

CREATING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE: LINKING SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

WHERE WE STAND: ANSWERING THE CHALLENGE

Randi Weingarten, *American Teacher*, September 2008

This column, drawn from Randi Weingarten's presidential address to the 2008 AFT Convention, sketches a new vision of 21st century schools—schools that employ reforms that have been proven to improve achievement and narrow the achievement gap and that address factors that are beyond the control of teachers, yet have a direct effect on student outcomes—such as healthcare, social services, and family assistance.

REPORT ON CLEVELAND SCHOOLS FINDS DISCONNECT BETWEEN STAFF, STUDENTS' NEEDS

Thomas Ott, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 13, 2008

This is an article about the release of a comprehensive report by the American Institutes for Research for the Cleveland School District, describing a system that is overwhelmed by students' mental-health needs and has few ways to identify youngsters who could turn violent. The report was commissioned after 14-year-old Asa Coon opened fire at SuccessTech Academy in 2007. He wounded two teachers and two other students before killing himself. "The report notes that the schools must deal with issues that stem from the poverty and chaos that many students find in their neighborhoods. The study, which cost \$337,000, says other community agencies treat the same children, but the district and those agencies don't communicate well." Principal report author David Osher "also cited what he called 'chronic underfunding' that has left school staff thin and panting to keep up. For example, the report says that in 2006, the district had only 85 psychologists, one for every 692 students."

CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT HUMAN WARE AUDIT: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

D. Osher, J. Poirier, K. Dwyer, et. al, American Institutes for Research, August 14, 2008

This is the executive summary of the report described in the press report, above. "Children and youth require safe and supportive schools and communities if they are to succeed in school and thrive. These needs are particularly great for children who struggle with the impacts of chronic poverty, lead poisoning and lead effect, community and media violence, drugs and alcohol, trauma and loss. There are many such students in Cleveland, and our research suggests that many of that many of them attend schools that do not sufficiently address their needs."