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**A TRIO OF CHANGES SUPPORTING STUDENTS:  
INTEGRATING SCHOOL REFORMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

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**I. THE HISTORY OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES REVISITED:  
A CALL TO REFORM OUR VISION OF SCHOOLING**

The idea that schools are the right places for students — especially low-performing and working-class students — to receive a variety of non-academic support services is at least a century old. The pattern of recurrent proposals for support services, contrasted with the reality of relatively few comprehensive services, is reminiscent of Cuban's (1990) reminder that schools engage in "reforming again, again, and again". For example, the call for "full-service schools" almost two decades ago (Dryfoos, 1991) has not led to many schools with a full array of support services, yet we are now re-articulating the need for such schools in initiatives to create "community schools" and programs modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone.

Successful efforts to increase the provision of support services in schools must incorporate the lessons of failed attempts of the past. In particular, a remarkable feature of formal schooling has been its ability to reshape agendas coming from outside the

institution to fit the bureaucratic structures of schooling. For example, the kindergarten imported from Switzerland — the “children’s garden,” a place of joy and creativity focused on the whole child — was converted into a form of school readiness for academic tasks (Russell, 2010). School psychologists and social workers in practice often become part of the apparatus of special education testing, diagnosis, and placement (Frey & Dupper, 2005). As a result, many support services have in practice been subordinated to the core of public schooling: mastering academic subjects; either converting “misfits” into obedient students or relegating them to “dumping grounds” like traditional vocational or special education. Too often, they have functioned to grease “the instructional machinery of the school” by making students docile participants in the educational process, rather than acting in the best interests of students themselves (Tyack, 1992, p. 26). A few non-academic programs, like team sports, have retained their original purpose and become permanent fixtures in public education, but they have largely augmented rather than challenged the core of the school’s conventional academic agenda.

In contrast, health, mental health, and social services have had much more tenuous roles in schools (Sedlak, 1997). Though many advocates have argued for them — in “full service” schools, Comer schools, community schools, and approaches like the Harlem Children’s Zone — support services have never been accepted as necessary elements of all schools, the way extra-curricular activities have. The insistence by some

that families ought to be providing these supports and the American mistrust of mental health as health problem have undermined public approval of universal support services. And the focus of support services since the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on low-income students — and inevitably on African American, Latino, and other racial minority students — runs into the suspicion that class and racial biases may operate in efforts to impose White middle-class values and conceptions of child-rearing on the poor. Some of the rhetoric about poor parents (as well as their community surroundings) has given a negative tone to advocacy for support services, calling students most in need “neglected and behavior-problem children,” “vicious and criminally dangerous” — the basis for what is now uniformly excoriated as a deficiency perspective (Tyack, 1992).

Furthermore, student support services have traditionally been conceptualized as efforts to remove barriers to learning (Adelman & Taylor, 1997; Dryfoos, 1991). The focus has been on reducing problems in young people and their families, so that students are ready to receive instruction. When articulated this way, support services can unintentionally become a mechanism by which the responsibility for students’ poor academic performance is transferred from schools to students and their families, “through medicalizing and objectifying discourses” (Skirtic, 2005, p. 149). From this perspective, schools are neutral settings for delivering services to students, ignoring the ways in which schools actively shape students’ social, emotional, and health needs

(Fletcher, Bonell, & Hargreaves, 2008; Hoagwood, 2007). As a result, support providers' goals, responsibilities, and related tasks are separated from those of teachers and administrators, and services are seen as peripheral to the core responsibilities of schools. These services are not integrated with, or understood as central to, school improvement strategies and are therefore easily marginalized (The School Mental Health Project, 2010). So the challenge from the history of failures is still to overcome the barriers – fiscal, institutional, and philosophical – to incorporating comprehensive non-academic supports into what has been primarily an academic institution.

There are at least three reasons to think that now might be the right time to call for this re-visioning, and create comprehensive services in schools as part of efforts to reform our education system and promote early college readiness. One is that, through No Child Left Behind, we have made a national commitment to having all students be proficient by 2014. The idea that *all* children should be brought up to some academic standard has driven schools with under-performing students to look for practices that might accomplish this. Teachers, parents, community members, and school leaders agree that “schools can’t do it alone”, and that non-academic supports are necessary to reach this goal (Greenberg, 2003).<sup>i</sup> Promoting equity and reducing achievement gaps therefore require the expansion of support services in communities that have access to fewer resources.

Second, the prospect of universal health coverage may facilitate the financing of a variety of health and mental health services in schools, especially through School-Based Health centers, though many administrative hurdles remain. Finally, we have increased demands on schools just when the choices and challenges of adolescents in public schools have exploded; a greater prevalence and variety of disorders and disabilities have been recognized, and an increasing number of youth are living in distressed neighborhoods (Costello, Mustillo, Erkanli, Keeler, & Angold, 2003; O'Hare & Mather, 2003). Certainly high schools have become more inclusive of a broader range of students beyond the White, middle-class students who dominated in 1900 (Rothman, 2007). The expansion of challenges, contrasted with the narrowing of schooling because of fiscal limits and of accountability, portends a dismal future. The reconstruction of schooling and its complementary programs seems more necessary now than at any time in the past.

This paper proposes several strategies for overcoming the limitations of previous efforts to improve support services in school. First, to shift the discourse away from a deficiency perspective, we begin with a discussion of the capacities all students need to be successful in college and beyond. We then outline the key principles for promoting positive student outcomes across a trio of reforms:

1. Efforts to make schooling itself — including instruction, discipline, and guidance and counseling — more supportive of all students.

2. The elaboration of health services within School-Based Health Centers.
3. The development of a rich set of after school programs.

Although these reforms are initially discussed separately, a central argument of this paper is that teachers, administrators, support providers, and after-school program leaders must work together, with distributed responsibility for a range of student outcomes. We close with a discussion of key issues that remain unresolved.

## **II. THE CAPACITIES ALL STUDENTS NEED AND THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS**

Most discussions about support services stress negative outcomes — pregnancy, depression, violence, drug abuse, unmotivated students, and on and on, a litany of woes that suggest support services are supposed to “fix” the small minority of kids who are “broken” in some way. Yet when interventions are targeted at the problems of individual youth, they fail to address the cultural and developmental mismatches between schools and students that contribute to the psychological and academic challenges faced by adolescents (Deschenes, Cuban, & Tyack, 2001; Eccles et al., 1993). Moreover, when services are driven by teacher or administrator referrals of “problem” youth, these programs end up responding to a relatively narrow range of student



issues (e.g. disruptive behavior and truancy) while exacerbating racial disparities in unmet need (Gudino, Lau, Yeh, McCabe, & Hough, 2009).

An alternative, more positive and universal approach is to stress that all youth need to develop a variety of competencies to participate successfully in an increasingly complex world. Such a perspective is supported by growing evidence that efforts to promote students' development can also address the underlying causes of problem behavior (Catalano, 2004; Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2003). This section briefly outlines these capacities, drawing on Lerner's (2005) framework of positive youth development outcomes, the "five C's" of competence, confidence, character, connections and caring. We also emphasize similar capacities that are especially important for college readiness (Conley, 2007). Although these attributes are often viewed as personal characteristics of individual students, in reality they are developed and fostered in multiple contexts including — sometimes most importantly — educational settings (Eccles & Roeser, 1999). Our purpose is not to suggest a definitive list of competencies that all youth need; such lists are inevitably somewhat arbitrary. Instead, we emphasize that a competency-based approach accomplishes two goals: it resists the tendency to list an endless series of deficiencies and barriers to be eliminated by support services; and it clarifies that the development of these capacities could be the distributed responsibility of multiple actors working together in schools.

First, students need to develop *cognitive and academic competence*, historically the priority of public education. Although state and federal accountability systems usually test only for basic skills, it is widely recognized that higher-order conceptual abilities — such as problem-posing and -solving, conceptual and abstract thinking, and decision-making, often called “21<sup>st</sup> century skills” (and earlier called “20<sup>th</sup> century skills”) — are crucial for college readiness and completion, and occupational, civic and family life. Such abilities are well beyond those generally referred to as “basic” skills, and no amount of instruction (or “interventions”) stressing drill and repetition, can bring students to appropriate levels of conceptual abilities.

In order to perform well on multiple types of educational tasks and avoid taking self-destructive risks, students need *confidence* and a positive self-identity. Of particular relevance to success in school and employment outcomes is the development of a strong *character*, including planfulness, commitment to schooling, independence, initiative, flexibility, and academic stamina or “grit” (Duckworth et al. 2007). Acquiring the credits and passing courses required for graduation and college enrollment requires organization, persistence, and the ability to connect ones current actions to future goals. To foster these attributes, students must feel *connected* to their school, community, family and peers; they need relationships and pro-social networks that they can rely on for information, guidance, and modeling. Finally, just as is emphasized in early childhood education, adolescents need to develop social and

emotional capacities, represented in the final “C” of *caring*. This includes abilities to show compassion towards others, work cooperatively, demonstrate empathy and moral reasoning, and recognize and control their emotions. Primary physical and mental health is the foundation on which all of these capacities are developed.

Of course, this list of competencies can be stated in other ways. For college readiness Conley (2007) has stressed the importance of basic academic preparation; conceptual understanding, cognitive strategies, and discipline-based ways of thinking; behavioral capacities including independence, initiative, flexibility, planning and decision-making skills; and “college knowledge,” or information about the variety of colleges, their expectations, and the procedures for applying to and then negotiating college. With the exception of college knowledge, required to negotiate the institutional procedures for getting into and thriving in college, these dimensions of college readiness mirror the five C’s.

Although all of the 5 C’s are central to students’ long-term success in college and beyond, traditional schools — particularly in middle schools and high schools — are almost exclusively concerned with academic competence, and often with basic skills only. Under pressure from state accountability systems and No Child Left Behind, schools serving low-performing students have narrowed their focus to basic math and reading skills, discouraging the kind of teaching that might foster higher-order conceptual abilities and neglecting activities that support the other 4 Cs. The

narrowing of instruction and curricula have to be counted as the great cost of accountability systems focused on standardized test scores, certainly when we consider the range of capacities students need for both further education and for adult life.

Instruction, school climate, and support services *all* have the potential to contribute to, or detract from, the development of student capacities (Eccles et al., 1993; Fletcher et al., 2008; Hoagwood, 2007). For example, students are more likely to be motivated, and therefore connected to their schooling, in programs allowing for close adult-student relationships; in environments where students have some autonomy in selecting tasks and methods; in which students can construct meaning, engage in sense-making on their own, and play an active role in learning; in well-structured educational environments, with clear purposes, a challenging curriculum, high expectations, and a strong emphasis on achievement; when students have multiple paths to competence; and when they understand possible education and career pathways, enhancing their understanding of schooling and their motivation to participate fully (National Research Council, 2004). Students with teachers who foster social connectedness and care are less likely to experience emotional distress, use alcohol and drugs, or engage in violent behavior (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002). A positive school climate enhances learning as well as occupational and educational aspirations (Grubb, 2009, Table B.1). Similarly, self-confidence and feelings of control and accomplishment are fostered in academic environments that provide

challenging but manageable tasks and hold students to high but achievable standards (National Research Council, 2004, Ch. 2). After-school programs that promote social and emotional development also improve students' performance on standardized tests and their overall academic achievement (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). Once again, the nature of school experiences – both in and outside the classroom - shape youth capacities that are important for college readiness, success, and then adult life.

### III. A TRIO OF INTEGRATED REFORMS

In the same way that schools and support services influence students' development of core capacities, they also influence each other. An unsupportive climate itself creates problems for students, *and* a negative climate is likely to undermine the effectiveness of whatever support services are provided. Similarly, unmotivating instruction undermines students' commitment to schooling, making it that much harder to "fix" the behavior of students. Broader school reform initiatives and efforts to expand services in schools are necessarily interconnected; these efforts must be integrated to be successful (Payne, 2008; Ringeisen, Henderson, & Hoagwood, 2003). In short, adding a variety of support services to existing schools may be a necessary condition to promote student success, but it is certainly not sufficient, particularly if a school's climate and instruction themselves exacerbate the problems

students experience. So rather than viewing student support as the responsibility of certain services — particularly those that might be provided in “full service” schools or comprehensive School-Based Health Centers — it is more appropriate to view such support as the responsibility of several dimensions of a school.

What is necessary is a both-and solution: *both* reforming the school *and* introducing a variety of support services to be provided on-site.<sup>ii</sup> In this paper, we outline a trio of efforts to support students: (1) school reforms to create better conditions for student learning and social development; (2) primary health and wellness services, ideally provided through a comprehensive School-Based Health Center; and (3) an expansion and re-conceptualization of after-school and extra-curricular activities. These three centers of activity are complementary to one another, and some of them — like reforming a school’s culture — are necessary before other services can be very effective. Instead of outlining specific reforms in detail, we will spend more time describing strategies that should be at the foundation of their development. Although this trio of reforms is first discussed conventionally, as separate and distinct spheres of school life addressing various problems, the following section will provide examples of how reforms can be integrated.

### **School reforms**

The most critical school reforms would enhance the ways that teachers, counselors and other school personnel support both the cognitive *and* the non-cognitive development of students. Four areas appear to be particularly critical in this area: instruction, school climate, discipline, and racial and ethnic mistreatment. These all have many effects on students, including large effects on problem behaviors such as drug use and aggression (Wilson, Gottfredson, & Najaka, 2001)

*Approaches to Instruction:* There are at least two reasons why instruction in middle and high schools needs to be reformed, to move away from traditional behaviorist teaching toward more constructivist or “balanced” approaches in which teachers move as appropriate between traditional and innovative teaching. The first is that conventional instruction cannot help students develop the conceptual perspectives that allow them to engage in more sophisticated learning, or any of the “higher order-skills” being widely discussed; and the second is that traditional instruction violates almost all the precepts for motivation and engagement. A school with traditional or behaviorist instruction is likely to create relatively poor attendance, unwillingness to work hard, resistance to school authority, and other signs of reduced commitment to formal schooling — including behaviors like defiance that sometimes end up with students placed in special education, detention, expulsion, or retention in grade.

Unfortunately, changing pedagogy is itself a difficult task, particularly at the high school level. Ideally, facility in instructional methods starts in teacher preparation,

continues in internships, is reinforced in initial teaching placements through support from the school (including the principal acting as an *instructional* leader) and through induction and professional development activities. In practice, the early stages of such preparation are missing, so many schools trying to change instruction rely on professional development; in this case it needs to involve long-term efforts, with teachers engaged in discussions and practice about pedagogical content knowledge (Little, 2006), and developing approaches in the classroom that are then observed by others, modified, and developed over time (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, Ch. 10). Most often, schools (or even individual departments) that have been able to change their teaching methods have also created schools with more collegial internal working relations, with leadership distributed among administrators and teachers rather than held by the principal, and with teachers working at supporting one another through classroom observations, feedback, sharing of information about students' work, the development of common assessments, and other collaborative work (Grubb, 2009; Grubb & Tredway, 2010). This means that changing instruction may require changing the structure and norms of a school as well as the practices of individual teachers.

*Improving School Climate:* Many schools, particularly urban schools, have a climate or culture that is unsupportive of students. The relationships between students and teachers are antagonistic, while relationships among students are hostile and combative (Payne 2008). The climate of a school can generate both academic and



behavioral problems, and exacerbate the conditions that mental health services are intended to alleviate. There is a substantial literature on changing school climate, and now on “reculturing” schools.<sup>iii</sup> Some of this involves changing approaches to instruction, as we have already mentioned; others involve changing attitudes toward and relations with students. These methods are often called student-centered, and require teachers and other adults to know their students well; this has been extended to conceptions of caring as a crucial element of teaching (e.g., Noddings, 1992). Like the improvement of instruction, most of these changes stress the importance of a school community working together to recognize the problems, devise solutions appropriate to the specific school, and implement these solutions collectively. Outside experts may be able to facilitate the stages of diagnosis and recommendation, but re-culturing is very much a school-based activity.

*Discipline:* Most schools rely on highly behaviorist discipline systems: adults set the rules and adjudicate them, and students have very little power over the process — quite the opposite of the conditions for motivation, where student initiative and autonomy are important. Furthermore, there’s a strong tendency in many schools to elaborate rules and enforce them more strictly in response to poor relationships among students, teachers and administrators, in effect blaming students rather than asking whether the schools’ own climate and discipline system are to blame.

Furthermore, there are distinctive racial and ethnic dimension of discipline.

Many cases of procedural injustice arise where students perceive — correctly, it turns out — bias by race and class. For example, Skiba (2002) found that African American students were more likely to be referred to the office by teachers, and for more subjective infractions like loitering and disrespect rather than clear violations of rules. Suspensions are commonly higher for males, Black, and Latino students, and higher-performing students are less likely to be suspended for the same infractions (Noguera, 2003). Zero tolerance policies, in which every infraction is punished regardless of its severity, are disproportionately developed and enforced in schools serving low-income students of color (Ayers, Dohrn, & Ayers, 2001; Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

The alternative is to consider whether the school is also to blame for misbehavior. While many schools have identified which *students* are responsible for referrals, complementary analysis is to identify which *teachers* are responsible. Often, a few teachers are responsible for a large proportion of disciplinary actions (Gregory, 2003). The next step is to identify, through classroom observations, whether something about teachers' instruction or interactions with students might explain high levels of referrals. In one case, a principal was able to determine that the four teachers responsible for most referrals taught in the most rigid and traditional ways, were intolerant of any movement around the classroom, and interpreted rules in narrow and rigid ways (Mukerjee, 2006). Discipline problems may arise from an interaction of

student and teacher behavior, and punishing students without changing teacher behavior may again be perceived as procedurally unfair.

So discipline systems are themselves responsible for the stresses experienced by students and some of their alienation from schools, especially among students of color. In response, some schools have tried alternatives to behaviorist discipline. One is to give a greater role to students in establishing and adjudicating rules; this has led, for example, to student-run “courts” where students (coached by adults) interpret the rules with much more knowledge of student and school conditions.<sup>iv</sup> Another is to identify the problem as one of school culture generally, and provide teachers with preventive and proactive strategies — creating a school climate more respectful of students, promoting forms of mediation when teachers and students come into conflict, and preparing teachers to defuse hostility instead of exacerbating it. A third promising approach has been restorative justice, based on the ideas of Marvin Wolfgang, which tries to impose consequences that enable students to contribute to the school and restore their standing rather than banishing them. Schools can confront problems caused by conventional discipline systems in many ways, thereby contributing both to school connectedness and to the well-being of students.

***Racial and ethnic mistreatment:*** The most profound inequalities in the American educational system are associated with racial and ethnic status. The “achievement gap” is usually stated in terms of racial differences among white, African American, and

Latino students in test scores or dropout rates. Some part of these gaps can be explained by family background, some by variation in school resources among schools, among districts, and among states, and some by student behavior including attendance and commitment to schooling. But even after considering these effects, racial and ethnic differences persist: other variables fail to explain between 45% and 60% of the black-white differences in test scores, 25% to 40% of white-Latino differences; 45% of the black-white difference in earning a high school diploma; and 20% of the white-Latino difference (Grubb 2009, Table B-4). An irreducible knot of racial and ethnic inequality remains after considering almost every alternative explanation.

The persistence of racial/ethnic differences demands first that we come up with some explanation of the remaining gap. Genetic explanations have by now been firmly rejected by statistical evidence, but when we look at qualitative information about schools, one powerful explanation involves the biased perceptions and mistreatment of students — based on class differences, sometimes, and certainly on gender differences, but mostly based on race and ethnicity. There's substantial testimony about mistreatment from African American and Latino writers remembering their own schooling, from ethnographers describing particular schools and districts, from critical race theory with its insistence on personal stories and voice. Mistreatment takes many forms, so it can be elusive. Sometimes it may be overt, as in the psychological abuse of students, but it's more likely to take the form of covert and unconscious mistreatment,

sometimes called “micro-aggressions” — individually small but collectively relentless (Solorzano, 2001). Many students of color report feeling invisible or ignored in the classroom, with their concerns about race marginalized. These students are more likely to feel demeaned for using non-standard English or foreign languages. The sense that schools are trying to replace a student’s home culture with mainstream middle-class norms (rather than encouraging multiple identities or multiculturalism) has been labeled “subtractive schooling,” and has been documented in the historically persistent “mismatch” between the culture of schooling and the culture of some students’ communities (Deschenes et al., 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). Students of color are also more likely to be the victims of the well-documented problem of lower teacher expectations (Ferguson, 2001; Weinstein, 2002). As the previous section pointed out, they are more likely to be disciplined, suspended, or expelled for infractions that other students are not punished for. The psychological conception of stereotype threat helps clarify how racially minority students may feel threatened by all these forms of treatment, as individuals in a negatively stereotyped group perform poorly, or withdraw from an activity, if the negative stereotype is triggered by some action or word (Steele, 2010).

That’s the bad news. The good news is that advocates have developed an enormous range of strategies to combat these forms of mistreatment head on and to avoid triggering stereotype threat. These include finding more teachers of color, to be sure, but also a variety of curricular and pedagogical innovations: explicit attention to

code-switching for immigrant students and speakers of Black Vernacular English; a range of culturally-relevant pedagogy and multicultural education introducing new curriculum materials; new subjects (like the role of race in American society); pedagogies with greater student participation and more critical perspectives; systematic classroom observations so that teachers can learn if they are unconsciously mistreating students of color; different approaches to discipline; non-teaching support from same-race counselors and mentors. These equity-focused practices constitute a vast portfolio of options for schools and districts that take the racial and ethnic dimensions of achievement gaps seriously.

There are, then, many ways schools can and should change to develop the competencies that all young people need in the modern world. These would not only foster the cognitive capacities that schools have traditionally developed, but also those social and emotional competencies that some approaches to education have fostered though others have ignored. Some of the reforms would prevent, or at least not exacerbate, the problems that otherwise show up in special education, mental health issues, or substance abuse. There still would be substantial needs for support services, but at least schooling itself would not be to blame for making things worse for kids.

### **Health and wellness services**

Even if schools become more supportive places, many students still need additional health and wellness services because of the limited availability, quality and affordability of these programs in their communities. For adolescents, common health concerns include unintentional injuries, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, disruptive disorders, sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancy (Costello et al., 2003; Grunbaum, 2000; Mulye et al., 2009).<sup>v</sup> When untreated, these problems have been linked to school absences, academic failure, and debilitating, chronic disorders in adulthood (Costello, Egger, & Angold, 2005; Jeynes, 2002; Needham, Crosnoe, & Muller, 2003). Access to prevention and intervention services is related to race, ethnicity, and class: low-income youth of color far less likely to have their health needs met (Elster, Jarosik, VanGeest, & Fleming, 2003). Given the relationship among poverty, lack of insurance, health challenges and schooling outcomes, many have argued that improved access to comprehensive healthcare is as likely to narrow the achievement gap as much as school improvement efforts would (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Berliner, 2009, March; Currie, 2005).

Health and wellness programs are better utilized, less stigmatized, more responsive to young peoples' needs, and more easily integrated with other school reforms when they are located on school campuses, in school-*based* rather than school-*linked* health centers (Anglin, Naylor, & Kaplan, 1996; Burns et al., 1995). The specific services provided by School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs)<sup>vi</sup> vary from school to

school depending on the needs of students, but they would ideally include: physical and mental health services, including dental and vision care; contraceptive distribution; and health education programs that promote the confidence and caring capacities necessary to avoid risky behaviors. In practice, however, SBHCs are rarely this comprehensive; 35% don't provide mental health services, only 15% provide health education, and two thirds are unable to distribute contraceptives because of local ordinances (National Assembly on School Based Health Care, 2010). Therefore the provision of "full services requires both an expansion of SBHCs to many more schools *and* a greater range of services within SBHCs.

Regardless of the specific menu of services provided, it is critical that SBHCs offer programs that target both physical and mental health, in order to reduce stigma, increase utilization, and enhance collaboration with other school staff. For example, if students sometimes go to a SBHC for innocuous physical treatments like flu shots or diagnosis of ear infections, sometimes for contraceptives, sometime for treatment of depression or drug abuse, then no one except the SBHC's staff need know why they are going. A comprehensive SBHC can respond to different patterns of demand, providing specific services as the need for them becomes apparent. Finally, comprehensive SBHCs can more easily coordinate its efforts with those of the regular curriculum and the extra-curriculum, since some educational efforts and services can be provided in any of the three.



Some advocates of student services have welcomed the health care reforms of 2010 because they expand eligibility for health insurance, and they contain a modest provision (of \$200million over four years) for SBHCs (Samuels, 2010). Ideally public support for SBHCs could be expanded, and the SBHCs could include all students, either with their own private insurance or with government-funded Medicaid. In practice, the current public support for SBHCs is wholly inadequate, and the bureaucratic barriers to creating comprehensive centers are enormous. But at least the new legislation has established the principle of universal health coverage, creating conditions more favorable to widespread SBHCs.

### **After-school and extra-curricular programs**

Traditionally, after-school programs have offered youth access to supervised recreation or supplemental instruction, with the primary aims of improving school performance and preventing delinquency. At a minimum, they have provided reasons for students to become more committed to school as the locus of their lives after 3:00, rather than hanging out on the streets. In recent years, the field has expanded tremendously, with a growing range of activities offered in educational settings for a variety of purposes — not only traditional sports and student clubs, but also service-learning; work-based internships aligned with the curriculum; and “interventions” and remedial efforts of great variety, potentially (if not always in practice) aligned with the

curriculum. In this respect, what matters most to the success of after-school programs are not their specific foci, but that their goals are relevant, realistic, and measurable (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). For example, if a desired outcome is increased student achievement on standardized tests, it is critical that the after-school program explicitly involve an academic component, ideally coupled with a recreational, cultural, or vocational aspect to keep students engaged (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Lauer et al., 2006). Like other school reforms, implementation varies tremendously, but high-quality and well-resourced after-school programs have demonstrated large positive effects on students' capacities and problem behaviors (Beckett, 2008). The advantages of traditional extra-curricular activities for school attendance and performance have also been well documented (Grubb, 2009, Ch. 5; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

Of particular relevance to Early College High Schools are after-school programs that help students develop their career and educational goals through work-based and service-learning placements. These programs take students outside the confines of the school building, with opportunities to learn from the broader community while developing career and post-secondary goals. Although teenage employment not only reduces learning and test scores and slows progress through high school (Greenberger & Steinberg, 1986; Grubb, 2009), evaluations demonstrate that students develop competence, confidence, character, and connections when work and service experiences are coordinated and supplemented by the school (Badway & Grubb, 1988;

Furco, 2010; Ryken, 2001; Spring, Grimm, & Dietz, 2009). As part of after-school activities, work-based and service-learning programs have the potential for enriching the lives of adolescents, and providing them with both the competencies and the knowledge about life after high school that could not be obtained in any other way.

Ideally, however, after-school programming should offer a wide variety of activities, beyond work-based or service-learning, that reflects the diversity of interests among students. Students would show up at some points to improve their learning and grades, or for credit recovery; at other times they would participate in discussion groups, or in conventional clubs or sports. All of these activities would also focus on building the 5 C's, the competencies of healthy adolescents contemplating changes in their lives, rather than dealing with problems and pathologies. In the process students might become better connected to schooling, and learn the value of purposeful activity — or persistence and “grit” — instead of “hanging out” (Larson, 2000). In every way, a rich after-school program would be complementary to the academic core of the school, rather than competing with it.

#### **IV. STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS ACROSS REFORM EFFORTS**

We have written the previous section as if school reforms, support services, and afterschool or out-of-school-time (OST) activities could be considered separately, as

independent fiefdoms in a large school organization. In part this reflects the reality that teachers and administrators, those who work in School-Based Health Centers, and after-school services and extra-curricular activities usually operate independently from one other. But many similar or related activities could be carried out in any one of the three areas, so they should be viewed as interconnected. In addition, several meta-analyses of implementation and effectiveness reveal commonalities in successful practices for this trio of reforms.

For example, the high school reform commonly called multiple pathways (Oakes & Saunders, 2008) involves several teachers integrating their instruction around a theme, either occupational (health, or IT, or industrial production) or non-occupational (environmental issues or social justice are examples). Pathways normally try to incorporate some learning in settings outside the school related to the pathways theme, in work-based placements or (for non-occupational themes) in service learning. These represent opportunities to link after-school activities with the school-based curriculum.

Similarly, when high schools develop vocationally-oriented pathways, they often include forms of counseling to enable students to choose among the alternatives. Schools with multiple pathways often offer information sessions about each of the pathways, or better yet, short periods of time in each of the pathways (sometimes called “exploratories”). These efforts give students some experience with alternative

occupational areas and are embedded in the curriculum, rather than being a peripheral service by guidance counselors disconnected from classrooms.

Guidance and counseling have been a traditional part of schools, and academic counseling has become a necessary fixture given the complexity of the high school. But some components — particularly those involved with individual interests and preferences — could be offered through School-Based Health Centers; after-school workshops and seminars could also encompass such “courses” or workshops. More active ways of exploring student interests — through internships, job shadowing, interviewing members of the community about their educational trajectories and jobs — could be incorporated into after-school activities, as service learning and work-based learning now are. The guidance and counseling function, broadly interpreted, could be distributed among the three areas, with teachers assigning papers on topics related to schooling and future life, School-Based Health Centers providing other opportunities to explore life planning and decision-making, and after-school activities providing other experiences from which students might develop their interests.

Elements of health-related education and services could also be distributed across the three centers of reform. For example, a School-Based Health Center might provide a workshop on nutrition and exercise while a biology class explores the biology of nutrition and obesity; after-school sports provide the traditional place where students develop lifelong interests in exercise and health. A SBHC could provide seminars on

adolescent development while an English class reads *Bildungsroman*, the literature on lifespan development. Some schools have courses like “Social Living,” where students grapple with the dilemmas of living in communities as well as the range of teenage anxieties about sex, STDs, drugs, race, and parents (Rubin, 1994). Others, like Cal Prep at U.C. Berkeley, have developed “advisories” where students discuss such issues as personal goals, career paths, and the value of community service and college or graduation requirements.(Osofsky, Sinner, & Wolk, 2003). These kinds of exploration could take place within the regular school setting, after school, or in health centers.

While schools can be more attentive to social- and emotional dimensions than they now are, this is also a capacity that can be developed in after-school and extra-curricular activities, as well as within the workshops and seminars of a School-Based Health Center. Discussion groups about adolescent concerns, student courts, the examination of racial issues both in school and in society, and the promotion of service learning to develop empathy could all be part of a School-Based Health Center or a rich after-school program. Social and emotional capacities may also be developed in the extra-curriculum, where sports and clubs have traditionally encouraged teamwork, loyalty, and hard work in the pursuit of goals (“grit”). When extra-curricular activities are carefully developed, they are also places where students of different races and ethnicities work together, places where students can show their competence in forms

different from that of the academic content, and places where commitment to schooling can develop — all dimensions of engagement.

Two others kinds of support services could be located either in a School-Based Health Center or in the extra-curriculum: critical analysis of media and popular culture, to counter the stereotypes and commercial values that envelop young people; and workshops related to identity, like discussion groups around gender, race and ethnicity — particularly because a number of studies have found that a strong and positive racial identity is positively related to school performance (Cohen, 2006 p. 138; Zirkel, forthcoming). Whether such workshops and seminars can make much of an impact on the tsunami of popular culture is unclear, but at least they could provide an appropriately critical approach for young people to consider.

Staff from a mental health program could diagnose what about a school's climate and classrooms are causing distress to students, and suggest remedies — similar to the role that the MetLife foundation has suggested for counselors. With this kind of practice, School-Based Health Center personnel share the responsibility for creating a healthy school, something that might be seen as an intrusion on the turf of educators but which could be viewed as another source of help in a difficult educational task.

There, then, many ways in which school reforms, comprehensive services, and after-school or OST activities could be viewed as complementary. In addition, analyses of the most effective reforms suggest several commonalities among all three domains:

*Multi-level efforts:* The most effective reforms target multiple student outcomes or capacities, involve multiple partners, and take place in multiple settings (Catalano, 2004; Hoagwood, 2007; Rones & Hoagwood, 2000; Tobler et al., 2000; Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003; Wilson et al., 2001). This comprehensive approach reaches beyond individual students to their families, classrooms, and communities.

Particularly promising are system-wide change programs that build a supportive school environment by altering teacher practices or incorporating support programs into the classroom curricula (Greenberg, 2003; Tobler et al., 2000). In these cases, the overarching goal is to improve classroom management and school climate while fostering students' connections and engagement, not to "fix" individual students.

*Interactive student-centered approaches:* Just as didactic and lecture-oriented approaches to academic instruction are less effective,<sup>vii</sup> support services have a greater impact when they teach new skills in an active, interactive way, providing opportunities for students to practice and apply them (Tobler et al., 2000; Weissberg et al., 2003). In group or classroom formats, facilitated discussions that allow participants to exchange ideas, practice skills, and receive feedback in a non-threatening environment are essential to both academic and social-emotional learning. Even individually oriented interventions are more effective when they use cognitive-behavioral strategies with structured activities and active learning techniques, such as rehearsal, to acquire new behaviors (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Wilson et al., 2001).



*Relationship-focused methods:* Positive relationships with adults and peers in a supportive emotional environment are central to students' engagement and motivation (National Research Council, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Trusting relationships are also a core resource for effective school reforms (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

Teachers, administrators and service providers can foster these connections by actively facilitating opportunities for informal socializing with students in small group settings, creating learning atmospheres that respond to youths' interests, and consistently applying rules that incorporate young people's ideas about mutual respect (Grossman & Bulle, 2006; McNeely et al., 2002).

*Developmental approaches:* School and service contexts must be responsive to students' developmental needs in order to be effective. Here, we use the term developmental to refer to a cumulative process of learning and maturation, where achievement at any period is the result of all prior experiences (Weissberg et al., 2003). Put another way, reforms must be student-centered and timed to youths' intellectual, cognitive and social development (Nation, 2003). This suggests that a developmental program keeps adding new experiences and competencies to those that have been developed before, rather than thinking that a one-time program is sufficient (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). This conception is opposed to the "inoculation" model, where intervention in the early years — in early childhood programs, for example, or the mastery of basic skills in the early years — creates the foundation for permanent

success in school and obviates the need for continuing support. Rather, a developmental conception would argue that services need to be maintained throughout the course of schooling, albeit changing as the student's needs and capacities change. In high school, this means allowing for greater youth voice, autonomy, and decision-making (Weissberg et al., 2003).

*Culturally responsive practices:* Teachers, health providers and youth workers, along with the systems they create to address students' needs, are more effective and equitable when they are adapted to the experiences and perspectives of students of color. Strategies employed in the classroom, such as culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural education (Banks & Banks, 2004; Gay, 2000), parallel in many ways the dimensions of culturally competent support services (Nation, 2003; Sue, 2006). All require adults to have knowledge specific to the cultural backgrounds, norms, and beliefs of students, balanced with an ability to look beyond stereotypes to hold youth to high expectations.

*Leadership by skilled staff.* The success of reform efforts hinges on the capacities of the adults who lead them. The skills of teachers, health providers, and youth workers matter tremendously for implementation (Weissberg, et al., 2003). Adult leaders need opportunities to participate in ongoing training, evaluation, and reflection about implementation quality and outcomes to sustain their impact on students.

Rather than viewing school reforms, the creation of more comprehensive service, and after-school or OST activities as independent, therefore, we should recognize the similarities and synergies among them. In a well-integrated school, the trio of reforms we have developed would blend into and support one another, rather than perpetuating the divisions among the three that now prevail.

## V. UNRESOLVED ISSUES

While the ideal of support services for students is at least a century old, evidently this vision has not been well-institutionalized. The number of full-service schools, or schools with comprehensive School-Based Health Centers, is still a tiny percentage of the total; while some extra-curricular activities have become institutionalized, a broader array of after-school choices has not. In this concluding section we examine four unresolved issues creating barriers to more comprehensive support, pointing out promising directions for government policy and foundation initiatives: basic governance issues; the resources required; the dilemmas of leadership; and the preparation of teachers, workers in SBHCs, and after-school personnel.

*Governance.* In order to coordinate and integrate this trio of efforts in schools, new administrative, financial, and accountability structures are required, but there is very little empirical research about what works in this regard. The most robust

literature comes from the community schools movement, in which schools serve as the central institution to meet young peoples' needs through partnerships with other agencies. Support services are designed collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders and then a full-time coordinator oversees their implementation and integration (Blank, Quinn, & Kim, 2003). In addition, the director of the School-Based Health Center and after school programs may serve on the decision-making bodies, such as the school's administrative team or school-site council. To further support coordination, supervision is shared, as are student outcomes. Support service staff are required to be in classrooms a number of hours a week, and to meet with teachers, provide in-service trainings, and coordinate interventions that address school climate or other school-wide problems (Blank et al., 2003). Teachers have a correlary obligation to collaborate with service providers and make space for them in their classrooms. Of course, the details of responsibilities in governing a tripartite school would need to be developed locally, school by school, and variability in the extent of integration and cooperation would persist. But integration of governance seems the only way to avoid the fragmentation that has been typical.

Adding these services to schools in a sustainable way also means that new ways of assessing the success of public schools are necessary. New systems of accountability that emphasize a wider range of outcomes for students could help schools make these fundamental changes in the way they organize and deliver support services in

conjunction with instructional reforms. In order to improve service quality and contribute to knowledge development, new accountability systems need to assess both outcomes and practices, requiring periodic observation, not just paper and pencil assessments (Granger, Durlak, Yohalem, & Reisner, 2007; Weissberg et al., 2003).<sup>viii</sup>

*Leadership.* A second problem, virtually unrecognized, involves leadership and preparation issues. The demands on school leaders — principals and teacher-leaders — have grown substantially, in such areas as instructional leadership, school reform, and the use of data for improvement. Creating new responsibilities for support services might over-burden them, or distract them from their instructional responsibilities. While there are several solutions to this problem, they require some recognition of how important leadership is, and how badly it has been neglected at the high school level in particular (Grubb & Tredway, 2010). For example, schools that integrate their programs into regular school operations are much more likely to have supportive principals (Payne, 2008), and principals need to be knowledgeable about the kinds of services available and their effects. At the very least this will require modules in leadership training that examine support services; in addition, the initial placements of assistant principals and induction programs for new leaders could include rotation through experiences with student services and OST activities.

*Professional preparation and development.* Like the issue of leadership, the preparation of teachers, and of those individuals who work in support services and in

after-school programs, is another topic that needs to be addressed. The tri-partite school developed in this paper requires professionals who are able to interact in new ways, rather than individuals operating in isolated classrooms and services. The need to connect after-school programs and regular academic instruction has already been recognized, though many after-school programs remain unarticulated with the rest of academic preparation. The antidote must be some combination of preparation and ongoing professional development. Special forms of pre-service training for teachers, health workers, and after school staff could bring about the integration that would most benefit students (Greenberg, 2003; Nation, 2003). Currently such programs are exceedingly rare, though a growing number of helping professions offer a school-related credential (like one for school social workers), and some teacher preparation programs incorporate discussions of social and emotional development. Therefore, in-service and induction activities are critical to support reform strategies, including time for consultation and communication among regular teachers, after-school workers, and school-based health professionals (Ringeisen et al., 2003; Weissberg, Durlak, Taylor, & Dymnicki, 2009; Weissberg et al., 2003).

*Resources.* A fourth issue is the age-old problem of resources, of which money is just one. Some of these services, like School-Based Health Centers with nurses and health care workers, or an after-school program with a rich portfolio of options, require new funding in obvious ways.<sup>ix</sup> Others, especially improving pedagogy, climate, and

integration across reforms, require different resources — leadership, the active participation of teachers, a vision, persistence and stability — because they have to be *constructed* by participants and cannot be bought off the shelf (Grubb, 2009). So the “costs” of these reforms must be reckoned in terms of both money and other resources, and there is little guidance about what levels of costs will be required for some of them. While the an expanded insurance-based health system provides some possibilities for funding School-Based Health Centers, funding streams remain categorical and fragmented, making it very difficult for schools to create governance structures that support shared supervision, training and integration (Newman, 2000). The crying need in this country is not to create a few “little programs” here and there, but to develop universal policies and programs that can enhance the capacities of all schools to enable students to be college-ready.

The past decade has seen the development of standards and accountability mechanisms, but without a commensurate increase in the capacity to meet these standards. The issues of leadership, resources, and the preparation of teachers, after-school program providers and School-Based Health Center workers are all part of capacity building. Until we as a nation confront the need for such capacity in these three centers, our schools will fail to live up to the hopes we have for them.

In many ways, schools took a wrong turn after 1890. In a time of great change, what prevailed was a K-12 system concerned more with uniformity and efficiency,

with narrow conceptions of what academic capacities (or “skills”) should be developed in school, with little regard for equity. Now, in a period of similarly great change, we need to develop a different vision, with broader goals for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and greater equity. The tri-partite approach outlined in this paper is one such vision, intended to develop a wider range of competencies among all students.



## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> The idea that “schools can’t do it alone” is one that has been debated over a long period of time; see Grubb (2009), Ch. 12 for a very brief history. Rothstein (2004) and Berliner (2009) are two recent statements of the need for non-school policies.

<sup>ii</sup> This perspective and language comes from John Dewey. In his introduction to *Experience and Education* (1938) he wrote: “Mankind likes to think in terms of extreme opposites. It is given to formulating its beliefs in terms of Either-Ors, between which it recognizes no intermediate possibilities” (p. 17). In discussing traditional and progressive pedagogies, he lamented that “the problems are not even recognized, to say nothing of being solved, when it is assumed that it suffices to reject the ideas and practices of the old education and then go to the opposite extreme” (p. 22).

<sup>iii</sup> Sarason (1996) is the classic; see also Hinde (2002), a review drawn from a dissertation. There are now many how-to books on changing school culture.

<sup>iv</sup> See, for example, the National Association of Youth Courts, at [www.youthcourt.net](http://www.youthcourt.net); Nessel (2000), a report of the American Bar Association.

<sup>v</sup> In one nationally representative sample, 44% of Asian American youth, 70% of whites, 70% of Latinos, and 75% of African Americans reported at least one risky health behavior (Grunbaum et al. 2000). Roughly 30% of adolescents experience mental health problems at some point in their youth (Costello, et al., 2003).

<sup>vi</sup> For more information about school-based healthcare, see: The National Assembly on School-Based Health Care ([www.nasbhc.org](http://www.nasbhc.org)), The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools ([www.healthinschools.org](http://www.healthinschools.org)), and The School Mental Health Project ([www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu](http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu)),

<sup>vii</sup> For some statistical evidence see Knapp et al. (1995); Grubb (2009), and other work based on the NELS88 data cited therein. For massive summaries of the literatures of teaching see a series of reports from the National Academy of Sciences: (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; NRC, 2004; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Donovan & Bransford, 2005). In addition, students taught with more balanced methods do better than other students on both multidimensional tests and on tests of basic skills (Newman, Bryk, and Nagoaka, 2001) — so balanced instruction (rather than teaching to basic skills tests) does not undermine basic test scores.

<sup>viii</sup> Granger et al. (2007) argue that periodic observation is sustainable and feasible given examples from several states who use observational assessments in their evaluations of publicly funded after school programs.

<sup>ix</sup> The costs per student for after-school activities average \$3,600 per year (Newman, Smith, & Murphy, 2000).

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