially when the persons portrayed have similar phenotypic characteristics to them (Trebbe, et al, 2017). These perceptions play a role in forming social and ethnic identities. Creating generalizations often causes group stereotyping of minority and marginalized individuals. And too often the stereotypes are negative and depict some groups as more negative or inferior than others.

As of 2020-2021, there has been an overall rise in diversity (e.g., 34.9% of broadcast, 35.8% of cable, 30.7% of digital featured majority-minority casts). However, most of the main character roles still are represented by white actors (Ramón, Tran,& Hunt, 2022). "People of color are often stereotyped or, in some cases, absent altogether. For example, despite being 18% of the population, Latinos only make up 5% of speaking film roles. Meanwhile White people, who make up only 60% of the population, occupy

76% of lead roles on both streaming and network TV shows" (Rogers, Mastro, Robb, & Peebles, 2021). Asians, Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, Muslims, Arabs, gender minorities, etc. all are under-represented.

A Sampling from the Literature on
How Media Consumption Affects Racial Minority Children

From: *The Inclusion Imperative: Why Media Representation Matters for Kids' Ethnic-Racial Development.* by Rogers, Mastro, Robb, & Peebles (2021).

>Rogers and colleagues report that "screen media continues to fall short in its portrayal of diverse races and ethnicities. People of color are underrepresented in movie and TV roles, and when they are represented, they're often stereotyped. Meanwhile, parents and caregivers have reported that they want to use media as a tool to help kids not just see themselves reflected back, but also to inspire acceptance and inclusion in general."...

More specifically, they note that "exposure to negative and narrow media representations of ethnic-racial groups can contribute to the development of stereotypes, prompt bias, encourage prejudice and discrimination, and even undermine how people feel about themselves and their own ethnic-racial group. Alternatively, seeing constructive depictions of ethnic-racial groups may reduce stereotyping and encourage more favorable interracial and interethnic relations."

"... For children, media representations may be particularly meaningful as they look to cues in their social environment to develop and shape their understanding of ethnic-racial groups. Unfortunately, the research on ethnic-racial representations in children's media is limited, as is our understanding of when, what, and how children learn about ethnicity-race from the media. However, we know that children consume and engage with media regularly (Rideout & Robb, 2019; Rideout & Robb, 2020) and that children can (and do) learn many concepts from the media, from numbers and letters to empathy and science, that influence their behaviors and knowledge about the real world (Aladé & Nathanson, 2016; Lauricella et al., 2011; Richards & Calvert, 2017)."

>A general concern raised in the literature is that racial stereotypes made in the media can negatively influence policies and practices affecting people of color (e.g., related to health, immigration status, affirmative action). Relatedly, Trebbe and colleagues (2017) note findings indicating that heavy media exposure given to stereotypical portrayals of Latinos is associated with widespread beliefs that the representations accurately reflect Latinos in real life; the authors stress that this can have polarizing and prejudicial effects on behavior.

>An article from a high school newspaper featured student views of minority representation in media (Basnet, 2021). One student commented that "The lack of representation has impacted me so much. ... Many shows and movies try to be more inclusive, but ... they incorporate a white savior complex, which makes it a conflict for the POC [people of color] community." The interviewed students believe such portrayals contribute to internalization of feelings that their racial identity is not desirable or attractive and that they are inferior to whites.

Implications for Schools

Although children are born with unbiased innocence, the environment they are born into begins to frame their world-view, from the people they live with to the people they see only on screen. The characters and storylines that children grow up viewing take part in building their perspective of themselves and of others. Therefore, the marginalization of people of color in the media leads viewers to believe that whiteness is equivalent to normalcy, which can cause children of color to struggle with their identity or communities. Quetzali Lopez

Schools can play a major role in countering the negative impact of media. And they need to do so if they are to maximize efforts to reduce the achievement and opportunity gaps, facilitate positive social and emotional development, and produce racial harmony at school.

Recommendations for schools in the media literature emphasize

- including a focus on teaching media literacy in a comprehensive and inclusive way
- using media that not only is inclusive, but presents authentic representations
- curtailing cyberbullying
- fostering mutual respect in interpersonal transactions at school.

All of these efforts can be bolstered as schools outreach to inform parents about helping their youngsters do well at school. Available evidence indicates that parents are especially anxious to learn more about how to effectively interact with their youngsters to minimize the negative impact of media consumption (Besana, Katsiaficas, & Loyd, 2020; Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2015).

Beyond the above efforts, schools need to provide a system of student/learning supports for those who require help in recovering positive feelings about self and others. (Adelman & Taylor, 2020).

Also, realistically, efforts at schools to counter the negative impact of media require a focus on dealing with racial, gender, and other negative biases that may have been deeply internalized by students, their families, school staff, and district administrators, and board members.

Concluding Comments

We recognize the immensity of the problem. We also recognize that it is a highly charged political, economic, and societal problem.

Nevertheless, schools must play a major role in addressing the negative effects of student media consumption and in capitalizing on the opportunities media provides for facilitating the school's mission to educate all students.

As James P. Steyer, founder and CEO of the organization *Common Sense* eloquently notes:

> Media plays a critical role in shaping how we understand and make sense of ourselves, our identities, and the world around us. It can perpetuate stereotypes and biases, exacerbating injustice and inequities. But it also presents an opportunity to reduce bias, end division, and be a gateway to a more inclusive future.

Given the prominence of media in the development and lives of children and adolescents, it is daunting to think about how limited the research focus has been. For instance, there is pressing need to increase understanding of the impact of social media apps such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. In particular, significant concerns have been raised about the types of interactions and the nature of the user-generated media content.

Clearly, it is time to do more.

Resources Used in Developing this Document

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2020). *Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*. Los Angeles: Center for MH in Schools &Student/Learning Supports at UCLA.

Aladé, F., & Nathanson, A.I. (2016). What preschoolers bring to the show: The relation between viewer characteristics and children's learning from educational television. *Media Psychology, 19,* 406–430.

Basnet, M. (2021). A diversity deficit: The implications of lack of representation in entertainment on Youth. *Spartan Shield*. Online.

Berry, G.L. (2000). Multicultural media portrayals and the changing demographic landscape: The psychosocial impact of television representations on the adolescent of color. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 27. 57-60.*

Besana, T., Katsiaficas, D., & Loyd, A.B, (2020). Asian American media representation: A film analysis and implications for identity development. *Research in Human Development, 16*, 201-225

Greenberg, B.S. & Mastro, D.E. (2011). Children, race, ethnicity, and media. In S.L. Calvert & B.J. Wilson. (Eds), *The handbook of children, media and development*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 74-97.

Greenberg, B.S. (1988). Some uncommon television images and the drench hypothesis. In S. Oskamp (Ed.), *Applied Social Psychology Annual (Vol. 8) Television as a social issue*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Hamm, M.P., Newton, A.S., Chisholm, A., et al. (2015). Prevalence and effect of cyberbullying on children and young people: A scoping review of social media studies. *JAMA Pediatrics, 169,* 770-777.

Lauricella, A.R., Gola, A.A.H., & Calvert, S.L. (2011). Toddlers' learning from socially meaningful video characters. *Media Psychology, 14,* 216–232.

Lopez , Q. (2020). The influence of racial depictions in children's media on child development. Dissertation online.

Persson, A., & Musher-Eizenman, D., 2003, The impact of a prejudice-prevention television program on young children's ideas about race. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 18*, 530-546,

Martins , N., Gonzales , A., & Mastro , D. (2022). If they only disrespect us a little, and the story is interesting, I keep watching: navigation of ethnic media gratifications by Latino teens. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 37,* 842-870

Monk-Turner , E., Heiserman , M., Johnson , C., Cotton , V., & Jackson, M. (2010). The portrayal of racial minorities on prime time television: A replication of the Mastro and Greenberg study a decade later. *Studies in Popular Culture, 32*, 101-114.

Ramón, A.-C., Tran, M., & Hunt, D. (2022). *Hollywood diversity report 2022, Part 2: Television.* Los Angeles: UCLA Entertainment & Media Research Initiative.

Richards, M.N., & Calvert, S.L. (2017). Media characters, parasocial relationships, and the social aspects of children's learning across media platforms. In R. Barr & D.N. Linebarger (Eds), Media exposure during infancy and early childhood: The effects of content and context on learning and development. Springer. (pp. 141–163).

Rideout, V., & Robb, M.B. (2019). *The Common Sense census: Media use by tweens and teens, 2019.* San Francisco, CA: Common Sense Media.

Rideout, V., & Robb, M.B. (2020). *The Common Sense census: Media use by kids age zero to eight, 2020.* San Francisco, CA: Common Sense Media.

Rogers, O., Mastro, D., Robb, M. B., & Peebles, A. (2021). *The Inclusion Imperative: Why Media Representation Matters for Kids' Ethnic-Racial Development.* San Francisco, CA: Common Sense.

Scharrer, E., & Ramasubramanian, S. (2015). Intervening in the media's influence on stereotypes of race and ethnicity: The role of media literacy education. *Journal of Social Issues, 71*, 171-185.

Singh, H. (2020). The impact of media on youth mental health status. *International Journal of Physiology, 5,* 108-110.

Schlote, E., & Otremba, K. (2010). Cultural diversity in children's television. *TelevIZIon, 23*, 4-8.

Strasburger, V.C., Jordan, A.B., & Donnerstein, E. (2010). Health effects of media on children and adolescents. *Pediatrics, 125*, 756–767.

Trebbe, J., Paasch-Colberg, S., Greyer, J. and Fehr, A. (2017). Media representation: Racial and ethnic stereotypes. In P. Rössler, C.A. Hoffner, & L. Zoonen (Eds), *The international encyclopedia of media Effects*.

Tukachinsky, R. (2015). Where we have been and where we can go from here: Looking to the future in research on media, race, and ethnicity. *Journal of Social Issues, 71*, 186-199.

For more, see the

> ***>Center for Media & Social Impact*** (CMSI); focuses on media with an equity and social justice emphasis.

> ***>Media Awareness Network: For Educators***

Also, our Center has a Quick Find on the

> ***>Effects of Mass Media on Behavior***

A Final Note About Improving Student/Learning Supports

We had just finished a presentation on new directions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, when a member of the audience confronted Linda taylor, the Center's co-director. In an exasperated tone, he complained:

What you discussed is nothing but common sense!

He then waited for her to offer a defense. She smiled and said simply:

You're right!

Despite the common sense reality that school improvement policy and practice must move forward in transforming student and learning supports, it has taken some time for major efforts to emerge. In the meantime, external and internal barriers to learning and teaching have continued to pose some of the most pervasive and entrenched challenges to educators across the country, particularly in chronically low performing schools. Failure to directly address these barriers ensures that (a) too many children and youth will continue to struggle in school, and (b) teachers will continue to divert precious instructional time to dealing with behavior and other problems that can interfere with classroom engagement for all students.

As Dennie Wolf stressed over a decade ago as director of the Opportunity and Accountability Initiative at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform:

Clearly, we know how to raise standards. However, we are less clear on how to support students in rising to meet those standards" Then, she asked: "Having invested heavily in 'raising' both the standards and the stakes, what investment are we willing to make to support students in 'rising' to meet those standards?

Ultimately, the answer to that question will affect not only individuals with learning, behavior, emotional, and physical problems but the entire society.

It is time for school improvement to encompass policy and planning that enables every school to replace its outdated patchwork of programs and services used in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. The aim is to ensure equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school and beyond. Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to enabling equity of opportunity and promoting whole child development.

There are no shortcuts to any place worth going. **~Beverly Sills**

A Host of Free and Readily Accessible Resources from the Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

The Center's resources are widely used for pre-service and continuing professional education and by policy makers and the general public at large.

(1) Here are a few brief Information Resources recently developed by our Center.

>**Social Media's Impact on Young People**

>**How Does Media Consumption Affect Racial Minority Children?**

>**Addressing Violent Behavior at Schools**

>**How Important are Bystanders' Interventions in Bullying?**

>**Project Based Learning and Student Engagement**

(2) For more brief documents on a variety of matters related to youngsters' learning, behavior, and emotional concerns, see the lists of

>**Information Resources**

>**Practice Notes**

(3) See the complete catalogue of **Center Resources**.

(4) Go to the **Quick Find menu** of over 130 topics for a fast and convenient way to access links to selected materials from our Center and other online sources

(5) For a school improvement perspective related to mental health in schools and student/learning supports, see

>**Rethinking Student and Learning Supports**

>**Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions**

>**Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change**

>**Improving School Improvement**

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

And if you don't find what you are looking for, let us know and we'll try to help you find it.

Send requests and comments to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Please share this with others.

As always, we hope you will send us what you think others might find related and relevant.

And if you need to find some resources or want technical assistance,

contact Ltaylor@ucla.edu

The Center for Mental Health in Schools operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Dept. of Psychology, UCLA.

Center Staff:
Howard Adelman, Co-Dirctor
Linda Taylor, Co-Director
Perry Nelson, Coordinator
. . . and a host of students