ENEWS

A Monthly Forum for Sharing and Interchange

December, 2007 (Vol. 12 #3)

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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Feel Free to Forward this to Anyone
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WHAT'S HERE THIS MONTH

**Emerging Issue

>>Are Some Schools "Dropout Factories"?

****News from around the country**

**Recent Publications Relevant to

>Children's mental and physical health
>Family, school & community
>Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics

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

>Re-engaging students: Using a student's time off in ways that pay off!

****Other helpful Internet resources**

**Links to

>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops
>Calls for grant proposals, presentations & papers
>Training and job opportunities

**UCLA Center brief update

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

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**EMERGING ISSUE
>>Are Some Schools "Dropout Factories"?

The Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University, was criticized recently for using of the term "dropout factory" for 1,700 regular or vocational high schools

nationwide.

They defined a Dropout Factory as "a school in which year in and year out a significant number of under-prepared and disengaged students enter the ninth grade, struggle to succeed, become further disengaged, stop attending on a regular basis, fail two or more courses, do not earn promotion to the 10th grade, try again the next year, do no better, likely transfer to another regular school or alternative school, fail to succeed again, and having become over-aged and under-credited and worn down through years of struggle, drop out of school. The process is repetitive, mechanical, and continuous -- hence, factory like."

In response to the criticism, the Center clarified that they are not inferring that teachers, administrators, or students in such schools intend this result or cause it to occur. They state: "Nothing could be further from the truth. The teachers, administrators, and students in these schools are often going to heroic lengths to succeed despite long odds. The fault lies not with the schools or their teachers or students but with the intended and unintended consequences of decisions made at the city, state, and federal levels to create a sub-set of under-resourced, over-challenged, and non-supported schools that primarily educate low-income and minority students. The term Dropout Factory is thus used to describe a harsh and deeply problematic situation that needs to be acknowledged and addressed."

What's your take on this? Send your comments to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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**NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

>INCREASING FOCUS ON DROPOUTS

>>Report Says 1 in 10 Schools Are "Dropout Factories"
The highest concentration of what the report calls "dropout factories" is in large cities or high-poverty rural areas in the South and Southwest. Most have high proportions of minority students. These schools are tougher to turn around, because their students face challenges well beyond the academic ones. 10/30/07. Associated Press. http://www.boston.com

>>Calculation of Graduation Rates Differ
If Congress doesn't get the job done, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings says she'll consider using her authority to require states to report high school graduation rates in a more uniform and accurate way. Spellings pointed to a two-year-old agreement by the nation's governors to adopt a common method of calculating high school graduate rates by tracking individual students throughout school. So far, about a dozen states are using a method like this. 11/9/07. Associated Press. http://www.boston.com

>MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS
>>Toward Persuading School Administrators
In persuading school administrators that successful school-based mental health programs can help academic achievement, advocates are calling for a new school component to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development. 11/25/07. http://www.star-telegram.com

>>Guides on Sharing Information Released
The Virginia Tech shooting has sparked many efforts to tighten school security, improve mental health services and create systems to alert students of danger. Schools also have asked for guidance on what information can be shared among government agencies and parents under the 1974 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The U. S. Department of Education has related three brochures on the law: one for k-12 educators, one for colleges, and one for parents. They are available at http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/safeschools/
10/31/07. Http://www.washingtonpost.com

>HOW DO TEENS SPEND THEIR TIME?
>>A Day in the Life of U.S. Teen: Thousands Do Drugs
On an average day, nearly 1.2 million teenagers smoked cigarettes, 631,00 drank and 586,000

used marijuana. Nearly 50,000 used inhalants, 27,000 used hallucinogens, 13,000 used cocaine and 3,800 used heroin. More than 76,000 children and teens were in outpatient treatment for alcohol or drug abuse and 10,000 in non-hospital residential treatment. 10/18/07. http://www.reuters.com

>>**Study Links Drop in Test Scores to a Decline in Time Spent Reading**
Although reading scores among elementary school students have been improving, scores are flat among middle school students and slightly declining among high school seniors. These trends are concurrent with a falloff in daily pleasure reading among young people. 11/19/07. http://www.nytimes.com

>**AUTISM EPIDEMIC MAY BE ALL IN THE LABEL**
In the latest estimate, as many as one in 150 children have some form of autism. But many experts believe the recent explosion of cases is caused by a surge in special education services for autistic children and by a corresponding shift in what doctors call autism. For decades, the diagnosis was given only to kids with severe language and social impairments and unusual repetitious behavior. In the 1990's the autism umbrella expanded to a group of milder related conditions. 11/4/07. http://www.boston.com

>**STOP AIDS: KEEP THE PROMISE —— WORLD AIDS DAY IS DECEMBER 1ST!**
See information at http://www.oar.nih.gov/

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Note: Each week the Center highlights one or more newsworthy stories online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/newsitems.htm

Also access other news stories relevant to mental health in schools through links at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/linkstolatest.htm

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Sending Students Away

In enacting a law that requires test scores of students sent to alternatives schools be counted in the original school's academic performance accountability, state senator Darrell Steinberg stressed: "I believe the vast majority of public educators are well-intentioned, but the system provides a perverse incentive. Your scores are likely to go up if you move kids with significant challenges on."

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS (IN PRINT AND ON THE WEB)

Children's Mental and Physical Health

>When a student dies. (2007) M. Jellinek, et al., Educational Leadership, 65(3) 78-82. http://www.ascd.org

>Who gets care? Mental health service use following a school-based suicide prevention program (2007) S. Kataoka, et al., Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 46(10) 1341-1348. http://www.jaacap.com

>Control-group study of an intervention training program for youth suicide prevention. (2007) F.Chanon, et al. Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior, 37(2) 135-44.

http://www.guilford.com/pr/jnsl.htm

>Determinants of adolescents' active defending and passive bystanding behavior in bullying. (2007) G. Gini, et al., Journal of Adolescence, epub.
Http://www.elsevier.com/inca/publications/store/6/2/2/8/4/9/

>Associations among empathy, social competence, and reactive/proactive aggression subtypes (2007). M. Mayberry & D. Espelage, Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 36(6) 787-798.
http://www.springerlink.com/content/0047-2891

>A rationale and method of examining reasons for linkages among adolescent risk behaviors (2007) M. Busseri, et al., Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 36(3) 279-289.
http://www.springerlink.com/content/1573-6601/

*Family, School & Community

>The family: America's smallest school (2007) P. Barton & R. Coley. Http://www.ets.org/

>Parent and home involvement in schools (rev. 2007). Center for Mental Health in Schools.
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/parenthome/parent1.pdf

>Developmental Commentary: Ecological perspectives on parental influences during adolescence (2007) N. Hill, et al., Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 36(3) 367-377.

>Silent victims: Children exposed to family violence (2007) K. Kolar & D. Davey, The Journal of School Nursing, 23(2) 86-90.

>School violence: Effective response protocols for maximum safety and minimum liability. (2007) L. Miller, International Journal of Emergency Mental Health, 9(2) 105-109.
http://www.chevronpublishing.com/product.cfm?dispprodid=480

>Safe schools in the context of school improvement. (2007) Hamilton Fish Institute's National Conference on Safe Schools and Communities, Conference Proceedings.
http://gwired.gwu.edu/hamfish/annualconference/2007/

>Effects of neighborhood resources on aggressive and delinquent behaviors among urban youth. (2007). B. Molnar, et al., American Journal of Public Health, ePub. Http://www.ajph.org/

>Integrating academic interventions into small group counseling in elementary school. (2007) S. Steen & C. Kaffenberger, Professional School Counseling, 10(5) 516-19.

>After-School programs and Addressing Barriers to Learning (rev. 2007). Center for Mental Health in Schools http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/afterschool/afterschool.pdf

>Sexual Minority Students (rev. 2007). Center for Mental Health in Schools.
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sexual_minority/lgbt.pdf

>School improvement: A systemic view of what's missing and what to do about it. H. Adelman & L. Taylor (2007). In Systems thinkers in action: A field guide for effective change leadership in education edited by B. Despres. Rowman and Littlefield Pub.

*Policy, Systems, Law, Ethics, Finances & Statistics

>Public school practices for violence prevention and reduction: 2003-2004 (2007) National

Center for Education Statistics http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007010

>State data system to assess learning barriers and supports: Implications for school reform efforts (2007) G.Austin and B. Benard, WestEd.
Http://www.californiaschool finance.org/portals/0/pdfs/policy/wested_brief.pdf

>School mental health: role of the substance abuse and mental health services administration and factors affecting service provision. (2007) U. S. Government Accountability Office.
http://www.gao.gov

>Crime, violence, discipline, and safety in U. S. public schools. Findings from the School Survey on Crime and Safety: 2005-2006. (2007)
http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007361

>A national portrait of chronic absenteeism in the early grades (2007). M Romero & L. Young-Sun. National Center for Children in Poverty. http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_771.html

>Conflict of interest in the evaluation and dissemination of "model" school-based drug and violence prevention programs. (2007) D. Gorman & E. Conde. Evaluation and Program Planning, 30(4) 422-9. http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/01497189

>CDC Datasets Available – School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS) and Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) public-use data files and technical documentation are available for download and can be used for secondary analyses without cost. The data files are located respectively at http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/shpps/2006/data/index.htm and http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/data/index.htm .

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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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"Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work."
                                                        Peter Drucker
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MONTHLY FOCUS FOR SCHOOLS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO LEARNING

>>December – Re-engaging students: using a student's time off in ways that pay off!

For school staff and students the winter break is a welcome time for rest and relaxation. It is also a valuable opportunity for appreciating what we have accomplished, facing the fact that there are some problems that need to be addressed, and anticipating a fresh start in the new year.

By December, school staff and students know that for some students "it isn't working." Since giving up is no option, we need to focus on re-engagement. The first step is to establish a working relationship that is motivated by the desire to (a) understand the causes for students' lack of engagement and (b) try some different strategies.

Why are some students not engaged in classroom learning? Some common school-related

reasons include:
>not experiencing sufficient success in learning, so they give up;
>not having a good relationship with the teacher, so they react/resist;
>not having connected with a supportive group of friends, so they feel isolated/alienated.
Worse yet, a few students may be experiencing lack of success related to all three.

The challenge for student support personnel is to expand the positive relationships they establish with students in individual and group sessions back into the classroom so struggling students are connecting with teachers and peers in a positive way.

See "Some things to do before winter break"-- go to Ideas for Enhancing Support at Your School this Month on the Center's home page at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu
For December, you will see ideas for:
>Student led individual conferences
>Immediate opportunities for change
>Ideas for adding extra support
>Enrichment choices for learning over the winter break
>Plans for "starting with a clean slate" in the new year

For some students, arranging internships and work-experience over the winter break may help students focus on the future (e.g., job, profession, higher education). For some students the "gift" of a book chosen especially based on their interest (and ability) promotes reading for pleasure.
Taking the time and effort to connect with students in these ways strengthens relationships.

For a broad range of relevant resources related to enhancing engagement in learning see Quick Find topic pages on
>>Motivation
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/motiv.htm
>>Classroom-focused Enabling
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/classenable.htm

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Note: You can anticipate major concerns that arise over the course of the school year that provide natural opportunities to strengthen support for learning. To see the "calendar" of monthly concerns and themes, see "Ideas for Enhancing Support at Your School this Month" on the Center's home page at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu
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"I would be the most content if my children grew up to be the kind of people who think decorating consists mostly of building enough bookshelves.
Anna Quindlen
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OTHER HELPFUL INTERNET RESOURCES

>Balancing Student Privacy and School Safety: A Guide to the Family Educational Rights and privacy Act for Elementary and Secondary Schools
http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/safeschools/

>Parents' Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act: Rights Regarding Your Children's Education Records
http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/safeschools/

>Center for Disease Control and Prevention Health Education Web Tool for Schools
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/SHER

>Overview and Inventory of State Education Reforms
http://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/

>A Day in the Life of American Adolescents – Substance Use Facts
http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k7/youthfacts/youth.cfm

>Implementing evidence-based practices: Six "drivers" of success
http://www.childtrends.org/files/child_trends-2007_10_01_RB_6successdrivers.pdf

>Seven activities for enhancing the replicability of evidence-based practices
http://www.childtrends.org/files/child_trends-2007_10_01_RB_Replicability.pdf

>Making schools places where everyone succeeds: belonging is necessary for learning
http://www.iel.org/pubs/2007_jd_steele.pdf

>National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning
http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/

>Response: A comprehensive high school based suicide awareness program
http://oregon.gov/dhs/ph/ipe/ysp/response.shtml

>Municipal Network for Disconnected Youth
http://www.nlc.org/iyef/program_areas/youth_development/4627.aspx

>Substance use fact sheet on adolescents and youth adults
http://nahic.ucsf.edu/index.php/data/article/briefs_fact_sheets/

>Community Service Options Toolkit
http://serviceoptions.org/toolkit.html

>Multi-language resources on substance abuse treatment materials
http://www.samhsa.gov

>Engaging Youth: On their turf: Creative approaches to connecting youth through community
http://www.healthyteennetwork.org

>The Parenting Imperative: Investing in parents so children and youth succeed
http://www.nassembly.org/fspc/index.html

>Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration: A guide to evidence-based practices on the web
http://www.samhsa.gov/ebpWebguide/index.asp

>Doing What Works: U. S. Department of Education
http://dww.ed.gov/index.cfm?

>Approaches to Dropout Prevention: Heeding Early Warning Signs with Appropriate Interventions. http://www.betterhighschools.com/docs/nhsc_approachestodropoutprevention.pdf

>The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills

http://www.casel.org/
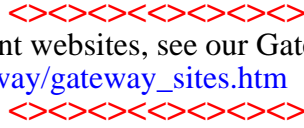
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Note: For a wide range of relevant websites, see our Gateway to a World of Resources at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/gateway/gateway_sites.htm
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"I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by."
Douglas Adams
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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

Information on each of these is updated on an ongoing bases on our website. Just click on the
indicated URL
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**UCLA CENTER BRIEF UPDATE

For the latest information on Center resources and activities, go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu
and click on What's New. Highlighted below are a few items.

>New Publication

>>School Improvement: A Systemic View of What's Missing and What to Do About It
H. Adelman & L. Taylor. In Systems Thinkers in Action: A Field Guide for Effective
Change Leadership in Education (2007). B. Despres (Ed.) Rowman and Littlefield Pub.

>Updated Resources

We update all of the materials on our website on a regular basis to include the most recent
research and evidence of impact. Here are some of the documents recently updated:

On Students and School Programs
>>After-School programs and Addressing Barriers to Learning
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/afterschool/afterschool.pdf

>>Sexual Minority Students
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sexual_minority/lgbt.pdf

On Financing:
>>Financial strategies to aid in addressing barriers to learning (Intro Packet)

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/financial/fund2000.pdf
>>Financing strategies to address barriers to learning (Quick Training Aid)
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/funding_qt/

   On Evaluation:
       >>Evaluation and accountability: Getting credit for all you do (Into Packet)
       http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/evaluation/evaluation.pdf
       >>Evaluation and accountability: related to mental health in schools (Technical Aid)
       http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/evalaccount/evalmh.pdf

>Conference Proceedings
       >>Safe Schools in the Context of School Improvement. 2007 National Conference on
       Safe Schools and Communities. Hamilton Fish Institute
       http://gwired.gwu.edu/hamfish/annualconference/2007/

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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/Center for Mental Health in Schools UCLA
Department of Psychology, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563. Phone: (310) 825-3634; Toll
Free (866) 846-4843; Fax (310) 206-8716. Email: smhp@ucla.edu
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AND check out our sister center – 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. Tool free: 888-706-0980. Email csmh@psych.umaryland.edu

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"Sometimes glass glitters more than diamonds because it has more to prove."
                               Terry Pratchett
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**COMMENTS, REQUESTS, INFO, QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

>>Related to last month's Emerging Issue
     Which Comes First: Substance Abuse or School Failure?

(1) "I am an LPC and have been working in a middle and high school setting for over 6 years
now. After reading and considering the findings I feel that both educational success (or failure)
AND substance use result from the parental factors listed. In my experience, parent involvement
by one or more parents, or grandparents, is a key element to success. By parent involvement I
mean parents who are consistent in their discipline, affection, and expectations. Parents who
cope well with adversity and model this behavior. Children can cope well with academic
adversity if they have good supports in place from family, school, and community."

(2) "This really hit a nerve with me because for the past 25 years I and my colleagues have
worked our tails off trying to support students. The biggest obstacle that is rarely addressed is the
home, and their environment. The most important influential factors I see are related to what is
going on in the home. Is a family member a substance abuser, is there a good level of
supervision, do the parents value education and are they effective as parents. What are the older

siblings doing, are they doing drugs, are they gang members? Who is taking care of the child, an adult or an older sibling? Does the family unit function in a way that the child feels they are getting their needs met. Do they parents communicate with the child, is the primary parent emotionally disturbed. Will the parent allow early intervention, many times they will not, or say they will and will not follow through, this happens repeatedly. Many times the family or caretaker is so involved in their own problems that they are not able to support the student. Children will model the behavior that is shown them by those closest to them.

As an added note, a few years ago I had to review the files of about 60 students, who are placed in our most isolated school, all labeled Emotional Disturbed for special ed purposes. The overwhelming majority of these students had been significantly abused, some repeatedly. I was also able to see the trail of "interventions" with school programs, meetings, agency interventions, court interventions, none of them producing a stable environment for the student, you could see that the parent influence, or the family members influence if the parent was no longer in the picture, continued to be chaotic, unsupportive and counter productive.

I'm not sure what the solution is to this. However it seems ridiculous to continue to hammer the schools for student's use of drugs, delinquent behavior, when a family operates completely counter to this. There is a limit to what can be done without the willingness and support of the family. It puts a tremendous amount of stress on the school system to make those of us that have dedicated our lives to helping students responsible for things we cannot control. Thanks for allowing me to express my frustration."

(3) "With NCLB come high stakes, standardized tests. With the bell curve on standardized tests, 50% of students must be below average, or failures. When standardized tests determine grade promotion, track assignment (once assigned to a low or remedial track, students will never get out of it), or that a school is considered to be "failing" because of the poor performance of some groups of students (usually minority or immigrants) then the whole school community starts to see these students as deficits and they are labeled as such. Adolescents, especially, know that they are labeled as such and that the school and district personnel consider them to be a "problem." Do the studies address the specific effects of tracking and intraschool segregation?"

(4) "I believe a family with mom and dad can also have drug/alcohol and mental health problems. I believe the parents have a major impact on the success of a family but the students can be lead astray by their peers also without parent's knowledge. Also the parent's education level can help keep the students on the right track but nothing is for sure. I believe school failure can lead to substance abuse and vice versa, each situation is unique and it's hard to say what brings on what. The discouragement and downward spiral this brings on can be helped by support services of some kind that's unique to the family."

>>We were asked to share information on two publications:

>Teaching Kids with Mental Health & Learning Disorders in the Regular Classroom: How to Recognize, Understand, and Help Challenged (and Challenging) Students Succeed. (2007) M. Cooley, Free Spirit Publishing. http://www.drmylescooley.com

>Tragic Redemption: Healing the Guild and Shame. (2007) H. Johnson. Http://www.langmarc.com

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THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF ENEWS
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.

As sister Centers, the Center at UCLA and the one at the University of Maryland focus on advancing efforts to enhance how schools address mental health and psychosocial concerns. 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:
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Phone (310) 825-3634; Toll Free (866) 846-4843; Fax (310) 206-5895 email: smhp@ucla.edu