

# Students & Schools: Moving Forward\*

February, 2020 (Vol. 24 #5) – 34 Years & Counting

## What's Here

### For Discussion

>How to increase graduation rates

### Quick Links to Resources from Across the Country

About transforming student/learning supports

Comments, requests, information, questions from the field  
and more

*\*Concerned about addressing barriers to student learning and teaching & re-engaging disconnected students? about equity of opportunity? about whole child development? about school climate? All that and more is our focus.*



We encourage you to forward this to others. If this has been forwarded and you want to receive it directly, contact: [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)



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



## For discussion:

### >How to Increase Graduation Rates (working at all levels)

At this time in the school year, it is important to take another look at what a school can do to minimize student dropouts and maximize graduation rates. Time is running out for catching up; decisions are being made about who passes and who fails. (Available research suggests that being held back is the single strongest predictor of dropping out for both early and late dropouts. Data indicate that being held back one grade increases the risk of dropping out later by 40 to 50 percent, two grades by 90 percent.)

*Most late high school dropouts (83%) listed a school-related (versus a family or employment related) reason for leaving. These reasons included missing too many school days, thinking it would be easier to get a GED, getting poor grades, and not liking school.*

National Center for Education Statistics, Late High Schools Dropouts (2009)  
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009307>

One question for discussion is: *How much can teachers (along with student and learning support staff) turn things around for students who are falling further and further behind?*

And in that context: *What currently is being done and what more can be done to help students who need extra and perhaps special assistance?*

In our experience, greater attention must be given to personalizing interventions and shared problem solving. And particular attention needs to be paid to addressing any underlying factors interfering with school learning and performance.

For those seen as potential dropouts, we start by asking why is the student likely to do so. We explore this with the student and, where appropriate, with the family. To do this in-depth, we use a personalized conference format and a series of follow-ups. The *content* focus is on clarifying specifics related to matters associated with dropping out and formulating flexible steps to solve problems. The *process* focus is on establishing and continuously enhancing a positive working relationship, (re)engaging the student in schooling, and monitoring the intervention steps closely to make immediate changes as necessary.

With respect to general school improvements to increase graduation rates, research suggests that in some districts school factors can account for approximately two-thirds of the differences in mean school dropout rates. For any school pursuing improvements, here are some points for discussion that have major implications for the professional development of teachers and support staff.

>How can the school enhance personalized learning? Personalization involves meeting students where they are at with respect to both capability and intrinsic motivation and ensuring engagement.

>How can the school provide more learning supports in classrooms and school wide?

>How can the school re-engage students who have disengaged from classroom learning?

In discussing such improvements, besides professional development, consider multiple pathways to graduation, non-traditional approaches to curriculum and instruction, and out-of-school learning opportunities.

### Resources Related to School Improvements to Increase Graduation Rates

>Improving School Improvement

[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

>Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide

[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

> Dropout Prevention guide – The U.S. Department of Education’s What Works

Clearinghouse provides this practice guide. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/9>

>The following websites deal directly with Dropout Prevention

>>National Dropout Prevention Centers – <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/>

>>Focus Adolescent Services: Youth Who Drop Out – <http://www.focusas.com/Dropouts.html>

>>School Dropout Prevention Program – <http://www.ed.gov/programs/dropout/index.html>

>>National Center for School Engagement – <http://www.schoolengagement.org/>

>>Youth Build USA – <http://www.youthbuild.org/>

Need More?

See the Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Finds. For example:

>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>

### Did you miss the following online discussions?

These were explored in January as Part of the Weekly School Practitioner Community of Practice.

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

- Hate Crimes
- Cyberbullying
- Controversy about screening students for toxic stress

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Our greatest weakness lies in giving up.  
The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.  
Thomas Edison

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## Quick Links to Resources from Across the Country

### A few relevant resources, reports, and journal publications

*Screen time and mental health: No easy solutions* (2020). C. Williams. *Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter*, 36, 1-6. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/cbl.30439>

*How states allocate funding for student from low income backgrounds* <https://ednote.ecs.org/>

*Social-Emotional Learning and Preventing Youth Suicide*  
<https://www.cfchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/policy-advocacy/sel-youth-suicide-prevention.pdf>

*Providing more special assistance in the classroom*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/summer19.pdf>

*Updated inventory of evidence-based, research-based, and promising practices: For prevention and intervention services for children and juveniles in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health systems* <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/>

*A de-escalation exercise for upset students*  
[https://www.edutopia.org/article/de-escalation-exercise-upset-students?utm\\_source=Psych+Learning+Curve&utm\\_campaign=7e4c68264f-roundup-jan-17-2020&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_ff6044c3a5-7e4c68264f-174482877](https://www.edutopia.org/article/de-escalation-exercise-upset-students?utm_source=Psych+Learning+Curve&utm_campaign=7e4c68264f-roundup-jan-17-2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ff6044c3a5-7e4c68264f-174482877)

*The association between perception of caring and intrinsic motivation: A study of urban middle school students* (2020). D. Reppy & K. Larwin. *Journal of Education*, 200, 48-61.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0022057419875123>

*A coping-oriented group intervention for students waiting to undergo secondary school transition: Effects on coping strategies, self-esteem, and social anxiety symptoms* (2020). A. Brouzos, S. Vassilopoulos, A. Vlachioti, V. Baourda. *Psychology in the Schools*, 57, 31-43.  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pits.22319>

*Why are kids different at home and at school?*  
[https://childmind.org/article/kids-different-home-school/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=READ%20MORE&utm\\_campaign=Weekly-01-21-20](https://childmind.org/article/kids-different-home-school/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=READ%20MORE&utm_campaign=Weekly-01-21-20)

*Rethinking MTSS to better address barriers to learning*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/fall19.pdf>

>For more resources, see our website  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

>For info on upcoming conferences, initiatives, workshops  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm>

>For info on webinars  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

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Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.  
Nelson Mandela

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## About Transforming Student and Learning Supports

See the Center's Winter Quarterly for a look at the *National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports in 2020* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/winter2020.pdf>

For this issue of ENEWS, we thought it would be good to note two examples of how the Center's work related to transforming student/learning supports has influenced state departments and districts.

(1) From: *2019 STRENGTHENING STUDENT EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES: Behavior Menu of Best Practices and Strategies* – Washington State Office of Public Instruction <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/learning-assistance-program-lap/menus-best-practices-strategies/behavior-menu-best-practicesstrategies>

*...The intent of collaborative school-community partnerships should be to merge school resources with resources available within the larger community or local neighborhoods and provide services that are sustainable over time (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA). Community resources not only include the plethora of community organizations or agencies, but also include individual members of the community, local businesses, college or universities, faith-based and civic affiliations, parks and library programs, and other facilities that provide opportunities for students to participate in recreation or learning opportunities, or may receive enrichment or support services (Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA)... When schools form partnerships within the community, they adopt a more integral and positive role within the community (Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA). The Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA found that these collaborative partnerships positively impact academic achievement, increase staff morale, result in fewer discipline issues, and improve the use of school's resources....\**

\*See *School-Community Partnerships: A Guide*. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/guides/schoolcomm.pdf>

(2) From: *Coordination of PUSD Internal Student Support Services: Part I*. an evaluation report on work done by Page Unified School District in Arizona.

<http://www.lecroymilligan.com/data/resources/page-task3reportfinal2-1-11.pdf>

*...While many support services are available, recent literature suggests that just having support services may be insufficient. An article by the UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools posits that support services are frequently "fragmented, overspecialized, counterproductively competitive, unsustainable, and fundamentally marginalized in policy and practice". This same article argues for the need to take a systems approach based first on creating an operational infrastructure within each school. This infrastructure is then fortified with linkages and connections to resources in the community and in the home creating an intervention continuum and coordinated approach. They propose that an effective systems approach has several key subsystems: preventative efforts, early intervention upon identification of problem, and addressing severe problems.... [and] they suggest that developing a comprehensive and integrated system requires developing an operational infrastructure within each school that implements interventions on a daily basis. This infrastructure includes linkages to community and home resources....*

### Let Us Know:

**(1) About any state legislators you think we should contact**

**(2) About efforts you know about focused on transforming student/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/learning supports, we can help. Send all info to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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*Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind.  
The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind. – Henry James*

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>Calls for grant proposals & presentations  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm>

> job and training opportunities  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm>

## News from around the country related to addressing barriers

**Kentucky to pay for the GED test for thousands of Kentuckians.** Kentucky will pay for thousands of GED tests to help Kentuckians' further their education. Kentucky's Education and Workforce Development Cabinet will allot \$600,000 to waive GED test fees for first-time test-takers in the coming year. About 335,000 Kentuckians over the age of 18 don't have a high school diploma or GED. <https://www.courier-journal.com/>

**Statement by the Connecticut State Department of Education on Providing Educational Supports to Students Who Were Displaced by the Earthquakes in Puerto Rico.** The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) issued the following statement regarding students who relocate to Connecticut after being displaced by the earthquakes in Puerto Rico and require educational supports: ...As an agency, CSDE stands ready to assist districts as they enroll students who were displaced by the earthquakes by providing any guidance and programmatic technical assistance that may be required, such as training in trauma-informed education and best strategies for supporting new students who are English learners. We will also work closely with the Governor's office, the legislature, and members of Connecticut's congressional delegation to identify and advocate for state and federal funding to ensure districts will be able to obtain the fiscal support – as it becomes available – in order to cover the costs of serving and educating this new population. ... As the implications of the earthquakes unfold, district leaders will receive resources from CSDE on best practices for providing support to students who have become displaced and relocated to Connecticut.  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Press-Room/Press-Releases/2020/Statement-by-CSDE-on-Providing-Educational-Supports-to-Students-Who-Were-Displaced-from-Puerto-Rico>

**4,000 Anaheim Union High School District Students Prepare for the 6th Annual Servathon on January 20 Honoring MLK National Day of Service.** 4,000 Anaheim Union students are poised to participate in the Sixth Annual AUHSD Servathon on Monday, January 20, 2020, coinciding with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday and National Day of Service. Students will be accomplishing more than 100 different service projects across the communities of Anaheim, Cypress, Buena Park, La Palma, and Stanton. The service projects, which range from the traditional, such as neighborhood or campus cleanups, to out-of-the box initiatives, such as teaching technology to senior citizens, are designed to give students experiences that will better connect them with neighborhoods, businesses, the elderly, and younger students.  
<https://www.auhsd.us/district/index.php>

**Free public transportation will help students get to school.** Beginning this month, all K-12 students in Clatsop County, Oregon, will have access to free public transportation, helping them get to school and back, as well as to extracurricular activities. The initiative launches as communities across Oregon are working together to address barriers that students face in getting to school. Clatsop County developed the Fare Free Student Program in collaboration with community partners and with funding from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). The program will benefit more than 5,100 students currently enrolled in Clatsop County schools. Community partnerships are an ongoing priority for ODE, as barriers to school attendance are most effectively addressed when community partners and agencies work together to find solutions. The Every Day Matters team within ODE has intentionally developed partnerships with ODOT, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and other cross-agency advisory boards, such as Healthy Kids Learn Better, to further address chronic absenteeism in schools. As a result, state agencies have the opportunity to understand student barriers to attendance and to collaborate on shared priorities, such as supporting students by addressing transportation or health issues.  
<https://www.myoregon.gov/2020/01/07/free-public-transportation-will-help-students-get-to-school/>

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Quote from the above Oregon story

*The development of this exciting new initiative demonstrates how Oregon communities can cross-collaborate and leverage resources.*

Terra Hernandez, lead for the Every Day Matters team. Oregon Dept. of Educ.

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### Comments and sharing from the field

- (1) From a School Psychologist: *In reference to the December 11, 2019 School Practitioner discussion about school mental health services being provided by community providers or by school district employees, I would like to emphasize that there is room for both types of providers; however, first, we need to ensure that all schools have access to full-time school guidance counselors and school psychologists. School guidance counselors focus on prevention, normal developmental processes and transitions, and handle the day-to-day issues such as playground conflicts. School psychologists are one of the most highly qualified school-based behavioral health professionals in schools today; however, there is an acute shortage in the USA, which means we need to promote the profession to our undergraduate education and psychology majors and keep graduate school psychology programs open instead of closing them (e.g., Arizona State University). Additionally, the recommended NASP ratio of school psychologists to student population is not being adopted by and adhered to by school districts and, therefore, we see ratios as bad as one school psychologist for up to 3,000 students for a large high school. To be able to use the full range of the school psychologist's professional skills and competency, there needs to be a lower ratio of the school psychologist to student population; otherwise, the school psychologist is working ten plus hour days in a never-ending rotation of evaluations never being able to catch up with reports and the school district/school is never able to reap the benefits of the school psychologist's training and skills to directly help students in other ways outside of testing. The benefit of school-based mental health providers is their integration within the system, school, and community; their understanding of the educational system (e.g., schools, teachers, districts); and their accessibility. Certainly, there is a role for community providers for students with severe mental illness, eating disorders, child abuse trauma, complicated grief, and/or severe disabilities (e.g., autism with intellectual disability and nonverbal) who require long-term care outside of school hours and school calendars. Most importantly, the first step is to fully staff all schools with school guidance counselors and school psychologists with school psychologists at the NASP recommended ratio.*
- (2) From a Director of Integrated Services, Health Services: *Thanks for all of your great materials! I especially love this guide [Education Leaders Guide to Transforming Student and Learning Supports <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/transguide.pdf>]. I was wondering if there is anyway I can use Exhibit 2 and plug in my own schools information? This is my situation exactly.*  
(We, of course, told her to feel free to use any of it.)
- (3) And we received this nice comment from a Principal:  
*I love the emails and studies shared. Please keep them coming!*

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\*Information is online about the

**National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Also online are two free books

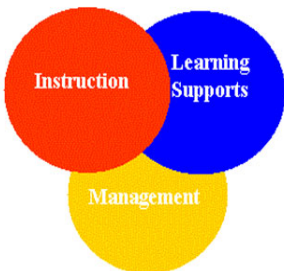
**Improving School Improvement**

[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

**Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide**

[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

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*Here's a crazy idea:* What if we stop pretending that teachers working alone in the classroom can do their job effectively in the absence of a comprehensive and equitable system of student/learning supports for addressing barriers to learning and teaching?



See our take on this:

*Improving Student Outcomes, Enhancing School Climate:  
Teachers Can't Do it Alone!*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/winter13.pdf>

#### **THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF ENEWS**

Who Are We? Recently renamed the Center for MH in Schools and Student/Learning Supports, our national Center 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 Center is 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 [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)