



## **\*\*EMERGING ISSUE**

### **>>>Backlash to High School Exit Exams**

Report in the Los Angeles Times (4/9/03): "The Los Angeles Unified School Board voted unanimously Tuesday to oppose the state's requirement that students pass an exit exam before graduating from high school . . . More than 100,000 teenagers have failed the California High School Exit Exam at least twice and must retake it."

Proponents of exit exams warned that "dropping the test would not help struggling students in the long run because the exam's content is not unreasonably difficult . . ."

Those concerned about the psychosocial consequences of such testing argue that more is at stake than whether students can assimilate enough content to pass the exam; they point to likely increases in dropout rates, mental health problems, and related problems as being ignored by advocates of high stakes testing.

Where do you stand on this? We look forward to your comments.

Post your response directly on our website's Net Exchange page for others to read and respond.

Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

Or you can send your response by email to: [smhp@ucla.edu](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu)

Phone: 310/825-3634 Fax: 310/206-8716

Write: Center for Mental Health in Schools

Department of Psychology, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

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## **\*\*NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY**

### **FEELING TRAPPED BY ACCOUNTABILITY**

Indiana State Board of Education reluctantly agreed to revise the state's accountability system to comply with No Child Left Behind Act, despite Board concern that 80 to 95 percent of schools could be considered failing. "We feel very trapped and backed into a corner by this situation, said a Board member.

<http://www.nclb.gov/next/overview/index.html>

### **GAO CALLS FOR REDUCING NUMBER OF CHILDREN PLACED IN CHILD WELFARE & JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS SOLELY FOR MH SERVICES**

An April (2003) GAO Congressional report calls on federal agencies to play a stronger role in reducing the number of children who are being placed solely for purposes of obtaining MH services. The report states: "Child welfare directors in 19 states and juvenile justice officials in 30 counties estimated that in fiscal year 2001 parents place over 12,700 children into child welfare or juvenile justice systems so that these children could receive mental health services. ...officials said most are male, adolescent, often have multiple problems, and many exhibit behaviors that threaten the safety of themselves and others." GAO recommends developing an interagency working group to identify the causes of the problem at state and local levels and create an action plan to address the causes. (<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d03397.pdf>)

### **PREVALENCE OF CHILD DELINQUENCY**

According to the latest statistics, children younger than 13 are involved in almost one in ten juvenile arrests related to arson, sex offenses, and vandalism.

<http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojdp/193411.pdf>

## GROUPING HIGH-RISK YOUTH FOR PREVENTION MAY HARM MORE THAN HELP

A January (2003) report from the National Institute on Drug Abuse cites the work of Tom Dishion and his colleagues who found that youth at high risk for substance abuse and increasingly serious delinquency were grouped together for a 12-week cognitive behavioral program designed to reduce problems behavior actually increased teacher reported delinquency over three years. These youth exhibited significantly worse behaviors than similarly at risk youths who were given prevention materials to study by themselves individually or received no intervention at all. The results are consistent with a number of studies on negative peer dynamics within high risk youth groups. Dishion describes the method by which peers negatively influence on another as “deviancy training.” Not all interventions with peer groups have adverse effects. Data also exist that indicate peer interventions may result in beneficial effects, especially when the groups include prosocial youth.

[http://www.drugabuse.gov/NIDA\\_Notes/NNV017N5/Grouping.html](http://www.drugabuse.gov/NIDA_Notes/NNV017N5/Grouping.html)

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT: AN EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

An analysis by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis argues that most initiatives funded by state and local government to create new jobs result in few public benefits, but dollars invested in early childhood yield extraordinary public returns.

<http://minneapolisfed.org/pubs/fedgaz/03-03/earlychild.cfm>

## NEW SURVEY ON PREKINDERGARTEN IN U.S. PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Thirty-five percent of all public elementary schools offer prekindergarten classes. Renewed attention on early education to promote school readiness focused on role public schools might play.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003019>

## SURGEON GENERAL TO VISIT 50 SCHOOLS IN 50 STATES

U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona will talk with students about the importance of making healthy choices and risk avoidance and how making the right decisions can benefit a student now and later in life. <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov>.

## NEW TASK FORCE ON RURAL EDUCATION

Recognizing the unique challenges rural school districts face, the U.S. Department of Education has formed a task force to work with the Rural Caucus to find solutions.

<http://www.ed.gov>.

## DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD VOTES TO OPPOSE STATE EXIT EXAM

As noted in this month’s “Emerging Issue, the Los Angeles School Board voted unanimously to oppose the state’s exit exam requirement. Across the state, more than 100,000 students have failed the exam; pass rates for white and Asian students are

nearly double those of Latinos and African Americans; among students from low-income homes, only 22% passed the exam's math section, while about 40% of non-economically disadvantaged students passed (April 9, 2003 Los Angeles Times)

## INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Fourth graders in the U.S. score better in reading than students in 23 of the 34 other countries participating in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, although they score lower than students in England, the Netherlands, and Sweden.  
[Http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003073](http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003073)

## HIGH COST OF TEACHER TURNOVER

What does it cost school districts to replace teachers leaving the profession? A study of teacher turnover in Texas estimates that when wages, benefits, organization costs related to termination, recruitment and hiring, substitute salaries, learning curve loss, and training are added up, it costs \$56,115 to replace a teacher who leaves the system. Statewide, the estimate that teacher turnover costs Texas schools from \$329 million per year to \$1.59 billion.  
[Http://www.ascd.org/publications/researchbrief/volume1/v1n8.html](http://www.ascd.org/publications/researchbrief/volume1/v1n8.html).

[Note: see our website What's New, for a current news item posted each week.]

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“School is not easy and it is not for the most part very much fun, but then, if you are very lucky, you may find a teacher...My three had this in common – they all loved what they were doing. They did not tell – they catalyzed a burning desire to know. Under their influence, the horizons sprung wide and fear went away and the unknown became knowable. But most important of all, the truth, that dangerous stuff, became beautiful and very precious...”

John Steinbeck

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

Each month on our website we feature a special focus on enhancing student support at schools.

May's topic is “Planning for Successful Transitions to a New Grade or a New School.” As the traditional school year draws to a close, anticipation of a move to the next grade or to middle or high school can raise concerns for a student and family. For tools, guidelines and resource to support transitions, see the Center's home page and click on “Ideas for Enhancing Support at Your School This Month” (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>)

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“We hear . . . they are laying off all these first-year teachers. ...  
I think I came into the profession at the wrong time.”  
Sarah Kenley, graduate student in education

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

>>>CHILDREN'S MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

“Differences in the use of a school mental health program in secondary schools.” (2003) by C Fertman & J. Ross. American Journal of Health Behavior 27(2) 146-155.

“Youth suicide risk and prevention interventions: A review of the past 10 years (2003) by M Gould, et al. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 42(4) 386-405.

“Receipt of Psychological or Emotional Counseling by Suicidal Adolescents” (2003) J. Pirkis, et al. Pediatrics, 111(4) 388-393.

“Science-Based Prevention Programs and Principles 2002: Effective Substance Abuse and Mental Health Programs for Every Community” (2003)  
<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/govpubs/BKD479/BKD479.pdf>

“Educating the Child with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder” (2003) S. Rief. Primary Psychiatry 10(4) 61-65.  
[Http://www.primarypsychiatry.com/issue.php3?volume=10&number=4](http://www.primarypsychiatry.com/issue.php3?volume=10&number=4)

“Use of Psychotropic Medications in Young, Preschool Children: Primum Non Nocere” (2003) W. Barbaresi. Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, 157(2) 121-123. ([Http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/short/157/2/121](http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/short/157/2/121)

“Ethnic Matching of Clients and Clinicians and Use of Mental Health Services by Ethnic Minority Clients” (2003) by S. Ziguras, et al. Psychiatric Services, 54, 535-541.

“Screening and Assessing Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders among Youth in the Juvenile Justice System” (2003) T. Grisso & L. Underwood. National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice. [Http://www.ncmhjj.com](http://www.ncmhjj.com).

“Assessing the effectiveness of care for youth with severe emotional disturbances: Is there agreement between popular outcome measures?” (2002) A Rosenblatt & J. Rosenblatt. Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research 29(3) 259-273. Summarized at [http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtcpubs/datatrends/summary\\_76.pdf](http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtcpubs/datatrends/summary_76.pdf)

“Building a Strong Foundation: Creating a Health Agenda for the Middle Childhood Years” (2003) M Biehl, et al. <http://youth.ucsf.edu/policycenter>.

“New medical records privacy rule: The interface with teen access to confidential care” (2003) by C. Dailard. The Guttmacher Report on Public Policy 6(1) 6-7.

#### >>>>FAMILY, COMMUNITY & SCHOOLS

“Special Issue: Evidence-Based Interventions in School Psychology: The State of the Art and Future Directions” (2003) School Psychology Quarterly, 17(4).

“Safe and Secure: Guides to Creating Safer Schools” (2003) Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, [http://www.safetyzone.org/safe\\_secure.html](http://www.safetyzone.org/safe_secure.html)

“Neighborhood-Based Prevention/Intervention: A Process Evaluation of a Risk-Focused Approach” (2003) P. Jenkins & W. Welsh. Children and Youth Services Review, 25(4) 327-351.

“Relationship between bullying and violence among U.S. Youth” (2003) T. Nansel, et al. Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, 157(4) 348-353.

“Task Force on Community Preventive Services” (2003) Recommendations to promote healthy social environments. American Journal of Preventive Medicine 24 (3S)

21-24.

“Altering the Structure and Culture of American Public Schools” (2003) W. Wilms. Phi Delta Kappan. <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k0304wil.htm>

“The Agony of School Reform: Race, Class, and the Elusive Search for Social Justice” (2003) Z. Leonardo, Educational Researcher, 32, 37-43.

#### >>>POLICY, LAW, FINANCES & STATISTICS

“Funding Mental Health Services for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System: Challenges and Opportunities” (2003) B. Kamradt. National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice. <http://www.ncmhjj.com>.

“Factors that Explain How Policy Makers Distribute Resources to Mental Health Services” (2003) by P. Corrigan & A. Watson. Psychiatric Services 54; 501-507.

“Are American Children’s Problems Still Getting Worse? A 23 year comparison” (2003) by T. Achenbach, et al. Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology 31(1) 1-11.

“Teen Pregnancy: Policy’s Role in Prevention” (2003) Center for Health Improvement. [http://www.centerforhealthimprovement.org/pdf/TEEN\\_BRF1.pdf](http://www.centerforhealthimprovement.org/pdf/TEEN_BRF1.pdf)

“Datapoints: Trends by Race and Gender in Suicide Attempts Among U.S. Adolescents, 1991-2001. (2003) S. Joe & S. Marcus. Psychiatric Services, 54; 454.

“Risk and Resilience in the Life Course: Implications for Interventions and Social Policies” (2003) by I. Schoon & J. Bynner. Journal of Youth Studies, 6(1) 21-31.

“Children’s Services Tracking: Understanding Multiple Service Use of at Risk Children through Technology. (2003) R. Brown, et al. Children and Youth Services Review, 25 (3) 225-249.

“Whole school reform and preschool education: The role of preschool education in policy decisions regarding the improvement of disadvantaged school systems” (2003) E. Walker. Journal of Children and Poverty, 9(1) 71-88.

“Status and Trends in the Education of Hispanics” (2003) National Center for Education Statistics. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003008>

“School Choice: Silver Bullet, Social Threat, or Sound Policy?” (2003) by F. Fowler. Educational Researcher, 32(2) 33-39.

“Schools’ Use of Assessment for Kindergarten Entrance and Placement: 1998-1999” (2003) <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003004>.

“Using the Right Words Gets the Message to Opinion Leaders About Helping Low-Income Families” (2003) by M. Mellman and S. Munger. National Center for Children in Poverty. [http://www.nccp.org/news/win03/win03\\_02.html](http://www.nccp.org/news/win03/win03_02.html)

[Note: the Quick Find topic search menu on our website is updated regularly with new reports and publications such as those listed above. Currently there are over 100 topics with direct links to our Center materials and to other online resources and related Centers. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>]

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Money is better than poverty, if only for financial reasons.  
Woody Allen

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**\*\*UPCOMING INITIATIVES, CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS**

>National Coordinating Committee on School Health, May 15-16, Washington, DC  
<http://www.healthystudents.org>

>Linking Forces: Annual Children's Mental Health Conference, May 22 - 23, Miami, FL  
<http://sednet.dadeschools.net>

>Interprofessional Collaboration 2003, June 13-14, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA [http://www.hhs.jmu.edu/ipc\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.hhs.jmu.edu/ipc_flyer.pdf)

>National Assembly on School Based Health Care, June 26-28, Reston, VA  
<http://www.nasbhc.org>

>National Association of School Nurses, June 28-July 1, Cincinnati, OH  
<http://www.nasn.org>

>American School Counselor Association, June 29-July 2, St. Louis, MO  
<http://www.schoolcounselor.org>

>Educating Minds and Hearts: Safe Schools, Healthy Character Development, Academic Success, and Social-Emotional Education, July 8 - 11 NY, NY  
<http://www.csee.net/conferences/mindsandhearts/evaluationreport.asp>

>National Prevention Symposium, July 16-18, San Francisco, CA <http://www.chef.org>

>National Prevention Network Research Conference, August 24-27, Albuquerque, NM [scarlson@ou.edu](mailto:scarlson@ou.edu)

>International Conference on Trauma, Attachment and Dissociation, September 12 - 14, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia <http://www.delphicentre.com.au>

[FOR MORE CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS, REFER TO OUR WEBSITE AT <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> – Go to “Contents” then click on Upcoming Conferences]

If you want your conference listed, send the information to [smhp@ucla.edu](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu)

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To lose one parent may be regarded as a misfortune;  
to lose both looks like carelessness.  
Oscar Wilde

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**^^^ CALLS FOR GRANT PROPOSALS, PRESENTATIONS, AND PAPERS**

**GRANTS:**

>>>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (<http://samhsa.gov>)  
>Strengthening Access and Retention for Substance Abuse Treatment, TI-03-006, due May 12

>Effective Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment; Motivational Enhancement Therapy and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, TI 03-007, Due May 12

>Methamphetamine and inhalant prevention interventions or infrastructure development (part of the Targeted Capacity Expansion Program) SP 03-006, Due May 23

>Knowledge Dissemination Conference Grants, PA 03-002, Deadline September 10

>>>U. S. Department of Education (<http://www.ed.gov>)

>Comprehensive School Reform Quality Initiatives, CFDA#84.332B, Due May 5

>Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program CFDA #84.349A, due May 16

>Smaller Learning Communities Program, CFDA#84.215L, Due May 19

>>>U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

COPS in Schools: School Resource Officers. Deadline June 13

<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov>

[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]

#### REQUESTS FOR PRESENTATIONS & PAPERS:

>National Association of Secondary School Principals Convention, Feb 27-Mar 1, 2004, Orlando, FL. Call for Presentations on successful research based information on student achievement or principal leadership. Proposals due May 5. (<Http://www.nasspconvention.org/2004convention.htm>)

>The journal "Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties" is soliciting manuscripts for its column "Focus on Inclusion." The column provides a forum for discussing ways to make mainstream education work for students with learning problems. Manuscripts must be no more than six pages, double spaced. For more info, contact Michael Skinner ([skinnerm@cofc.edu](mailto:skinnerm@cofc.edu))

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"If everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane."

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>>NEWS FROM THE TWO NATIONAL CENTERS FOCUSING ON MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS

^^^ **Updates from our Center at UCLA**

>**SUMMITS INITIATIVE: NEW DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENT SUPPORT – OUTREACH CAMPAIGN BEGINS**

As part of the Summits Initiative, we have developed a nationwide outreach campaign. The outreach is designed to build awareness regarding:

- >Why it is imperative to pursue New Directions for Student Support
- >Ways to Rethink Use of Resources (Programs, Personnel, etc.)

Special mailings are being sent to Superintendents, Title I Coordinators, Student Support Directors, and Special Education Directors at state and district levels across the country. (For a copy of the outreach material, click on the Summits on New Directions icon on the Center website home page). If there is someone you want sent the info, let us know.

At the same time, invitations are going out to key leaders for student/learning support to attend the Middle States Regional Summit in Chicago on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Nominations of appropriate participants are welcome, as are recommendations for organizing State Summits. (See guidelines for state Summits on the Center's website Summits' link).

The American School Health Association is the latest organization to join as a co-sponsor of this important endeavor. Other organizations interested in co-sponsoring the Summits Initiative are invited to contact us.

### **>NEW RESOURCE MATERIALS**

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, SafetyZone, has developed a series of eight guidebooks intended to build a foundation of information that will assist schools and school districts in developing safe learning environments. Guide 7 was developed by our Center. It is entitled: "Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement." This Guide provides an overview of the nature and scope of collaboration, explores barriers to effectively working together, and discusses the processes of establishing and sustaining the work. All eight guide are downloadable at [http://www.safetyzone.org/safe\\_secure.html](http://www.safetyzone.org/safe_secure.html) and also are available in CD format.

### **>THIS MONTH'S IDEAS FOR ENHANCING SUPPORT AT YOUR SCHOOL**

Each month we compile ideas and activities to support students, families, and staff that fit the "season" or rhythm of the school year. The focus for May is "Planning for Successful Transitions to a New Grade or a New School." This monthly website feature and other tools, guidelines and resources to support transitions can be accessed at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>.

### **>CENTER IMPACT EVALUATION**

Thanks to all who responded. Data are being analyzed and a report will soon be put online.

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU NEED. New resources can be developed and best practices identified. Also, let us know about the latest and greatest you encounter so we can update our resources and your colleagues across the nation.

Contact us at SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT/  
CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS  
UCLA Department of Psychology

Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

Phone (310) 825-3634 Fax (310) 206-5895

Email: [smhp@ucla.edu](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu)

Website: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

#### ^^^ UPDATES FROM OUR SISTER CENTER

The Center for School Mental Health Assistance at the University of Maryland at Baltimore will hold its 8<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Advancing School Based Mental Health Programs, October 23-25, Portland, OR

The Center has circulated its impact evaluation questionnaire and has placed the form on their website to facilitate consumer response.

See their website (<http://csmha.umaryland.edu>) Or contact Mark Weist, Director, Center for School Mental Health Assistance, University of Maryland at Baltimore, Department of Psychiatry, 680 W. Lexington St., 10<sup>th</sup> fl. Baltimore, MD 21201. Phone (888) 706-0980; Email: [csmha@umpsy.umaryland.edu](mailto:csmha@umpsy.umaryland.edu)

#### + + + + OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

##### >>MENTAL HEALTH/SUBSTANCE ABUSE/HEALTH

“Parents Guide for Talking with their Children About War”, National Center for Children Exposed to Violence, Yale Child Study Center (<http://www.nccev.org>)

“Grouping High-Risk Youth for Prevention May Harm More Than Help”  
[http://www.drugabuse.gov/NIDA\\_Notes/NNVol17N5/Grouping.html](http://www.drugabuse.gov/NIDA_Notes/NNVol17N5/Grouping.html)

“Spanish-Language Health Resources knowledge path”, Maternal and Child Health Library, [http://www.mchlibrary.info/KnowledgePaths/kp\\_spanish.html](http://www.mchlibrary.info/KnowledgePaths/kp_spanish.html)

“Helping your child become a responsible citizen” (English and Spanish) U.S. Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/hyc.html>

Prevention Portfolio: a series of three publications to guide community leaders and policy makers:

- >The Power of Prevention; an resource on long term cost effective prevention programs

- >Prevention Strategies that Work; promoting healthy life style choices

- >Prevention Programs in Action; exemplary programs from states and communities

<http://www.HealthierUS.gov/steps>

“America’s Adolescents: Are They Healthy?” (2003 revised and updated edition) and Updated Fact Sheets on Adolescent demographics, mortality, substance use, suicide, unintentional injury and violence.. National Adolescent Health Information Center.  
<http://youth.ucsf.edu/nahic/products.html>

##### >>>PARENTS, SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

“Closing the Achievement Gap: Lagging Achievement of Disadvantaged Students Remains a Critical Problem” Education Commission of the States  
<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/43/00/4300.pdf>

“Stateline outlines the impact of state budget crisis on communities and governors efforts to maintain essential services like health care and education.”





