



A Resource for Information, Sharing, and Interchange

February 2017 (Vol. 21 #5) – 30 Years & Counting

Concerned about addressing barriers to student learning and teaching & re-engaging disconnected students? Concerned about equity of opportunity? Concerned about whole child development? This newsletter focuses on these and other related matters.



We encourage you to forward this to others. If this has been forwarded and you want to receive it directly, contact Ltaylor@ucla.edu



For more on resources from our national Center at UCLA, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

WHAT'S HERE THIS MONTH

****Emerging Concern**

>Promoting public schools; ensuring equity of opportunity

****News from around the country**

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

>Increasing graduation rates by working at all levels

****National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports in 2017**

****UCLA Center Resources Update**

****Access links about:**

>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops

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

>Calls for grant proposals, presentations & papers

>Training and job opportunities

****A few other helpful resources accessible from the internet**

****Additional recent publications relevant to**

>School, family, & community

>Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics

>Child, adolescent, and young adults' mental and physical health

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

EMERGING CONCERN

Promoting Public Schools; Ensuring Equity of Opportunity

With the increasing focus on school choice, there is growing interest in showcasing schools in ways that make them attractive to students and families. For example, the Iowa Association of School Boards has launched “The Promise of Iowa” campaign to enhance attention and rally support for investments in public education as a critical facet of the state’s future well-being. <http://promiseofiowa.org/about/>

Their website emphasizes:

“...The Promise of Iowa campaign celebrates the many successes of Iowa public schools by bringing to life the story of Iowa public education. It’s part of our commitment as locally elected school boards to ensure that Iowa taxpayers know that your investment in public schools is making a difference.

But we can’t rest on our laurels—there is more work to be done. Our next generation faces new challenges we never dreamed of. Iowa public schools are changing and evolving to keep pace with a fast-changing digital and global world. We must continue to find ways to close achievement gaps so that Iowa public schools fulfill the ideal of equity and opportunity for all. ...”

Let us know about other examples of efforts to strengthen the social marketing of public schools.

Send your comments for sharing to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

For a range of resources related to this matter, see
National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY *that has relevance to barriers to learning and teaching*

>**Children aren't the only ones who can't read.** According to the Literacy Project Foundation, 50 percent of adults in this country cannot read a book written at an eighth-grade level. Three out of four people on welfare can’t read, and 50 percent of unemployed people between the ages of 16 and 21 cannot read well enough to be considered functionally literate. The causes of illiteracy are varied. According to the Literacy Foundation, the most frequent causes of illiteracy in adults are having parents with little schooling, lack of books at home and lack of reading stimulation as a child, dropping out of school, difficult living conditions including poverty, and learning disabilities. 1/1/17 <http://www.sunherald.com/news/local/education/article124065799.html#storylink=cpy>

>**Why surging high school graduation rates might be a mirage.** President Obama announced in October that the 2014-2015 graduation rate was up to 83 percent in a fifth straight record-setting year. The D.C. public schools’ increase was the greatest anywhere, from 53 percent to 69 percent. Sadly, as impressive as these numbers seem, there is no research indicating they reveal any learning gains in our high schools. Because of an accelerating use of a shortcut to graduation called credit recovery, used by 88 percent of school districts, most if not all of this much-publicized high school improvement might be an illusion. 1/8/17 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/why-surg-ing-high-school-graduation-rates-might-be-a-mirage/>

>**Supreme court to decide what level of education so public schools legally owe to students with disabilities.** The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in a dispute over the level of education that public schools must provide to millions of children with disabilities. Advocates describe this as the most significant special-education issue to reach the high court in more than three decades. The question is whether public schools owe disabled children “some” educational benefit, which courts have determined to mean just-above-trivial progress, or whether students legally deserve something more: a substantial, “meaningful” benefit. Lower courts are divided on the question, meaning that disabled children in some states can currently expect more from their schools than children in other states. Now the Supreme Court will have an opportunity to decide whether a uniform standard should apply nationally. 1/10/17 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/supreme-court-to-decide-what-level-of-education-do-public-schools-legally-owe-to-students-with-disabilities/>

>**School staffing shortages.** Iowa colleges are now graduating 400 fewer teachers, counselors and administrators a year, a 16 percent decline, than they did in 2013. Now, about 2,100 graduates are earning education degrees a year, according to Iowa Department of Education data. The national data are even more concerning. For example, between 2009 and 2014, enrollments in teacher prep programs dropped 35 percent, from 691,000 to 451,000 students, according to the Learning Policy Institute. The shortages likely have complex reasons, from greater degree requirements to increased challenges and responsibilities. But some blame a political backlash they believe unfairly scapegoats the profession, weakening its perceived respectability and the interest of college students. 1/11/17 <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/education/2017/01/11/iowa-readies-teacher-shortage/96257920/>

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.

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Quote from story on teacher shortage:

If my elected leaders, from the top down, really aren't saying they support or respect education or public schools, it would really make me question whether that's the route I would want to go.

Tammy Wawro,
President, Iowa's teachers union

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Teachers deserve more credit.



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

>February: Increasing Graduation Rates by Working at All Levels

While the numbers continue to be debated, the goal of reducing dropouts and increasing graduation rates remains a high priority. Reports suggest that more than half a million young people dropout of high school each year.

As with so many problems in our society, increasing high school and postsecondary graduate rates could be tremendously aided by reducing generational poverty. As a societal institution, schools play an indirect and direct role in this. Their direct role is to ensure they do the best they can to (a) promote positive development and (b) address barriers to learning and teaching (especially school-related experiences that push students out).

At this point in the school year, time is running out for some students to catch up; decisions will soon be made about who passes and who fails. A special focus is needed on what the school can do to minimize student dropouts and maximize graduation rates.

As one recent high school graduate stressed:

Schools and teachers need to become a bit more flexible and encouraging towards students who seem as if they are losing gusto and falling behind. Sometimes its towards the end of the year that the pressure that has been building up ... becomes too much. Schools need to outreach to kids who seem to be having trouble, talk to them, make them feel important and connected and provide them with a plan to get back on their feet. Things like make-up assignments, make-up tests, tutoring opportunities, etc., should all be made available. If this has been implemented, and it doesn't help, get parents involved.

At this critical juncture, teachers need to work with student and learning support staff 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 usually requires an indepth conference and a series of follow-ups with the student and family. The specific focus is on (1) clarifying specifics related to the problem and formulating flexible steps to solve it, (2) establishing and continuously enhancing a positive working relationship, and then (3) 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.

For more related to this topic, see the Center’s Online Clearinghouse Quick Finds on:

- >Dropout Prevention – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/dropout.html>
- >Barriers to Learning – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/barriers.htm>
- >Accommodations – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/idea.htm>

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 *Ideas for Enhancing Learning Supports at your school this month* on the homepage at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

There is a high school dropout crisis far beyond the imagination of most Americans, concentrated in urban schools and relegating many thousands of minority children to a life of failure. ... Only half of our nation's minority students graduate from high school along with their peers. For many groups – Latino, black, or Native American males-graduation rates are even lower. ...this [is an] educational and civil rights crisis.
Gary Orfield, director of the Civil Rights project

NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR TRANSFORMING STUDENT & LEARNING SUPPORTS*

National Summit a Success and Now Comes Next Steps

The national summit on *ESSA and Learning Supports: Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching to Enhance Equity of Opportunity* was held on January 23rd. 75 leaders from 20 states and D.C. accepted the invitation and represented state education departments, county and regional offices, districts (large/small, urban/rural), schools, the U.S. Department of Education, and other institutions.

The day emphasized that planning for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides a renewed opportunity for innovation in revisiting school improvement policy and practice. There was considerable interest in using the opportunity to move forward with unifying and then developing a comprehensive and equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Prior to the summit, a special edition of the Center's quarterly e-journal was prepared as a resource for anyone concerned with improving how schools address barriers to teaching and learning. The topics covered in the article are:

- >Concerns about ESSA Planning Related to Addressing Barriers to Learning
- >The Need to Transform Student and Learning Supports
- >Delineating the Nature and Scope of a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System of Learning Supports
- >Personalization and Special Assistance: An Intervention Sequence and Hierarchy (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/Winter17.pdf>)

In addition to group discussions, presentations at the summit stressed:

- >*Re-envisioning How to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching at Schools*
- >*Expanding School Improvement Policy to Make it Happen*
- >*State Adaptation and Scale-up in Alabama*
- >*A Georgia District's Implementation Experiences*
- >*A Federal Perspective on ESSA and Learning Supports*
- >*About Funding Stream Integration*
- >*About the Necessity of Implementing Essential Elements to Ensure Substantive and Sustainable Transformative Changes*

There also was a three district panel discussing lessons learned during early implementation (panelists were: Angela Mangum, Superintendent, Selma (AL) City Schools, Shawn Hagerty, Director of Specialized Programs, Sumter (SC) School district, Andy Kubas, Director of Learning Supports, Bloomington (MN) Public Schools).

The day finished up with a discussion of *Next Steps for Supporting Those Moving Forward*.

A formal Summit report in being prepared, but more importantly, steps are underway to provide supports for those who are planning new directions for student and learning supports (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/nextsteps.pdf>)

Update: See info on the Iowa Department of Education Learning Supports Team (DELS).

Iowa's Vision Statement Related to Learning Supports: *All children/youth have access to an integrated comprehensive system of high-quality supports that ensures an equal opportunity to overcome barriers to learning and succeed in school and in life.*
https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/learner-supports/learning-supports#Department_of_Education_Learning_Supports_Team_DELS

*For more information on the national initiative, we refer folks to the webpages <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

**LET US KNOW WHAT YOU SEE HAPPENING TO TRANSFORM
STUDENT AND LEARNING SUPPORTS**

And if anyone is thinking about increasing the capacity of a district or school with respect to developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student supports, *we can help*. Send all info to ltaylor@ucla.edu .

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**The person who knows “how” will always have a job.
The person who knows “why” will always be his boss.**

Diane Ravitch
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UCLA CENTER DEVELOPED RESOURCES – UPDATE

New

Information Resources:

- > *Empathy, Compassion, and Addressing Student Misbehavior* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/empath.pdf>
- > *About Resilience and Schools* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resili.pdf>
- > *About Pressures on Affluent Students Related to University Admission* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/affluent.pdf>

School Practitioner Community of Practice Interchange During January

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

- > *About measuring mental health in schools*
- > *Places working on developing a unified and comprehensive system of student support*
- > *Professional development to reduce classroom behavior problems*

Note: The latest School Practitioner and archived previous ones are on our website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm> (Also on our Facebook page)
Follow-up exchanges are posted on the Center website's Net Exchange – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm>

Recently Featured Resources from the Center and Elsewhere

>Tools for assessing a school’s support for students

Re: assessing what the school doing to enhance positive well-being, see

>> *Measuring School Climate* – <http://schoolclimate.org/climate/practice.php>

>> *Strategies for Social and Emotional Learning* –

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/513f79f9e4b05ce7b70e9673/t/53063624e4b0c6a4f3335f56/1392916004591/stategies-assessment-SEL-EDC.pdf>

Re: Assessing what the school doing to address interfering factors, see

>> *Addressing Barriers to Learning: A Set of Surveys to Map What a School Has and*

What It Needs – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf>

Surveys for 6 arenas of concerns and related system needs that underscore the content of a unified, comprehensive, equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. The areas are (1) classroom-focused enabling, (2) crisis assistance and prevention, (3) support for transitions, (4) home involvement and commitment, (5) student and family assistance, and (6) community outreach for involvement and support.

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

>**Tools for assessing students** – For resources on student assessment (from our Center and from others), see the Center’s online clearinghouse Quick Find on

>>Assessment/Screening – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p1405_01.htm

Among the Center developed documents listed there is:

>>Screening/Assessing Students: Indicators and Tools –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/assessment/assessment.pdf>

>**Personalizing instruction: An essential step before assessing individual students**

See the following Quick Finds.

>>Personalized Learning – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/classenable.htm>

>>Accommodating differences and disabilities – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/idea.htm>

>>Dropout prevention – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/dropout.html>

>>Early Intervention – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2305_01.htm

>>Motivation, engagement, and re-engagement –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/motiv.htm>

>>Prevention for students at risk – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/prevention.html>

>>Resilience and protective factors – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/resilience.html>

ACCESS LINKS ABOUT:

>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>

>Upcoming and archived webcasts and other professional development opportunities – <http://smhp.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

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It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

Charles Darwin

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OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES ACCESSIBLE FROM THE INTERNET

>Student Reports of Bullying: 2015 School Crime Supplement –
<https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2017015&ed2f26df2d9c416fbddddd2330a778c6=nrphprnxnd-nzuohbhp>

>Strategies for recess in schools –
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/pdf/2016_12_16_schoolrecessstrategies_508.pdf

>Recess planning in schools –
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/pdf/2016_12_16_schoolrecessplanning_508.pdf

Note: Resources, such as those above, will be added to the relevant topic in our online clearinghouse – see the Quick Find menu -- <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm>. We update the Quick Finds as we find new resources. If you have suggestions on resources to add, let us know. Ltaylor@ucla.edu

New resources related to Ability Grouping

- > *Beyond tracking and detracking* – https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/working_papers/WR1100/WR1155/RAND_WR1155.pdf
- > *Gifted students benefit from ability grouping* – <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/01/170113094017.htm>
- > *Ability grouping and tracking: How schools work* – <https://www.brookings.edu/research/ability-grouping-tracking-and-how-schools-work>

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Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle.

Abraham Lincoln

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ADDITIONAL RECENT PUBLICATIONS (in print and on the web)

School, Family & Community

- > Adolescents transitioning to high school. (2017). S.G. Williams, J. Langhinrichsen-Rohling, C. Wornell, & H. Finnegan, *Journal of School Nursing*, ePub. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1059840516686840>
- > Pathways of risk and resilience between neighborhood socioeconomic conditions and parenting. (2017). E. Shuey, & T. Leventhal, *Children and Youth Services Review*, 72, 52-59. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740916303115>
- > Designing culturally response organized after-school activities (2017). S. Simking, N. Riggs, B. Nigo, et al. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 32, 11-36. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0743558416666169>

Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics

- > An alternative technique for Youth Risk Surveillance outside of the school system (2017). M. Brooks, T. Bear, K. Hacker, et al., *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 60, 72-78. [http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(16\)30299-3/fulltext](http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(16)30299-3/fulltext)
- > Towards a framework for preventing community violence among youth (2016). T.P. Abt, *Psychology, Health, & Medicine*, ePub <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13548506.2016.1257815>
- > Civil rights laws as tools to advance health in the twenty-first century (2016). A.K. McGowan, M.M. Lee, C.M. Meneses, J. Perkins, & M. Youdelman, *Annual Review of Public Health*, 37, 185-204. <http://www.healthlaw.org/news/nhelp-in-the-news/539-civil-rights-laws-used-to-improve-health-in-the-twenty-first-century>

Child, adolescent, and young adult's mental and physical health

- > Motivation toward extracurricular activities and motivation at schools (2017). A. Denault & F. Guay. *Journal of Adolescence*, 54, 94-103. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197116301695>
- > Children's voices on bullying in kindergarten (2017). A. Helgeland & I. Lund. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 45, 133-141. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10643-016-0784-z>

>Good enough? Interventions for child mental health: From adoption to adaptation – from programs to systems (2016). Special issue of the *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 45. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15374416.2016.1157759>

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

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 topics 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. [Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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If you really want to do something you will find a way.
If you don’t, you’ll find an excuse.

Jim Rohn

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COMMENTS AND SHARING FROM THE FIELD

New Years’ appreciations in response to the January edition of *ENEWS*:

- (1) “Please keep it coming I enjoy it very much and find it very helpful. Thank you. I am the Vice Chair of our County Schools Board of Education. Happy New Year.”
- (2) “Every time I open an email from you I get another inoculation of hope. Thank you. My journey has taken from public schools into the nonprofit sector (Metrowestnonprofit.org) but the issues remain the same. There are so many bridges to be built between schools and the community and I am doing my best to lay the foundation of THIS wall of cooperation and compassion one brick at a time. Thank you for reminding us that we have the power to change the world. My very best wishes to both of you for a courageous new year.”

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 or adelman@psych.ucla.edu

Send info to share with others or ask for specific resources by email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu