

## **ESSA and EQUITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

The responses to last week's report\* included queries about what is involved in moving to more *directly* enhance *equity of opportunity* as ESSA takes hold.

Our research finds that most discussions of how schools can enhance equity of opportunity tend to suggest all that is needed is appropriate accountability, better instruction (including technology), and some tinkering with services for student and families (such as more support staff, more school-based health centers, more community schools). School improvement policy and practices need to move beyond such a limited set of ideas.

One intent of the new law is to replace the outdated patchwork of programs and services used in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. The new block grant funding will open up discussions about the best way to allocate these resources.

It will be unfortunate if the talk about equity and school improvement continues to pay little attention to addressing barriers to learning and teaching by *TRANSFORMING* student and learning supports. It is time to end the fragmentation and marginalization of such supports. Doing so involves unifying and then developing a comprehensive and equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students and families.

The Center's new policy brief highlights research relevant to enhancing equity of opportunity through such a transformation. See:

### **Student and Learning Supports: Moving Forward**

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/suppbrief.pdf>

This brief outlines a necessary shift in school improvement policy and provides a prototype for a unified, comprehensive, and equitable component to replace the existing fragmented and disorganized set of student and learning supports.

\*If you didn't see last week's report, it is at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/accountrep.pdf> .