School Practitioner Listserv

A Weekly Community of Practice Network
for Sharing and Interchange

*27 years
& counting*

Mental Health in Schools
UCLA
Center
Program and Policy Analysis+

March 17, 2014

Request

> *What research can help argue for
> (re)deploying funds for learning supports?*

Feedback from Colleagues

> *About Connecting Families and Schools*

Featured Center Resource

> *Self-study Surveys for Strengthening
> Learning Supports*

**Grant Information: Opportunity to Move Toward a
Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports**

> *Grant for School Counseling Programs*

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Please forward this to a few colleagues you think might be interested.
The more who join, the more we are likely to receive to share.

For those who have been forwarded this and want to be part of
the weekly exchange, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu
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Request: "We're looking for research that will allow us to justify using the District's federal and state funds to build a comprehensive system of student learning supports."

Center Response: We regularly receive requests about research on and redeploying funds for learning supports. Because these matters are a bit more complicated than folks tend to appreciate, we have prepared responses over the years and made them part of the Q & A Talking Points included in the Center's *System Change Toolkit for Transforming Student Supports into a Unified & Comprehensive System for Addressing Barriers to Learning. and Teaching.* The most recent responses are in:

> *What's the Research base for Moving Toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports? –* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/WhatstheEvidenceBase.pdf

> *Data Related to Gainesville (GA) City Schools' Work on Developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports –* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/edcsum.pdf

> *Data Related to Iowa's Work on Developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports –* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/iaaireval.pdf

We also find it useful to indicate the work already is underway across the country – see

> *Where's it Happening Trailblazing and Pioneering Initiatives –* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm

And, with specific respect to redeploying federal and state funding streams, see

> *Funding Stream Integration to Promote Development and Sustainability of a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fundingstream.pdf

Listserv Participants: We always are looking for data on the impact of unifying and systematizing student/learning supports. So please share your successes so we can add it to the above references. ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Feedback from Colleagues

About Connecting Families and Schools

(1) "Parent involvement is so tough. ... My advice would be to ask the kids. Pose the question/problem and then whether you use focus groups, go into one class and ask for ideas, use the student council or whatever is available to you - the result is that you will get conversation going and you will get ideas and buy-in from kids. The best advice to me always comes from our student body! They know what is needed, have ideas for solving problems, and they just want someone to listen to them. They then become the champions and make it work. Simple, tried and true! ...

There seems to be a push in Illinois again for parent involvement and parent training. I experienced this when I was at the Regional level when we worked with state board of education to do parent education work, then when we did a follow-up to that work, and now at the local level we work hard to involve parents. It is always a challenge! The research and the practice validate the fact that parents of young children are involved. We have 0-3 programs, 3-5 programs and even our preK-5 school has wonderful parent involvement. The push back from children at middle school and total push back of high school age students makes it very difficult for parents to be involved in a positive manner. Things that are working for us now include:

a) Our preK-5 building has about 1100 students. They have lots of involvement in all kinds of things. The newest involvement though is that grade levels host a 'data time'. Yesterday 2nd graders invited their parent or other adult to come in to visit and the student reviewed their data binder with their parent. Each student had a lego build and the parent was to complete the build. Then the student gave a tour of their classroom and the building. For me - this is new, different, and exciting. Parents came and celebrated the academic achievements of their students. It was all about learning!

b) At the middle school all students have an IPad so three years ago when we became 1:1 parents came to learn and find out what we were doing. This year we are hosting parent/student nights for incoming 6th graders and because we have a school to the west of us annexing into the district we will host an evening and other times for their families to come tour the building, check out the IPad's, learn how to open their locker and all of those things that help kids be successful.
    Another push at the middle school has been reading. We will announce in march our One Book, One Community project. This involves the entire community as kids and adults read the same book. The author will come, speak, autograph books, etc. Last year the excitement for this program was exceptional! This year the author is one of the most published and kids will be so excited to see her that we expect good participation. The 8th graders do a 'Hero' project and all parents, family and community members come the evening that they present their 'Wax museum' of their hero's. It is another academic project that has a paper, an oral presentation, and a visual of some kind.
    What this sums up is that in 6-8th grades the best way to get parents to school is to have their kids involved. Sports and music programs have always had good participation. We have now added some academic programs that are just as exciting and involve all kids. For parent training at the middle school level - it is tough. We have some participation at some workshops such as technology, wellness(we use the fitness center), and cooking things.

c) At the high school level - parents were more involved this year in parent teacher conferences because of working with students. The deal was that if a parent came to the conference then the student could have 15 more minutes for lunch on Friday. Who knew that 15 minutes for lunch on Friday would get such fabulous results! (answer - the kids)"

(2) "This is a large concern for us here in the Prevention Services Department at our County Juvenile Services, as our chief focus is school and community engagement; in our efforts to best access and serve the county's youth and their families from an ecological, strengths-based approach. ... We have involved many economically disadvantaged families in non-court ordered programming and we work very hard to integrate culturally relevant and easy to use tools that help them immediately. We host youth lead entertainment events, showcasing traditional dance, inter-faith dinner nights, etc. They seem to genuinely know that our expectation is wrapped in genuine WANT to know and serve whole families better. I do not believe in constantly band-aiding a systemic problem that can easily change, when communities start with their own FRONT yards. Many people, agencies, and individual change agents do so much in silos, but this change is likely to require a collaborative approach. What I have always known, but see even more clearly now since leaving my own silo, is their is a cultural complacency among the front lines of most youth stake-holder agencies. They have come to expect parents won't participate, are more than happy to defer responsibility to them for the child's presenting issues, and their attitudes, although not obvious, are received as serious mistrust within the community. Rigid expectations of how and when parents can engage, and if they don't complete all the 'expectations' of the agency's grant or federally funded program requirements, they are labeled unsuccessful. I can boil this down to a few key words and phrases: mistrust, alienation, disillusionment (no voice in discipline, justice, services provided, etc), unfriendly and cumbersome front door access, and now, the resulting and likely prolonged acculturation effects this has had our their children; where survival instincts have kicked in, and a few entitled youth are bullying their parents, and blocking engagement. Our focus has shifted toward them, rather than the other 85-90% who are engaged and more than anxious to bring their wife's, mother's or grandmother's 'best ever' food of choice, or come teach crochet lessons, write letters home in WHATEVER native language, without ever knowing a kid's name, just so families can celebrate successes; or serve as emergency response team trainees as front door translators, pet care coordinators, and hosts, when tensions are high. I would be happy to share our data outcomes if that will also help."

(3) "We have found that we must think about what are the barriers that keep parents from participating. So we have tried to overcome those barriers. For our support groups and trainings for parents we offer free child care, we also will provide transportation (school bus will pick up family and drop off at their residence), we have interpreters so that the format is in their native language and we also will seek out presenters that are engaging or have a personal understanding of having a child with special needs. We also have meetings/trainings during the school day, evenings and Saturdays so that all parents have an opportunity to attend. We also will do reminder calls and I do personally work with some of the parents who may be more sensitive about schools. We are always mindful of the respect and dignity that all parents and children deserve. Please feel free to send me information or questions."

Note: Remember to see the Center Quick Find: *Parent/Home Involvement in Schools –*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/homework.htm

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Featured Center Resource

Self-study Surveys for Strengthening Learning Supports

We frequently receive requests for Center developed survey tools to strengthen learning supports. Our emphasis in survey development has been on self-study surveys that can engage all the participants in discussion and planning for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. See:

>*Addressing Barriers to Learning: A Set of Surveys to Map What a School Has and What It Needs* -- http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf

Surveys for the six content arenas and related systemic needs that constitute a unified and comprehensive approach to addressing barriers to enable learning. The six arenas are (1) classroom-focused supports for enabling learning, (2) crisis assistance and prevention, (3) support for transitions, (4) home involvement and engagement, (5) community outreach to involve and engagement resources to fill gaps, (6) student and family assistance programs and services. In addition, there is an overview Survey of Learning Supports System Status and another focused on school-community collaboration. The emphasis is on what is in place, how well things are working, and what will build a stronger system of student and learning supports.

Because we see surveying and related analyses as a system-level intervention, we also have an aids to guide the use by school improvement planners and decision makers in evaluating the current state of development, doing a gap analysis, and setting priorities for moving forward. See

>*Guide to Resource Mapping and Management to Address Barriers to Learning: An Intervention for Systemic Change* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resourcemapping/resourcemappingandmanagement.pdf

>*Moving toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: MAPPING & ANALYZING LEARNING SUPPORTS* -- http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/tool%20mapping%20current%20status.pdf

Another aid is available for clarifying the names, roles, functions, and schedule of student and learning supports staff at a school. See

>*Initial Listing of Current Resources Used at a School for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/listingresources.pdf

Additional surveys focus on specific concerns within one of the six content arenas. For example:

a) Survey forms for parents and students on their experience of moving to a new school are in:

>*Welcoming and Involving New Students and Families* – a resource aid containing guidelines, strategies, and tools for planning, implementing, and evolving efforts to enhance activities for welcoming and involving new students and families in schools.
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/welcome/welcome.pdf

(b) Surveys related to providing individual student with special assistance are in

>*School-Based Client Consultation, Referral, and Management of Care* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/consultation/consultation2003.pdf
Contains:
• Triage Review Request Form
• Student's View of the Problem
• Follow-up Rating Forms for Interveners and Clients
• Management of Care Review Forms
• End of Intervention Form

If you have survey forms that can be shared with colleagues, please let us know so we can add them to our online clearinghouse quick finds.

Grant Information: Opportunity to Move Toward a
Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports
Grant for School Counseling Programs

As we have noted in the past, applying for a major grant is an opportunity to improve the system of student and learning supports at schools even if the proposal is not funded. The focus in preparing the proposal should be on a broad plan for districts to move forward with unifying student/learning supports and developing them into a comprehensive system of interventions to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. Much of such a plan can be pursued without added extramural support (see *Pursuing Promise Neighborhoods: With or Without the Grant Program* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/purpromneig.pdf).

So think about using the *Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Programs' Grant* as such an opportunity. Here's information about the grant competition:

"The Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Programs, administered by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education (Department) is now open. This grant competition will provide funds to local educational agencies (LEAs), including charter schools that qualify as an LEA, to enable schools to develop promising and innovative approaches for initiating or expanding counseling programs in elementary and secondary schools. Each grant project will contribute to the personal growth, educational development, and the social-emotional well-being of students served at this critical time in their lives."

Application Deadline Date: April 28, 2014. Project Period: Up to 36 months

Application Submission: Applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov
http://www.grants.gov/search-grants.html?fundingCategories%3DED%7CEducation

Brief excerpt from grant instructions:

"From time to time, all children face challenges that can affect their learning and behavior. As such, when they arrive at school, some students also bring with them

concerns such as stress over academics and grades, concerns about relationships with family, friends, or teachers, bullying or harassment, and/or more serious behavioral, health, or safety concerns. Moreover, during the course of their school years, it is estimated that one in five children and adolescents will experience a significant mental health problem.[1] While school systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students, schools must meet the challenge when the need directly affects learning as these do.

Growing evidence shows that school-based initiatives to promote mental health can help students cope with these common issues, support healthy development, and improve educational outcomes.[2] To address barriers to learning, schools need to integrate resources into a comprehensive, cohesive continuum of support that promotes healthy, positive youth development and prevents problems, allows for early intervention to address problems as soon after onset and provides assistance to those with more chronic and severe problems.[3] . . .

[1] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1999). Mental Health: A report of the surgeon general. Executive summary. Rockville, MD: National Institute of Mental Health.
[2] Fleming, CB, Haggerty, KP, Brown, EC, Catalano, RF, Harachi, TW, Mazza, JJ, & Gruman, DH. Do social and behavioral characteristics targeted by preventive interventions predict standardized test scores and grades? 2005; Journal of School Health (75), 342-349.
[3] Adelman, HS, & Taylor, L. (2006). The current status of mental health in schools: A policy and practice brief. UCLA School Mental Health Project; Los Angeles, CA

Note: The Elementary and Secondary School Counseling program supports hiring various types of personnel (e.g., counselor, social worker, psychologist, psychiatrist) and implementing a range of interventions, including developmental and prevention approaches to support students.

For other systemic change grant opportunities, see our Center's website – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm

Please share relevant resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences!

Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Note: Responses come only to the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA for possible inclusion in the next week's message.

We also post a broad range of issues and responses to the *Net Exchange* on our website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm and to the *Facebook* site (which can be accessed from the Center's website homepage http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/