

**25 Years &  
Counting**



# ENEWS

A Monthly Forum for Sharing and Interchange



**February, 2012 (Vol. 16 #5)**

ENEWS is one of the many resources provided by the School Mental Health Project/Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. This electronic journal/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 national Center offers, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>



**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](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu)**



## **WHAT'S HERE THIS MONTH**

### **\*\*EMERGING OPPORTUNITY**

**>Are the Candidates Asking the Right Questions About School Improvement?**

**\*\*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**

**>February – New ideas for increasing graduation rates and reducing dropouts**

**\*\*Other helpful Internet resources**

**\*\*UCLA Center Update**

**\*\*Links to**

**>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops**

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

**>Calls for grant proposals, presentations & papers**

**>Training and job opportunities**

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



## EMERGING OPPORTUNITY

### Are the Candidates Asking the Right Questions About School Improvement?

In the upcoming months political debates at federal, state, and local levels will include a focus on improving schools. From what you are hearing do you think the right questions are being asked? What questions do you think those leading our country, our states, our cities should be asked about schools? Here is a start, we look forward to what you think should be added:

- What should be done through policy, funding, incentives to strengthen public schools so all students succeed?
- What should be stopped that is interfering with public school success (related to policies, funding, current accountability)?
- How can best practices to engage communities in supporting schools move from grants and projects, to policy and practice for all schools?

*What would you add?*

Let us know. Send your questions (and comments) to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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## NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

**School success for at-risk kids** – Innovative work around the country is highlighted as part of a series of brief articles in the American Psychological Association’s February 2012 *Monitor*. The Center at UCLA’s framework for a unified and comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students is highlighted in the article entitled “Helping at-risk students succeed.” The description of the UCLA work underscores examples of efforts at state departments of education and in districts and notes the Center’s collaborations with Scholastic, the American Association of School Administrators, and the National Association of School Psychologists.

[http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/apa/monitor\\_201202/index.php?startid=15#/48](http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/apa/monitor_201202/index.php?startid=15#/48)

**Illinois task force wants to halt school closings, turnarounds** – A legislative task force created to address community concerns over Chicago’s efforts to shut down or completely overhaul underperforming schools is calling for a moratorium on school

closings and “turnarounds.” The Chicago Public Schools plans to close seven schools this year and picked another 10 for turnaround. 1/13/12. [Http://www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com)

**Number of homeless students surges, putting strain on schools** – Nationally, 1.6 million U. S. children lived in homeless shelters, motels, with relatives or other families or living on the street in 2010, a 38 percent increase since 2007, according to the National Center on Family Homelessness. The large number of homeless students presents a particular challenge to school districts. In addition to emotional and health problems, homeless students are more likely to go hungry and are four times more likely to show delayed development. They have twice the rate of learning disabilities as non-homeless children. 1/8/12. [Http://www.suntimes.com](http://www.suntimes.com)

**Task force developed to look at Pennsylvania child abuse laws** – On the heels of the child sex abuse scandal, an eleven member task force is now in place to review current laws, specifically focusing on the reporting laws in child abuse cases. Besides focusing on reporting, the task force will examine child abuse response procedures, hold public hearings, accept comments, submit reports with recommendations, implement changes and better training people on how to report abuse. 1/11/12. [Http://www.whptv.com](http://www.whptv.com)

**State special education rates vary widely** – An analysis of the U. S. Department of Education data shows that the percentage of students in special education varies widely among states. The average percentage across all states is 13 percent, and two-third of states are above that number. Those differences could have major financial implications for states. Special education funding can account for up to 20 percent of school budgets. 1/24/12. [Http://www.stateline.org](http://www.stateline.org)

**New definition of autism will exclude many, study suggests** – Proposed changes in the definition of autism would sharply reduce the skyrocketing rate at which the disorder is diagnosed and might make it harder for many people who would no longer meet the criteria to get health, educational and social services, a new analysis suggests. The definition is now being reassessed by an expert panel appointed by the American Psychiatric Association, which is completing work on the fifth edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the first major revision in 17 years. 1/19/12. [Http://www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

**School principals’ jobs becoming more complex** – A survey of 600 principals found that they are taking on tasks such as fund raising, managing school facilities and site budgets without appropriate training or mentors. State funding cuts also have reduced the number of support staff, such as assistant principals and instructional coaches, who have historically taken on those peripheral jobs. 12/31/11. [Http://www.burbankleader.com](http://www.burbankleader.com)

**Study links good teachers to lasting gain** – Elementary and middle school teachers who help raise their students’ standardized test scores seem to have a wide ranging, lasting positive effect on those students’ lives beyond academics, including lower teenage pregnancy rates and great college matriculation and adult earnings, according to a new study that tracked 2.5 million students over 20 years. 1/6/12. [Http://www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

**States’ use of academic data** – All 50 states and the District of Columbia have built digital warehouses and filled them with academic data for every public school child, but

many states are not adequately sharing the information with teachers and parents or using it in sophisticated ways to improve classroom learning, according to the Data Quality Campaign. Some teachers worry that an emphasis on data ignores other progress that can't be measured on a test, such as emotional and social development. 1/17/12.  
[Http://www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

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Quote from data news story:

“We have to transform the way we think about data from a hammer that’s going to hurt teachers to a flashlight that’s going to help them.”

Aimee Guidera, Executive director, Data Quality

Campaign

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Among the sources used in gathering the above items are:

- >The ECS e-clip at <http://www.ecs.org>
- >The Public Education Network Newsblast at <http://www.publiceducationorg>
- >The Update from the American Orthopsychiatric Association at <http://www.aoatoday.com/news.php>

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](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu) or [smhp@ucla.edu](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu)

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## RECENT PUBLICATIONS (In print and on the web)

### Child, Adolescent, Young Adult Mental and Physical Health

>Mental health conditions among school aged children: Geographic and socio-demographic patterns in prevalence and treatment.(2012) R. Gandour, et al. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics* 33(1) 42-54. [Http://journals.lww.com](http://journals.lww.com)

>Measuring school-related subjective well-being in adolescents (2012) R. Long, et al., *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 82(1) 50-60 <http://www.apa.org>

>It's not just the squeaky wheels that need the oil: Examining teachers' views on the disparity between referral rates for students with internalizing versus externalizing problems (2011) K. Papandrea & H. Winefield. *School Mental Health*, 3(4) 225-235. [Http://www.springerlink.com](http://www.springerlink.com)

>Common patterns of violence experiences and depression and anxiety among adolescents. (2012) N. Slopen, et al. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*. Epub <http://www.springerlink.com>

>Precipitating events in adolescent suicidal crises: Exploring stress-reactive and nonreactive risk profiles. (2012) *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior* ePub. [Http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com)

>Trends in psychopathology across the adolescent years: What changes when children become adolescents, and when adolescents become adults? (2011) E. Costello, et al. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 52(10) 1015-1025. [Http://www.interscience.wiley.com](http://www.interscience.wiley.com)

### **Schools, Family & Community**

>Protective factors for youth exposed to violence: Role of developmental assets in building emotional resilience (2012) S. Jain, et al. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 10(1) 107-129. [Http://yvj.sagepub.com](http://yvj.sagepub.com)

>Community-based education and social capital in an urban after school program (2012) E. Darden & E. Cavendish. *Education and Urban Society*, 44, 35-60. <http://eus.sagepub.com/content/44/1/35.full.pdf+html>

>Risk and protective factors associated with gang affiliation among high risk youth: a public health approach (2012) D. McDaniel. *Injury Prevention*, online. [Http://injuryprevention.bmj.com](http://injuryprevention.bmj.com)

>Protective factors at school: Reciprocal effects among adolescents' perceptions of the school environment, engagement in learning, and hope (2011) M. Van Ryzin. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 40(12) 1568-1580. [Http://www.metapress.com](http://www.metapress.com)

>Combating school bullying through developmental guidance for positive youth development and promoting harmonious school culture. (2011) E. Hui, et al. *Scientific World Journal*, 11, 2266-2277. [Http://www.thescientificworld.com](http://www.thescientificworld.com)

>Disordered neighborhood environments and risk taking propensity in late childhood through adolescence (2012) C. Furr-Holden, et al. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 50 (1) 100-102. [Http://www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

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

- >Adolescent sexual assault victims and the legal system: Building community relationships to improve prosecution rates (2011) R. Campbell, et al. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, ePub. [Http://www.springerlink.com](http://www.springerlink.com)
- >The role of school engagement in preventing adolescent delinquency and substance use: A survival analysis (2011) Y. Li et al. *Journal of Adolescence*, 34(6) 1181-1192. [Http://www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)
- >Series of articles evaluating the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative (2012) *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 35(2) 269-302. [Http://www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)
- >A meta-analysis of experimental studies of diversion programs for juvenile offenders (2011) C. Schwalbe, et al. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 32(1) 26-33. [Http://www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)
- >A qualitative study of the formation and composition of social networks among homeless youth (2011) K. Tyler & L. Melander. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21(4) 802-817. [Http://www.interscience.wiley.com](http://www.interscience.wiley.com)
- >Violence, schools, and dropping out: Racial and ethnic disparities in the educational consequence of student victimization (2011) A. Peguero. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 26(18) 3753-3772. [Http://jiv.sagepub.com](http://jiv.sagepub.com)

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

If you see a publication we should include in ENEWS, please let us know. Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu) or [smhp@ucla.edu](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu)

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 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. [Smhp@ucla.edu](mailto:Smhp@ucla.edu)

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“If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much.”

Marian Wright Edelman  
[@##@##@#](mailto:##@##@#)

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

### **February – New ideas for increasing graduation rates and reducing dropouts**

With half the year left, the clock is running down on helping students meet requirements for this year's grade level and course expectations. If current supports and structure haven't been successful, what needs to be added? Who needs to step in to help? How do we mobilize the efforts of all involved (students, their families, teachers and school support staff) to enable all students to be successful?

At this critical time, teachers and staff need to work with students with an emphasis on (a) helping students who need special assistance to "catch-up" (e.g., homework help, tutoring, peer-to-peer support) and (b) turning things around for students who are falling further and further behind.

The need in both instances is for personalized and shared problem solving. This requires an in-depth conference and a series of follow ups with the student and family.

- The content focus is on clarifying specifics related to the problem and formulating flexible steps to solve it;
- The process focus is on establishing and continuously enhancing a positive working relationship and monitoring the intervention steps closely to make immediate changes as necessary.

Special attention needs to be paid to addressing any underlying factors interfering with school learning and performance.

See the Center's new set of practice notes which covers six fundamental steps to address these matters:

>Learning Supports: Enabling Learning in the Classroom  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rtipract.pdf>

*Here's an example of a non-traditional approach to enhancing graduation and reducing dropout: Across the country schools are expanding the opportunities for how students can approach learning in ways that incorporate more vivid and engaging content and modalities. In Gainesville City GA the district created a non-traditional high school.*

Here is what the Superintendents said about this new school (excerpted from EDC's case study of the district):

*"Before, the alternative program was only for middle school students who had behavioral difficulties and/or had unusual behavior issues. It was staff by some of the least qualified teachers and enrolled the most at-risk kids. Students missed instruction and most often those students were behind on state tests and left even further behind the next school year. Now the blended learning-computer based instruction allow for individualized work at each student's own pace. The teachers are our most effective."* (cont.)



The school uses a blended model of online or computer based instruction combined with personalized teacher-directed instruction to customize a curriculum for each student. East time requirements are flexible allowing students to tailor their own schedules that accommodate their circumstances. There are two components for the alternative program, the Superintendent explained:

- One component is for temporary students, students with behavioral difficulties. They have the same type of blended instruction, but have a regular school day and are supervised.
- The other component, the high school, is an open learning situation where seat time is not compulsory and they have staggered hours...For entrance into this high school program, students are interviewed by the teachers and evaluated based on their capacity for self-management.”

The district website describes the program in this way:

“...We feel that each student has the inherent motivation to succeed and graduate from high school, given a program that is tailored to the needs of the individual. We strive to develop that academic program and assist students in meeting their academic and personal goals. The bulk of academic course work is offered online, using educational software that is keyed to the state performance standards. Students are pre-tested before each course, allowing the development of a personalized course of study, eliminating wasted time studying concepts already mastered.... In addition to courses that comprise the academic core, all students take a leadership elective course which has a community service project as part of its requirements. During their last semester, students complete an internship in the community, exploring a potential area of future employment. ...”

For more on dropout prevention, see the Center’s Quick Find on this topic – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/dropout.html>

***What new ideas and program can you share to help students catch up and succeed?***  
Let us know.

***If you want additional ideas for students who have become disengaged, let us know. Describe the problem and relate what has been tried.***

***If you have suggestions on what is working to re-engage students, send them as well so we can share with others.***

Send all information and requests to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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 our home page “Ideas for Enhancing Learning Supports at your School this Month” on the homepage at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>



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“The first rule of holes: when you’re in one, stop digging.”  
Molly Ivins

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## OTHER HELPFUL INTERNET RESOURCES

- >The long term impacts of teachers  
[http://obs.rc.fas.harvard.edu/chetty/value\\_added.html](http://obs.rc.fas.harvard.edu/chetty/value_added.html)
- >Teacher Stress Reduction Module  
<http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/cpse/activities/teacher-stress.aspx>
- >Choosing and implementing a suicide prevention gatekeeper training program  
<http://training.sprc.org/mod/resource/view.php?id=164&tab=3#course1>
- >Association between bullying and psychosomatic problems: a meta analysis  
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/123/3/1059.full.pdf>
- >No longer alone: A resource manual for rural sexual minority youth and the adults who serve them  
<Http://www.nyacyouth.org/docs/ruralyough/nolongeralone.pdf>
- >School connectedness: strategies for increasing protective factors among youth  
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/adolescenthealth/connectedness.htm>
- >A matter of money: the cost and financing of youth development  
<http://www.aed.org/publications/upload/youthdevelopment.pdf>

Note: For a wider range of relevant websites see our *Gateway to a World of Resources* – [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/gateway/gateway\\_sites.htm](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/gateway/gateway_sites.htm)

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“All efforts to improve schools are confronted with the unrelenting reality of powerful competing agenda.”

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## UCLA CENTER UPDATE

### **New Guide:**

*RTI and Classroom & Schoolwide Learning Supports: A Guide for Teachers and Learning Supports Staff* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rtiguide.pdf>

### **New Practice Notes:**

>*Student and Learning Supports: Increasing Availability and Enhancing Student Access and Use* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mapping&use.pdf>

>*About Policy and Practice Trends for Reducing Truancy*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/truancy.pdf>

>*Learning Supports: Enabling Learning in the Classroom*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rtipract.pdf>

### **New Training & Presentation Resource (Power Point & Handouts):**

>*RTI and Learning Supports: Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching & Re-engaging Disconnected Students*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/rebuild//rfl/rti.htm>

### **New Information Resource:**

>*From Robert C. Granger's The Big Why? A Learning Agenda for the Scale Up Movement* <http://smh.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/scaleup.pdf>

### **New Policy Note and Hot Topic**

>*Challenge for 2012: Expanding the 2012 School Improvement Agenda to Encompass Development of a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/hottopic.htm>

### **New Quarterly Newsletter/Journal (Winter, 2012)**

>*Engaging and Re-engaging Families When a Student is Not Doing Well*  
<http://smh.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/winter12.pdf>

### **Featured Center Resource**

We have had considerable response to the following recent Center Reports:

>*RTI and Classroom & Schoolwide Learning Supports: a Guide for Teachers and Learning Supports Staff* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rtiguide.pdf>

>*Enhancing Home Involvement to Address Barriers to Learning: A Collaborative Process* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/homeinv.pdf>

Many who emailed us indicated a desire for more and continuing information on these topics. To this end, we continue to develop our Online Clearinghouse Quick Finds. See the following and send us suggestions for additions and other changes.

>*Response to Intervention* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/responsetointervention.htm>

>*Parent/Home Involvement in Schools* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/homework.htm>

## LINKS TO:

>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](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm)

>Upcoming and archived webcasts and other professional development opportunities – <http://smh.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](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

## COMMENTS FROM THE FIELD

We were asked to share the following with you:

(1) “We have written a book, *The Power of Family-School Partnering: A Practical Guide for School Mental Health Professionals and Educators* (Routledge, 2011). We focus on a multi-tiered system of supports for families, staff, and students so that stakeholders can integrate their actions with the current reform initiatives.”

(2) National School Climate Center, Summer Institute 2012 will be held July 10-12 in New York. [Http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/si.php](http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/si.php)

(3) “The RULER Approach to social and emotional learning is an evidence-based prevention and intervention program for school aged children, emanating from the Health, Emotion and Behavior Laboratory at Yale University.”

[Http://therulerapproach.org](http://therulerapproach.org)

(4) Please share these two studies:

“Effects of a social-emotional and character development program on the trajectory of behaviors associated with social-emotional and character development: Findings from three randomized trials. Washburn, *Prevention Science* 12, 314-323 (2011)

This study looked at effects of *Positive Action* on the developmental trajectory of

social-emotional and character-related behaviors using data from three school-based randomized trials in elementary schools. Results come from students in 20 Hawai'i schools, 14 schools in Chicago and eight schools in a southeastern state. Analyses showed that students in both control and *Positive Action* schools exhibited a general decline in the number of positive behaviors associated with social-emotional and character development that were endorsed. However, the *Positive Action* intervention significantly reduced these declines in all three trials. Taken together, these analyses 1) give insight into the normative trajectory of behaviors associated with social-emotional and character development and 2) provide evidence for the effectiveness of Positive Action in helping children maintain a relatively beneficial developmental trajectory.

“Improving Elementary School Quality Through the Use of a Social-Emotional and Character Development Program: A Matched-Pair, Cluster-Randomized, Controlled Trial in Hawai'i” *Journal of School Health*, January 2012

School safety and quality affect student learning and success. This study examined the effects of a comprehensive elementary school-wide social-emotional and character education program, Positive Action, on teacher, parent, and student perceptions of school safety and quality utilizing a matched-pair, cluster-randomized, controlled design. The Positive Action Hawai'i trial included 20 racially/ethnically diverse schools and was conducted from 2002-2003 through 2005-2006.

### **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](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu) or [adelman@psych.ucla.edu](mailto:adelman@psych.ucla.edu)

Send info to share with others or ask for specific resources by email to [smhp@ucla.edu](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu)