

Improving State Legislation to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching

The reality is that federal and state legislation aimed at improving schools continues to *marginalize and fragment* efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students.

At the federal level, analyses of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) indicates a continuing ad hoc, piecemeal, and scattered approach to its focus on student/learning supports. Analyses of state plans produce similar findings. These analyses highlight the need for a fundamental shift in school improvement legislation in order to reduce the opportunity and achievement gaps.

See a digest prototype of the type of state legislation that can end the marginalization and fragmentation of efforts to address the complex learning, behavior, and emotional concerns schools encounter every day (online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/draftbill.pdf>).

The *National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports* has provided analyses underscoring the need for transformation and has developed prototypes for new directions. See, for example, the following:

- *Analyses of ESSA's Focus on Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/essaanalyses.pdf>
- *Evolving School Improvement Planning for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/evolving.pdf>
- *ESSA and Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching: Is there Movement toward Transforming Student/Learning Supports?*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/2018%20report.pdf>
- *How Well Do State Legislatures Focus on Improving School Efforts to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching & Re engage Disconnected Students?*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Legisanal.pdf>
- *Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html
- *Improving School Improvement*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

Now is the time to convince legislators to act. So we are asking everyone to consider contacting legislators about this matter.

At the same time, everyone can play a role in moving schools toward unifying and then developing a comprehensive and equitable system of learning supports.

See the call to action outlined as part of the *National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports* –

For more information about the
National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Or contact the national Center for MH & Student/Learning Supports

Howard Adelman adelman@psych.ucla.edu

Linda Taylor, Ltaylor@ucla.edu