

Students & Schools: Moving Forward*

(April, 2021 Vol. 25 #7) – 35 Years & Counting

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**Concerned about addressing barriers to student learning and teaching & re-engaging disconnected students? about equity of opportunity? about whole child development? about school climate? All that and more is our focus.*



We encourage you to forward this to others. If this has been forwarded and you want to receive it directly, contact: Ltaylor@ucla.edu



For more on resources from our national Center, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

>As schools re-open, how are they addressing student and family transition problems?

As schools reopen, the challenges involve much more than implementing mitigation strategies that limit transmission of COVID-19. The transition back calls for a psychologically welcoming environment and enhancing student and learning supports. The lead article in the latest issue of the Center's ejournal focuses on supporting transition-back for students, families, and staff (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.htm>). It discusses (a) *Welcoming, Immediate Social and Academic Support, and Outreach*, (b) *Rapid Identification of Students who aren't Successfully Adjusting at School*, and (c) *Daily Transitions During the First Weeks*. It concludes with the following questions for planners to consider:

“This is the time for schools to ensure they have addressed the variety of initial transition concerns that confront students, their families, and staff as schools re-open.

- How is everyone, staff, students, and families, being welcomed, oriented, and positively connected to the school?
- What are the plans for outreaching to those students and families who were expected but did not return?
- What's in place to minimize problems during daily transition times (e.g., before school, during breaks, lunch, after school)?
- What supports are available to quickly address those not adjusting well?”

Note: As always, we stress that transition supports are best addressed when they are embedded in a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports. Appropriately planned and implemented such a system can play a critical role in the emergence of a positive school climate. Our Center's research and development delineates such a system as encompassing classrooms and schoolwide interventions, coordination among families of schools, and collaboration with community resources. Given tight budgets, the framework stresses ways to redeploy existing school resources and weave whatever the community can add to fill gaps. See discussion at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

More About Transitions

Students are regularly confronted with a variety of transitions – changing schools, changing grades, and encountering a range of other minor and major transitory demands. Such transitions are ever present and usually are not a customary focus of institutionalized efforts to support students. Every transition can exacerbate problems or be used as a natural opportunity to promote positive learning and attitudes and reduce alienation.

Schools need to build their capacity to address transitions proactively and in the process to be guided by their goals for enhancing personal and social functioning. A comprehensive focus on transitions requires school-wide and classroom-based systems and programs designed to (a) enhance successful transitions, (b) prevent transition problems, and (c) use transition periods to reduce alienation and increase positive attitudes toward school and learning. Examples of programs include school-wide and classroom specific activities for welcoming new arrivals (students, their families, staff) and rendering ongoing social support; counseling and articulation strategies to support grade-to-grade and school-to-school transitions and moves to and from special education, college, and post school living and work; and before and after-school and inter-session activities to enrich learning and provide recreation in a safe environment.

Anticipated overall outcomes are reduced alienation and enhanced motivation and increased involvement in school and learning activities. Over time, articulation programs can play a major role in reducing school avoidance and dropouts, as well as enhancing the number who make successful transitions to higher education and post school living and work. It is also likely that a caring school climate can play a significant role in reducing student transiency.

Support for Transitions encompasses:

- Welcoming & social support programs for newcomers (e.g., welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions; peer buddy programs for students, families, staff, volunteers)
- Daily transition programs for (e.g., before school, breaks, lunch, afterschool)
- Articulation programs (e.g., grade to grade, new classrooms, new teachers; elementary to middle school; middle to high school; in and out of special education programs)
- Summer or intersession programs (e.g., catch-up, recreation, and enrichment programs)
- School-to-career/higher education (e.g., counseling, pathway, and mentor programs; broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions; students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education)
- Broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions (e.g., students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education)
- Capacity building to enhance transition programs and activities

*For more, see

>*Support for Transitions Self-study Survey*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/transitionsurvey.pdf>

>*Transitions: Turning Risks into Opportunities for Student Support*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/transitions/transitions.pdf>

Also see the Quick Find on *Transitions* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm

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We expect them to learn math and science and English the same way [as] in normal times, and this is nowhere near normal. I think our kids are amazing. We need to give them hope. We need to tell them that this is a small setback and you're not alone. In fact, the entire world is with us. If anything, I would hope that by the time we get out of this, we would pat ourselves on the back and ... celebrate all the overcoming and becoming.

Washington state Rep. My-Linh Thai

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>Quick Links to Online Resources

Learning Beyond COVID-19 <https://www.aft.org/node/18917>

Racial justice in education

<https://neadjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Racial-Justice-in-Education.pdf>

California Safe Schools Plan

<https://edsources.org/2021/quick-guide-how-does-gov-newsoms-safe-schools-for-all-plan-work/646111>

Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Prevention – CDC’s Summary of Recent Changes

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html>

Making Decisions about Children Attending In-person School During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Information for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/decision-tool.html>

Districts Eye Summer and Beyond to Recoup Learning Losses. Here’s What 3 Have on Tap

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/districts-eye-summer-and-beyond-to-recoup-learning-losses-here-s-what-three-have-on-tap/2021/03>

‘Hidden costs’ of being Black in the U.S

<https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/hidden-costs-of-being-black>

Why SEL Alone Isn't Enough

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar21/vol78/num06/Why-SEL-Alone-Isn't-Enough.aspx>

Improving Student and Staff Well-Being During COVID-19 and Beyond: Connecting Social Emotional Learning with Anti-Racism and Equity

<https://www.chdi.org/index.php/publications/issue-briefs/improving-student-and-staff-well-being-during-covid-19-and-beyond-connecting-social-emotional-learning-anti-racism-and-equity>

Challenges Facing Rural Communities

https://diverseeducation.com/article/208561/?utm_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm_campaign=4e89a886ef-ED_CLIPS_03_18_2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a2b00b930-4e89a886ef-53599575

Job Training for Youth With Justice Involvement – A Toolkit

<https://www.aecf.org/resources/job-training-for-youth-with-justice-involvement/>

Resources for American Indian and Alaska Native youth from the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network's K-12 School Initiative

<https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/national-american-indian-and-alaska-native-mhrtc/school-mental-health>

Adverse Childhood Experiences: Translating Research to Action

<https://gtxccl.omecl.com/portal/wts/ugmcmVyf2s26eg40yLj9Eb%7Cqv7yr6xdgBfL~gQSXsW9ka>

Supporting Parents and Caregivers with Trauma Histories during COVID-19
<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/supporting-parents-caregivers-trauma-histories-during-covid-19>

Talking to Kids About Racism and Violence
https://childmind.org/article/racism-and-violence-how-to-help-kids-handle-the-news/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Talking%20to%20Kids%20About%20Racism%20and%20Violence&utm_campaign=Public-Ed-Newsletter

Association of Children's Mode of School Instruction with Child and Parent Experiences and Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic - COVID Experiences Survey, United States, October 8-November 13, 2020
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7011a1.htm?s_cid=mm7011a1_e&ACSTrackingID=USCDC_921-DM52380&ACSTrackingLabel=This%20Week%20in%20MMWR%20-%20Vol.%2070%2C%20March%2019%2C%202021&deliveryName=USCDC_921-DM52380&ACSTrackingID=USCDC_2024-DM52563&ACSTrackingLabel=MMWR%3A%20Association%20of%20Children%E2%80%99s%20Mode%20of%20School%20Instruction%20on%20with%20Child%20and%20Parent%20Experiences%20and%20Well-being%20during%20the%20COVID-&deliveryName=USCDC_2024-DM52563

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The next time you hear anyone say students need to get back in school, or that schools need to reopen, please remember that schools are open and performing miraculous feats to keep public education available to all. Sandra Vohs is president of the Fort Wayne Education Association.

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Here's what was discussed in the Community of Practice during March

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

Note: All community of practice editions contain Links to relevant shared resources.

- >Anticipating and planning for demonstrations related to the trial of the officer charged in George Floyd's death
- >More on 504 accommodations
- >What's being done about substance abuse during the pandemic?
- >COVID-19 Prevention via the Science of Habit Formation
- >New Directions for Student/Learning Supports Staff
- >About School Planning for Uncertainty in Navigating COVID-19
- >How Do Young Children Explain Differences in the Classroom?
Implications for Achievement, Motivation, and Educational Equity

If you missed the resources and news in the Special Editions of the Community of Practice prepared in relation to the crisis, see

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

For an update on how the center is responding to the Coronavirus crisis, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/centercorona.pdf>

>For more resources in general, see our website <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

>For info on the status of upcoming conferences <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm>

>For info on webinars <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

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Between three major hurricanes and the COVID-19 pandemic, fifth-graders in the southeast districts of the state haven't had an uninterrupted year of learning since kindergarten. But you know what? They have soldiered on. They have been resilient. And they are coming back stronger than ever before. Like a slow-moving hurricane, COVID-19 has wrought havoc, leaving untold damage in its wake. But just like our friends in the southeast, we begin today the hard work of recovering from this disaster. NC State Superintendent Catherine Truitt

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>Calls for grant proposals
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm>

> job and training opportunities
when available
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm>

>**A Few News Stories** (excerpted from various news sources)

40% of Colorado Teachers Are Considering Quitting after Pandemic School Year. Teachers cited safety concerns, ballooning workloads during COVID-19 and low pay among them. According to a new survey conducted by the Colorado Education Association, 40% of licensed teachers across the state said they are weighing an exit from the profession after the 2020-21 school year, as are 33% of professionals in education support roles. That sentiment was highest among teachers ages 60 to 69 (53%), followed by those in their 50s (45%), those in their 30s (36%), and those in their 40s (35%), the organization reported. The Colorado Education Association, a statewide union of K-12 teachers and higher education faculty, surveyed 5,000 of its members in December and released the results Thursday. The organization had not previously polled its members on this topic, so it's unclear how the results compare to prior years. <https://www.denverpost.com/2021/02/19/colorado-education-association-teacher-survey-covid/>

States Must Test Student Learning This Spring, Biden Administration Says. The U.S. Education Dept says states must resume the annual testing of students that was suspended a year ago amid the pandemic. For the past two decades, federal law has required schools to test students once each year in math and reading, in grades three through eight and once in high school. And they are required to publicly report these standardized test results, broken out by racial and ethnic group and disability status, and in some cases, hold schools accountable with various sanctions if their students score too low. The department invites states to request waivers of the requirement that they use this data to identify "failing" schools. These waivers would also exempt schools from the current requirement that at least 95% of students participate in testing. And the letter invites states to be flexible in how schools give the tests, such as by shortening the tests, administering them remotely and offering multiple testing windows into the summer and even the fall.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/02/23/970520559/states-must-test-student-learning-this-spring-biden-administration-says>

Texas Students Slammed Again as Storm Scrambles Already Chaotic School Year. The pandemic had already destabilized parents, teachers and students. Now the winter storm's damage to buildings is preventing schools from even serving as lifelines for students in need of shelter and food. Districts across the state are surveying their buildings and finding broken pipes, soaked classrooms and other major property damage, as rising temperatures thaw pipes. The destruction may indefinitely delay in-person instruction — and more crucially may prevent schools from serving as immediate lifelines for their most vulnerable families. As temperatures plummeted over the last week, many schools could not serve as warming centers for their communities as they have done during past disasters. <https://www.texastribune.org/2021/02/19/texas-school-power-outage/>

Los Angeles Unified School District School Board Cuts its Police Force and Diverts Funds for Black Student Achievement. In a major overhaul of the Los Angeles School Police Department, the Board of Education approved a plan that cuts a third of its officers, bans the use of pepper spray on students and diverts funds from the department to improve the education of Black students. The Oakland Unified School District school board unanimously voted to eliminate its school Police Department in June. That month in Portland, Ore., the superintendent of public schools announced campuses would no longer have school resource officers regularly on campus.

The LAUSD plan will cut 133 positions: 70 sworn officers, 62 non-sworn officers and 1 support staff member. The reduction would leave the force with 211 officers. The bulk of the funding, \$30.1 million, will go toward hiring school climate coaches and other support staff, such as school nurses and counselors. The coaches will be responsible for applying deescalation strategies for conflict resolution, eliminating racial disparities in school discipline practices and addressing implicit bias.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-02-16/lausd-diverting-school-police-funds-support-black-students>

Cleveland Schools to Proceed with Reopening on March 8, Despite Direction from Union Urging Teachers to Not Return. The decision from the Cleveland Teachers Union goes against Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine's request and the school district's plan to have students and faculty members return on March 8. Gov. DeWine prioritized teachers in the vaccine rollout if school districts agreed to return to in-person learning to some extent. Health safety measures have been implemented by the CMSD ahead of the scheduled return, including sanitization stations, temperatures checks, reconfigured classrooms for spacing, and quarantine centers, but the teachers union said that is not enough. Only about one-third of the buildings have completed ventilation inspections in time for the expected return, according to the teachers union.

<https://www.cleveland19.com/2021/03/05/cleveland-teachers-union-reacts-lt-gov-husted-criticism-over-vote-remain-remote-his-children-arent-going-our-schools/>

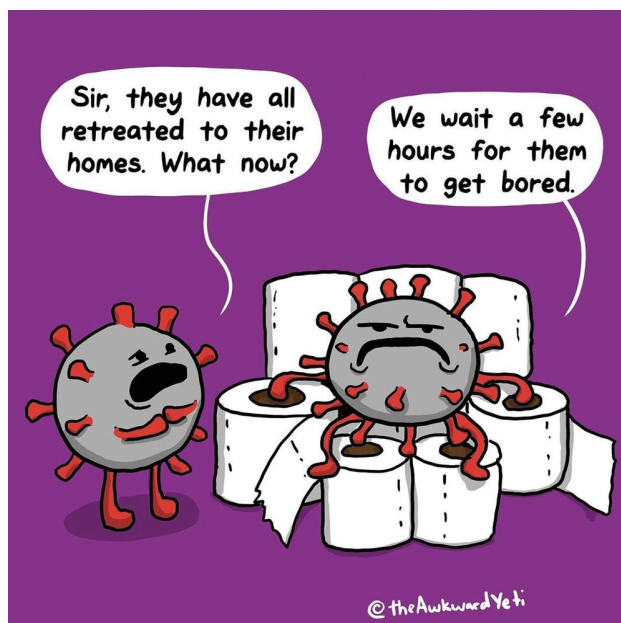
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Quote from Cleveland story:

Cleveland school personnel jumped to the front of the line to get vaccines in return for going back to school in-person March 1. Now the union is violating that agreement. If you weren't going to go back to work then you shouldn't have taken the vaccine.

Ohio Lt. Gov. Jon Husted

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Commentary

HERE WE GO AGAIN . . .

In the Rush to Spend Federal Stimulus Funds Schools are Attending to Immediate Individual Needs Without Addressing the Opportunity to Make Necessary Systemic Improvements

The COVID pandemic has increased school concerns about a growing number of students manifesting learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

Last week one large district announced that it would use \$24 million of its federal stimulus funding for a 3 year mental health plan to expand the number of behavioral support teams from 200 schools to closer to 500 and enlist more help from community groups through grants. We wonder what will happen when the funds run out.

In the past, when special funding for such 3 year plans has ended so have the added-on interventions.

For some time, we have seen increasing calls for schools to pursue interventions related to trauma, anxiety, depression, disconnected students and truancy, adverse childhood experiences, social and emotional health, substance abuse, suicide prevention, and other mental health concerns. Clearly, there is a need for schools to play a role in addressing such matters. At the same time, it is essential to avoid ad hoc and piecemeal approaches, cycling from one concern to another, and interventions that pull resources away from other priority concerns and increase inequities of opportunity for other students.

Given the increasing number of learning, behavior, and emotional problems confronting educators, it is essential that schools avoid pressures to just expand intervention strategies that only attend to individual needs or that pursue another "hot topic" program.

The federal stimulus funds also provide the opportunity to start a process for transforming student/learning supports in ways that substantially and substantively address a broad range of barriers to learning and teaching.

Here are three free resources we have developed to provide online in depth aids to guide transformation planning:

>*Improving School Improvement*

>*Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*

>*Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*

All three can be accessed at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

And here is a recently released policy analysis prepared for PACE:

Restructuring California Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching in the COVID 19 Context and Beyond

https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/pb_adelman_nov2020.pdf

(Note that this is not just relevant to California)

Please share this information with those who may find it helpful.

And if you have any questions or want to share something you think others might find relevant, send them to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Finally, for those moving forward to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students, see the **National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports**
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

And note that we offer free distance coaching and technical assistance

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/coach.pdf>

Please Let Us Know About:

What ideas are being proposed for transforming schools as they re-open?

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 to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Comments and sharing from the field

(1) We were asked to share this “Mental Health & Equity Funding Opportunity for High School Students Active Minds is proud to launch the Your Voice is Your Power Student Ambassador program (activeminds.org/highschools). This spring, Active Minds is calling on high school mental health advocates to help establish a school culture of caring and support for Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ+ students nationwide. Through the Your Voice is Your Power (YVYP) program they will gain invaluable mentorship, guidance, support, resources, and funding from Active Minds to develop coalitions of students, teachers, administrators, staff, and community members working towards a common goal of proactive mental wellness for all students.

Active Minds is offering funds to up to 100 student advocates at 50 high schools (1-2 student advocates per school) to create their coalitions and receive close support from the National Office this spring! To be eligible, students should attend high school and identify as BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ or have a commitment from a BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ student to co-lead the coalition.

More details are available at activeminds.org/highschools. If you have questions about eligibility or project details, please reach out to Laura Horne at laura@activeminds.org. “

(2) And we had some encouraging feedback about our efforts:

>Your insight on adolescent growth is a remarkable approach to learning, bridging the gap of intrapersonal and interpersonal growth with critical thinking skills to promulgate professional and mental health development. Your riveting research and goals of the Center of Mental Health in Schools addressing how we can influence students' academic growth and decline of adolescent well-being are inspirational to me. Your clinical perspective addressing education is a holistic approach I strive for when empirically addressing both educational and clinical issues.

*>I am writing an article for Child Psychiatry Clinics of North America on "Collaboration with Schools and School Wellness Centers". I came across your fabulous book, **Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change**, and would like to reprint your Figure in “Exhibit 31: Intervention Continuum: Interconnected Subsystems.*

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César Chávez recognized the power of service and helping communities in need. He said, *We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.*

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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

THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF ENEWS

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.

For more information about the Center and its many resources, go to the website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> or email Ltaylor@ucla.edu or adelman@psych.ucla.edu

Send info to share with others or ask for specific resources by email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu