

(2/22/23) This resource is from the national  
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured:

**>Students Thrive with Positive Experiences (and so do school staff)**

**>New Teacher Blues: Changing the Tune**

**>It's not all about teacher-student relationships and good instruction:  
Addressing problems requires a strong system of student/learning supports**

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**For discussion and interchange:**

**>Students Thrive with Positive Experiences (and so do school staff)**

Key to engagement at school and wellness are experiences and practices that (a) promote feelings of self-determination, competence, and connection with significant others and (b) counter threats to such feelings.

Below are excerpts from a couple of recent articles that highlight the matter. The first emphasizes that youth need opportunities to be in their schools and communities in meaningful, developmentally appropriate ways in order to make a real contributions and feel valued for their efforts and accomplishments. The second discusses ways that can help school staff keep-on-keeping-on and even thrive in their work.

(1) From: *Young people need experiences that boost their mental health*

“More policymakers and practitioners should encourage exploration and discovery during youth, to prevent adolescents from reaching crisis....

Adolescence can be supported as a key developmental window of exploration and discovery. Specifically, this means providing young people with safe ways to try new things; giving them opportunities to contribute to other people’s lives; and helping them to foster healthy relationships with parents and other caring adults....

First, youth need healthy ways to channel their motivation to explore their world. These could be school-based extracurricular activities, special-interest clubs and sports or community-based activities, such as volunteering in social-service agencies....

Second, young people need opportunities to contribute to the lives of others.... whether young people are helping their families with chores or through financial contributions, providing emotional support to friends or volunteering in their communities, they seem to be primed to contribute in many ways... Opportunities to contribute to others’ lives — either informally or through volunteering, youth leadership programs and community engagement — can have multiple effects on adolescent well-being....

Third, adolescents need healthy relationships with parents and other adults: these are essential for young people’s mental health and well-being.... Adolescents who have secure and supportive relationships with their parents or other carers have lower levels of depression and a stronger sense of identity than do those with insecure relationships... Relationships with caring adults outside the family home can also be important in shaping the lives of young people.

Sports and other extracurricular activities can help to introduce youth to adult mentors. And various studies examining the importance of role models suggest that formal mentoring programs, such as those involving a young adult in the community spending time with an adolescent, can positively affect the mental health of youth...”

For more about *Youth Development*, see the Center’s Quick Find

(2) From: *You've heard of 'quiet quitting.' Now try 'quiet thriving.'*

"...If you're frustrated at work — and who isn't some of the time — quiet quitting, where you essentially disengage and do the bare minimum, is not the only answer. You can also try "quiet thriving," which involves taking specific actions and making mental shifts that help you to feel more engaged on the job....

Here are steps you can take to thrive at work.

- >Advocate for a cause. People tend to feel better when they take action. Find something that's important to you and talk to your colleagues in a friendly collaborative way about making a change. ...
- >Focus on what you like about your job...
- >Craft a job that's more appealing.. What part of your job do you want to amplify?...  
Maybe there's something that's not even part of your job, such as being a resource for new employees, that would make your days feel more meaningful.
- >Cultivate a best friend at work. Employees who have a close work pal are significantly more likely to innovate, feel engaged and have fun on the job.
- >Make an accomplishments list...

For more on this from our Center, see *Understanding and Minimizing Staff Burnout*

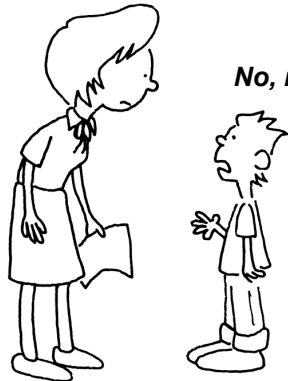
*Besides accentuating the positive, schools also need to reduce the negatives and provide a system of supports that effectively **address barriers to learning and teaching.***

### Are Students being Asked?

Student voices are particularly important in understanding barriers to learning and teaching. Students have thoughts and feelings about what's affecting their learning and behavior and what needs to happen to make things better. Empathically hearing what a student has to say is a good starting point. We find it an essential facet of building a sense of trust and (re)engaging students. For example, when teachers are receptive to expressed thoughts and feelings, students are more likely to open-up about problems and needs. Furthermore, eliciting a student's perceptions and participation are especially critical to effective problem-solving. And all this helps students establish the type of collaborative relationship with a teacher or other adult at school that can be a significant protective buffer. See

- >*About Student Voice and Participation*
- >*Youth Participation: Making It Real*

**You got a zero on your test!**



**No, mom, I didn't. That's a full moon; the teacher ran out of stars.**

**For discussion and interchange:**

**>New Teacher Blues: Changing the Tune**

For years, little thought was given to teacher induction beyond cursory introductions and orientation. As a result, many newcomers were frustrated and even traumatized, especially those assigned to schools housing a great many “hard-to-reach and teach” students. Initially essential are in-depth induction and mentoring, followed by ongoing collaborations for on-the-job learning related to personalizing instruction, overcoming barriers to teaching and learning, and reengaging disconnected students.

Teachers, and especially novice teachers, cannot and should not be expected to do it alone. Classroom doors need to be open, and teachers need to invite in others who can help improve instruction and provide special student assistance as needed. This includes collaborating with other teachers and with student and learning support staff, and professionals-in-training, as well as strategic involvement of parents and volunteers. Successful classrooms require teacher who not only are well-prepared, but are well-supported from day one on the job.

Here’s an excerpt from one teacher’s thoughts on the matter:

From: *Avoiding the new-teacher blues: What I wish I'd known when I started out*

“...Teaching is a fickle beast. It is sometimes thankless, overwhelming and exhausting. It is also affirming, heart-warming and exciting. These two experiences occur simultaneously, making teaching a job where heart and passion need to be a factor....

Over the years, I have compiled some tips for new teachers, one I wish someone had shared with me:

- > When you’re a new teacher you need to focus on simple and effective strategies and activities.
- > Set time aside each day to connect with your students.... When you take the time to build relationships, the students will work harder in your class because they feel that connection.
- > As a new teacher, you’re going to be overwhelmed with the amount of work that goes into your day-to-day. Setting boundaries, just like in any healthy relationship, will help you feel successful and keep those overwhelmed feelings at bay....
- > Teaching is HARD. Having a support person on campus or virtually will make a huge difference in your overall happiness.
- > Last but not least, have fun! There is a reason you chose teaching, and I’m willing to bet it wasn’t for the fame and money....

Teaching is tough, but it’s also the best career out there.... “

For more on this see

- >*Retaining New Teachers*
- >*Improving teacher retention, performance, and student outcomes*
- >*Helping New Teachers Succeed*
- >*Personalizing Personnel Development at Schools: A Focus on Student Engagement and Re-engagement*
- >*Teachers Can't Do it Alone!*
- >*Enhancing Classroom Teachers’ Capacity to Successfully Engage All Students in Learning: It’s the Foundation of Learning Supports*

**For discussion and interchange:**

**>It's not all about teacher-student relationships and good instruction:  
Addressing problems requires a strong system of student/learning supports**

It's easy to list out a set of ideals related to what students and school staff would like their experiences in the classroom and school-wide to be. Such a list encompasses being welcome, safe, included, respected, cared for, guided and supported in learning, and treated fairly. These qualitative features are seen as enabling openness, trust, engagement, participation, and enhancing the "fit" for effective learning and positive growth. Pursuing these ideals in an equitable manner requires that teachers develop effective working relationships with all their students and provide effective instruction.

**AND – teachers and students also need an effective student/learning support system in place to address barriers to learning and teaching.**

From: *A Positive Relationship Will Not Fix All Classroom Issues. Period.*

"For most teachers, the teacher-student bond is the best part of the job. We engage with our kids by investing in their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and aspirations. A lot can be said about this intimate dynamic, especially regarding its influence on the classroom environment and the learning experience. However (and it's a big however), the increasingly popular notion that a solid teacher-student relationship can solve anything and everything is simply unreasonable ... and even damaging. ...

A positive teacher-student relationship can't undo the effects of:

Poverty                      Trauma                      School funding and resources

When we routinely dismiss legitimate issues as a flawed teacher-student relationship, everyone loses. We have a vicious cycle in which kids don't get the support they need, everyone gets discouraged, and the problem persists....

The reality is that poverty, trauma, and school funding issues are too immense for a single school or teacher to solve. Pointing fingers and casting blame do nothing to help the situation and only fuel this unsustainable cycle. While the teacher-student relationship isn't the answer to this systemic mess, it is crucial for setting students up for success. We need to be able to work toward the small victories and positive impacts without being expected to solve the world's injustices. Teachers can do a lot of things. But we can't do everything."

Concern for specific individuals creeps in when learning, behavior, and emotional problems interfere with progress. Public health concerns arise when large numbers of youngsters are reported as not doing well. Civil rights concerns spring forth when large scale disparities become evident. And economic concerns emerge with enhanced visibility about the costs to society of so many students dropping out before high school graduation and the impact on global competitiveness of too few students going on to and succeeding in postsecondary education.

Reducing the achievement gap requires a laser-like focus on closing the opportunity gap by transforming the role schools play in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students. In essence, the need is for fundamental changes in the way student and learning supports are conceived and structured. To aid in moving in this direction, our Center has developed a guide that highlights the need for major changes, offers a blueprint for rethinking student and learning supports, and delineates first steps in making changes. See

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

## >Links to a few other relevant shared resources

**The Experience of COVID-19 and Its Impact on Teachers' Mental Health, Coping, and Teaching**

**When students grieve: how can educators help?**

**How to Leverage Ed Tech for Inquiry-Based Learning in K–12 Schools**

**Developing an Educational Plan for your child to address school avoidance**

**Beyond Diagnosis: Formulation–Storytelling and Maps**

**Leveraging ChatGPT: Practical Ideas for Educators**

**White House Report on Mental Health Research Priorities**

**Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Data Summary & Trends Report (from CDC)**

**‘We R Native’ - Answering ‘Mind, Body or Spirit’ Questions for Native Youth**

**Rites & Rituals- Bringing a Cultural Lens to Positive Youth Development for Black Girls**

**NIMH Strategic Framework for Addressing Youth Mental Health Disparities**

**LGBTQ Inclusivity in Schools: A Self-Assessment Tool**

**Toolkit for Supporting the Mental Health of Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

## **A Few Upcoming Webinars**

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

2/22 Paving the Way to College for Students Experiencing Homelessness

2/22 Staff turnover in school mental health

2/23 Rethinking Race and Education Seminar

2/23 Courageous leadership

2/23 Getting ready to change out of school time

2/27 Healthy Mental & Emotional Development

2/27 Organizing a District Team to Address Chronic Absenteeism

2/28 The power of relationships in supporting positive school climate

2/28 Behavioral threat assessment best practices

3/1 Transition out of high school

3/2 Sustainability planning

3/2 Supporting resilience

3/6 Disaster behavioral health

3/8 The School Counselor's Role in Addressing Student Behavior

***Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.***

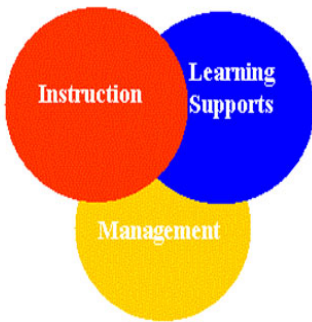
Harriet Tubman

## 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](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 <http://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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**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!**

**For new sign-ups – email [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 <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm> and on Facebook (access from the Center's home page <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>)**