

School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
(3/23/22)

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Note: Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/> for links to other Center resources.

**This resource is from the
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA**

So please feel free to share with anyone you think might benefit (e.g., forward our resources to individuals and share on listservs and websites).

For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

For previous postings of community of practice discussions, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

For discussion and interchange:

>About Students Supporting Ukraine

In response to the war, folks of course are concerned about kids who are upset by what's happening. And there is much being shared about how to help them. Too little attention is being paid, however, to the impressive ways young students are mobilizing to support Ukraine. Here is an article to stimulate more discussion about how youngsters are engaging in ways beyond protests.

Highland schools raise support for Ukraine

"The events happening in Ukraine are shocking as people are forced to flee their home for safety. We are proud of our children and young people who are organizing and participating in activities to show and raise support for Ukrainian refugees. Many of our schools work hard throughout the year to develop and strengthen their pupil's attitudes towards people's rights and respect for others. It is encouraging to see our young people demonstrating this now to help families who are experiencing a very difficult situation and an uncertain future. I would encourage people to keep an eye out for what their local school has organized and to please donate where you are able to."

(Education Chair, Cllr John Finlayson)

Schools across Highland (UK) are showing their support for Ukraine by organizing sponsored activities and events to raise donations to help Ukrainian refugees. Several schools are organizing a dress down day by asking pupils to donate £1 and to wear blue and yellow items of clothing, the colors of the Ukrainian flag. Schools will be donating to the national charity of their choice. Some schools have chosen to organize sponsored sporting events to help raise money for Ukraine. One school will be highlighting the long journey which many Ukrainian families have to make in order to reach safety through a sponsored walk.

https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/14470/highland_schools_raise_support_for_ukraine

For discussion and interchange:

>Perspectives on addressing the teacher shortage

Request from a colleague:

We recently met with congressional offices interested in the impact of the national teacher shortage.... Specifically, the offices want to learn more about the following:

1. What is the impact of the nationwide teacher shortage...?
2. What policy recommendations might counteract the teacher shortage and its impact?

We are interested in any input and/or resources that you're able to offer related to these questions

Center Comments: As has occurred for so many problems, this long-standing matter has worsened because of the pandemic.

In dealing with the teacher shortage, considerable consensus has formed over the years around the need to address seven basic interrelated matters. They are: (1) salaries, (2) recruitment, (3) preservice professional preparation, (4) induction into the profession, (5) personalized on-the-job (inservice) learning, (6) student and learning supports, and (7) a career ladder.

Here are a few specifics that policy makers need to consider providing:

- >tuition support for those agreeing to three years teaching in rural areas
- >recruitment incentives (Can Congress offer resources to redress poor salaries and working and living conditions? On average, the salaries are less in most rural areas; applicants from away are not very attracted to come to situations with poor working and living conditions)
- >funding for increased and improved student/learning support systems that assist teachers as they deal with barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students
- >retention bonuses

Also, emergency credentials probably are inevitable but hopefully are used only as a short-term strategy.

For more on this, see the brief report our Center wrote in 2012 related to concerns about teacher shortages:

Improving Teacher Retention, Performance, and Student Outcomes
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newteach.pdf>

Perspectives from the Field:

1. From a former Superintendent

There is a looming crisis with teacher shortages everywhere. The obvious solution is increases in teacher pay which I believe will happen incrementally and is positive. Short-term, however, is going to be challenging in schools.

>Short term suggestions would be:

Allocating through the regular funding formula for additional (2-5) certified teachers who rotate for substituting regular teachers. (These teachers would be paid on the regular scale.)

Analyzing teacher roles & responsibility and eliminating all responsibilities that are not required by state or federal law (local procedures, policies, practices.) "Clear their plates" as much as possible.

Using teacher leadership to promptly respond to teacher needs. Many states are offering certification in Teacher Leadership. Having a Teacher Leader who is compensated with a supplement is a way to offer collegial help and support.

>My suggestion for the long term is to incrementally increase the number of days that teachers work and compensate them for those days. This would increase teacher pay as well as give time for professional learning, planning, and completing accountability tasks. Example: Teachers are paid for 190 days. Increase the number of days by 4 over the next 5 years to equal 20 additional work days paid. Student days would remain at 180.

2. From a former State Department of Ed leader and university researcher

This has been a concern of mine - especially in our state where legislators are looking for quick fixes.

The impact of the teacher shortage is simple. Research shows unequivocally, that the teacher/student relationship is paramount to learning and positive outcomes for students. When the numbers of students per teacher are increased, that relationship can suffer (along with positive learning outcomes). And when inexperienced people or people who lack training in teaching practices are put into classrooms, that relationship can suffer or may be non-existent. For example, having student-teachers take over classrooms without supervision is not only unfair to students, it is not fair to the student-teacher who can't benefit from the expertise of their supervisor. These are all quick fixes that are not going to yield desired results.

What policy recommendations might counteract the effects of the shortage? That's a much more complex and long-term answer. I believe we need to step back and not think about this problem as a teacher shortage but think about it as a challenge to student learning. Thinking "bigger" allows for more creative responses to the need. Anytime there's a challenge, you begin by taking stock of what you already have. Policy changes that include increased support for existing teachers is a start. There needs to be funding for professional development and time for existing teachers to expand their repertoire of strategies and implement techniques such as: experiential learning, indirect instruction, interactive instruction, cooperative learning and independent study. These strategies should be implemented and supported (long-term) so that teachers can more effectively and efficiently teach students using methods that fit student needs.

Next, higher salaries can attract qualified people to the field. Some of those people, however, need help (funding and opportunities) to get the appropriate education they need to be effective in the classroom. That speaks to policies focused on low-cost educational options and/or loan forgiveness for those entering the field. Colleges and universities in rural areas need to collaborate to offer shared opportunities for teacher shortage areas. For example, one college or university may not be able to offer a complete education program but could offer some classes in conjunction with another institute of higher learning, making it possible for students to get their degree. Needless to say, similar policies have existed in the past but came with complex and challenging paperwork. These processes must be streamlined! Attracting highly qualified people to the field is absolutely needed and will address student learning long-term.

Then, schools need support (time and funding) to take stock of what's available in their own communities to address their student learning challenges. It became obvious during COVID shutdowns that there are people willing to step up and volunteer materials, time, services, etc. to meet the challenges of people in their community. Schools need to focus on inventive strategies for involving local programs and services to enhance and support student learning. (Again, these people should not step into a classroom necessarily, but rather support areas of need for students so they can be successful.) This is much easier said than done. Policies (and funding) focused on schools working with their families and local communities to support student learning could be an incredible, long-lasting strategy. Not only would it meet learning challenges, the strategy could become institutionalized, making it more likely that schools could survive future challenges that impact student learning.

To do this, schools need financial support to, essentially, reorganize themselves. They need time to assess their unique student learning needs, build relationships with local supports, implement additional supports that are needed, and measure the effectiveness of what they are doing. This approach is a major change to our current educational system but one that is sorely needed. We've patched up the existing 1800's system too long and need to rethink what we're doing to educate our youth. If we only focus on a teacher shortage, we've missed the boat. More bodies will not make the system better. We need to rethink what we're doing overall to educate the next generation. (See the years of research on Learning Supports from UCLA.) This is an opportunity that shouldn't be wasted.

3. From a university professor and researcher

... Problems especially dire in schools in high poverty communities which is no surprise. As to what to do, wages and better work conditions are obvious. And the fact that teachers in Chicago had to go out on strike to get sufficient counselors and nurses is especially egregious...

Excerpt from article he recommended:

"I think our district could do a better job of attracting and retaining our paraprofessional positions. We could recruit [paraprofessionals] and train them [until they are] well qualified and [receive more pay] so they stick around. Then, many of them do want to get their teacher certification, which [our district] would directly benefit from since they would be familiar with the district and want to stick around. We need to do a better job of 'growing our own.'"

<https://www.frontlineeducation.com/blog/teacher-shortage-2021/>

4. From another university professor and researcher

... Priorities for the workforce no longer can be ignored or taken-for-granted. Our work in NY State, via a state-funded initiative called "NY Kids", has provided some interesting and potentially important findings, some of which signal that the "workforce crisis" may get worse.

....

The teaching profession overall remains gendered and predominantly Caucasian... While they seek employment in the kinds of schools they experienced as youngsters, the job market typically recommends urban and inner ring suburban schools. Many novices start in these schools, and they leave within five years as they obtain preferred jobs in the kinds of schools and communities they prefer. For this reason, urban and inner ring suburban schools characteristically experience high teacher and principal turnover.. ...

COVID-related circumstances are exacerbating retention challenges... Women in the workforce with children at home are ready to give up their jobs because they can't achieve a sustainable life-work balance. More fundamentally, the "work" has changed. The new jobs depart from the original attractors and facilitators, which together constitute teachers' "career anchors" This anchor concept serves as reminder that who teachers are and what they do often are intertwined--and this highlights anew the important of life-work relations.

School characteristics matter... Schools we call "positive outliers" because they achieve comparatively better results in view of their location and student populations demonstrate better student and overall school outcomes AND appear to have (even today) more retention power than comparison typical schools--rural, suburban, and urban. This equity-oriented research and development has prioritized school features, leadership phenomena and organizational characteristics...

My background in occupational socialization theory, research and development recommends an emphasis on "occupational ladders" for teacher (and educational leader) recruits, probably beginning in middle schools. The macro-frame is "Cradle-to-career education systems."

Career and technical education for teachers and educators in general no doubt can be facilitated by Career Academies in high schools--with firm connections to Ed. Schools in higher education. Scholarships and loan forgiveness programs promise to be incentives. Higher education-school system partnerships are essential, and they will be enriched if they are not merely academic. Your comprehensive framework has much to offer to these partnerships, including their occupational recruitment reach toward counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers---also in short supply and many looking to leave with COVID-related challenges.

5. From a school psychologist

What is the impact of the nationwide teacher shortage...? Probably the biggest impact is that the citizenry is now forced to ask "why is there a teacher shortage" and the answers have been widely known for decades but swept under the rugs and ignored. The pandemic has put a bright spotlight on many of the old ways of doing business that are broken, discriminatory, and non-inclusive. In pursuit of lower taxes, we have treated education as a business that

needs to show a return on investment in the form of high standardized achievement test scores. We should not “go back” to these old ways, but instead bounce forward to build a service intended to maximize positive child development using developmentally appropriate instructional methods and humane institutions.

The misguided thinking of the past has produced some terrible conditions. I'll begin by listing a few that have come to my attention, and ask the readers to imagine how long they would continue to work under such conditions.

- a) School buildings are in disrepair.
 - We have unreinforced masonry buildings in earthquake zones that will collapse like dominoes.
 - Indoor air quality has been problematic for decades.
 - Some schools have contaminated air from nearby polluters, water that doesn't meet standards, ceiling tiles that fall onto people, etc.
 - Only a small percentage of teachers believe the ventilation & filtration upgrades made recently are sufficient to deal with the corona viruses.
- b) Teacher pay has been substandard for decades.
 - Educators make about 20% less than other professional people with similar levels of experience and training.
 - Many teachers have to pay for their own continuing education, taking summer classes for license renewal.
 - This results in teachers living below the family living wage and sometimes needing a second job to make ends meet.
- c) School districts tend to skimp on equipment and materials.
 - When a long-term teacher leaves, the remaining teachers strip the old room for chairs, desks, books, etc. They exchange their old, three-legged chairs and tables with deeply-gouged tops (which makes writing difficult) for better ones.
 - A school district that had many disruptive events bought a research-based kit with separate components to reduce disruption and improve pro-social skills. Even though the product research noted that the entire program was required to be implemented with fidelity or else it would not be effective, the district bought one, small portion “to save money.” It was not effective, but the school could brag that it had a “program” and they were working on the problem.
 - A district replaced chalk boards with white marker boards, but required staff to buy their own markers.
 - I've known teachers to buy food, water, books, furniture, rugs, computers & software, winter coats, shoes, gym clothes, fans and air conditioners, fees for outdoor schools at remote camps, notebooks, backpacks, pencils, art supplies, etc. for their students.
- d) Many schools are overcrowded.
 - Some classrooms don't have enough desks and textbooks to match the number of students
 - Lack of personal space in the halls can lead to disruptions of many kinds.
 - The opposite of “overcrowded” should not be “chaos.” As people became ill during the pandemic, staff and students stayed home for varying periods of time, and some died. Principals would not know how many students, bus drivers, cooks, custodians, teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, etc. to expect on any given day until the last minute. Parents would receive emails 20 minutes before the start of school reporting “no bus today” or “no teacher today, looking for a sub.” Families without internet may or may not get the word some other way.
- e) Personnel have been eliminated to cope with low budgets.
 - We used to have school nurses in a small clinic for the entire school day. That's not so common now.
 - We used to have cooks coming in early to bake fresh bread and prepare meals from scratch. Now we hire third parties to bring in processed foods to be warmed up.

- Student/teacher ratios have been determined by budget, not by adhering to best practices.
- In some areas, principals have the power to mis-assign people with no training and no supervised experience to teaching assignments.
- Schools often encourage highly-trained, experienced personnel to take early retirement because it's cheaper to replace them with a first year on the job college graduate.
- f) In the USA, we tend to "keep score" by comparing salaries.
 - Low pay and poor working conditions equates to low respect....
- g) We have no educational "Plan B" for dealing with pandemics, economic downturns, weather disasters, etc.
 - Although many schools do have plans in place for dealing with school shooters and a variety of tragedies such as teacher or student suicide, there is clearly insufficient preparedness....
 - Right now, teachers are told to give up planning time and lunch breaks to substitute for staff who were home sick. Some staff are ordered to report to work while ill.
 - Distance learning systems were thrown together at the last minute and people just had to figure it out on the fly.....
 - There is little to no mental health prevention included in the school day, and treatment for illness is not routinely available for either teachers or the students...
- h) Teachers enjoy being with students when the metaphoric "light bulb" turns on.
 - That's the reason why many people entered the teaching profession in the first place! That's what keeps them going. However nowadays it is difficult to have much quality time with students and enjoy that "aha" moment together.
 - It can be extremely demoralizing when a teacher's student is suddenly removed and detained by immigration officials.
- i) Decades of low funding has forced schools to place cost above excellence.
 - Too often schools do not plan for the best course of action. Insufficient funding forces schools to "make do" and try to "look good on paper."
 - When we value money more than people, we create policies such as "students who don't have lunch money don't get to eat" and funding schools by X dollars per day of student attendance. Money causes us to overlook the human aspects of living, working, and learning together in the name of "efficiency."
- j) For all the above, people of color and other minorities have it worse....

Schools have been threatened with loss of funding and expensive lawsuits in order to "reform" them. To protect themselves, some districts spend a fair amount of time becoming "unassailable" in court.....

It's clear to me that bribing schools with more money and threatening them with legal actions hasn't worked and it is time for a new way. Schools have too many responsibilities, not enough people to do the job properly, and materials and facilities that aren't helping much. I suggest we abandon the broken old ways and more off in a new direction....

6. From a teacher

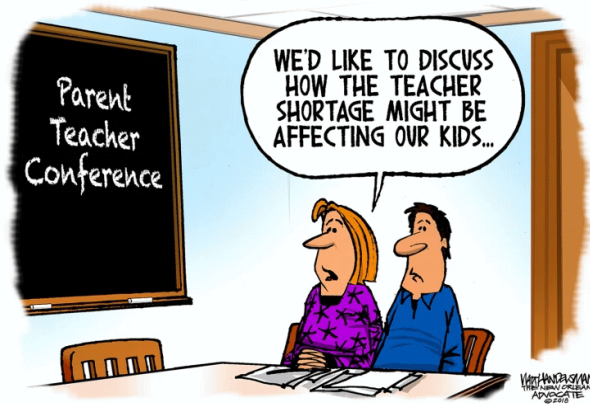
I was able to talk to some of the administrators in our district, here is what they have to say about the issue:

- >What policy recommendations might counteract the teacher shortage and its impact?
 - A large part of it comes down to teacher pay. Considering the amount of debt that most college graduates have, teaching isn't as appealing of a career as it once was. A lot of talent no longer is interested in teaching, and on top of that, teaching itself has also become a lot more challenging and demanding. According to my principal he said that teachers in the past didn't have to deal with the social-emotional learning side of things as much. Nowadays teachers are somewhat expected to do some things that parents should be doing. In terms of policy change, he thought that increasing teacher pay is probably the quickest way to counteract teacher shortage

- and simultaneously bring in more talent into the profession.
- >What is the impact of the nationwide teacher shortage...?
 - With many teachers leaving the profession + low teacher retention rate, some of the negative impacts we see on the student side of things is a lack of stability and consistency that is so important in the education setting. Students definitely have a harder time learning when their classroom environment keeps changing. At our school for example, we've had so many people leave within the last two years and a lot of teachers leave in the middle of the school year. We currently have a couple of teachers like me who are non-traditional hires. A lot of them are still working for their teacher credentials as they teach just as I did over the last 2 years. We also had to hire someone to fill in an English teacher spot in the middle of the year. The person we hired was a student-teaching for history last quarter, so you can see how inexperienced a lot of teachers are. With all these shortages, the school ends up scrambling to find anyone who can fill the spot and as a result they often are forced to hire teachers who either have less experience (teachers who are certified non-traditionally) or ask teachers to cover subjects they have never taught. Overall this also lowers the quality of education. School administrators have told me that people increasingly have a lack of respect for the profession, but from what I said about pay and teacher inexperience, this is part of the positive feedback loop that not only causes teachers to leave but also makes people avoid the career.
 - >What was an ongoing problem/concern now is approaching a crisis.
 - I would say the teacher respect thing is probably going to be a bigger issue. The critical race theory stuff has definitely played a role in undermining teachers to a degree.
 - >Any ideas about new ways of good teaching with fewer teachers?
 - These are my thoughts, but my main concern with the current situation is that when there are teacher shortages, each individual teacher ends up interacting with 150-200 students a day (6 periods*25-35 students, we used to have classes that were under 30, but now the class size is increasing). A lot of students will end up falling through the cracks since it's hard to build a meaningful connection with all of them. When I was in Taiwan for school, my class sizes were almost 50 students, but the main difference was that students had a home room class. The teachers would rotate classes as they taught their own subject. I think this strategy would take a while to implement, but the end result is that students are still able to feel a strong connection with at least one teacher since they are spending a lot of time with their homeroom teacher. The teachers would also get a better sense of the class dynamics and I believe it could simplify classroom management problems. If the non-homeroom teacher had an issue with the class, then the homeroom teacher was able to support that teacher. I have no idea how this would work because this would take away the flexibility of the individual's class schedule. This would also require all students to basically maintain the same grade level, and would definitely be hard for students who are behind.

Are these topics being discussed in your locale?

Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu



>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

Widening the Pathway: Implementation and Impacts of Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA281-1.html

Reducing High School Drop-Out through Elementary School Student Support <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/lynch-school/sites/ctc.html>

What to make of declining enrollment in teacher preparation programs <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/make-declining-enrollment-teacher-preparation-programs/>

School climate essentials <https://www.wested.org/resources/school-climate-essentials-brief/>

Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on Public and Private Elementary and Secondary Education <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2022019>

What Is Assistive Technology? https://childmind.org/article/what-is-assistive-technology/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=publ_ed_nl_2022-03-08&utm_content=what-is-assistive-technology

Sport for All, Play for Life: A Playbook to Develop Every Student Through Sports <https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/school-sports/playbook>

Reimagining Black Families' Cultural Assets Can Inform Policies and Practices That Enhance Their Well-being <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/reimagining-black-families-cultural-assets-can-inform-policies-and-practices-that-enhance-their-well-being>

By Using Vague Language to Define Misconduct, Many States Put Children at Risk for Unfair Disciplinary Action <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/by-using-vague-language-to-define-misconduct-many-states-put-children-at-risk-for-unfair-disciplinary-action>

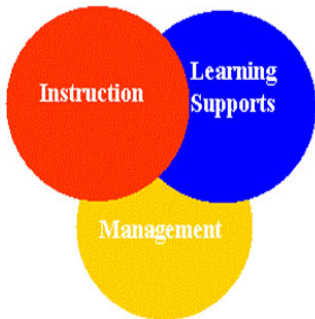
Improving the Emotional Well-Being of Latinx Students Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic: Tips for School Personnel and Caregivers <https://mhntnetwork.org/centers/national-hispanic-and-latino-mhntc/product/improving-emotional-well-being-latinx-students>

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has rolled out a new 988 website - available at samhsa.gov/988. The 988 website is designed to serve as a one-stop-shop for 988 resources from SAMHSA.

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>

- 3/29 Racial and ethnic diversity in education
- 3/30 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility
- 3/30 Balanced instruction
- 3/31 Youth peer support group coaching
- 4/1: Building the Movement to Address Global Crises
- 4/5 Resolving Disputes Through the Special Education Process
- 4/6 Keep kids engaged
- 4/7 Equity Considerations for Collaborative, Comprehensive School-Based MH Systems
- 4/12 Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Students Experiencing Homelessness
- 4/15: Building the Movement through Policy and Advocacy
- 4/19 Closing the Implementation Gap
- 4/28 Basic Requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act
- 4/28 Youth mentoring research symposium



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.

Invitation to Listserv Participants:

Everyone has a stake in the future of public education. This is a critical time for action. Send this resource on to others. Think about sharing with the growing number who are receiving it. AND Let us know about what we should be including.

Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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.

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/>)