



ENEWS



**29 Years &
Counting**

A Monthly Forum for Sharing and Interchange

April, 2015 (Vol. 19 #7)

Concerned about addressing barriers to student learning and teaching & re-engaging disconnected students? Concerned about equity of opportunity? Concerned about whole child development? This newsletter focuses on relevant policies and practices.



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'S HERE THIS MONTH

****Continuing Issue**

>What's the best way to deal with chronic absenteeism and ensure sustained attendance?

****News from around the country**

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

>Helping students & families transition – moving on, coming in

****2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports**

****UCLA Center Resources Update**

****Access links about:**

>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops

>Upcoming and archived webcasts, video, and online professional development

>Calls for grant proposals, presentations & papers

>Training and job opportunities

****A few other helpful resources accessible from the internet**

****Additional recent publications relevant to**

>School, family, & community

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

>Child, adolescent, and young adults' mental and physical health

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

CONTINUING ISSUE

What's the Best Way to Deal with Chronic Absenteeism and Ensure Sustained Attendance?

School attendance problems have many correlates. Absences jeopardize student success at school, as well as a school's ability to achieve its mission. Students not at school can't benefit from what schools offer; moreover, truancy is associated with delinquency. Schools funded on the basis of average daily attendance have less resources to do the job.

No one argues about the importance and the challenge of improving attendance. *Issues* arise, however, in deciding how to reduce absenteeism *and* maintain attendance. Doing *both* requires (1) addressing factors interfering with regular attendance AND (2) ensuring that students are fully engaged in learning at school.

Many widely applied practices mainly use direct, surface level strategies. The best of these stresses cultivating a school-wide culture of attendance "using data to determine need for additional support, developing staff capacity to adopt effective attendance practice, and advocating for resources and policies to improve attendance." In the process, those pursuing such strategies address a few interfering factors; however, they seldom go on to help teachers (re)engage students in classroom instruction.

Some schools understand chronic absenteeism as a symptom, usually stemming from multiple underlying systemic problems (related to neighborhood, family, school, peer, and personal conditions). This understanding has led to in-depth assessments of causality and, in some cases, attempts to ameliorate a broader range of interfering factors. However, helping teachers (re)engage students in classroom instruction usually is not addressed.

A few places have embedded the focus on chronic absenteeism into their work on *transforming student and learning supports*. For example, while in early stages, Alabama's state department of education is working with districts to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports. One of the priorities in developing the system is to enhance attendance. A recent report notes:

"Across Alabama, schools recorded 11 million days of absence over the course of the 2010-11 school year. Close to 200,000 students, more than a quarter of total statewide enrollment, had five or more or more unexcused absences, a danger sign for school failure. In schools moving to develop a systemic approach to learning supports, general strategies were used to address attendance among all students and special supports were directed at those with higher than normal absence rates and those with chronic attendance problems. The schools moved from punitive to proactive approaches, acting at an early stage to address the individual student needs leading to school days missed. Participating schools saw a 25 percent decrease in absences over the previous year. That decrease represents a total of 110,000 avoided absences, meaning students in those schools are available for that many more days of instruction."

The challenge ahead is to ensure students are effectively (re)engaged in classroom learning.

To underscore all this, our Center has developed a set of practice notes entitled:

>*School Attendance: Focusing on Engagement and Re-engagement* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schoolattend.pdf>

Let us know what you are seeing as practices that increase attendance and (re)engage students in classroom learning. Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader
John Quincy Adams

If you think you are leading and turn around to see no one is following, then you are just taking a walk.
Benjamin Hooks @#@#@#

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

Special education goes digital. Students with disabilities are able to learn online at Sycamore School District's Learning, Emotional and Academic Fundamentals. This district wide special education program provides students an opportunity to hone academic skills. In addition to the traditional classroom structure, students use the Apex Learning website, an online program that can supplement or broaden learning. 2/23/15 <http://www.daily-chronicle.com>

CDC reports on dating violence among teens. One in five high-school girls who date said they have been physically or sexually abused by a dating partner at least once in the past year, according to a CDC report published in the journal JAMA Pediatrics. Dating violence also was reported by 10% of teen boys who responded to the agency's survey. USA Today (3/2) <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/03/02/teen-dating-violence-study/24127121/>

Where have all the teachers gone? Several big states have seen alarming drops in enrollment at teacher training programs. In California, enrollment is down 53 percent over the past five years. It's down sharply in New York and Texas as well. Why? Bill McDiarmid, dean of the UNC's School of Education points to the strengthening economy and erosion of teaching's image as a stable career. There's a growing sense, he says, that K-12 teachers simply have less control over their professional lives in an increasingly bitter, politicized environment. The job also has a PR problem with teachers too often turned into scapegoats by politicians, policymakers, foundations and the media. 3/3/15 <http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2015/03/03/389282733/where-have-all-the-teachers-gone>

Mississippi to open first "early college high school". Partnering with East Mississippi Community College, the state's dept. of educ., will open the first early college high school for kids who show potential for academic success but need a different type of setting. Modeled after a similar program called North Carolina New Schools, Golden Triangle Early College High School will help students earn both their high school diploma and an associate's degree from EMCC at the same time. Or they can get nationally certified in a technical field instead. 3/12/15 <http://www.clarionledger.com>

In 23 states, richer school districts get more local funding that poorer districts. Children who live in poverty come to school at a disadvantage, arriving at their classrooms with far more intensive needs than their middle class and affluent counterparts. But in 23 states, state and local government are together spending less per pupil in the poorest school districts than they are in the most affluent school districts. Nationwide, states and localities are spending an average of 15 percent less per pupil in the poorest school districts. Federal spending, including through Title I, money meant to bolster programs for poor children, is serving as an equalizer. But federal spending was never intended to equalize funding for poor children, it was meant to add more money for student who need more services. 3/12/15 <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

Note: Each week the Center highlights newsworthy stories online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/linkstolatest.htm>

If you see a story that should be included, let us know. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu.

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

>Helping Students & Families transition – moving on, coming in

Transitions are truly risky opportunities. Students are regularly confronted with a variety of transitions — changing schools, moving on to the next grade, and encountering a range of other minor and major transitory demands. Such transitions are ever present and usually are not a institutionalized focus of efforts to support students.

Every transition can exacerbate problems or be used as a natural opportunity to promote positive learning and attitudes, as well as reducing 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.

One concern at this time of the year is on preparing for end-of-year transitions and for anticipating transitions at the beginning of next year. Well-designed supports during these periods can make a great difference in students' lives. Think about students and families moving to the next grade, going on to middle and high school, moving to and from special programs, transitioning to post school living and work.

Minimally, supports for these transitions anticipate the changes ahead and assist students and their families in addressing challenges. Ideally, efforts should be made to enhance positive expectations and, where feasible, facilitate some personal connections to future settings.

A comprehensive approach calls for school-wide and classroom-based interventions that (a) enhance successful transitions and prevent transition problems and (b) use transition periods to reduce alienation and increase positive attitudes toward school and learning. Examples of intervention tasks include:

- providing closure related to what the student is leaving behind
- enhancing articulation between the old and the new
- welcoming newcomers and ensuring they have the type of social support that facilitates positive acceptance and adjustment in the new setting
- assessing transition success
- implementing timely corrective interventions when transitions are not successful.

Over time, supports for transition 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 transition supports can promote the type of school climate that helps reduce student transiency.

For some Center resources related to supporting transitions, see the links on the Supports for Transition Quick Find – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm

Note: Integrating support for learning and teaching into the natural opportunities and phases of the school year provide unlimited opportunities. For a range of ideas organized by each month, see *Ideas for Enhancing Learning Supports at your school this month* on the homepage at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

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When your outgo exceeds your income, your upkeep is your downfall.

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2015 NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR TRANSFORMING STUDENT & LEARNING SUPPORTS*

Here is a request we received: “I am looking to bring the learning supports conversation forward, as we are transitioning in leadership in our organization. However before I do so I would like to ensure that I fully understand what Learning Supports looks like from your perspective. I am currently in the process of reading the recent book: *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System*. Just want to make sure that I fully understand what is meant by a ‘unified, comprehensive, and equitable learning supports component to replace the existing fragmented and disorganized set of student and learning supports.’”

Response: Given the response to the initiative, we are suggesting the following as ways to enrich discussions:

- (1) See the just developed 30 minute introductory power point with narration and an accompanying set of handouts.
 - >The introductory presentation is online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/powerpoint/briefintroslicesrec.pptx>
 - >The accompanying handouts are at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/intropphandouts.pdf>
- (2) See other introductory material included in the *System Change Toolkit* at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>
- (3) After watching the webinar and browsing some of the other resources, let us know what else would be useful.

Note: For those ready to move forward, we provide distance coaching and technical assistance.

*For more information, see the webpages for the initiative – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>
or contact us at adelman@psych.ucla.edu or Ltaylor@ucla.edu .

We are seeking input about the above cited introductory webinar.

We are aware that the narration could have more spark and will try to enliven it at a future date. At this time, we would like feedback on the following:

- (1) Is the webinar something you could use in providing an introduction to others?
- (2) What changes are needed in the presentation and accompanying handouts?
- (3) Is there anyone who you want us to send information to about accessing and using this webinar?

Send feedback to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

**LET US KNOW 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 .

UCLA CENTER DEVELOPED RESOURCES – UPDATE

New

Information Resources & Practice Notes

- > *Addressing stigma as part of student supports* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/stigma.pdf>
- > *Children with incarcerated parents: The role of schools* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/incar.pdf>
- > *Discipline and self-discipline: A personal cross-cultural perspective* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/china.pdf>
- > *About supporting those who seem depressed* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/dep.pdf>
- > *Volunteers are an important part of a system of student and learning supports* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/vols.pdf>
- > *A student's proposal for using an online chat room to facilitate student discussion* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/chat.pdf>

Quarterly e-Journal Articles

- > *Crisis prevention and response: A key facet in transforming learning supports*
- > *Addressing stigma as part of student supports*

Transforming Student & Learning Supports

- > *30 Minute Introductory Webinar*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/powerpoint/briefintrosldesrec.pptx>

School Practitioner Community of Practice Interchange: Weekly Listserv

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

Topics explored in the last month

- > *Playground problems spill into the classroom and disrupt learning: Suggestions?*
- > *Resources to promote school connectedness*

Note: The latest interchange is on our website at
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm> (Also on our Facebook page)
Follow-up exchanges are posted on the Center website's Net Exchange –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm>

Center Featured Resource

Resources related to attendance: Addressing barriers & promoting school connectedness

See our online clearinghouse Quick Find on *Attendance* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/attendance.html>

There you will see links to a wide range of resources from our Center and from other sources.

For example, you can link to the following Center resources:

- > *Connecting Schools, Families, and Communities*
- > *Easing the Impact of Student Mobility: Welcoming & Social Support*
- > *School Attendance Problems: Are Current Policies & Practices Going in the Right Direction?*

- > *Schools as Caring, Learning Communities*
- > *Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement*
- > *Schools, Families, and Community Working Together: Building an Effective Collaborative*
- > *Home Involvement in Schooling*
- > *Addressing School Adjustment Problems*
- > *School Attendance: Focusing on Engagement and Re-engagement*
- > *About Policy and Practice Trends for Reducing Truancy*
- > *Welcoming Strategies for Newly Arrived Students and Their Families*

ACCESS LINKS ABOUT:

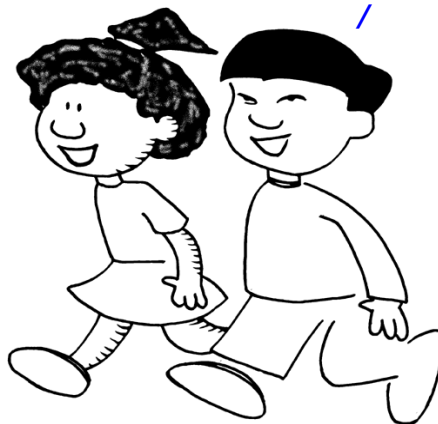
- > **Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops** – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm>
- > **Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers** – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm>
- > **Training and job opportunities** – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm>
- > **Upcoming and archived webcasts and other professional development opportunities** – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

Note: These links are on our homepage for easy access. Each is updated regularly. Just click on the indicated URL or go to our homepage at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

If you would like to add information to these, send it to ltaylor@ucla.edu

I heard you only passed one class.

Yea, but it's OK. I'm planning to be a specialist.



OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES ACCESSIBLE FROM THE INTERNET

>Accountability pressure and non-achievement student behaviors –
<http://www.caldercenter.org/publications/accountability-pressure-and-non-achievement-student-behaviors>

>Typical or Troubled? –
<http://www.americanpsychiatricfoundation.org/what-we-do/public-education/typical-or-troubled>

>Harvesting the scientific Investment in Prevention Science to Promote Children’s Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Health – http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=18964

>Strategies for scaling effective family focused preventive interventions to promote childrens cognitive, affective, and behavioral health –
<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/18808/strategies-for-scaling-effective-family-focused-preventive-interventions-to-promote-childrens-cognitive-affective-and-behavioral-health>

>Prevalence of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis – <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/02/24/peds.2014-3482.abstract>

>High schools: Size does matter – <http://www.edb.utexas.edu/hsns>

>How important is school size? – [Http://www.greatschools.org/](http://www.greatschools.org/)

>Are we closing the school discipline gap? –
<http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/are-we-closing-the-school-discipline-gap>

>Quality education for all: what the research tells us –
http://www.generationallchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Quality-Education-for-All-What-the-Research-Tells-Us_Nov-2014.pdf

>A look at funding for students with disabilities –
<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/17/72/11772.pdf>

>Assessment opt-out policies: state responses to parent pushback –
<http://clearinghouse/01/17/68/11/68.pef>

>A Clinical Treatment Guide to 10 Common Behavioral Pediatric Problems –
http://freepsychotherapybooks.org/?option=com_content&view=article&id=148

>School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth –
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/connectedness.pdf>

>Student Engagement –
http://www.nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/StudentEngagementStudyGroupReport_March-2015_FINAL.pdf

>School Connectedness – <http://californias3.wested.org/tools/1>

>Leading attendance: A toolkit for principals – <http://www.attendanceworks.org>

>Blended Learning –
<http://lexialearning.com/uploads/page-body/WhitePaper-Blended-Learning-Overview.pdf>

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“All my life I wanted to be somebody.
Now I see that I should have been more specific.”

Lilli Tomlin
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ADDITIONAL RECENT PUBLICATIONS (in print and on the web)

School, Family & Community

- >School violence prevention: The youth development perspective. Andreou, E. (2015). *Br. J. Educ. Soc. Behav. Sci.*, 5(4), 389-395.
<http://www.sciencedomain.org/abstract.php?iid=817&id=21&aid=7102>
- >Visible school security measures and student academic performance, attendance, and postsecondary aspirations. Tanner-Smith, E. & Fisher, B. (2015). *J. Youth Adolesc.*, ePub
<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10964-015-0265-5>
- >Mothers' motivation for involvement in their children's schooling: mechanisms and outcomes. Grolnick, W. (2015). *Motivation and Emotion*, 39, 63-73.
<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11031-014-9423-4>
- >Assessing school climate: Validation of a brief measure of the perceptions of parents. Bear, G., et al. (2015). *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*. 33(2), 115-129.
<http://jpa.sagepub.com/content/33/2/115>

Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics

- >Suicide trends among persons aged 10-24 years - United States, 1994-2012. Sullivan, E.M., Annet, J.L., Simon, T.R., Luo, F., & Dahlberg, L.L. (2015). *MMWR Morb. Mortal. Wkly. Rep.* 64, 201-205. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/weekcvol.html>
- >The ethical and policy implications of research on income inequality and child well-being. Pickett, K.E., & Wilkinson, R.G. (2015). *Pediatrics*, 135 (Suppl 2), S39-S47.
http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/135/Supplement_2/S39
- >The failure of zero tolerance. Skiba, R.J. (2014). *J. Emotion. Behav. Probl.* 22(4), 27-33.
<http://reclaimingjournal.com>

Child, adolescent, and young adult's mental and physical health

- >Positive-themed suicide prevention messages delivered by adolescent peer leaders: proximal impact on classmates' coping attitudes and perceptions of adult support. Petrova, M., Wyman, P.A., Schmeelk-Cone, K., & Pisani, A.R. (2015). *Suicide Life Threat. Behav.* ePub
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/sltb.12156/abstract;jsessionid=C1A72D6F6AC122DBAC543A03F2D772A4.f04t02>
- >Neighborhood adversity, child health, and the role for community development. Jutte, D.P., Miller, J.L., & Erickson, D.J. (2015). *Pediatrics*, 135 (Suppl 2): S48-S57.
http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/135/Supplement_2/S48
- >*Disparities in child and adolescent mental health and mental health services in the U.S.* Alegria, M., Green, J.G. et al. (2015). A William T. Grant Foundation Inequality Paper.
<http://blog.wtgrantfoundation.org/post/114541733572/new-report-disparities-in-child-and-adolescent>

FYI: Safety Lit is a useful resource for abstracts related to injury prevention policy and practice.
[Http://www.safetylit.org](http://www.safetylit.org)

Note: The Center's 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 topics 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. [Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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Don't tell me how talented you are. Tell me how hard you work.

Arthur Rubenstein

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COMMENTS AND SHARING FROM THE FIELD

- (1) Here is a comment we received from a principal related to the 2015 National Initiative email highlighting the range of separate and competing bills proposed in congress

"It is interesting to see what gets tossed into "education." Of course it is important to see that students feel safe so they can learn. What I would like to see studied is based on a commercial that speaks of how many days out of school and its effect of a set number of days leading to higher drop out rates. I would like to see a study of schools testing days and its effect on drop outs later. In my school, between NECAP, NWEA testing three times a year, and NECAP science in the Spring and the national test we had students with 23 days of testing each year. My hypotheses is that too many test days has the same effect as if the students did not attend school that day. But I cannot test this."

- (2) A response to the 2/16/15 School Practitioner Listserv on Home Involvement

"The practitioner was the catalyst for some very rich discussion about perspectives from the field and how as professional development providers we respond to those different perspectives when we are working to promote family engagement across all areas of education to support student learning and healthy development. Participants felt strongly that time and competing priorities were the biggest challenges. Promoting integration and high impact strategies were the big take aways from the discussion." From a state department of ed, Learning Supports, Principal Consultant

- (3) We were asked to share the following:

>We will be hosting our second statewide *School Based Mental Health Summit*, July 21 & 22, 2015 on the UW-Madison Campus - Fluno Center for Learning, Madison, WI. For more information and registration please visit our website at: <http://www.mcspecialeducation.com>

>*School Climate Improvement: Policy, Practice and Leadership Development. What to do and how to do it?* The National School Climate Center's 18th annual Summer Institute. To learn more, see: <http://conta.cc/1LQU2qg>

>Dan Bassill recommends Robert Putnam's new book: *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. See review in the *Sunday New York Times*.
http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/08/books/review/our-kids-by-robert-d-putnam.html?_r=3

THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF ENEWS

Who Are We? The *national Center for Mental Health in Schools* 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 Project and Center are 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