

Students & Schools: Moving Forward*

August, 2020 (Vol. 24 #11) – 34 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>

>What is (and isn't) in Place to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching for the New School Year?

As the debate goes on about re-opening schools, concerns about safety and health, as well as how best to enhance teaching and learning are being widely discussed. However, while there is widespread awareness that there will be an increased number of students experiencing learning, behavior, and emotional problems, planning appears inadequate with respect to providing essential student/learning supports in whatever setting instruction takes place.

For example, in advocating for in-person instruction, the American Academy of Pediatrics highlights the need:

The emotional impact of the pandemic, financial/employment concerns, social isolation, and growing concerns about systemic racial inequity — coupled with prolonged limited access to critical school-based mental health services and the support and assistance of school professionals — demands careful attention and planning as well. Schools should be prepared to adopt an approach for mental health support....

When schools do reopen, plans should already be in place for outreach to students who do not return, given the high likelihood of separation anxiety and agoraphobia in students. Students may have difficulty with the social and emotional aspects of transitioning back into the school setting, especially given the unfamiliarity with the changed school environment and experience....

Schools need to incorporate academic accommodations and supports for all students who may still be having difficulty concentrating or learning new information because of stress associated with the pandemic. It is important that schools do not anticipate or attempt to catch up for lost academic time through accelerating curriculum delivery at a time when students and educators may find it difficult to even return to baseline rates. These expectations should be communicated to educators, students, and family members so that school does not become a source of further distress....

The personal impact on educators and other school staff should be recognized. In the same way that students are going to need support to effectively return to school and to be prepared to be ready to process the information they are being taught, teachers cannot be expected to be successful at teaching children without having their mental health needs supported. The strain on teachers this year as they have been asked to teach differently while they support their own needs and those of their families has been significant, and they will be bringing that stress back to school as schools reopen. Resources such as Employee Assistance Programs and other means to provide support and mental health services should be established prior to reopening...”
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

CDC also stresses the matter – see the *Thriving Schools Website* –
<https://thrivingschools.kaiserpermanente.org/get-inspired/coronavirus-response/schools-reopening-playbook/>

Also see, from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO),
Restart & Recovery: Considerations for Teaching & Learning Overview
https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/CCSSO_RR_Consider_Teach-v3.pdf

And from PACE (Policy Analysis for California Education), see
Lead with Equity What California’s Leaders Must Do Next to Advance Student Learning During COVID-19 https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/pb_hough_jul20.pdf

For our Centers most recent discussion of immediate and long-term planning priorities and processes for providing essential student/learning supports, see our Policy Notes at
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/what'sin.pdf>

Let Us Hear from You so we can do more sharing:

We want to share plans and experiences for student/learning supports as the school year begins.

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

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On reopening schools, scientists say proceed with caution

Schools don’t operate in a vacuum. A large part of how safe they’re going to be in the fall depends on the local levels of transmission. Helen Jenkins, Boston University

We’ve been very reactionary in terms of our response to COVID, and we have an opportunity to be thoughtful around how we’re going to handle the fall as we try to reopen schools. Part of that means having clearly articulated, thoughtful plans around what will trigger a school closure.... What are the contingency plans for if staff members start to get sick? How is that going to be handled, and what are the specific epidemiological triggers around, say, a school having to close? Samuel Scarpino, Northeastern University

quotes from Boston Globe
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>Quick Links to Online Resources

Schools Should Prioritize Reopening in Fall 2020, Especially for Grades K-5, While Weighing Risks and Benefits
<https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2020/07/schools-should-prioritize-reopening-in-fall-2020-especially-for-grades-k-5-while-weighing-risks-and-benefits>

CDC Considerations for Schools Operating Schools During COVID-19
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

CDC School Decision-Making Tool for Parents, Caregivers, and Guardians
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/decision-tool.html>

Education Researchers Come Together on What Schools Need Now - Starting With More Money
https://www.chalkbeat.org/2020/7/23/21336306/education-researchers-schools-budget-pandemic-letter-recommendations?utm_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm_campaign=2598557429-ED_CLIPS_07_24_2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a2b00b930-2598557429-53599575

New York state guidance on reopening schools
<http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/state-education-department-issues-guidance-reopen-new-york-state-schools>

Teens and COVID: Challenges and Opportunities
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Teens-and-COVID-19.aspx>

Screen time during COVID
https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/Docs/resource_libraries/covid-19/Screen-Time-During-COVID.pdf

Telehealth to Support Students, Families, and Educators Across School Psychology Practice
https://apadivision16.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/TSP-Spring-2020_1.pdf

American Institutes for Research Releases Early Results from National Survey on Public Education's COVID-19 Response
<https://www.air.org/news/press-release/american-institutes-research-releases-early-results-national-survey-public>

Supporting the Foster Care Community During COVID-19
<https://www.air.org/resource/air-informs-episode-8-supporting-foster-care-community-during-covid-19>

How Schools and Teachers Can Support Students with Disabilities in Remote Learning
<https://www.air.org/resource/digital-accessibility-how-schools-and-teachers-can-support-students-disabilities-remote>

How to Talk "Taboo" Topics with Young Students
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/education-update/sept19/vol61/num09/How-to-Talk-%C2%A3Taboo%C2%A3-Topics-with-Young-Students.aspx>

From the Center

> *What is (and isn't) in Place to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching for the New School Year?* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/what'sin.pdf>

> *Watch out! Much Discussion of MTSS, Little Discussion of Student/Learning Support Staff and Developing MTSS into a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/july19init.pdf>

> *Hypersensitivity to a Student's Emotional Reactions Can Be Harmful*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/july16init.pdf>

> *CALL TO ACTION: Ensuring that mental health is a high priority as schools reopen*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/7-9-20.pdf>

In case you missed it, the latest Quarterly ejournal is now online. See

> *Schools Re-opening: Safety Plus Enhancing Equity of Opportunity and Social Justice*

> *The Role of Schools in Promoting Whole Child Development and Learning?*

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

Webinars

- >8/3 – *Supporting Youth Peers During COVID-19*
- >8/11 – *When the Monsters Live with Us: Structural Inequities, COVID-19, and Intimate Partner Violence in Latin American Families (in Spanish)*
Cuando los Monstruos Viven con Nosotros: Reflexiones sobre el Impacto de la Intersección de las Inequidades Estructurales, el COVID-19 y la Violencia de Pareja en los Niños Pequeños en Familias Latinoamericanas
- >8/18 – *Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services*
- >8/19 – *Addressing Environmental Challenges through Service-Learning: Could Large-Scale Tutoring Address COVID-Related Learning Loss? (Podcast)*
- >8/19 – *Addressing Environmental Challenges through Service-Learning*
- >9/17 – *Meeting the needs of adolescent youth*

For more webinars, go to the our Center’s links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

School Practitioner Listservs in July*

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

7/8

- >NEA’s request re: a “virtual care package”
- >How do schools respond to students expressing strong emotions?
- >What’s taking place locally to support learning over the summer?

7/15

- >Different perspectives on resuming in person teaching and learning
- >Guidance for school re-opening: NEA, AASA, States

7/22

- >What are teachers and student support staff reporting about their experiences with distance learning/student support?

*Each week’s Community of Practice offers links to relevant resources

If you missed the crisis related resources (including activities to pursue while schools are closed), see the Special Editions of the Community of Practice prepared in relation to the crisis, see

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

>For more resources, 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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...for over twenty-five years I also worked and a school psychologist. I have spent my career pulling kids out of the stream of problems. Now it is time to teach them how to swim. Mental health instruction in schools can teach them how to swim.

Bob McGlenn

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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>

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Street demonstrations were not even a mild expression of militancy. The turmoil of cities absorbs demonstrations as merely transitory drama which is ordinary in city life. Without a more effective tactic for upsetting the status quo, the power structure could maintain its intransigence and hostility.

Martin Luther King, Jr (1967)

But times may be changing.

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

The Return to School. While states are rolling out guidance to school districts for reopening, the reality is that most don't yet have a set plan and are stuck awaiting state and local budget cuts – some projected to be as large as 25% – tied to lost revenue from the economic downturn. Last week, for example, more than 2,000 educators in Massachusetts were laid off, an early and grim sign that bolsters the National Education Association's estimate that nearly 700,000 educators could lose their job over the next two years and raises major red flags for the ability of schools to reopen at all.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2020-06-29/pediatric-group-calls-for-children-to-return-to-schools-despite-coronavirus>

Amid pandemic, fewer students seek federal aid for college. The number of high school seniors applying for U.S. federal college aid plunged in the weeks following the sudden closure of school buildings this spring — a time when students were cut off from school counselors, and families hit with financial setbacks were reconsidering plans for higher education. In the first weeks of the pandemic, the number of new applications fell by nearly half compared to last year's levels, fueled by a decline among students at low-income schools, according to an Associated Press analysis.

https://www.richmond.com/ap/national/amid-pandemic-fewer-students-seek-federal-aid-for-college/article_b337efbe-3e36-5d11-af88-f5f15e2d433e.html

Virginia program looks to help new teachers as state works to address teacher shortage. The Virginia Department of Education is partnering with James Madison University's College of Education to create a program, dubbed the "Virginia New Teacher Support Program," to give coaching and professional development to first- and second-year teachers. The program will match first- and second-year teachers with an instructional coach. That coach will give the new teachers advice on instructional planning, student assessment and professionalism...The program, which has no cost to teachers, schools or school systems, is paid for through a \$200,000 federal grant under the Every Student Succeeds Act

https://www.richmond.com/news/virginia/virginia-program-looks-to-help-new-teachers-as-state-works-to-address-teacher-shortage/article_4697fa77-8c03-5139-b53f-e9cf36f85f1c.html

Budgets put limits on social distancing options for schools. Many schools find themselves overwhelmed by the potential expenses that would come with operating under pandemic-induced social distancing guidelines. ... In Hartford, Connecticut, Superintendent Leslie Torres-Rodriguez shudders at the thought of how to afford a scenario where each teacher had dramatically fewer students. In some grades, she said, she has individual teachers with as many as 27 students in their classrooms. In Hartford, which has 14.7 students per teacher, the district serves many high-poverty communities and also brings in thousands of students from 60 other towns through school-choice programs. The superintendent said the challenges associated with reopening are so severe, it may be time to come up with entirely new models for instruction.

https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/budgets-put-limits-social-distancing-options-schools-71403097?cid=clicks_ource_4380645_7_heads_posts_card_hed

Education Researchers Come Together on What Schools Need Now - Starting With More Money. Nearly 200 education researchers, including some who disagree fiercely on policy issues, have united around a set of recommendations for helping America's schools navigate the current crisis. The document highlights the widespread agreement among experts on what schools need at this moment, and offers a research-informed roadmap for policymakers looking to address the cascading effects of the pandemic on schools.

https://www.chalkbeat.org/2020/7/23/21336306/education-researchers-schools-budget-pandemic-letter-recommendations?utm_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm_campaign=2598557429-ED_CLIPS_07_24_2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a2b00b930-2598557429-53599575

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quote from Hartford story above

If we're going to go to smaller class sizes, where are we going to get more teachers from? We know that we have experts in our community right now. We have our corporate. We have our industry. We have higher ed,. So how do we leverage our retirees, for example? How do we leverage our soon to be college upper class students? Industry? I just think it is an opportunity.

Superintendent Leslie Torres-Rodriguez

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>Experiences Reported from the Front Lines

From a student support staff member

About contact over summer:

Surprisingly enough, our school social work department did not put out information to encourage staying in contact, however, our principal did. He encouraged students and parents to reach out at any time, and teachers and school staff to regularly check their emails. Regardless, I told all my students and their parents that I am around this summer and if they want to talk or need anything, to reach out to me. I've heard from a couple parents with questions but students have not yet reached out.

About plans for fall

We have no idea what school will look like in the fall, so I cannot comment in this area, however, I feel that whatever school looks like mental health and social/emotional learning/supports should be at the forefront when students return to some format of learning. I've communicated this to our union, special education and district leaders. If we are in any distance learning I think we should have mobile teams made of support staff to visit struggling students/parents/families. Again, those relationships are key and this would help to strengthen them.

About collaboration among support staff

During distance learning, our support staff met weekly to talk about ways we could support students and families. Our special education team also met weekly. This was VERY helpful because working from home was extremely isolating and it helped to have support. A downfall in our district is that at the beginning of distance learning school staff were emailed multiple (!) messages with information from our school social work department, district leaders, special education departments and our school. There was too much information to sift through day to day. I've suggested to our district that if we continue to be in distance learning all of these departments merge and we have different links for different things collectively, for example, one link for resources for families (food, shelter, counseling, etc), one link about what expectations are for school staff in distance learning, etc. Otherwise, being on the front lines with students and providing emotional support is already hugely stressful, and our work with students takes a tremendous amount of effort, planning and work, more than when we are in our school buildings. The other helpful item was that there were various Q&A google documents created for our departments - like school social work, district special education and our own school building, so we could ask questions and get answers immediately. There were also various google meet "training" sessions about google meets and our computer programs - for example how to create social/emotional learning lessons, etc. In late spring there were google meets for staff about self care and healthy eating. These different training sessions were super important in nurturing our roles in self care, educating and supporting students and families.

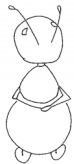
From a district leader (quoted in the American Institutes for Research's *Voices of School District Leaders National Survey of Public Education's Response to COVID-19* <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/Voices-of-School-District-Leaders-July-2020.pdf>)

In an survey conducted by AIR, one of the matters explored was how much equity in access was prioritized. AIR reports:

Many district leaders said their greatest concern during remote instruction was equity in access to instruction, and this has been a concern for many years. School closures brought many of the existing challenges to the surface, and, in some cases, gaps in access were exacerbated during school closures. When asked, "Which topics related to serving students during the COVID-19 pandemic would you most like to exchange ideas with other school districts across the country?", one leader stated their concern bluntly: "Equity within our inequitable educational system. Affirming the diversity of our students. Increasing achievement to remove barriers for our students."

DEAR READER: We want to share a variety of experiences and perspectives about what is and isn't happening related to schooling during this critical period in public education. We are especially interested in how schools are deploying student/learning supports to enhance equity of opportunity. Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

The budget's so tight, we're doing everything on a shoestring.



What? You still have a shoestring?



>Comments and sharing from Colleagues

- (1) I am very sad to see our children returning to schools. The system is demonstrating how they can destroy our children in less than a semester. Our children should not be killed due to someone else's greed. What they are requesting is impossible. I have been in public schools at all levels and I cannot foresee success. There are so many older schools that may or may not be healthy for our children. It is obvious the inner city schools are not oriented to educate due to federal cuts and poor training for the adults. Now the final curtain is about to be drawn. (former principal)
- (2) Sample of responses about the Center's new free book (*Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)
 - >Thank you so much for this resource! I am a social worker and a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership. While I am just at the beginning of my Ed.D. journey, I am a huge proponent of embedding mental health education into schools... Thank you for what you do! The resources that you have sent through the years has been very beneficial to my clinical work with my students.
 - >Thank you for the opportunity to review *Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*. I not only found your book as timely, but also it is a phenomenal analysis of what is needed to transform a school into a model that addresses the needs and barriers to learning and positive mental health development. As I read your examples of the barriers that are baked into school culture, I could confirm, been there, done that. Your book is an excellent blueprint on how, if the school is committed to change, can change. You also acknowledge how difficult it is to get a school or district to that point...."

- (3) Sample of recent special ways the Center is asked to contribute to the work of agencies:
- >I am writing on behalf of the Association of Alaska School Boards.... We are currently creating a Trauma Engaged Schools toolkit as a resource for teachers, administrators, and other practitioners who want to implement the Transforming Schools framework in their districts. In this toolkit, we share research, best practices, stories, and also links to supplemental materials that could provide a deeper understanding of the topics being addressed, including your publication, *Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement*. ... Thank you so much for all of the important work that you do
 - >On behalf of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA) and Attitudes In Reverse (AIR), I am writing to invite you to share your expertise on youth mental health and suicide prevention, especially as they relate to the coronavirus pandemic and students’ eventual return to school, during our seventh annual suicide prevention conference. ...”

For information about the
National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

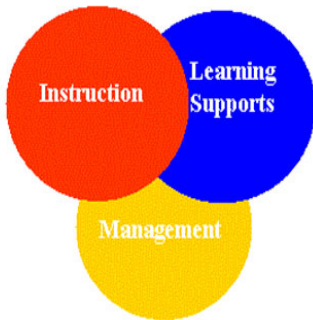
go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>
 Also online are two related free books

Improving School Improvement

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html



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