

ENEWS: A Monthly Forum for Sharing and Interchange

July, 2006 (vol. 10 #10)

Source: UCLA School Mental Health Project/
Center for Mental Health in Schools

ENEWS is one of the many resources our Center offers 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 Center can provide, 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**

>>Learning Supports and Reauthorizing the “No Child Left Behind Act”

****News from around the country**

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

July – Using “Down Time” to plan better ways to work together in providing learning supports

****Recent Publications Relevant to**

>Children's Mental and Physical Health

>Family, School & Community

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

****Upcoming Initiatives, Conferences & Workshops**

****Calls for Grant Proposals, Presentations & Papers**

****UCLA Center In Action**

****Other Internet Helpful Resources**

****Training & Job Opportunities (including fellowships and scholarships)**

****Comments/Requests/Information/Questions from the field**

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To post message to ENEWS, email them to ltaylor@ucla.edu

To subscribe/unsubscribe to ENEWS, go to:

<http://lists.ucla.edu/cr-bin/mailman/listinfo/mentalhealth-1>

and follow the directions to sign up. Alternatively, you can send an email request to smhp@ucla.edu asking to be added to the ENEWS listserv.

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****EMERGING ISSUE**

>>Learning Supports and Reauthorizing the “No Child Left Behind Act”

A variety of matters were raised by those responding to the Center's draft report:

“For Consideration in Reauthorizing the *No Child Left Behind Act* . . . Promoting a Systematic Focus on Learning Supports to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching.”
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/promotingsystem.htm>

No respondent had any doubt about the need for the reauthorization to include an emphasis on fully integrating development of a comprehensive *system of learning supports*. Such a system increasingly is being understood as an essential component for enhancing effectiveness in addressing barriers to learning and teaching. And, failure to develop such a system increasingly is seen as contributing to the perpetuation of achievement gaps and dropout rates and as playing a major role in the plateau of achievement gains.

One fundamental issue that did emerge is whether the proposed addition of language for a system of learning supports should be limited to Title I or should be a general mandate for all schools. Those arguing for the latter position think “no school should be left behind.” As a strategic matter, the report has taken the position that: “While a system of learning supports is essential for all schools, the critical immediate need is in Title I schools” and the additions are more likely to be incorporated into the revised law if they are part of Title I’s school improvement policy.

As the reauthorization discussion heats up, what will be your position on all this? Do you know of other proposals to address barriers to learning in the upcoming reauthorization? Send your perspective to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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“Hurry up or we’ll miss the school bus.”

“Don’t worry, I heard the Principal say, no child will be left behind.”

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****NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY**

***NEW REPORT ON LEARNING SUPPORTS AND REAUTHORIZING THE “NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT”**

The Center for Mental Health in Schools has incorporated feedback from across the country on the first draft of the report entitled: “For Consideration in Reauthorizing the *No Child Left Behind Act* ... Promoting a Systematic Focus on Learning Supports to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching.” Over the next few weeks, the Center will begin wide circulation of the document. It is available now online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/promotingsystem.htm>

***CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH RESILIENCY ACT OF 2006 INTRODUCED IN U.S. SENATE**

Includes in Section 103: Activities concerning mental health services in schools. Also addresses state and community activities concerning mental health of children and adolescents, federal interagency collaboration, and related research. See <http://thomas.loc.gov> S.3449

***USE OF ANTIPSYCHOTICS BY THE YOUNG ROSE FIVEFOLD**

“The use of potent antipsychotic drugs to treat children and adolescents for problems like aggression and mood swings increased more than fivefold from 1993 to 2002 researchers report. The findings augment earlier studies that have documented a sharp rise over the last decade in the prescription of psychiatric drugs for children.” 6/6/06. New York Times.

[Http://www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

***SUICIDE-RISK SCREENING FOR TEENS: THE DEBATE CONTINUES**

“A growing number of U. S. schools are screening teenagers for suicidal tendencies or signs of mental illness... The state of New York plans to start screening 400,000 children a year, and the federal government is directing tens of millions of dollars to expand screening nationwide... The growing use of screening has coincided with a rapid increase in the number of youngsters being prescribed powerful antipsychotic medications...” 6/16/06 Washington Post.

[Http://www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

***STORMS BLOW OUT MONEY FOR SCHOOLS**

“New Orleans area school systems will lose more than \$200 million in state funding under a revamped financing formula passed by the Legislature this month, cuts prompted largely by drastic swings in enrollment and a statewide loss of more than 70,000 students.” 6/22/06 New Orleans Times-Picayune.

***PUSH FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS IN NEW ORLEANS**

“Education Secretary Margaret Spellings announced that \$24 million in federal aid had been awarded to Louisiana for the Development of charter schools...The grant is likely to cement the role of New Orleans...as the nation’s pre-eminent laboratory for the widespread use of charter schools.” 6/13/06. New York Times. [Http://www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

***DROPPING THE DROPOUT RATE: FRESHMEN-ONLY SCHOOLS**

“Across the nation, freshmen are considered more likely to drop out or be held back than other students. Separate building on campus where ninth-graders have classes are designed to ease students into the pressures of high school by putting them in smaller settings with more individual attention.” 6/18/06. Detroit Free Press. [Http://www.freep.com](http://www.freep.com)

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“By and large, brief diagnostic tests—especially doing broad screening in children—are not well validated, and one has to be concerned about missing real illness or, conversely, interpreting transient life troubles as a mental illness requiring intervention. It doesn’t mean ignorance is good, but if your instrument is poor, or you don’t know how to intervene to prevent a condition like suicide, there is actually a risk of harm. Besides cost and intrusiveness, there is a risk of harm in terms of stigmatization, but also interventions that backfire.”

Steven E. Hyman

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Each week the Center highlights a newsworthy story 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>

****MONTHLY FOCUS FOR SCHOOLS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

>>July Theme – Using “Down Time: to plan better ways to work together in providing learning supports

Over a school year, it is hard to find enough time to stop, think, and plan new ways of doing things. It is a bit like Winnie the Pooh's experience going downstairs. As Milne describes it:

"Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he know, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it."

The month of July in many schools is "down time." (For year-long schools, intersessions are comparable times.) Down time provides an opportunity to stop and think long enough to plan better ways of doing things. Such time blocks can allow staff who work year round to plan new ways of providing and enhancing supports for student learning. Such periods also allow for special training opportunities.

One aim might be to set a process into motion that can lead to development of a comprehensive and cohesive component to address barriers to student learning and promote healthy development. Planning and developing such a component not only can end fragmented approaches, it can move toward eliminating the counterproductive competition for resources and end the marginalization of student support staff.

Building such a learning supports component requires enhancing the capacity of a school's support staff so that they can be more effective in addressing the many factors that interfere with students succeeding at school. One way to enhance the capacity of support staff is to develop a mechanism that enables them to work together on a regular basis. A *Learning Supports Resource Team* provides a good example of such a resource-oriented mechanism.

For more on this see “Developing Resource-oriented Mechanisms to Enhance Learning Supports http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/developing_resource_oriented-mechanisms.pdf

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“The bold vision behind standards begs for serious attention to good teaching, strong curriculum materials, tests that truly capture what we want students to learn, and help for students who need it.”

Jane David and Larry Cuban

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***RECENT PUBLICATIONS (IN PRINT AND ON THE WEB)**

***Children’s Mental and Physical Health**

>Understanding and treating psychopathology in schools: special Issue (2006) A. Davis, et al, (Eds). *Psychology in the Schools*, 43(4). <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com>

>Who receives a diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in the United States Elementary School Population? (2006) H. Schneider & D. Eisenberg. *Pediatrics*, 117(4) e601-609. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/117/4/e601>

>Comparisons of self-efficacy, mood, effort, and hope between students with learning disabilities and their non-LD-matched peers. (2006) T. Lackaye, et al. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 21(2) 111-121.

>What teens want: Barriers to seeking care for depression. (2006) J. Wisdom, et al. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 33(2) 133-145.

>Mental health care services for children with special health care needs and their family members: Prevalence and correlates of unmet needs. (2006) M. Ganz & S. Tendulkar. *Pediatrics* (117(6) 2138-2148. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org>

***Family, School & Community**

>Peer exclusion and victimization: Processes that mediate the relation between peer group rejection and children’s classroom engagement and achievement. (2006) E. Buhs, et al. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(1) 1-13. <http://www.apa.org/journals/releases/edu9811.pdf>

>School size and its relationship to student outcomes and school climate (2006) K. Stevenson. http://www.edfacilities.org/pubs/size_outcomes.pdf

>Using peer-assisted learning strategies to increase response to intervention in inclusive middle math settings. (2006) St. Kroeger & B. Kouche. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 38(5) 6-13.

>Cultural competency: From philosophy to research and practice. (2006) S. Sue. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 34(2) 237-245. See summary at http://datatrends.fmhi.usf.edu/summary_133.pdf

>Growing Community Schools: The role of cross-boundary leadership (2006) M. Blank, et al, Coalition for Community Schools. <http://www.communityschools.org>

>Social capital, family violence, and neglect (2006) A. Zolotor & D. Runyan, Pediatrics, 117(6) e1123-1131. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/117/6/e1124>

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

>Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance. Surveillance Summaries, (2006) <http://www.cdc.gov/yrbss>.

>Maximizing the use of EPSDT to improve the health and development of young children (2006) K. Johnson. http://nccp.org/pub_tst06b.html

>A self-assessment and planning guide: Developing a comprehensive financing plan. (2006) M. Armstrong, et al, <http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtcpubs/hctrking/pubs/AssessPlanGuide2006/AssessPlanGuideWeb.pdf>

>Dropout rates in the United States: 2002 and 2003 (2006) <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006062>

>Tracking achievement gaps and assessing the impact of NCLB on the gaps. (2006) J. Kee. <http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu>

>Applying empirically supported treatments to complex cases: Ethical, empirical, and practical considerations (2006) A. Ruscio & D. Holohan. Clinical Psychology, 13(2) 146-162

>National trends in the outpatient treatment of children and adolescents with antipsychotic drugs (2006) M. Olfson, et al, Archives of General Psychiatry, 63(6) 679-685. <http://archpsyc.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/63/6/679>

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“If you’re going to put children on three or four different drugs, now you’ve got a potpourri of target symptoms and side effects. How do you even know who the kid is anymore?”

Julie Magno Zito

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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 100 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

****UPCOMING INITIATIVES, CONFERENCES, AND WORKSHOPS**

>The Education Commission of the States National Forum on Education Policy, 7/11-14, Minneapolis, MN. <http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/meetings.asp>

>School of the 21st Century, 7/17-28, New Haven, CT. <http://www.yale.edu/21C/>

>Family-School Relations during Adolescence: Linking Interdisciplinary Research and Practice, 7/20-21, Durham, NC <http://www.childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu>

>National Innovation Forum on Best Practices in School Leadership, 7/25-27, Cleveland, OH. <http://www.csuohio.edu/theacademy/>

>School Health Interdisciplinary Program Conference, July 31 - 8/3, Ellicott City, MD, CSMHA, <http://csmha.umaryland.edu>

>Law Enforcement Solutions for Reducing Racial Disparities & Disproportionate Minority

Contact in Juvenile Justice, 9/7-10. New Orleans, LA.

[Http://www.juvjustice.org/conferences/index_conference.html](http://www.juvjustice.org/conferences/index_conference.html)

>Mentoring Youth with Disabilities, 9/13-15. Boston, MA. [Http://www.regonline.com/pyd](http://www.regonline.com/pyd)

>National Coordinating Committee on School Health and Safety, 9/20. Crystal City, VA
<http://mchb.hrsa.gov/healthystudents/>

>11th Annual Conference on Advancing School-Based Mental Health, CSMHA, 9/28-30, Baltimore, MD <http://csmha.umaryland.edu>

>American Academy of Pediatrics, 10/7-10. Atlanta, GA. [Http://www.aap.org/nce](http://www.aap.org/nce)

>International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention Conference, 10/7-11, Baltimore, MD. [Http://www.iatdp.org](http://www.iatdp.org)

>National Association of State Boards of Education, 10/12-14. Louisville, KY.
[Http://www.nasbe.org](http://www.nasbe.org)

>National Partnership for Juvenile Services, 10/15-18. Las Vegas, NV.
[Http://www.npjs.org/events/joint.html](http://www.npjs.org/events/joint.html)

>International Bullying Prevention Conference, 11/2-3, Atlanta, GA.
<http://www.stopbullyingworld.com/>

>Community Education: Raising the Odds. Linking Schools and Communities for Success, 11/29-12/2. Reno, NV. [Http://careercenter.ncea.com](http://careercenter.ncea.com)

>National Multicultural Conference and Summit, 1/24-26. Seattle, WA.
[Http://www.multiculturalsummit.com](http://www.multiculturalsummit.com)

Note: For ongoing information about conferences, refer to our website at
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm>

If you want to list your conference, please email information to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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“It’s not who’s first, but who lasts.”

New York Times

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****CALLS FOR GRANT PROPOSALS, PRESENTATIONS & PAPERS**

>Grants

See the electronic storefront for federal grants at <http://www.grants.gov>
You can use it to double check due dates and access applications.

Current Examples:

- >U. S. Department of Education)(<http://www.ed.gov>)
 - >>Integrations of Schools and Mental Health Systems (84.215M) Due 7/10/06
 - >>Education Research Grants (84.305)
 - >Education Leadership (due 7/27/06)
 - >Education policy, finance, and systems (due 7/27/06)
 - >Research on High School Reform (due 11/16/06)
 - >>Special Education Research Grants (84.324)

- >Early intervention, early childhood special education , and assessment for young children with disabilities (due 7/27/06)
- >Serious Behavior Disorders (due 7/27/06)
- >Response to Intervention (due 11/16/06)
- >Secondary and Transition Services (due 11/16/06)

>Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (<http://www.samhsa.gov>)
 >>Knowledge dissemination conference grants. Due 10/31 and 1/31.

>National Institutes of Health (<http://grants.nih.gov>)
 >>Early identification and treatment of mental disorders in children and adolescents (R01) Due 10/1/06

Note: If you want to Surf the Internet for Funds, go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>. Click on Quick Find, scroll down Center Responses to Financing and Funding. Provides links to funding sources and our Quick Training Aid on Financing Strategies to Address Barriers to Learning.

Call for Papers

>The Society for Research in Child Developing is launching a new Journal, Child Development Perspectives. It will begin accepting submission in July 1. See <http://www.srcd.org/CDPsubmit>

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“New policy on reimbursement for travel. Do not tip more than ten percent for meals.

If the meal costs more than six dollars, bring back a fork.”

Scott Adams

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**UCLA CENTER IN ACTION

*NEW REPORT ON LEARNING SUPPORTS AND REAUTHORIZING THE ““NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT””

As we noted last month, we have been conducting a policy analysis focused on how learning supports can be enhanced in the reauthorized law. A draft entitled “For Consideration in Reauthorizing the *No Child Left Behind Act* ... Promoting a Systematic Focus on Learning Supports to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching” was completed early in June. We circulated that draft for widespread reaction and to elicit ideas about how individuals, organizations, state departments, and districts can share ideas for strengthening learning supports (which is an umbrella concept for concerns about enhancing mental health in schools). We have now incorporated the feedback we received. Over the next few weeks, we will begin wide circulation of the document. If you want a hard copy, please let us know. The revision is online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/promotingsystem.htm>

*Summer Newsletter sent out and online –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Newsletter/summer06.pdf>

Lead article is

>a call to action . . .School Improvement: Where’s Student Support?

Other features:

>Suicide Prevention and Schools: Issues

>Doing Something about the Trend to Over-pathologize Students

>Schools as Businesses

Let us know if you haven’t received your copy. Also, let us know if there is anyone to whom you want us to send a copy.

*New Center Brief

“Preschool Programs: A Synthesis of Current Policy Issues” online as of July 5.

*New Quick Find on “Small Class Size”

*Other recent Practice Briefs, Practice Notes, and Guidance Notes

>>“Schools as Caring Learning Communities” –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/caring.pdf>

>>“Prescription Drug Abuse Among Youth” –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/abuseofprescript.pdf>

This is also the most recent Hot Topic (click on Hot Topics & Issues on the Center homepage – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>)

>>“Life Beyond the ‘Project’ – Fully Integrating the Effort into the School Improvement Agenda” –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/lifebeyondproject.pdf>

*Two leadership events in July to inform the field:

>>As part of its emphasis on developing policy leadership for mental health in schools, the Center hosts policy leadership institutes designed for school-community teams. For example, on July 11, projects involved in the USDOE initiative – “Integrating School and Mental Health Systems” will participate in such an institute. The theme is “MH in Schools: Where we are & where we need to go -- Becoming an Integrated Part of the School Improvement Agenda.” Comparable Leadership Institutes are being scheduled for the coming year. Let us know if you want to participate in such events.

>>A national leadership institute: “Call to Action . . . Student Support Staff: Moving in New Directions through School Improvement” Teams from major associations and education agencies will focus on how those in leadership positions across the country can mobilize school support staff to engage productively in school improvement planning and decision making. Leaders interested in the possibility of attending should contact ltaylor@ucla.edu

*Next major statewide events related to the “National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support”

>>A statewide Leadership Institute for the New Directions Initiative will be held in Hartford CT in August (a follow up to the CT Summit). Teams from schools and districts will plan ways to strengthen learning supports. Leaders interested in the possibility of attending should contact ltaylor@ucla.edu

>>Initial planning underway for a statewide summit in Washington state in the fall. Leaders interested in the possibility of attending should contact ltaylor@ucla.edu

For more information on the UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools, go to the website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> or contact:

Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor, Co-Directors
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) 846-4842; Fax (310) 206-8716
Email: smhp@ucla.edu

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****CENTER FOR SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH ANALYSIS AND ACTION.** Check out our sister center at <http://csmha.umaryland.edu> or contact Mark Weist, Director, CSMHA, University of Maryland at Baltimore, Department of Psychiatry, 737 W. Lombard St., 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD, 21202. Toll free phone: 888-706-0980. Email csmh@umpsy.umaryland.edu

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“Reading what people write on desks can teach you a lot.”

NIEHS Kids’ pages

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****OTHER INTERNET HELPFUL RESOURCES**

>Sustainable schoolwide social and emotional learning implementation guide and toolkit

http://www.casel.org/downloads/CASEL_flyer_final.pdf

>Tool kit on teaching and assessing students with disabilities

<http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/index.asp>

>Building young minds: The importance of social and emotional development

<http://www.ndkidscount.org>

>Knowledge path: Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Services

http://www.mchlibrary.info/knowledgepaths/kp_epsdt.html

>State health facts

<http://www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi>

>The Science of Mental illness. Free curriculum supplements for middle school.

[Http://science.education.nih.gov/supplements](http://science.education.nih.gov/supplements)

>Youth and substance use

http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/publications/factsheets/youth_substance.shtml

>Media-smart youth: Eat, think, and be active

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/msy>

>Building Partnerships for Youth

<http://bpy.n4h.org>

>Child welfare information gateway

http://www.childwelfare.gov/search/pubs_search.cfm

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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****TRAINING AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

<Child Behavior Therapists>

NYU Child Study Center, NIMH clinical trial related to ADHD. Contact Howard Abikoff at

howard.abikoff@med.nyu.edu

<Research Coordinator>

Out-of-School Time Resource Center, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice. Philadelphia, PA. [Http://jobs.hr.upenn.edu](http://jobs.hr.upenn.edu) Reference number #060519888

<Project Director>

The Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention and Treatment, Miami, FL. See <http://melissainstitute.org>

<Director>

Center for Academic Excellence in Child Development, University of Arkansas, College of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics. Little Rock, AR. Email FiserDebraH@uams.edu

<Faculty>

Assistant Professor, School Psychology, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Philadelphia, PA. Hr@pcom.edu

Note: For more information employment opportunities, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm>. Following the list of current openings, you will see links to HRSA, SAMHSA, and other relevant job sites.

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“Why do you work as a baker?”

“I knead the dough.”

Hayden McIntire

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****COMMENTS, REQUESTS, INFO, QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD**

> Responses to last month’s emerging issue:

“What Price School Accountability – Should Students Pay the Price of No Diploma?”

(1) “To put it simply, until/unless we are willing to hold grownups accountable for providing opportunity to learn (for which standards have been developed, but never enforced), it seems unfair to hold the least powerful stakeholders in the educational process--i.e., students--accountable. However, please be careful to separate NCLB (which does not mandate any consequences for individual students) from state laws (about half of which require passing an exam to receive a high school diploma). Graduation exams are a state, not a federal, decision.”

(2) “In our state, we are exploring another related issue to diplomas and credits. Presently school systems statewide are not consistently awarding credits to students who receive instruction in non-traditional educational settings and/or who experience disruption in their educational experience. Too many youth lose credits when they move from one school to another. The move can be due to homelessness, in-patient psychiatric care, correctional facility placement and/or change in foster care placement. These are youth who may or may not be receiving special education services. However, if they lose credits, there is an increased chance they will drop out of school. I am working with a group who would like to develop more consistent practice among school systems as well as increase a timely exchange of educational information when students move from one school or facility to another. Are you aware of any other research or state policies that address this issue?”

(3) “I agree with the quote by Mr. Gonzalez - the students should not be held solely accountable for the failures of the inequitable education system. As a school social worker in a high school teen parenting program, I have seen firsthand how the students in our program are suffering from this requirement. The majority of the young women I work with are coming into high school with challenges of poverty, abuse histories, dealing with racist educational systems, learning English as a second language, and a history of academic struggle since elementary school. Add

to that the challenge of raising a child while attending high school and it is easy to see how full of a plate these young people have. They have worked SO hard to make it this far - many of them have completed all their credits, passed all of their required classes, finished the required community service hours, and have already applied to local colleges with goals of becoming nurses, social workers, lawyers, police officers, teachers...and will not be able to walk the stage with their class because of the exit exam. Can you imagine working so hard towards a goal WHILE raising a healthy child, only to be denied this opportunity? For many they are the first in their families to graduate from high school and now their families are denied the pride of seeing their children graduate. While I agree with the concept that standards and accountability are essential for success and can help motivate students towards goals, I see that this can only work in an ideal system where equal education has been offered from the start.”

(4) “Any student who attends, participates and earns a passing grade for their performance in the required high school courses deserves to be awarded a diploma. If a student is somehow resilient and resourceful enough to earn credit for passing the classes, without having mastered the pre-requisite academic skills that support learning the content and performing the required assignments in those classes, then our hats should be off to them! Students who manage to compensate for a lack of training, sub-standard skills, cognitive processing deficits, and other learning differences to pull off this overwhelming challenge, clearly must possess a wide variety of other work-related, social, emotional, organizational, etc. skills and other production driven abilities which must have enabled them to be successful despite suffering from deficits in the 3 R's!!

There are plenty of success stories in the real world to justify awarding students a high school diploma upon graduation from high school! From business executives to rock stars, individuals who can't read well, who never did memorize their basic multiplication facts in the 3rd grade and then had a more difficult time of it in math ever since, who can't spell well enough to find a word in the dictionary or to effectively utilize the spell check tool, who break into a cold sweat as soon as an x or n appear alongside number symbols in a math problem, who suffer from writer's block, who experience extreme test anxiety, and who rely on their spouses, bookkeepers and accountants to balance their checkbooks, who rely on debt-financing to meet financial obligations... nevertheless these individuals have managed to function in their chosen vocational/professional roles, as employee, sales person, public servant, management, administrator, janitor and/or as entrepreneur.

When it comes right down to it, we are talking about recognizing the individual's resourcefulness and celebrating their achievement. Denying a young person this experience doesn't do much in the way of preparing anyone to successfully embark on an independent journey into adulthood, I should think, though it might just destine one towards failure.”

(5) “This has been an issue in our system for about 6 or 7 years. We only allow students who complete all requirements, including end of course and state tests, to march in graduation and to receive a diploma. When we first instituted this policy, we made a point of educating our students regarding graduation requirements and we continue to do so. At first we had quite a few disappointed parents and seniors but that number has dropped and our students have learned to comply. They have several opportunities to retake tests, even after their class graduates, and, they are provided with tutoring and any special help they need to succeed. As a board member, it is difficult to me to tell a parent their child will not be able to march in graduation but the child will affirm that they knew the requirements ahead of time. In this matter, it seems tough love has been effective for our system.”

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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:
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