

ENEWS & Resources for School Improvement*

December, 2018 (Vol. 23 #3) – 32 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



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

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Resources from Across the Country

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and more

Resources from Across the Country

A few relevant special reports and journal publications

- >Resources for Mental Health Education
<https://www.mentalhealthdny.org/education-professional/resources-for-mh-education/>
- >Building Partnerships: In Support of Where, When, and How Learning Happens
https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/2018/10/Aspen_YD_FINAL_2_web.pdf
- >Two Futures: the Economic Case for Keeping Youth on Track
https://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/moa/PSID2018_FINAL.pdf
- >Creating Policies to Support Healthy Schools: Policymaker, Educator, and Student Perspectives
https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/healthyschoolstakeholderreport_ChildTrends_October2018.pdf
- >A Design Thinking, Systems Approach to Well-Being Within Education and Practice
<https://www.nap.edu/books/25151/gif/32.gif>
- >Youth Gangs and Schools http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/policyissues/youth_gangs_&_schools.pdf
- >Common Psychosocial Problems of School Aged Youth: Developmental Variations, Problems, Disorders and Perspectives for Prevention and Treatment
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/psysocial/entirepacket.pdf>
- >More Police on School Campuses? (Latest Hot Topic) <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/hottopic.htm>

- >Does the reason matter? How student-reported reasons for school absence contribute to differences in achievement outcomes among 14–15 year olds (2018) K. Hancock, M. Gottfried, & S. Zubrick. *British Educational Research Journal*, 44, 141–174.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/berj.3322>
- >Relational experiences in school-based mentoring: The mediating role of rejection sensitivity (2018) S. Kanchewa, L. Yoviene, S. Schwartz, et al. *Youth & Society*, 50, 1078–1099.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0044118X16653534>
- >The relationship of school climate with out-of-school suspensions? (2018) F.Huang & D. Cornell. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 94, 378-389
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740918300185>

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

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

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I share a social worker with other schools. I share mental health counselors with other schools. In the context of a time where up to 25 percent of my kids are diagnosed with an anxiety disorder of some sort ... I got a big piece of toast and a little bit of jam, and I'm trying to figure out how to cover it all. Principal
(quote from *Creating Policies to Support Healthy Schools*)

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**So they kept you
after school again.**



**I prefer to think of it
as being held over by
popular demand.**

Focusing on

>Minimizing Stress Reactions & Preventing Student and Staff “Burnout”

A long-standing problem confronting schools is how to reduce stress for students and staff. Here’s a recent news update:

About 28 percent of America’s public school teachers, or roughly 900,000 educators, are missing more than 10 days of school a year, making them “chronically absent” by federal government standards.... When it comes to the question of *why* educators are missing school, teachers cite a breadth of reasons: illness, a negative and unsupportive school climate, burnout and stress, to name a few...

<https://www.the74million.org/nearly-30-percent-of-teachers-are-chronically-absent-how-rhode-island-is-using-essa-to-move-the-needle/>

When school staff don't feel good about themselves, it is unlikely they will be effective in making students feel good about themselves. At this time of the year, the pressure mounts. The pressing question is: *What to do?*

A 2018 workshop convened by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine emphasized that, while focusing on individual level interventions can help a few, ***“without addressing system level issues they can be a colossal waste of resources. System level interventions include initiatives such as ... allowing autonomy and control in the workplace.”***

From *A Design Thinking, Systems Approach to Well-Being Within Education and Practice*

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25151/a-design-thinking-systems-approach-to-well-being-within-education-and-practice>

In their research review about job burnout, Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter emphasize:

The most effective interventions combine changes in managerial practice with individual-level educational interventions. A combined managerial and educational approach to intervention tends to emphasize building engagement with work. Focusing on engagement creates an increased alliance with the organizational mission. Work settings which support positive development of energy, vigor, involvement, dedication, absorption, and effectiveness among employees should be successful in promoting their well-being and productivity. (*Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 397-422)

While viewing stress reactions and burnout as personal conditions is commonplace, this often leads to only prescribing stress-reduction activities. Given the prevalence of these concerns in schools, this usually is the least effective way to understand what must be done over the long-run. Addressing the nature and scope of such multifaceted and complex problems requires institution level changes that reduce environmental stressors and enhance work supports and over time reculture schools in ways that minimize the undermining and maximize the enhancement of intrinsic motivation. This involves policies and practices that ensure a daily focus on (1) promoting staff and student well-being and (2) addressing barriers to teaching and learning.

The behavior referred to as burnout is a psychological phenomenon. One way to understand the problem is in terms of three psychological needs that theorists posit as major intrinsic motivational determinants of behavior. these are the need to feel competent, the need to feel self-determining, and the need to feel interpersonally connected. From this perspective, burnout can be viewed as among the negative outcomes that result when these needs are threatened and thwarted. and, such needs are regularly threatened and thwarted by the prevailing culture of schools.

Given all this, efforts to reduce student and staff stress should include the following:

- Inducting newcomers into the school culture in a welcoming and socially supportive way.
- Opening classroom doors and creating appropriate teams of staff and students who support, nurture, and learn from each other every day.
- Personalized staff development and support, including:
 - >In-service programs that account for interests strengths, weaknesses and limitations;

- >Approaches that overcome avoidance motivation;
- >Structure that provides personalized support and guidance;
- >Instruction designed to enhance and expand intrinsic motivation for learning and problem solving.
- Restructuring school governance to enable shared decision-making.

A Quick Reminder about What Causes Staff Burnout

(From: A. J. Cedoline, *Job Burnout in Public Education: Symptoms, Causes, and Survival Skills*, Teachers College, Columbia University.)

Some Primary Causal Factors:

- >Lack of Control Over One's Destiny
- >Lack of Occupational Feedback and Communication
- >Work Overload or Underload
- >Contact overload resulting from the necessity for frequent encounters with other people in order to carry out job functions.
- >Role Conflict/Ambiguity (Uncertainty about what one is expected to do at work).
- >Individual Factors, including financial stability, marital satisfaction, neuroticism, excessive shyness, inflexibility, and poor stress management skills
- >Training Deficits

Some Secondary Factors:

- >Poor working conditions
- >Lack of job security
- >Lifestyle changes
- >Rapidly changing society that force individuals to make unexpected adjustments in their way of life and work.

(Note: Many of these factor are relevant to stress in general and can be applied to students and their families.)

For Resources for Minimizing Stress Reactions & Preventing Student and Staff “Burnout”

See the Center’s Online Clearinghouse Quick Find on

>*Burnout* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/burnout.htm>

This Quick Find provides easy access to a variety of online resources from our center and elsewhere. See, for example:

>>*Understanding and Minimizing Staff Burnout*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Burnout/burn1.pdf>

>>*School Staff Burnout* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Burnout/burn1.pdf>

Also see the Quick Find:

>*Environments that Support Learning* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/environments.htm>

Topics in November’s School Practitioner Community of Practice

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

Support for students who want to report peer sexual assault

Student Engagement and School Climate

Mental Health Screening in Schools

Are funding sources narrowing the focus of mental health in schools?

Measuring School Climate

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I don't suffer from stress. I'm a carrier. Dilbert

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Transforming Student and Learning Supports – *Grade Retention?*

Excerpt from: the Kentucky Department of Education's website focus on *Student Placement*

"...The zip code in which Kentucky children live, the amount of money their family earns, and the color of their skin are pervasive and powerful influences on the childhood they will have and the future they can embrace. We must recognize how our society allows and often promotes treating groups differently, whether consciously or not. For kids in Kentucky, there are reasons why place, income, and race matter. Those reasons have been embedded in us for years, and it is going to take time to change policies and attitudes to give every child a chance to thrive. We must learn together. We must be honest together. And we must move forward together..."

Research continues to show the negative impact retention has on the individual child. If our goal is to provide each student in the state of Kentucky with the opportunity and access needed for success, we must admit that retention may serve the needs of other agendas, but, in fact, does not serve the needs of students....

The UCLA Center recommends a variety of alternatives to retention (e.g., Adelman & Taylor, 1998; 2006... More broadly, research suggests the need is for schools and communities to weave together resources and develop a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports (Adelman & Taylor, 2006; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2008).

In terms of content, the UCLA center emphasizes clustering the essential needs identified by schools and communities into the following six major intervention arenas:

1. **Regular classroom strategies to enable learning** — teachers collaborate with other teachers and student support staff to ensure learning is personalized for all students and especially those manifesting mild-moderate learning and behavior problems. There is a focus on enhancing the range of learning options, extending learning opportunities, and providing learning supports, accommodations, and special assistance as needed and within the context of implementing "Response to Intervention." Special attention is given to re-engaging those who have become disengaged from learning at school.
2. **Supports for transitions** — programs and systems designed to assist students and families as they negotiate hurdles to enrollment, adjust to school, grade, and program changes, make daily transitions before, during, and after school, access and effectively use supports and extended learning opportunities, and so forth.
3. **Home involvement and engagement** — programs and systems designed to increase and strengthen the home and its connections with school.
4. **Community involvement and engagement** — programs and systems designed to increase and strengthen outreach to develop greater community involvement and support from a wide range of entities. This includes agency collaborations and use of volunteers to extend learning opportunities and help students-in-need.
5. **Crisis response and prevention** — programs and systems designed to respond to, and where feasible, prevent school and personal crises and trauma including creating a caring and safe learning environment and countering the impact of out-of-school traumatic events.
6. **Student and family assistance** — programs and systems designed to facilitate student and family access to effective services and special assistance on campus and in the community as needed.

Finally, all involved in school improvement recognize the need to ensure a focus on a full continuum of interventions encompassing: (1) promoting healthy development and preventing problems, (2) responding early after problem onset, and (3) treating chronic and severe problems..."

<http://education.ky.gov/curriculum/conpro/prim-pre/Documents/Student Placement in Primary.docx>

For our Center's resource on this, see

>*Grade Retention: What's the Prevailing Policy and What Needs to be Done?*

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

Let Us Know:

- (1) About any presentations on transforming student and learning supports**
- (2) What you see happening to transform student and learning supports**

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 supports, *we can help*. Send all info to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Differences in school achievement occur as a function of differences in family income and the housing choices associated with family income, as well as the employment policies, health policies, and policies about law enforcement and the sentencing of those found guilty of crimes. It is this profusion of policies, rarely thought about simultaneously, that determines the huge differences in achievement scores between schools, and between school districts. David Berliner

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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>

News and Sharing from the Field Related to Addressing Barriers

Students who refuse searches to face discipline. Students who refuse to submit to a random search for weapons will face disciplinary action and may be removed from school property, the Clark County (NV) School District announced. The announcement to randomly search middle- and high-school students with handheld metal **detectors** follows the fatal shooting of a student outside Canyon Springs High School in September and the confiscation of 11 guns found on students this year. Searches, which will start in the coming weeks, will be conducted as students arrive to school and while in class. A computer program will decide which school, classroom and students to search, the district said. When a school is randomly selected, the program will generate a random number, such as 3 or 5, according to the district. That will determine which students to search as they arrive at school — every third student, for example, or every fifth student. Students who don't consent to the search will be disciplined "as they would for breaking any other school rule," according to district spokeswoman.

<https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/education/clark-county-students-who-refuse-searches-face-discipline-1516523/>

Teacher: Bus drivers evacuated students amid California fire. Teachers, aides and bus drivers in Northern California loaded more than 100 school students into cars and school buses as a fast-moving wildfire approached, driving hours through smoke and flames to safely reunite the children with their families. In all, six school buses — along with teachers, aides and administrators — ferried out the children from the district's schools to evacuation centers. They plowed through smoke, burning debris and flames, driving hours on gridlocked country

roads. They reunited 125 students from kindergarteners to high school seniors with their families. Some parents had had no contact with their kids for eight hours.

https://www.richmond.com/news/national-world/ap/teacher-bus-drivers-evacuated-students-amid-california-fire/article_683453de-df31-5301-8844-4cee69c9e5ba.html

Stoneman Douglas staff could be disciplined in shooting. Broward Schools (FL) Superintendent Robert Runcie says he will discipline staff members at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School after a state investigation determined some administrators missed warning signs about the massacre. Two students said they reported unusual behavior about future gunman Nikolas Cruz in late 2016, according to a commission report. One student thought they reported it to an Assistant Principal, while the other thought it was reported to the Principal. The students said Cruz looked up firearms on a school computer in class, had posted on Instagram pictures of firearms and had brought a knife or bullets to school. Investigators also revealed this week that security experts on two separate occasions in the past two years advised teachers and administrators to mark safe areas called “hard corners” in each classroom. These are areas located at an angle that would prevent anyone firing a gun through the classroom door from hitting anyone. However, the school failed to enact them, which led to more deaths, investigators said. Administrators have also been criticized for a practice of keeping restrooms in the freshman building, where the shooting occurred, locked to prevent drug use. That practice prevented some students from finding a hiding place. Runcie told commissioners the district has made a number of safety improvements at Stoneman Douglas and districtwide. These include adding 100 new cameras, extra fencing and new door locks and twice the security personnel.

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/parkland/florida-school-shooting/fl-ne-runcie-stoneman-douglas-commission-20181115-story.html>

School chief’s plan would divide Los Angeles school district into 32 networks. Los Angeles schools chief is working out a plan to radically reshape the nation’s second-largest school district by greatly shrinking the central bureaucracy and moving decision-making closer to schools. The aim is to boost student success and also to save money at a time when district officials insist that grave financial problems threaten the Los Angeles Unified School District with insolvency. Under a proposal being developed confidentially, the school system would be divided into 32 “networks,” bringing authority and resources out of the central office and into neighborhoods. The networks of schools would be based mainly on geography. Each network would include elementary, middle and high schools — with cohesive academic programs for students as they progress through the system. Each network would report to one of several regional headquarters. Staffing at the central district office downtown would be sharply reduced, as would the areas over which it currently asserts authority. Schools and their networks would get more control in key areas such as hiring and budgets. <http://www.latimes.com/>

Can a school die even after surviving a wildfire? The Camp fire — the deadliest wildfire in California history, with at least 56 dead and hundreds missing — left Paradise High School still standing, physically. But its fate remains uncertain amid an exodus. Administrators say about 80 percent to 90 percent of students lost their homes to the fire. Classmates have scattered across county and state lines for refuge and don’t know if they’ll see each other again. It’s unclear how the Class of 2019 is going to graduate. On Tuesday night, hundreds of Paradise High students and teachers gathered at Pleasant Valley High School in Chico to reconnect and, for the first time in days, just hang out. The teenagers held each other in long hugs. Their teachers did the same. There were food trucks and pizza and hand-painted banners saying things like “Paradise Strong” and “Love is Thicker than Smoke.” In another gym, students packed wooden bleachers for what felt like a pep rally. Superintendent Michelle John told them there are a lot of unknowns for the district. “We may have satellite schools in a few places for a short time,” she said. “We have a few campuses still standing. We are getting offers — ‘I will clear out a classroom. You can have our school.’ ... <http://www.latimes.com>

In this region, we have real small communities, small towns, and the school is the center or the heartbeat of that little community. Superintendent Greg Mullins

Seeking Feedback

If you have had a chance to look at the new book which we have made available on our website, we would value any feedback you can share.

See: *Improving School Improvement*

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

Here are the first comments we have received

(1) *Always glad to have you two share your ideas and feedback from the trenches. Your new book challenges us to question the latest trends and reflect on our beliefs and practices. ... Your book is not free, it is priceless. Stay strong and call BS when necessary.*

School consultant

(2) *I found the book to be very helpful and written from a valid practitioner's perspective.*

Principal

(3) *found the motivation and positive school environment section to be extremely helpful.*

Division of Student Support Services, County Office of Education



*Information is online about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Also online are two 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