

## **ENEWS -- Another Center Resource for ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO LEARNING\***

**April, 2018 (Vol. 22 #7) – 31 Years & Counting**

**\*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](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**



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

### ***What's Here***

**Resource links relevant to school improvement and personnel development**

**This month's special topic – Helping Students and Families Plan Successful Transitions to a New Grade or a New School**

**Transforming student/learning supports – Call to Action**

**and more**

### **Resources from Across the Country**

- > *Using environmental design to prevent school violence* – <https://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/youthviolence/cpted.html>
- > *Recommendations to prevent gun violence* from the Prevention Institute – <https://www.preventioninstitute.org/focus-areas/preventing-violence-and-reducing-injury/preventing-violence-advocacy#FullRecommendations>
- > *How the Every Student Succeeds Act Can Support Social and Emotional Learning* – [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9988.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9988.html)
- > *Relationships among Trait Resilience, Virtues, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and Post-traumatic Growth* – <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4416702/>
- > *Deadly dreams: What motivates school shootings* – <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/deadly-dreams/>
- > *Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience: A Framework for Addressing and Preventing Community Trauma* – <https://www.preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Adverse%20Community%20Experiences%20and%20Resilience.pdf>

- > *Post-Traumatic Growth in Children and Adolescents* – [https://www.scitechnol.com/peer-review/posttraumatic-growth-in-children-and-adolescents-q0xD.php?article\\_id=6960](https://www.scitechnol.com/peer-review/posttraumatic-growth-in-children-and-adolescents-q0xD.php?article_id=6960)
- > *SITE ASSESS* -- a free app to guide assessing a school's safety, security, accessibility, and emergency preparedness from the U.S. Department of Education  
[https://rems.ed.gov/SITEASSESS.aspx?utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name=&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=](https://rems.ed.gov/SITEASSESS.aspx?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)
- > *Parenting Videos* – <https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/videos/index.html>
- > *MTSS: Strengths and weaknesses* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/equityresps.pdf>

**>upcoming conferences, initiatives, workshops**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm>  
  
**>webinars**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

### ***A few relevant journal publications***

- School safety strategies and their effects on the occurrence of school-based violence in U.S. high schools: An exploratory study. M. Cuellar, (2018). *Journal of School Violence*, 17, 28-45.  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15388220.2016.1193742>
- Early adolescents' peer experiences with ethnic diversity in middle school: Implications for academic outcomes. J. Lewis, A. Nishina, A. Hall, et al. (2018). *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 47, 194–206. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10964-017-0697-1.pdf>
- A teacher who knows me: The academic benefits of repeat student-teacher matches. A.J. Hill & D.B. Jones (2018). *Economics of Education Review*, online.  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272775717306635>
- Longitudinal examination of aggression and study skills from middle to high school: Implications for dropout prevention. P. Orpinas, K. Raczynski, H. Hsieh, L. Nahapetyan, A.M. Horne, (2018). *Journal of School Health*, 88, 246-252.  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/josh.12602/abstract>

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*If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales.  
If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales.*

Albert Einstein

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

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

## TRANSFORMING STUDENT AND LEARNING SUPPORTS

### Call to Action

The tragedy in Parkland (FL) has been recognized as a multi-system failure and has led to calls for enhancing school safety and mental health assistance.\* Rather than limiting the focus to the latest crisis, schools can embed these concerns into a broader school improvement agenda to establish a comprehensive and multifaceted system that addresses a wide range of problems. The aim can be to transform the many fragmented student/learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system at every school. Such a system is key to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

Here are some aids:

>*Education Leaders' Guide to Transforming Student and Learning Supports*. This guide incorporates years of research and prototype development and a variety of examples from trailblazing efforts at local, district, regional, and state levels. The prototypes and examples can be readily adopted/adapted – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/transguide.pdf>

In response to requests from superintendents and principals, the following brief guides outline strategic steps for getting started. The steps are based on experiences working with districts and schools across the country. Included are easily accessed links to free resource aids and tools.

>*Developing a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: First Steps for Superintendents Who Want to Get Started* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/superstart.pdf>

>*Establishing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports at a School: Seven Steps for Principals and Their Staff*. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/7steps.pdf> This set of guidance notes starts with an overview of steps and then offers detailed notes focusing on each.

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\*Broward County School Superintendent Runcie has called for a comprehensive, independent review of Nikolas Cruz educational record and the academic, social and emotional services Cruz received. "The ability to move forward in the aftermath of a horrific attack on our school community depends on the steps we take now to understand the conditions that may have led to this tragedy. A quest for such understanding must be done with both transparency and a sense of urgency...." The review would focus on the academic, social, and emotional services provided to Cruz by district staff and agency partners during the time he was enrolled in Broward County Public Schools.

## WHERE'S IT HAPPENING?

We are receiving an increasing number of requests about what sites we recommend contacting and perhaps visiting to see efforts that are being made to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports (i.e., efforts to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching). **Please let us know about schools/districts that would be good to contact.** Send to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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*Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.*

Theodore Roosevelt

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## News from around the country related to addressing barriers

**Spending bill boosts Title IV funding.** The just passed federal spending bill provides \$1.1 billion in funding for Title IV of the Every Student Succeeds Act. These funds can be used for enhancing school safety and addressing a variety of barriers to learning and teaching. 3/23/18  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/23/us/politics/trump-veto-spending-bill.html>

**Secretary DeVos Forms School Safety Commission.** U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos today announced new details on the Federal Commission on School Safety the President appointed her to chair. The Commission has been charged with quickly providing meaningful and actionable recommendations to keep students safe at school. Accordingly, the Commission will be comprised of department heads whose agencies have jurisdiction over key school safety issues: Secretary DeVos, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar and Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen. 3/23/18  
[https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-devos-forms-school-safety-commission?utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name=&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=](https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-devos-forms-school-safety-commission?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)

**N.J. district adopts "cradle to career" for ESL.** Support for English-language learners in a New Jersey school district begins before kindergarten. School leaders expanded prekindergarten access, and the district provides certification for English as a second language to pre-K through 12th-grade teachers. 3/23/18 <https://www.districtadministration.com/article/school-district-expands-esl-initiative>

**Students to volunteer in Puerto Rico over spring break.** In the months after Hurricane Maria, Orlando first responders traveled to Puerto Rico to assist the island in its hour of need. Now, Orlando students will follow in their footsteps. More than 30 middle and high students from Orlando youth programs are heading to Puerto Rico during their spring break next week to do what they can to help with recovery efforts. The students will be delivering backpacks filled with school supplies and books to schools, delivering supplies and donations to an orphanage, organizing field day events for children in some of the hardest-hit areas and helping repaint a school. 3/16/18  
<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/puerto-rico-hurricane-recovery/os-youth-puerto-rico-volunteers-20180316-story.html>

**Florida governor signs gun control school safety bill.** Gov. Rick Scott signed into law a bill that includes the first significant gun restrictions in the firearm-friendly state in decades. Mr. Scott said he weighed three factors in analyzing the legislation: whether it would improve school safety, provide more funding for mental-health treatment and keep guns away from people who shouldn't have them. The legislation includes \$400 million in funding to bolster mental-health services, fund additional school-resource officers and strengthen the physical security of school buildings. 3/9/18  
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/florida-gov-scott-signs-gun-control-school-safety-bill-1520627652>

**"I feel bad for the class of 2018".** An investigation showed that one of every three graduates from the Washington DC public schools last year missed too many classes or improperly took makeup classes, undermining the validity of hundreds of diplomas. In the wake of that review, school administrators tightened enforcement of long-ignored attendance rules, meaning seniors with too many absences will not be allowed to graduate. The investigation of the graduation issue concluded that the District's schools are plagued by a culture that encourages educators to hand out diplomas to meet lofty graduation goals even if that means giving a high school degree to a student who missed half the academic year. The school system released midyear data last week showing that the graduation rate is expected to decline in 2018, a sharp reversal for a system that has boasted seven consecutive years of increases. According to the data, 42 percent of seniors attending traditional public schools are on track to graduate, while 19 percent are considered "moderately off-track," meaning they could still earn enough credits for a diploma. 3/6/18  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/i-feel-really-bad-for-the-class-of-2018-dc-students-graduation-may-be-imperiled/2018/03/06/0623410c-11a2-11e8-9570-29c9830535e5\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.5dfcf9faa3a9](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/i-feel-really-bad-for-the-class-of-2018-dc-students-graduation-may-be-imperiled/2018/03/06/0623410c-11a2-11e8-9570-29c9830535e5_story.html?utm_term=.5dfcf9faa3a9)

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*All I know is just what I read in the papers, and that's an alibi for my ignorance. - Will Rogers*

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## Comments and sharing from the field

- (1) “Bill Ryser, principal at Girard High School, said students will honor the victims of the shooting by reaching out to 17 people they don’t usually talk to. ‘It’s about crossing bridges and social groups, to be more positive and inclusive and to encourage a feeling of connection between the students,’ Ryser said. ‘It was the idea of the school psychologist, and it is a really positive thing to do to break down barriers....’”
- (2) “I personally have asked all students to use the tragedy at Stoneman Douglas (Parkland, Florida) as a moment to reflect in order to make our school great by becoming more inclusive as a school community, to end negative behaviors, and put a stop to bullying.” (Roberto Medic, high school principal)
- (3) We receive a lot of positive feedback about the Center’s work, but this one wowed us so much we just needed to share it.  
“I am grateful to you for your knowledge and commitment in supporting us stakeholders, in so many areas of educational research and practice. You go where so many dare not tread-providing a thorough knowledge-base and addressing so many pertinent issues. Continue to support us within this miasmatic struggle!”

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The following captures our worst fear:

**Superintendent to Center Director:**

*I'm so pleased to meet you . . . I just finished reading your policy report.*

**Center Director:**

*Thanks for telling us! Now at least we know someone read it!!*

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### **This Month’s Special Topic – Helping Students and Families Plan Successful Transitions to a New Grade or a New School**

- (1) Excerpt from *Alone and Adrift: The association between mass school shootings, school size, and student support* –  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314109405\\_Alone\\_and\\_adrift\\_The\\_association\\_between\\_mass\\_school\\_shootings\\_school\\_size\\_and\\_student\\_support](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314109405_Alone_and_adrift_The_association_between_mass_school_shootings_school_size_and_student_support)

...One particularly stressful life event for the adolescent student is transitioning to a new school. Adjusting to any type of unfamiliar environment can be difficult for young people, but transitioning to a larger, less supportive environment may prove overwhelming, especially for students already struggling to find their place in a community of peers. It is conceivable that for adolescents who are already predisposed to feeling unimportant and alienated by virtue of their changing bodies, attitudes, and perhaps developing psychopathology, confronting a large and impersonal environment for the first time may provoke toxic levels of hostility and anger ...”

As students end a school year, new interventions needs arise. Minimally, there is a need to anticipate transitions and assist students and their families in the move to the next teacher(s) and setting. Ideally, efforts should be made to facilitate positive expectations and the beginnings of a strong working relationship.

Transitions arise related to each new step in formal education and in moving to and from special programs and to post school living and work. For those making such transitions, well-designed support during the period of transition can make a great difference in their lives. From the first grade-to-grade transition to the move to middle school and high school and every other move to a new school, all call for well-conceived programs designed to support transitions.

This means programs that prepare students and their families for the transitions and follow-up to ensure the transition has been a good one. Programs are needed that

- provide closure related to what the student is leaving behind
- enhance articulation between the old and the new
- welcome newcomers and ensure they have the type of social support that facilitates positive acceptance and adjustment in the new setting
- assess transition success
- implement timely corrective interventions when transitions are not successful

## (2) An Example of a Plan from a City School District in GA

Pre-K to Kindergarten Transition – At the start of the second semester, the class curriculum and structure changes to mirror what it will be like in kindergarten (e.g. shorter naps). Teachers also begin to talk to the children about going to kindergarten. Also, each school holds a parent night for parents of upcoming kinder students.

Fifth to sixth grade Transition – We have 5 elementary schools and 1 feeder middle school. Our elementary and middle school counselor communicate regularly to facilitate transition activities between the schools in the feeder pattern. These are support for transitions currently being utilized:

- Academic Fair Night – In February, an Academic Fair Night is held where fifth and sixth graders and their parents have the opportunity to come to the middle school and meet with teachers and counselors in their upcoming grade. It is also a good opportunity for fifth graders to interact with students who were former fifth graders when they were in fourth grade. Teachers also have examples of exemplary work on display so parents and students can get an idea of the level of expectations where work is concerned at the middle school.
- Fifth Grade Orientation Day – Before the end of the school year, fifth graders from our 5 elementary schools visit our middle school to get oriented on the particulars of middle school life. They have a chance to ask questions and get any concerns addressed that they may have.
- Teacher Transition Forms – We use a transition form that was created as a means for fifth grade teachers to communicate pertinent information about students to their sixth grade teachers. The form alerts sixth grade teachers and counselors as to concerns, interventions and learning supports in place for a student. Our goal in creating the form was to quickly communicate to the middle school so that supports/interventions could be put in place at the beginning of the school year. We believe it will expedite the services and aid in the transition process. The future plan is for the form to be utilized during all grade transitions.
- Teacher Transition Info Meeting – Each year, the sixth grade academy principal meets with all fifth grade teachers to orient them to the expectations, procedures, and the registration process at the middle school. It provides an opportunity for teachers to ask questions or get any concerns addressed. The middle school administrator can also bring any concerns from his sixth grade teachers that need to be discussed.

Eighth grade to Ninth grade Transition – The eighth to ninth grade transition is a year long process. In October 2010 the eighth grade counselor and one of the High school counselors attended a workshop on the New BRIDGE Legislation. The BRIDGE legislation involves the 6- 12 grade transitions from grade to grade. It is now required for each eighth grade student, along with the counselor to compose a high school plan for ninth to twelfth grade. The high school plan is an outline of courses that students must take in order to graduate in four years. All eighth grade students compose their High school Plan.”

(3) The Center embeds supports for transitioning to a new grade or school into a focus on the full range of transition supports students need throughout the school year and delineates supports for transitions as one of the six content arenas of a learning supports system. Here is our take on this arena:

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

As a planning aid, see the Support for Transitions Self-study Survey online at:

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

For more on this topic, see the online clearinghouse Quick Find on

> *Transition Programs/Grade Articulation/Welcome* – [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101\\_01.htm](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm)

This provides links to many relevant resources, such as the following Center documents

>>a Chapter on supports for transitions from *Transforming Student and Learning Supports:*

Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System

>>Transitions: Turning Risks into Opportunities for Student Support

>>Notes on Transition Planning for College

>>Supporting Successful Transition to Ninth Grade

>>Transitions to and from Elementary, Middle, and High School

Also see the Quick Find on *Transition to College* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/Transitiontocollege.htm>

**Topics in March's Weekly School Practitioner Community of Practice**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

3/7/18: Anticipating school walkouts

3/14/18: Enhancing parent engagement using home visits

Also see the following topics covered in the Quarterly Journal sent out in March and online at – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/spring18.pdf>

- >Time for Straight Talk about Mental Health Services and MH in Schools
- >Improving School Climate Starts with Understanding that it's an Emerging Quality

Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla> for links to many other resources

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**Student protestors are saying it clearly:**

**WE DESERVE BETTER!**

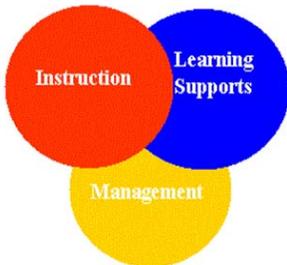
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\*Information is online about the

**National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Note that we offer free coaching and technical assistance for those developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student supports. See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/coach.pdf> and send all info to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)



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**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](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu) or [adelman@psych.ucla.edu](mailto:adelman@psych.ucla.edu)

Send info to share with others or ask for specific resources by email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)