

Focus on School Adjustment Problems:

INVEST NOW . . . OR PAY LATER!

Some students experience difficulties adjusting to new classes (content and standards), new schools, new teachers, new classmates, etc. It is particularly poignant to see a student who is trying hard, but is disorganized and can't keep up.

Over the first few weeks, teachers realize quickly who has and hasn't made a good adjustment to their classroom and to the school. This is the time to address the problem before it gets worse. If adjustment problems are not addressed, student motivation for school dwindles, and behavior problems increase. Misbehavior often arises in reaction to learning difficulties.

The first month is the time to be proactive. This is the time for staff development to focus on the type of strategies that enable good student adjustment, as well as identifying and addressing problems as soon as they arise. This is the time for student support staff to work with teachers in their classrooms to intervene before problems become severe and pervasive and require referrals for out-of-class interventions.

While some schools already have a proactive approach to student adjustment problems, many do not. These are the type of concerns that are regularly addressed by a transformed system of student and learning supports.*

Making it Happen

(1) To facilitate a strong focus on school adjustment, use a staff development session to encourage structured staff discussions about what teachers can do and what other staff (e.g., student support staff, resource teachers, etc.) can do to team with teachers in their classrooms to enhance school adjustment. Also clarify ways to use aides, volunteers, peer tutors/coaches, mentors, those in the home, etc. to help with additional strategies designed to enhance social, emotional, and cognitive engagement.

(2) Establish September as "Addressing School Adjustment Month – Getting the School Year Off to a Good Start" (see *Is the School Year Off to a Good Start?* -- <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/goodstart.pdf>)

(3) Let staff know about the following free and easily accessed Center resources:

- *Supports for Transitions* – Chapter 4 in *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System*-- <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf>
- *Addressing School Adjustment Problems* -- <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/adjustmentproblems.pdf>
- *What Schools Can Do to Welcome and Meet the Needs of All Students and Families* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/WELMEET/welmeetcomplete.pdf>
- *Welcoming Strategies for Newly Arrived Students and Their Families* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practicenotes/welcomingstrategies.pdf>
- *Welcoming and Involving New Students and Families* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/welcome/welcome.pdf>
- *Learning Supports: Enabling Learning in the Classroom* -- <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rtipract.pdf>
- *Engaging and Re-engaging Students* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engagingandre-engagingstudents.pdf>

For more, use the Online Clearinghouse Quick Finds to link to other Center resources and to online resources across the country. For example, see:

- >*Transition Programs/Grade Articulation/Welcoming* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm
- >*Classroom Focused Enabling* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/classenable.htm>
- >*Motivation* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/motiv.htm>
- >*Response to Intervention* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/responsetointervention.htm>

***About the 2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports**

As a key component in school improvement and renewal, the Center stresses the imperative of transforming student and learning supports. Such a transformation is seen as essential in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students and families. The emphasis is on unifying student and learning supports and then over a period of several years weaving school and community resources together to develop a comprehensive system of supports that enhances equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school and beyond. For more on this, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf> .

***Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights;
transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to
enabling equity of opportunity and promoting whole child development.***

#####

Please forward this to a few colleagues you think might be interested.

**For those who have been forwarded this and want to be part of the ongoing exchanges,
send an email to ltaylor@ucla.edu .**
