

### Featured

**>How should a parent respond when a school's practice undermines their child's positive attitudes?**

**>Providing housing for homeless students by districts and communities**

**>Links to a few other relevant shared resources**

#### **For discussion and interchange:**

**>How should a parent respond when a school's practice undermines their child's positive attitudes?**

#### **A parent reported this to us and asked for advice:**

*One month ago, my son started high school with a positive attitude and good motivation. Today he was in tears when he came home. He said he didn't have time to complete a class test and the teacher gave him a "D". (He usually gets good grades.)*

*What would you advise? Should we talk with the teacher? How do we best support our son? We are so sad to see his positive feelings about school turn into disappointment.*

We sent this request to colleagues with expertise in providing student/learning supports, and below is a sample of what they advised.

### **What would you advise?**

#### **Comments from the Field:**

1. Thanks for asking. Here is a sample of what I might write to this parent.

I'm sorry to hear that your son is going through a challenging time in his new high school. In my work, we acknowledge the transition from one Web of Support to another. (To learn more about the Web of Support, there's a video here - [www.icar-us.com](http://www.icar-us.com).) Because the web of support is usually invisible until made visible, it's not uncommon for students to experience a new world, without ample time and support to make adjustments and feel a sense of belonging.

Here are some steps you might consider to support him:

Find a trusted adult (we call them Anchors) to talk with Your Son: This might be done at a coffee shop, on a walk, or a drive, but best to be done in person, and with less formality to reduce the power differential, and allow your son to be forthright in his feelings and to relay his experiences.

Learn more about the Teacher: The teacher's philosophy can sometimes be surmised through their actions, but this is unusual. Teachers have all kinds of styles and reasons for doing what they do. After you learn a bit about the strengths of the teacher, find the time to talk with the teacher, in person, to gain their perspective on your son, and to fill in the rest of the story. Find out if there were any specific reasons for the lower grade. Keep the conversation respectful and focused on seeking solutions.

New Environments require new Skills: High school often requires improved time management skills due to increased coursework and responsibilities. Support your son to develop simple and effective study habits and time management techniques to ensure he can complete assignments and tests on time.

Seek the Support of other Anchors and other competent adults: If your son is struggling with

transition or any other aspect of his studies, consider engaging the adults around him for additional support. This could involve time with your son, listening to his stories, sharing insights on transitions, tutoring - either through the school or privately, to support him in processing what is happening in his life.

Encourage a Resilience Mindset: Emphasize the importance of learning from challenges. It's okay to make mistakes, and they can be valuable opportunities for growth. Encourage your son to embrace this resilience mindset, where effort and perseverance lead to improvement. And, the Web of Support is strongly linked to resilience.

Sustain an up-lifting environment: Continue to support and encourage your son's positive attitude toward himself, life and school.

Stay Present: Understand that your son is going through some changes and he may not be able to catch and hold the lessons that you give him. That doesn't mean that you stop trying, it means that you may try differently, use few words, use fewer command and correct phrases and tactics.

Just remember that moving from one Web of Support to another is a large transition for almost every youth. But the ones who see themselves and the situation they are in, in full color will better be able to understand the interplay between environment, social norms, and their own attitudes and behaviors....

2. I suggest talking to the teacher and using this as a guide:

Share how his attitude and motivation has changed and confirm they ( the parents) want to support the school and their child.

Ask the teacher if the test was a time limited test.

Ask the teacher if she/he thinks the results of the test are a reflection of their son's knowledge or a reflection of the amount of time he took on the test.

Depending upon the responses... ask the teacher if her/his goals for learning is to ensure learning or for the student's adhering to the time schedule.

If the teacher is a beginner teacher or one who has a reputation for being "unfair", I would suggest contacting the instructional coach or assistant principal who leads instruction and ask for advice on how to handle this.

3. There are a few actions I would suggest to these parents. Obviously, something has changed since the beginning of the school year. What that change is (or changes are) could be anyone's guess. Honestly, the change in attitude and poor academic performance could be at the heart of the problem or could simply be a symptom of something else going on. The best person to ask is their son and that's where I'd start. Asking open ended questions, listening and affirming his answers can only help strengthen their relationship, regardless of what they learn. They may or may not get to the root of the problem, but opening the conversation can only help make it easier for their son to come to them in the future.

Regardless of what they learn (or don't learn) from their son, I suggest they request a meeting with the teacher to get his/her take on their son's attitude, abilities and performance in the classroom. Explaining that he's typically a good student is important since the teacher probably doesn't know him very well yet. Also, asking the teacher what s/he recommends to help support their son in class could be helpful. As a parent, I would want to leave that meeting with a plan to do something and to have a follow-up or check-in a few weeks later to see if the plan is working. (Whether or not their son is a part of this meeting depends upon the personality and attitude of the student. This is the parents' call. However if he is not part of the meeting, he should be told what was discussed and what will be different as a result.)

As a parent, I would also contact the school's guidance counselor. Explain the issue and ask for assistance on how to get appropriate supports in place for their son. Research has shown that having one positive student/adult relationship at school can double the student's chances of success. Ask the counselor if s/he could develop that supportive relationship or if there is another teacher that could check in on their son on a regular basis.

If the parents take these actions, they should be able to figure out what's at the heart of their son's attitude change. Then, they'll know what they should do.

For resources on this concern, see the Center's Quick Find:  
*[Parent/Home Involvement and Engagement in Schools](#)*

**For discussion and interchange:**

**>Providing housing for homeless students by districts and communities**

From: *Davis School District to open residential center for high school students facing housing challenges*

“Davis County high school students facing housing difficulties will have an opportunity for help in the near future. Later this month, the Davis School District in partnership with other entities — private and public — will move forward on building a teen residential center to assist students facing housing insecurity.

Jodi Lunt, executive director of the Davis Education Foundation, said that housing insecurity is a growing issue in the county, especially among youth.

“In Davis County, we have more than 1,600 students that experience housing insecurity,” she said. “...If these young people do not have a safe, stable, reliable place to reside, it’s hard to stay in school. And when you don’t stay in school, intergenerational poverty continues and crisis and trauma continue.”

The temporary transitional housing unit will have 16 beds for students who are housing insecure. It will also feature laundry facilities, a kitchen and other basic residential amenities. The center will be staffed all day and night throughout the year and will be run and overseen by a nonprofit organization. The center is a public-private partnership that includes the contributions of the Davis School District, the Davis Education Foundation and several other entities.

In addition to basic amenities, the teen residential center will also host services including tutoring, Davis County Social Services, post-secondary employment preparation, life skills training and mentoring. Over the last couple of years, several teen centers have been opened at Davis School District high schools that offer students in similar circumstances a place to study, shower, do laundry and get food. These are anticipated to be in place at all Davis School District high schools by the beginning of next school year....”

In our 9/13/23 Practitioner, we noted: “...At this time, we are trying to amass and share examples of how districts are aiding homeless families related to finding housing, and we hope to hear what you can share.” We provided the following as a stimulus for responding:

- (1) Let us know about any districts that are using closed schools as temporary housing.
- (2) Given that every neighborhood has places that could be used for temporary housing (e.g., churches, empty offices and stores), are districts working with other entities to use such spaces for transitory housing for homeless families?
- (3) Are you aware of any county/city agencies that are offering funding incentives for schools and other entities to provide temporary housing?

In addition to sharing about the above matters, please feel free to share any ideas you have about what role schools could play in facilitating housing for homeless families with children.”

**We have gotten a few responses and are looking for more before we compile and share.**

Send your comments to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

***Our prime purpose in this life is to help others, and if you can’t help them, at least don’t hurt them.*— Dalai Lama**

**>Links to a few other relevant shared resources**

**Adapting Social Emotional Learning Curricula for an Urban Context**

**School crime and safety**

**Fiscal Cliff Threatens Student/Learning Supports: It's Time to Braid and Rethink Resource Use**

**Exploring residential move type, timing, and duration of implications during middle childhood**

**Effects of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Community-Based Mentoring Program on social-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes of participating youth**

**Why are school-community collaborations so difficult to establish & maintain?**

**Racial Disparities in Teacher Ratings of ADHD Symptoms and Behavior: A Systematic Review**

**AI Guidance For Schools Toolkit**

**Helping or hurting: The effects of retention in the third grade on student outcomes. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis.**

**Behavioral Threat Assessment in Schools: Evidence, Fit, and Appropriateness**

**Early Care and Education Providers Vary in Their Availability and Flexibility to Meet Hispanic Families' Needs**

**Dyslexia screenings should mind students' linguistic backgrounds**

**National Survey of Children's Health, Material Hardship Among Children, 2022**

**Moving Upstream: Opportunities in School Mental Health**

**How to Get Assistive Technology for Your Child in School**

**Social Influencers of Health and Education Needs Assessment**

***How did you do at school today?***



***I don't think I did well.  
They told me I had to come back tomorrow!***

## A Few Upcoming Webinars

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

- 10/25 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility
- 10/25 Shifting from Trauma-Informed to Healing Centered Practices in Schools
- 10/25 Adolescent Drug Prevention
- 10/25 Professional learning: what works and what doesn't
- 10/30 Healthy teams
- 10/31 Authentic youth voice
- 10/31 Collaborating with families
- 11/1 Virtual National Summit on K-12 school safety and security
- 11/1 Showing up for our kids
- 11/2 Helping teachers do the right thing the right way for the right reasons
- 11/3 Giving staff a voice
- 11/8 Addressing the Needs of Immigrant and Refugee Students: Inclusive Mental Health Interventions in Diverse School Settings
- 11/16 Improving staff morale
- 11/16 Fostering Student Well-Being Through School-Based Peer-to-Peer Support Programs
- 11/16 Paving the Way to College for Students Experiencing Homelessness
- 11/20 Elementary students thinking about college
- 11/21 Basic Requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act
- 11/28 Worry and anxiety

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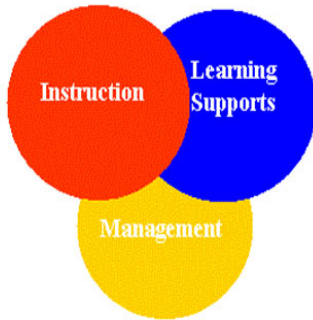
### To Listserv Participants

- **Please share this resource with others. (Everyone has a stake in the future of public education and this is a critical time for action.)**
- **Let us know your views about the topics shared and about what's going on to improve how schools address barriers to learning & teaching and reengage disconnected students and families. (We can share the info with the over 130,000 on our listserv.)**
- **For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**
- **Looking for information? (We usually can help.)**
- **Have a suggestion for improving our efforts? (We welcome your feedback.)**

We look forward to hearing from you!

Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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For information about the

***National Initiative for Transforming  
Student and Learning Supports***

go to <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to promoting whole child development, advancing social justice, and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.

**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND  
INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!**

**For new sign-ups** –Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

**Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.**

**We post a broad range of issues and responses to the Net Exchange  
on our website at <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm>  
and on Facebook (access from the Center's home page <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/> )**