

(2/14/24) **This continuing education resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA**

Featured

(1) Addressing the Student Mental Health Crisis: Some Major Concerns

(2) How are schools reengaging disconnected students (and families)?

(3) Links to a few other relevant shared resources

For discussion and interchange:

>Addressing the Student Mental Health Crisis: Some Major Concerns

As schools respond to what is being perceived as a mental health crisis, it is essential to avoid approaches that (1) only help a relatively few students, (2) don't appropriately account for individual differences, and (3) work against embedding mental health in schools into the broad range of supports teachers expect and want to have available to them.

To effectively address learning, behavior, and emotional problems manifested by so many students, schools must adopt a broad perspective about what causes these overlapping problems and the nature and scope of interventions needed to address them effectively. Such a perspective encompasses an appreciation of the psychological, sociocultural, and schooling factors that affect youngsters' behavior. And it requires moving student/learning supports in new directions to address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students.

Here are some concerns raised recently by involved stakeholders:

- >The pandemic has laid bare longstanding inequities in education and exacerbated them further. Far too few students—especially students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, students from rural communities, students with disabilities, and students who are first-generation college-goers—have had the opportunity to get a leg up Amy Loyd
<https://blog.ed.gov/2022/05/growing-pathways-to-success-for-all-students/>
- >Making generalisations about the cultural beliefs and customs of a given group may risk the stereotyping of individuals. It's therefore important to not to group all individuals from a racial, ethnic or cultural group together. This is because factors such as age, income, health status, and social class can influence our understanding of different cultures. Antoinette Njoku
<https://ourtime.org.uk/stories/the-relationship-between-culture-and-mental-illness/>
- >Conventional mental health services often intervene at the individual level - failing to incorporate broader environmental influences into case conceptualizations and intervention planning. Adopting a systems-level approach to working means recognizing the individual, their developmental needs, and their race-based experiences within the larger systems. It limits "blaming" the individual, and recognizes that systems can serve as barriers to mental health services use.... Thania Galvan and colleagues
[https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567\(23\)00127-2/fulltext](https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567(23)00127-2/fulltext)

What's Needed?

- It's time to go beyond thinking in terms of adding personnel mainly to provide services to a few more of the many students experiencing emotional (and learning) problems and the many currently disconnected from schooling.
- It's time to focus on system building that goes beyond linking with and collocating agency resources, and enhancing coordination. These efforts have a place, but they do not address how to unify and reconceive ways to better meet the needs of the many rather than just providing traditional services to a relatively few students.
- It is time to fundamentally rethink student and learning supports. The intent is to develop a comprehensive, cohesive, and equitable system. Such a system encompasses a full continuum of interventions and covers a well-defined and delimited set of classroom and schoolwide supports. It also emphasizes how to personalize instruction and special assistance.

Starting points include ensuring that the work is fully integrated into school improvement policy and practice, reworking operational infrastructure, setting priorities for system development, (re)deploying whatever resources are available to pursue priorities, and making formal connections with a wide range of community resources.

Unfortunately, too many recent reports have not gone beyond tinkering with what already is in place. Contrast such reports with the discussion of moving forward in rethinking and rebuilding a sustainable system of student/learning supports that is unified, comprehensive, and equitable. See

*>Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions**

For additional resources related to all this, see

>Rethinking Student and Learning Supports

>Improving School Improvement

>Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide

>Diversity and Professional Competence in Schools . . . a mental health perspective

>Diversity Competence for Psychological Practitioners: Eliminating Disparities in Psychological Practices

>School Counseling Prevention Programming to Address Social Determinants of MH

>Examining the Reality: The Influence of Social Inequities on Child and Adolescent MH

*Our website is down, but should be up soon. In the meantime, you can request a copy of many of our Center resources as email attachments; send requests to Ltaylor@ucla.edu



And access to the following free books remains online; see

>Addressing barriers to learning: In the classroom and schoolwide

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55w7b8x8>

>Improving School Improvement

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5288v1c1>

>Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change

<https://www.alabamaachievers.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Embedding-Mental-Health-as-Schools-Change.pdf>

For discussion and interchange:

>How are schools reengaging disconnected students (and families)?

Here's what a colleague recently reported about experiences reengaging students:

"I continue to read with interest your articles about re-engaging students. The California Department of Education, State School Attendance Review Board data, has given the figure of some 548,000 youth who did not return to school in the "2022-23 school year", the first year of back to in-person instruction. Many of them are still out there and need assistance to get back to a viable educational option for them. They will need the assistance of outreach efforts as well as some program modifications and models that will welcome them back, and help to get them back on track to eventual graduation.

I had the opportunity to administer a Federal Dropout Prevention and Recovery Demonstration program to provide outreach to out of school youth, engage with them, assess their needs, and help to bring them back to a workable educational option for them. Of interest is that the great majority of those we connected with did not want to return to the same school they had left, schools where they had not found sufficient connection and achievement to keep them there.

Some students were able to return to a regular school environment with encouragement and support, and were able to get back to school with minimal difficulty, depending largely on how long they had been out of school, and how many credits they may have fallen behind. Others needed some form of transitional program with modifications to a traditional schedule, to help them get back to going to school regularly, and in many cases, working to make-up credits for courses they had failed or otherwise missed.

We were able to implement a number of Re-Entry type programs, and I have learned of others. These can help to support students in their transition back to an educational setting, often with increased support, structure, personalization and monitoring. I have attached a listing of some of these models in case you might want to include them in your newsletter as possible examples of some program models for students who need them. I hope you find them helpful.

Re-Entry Program Models

1. CORE Program: For 9th grade students, (with less than 60 credits) who are either recovered from previously being a dropout, those who are returning to school after a significant period of absence, and/or 9th graders who failed to of earn sufficient credits in the 1st semester of the 9th grade. The program components are as follows:

- a. 5 teachers and a counselor agree to work together as a team, and agree to a common prep period for planning. Focusing on individual student needs, strategies, materials, and lesson plans are shared and coordinated.
- b. The students remain as a "core" group throughout the day in one room for all classes. They do not rotate from classroom to classroom around the building.
- c. The teachers leave their own classrooms and come to where the students are. The teachers do the moving, not the students.
- d. Counselor and other support staff meet weekly to discuss students. Student attendance, progress and any other concerns are discussed. They work to keep the communication and coordination loop strong.
- e. Parent/caregiver conferences are held with all program staff during weekly meetings
- f. Agency staff who work with a particular student are invited to meet with school staff during common prep times for collaboration and planning.
- g. Orientation to high school, success strategies, and key skills for success in high school are taught as part of the curriculum.

This model, developed in a San Francisco Unified School District high school, showed a 76% success rate after the first year.... It is recommended that an effort be made to have the CORE program taught in one designated part of the building in order for there to be a "home base" for the students. These are students who need increased structure, personalization and monitoring.

2. Comprehensive High School Re-Entry program model: For students recovered from having dropped out, students with significant absences, repeat 9th graders, and those selected from the grades D/F and Incomplete list

- a. Students are interviewed by the teacher(s) and a dropout prevention counselor.

- b. Student is programmed for three AM classes within the Re-Entry program, (English, World Civilization and Math)
- c. Students who have already successfully passed one or more of these courses are programmed into other subject classes where they need to earn course credit.
- d. Variable credit is offered for these courses so that student can earn one credit at a time (based on a 5-credit model for one class), helping them to see some incremental growth rather than passing or failing the entire course.
- e. Counselor works closely with these students to monitor attendance, develop and implement support services, and monitors the delivery of these services.
- f. Study skills and other high school success skills are integrated into the curriculum

3. A Re-Entry program implemented at a Vocational and Technical high school

- a. Students attend three or four academic classes in the morning, and take a vocational/technical preparation program in the afternoon.
- b. If one or more of the courses offered in the morning have already been completed, students are programmed into other courses within the regular offerings of the school where credits are needed.
- c. The class is self-contained. Students stay with the same multi-subject credentialed teacher in the same room all morning.
- d. Study skills and other high school success skills are integrated into the curriculum.

4. Back on Track Program:

- a. A one semester “back on track” transitional program for those students who are recovered from having dropped out, or whose attendance has been so poor that continuing in a comprehensive high school is unworkable.
- b. This program was developed out of a need defined by the students who felt they just could not go back or make it in a comprehensive high school, and who needed a “transitional” program to prepare them for return to a comprehensive school, a GED program, to take the California High School Proficiency Exam, adult school or community college.
- c. Such a program was established with six staff members: a program lead school social worker, two teachers, a counselor/work experience coordinator, and a peer resource/activities coordinator.

5. Student Support and Assistance Program: For students identified in the 8th grade as “at risk” for the possibility of dropping out in the transition to high school, or in the 9th grade year.

- a. As first semester 9th graders, students in this program take a first hour English “block” class that is co-taught by two Student Support and Assistance Program teachers – the last 30 minutes are devoted to enrichment
- b. The last class of the day is Algebra taught by a Student Support and Assistance Program teacher.
- c. Check-in is done with the students twice a day.
- d. Attendance and progress are monitored by regular phone calls with parents/guardians, home visits, and program staff with parent/guardian conferences.
- e. Character education, and supportive services provided, include psycho-educational groups, classroom guidance, student portfolios and additional social work and counseling services.
- f. Behavior monitoring is done through behavior contracts. The Student Support and Assistance Program team handles all disciplinary referrals of students in this program.
- g. Team members include an administrator, Student Support and Assistance Program teachers, school social worker and guidance counselor.

(This model can be modified to fit those students who have missed a great deal of the on-line lessons, are now returning to school and need additional structure).

6. Continuation School and Job Corps Partnership Program:

- a. Students attend a small necessary high school, (Continuation School) in the morning for core academics.
- b. Students are transferred to a Job Corps site in the afternoon, or on alternate days, for career preparation courses that can lead to apprenticeships with various unions.

7. Pueblo High School Project Success:

- a. This program offers four classes during periods one through four: Life Skills, English, Math, Free Enterprise. Variable credit is awarded on a quarterly basis, but students are expected to remain in the program for an entire semester.
- b. Mentors are matched with program students. Each mentor selects two to five students and schedules regular meetings with the mentees. Each mentee knows they can approach their mentor about any issue.

- c. Packets, developed by the coordinator are completed by students during their stay in the program. These packets include self-assessment materials, daily lesson plans, decision-making exercises, goal-setting, study skills, and a career interest inventory.

8. Partnership Academy Programs:

- a. These academies are partnerships between the school district, business and the community.
- b. They are “school-within-a-school” programs that engage “at risk” students in a specific curriculum over three years.
- c. Students enjoy smaller classes and increased personal attention in a centralized setting which prepares them for post-secondary education or skilled entry level employment.
- d. Each academy focuses on a particular career interest area or vocational/technical skill, combining core curriculum with a relationship to the world of work.
- e. Students are allowed to “job shadow” individuals working in business in the area of interest, and to have summer internships in real work situations.
- f. Research studies have shown improvement in student’s attitude toward school, focus, goal setting, completion of assignments, improved grades, increased self-esteem and improved attendance.

Can you share something about how local schools are reengaging students?

Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

Supporting Interethnic And Interracial Friendships Among Youth to Reduce Prejudice

Promoting Peer Connectedness Through Social-Emotional Learning

Developing strategies for summer learning

High School Students’ Expectations and College Aspirations: Causes and Consequences

Ways To Tackle Racist Bullying Behavior In School: A Guide For Educators

Adolescents’ perceptions of substance use messaging in the age of social media

Schools Won’t Recover from COVID Absenteeism Crisis Until at Least 2030

Responses to the pandemic and efforts toward recovery

About 16 Million Children in Low-Income Families Would Gain in First Year of Bipartisan Child Tax Credit Expansion

Data on the learning experiences of Black students throughout their education careers and the characteristics of Black teachers and faculty

Teen Dating Violence

Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools: Findings From the School Survey on Crime and Safety: 2021-22

5 questions to ask when evaluating AI edtech tools

A Few Upcoming webinars

2/14 **Planning an IEP Team Meeting When Your Child has Mental Health Challenges**

2/14 **Providing targeted support**

2/15 **Wellness & Resilience**

2/15 **Equity focused alignment**

2/21 **Threat assessment**

2/21 **Social skills and how to build them**

2/26 **Multicultural orientation to therapy**

2/28 **Eating disorders**

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 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!

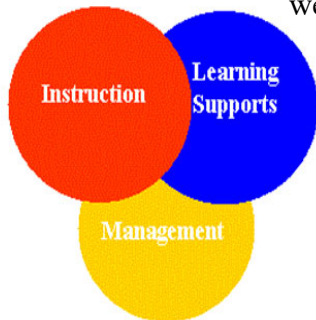
Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

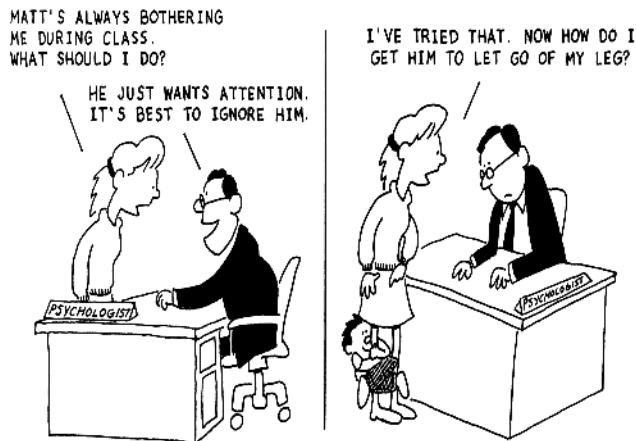
Our Center emphasizes the opportunity to start now to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students.

Let Us Know about what ideas are being proposed for moving in new directions for transforming how schools address barriers to learning and teaching.

And if anyone is thinking about increasing the capacity of a district or school with respect to developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports, we can help. Send all info and requests to ltaylor@ucla.edu



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 – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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

THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF THE PRACTITIONER

Who Are We? Recently renamed the Center for MH in Schools and Student/Learning Supports, our national Center was established in 1995 under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project (which was established in 1986). We are part of the Department of Psychology at UCLA. The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.