ENEWS

A Monthly Forum for Sharing and Interchange

April, 2009 (Vol. 13 #7)

ENEWS is one of the many resources provided by the School Mental Health Project/Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. This electronic newsletter is sent to those concerned with enhancing policies, programs, and practices related to addressing barriers to student learning and to promoting mental health in schools. For more on what our federally supported national Center offers, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

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We encourage you to forward this to others. If you have been forwarded this ENEWS and want to sign up to receive it directly, please let us know. Contact smhp@ucla.edu

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WHAT'S HERE THIS MONTH

**Emerging Issue

>>The Role of Student Problems, Poverty, and Other Interfering Factors in Measuring and Rewarding School and Teacher Effectiveness

**News from around the country

**Recent publications relevant to

>Child and adolescent mental and physical health

>School, family, & community

>Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics

**This month's focus for schools to address barriers to learning

>April – Spring can be a high risk time for students

**Other helpful Internet resources

**Links to

>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops
>Upcoming and archived webcasts and online professional development
>Calls for grant proposals, presentations & papers
>Training and job opportunities

**UCLA Center update

**Comments, requests, information, questions from the field

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Emerging Issue

>**The Role of Student Problems, Poverty, and Other Interfering Factors in Measuring and Rewarding School and Teacher Effectiveness**

The new administration's education agenda is zeroing in on matters such as how to reward successful teachers and remove teachers who are not effective. There is no issue about the desire to enhance school effectiveness. There are, however, a multitude of issues about what is it takes to accomplish this agenda and what gets in the way. Issues emerge with some clarity around the question: *Is it fair to focus narrowly on teacher results?*

Many teachers and their representatives argue it is not fair to do so. They are point to differences in school context that affect student and teacher performance. Neither blaming nor making excuses, the Digest of Education Statistics 2008 (released March 18, 2009) cites the three highest concerns rated by teachers as (1) students coming unprepared to learn, (2) poverty, and (3) lack of parental involvement.

From a system perspective, a narrow focus on teacher results (and rewarding and punishing poor results) is seen as failing to consider the impact of
>personnel recruitment, preparation, induction, professional development, and retention especially as related to the experience levels of staff working in the most challenging schools
>the inadequacy of the student and learning supports provided to address barriers to learning and teaching
>the inequities stemming from family and neighborhood socio-economic status
>the downside of bonuses that are yoked to student performance
and many more.

These issues must be considered as the administration sets its course and as discussion of how to enhance school effectiveness continues during the ESEA reauthorization process.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts about *Is it fair to focus narrowly on teacher results?* Send comments to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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**NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

>STIMULUS TO HELP RETOOL EDUCATION

To help struggling schools, the federal government will use stimulus funding to encourage states to expand school days, reward good teachers, fire bad ones and measure how students perform. Secretary Duncan said he wants struggling schools to use federal aid to adopt on a grander scale ideas that are producing results on a trial basis in some locales. Duncan said schools should be treated as community hubs that provide health care, meals and other services to support at-risk families. 3/5/09
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/04/AR2009030403523.html

>ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS DRAW FIRE IN MISSISSIPPI

A growing number of Mississippi students are being referred to alternative schools and most of them are black or have special needs, according to a report from the American Civil Liberties Union. The number of students attending alternative schools increased by 23% in the past four

years, according to the report. The ACLU contends the state's alternative schools focus on punishing students instead of providing support for behavior and academics. 2/25/09 http://www.clarionledger.com/article/20090225/news/902250367/_1/frontpagetwomodule-1v

>SOME DROPOUTS ARE LEFT OUT OF STATE'S OFFICIAL TALLY IN OKLAHOMA

Under state regulations, the state Department of education excludes students who haven't reached ninth grade or are 19 years or older. As a result more than 1,030 dropouts in Oklahoma were left out of the 2006-2007 dropout rate calculations, according to Tulsa World analysis of Department of Education data. 3/1/09
http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?subjectid=11&articleid=20090301_11_A1_Moreth883762&archive=yes

>IOWA'S HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE CLIMBS 23 PERCENT

The number of high school dropouts in Iowa climbed by 23% last year. The Iowa Department of Education said 4,438 students dropped out, up from 3,607 the year before. Officials said the increase was caused, in part, by identification numbers started four years ago to help the department more accurately track students' movements. The ID numbers are intended to give districts a more accurate sense of graduation and drop-out rates so they can try to focus on prevention programs. Ames Tribune
http://www.amestrib.com/articles/2009/03/26/ames_tribune/news/doc49cbe66aa0159066483730.txt

>SUPREME COURT CASE TESTS LIMIT OF SCHOOL POLICY

The case, Safford Unified School District v. Redding, will consider the question of how much leeway school officials should have in policing zero-tolerance policies for drugs and violence and the court is likely to provide importance guidance to school around the nation. The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that school officials had violated the Fourth Amendment's ban on unreasonable searches related to the search of a 13 year old girl for prescription drugs. The search was conducted by a school nurse and a secretary. The student did not return to school for months following the search and eventually transferred to another school. 3/24/09 http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/24/us/24savana.html

>EDUCATION FUNDING: CUTS STILL LOOM, BUT STIMULUS FUNDS HELP IN UTAH

Instead of the 18 % cut to education lawmakers discussed earlier, they will likely put federal stimulus money and an extra $36 million in state funds toward education resulting in a net cut of about 6% for the next school year. The Utah State Office of Education has estimated that each 1% cut to education could mean a loss of more than 300 teachers' jobs. 3/4/09. http://www.sltrib.com/education/ci_11829345

>OREGON'S SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS HIT NEW HIGH

A record 72,800 students qualified for special education services this year, with the biggest growth among students with attention disorders or other health problems that make it hard for them to concentrate in school. In addition, 9,000 preschools qualify for early intervention services. Among school-age children, one of every eight students qualified for special education. Learning disabilities are the leading case. On average, Oregon gives school slightly more than twice as much money to educate a special education student as the roughly $6,000 a year it gives schools to educate a student without disabilities. 3/11/09.
http://www.oregonlive.com/education/oregonian/index.ssf?/base/news/123682651253760.xml&coll=7

PRE-K NATIONALLY: MIDDLE-CLASS KIDS LEFT BEHIND

An avowed goal of President Barack Obama is universal preschool, but the economic crisis may stymie state-level efforts, writes The Wall Street Journal. The recent stimulus bill includes $5 billion for Head Start and related early-childhood programs, but a "universal" preschool system would take greater funding and orchestration, given the patchwork system that currently exists. Nationwide, there are about eight million three- and four-year-olds. Three million don't attend preschool, and roughly the same number attend private preschools, some of which offer little more than day care. The remaining preschool-age kids go to publicly funded schools, where money and programs vary. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research, 12 states spend nothing on preschool. For the 38 that do, funding ranges from $1,600 per child in South Carolina to nearly $10,500 per child in New Jersey. Because some research indicates that gains from preschool for middle- and upper-income children are modest, state and federal efforts have largely targeted disadvantaged students, making middle-class families feel left out. According to a recent study by advocacy group Pre-K Now, families earning more than about $40,000 a year are ineligible for free preschool in most of the 20 states that use income to determine eligibility. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123785557084820327.html

>CALIFORNIA TEACHERS SEE RED OVER PINK SLIPS

Public school employees throughout California warned of wrenching classroom cuts as local officials faced a deadline for issuing layoff notices to educators. The state Department of Education estimates that preliminary pink slips will have been handed to 26,500 teacher – two and a half times as many as were issued last year. Another 15,000 bus drivers, janitors, secretaries, and administrators also were expected to receive the written warnings. The state superintendent of education said that it was unlikely that tends of thousands of teachers would be let go, but said that with so huge a budget gap to fill, schools would probably increase class sizes, reduce library hours and lose counselors. 3/14/09 http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29691306/

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> "What is happening in these schools when the pink slips go out is everything stops, everyone is discouraged, everyone is busy worrying whether the money will come through, and all the efforts to get schools going basically grinds to a halt and remains ground to a halt for the rest of the spring. A state that has these kind of crises year after year is really doing a poor job of planning."

W. Norton Grubb
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Note: Each week the Center highlights newsworthy stories online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/newsitems.htm

Also access other news stories relevant to improving addressing barriers to learning through links at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/linkstolatest.htm

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**RECENT PUBLICATIONS (In print and on the Web)

Child, adolescent, young adult mental and physical health

>Resilience revisited (2009) P. Atkinson, et al., *Journal of Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing, 16*(2) 137-45. http://www.interscience.wiley.com/jpages/1351-0126

>Association between bullying and psychosomatic problems: A meta-analysis (2009) G. Pozzoli. *Pediatrics 123*(3) 1059-65. http://www.pediatrics.org

>Intervention to reduce bullying (2009) K. Rigby & P. Slee. *International Journal of Adolescent Medical Health 20*(2) 165-183. http://www.freundpublishing.com

>Exploring youth development with diverse children: Correlates of risk, health, and thriving behavior (2009) L. Smith & E. Barker, *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing. 14*(1) 12-21. http://www.interscience.wiley.com/jpages/1539-0136

>Development and etiology of disruptive and delinquent behavior (2009) R. Loeber, et al., *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*. http://arjournals.annualreivews.org/loi/clinpsy

>Risk through the years – a statistical portrait of young people's risk perceptions and experiences relative to those of older generations (2009) A. Cebulla. *Journal of Youth Studies. 12*(1) 39-56.

School, Family & Community

>*Grad Nation: A Guidebook to help communities tackle the dropout crisis* (2009) R. Balfanz & J. Bridgeland. America's Promise Alliance. http://www.americaspromise.org/APAPage.aspx?id=11796

>Youth perceptions of their school violence risks. (2009) J. Chapin. *Adolescence, 43*, 461-71.

>The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes (2009) P. Jennings & M. Greenberg. *Review of Educational Research, 79*(1) 491-525. http://rer.sagepub.com/

>Protective families in high and low risk environments: Implications for adolescent substance use. (2009) M. Cleveland, et al., *Journal of Youth and Adolescence,* published online 1/09. http://www.springerlink.com/content/00ng947712027011/fulltext.html

>Written discipline policies used by administrators (2009) P. Fenning, et al., *Journal of School Violence 7*(2) 123-146. http://www.haworthpress.com

>A review of empirical evidence about school size effects: A policy perspective (2009) K. Leithwood & D. Jantzi, *Review of Educational Research 79*(1) 464-490. http://rer.sagepub.com/

Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics

>*American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: IDEA Recovery Funds for Servies to Children and Youth with Disabilities* (2009) U. S. Department of Education. http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/factsheet/idea.html

>*The President's Education Agenda* (2009) G. Whitehurst, The Brookings Institution. http://www.brookings.edu/

>Examining the influences of gender, race, ethnicity, and social capital on the subjective health of adolescents (2009) G. Almgren, et al., *Journal of Adolescence, 32*(1) 109-133. http://www.sciencedirect.com

>Advancing out of poverty: Social class world-view and its relation to resilience (2009) M. Abelev. *Journal of Adolescent Research 24*. http://jar.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/24/1/114

>A cluster analytic investigation of school violence among diverse students (2009) E. Furlong, & G. Austin. *Journal if Interpersonal Violence*, ePub. http://jiv.sagepub.com

>*Digest of Education Statistics, 2008.* National Center for Education Statistics. http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009020

Note: The Quick Find online clearinghouse at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu is updated regularly with new reports and publications such as those listed above. Currently there are over 130 alphabetized topic pages with direct links to Center materials and to other online resources and related centers. Let us know about publications and reports that should be included in this dedicated online clearinghouse. Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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> "School buildings don't belong to us. They don't belong to the unions. School buildings belong to the community. Almost every school building has classrooms. They have computer labs. They have libraries...Why are they open six hours a day? It's crazy."

> Arne Duncan

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**THIS MONTH'S FOCUS FOR SCHOOLS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO LEARNING

April – Spring can be a high risk time for students

Time is running out for catching up; decisions are made about who passes and who fails, who graduates and who doesn't. For some, after the state achievement tests are over, so is the need to focus on learning. End of year celebrations can have some negative side effects related to social relationships, as well as health and safety risk (drinking, driving).

At a time when many school staff are worried about their own futures (job security, foreclosures, economic uncertainty) they need to be at their most vigilant regarding students. In "The Role of youth's ratings of the importance of socially supportive behaviors in the relationship between social support and self-concept" M. Demaray, et al., Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 2009, 38(1) 13-28. The authors state: "Results indicated that the relationship between the frequency of social support from parents, teachers, classmates, and close friends with self-concept were significant. However, only the perceived importance of social support from teachers was significantly related to self-concept."

With a growing emphasis on the involvement of youth in decisions that effect them, a good way to provide this social support might be through eliciting input from students about end of year

concerns. This fits the educational mission of schools: in addition to learning core subject matter, those concerned about skills for 21ˢᵗ century learning stress the importance of communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation. http://www.21stcenturyskills.org

For more on involving youth see:
>"Engaging Youth... On their Turf: Creative approaches to connecting youth through community" at Healthy Teen Network. http://www.healthyteennetwork.org

>"Youth Development: Strengthening Prevention Strategies" at Advocates for Youth. http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/iag/ythdevelop.htm

>Also see "Ready by 21: All youth ready for college, work & life" at The Forum for Youth Investment. http://forumforyouthinvestment.org/

For a wide range of resources, see our Quick Find online clearinghouse.

Note: It is important to anticipate major concerns that arise with regularity over the course of the school year. These provide natural opportunities to strengthen support for learning. For a calendar of monthly concerns and themes, see Ideas for Enhancing Support at Your School this Month on the Center's homepage at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

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"Today I saw a red and yellow sunset and thought, "How insignificant I am!." Of course, I thought that yesterday, too, and it rained."

Woody Allen
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**OTHER HELPFUL INTERNET RESOURCES

>Meeting the Challenge: Promising practices for reducing the dropout rate in Massachusetts schools and districts. http://www.renniecenter.org

Includes:
Targeted Interventions
Personalization and building a sense of community, Academic Supports,Wrap around services, Advisory programs for special populations, Support for the transition to ninth grade
Connecting school to college and career
Alternatives to traditional high school
Collaborations and partnerships

>Community organizing for school reform: Creating the context for change
http://www.aypf.org/forumbriefs/2001/fb120701.htm

>A Mayor's challenge: Building citywide afterschool systems that expand opportunities to learn
http://www.nlc.org/iyef/

>Adolescent violence prevention knowledge path
http://www.mchlibrary.info/knowledgepaths/kp_adolvio.html

>Strengthening mentoring opportunities for at-risk youth
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/mentoring_policy_brief.pdf

>SafetyLit, Center for Injury Prevention Policy and Practices and the World Health Organization
http://www.safetylit.org

>Interagency Council on Homelessness.
http://www.usich.gov/slocal/NationalProjectHomelessConnectPromo.html

>American's youngest outcasts: State report card on child homelessness
http://www.homelesschildrenamerica.org/

>Consortium to Prevent School Violence Fact Sheet #7: School Climate
http://www.preventschoolviolence.org

Note: For a wide range of relevant websites, see our Gateway to a World of Resources at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/gateway/gateway_sites.htm

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        "A peacock that rests on his feathers is just another turkey."
                                        Dolly Parton
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LINKS TO

        >Upcoming Initiatives, Conferences & Workshops
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm

        >Calls for Grant Proposals, Presentations & Papers
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm

        >Training and Job Opportunities
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm

        >Upcoming/Archived Webcasts
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm

Note: Information each of these in updated on an ongoing basis on our website. Just click on the indicated URL or on What's New on our website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu. If you would like to add information on these, please send it to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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UCLA CENTER BRIEF UPDATE

        Invitation to share and learn in order to advance the field

One of the Center's hopes is to enhance networking as a way of advancing the field. Networking allows for mobilizing an amazing amount of social capital. And, given the state of financial capital, social and human capital are essential to moving the field forward.

We invite you to network through

>ENEWS – send your response to the Emerging Issue, Theme of the Month, news items, additional resources, or any other comments that might be of value to others.

>Practitioner listserv. This goes out each Monday. It features requests for assistance and responses from school staff and community partners across the country. We include the Center's initial response and input from others on the listserv, from our Consultation Cadre, and from those with special expertise on the topic who we ask to weigh in. Recent examples include
>>What is the best way to enhance coordination among school-family-community resources?
>>Helping students, families, staff cope with district decisions on cuts that require closing schools and reducing staff
>>Need strategies for talking to a new Superintendent about the value of establishing a comprehensive system of learning support
>>Collaboration between classroom teachers and mental health professional
>>What products would you want a state department to develop as resources to help guide and support prevention and early intervention initiatives?

If you don't receive this weekly listserv and would like to be added, please send an email to smhp@ucla.edu stating "Add me to the Practitioner listserv." The more who join this network, the more we all can learn what works and what doesn't. For additional information of relevance to daily work, click on *Practitioner Toolkit and Networks* on the Center Website homepage.

>National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support and Collaboration with Scholastic Inc.'s Community Affairs Unit – For information on opportunities related to this work, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/initiativecosponsors.htm

Note: We continually update the resources on our website. A convenient way to access information is through the Quick Find online clearinghouse. Alphabetized by topics, you can access information over 130 topics relevant to addressing barriers to learning. Each includes links to Center Resources, online reports, others centers focusing on the topic, and relevant publications. Go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu and click on Quick Find. If you would like to add a resource, let us know. Ltaylor@ucla.edu. For more information on the UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools, go to the website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu or contact Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor, Co-directors at the School Mental Health Project for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA, Department of Psychology, Los Angeles, CA 90095. Phone(310) 825-3634. Toll Free (866) 846-4843. Fax (310) 206-8716. Email: smhp@ucla.edu

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Check out our sister center, The Center for School Mental Health at http://csmh.umaryland.edu or contact Mark Weist, Director, CSMH, University of Maryland at Baltimore, Department of Psychiatry, 737 W. Lombard St 4th floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. Toll Free (888)706-0980. Email: csmh@psych.umaryland.edu

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"The shortest distance between two points is always under construction."
Noelie Alito
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**COMMENTS, REQUESTS, INFO, QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

>A response to last month's emerging issue: *Is it possible to make budget cuts and still provide a safety net for students?*

"We don't need more expensive "innovation." Sound educational practices have been known for years. What is needed is the political will to implement them because children from socioeconomically challenging backgrounds require a lot more money to educate. They need smaller classes, extensive in-school interventions and after school tutoring, summer school, and well trained, experienced teachers who are financially motivated to take on the challenges of teaching them. Unfortunately, the challenged kids' families have almost no political influence."

>We were asked to share the following:

     (1) "I am happy to tell you about a new teacher training text that puts SEL theory into practice. *Surpassing Standards in the Elementary Classroom: Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement through Educational Drama* (2009, Peter Lang Publishing) provides over 40 hours of literacy and social studies instruction through model lesson plans that integrate social and emotional learning concepts. It talks about real classroom experiences that inspire teachers and school counselors to take on this important work"

     (2) "In the past, you have been very helpful in posting announcements about the summer training offered by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). I hope that you can do this in your e-newsletters (and website) again this spring. Sustainable, Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning Implementation Workshop, June 15-16, 2009, Chicago, IL. Http://www.casel.org

     (3) "I am pleased to share the film, *A Question of Hope: Reducing Latina Teen Childbearing in California,* with you. We are hoping to disseminate this film widely. I am writing to request that you advertise the availability of the file on your email listservs and/or newsletters." Http://bixbycenter.ucsf.edu/videos/video-lo-1.html

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THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF E-NEWS

See below for source identifying information

Who Are We? Under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Department of Psychology at UCLA, the national Center for Mental Health in Schools was established in 1995. The Project and Center are co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.

     A description and evaluation of the Center's work and impact is available at
     http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

For more information about the Center or about ENEWS, contact Center Coordinator Perry Nelson or Center Co-Directors Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor at: UCLA School Mental Health Project/Center for Mental Health in Schools Box 951563, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563 Phone (310) 825-3634; Toll Free (866) 846-4843; Fax (310) 206-5895; email: smhp@ucla.edu