ENEWS

A Monthly Forum for Sharing and Interchange

April, 2010 (Vol. 14 #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 Opportunity:

> **>Turning Around Low Performing Schools by Comprehensively Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching & Re-engaging Disconnected Students**

**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, vidoe, and online professional development**
> **>Calls for grant proposals, presentations & papers**
> **>Training and job opportunities**

**UCLA Center's Latest Reports

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

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>Turning Around Low Performing Schools by Comprehensively Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching & Re-engaging Disconnected Students

In his introduction to the 2009 Brown Center Report on American Education, Tom Loveless states: "The study suggests that people who say we know how to make failing schools into successful ones but merely lack the will to do so are selling snake oil. In fact, successful turnaround stories are marked by idiosyncratic circumstances. The science of turnarounds is weak and devoid of practical, effective strategies for educators to employ. Examples of large-scale, system-wide turnarounds are nonexistent. A lot of work needs to be done before the odds of turning around failing schools begin to tip in a favorable direction. ..."

This may explain why the *Innovation and Improvement* grant competition will award only 5 grants for scale up interventions for which there is strong evidence, while investing in 100 validation grants for interventions that show promise and 100 grants for development to support high-potential practices, strategies or programs.
See information at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html

Of the 4 Absolute Priorities for this grant, the fourth focuses on innovations that turn around persistently low performing schools through whole school reform or targeted approaches. The targeted approaches include (1) providing more time for students to learn by expanding the school day, school week or school year; (2) integrating 'student supports' into the school model to address non-academic barriers to student achievement; or (3) creating multiple pathways for students to earn regular high school diplomas.

This is important acknowledgment of the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to Comprehensively Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching & Re-engaging Disconnected Students. It becomes another of the several opportunities now opening up for improving schools by focusing on transformative efforts to establish a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports.

If you know of major school turnaround and school improvement models focused on transforming how schools address barriers to learning and teaching & re-engage disconnected students, please let us know about them or simply provide us with a contact person. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu We will compile what we learn and circulate the information.

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY*

Federal Agency to Investigate L. A. Schools

The federal government has singled out the Los Angeles Unified School District for its first major investigation under a reinvigorated Office of Civil Rights of the U. S. Department of Education. The focus of the probe will be whether the district provides adequate services to students learning English (they make up about a third of district enrollment). 3/10/10
http://www.latimes.com

New Tracking System Shows CT. Graduation Rates Not as Good as Thought

A new system that can track each student by a numerical identifier found that the high school graduation rate in Connecticut is 79%. The state had estimated that 92% of students graduated. Only 58% of Hispanic and 66% of African American students graduates in four years. The system, promoted by the National Governors Association, will be used by 49 other states for calculating graduation rates. 3/24/10 http://www.courant.com

U.S. Teachers More Interested in Reform than Money

The largest national survey of teachers found most teachers believe fewer than 75% of students will graduate. And, most value non-monetary reward, such as time to collaborate with others and supportive leadership, over higher salaries. 3/2/10. Http://www.boston.com

Obama Unveils 'Turnaround' Grants for Schools

President Obama has pledged to fight the dropout rate and to improve low-performing schools through new investments in 'turnaround' programs. He wants states to transform the poorest schools with 'last resort' strategies that could necessitate dismissing principals and staff and closing some campuses. To receive a turnaround grant, a school must either have state test scores in the bottom 5% or high school graduation rates below 60%. 3/2/10. Http://www.latimes.com

Judge Blocks Closing of 19 New York City Low-performing Schools

A judge blocked the closing of 19 schools for poor performance, finding that New York City engaged in "significant violations" of the new state law governing mayoral control of city schools. The ruling means the city will have to start over in making its case to close the schools, this time, the judge wrote, with "meaningful community involvement." Unless the decision is overturned, it will most likely result in all the schools remaining open for at least another year. The law requires the closing process to begin at least six months before the start of the next school year. (*New York Times*, 03/27/10)

Race to the Top Awards Go to Delaware & Tennessee

Delaware and Tennessee won bragging rights as the nation's top education innovators, besting the District and 13 other finalists to claim a share of the $4 billion Race to the Top competition. Delaware won as much as $107 million and Tennessee could be awarded $502 million. Georgia, ranked third in the contest, and Florida, considered a favorite to win, fell just short of a threshold for awards. More than $3 billion remains in the fund, and they could win some in a future round.

U.S. 'Report Card' on Reading

For the first time since 2003, America's fourth-graders failed to make any improvements in reading, according to a report from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Most achievement gaps – between whites and blacks, whites and Hispanics, boys and girls, public school and private school students, and low-income students and their middle or upper income peers – also remained unchanged compared with 2007 and with 1992 when NAEP was first administered. 3/24/10 http://www.csmonitor.com

Kansas City, Mo., May Close Half its Schools.

In the 1960s enrollment peaked at 75,000, dropped to 35,000 a decade ago and now sits at just under 18,000. Only about half of Kansas City's elementary schools students and about 40% of middle and high school students now attend the city's public schools. Many of the other students left for charter schools, private and parochial schools, and the suburbs. Public hearings on the plan have been filled with hundreds of parents, students and community members holding signs and chanting in protest. 3/8/10 http://www.boston.com

In Middle School, Charting a Course to College and Beyond

Personalized student learning plans – electronic portfolios containing information about their learning styles, interests, skills, career goals, and extracurricular activities – will follow Linwood Middle School students through high schools. Along with differentiated instruction and specialized career academies, it is yet another way that public school are trying to reach more students. 2/28/10 http://www.nytimes.com

Forget Goofing Around: Recess Has a New Boss

Broadway Elementary school brought in a recess coach out of exasperation with students who, left to their own devices, used to run into one another, squabble over balls and jump ropes or monopolize the blacktop while exiling their classmates to the sidelines. Since she started, disciplinary referrals at recess have dropped by three-quarters and injuries are no longer a daily occurrence. The school is one of a growing number across the country that are reining in recess to curb bullying and behavior problems foster social skills and address concerns over obesity. 3/14/10 http://www.nytimes.com

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Quote from the above story about recess:

> "Before, I was seeing nosebleeds, busted lips, and students being a danger to themselves and others. Now, Coach does miracles with 20 cones and three handballs."
>
> Principal

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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

*Among the sources used in gathering the above items are the ECS e-Clip http://www.ecs.org/e-clips and the Public Education Network (PEN) Newsblast http://www.publiceducation.org/newsblast_current.asp

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS (in print and on the Web)

Child, Adolescent, Young Adult Mental and Physical Health

>Is low empathy related to bullying after controlling for individual and social background variables? (2010). D. Jolliffe & D. Farrington. *Journal of Adolescence*. ePub. Http://www.sciencedirect.com

>The Choking Game: and YouTube: A dangerous combination. (2010). M. Linkletter, et al. *Clinical Pediatrics, 49*, 274-279. Http://cpj.sagepub.com

>Attributions and coping styles in reducing victimization. (2010). D. Shelley & W. Craig. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 25*, 84-100. Http://cjs.sagepub.com

>Understanding how resiliency development influences adolescent bullying and victimization. (2010). T. Donnon. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 25*, 101-113. Http://cjs.sagepub.com

>Protective strategies: A mediator of risk associated with age of drinking onset. (2010). R. Palmer, et al. *Addictive Behavior*, ePub. Http://www.sciencedirect.com

>Associations between sadness and anger regulation coping, emotional expression, and physical and relational aggression among urban adolescents. (2010). T. Sullivan, et al. *Social Development, 19*, 30-51. Http://www.interscience.wiley.com

School, Family & Community

>Conflict resolution in the parent-child, marital, and peer contexts and children's aggression in the peer group; a process-oriented cultural perspective. (2010). R. Feldman, et al. *Developmental Psychology, 46,* 310-25. Http://www.apa.org/journals/dev/

>Places to avoid: Population based study of student reports of unsafe and high bullying areas a school. (2010). T. Valliancourt, et al. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 25*, 40-54. Http://cjs.sagepub.com

>Academic vulnerability and resilience during the transition to high school. (2010). A. Langenkamp. *Sociology of Education 83*, 1-19. Http://soe.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/83/1/1

>Can't get kids to read? Make it social. (2010). W. Ferriter. *Educational Leadership. 67,* 87-88. Http://www.educationalleadership-digital.com

>Structure and deviancy training in after-school programs. (2010). M. Rorie, D. Gottfredson, et al., *Journal of Adolescence* ePub. Http://www.sciencedirect.com

>After the bell. (2010). E. Covay & W. Carbonaro. *Sociology of Education, 83*, 20-45. Http://soe.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/83/1/20

Policy, Systems, Law, Ethics, Finances & Statistics

>*Federal Education Funding: Overview of K-12 and Early Childhood Education Programs* http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-10-51

>*Public Health approach to children's mental health: A conceptual framework* http://gucchdtacenter.georgetown.edu/public_health.html

>The relation of student behavior, peer status, race, and gender to decisions about school discipline. (2010). S. Horner et al., *Journal of School Psychology, 48*, 135-161. Http://www.sciencedirect.com

>*The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2009.* National Center for Education Statistics. Http://nationsreportcard.gov

>Neighborhood socioeconomic conditions, build environments, and childhood obesity. (2010). G. Singh, et al. *Health Affairs, 29,* 503-512. Http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/abstract/29/3/503

>Positive youth development promoting adolescent sexual and reproductive health: A review of observational and intervention research. (2010). *Journal of Adolescent Health* http://www.sciencedirect.com/

>Cyberbullying and its correlation to traditional bullying, gender and frequent and risky usage of Internet mediated communication tools. (2010). Erdur-Baker. *New Media and Society, 12*, 109-125. Http://nms.sagepub.com

>Training therapists in evidence based practice: A critical review of studies from a systems contextual perspective. (2010). R. Beidas & P. Kendall. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 17*, 1-30. Http://www.interscience.wiley.com

>FYI: SafetyLit is a useful resource for abstracts to articles related to injury prevention policy and practice. Http://www.safetylit.org

  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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  "Since the main features of an educational system do reflect the main features of the society in which it is embedded, any criticism of education is at the same time a criticism of the wider society."

Donald Arnstine

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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

Some students give their all during spring semester to ensure a successful school year ... for others spring means "too late to catch up, why try;" "no money this year for the prom;" "already got college acceptance, I'm on vacation."
    And, for some school staff spring brings end of year tests that will or won't show the progress their students have made ... some staff may have received lay off notices or have been told that all the staff must reapply for their jobs. Under such circumstance, they may find it hard to give their best for the end of year push.
    Who at your local school watches for waning motivation on the part of students and staff and works to improve the situation? Who is looking at attendance patterns of students and staff as indicators that concerned partners need to be alerted to reach out? What plans are in place to help students who are losing interest and hope?
    A Learning Support Resource mechanism at a school (e.g., a team), in a feeder pattern (e.g., a council), and at the district level provides a critical operational mechanism for following such predictable trends and ensuring relevant supports. It also provides a mechanism for reaching out to the wider community (including higher education, civic groups, faith organizations) for tutors, mentors, internships, and designing end of year activities that will provide a boost for both students and staff. In the Center's toolkit, see
      >*What is a Learning Supports Resource Team?*
         http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resource%20coord%20team.pdf
      >*Resource Oriented Teams: Key Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Education Supports*
         http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf

If you know of ways schools are providing extra resources for students and staff during the spring push, let us know so we can share the ideas with others. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Here is an interesting idea noted in an article in the 3/2/10 US NEWS and World Report:

    Alternative Spring Breaks Combine Service, Learning
        Instead of relaxing on white, sandy beaches this spring break, thousands of
        college students will travel around the globe to volunteer for a variety of social

justice causes...the alternative break can be the catalyst to make students "active citizens" who are engaged in their own communities and become contributing members of society. Http://www.usnews.com

Note: Anticipating major concerns that arise with regularity over the course of the school year is imperative. 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 home page at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

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"Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush."

<div align="right">Doug Larson</div>

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OTHER HELPFUL INTERNET RESOURCES

>Support student transition from middle to high schools
http://txcc.sedl.org/resources/briefs/number1/index.html

>Guidelines for psychotherapy with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients
http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/guidelines.aspx

>Alternative schools and programs for public school students at risk of educational failure
http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010026

>Runaway & homeless youth and relationship violence toolkit
http://www.nrcdv.org/rhydvtoolkit/

>From the National School Climate Council:
>>National School Climate Standards http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/standards.php

>>School Climate Guide for District Policy Makers and Educational Leaders
http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/districtguide.php

>>School Climate Implementation Road Map
http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/roadmap.php

>More on School Climate
http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/hlgbsp/school-climate.aspx

>Tailor Made: Attracting, Engaging and Retaining hard to Reach Youth
http://www.ydinstitute.org/resources/publications/TailorMade.pdf

>Gaining ground in the middle grades: Why some schools do better
http://www.edsource.org/middle-grades-report.html

>Young people advocate for, plan, and provide services to their communities
http://www.ydinstitute.org/resources/publications/YoungPeople.pdf

>Chronic early absence
http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/84/20/8420.pdf

>Early learning continuity
http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/84/07/8407.pdf

>Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools
http://rems.ed.gov

   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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   Child: "I can't go to school today, I don't feel well."

   Parent: "Where don't you feel well?"

   Child: "In school."
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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 and other professional develop opportunities
   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm

   Note: Information on each of these is 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 UPDATE

*Spring Journal/Newsletter

   Youth Subcultures: Understanding Subgroups to
   Better Address Barriers to Learning & Improve Schools
            http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/spring10.pdf

   The pre-publication edition was sent to listserv participants and hard copies will be sent to all
   on our mailing list. Feedback from the electronic version shows high interest in the topic
   and it's relevance to working with youth in education, health, and juvenile justice settings.

*Additions to the series on Youth Subcultures

   If you haven't looked at this evolving series, check it out. You will find links to the entire
       series, as well as to other related resources by going to our Center's online clearinghouse
       Quick Find on *Youth Culture & Subgroups*
            http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/youthculture.htm

We have added the following this month:
>About Jocks as a Youth Subculture
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/youth/jocks.pdf

>About "Loners" and "Losers"
Http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/youth/loners.pdf

>About Emo Youth Subculture
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/youth/emo.pdf

>About Surfing and Skateboarding Youth Subcultures
:   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/youth/surf.pdf

If you have information to share related to this topic, please let us know. Ltaylor@ucla.edu

*New Directions Initiative

>*Next Steps in the Call to Action* – We are compiling information about places where action is underway to address barriers to learning and teaching in a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive way. As part of our ongoing collaboration with national student services organizations, we did an electronic outreach about this to the national and state affiliates of the following:
>>National Association of Pupil Services Administrators
>>School Social Work Association of America
>>National Association of School Psychologists
>>National Association of School Nurses
>>American School Counselor Association
We now extend to you the same request we made to them.

Please share information about any *comprehensive* strategic local action related to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

We will compile the information we receive and share it widely as a catalyst for change.

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

CSMH announcement: The 15th Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health October 7-9, 2010. Hyatt Regency Albuquerque, Albuquerque, New Mexico. The conference is conducted by the Center for School Mental Health (CSMH) University of Maryland School of Medicine, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in partnership with The IDEA partnership, funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, sponsored by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE).

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COMMENTS, REQUESTS, INFORMATION, QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

(1) *Feedback on last month's emerging issue:*

How to organize and interpret youth subculture and groupings

I saw your posting on subcultures and education. One of the byproducts of the charter school reforms in New Orleans is that the selective admission charters -and the unique discipline and expulsion policies of charter schools as a whole--have resulted in a new kind of public school comprised almost entirely of students who have been expelled from the charter schools for behavior or learning problems. Most of these students suffer from trauma stress related to hurricane Katrina. By isolating and concentrating these students in a "second tier" public system, we have created a unique classroom subculture.

In interviewing teachers I have discovered that the students have created what I would characterize as an "oppositional subculture" that makes it impossible to implement positive behavioral supports. If a teacher praises a student, all the other students verbally attack and ostracize the compliant student.

The concentration of students with challenges has reached "critical mass" in which the students have created a dysfunctional group cultural adaptation. Thrust into a setting where their self-worth is measured by academic skills they do not possess and are not like to acquire in the overcrowded, chaotic atmosphere, and bereft of any peer role-models who can model cooperative behavior or successful learning, the students have improvised their own sub-culture that awards status and respect by opposing authority of the teacher and punishes compliance and rewards resistance. The students who demonstrate their loyalty to the resisting student group achieve status and respect, which replaces the status and respect that successful learning provides in the teacher's model. This is not unlike the anti-authority subcultures that we find in prisons.

I am curious if there is any research on this phenomenon in schools and how it impeded positive behavior support methods? If not, I think that it would be useful area of research since the charter school phenomenon of "creating good schools by creating bad schools" will expand with the Race To The Top incentives to create more charters.

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(2) *Feedback on Center Email to Listserv on March 2:*

Addressing The Dropout Problem Involves More Than What Policy Makers Are Proposing

>My suggestion regarding policy approaches to this issue — the USDOE's and the US Dept of Justice's **own published research** shows that 60-85% (and likely more) of kids in the juvenile justice system have disabilities. The IDEA and Section 504 not only require but mandate that students showing symptoms of academic/behavioral/social problems be formally assessed (and given evidence-based interventions). These federal laws already exist but are being ignored! Have 60-85% of kids in the juvenile justice system been assessed for disabilities? Have even 2% of them? Probably not even that. This is the School To Prison Pipeline in a nutshell. Any approach that doesn't make this a centerpiece seems to me like re-inventing the wheel in many ways.

>I am the At Risk Coordinator for a small school district north of Houston, Texas. I am the Coordinator of the dropout prevention school, the Credit Recovery Center ("CRC"). The school is an alternative - of choice facility. Students who are behind in credits and will not graduate within 4 years of entering the ninth grade are eligible to apply. This is CRC's fifth year of operation. Before we can help a student get on track to graduation we must first identify the reason(s) why he fell behind in the first place. Our goal is to renew that zest for learning that the

student had in elementary school. Most of the students who apply for admission to CRC are from one or more of the following home situations: broken homes, homes where substance abuse is prevalent, students who are being raised by relatives other than their parents, students who are pregnant or parenting, students whose parents are unemployed, students who have lost one more parents, student who are homeless or living on their own, and students who are being raised by a single parent or being raised in a non-traditional marriage situation. Until we can help the student come to grips with the emotional problems they are dealing with at home, it is difficult for the students to succeed in school. We also find that many of our students have had serious drug problems in middle school and while they are not using drugs now - they may still have mental problems from the heavy usage. We find this most often in students who used inhalants.

In the five years since CRC opened - 200 students have graduated. To help these students, we use lots of mentoring both of the student and the family. We use county agencies to help families with their problems which in turn helps CRC students.

The bottom line is that while some of the blame may be placed on the schools an equal or larger share of the blame may be placed on the home life that the dropouts are experiencing. Once that emotional burden can be alleviated, students can succeed. We tell the students that when they walk in the door of CRC they are safe - leave all problems outside. They will have plenty to eat at CRC and there are people who care about them here to help them.

Approximately 1/3 of CRC graduates go into the military. The East Montgomery County Improvement District gives a $1000 scholarship to each graduate from New Caney High School and approximately 1/3 of CRC's graduates use the scholarship at our local community college.

It is a blessing to work in such a facility. My personal belief is that unless and until we can cure our Country's socio-economic problems our children will continue to suffer."

>Let us all be as concerned with the "push out rate" as we are with the dropout rate. The former are the students who are pushed out of school without a diploma because they have not passed one or more high stakes tests. I hear little discussion of what is being done for these students once they leave the school community. How are they being helped to be college/career ready? No student who comes to school for thirteen years on a regular basis, with allowances being made for physician documented severe injuries or illnesses; who is a good citizen in the school community; and who, in the best determination of those working with the student feel that the student is working up to his/her God given ability, should ever be retained in grade or denied a diploma. It serves neither the best interests of the student, his/her state, nor his/her country. Everyone should take time to read the interview of Yong Zhao in the December 2009/January 2010 issue of the Phi Delta Kappan. Ir is one of the most enlightening, thought provoking articles on education I have come across in a long while.

>The Obama Administration intent is NOT the problem. The problem may be within the dropout prevention service community with their over-emphasis on labor intensive and expensive services that replicate failed educational services that should have worked right the first time.

In the past dropout prevention projects did not look beyond getting a student out of high school and into college. A longer focus into the future, starting in middle school, is increasingly recognized in the educational community as being needed. The planning and success of the Washington University based Freshman Transition Initiative, http://www.freshmantransition.org/, is one verification of the need for our students to plan 10 years into the future. Another is the School Archive Project , http://www.studentmotivation.org, that is now almost 5 years old in Dallas. The $2 per student Archive Project only takes two steps:

The first step is to know and closely follow current dropout rates so as to monitor progress. Too often official numbers are less than reliable. An annually updated 10+ year enrollment by grade spreadsheet on every school and school district web site, with graduation numbers included, does that. It also costs almost nothing as these numbers are readily available and simple need to be made public in a spreadsheet.

From this spreadsheet a minimum of four separate dropout rate measurements can be

calculated showing the current dropout situation in a manner anyone can understand. (See example of such a spreadsheet at http://www.studentmotivation.org/DallasISD.htm.) Auditing enrollment numbers can easily be done. No magical "coding" for "valid transfers" is allowed such as those Houston ISD used to officially claim fantasy 1% dropout rates about a decade ago.

Use this spreadsheet to track progress under the second step.

The second step is to bolt a 500-pound gun vault to the floor in every secondary school lobby to function as a 10-year time-capsule. This can happen both at the middle school and high school level.

Each new class writes letters to themselves for the vault as they enter the school. They write about their life history and plans for the future. Their parents are invited to also write a letter to their child to place in the same self-addressed envelope with their child's letter. Then, as the years pass at the school and they walk past the vault every day they know that their letter is already with the thousands of others inside the vault. Hopefully they will think more often of their futures.

As they are about to graduate from that school, students receive back that initial self addressed envelope and use it to another letter to themselves with a clearer focus 10 years into their future. Parents are again invited to write a letter to their child, this time with a 10 year focus in their dreams for their child. The student places the new letters inside another self-addressed envelope and then into the vault. They plan for the 10-year class reunion to retrieve it at which they know they will be invited to speak to then current students in the school about their recommendations for success. They are warned to prepare for questions from those decade younger students such as: "What would you do differently if you were 13 again?"

Many traditions have grown as this project developed. Imagine the power of a middle school teacher being able to tell their students that they look forward to seeing them again in 10 years at their class reunion? It shows a bond and an interest such as the kind that keeps a child in school as shown by the research. The more a positive school community forms the fewer students will drop out.

The first School Archive Project started in 2005 in a Dallas middle school with an 8th grade class that was the Graduation Class of 2009. Both high schools who received these students had the largest graduation class ever with their Class of 2009! Dropout rates are going down! Students are making it past that critical 9th grade! 11th and 12th grade enrollments in the 32 high schools in Dallas ISD are the highest on record! They are up 5% since 2005/2006 for a total increase of 758 students in these upper grades. This is in spite of total district enrollment going down 2.5% during the same time. However 55% of this gain (417 students) is from only two of the 32 high schools in the district, the two who received almost all School Archive Project students.

Realistically focusing students onto their own futures makes a big difference! See http://www.studentmotivation.org for details on this simple project costing less than $2 per 8th grade student to run. This project strongly reinforces what teachers are already saying to their students, plan for the future!

One percent of the planned $900,000,000 in grants would be more than adequate to place School Archive Projects into every one of the 2,000 "Dropout Factories" in the US as well as the feeder middle schools who send students into those schools.

Sunset High School in Dallas was one of the original Dropout Factories in the original study involving 12th grade enrollment data from 2004-2006. It is no longer a "Dropout Factory" in 2009/2010. It has been receiving School Archive Project students since 2005 with constant improvements in the 12th grade promotion rate. In 2005/2006 that rate was only 38.7% with only that percentage of 9th grade enrollment reflected in 12th grade enrollment for 2005/2006. This year, 2009/2010, the 12th grade promotion rate at Sunset is 64.1%! That is progress that every dropout factory in the US must make!

This summer Sunset saw the value of the Archive Project and started it's own Archive Project at the high school level. The other middle school feeding into Sunset has also started an Archive Project. The Sunset promotion rate will continue to rise well above 64%! Within 4 years it could be above 80%.

>Thank you for taking bold steps to address the drop out issue, Dropouts - are policy makers on the right track? I would like to have a somewhat personal note to you in reference to your recent high school graduation email. The last year of high school was a difficult proposition for me for several reasons. Instead I chose to drop out take the GED and try to decide what I was going to do next. I went to the local community college part time and went from one low paying job to the next. Eventually I attended the community college full time transferred to Arizona State Graduated cum Laude and obtained my multiple graduate degrees including Johns Hopkins with full ride scholarships. In addition I have spent most of my career working with students with serious challenges emotionally and intellectually in the high school environment and have many obituaries of students to remind me of those years. I really think the path to success for many students does not go through high school graduation. As our high schools are structured now they often impede the potential success of individuals. High schools continue to limit curriculum in order to focus on high stakes testing and can never engage students the way that community colleges and work environments can. I think we need to consider other options that can lead to the successful transition into the adult service sector besides graduation. Secondly I wonder how many graduate programs offer a course specifically focused on drop out prevention? I teach such a course online at the University of Missouri Center for the Advancement of Mental Health Practices. Perhaps part of the answer is to offer graduate training in this area. By the way the state of California's work in this area is absolutely the I use many of their resources in my class.

>I don't think much of Obama's approach. It's too little, too late. If you want to stop high school drop outs, you must focus on student success in grades 4 - 8 with intensive targeted tutoring for those who fall behind - like they do in other countries. Successful students stay in school. If you wait till high school to notice a problem, it's way too late. Targeted tutoring is too expensive, however, and will never fly in a political climate where appearance of reform is more important and cheaper than substance.

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

(1) "I just want to share with you a publication that may be of interest to you, and ask if you could please pass it on to your listerv. I work for Dr. Gil Noam at the Program in Education, Afterschool, and Resiliency, and we publish the journal New Directions in Youth Development (NDYD, see http://www.pearweb.org/ndyd/index.html) and we just published a new issue. This issue, called Framing Youth Development for Public Support, focuses on the theory, research, and practice of FrameWorks' decade of work in evidence-based communications strategies for child and youth issues. The articles explain where this approach is situated within the broader conversation on communications for social change; why an iterative, multimethod process is necessary to determine the communications strategies that will elevate the public dimensions of children's and youth's developmental trajectories; and how experts and advocates are applying these evidence-based communications strategies to their work on behalf of children and youth. Other issues of the NDYD journal focus on various topics in child development, child psychology, parenting, and adult-child relationships. Thank you so much and I look forward to hearing from you. A full list of our archived issues is available
at http://www.pearweb.org/ndyd/archive.html

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(2) "Your collection of classroom management information on the University of California Center for Mental Health in Schools website is superb,
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/culturecomp.htm. I like that you compiled a detailed list of topics on "Diversity, Disparities, etc.". As diversity continues to increase, the way teachers present their material will have to adapt to better address the audience. We tried to capture advice and resources from professors and teachers to help address the topic. The result is Teaching to a

Diverse Classroom on Guide to Online Schools, http://www.guidetoonlineschools.com/online-teaching/diverse-audience. The article would be a great addition to your resources. I hope it helps all of the teachers who use your website."

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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