(12/13/23) **This continuing education resource is from the national**
***Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports* at UCLA**

Featured
>What supports can schools provide over winter break?
>Enhancing teacher/staff well being and retention
>The Youth Homelessness System Improvement Grants
>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

For discussion and interchange:
  >What supports can schools provide over winter break?

For many students (e.g., homeless, those living in poverty, those with special needs), schools often are a major source for basic supports. As schools close for the winter break, what supports will be available?

From: ***Winter break doesn't equate to celebration and relaxation for all students***

> Often winter break means entering a two-week period of instability in housing, in meals, in daily routine — the very things that youth need to feel secure....
> Lots of schools take clothing donations to help outfit students with appropriate winter gear. And it's not hard to find a toy drive or food shelf to support, or a shelter to volunteer at over the winter break. But there's a whole lot more educators and community members can do to support homeless students during winter break. ...
> Margo Hurrle, the homeless liaison for the Minneapolis Public Schools, says that in addition to collecting donations for things like holiday meals and toys to give away to families in need, she and her colleagues are also busy curating a list of community-based extracurricular activities that students can partake in over the winter break, while school is shut down. "There's lots of programming that's going on at community centers and parks that is ramped up over the break, knowing that kids will be looking for a fun place to go and something to do – so spreading that information," she said. They also talk with shelters about providing more recreational and entertainment opportunities for the children..."

From: ***Home for the holidays***

> ...The negative impacts of family homelessness are magnified during the holiday season - adding an extra layer of stress to these families and an extra element of loss. Family members often feel a particular type of desperation during the holidays. These families are not able to provide all the beloved holiday extras for their children. They may skip established holiday traditions and miss opportunities to make new ones. Further, although many community services are still open and still helping families navigate homelessness - school is closed. The lack of routine and school meals can magnify an already stressful time. Finally, homeless families tend to be more mobile during the holidays,...

From: ***How to Support Your Students and Staff During Winter Break***

> In an article for ***Hey Teach!***, Nancy Barile, M.A.Ed. suggested using a peer buddy system, connecting families with resources, and setting up check-ins in preparation for winter break.

> > Peer Buddy System: Pairing your at-risk students with a peer buddy for winter break can help students feel less isolated. A quick text, phone call, or email can make all the difference for students who are struggling while they're away from school.
> > Connect Families With Resources: As an administrator, you can work with social workers and school resource officers to make an impact on students and their families. Check out food banks in your community or consider hosting a gift drive at your school. You can even compile

a list of these resources to send home with students to share with their parents and others during the break.

Set Up Check-Ins: Have your social workers and school administrators check in with at-risk students prior to winter break to make sure they have the support and resources they need during the break.

Update Student Records: We also suggest auditing student contact information to make sure addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contacts are up to date before students leave for winter break. By ensuring you have all of their information updated, you're less likely to lose track of students if they do not return at the start of the spring semester.

Planning ahead and setting up some safety nets for students before they leave for the break is the best way to ensure they have the support they need if something comes up while they're away from school.

A colleague who works with homeless students suggested the following:

"For meals, school staff can use this website: https://www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids to find what state level agencies may have programs in their area. Some of those same agencies may know of existing programs as well. Some states have shelters, churches, and hospitals who provide meals and a safe place but those programs can vary dramatically.

School staff member should begin by contacting their state Department of Education, Human Services and possibly the Health Department to inquire about what exists. Some states also have other agencies that serve youth and families.

Also, put a notice in the school newsletter, local paper or whatever media will reach traditional community services. If there aren't programs, perhaps there are places to start programs. For example, I know of a retirement facility that partnered with a school to match students with elderly. They ate their lunch with the person, participated in planned activities, and generally became "buddies". Another example is a hospital that had a similar program for young people and children who needed to stay in the hospital over the holidays. Not only does the homeless student get a meal and have a safe space to spend time, but they are also helping someone else. That's important."

For discussion and interchange:
>**Enhancing teacher/staff well being and retention**

Winter break is a time for school staff to rest and renew. Time to think of what changes they would make so the next semester is less stressful. Time to plan more positive interactions in working with students, families, and colleagues. Here are a few Center resources:

>***Promoting Staff Well-being***

>***Retaining New Teachers***

>***Improving Working Relationships Inside the Classroom***

And here's a reminder not to think narrowly about the term : *Well-being*:

From: ***Methods used to evaluate teacher well-being: A systematic review***

"...The need to improve teacher well-being and decrease teacher stress, burnout, and attrition is clear. However, one consideration is whether the methods used to evaluate teacher well-being appropriately and accurately capture the construct. As we face mounting certified staff and teacher shortages, there is pressure for understanding how to ensure teachers get the mental health and well-being support they need to stay in the profession ...

Positive psychologists go well beyond mental health and characterize well-being as a multidimensional construct including positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. In this sense, positive psychological interventions to promote well-being not only aim to alter teachers' psychology, but also to enhance cognitive and affective appraisals of teachers' lives or professional roles so that they may thrive rather than merely survive...

Teacher well-being on the basis of this review, suggests that it has been operationalized as experiencing a high sense of teaching efficacy and general satisfaction, coupled with high support from colleagues and administrators, and a manageable workload....

This study focused on teachers specifically, not all school-based professionals. We made this choice to target and narrow our focus to teachers, but we recognize that teacher well-being is part of an ecology that includes other school-based professionals and that well-being for these professionals may vary from the types of well-being experienced by teachers. Future research should consider the well-being of other school-based personnel (e.g., administrators, psychologists, paraprofessionals) to better elucidate what it means for a school to be well. ...

Alleviating teacher burnout may certainly be aided by removing stressors, but well-being may also be facilitated by cultivating positive aspects of teaching and school life, such as enhanced collegiality and support..."

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The Youth Homelessness System Improvement Grants

FR-6700-N-96 Department of Housing and Urban Development

"HUD is awarding Youth Homelessness System Improvement grants to support selected communities develop and implement systems infrastructure to better address youth homelessness. The grants will focus on systems change to create and build capacity for Youth Action Boards; collect and use data that work with at-risk youth; develop strong leaders within a community; and improve the coordination, communication, operation, and administration of homeless assistance projects to better serve youth, including prevention and diversion strategies. The goal is to increase the capacity of communities to better serve youth and create projects that are responsive to the needs of youth at-risk of or experiencing homelessness in the community. The objectives of this funding are to:

>Improve the capacity of youth in the community: Developing peer support models, including training, project design, and implementation; creating Youth Action Board training, including government rules, leadership, and other skills; community training and outreach on how to work with youth and integrate youth leadership in an authentic way.

>Establish partnerships: Bringing together system partners who also work with youth who are housing unstable. This could include partnerships with Tribes and cultural organizations in the community, k-12 schools, higher education, juvenile justice, child welfare, employment services, etc

>Improve Coordinated Entry Systems: Improve data collection and use between systems that work with youth at-risk of and experiencing homelessness.

>Assess, address, and improve equity in youth homeless response systems.

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From: *Support Interventions for Young People in Housing Programs: A Rapid Literature Review*

"Youth experiencing homelessness are among the most vulnerable populations and most in need of services. In the U.S., approximately 4.2 million youth and young adults experience homelessness. Of these approximately 700,000 are unaccompanied minors, meaning that they are without any family connection or the presence of a parent or guardian ...

Youth-focused housing programs offer a variety of services and built-in support structures with a strong emphasis on meeting the unique needs of young people. They typically incorporate the provision of stable and secure housing options that are safe, affordable, and appropriate for young individuals, and offer age-appropriate support services that recognize the specific developmental stages and challenges faced by youth including educational support, employment assistance, life skills training, mental health counseling, substance use treatment, and access to healthcare. They also take the high prevalence of trauma among homeless youth into account and incorporate trauma-informed approaches to service delivery, creating a safe and supportive environment that recognizes and responds to the unique experiences and needs of young individuals who have experienced trauma.

Actively involving young people in decision-making processes, youth-focused housing programs also encourage youth engagement, encourage their participation, and promote their autonomy and self-determination. They recognize the importance of empowering youth to take ownership of their housing situations and provide opportunities for leadership development and youth advocacy. Finally, youth-focused housing programs collaborate with community organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders such as educational institutions, healthcare providers, and youth-serving organizations, to ensure comprehensive support for young individuals. Thus, youth-focused housing programs serve as a crucial platform for engaging with young people who have endured homelessness, allowing for the provision of necessary services and support to facilitate the transition out of homelessness, support young people's long-term independence, and prevent the reoccurrence of homelessness...."

Also see the following Center resources:

>*About Homeless Youth*
>*Homeless Students: Program Examples*

And for more on homeless youth, see the Center Quick Find
>*Homeless Children and Youth*

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

Interventions for Youth Homelessness: A systematic review of Effectiveness Studies.

Teacher retention in challenging schools

Teacher Educator Wellbeing, Stress and Burnout

Empowering families to improve youth mental health

Teacher–student relationships, stress, and psychosocial functioning during early adolescence

Can unconventional teaching roles douse teacher burnout?

5 Things to Know About Indigenous Knowledge When Working With Indigenous Children, Youth, and Families

**The U.S. Playbook to Address Social Determinants of Health**

Take Action for Adolescents – A Call to Action for Adolescent Health and Well-Being

Youth Thrive Blueprint: Tools and Resources for Putting Youth Thrive into Practice

Has Inclusion Gone Too Far?

On Edge: Understanding and Preventing Young Adults' Mental Health Challenges

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Teachers Lounge

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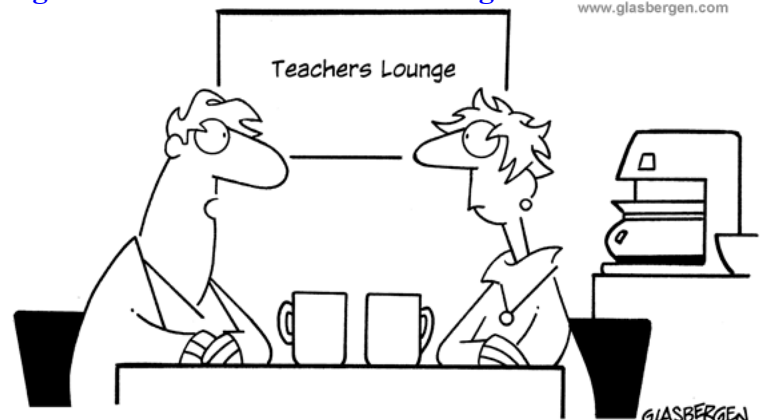
"Daydreaming is a serious problem in my classroom. I can't stop thinking about retirement, summer vacation, winter break, snow days..."

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**

12/13 Supporting Full Student Participation
12/13 Decrease school-based stress and anxiety
12/14 Highlighting school success
12/14 Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Students
　　　　　Experiencing Homelessness
12/19 Using data to address equity
1/17 Staff recruitment and retainment
1/17 Promoting positive mental health in schools
1/17 Mediating Conflicts
1/18 Strengthening your workforce
1/18 Culturally Responsive & Sustaining Education
1/23 Trauma recovery
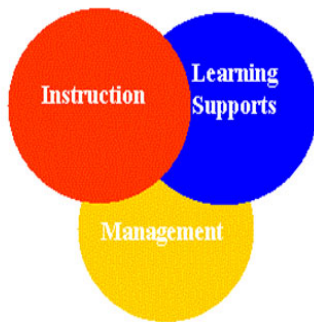
For information about the
*National Initiative for Transforming
Student and Learning Supports*
go to https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

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.

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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

• 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

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

For new sign-ups – Send to 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/)