

(7/5/23) **This continuing education resource is from the national  
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA**

### Featured

#### **(1) Positive psychology goes to school**

Positive psychology is devoted to the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and positive enabling institutions. An understanding of positive psychology is consistent with the efforts of schools to

- >avoid a deficit view of students and emphasize strengths, assets, resilience, protective buffers
- >develop a supportive, nurturing, and caring climate in classrooms/school-wide
- >enhance student self-regulation
- >promote social and emotional learning

#### **(2) About the growing number of reports of discipline problems**

A colleague weighs in of this widespread concern

#### **(3) Links to a few other relevant shared resources**

Here are a few items we hope will be of interest.

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

>From: ***Positive Psychology Goes to School: Conceptualizing Students' Happiness in 21st Century Schools While 'Minding the Mind!' Are We There Yet? Evidence-Backed, School-Based Positive Psychology Interventions***

Positive psychology is a relatively young branch of psychology that examines how individuals, communities, and enterprises may leverage their strengths and virtues to achieve success. Positive psychology aspires to widen the field's focus from resolving negative aspects of life to including fostering of positive aspects of life.

The purpose of positive psychology is to improve mental health by emphasizing positive emotions and human characteristics. Examining the positives may provide us with fresh information on human flourishing that we would not obtain by focusing exclusively on the negatives. ...

Numerous aspects of positive psychology align with the 21st century school's whole-student learning philosophy. Positive psychology interventions are programs, practices, therapies, or activities aiming at promoting positive emotions, positive behaviors, and positive ideas. Five components that are often included are positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments....

Positive education is predicated on the premise that the same abilities and attitudes that enable us to be happy, have healthy relationships, and be decent individuals also enable us to study and perform well in school. Students who are happy are more likely to succeed academically has been evidenced in numerous studies....

For more from the Center on *Positive Psychology*, see

- >***About positive psychology***
- >***Engaging the Strengths of Families, Youth, and Communities in Rebuilding Learning Supports***
- >***Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Problems at School***

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## About the Growing Number of Reports of Discipline Problems: A Colleague's Perspective

Here is an excerpt to our commentary "*About Addressing the Growing Discipline Problem.*"

A recent discussion shared on the internet focused on how schools are trying to "Fix the Growing Discipline Problem." The discussion stressed that there are lots of possible remedies (e.g., changing classroom culture, making discipline more proactive and less bureaucratic), but it was noted that many states are headed down one particular path: They want to crack down on disruptive student behavior, often by removing students from school. The implications of such a trend are ominous and antithetical to the notion that schools intend that every student will succeed....

While the press is for quick solutions, fixing the discipline problem over the long-term requires a shift away from practices that mainly stress controlling behavior. Research stresses practices that emphasize intrinsic motivation as the best way to enhance and sustain engagement in instruction and reengage students who have become disengaged. This shift from overrelying on extrinsic to emphasizing intrinsic motivation needs to infuse instructional practices. It also needs to permeate the way student/learning supports are provided – as is reflected in efforts to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system for providing such supports...."

Here are a few Center resources related to this concern:

- >*Rethinking Discipline to Improve School Climate*
- >*Minimizing Referrals Out of the Classroom*
- >*Common Behavior Problems at School: A Natural Opportunity for Social and Emotional Learning*

### Here is a response from a colleague:

"I read through the resources you included in "About Addressing the Growing Discipline Problem," and I walked away (metaphorically) with a reaffirmation that I am an edu-pessimist. I agree with your underlying premise that we need to move away from traditional reward/punishment/compliance approaches. I have a different idea when it comes to how to do this, however.

The other day I taught a lesson on perspective and used some common perspective images as a hook for my students. My students marveled at how some could see one image and others the other, and at how hard it was to see the opposite image for many of them (one student literally traced the image for another so they could see it). We discussed the idea of taking another's perspective in times of interpersonal conflict, and I believe this lesson has application here.

As educators, we often discuss student 'misbehavior' and how teachers should increase engagement, build relationships, and such. But we may be shying away from the elephant in the room--our locating the problem in the student, a deficit-based approach. In the process, we make a few assumptions that further undermine our efforts: (1) student behavior is a problem that we can "solve" by increasing engagement, building relationships, etc., and (2) we do not have these problems ourselves, so we don't need to look at our own behavior. Essentially, we position students as the problem, when in fact many (albeit not all) issues of discipline are instigated or escalated by educators. The problem is not a student misbehavior problem. It is a student-educator interaction problem.

For example, many schools in the west include "respect" as one of their schoolwide expectations. But respect for whom and by whom? Educators often consider respect as a

right they are owed, positioning respect as a one-way (or at best, a two-way transactional) exchange. Teachers do this with students. School administrators do this with teachers. District administrators do this with school administrators. And so on. Rarely do I find educators who give respect as a gift--with no return transaction required. But for students to learn the meaning of respect, this gift is exactly what they need. In their worst moments, they need to see what respect looks and feels like. Only then can students begin to internalize an intrinsic understanding of respect.

This is only one example that illustrates what is a simple solution for many behaviors that disrupt learning. This is not an easy solution, however, because it requires a shift in perspective for educators--one from a rigid, rule-based, transactional, and deficit-based approach to one of a fluid, relationship-based, transformational, and asset-based approach. This perspective moves beyond engagement to empowerment--what is needed for students to become truly intrinsically motivated. I have tried time and again to influence schools to shift perspective in this way and to move into a space of transformational empowerment. Each time I have been pushed back by the status quo of transactional interactions under the guise of the latest behavior fad that claims to solve the problem of student "misbehavior."

This is just a small glimpse of a very nuanced approach to addressing the growing interactional breakdown in our schools. Education doesn't like nuance however. It likes data. And quantitative data at that. So it is unlikely in my view that we will ever bridge this divide.

And so I come full circle as to why I am an edu-pessimist. Education is not broken. It is working exactly as it was designed--to create different classes who can fill different roles in society. If we truly want to address the growing "discipline" problem, we educators must look in the mirror first. We must understand (and own) our circle of control, our biases, our assumptions, and we must be willing to take a hard look at the systems that belie every attempt at transformational change--a tall order indeed!"

**Please let us know [your perspective on this topic](#)  
Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

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

#### **Optimistic thinking**

**The longitudinal development of students' well-being in adolescence**

**Psychological distress among young people who are couchsurfing: an exploratory analysis of correlated factors**

**From a child who IS a problem to a child who HAS a problem: fixed period school exclusions and mental health outcomes from routine outcome monitoring among children and young people attending school counseling**

**Creating and Sustaining Discipline Policies That Support Students' Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Academic Well-Being and Success: Strategies for School and District Leaders**

**The relationship between teacher stress and job satisfaction as moderated by coping**

**What No One Told Me About "Classroom Management" as a New Teacher**

**Is the School Assessment and Accountability Era Over? Insights from Marianne Perie, Director of Assessment Research and Innovation at WestEd**

**Rethinking School Evaluation and Accountability to Get Credit for All that is Being Done**

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

We were sent an announcement about a new book updating the Community School movement. See ***The Community Schools Revolution***.

As you read the work, think about the following.

Efforts such as the Community School movement effect initiatives to transform student/learning supports. They are relevant to tranformation efforts and can be built upon. But as usually implemented, they ignore and even impede making essential changes in school improvement policy and guiding transformative systemic improvements in how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students and families. (We note that, at too many schools, both MTSS and Community Schools rapidly are being adopted as buzzwords rather than substantive improvements.)

It is essential to continue to urge such movements to play an increasing role in helping to transform student/learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system.

For more on this, see

- >*Rethinking MTSS to Better Address Barriers to Learning*
- >*Evolving Community Schools and Transforming Student/Learning Supports*

We look forward to hearing how moves to MTSS and Community Schools are contributing to ending the marginalization and fragmentation of student/learning supports in school improvement policy and practice.

Our Center has many resources online focusing on transforminb student/learning supports that can be used for discussion, continuing education, and planning. As a start, see, the following brief resources:

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

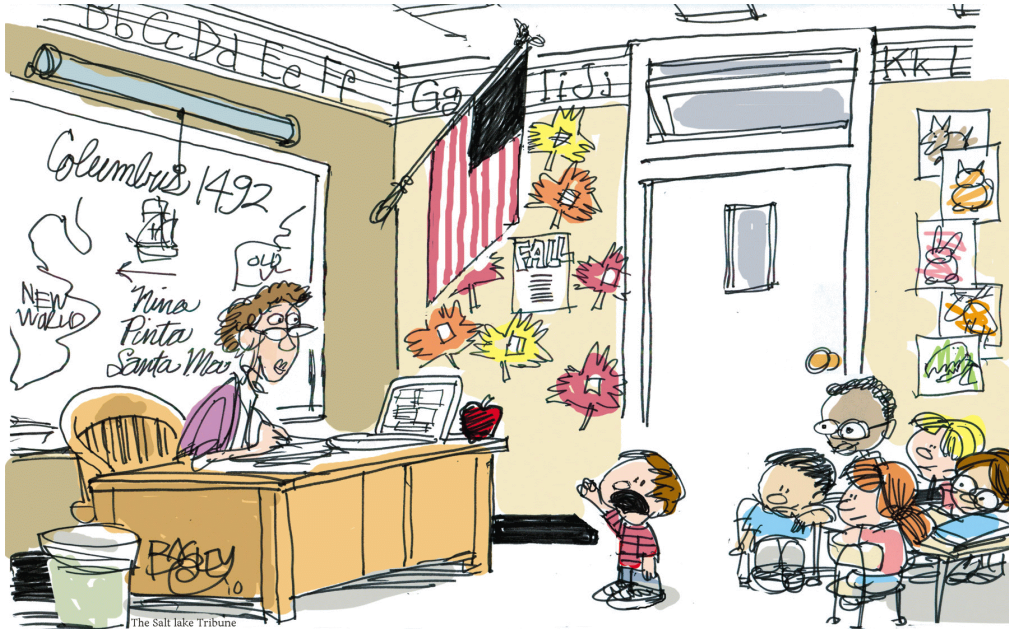
The work is detailed in three free books:

- >*Improving School Improvement*
- >*Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*
- >*Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*

## **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>

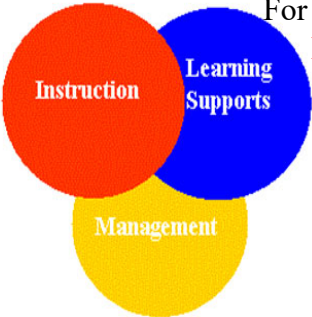
- 7/12 Understanding Doubled up
- 7/13 Artificial Intelligence in education
- 7/17 Mental health first aid
- 7/18 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility
- 7/18 Building an effective team
- 7/20 Counseling for equity in rural America
- 7/24 Peer perspective
- 7/25 Individualized Family Service Plans
- 7/26 Flipping the youth services paradigm



"MR. APPLEWURST, DESPITE SLASHED FUNDING AND OUTRIGHT HOSTILITY ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, WE ALL SAY, 'LET'S GIVE THIS EDUCATION THING A SHOT!'"

caglecartoons.com

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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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**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)

**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/> )**