

Students & Schools: Moving Forward*

(February, 2022 (Vol. 26 #5) – 36 Years & Counting

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***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



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

>About vulnerable students who are falling through the cracks

Here's what the media are highlighting

Excerpt from: *Where are the students? For a second straight year, school enrollment is dropping*

<https://www.npr.org/2021/12/15/1062999168/school-enrollment-drops-for-second-straight-year>

The troubling enrollment losses that school districts reported last year have in many places continued, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt public education across the country....

Educators are most worried about vulnerable students who may have fallen through the cracks in the widespread economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic....

The biggest concern for the country at large is students who drop out of school entirely.... Superintendents say they are often losing students to paid jobs.... Rochester has increased opportunities for working students to make up lost credits online. "We ... knew that we were fighting against survival and poverty," said the Superintendent....

From: *How will pandemic learning impact graduation rates long-term?*

<https://www.k12dive.com/news/how-will-pandemic-learning-impact-graduation-rates-long-term/607734/>

According to the 2021 Building A Grad Nation report from the America's Promise Alliance, an estimated 3 million students stopped going to school altogether when the COVID-19 pandemic forced a transition to virtual learning. The greatest impacts were felt by traditionally underserved groups, including students of color, English learners and those from low-income families....

Though current dropout rates aren't available yet, rising absenteeism, falling grades and shrinking enrollment are early warning signs. Thousands of students reportedly dropped out of school during the pandemic, including many teens who did so to work so they could help support their families amid job losses...."

About Addressing the Problem

In Jackson, Miss., the Superintendent says that, during remote learning, teachers told him of students "who were on Zoom calls during the day and at work." He says some of his principals and staff have reached out to local business-owners to plead for students to have shifts that start after

a particular required course. He says he's tried hard not to force these teens to choose between school and work, and the district is designing a new, fully virtual option for working students or anyone who thrives learning from home....

<https://www.npr.org/2021/12/15/1062999168/school-enrollment-drops-for-second-straight-year>

Schools, and especially student support staff, clearly have role to play in helping address factors that make students vulnerable to school failure and to dropping out. Certainly, ensuring student attendance is essential. However, attendance does not guarantee engagement. An unengaged student remains vulnerable.

Student and learning support staff also have a role to play collaborating with teachers in classrooms to turn things around for students. This involves (a) helping to reengage students with instruction and (b) ensuring special assistance is provided to aid students in “catching-up” and overcome learning, behavior, and emotional problems. (See *Enhancing Student/Learning Supports in Classrooms* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/classroomredes.pdf>.)

There is general agreement that schools must become more proactive. Here are some points for school staff to consider:

- > Rethink classroom and schoolwide approaches to (a) enhance engaged, personalized learning and (b) provide students the learning supports they need to succeed. Schools must engage all students in learning. Doing this involves practices based on understanding intrinsic motivation and that use classroom assessments that inform personalized intervention (e.g., response to intervention).
- > Enhance the professional development of teachers and support staff. Ensure that support staff know how to team with teachers in the classroom to rethink engagement, personalized intervention, and special assistance
- > Provide out-of-school opportunities. Efforts using out-of-school opportunities to retain middle and high school students begin early. They include tutoring, mentoring, service learning, career advising, and more. When older students (including potential dropouts) work with younger ones, both can improve their literacy skills.
- > Offer multiple pathways. Students need alternative career and vocational pathways. The concept of multiple pathways focuses on ensuring choice among a variety of high school programs that prepare all students for both college and careers. The emphasis is on providing both academic and career foundations for advanced learning, training, and effective and responsible participation in society. Available choices reflect student interests and community strengths and opportunities. They include programs that provide real world training in areas where graduates can apply for living-wage jobs.
- > Introduce non-traditional approaches. Educational alternative programs and accommodations provide a non-traditional approach to curriculum by utilizing alternative teaching strategies. Programs focus upon the needs and interests of students by offering positive experiences, which are geared for achievement, enhancement of positive self-concept, motivation, reduction of disruptive behavior.

A Few Websites Focused on Dropout Prevention

- > National Dropout Prevention Center <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/>
- > Preventing Dropouts in Secondary Schools https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/wwc_dropout_092617.pdf
- > National Center for School Engagement <http://www.schoolengagement.org/>
- > Youth Build USA <http://www.youthbuild.org/>
- > America's Promise <https://www.americaspromise.org/>

Need More?

For links to key references, empirically supported programs, and centers specializing in the topic and related topics, go to 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>

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From the superintendent on down to every staff person, we have said you need to know what makes kids tick. You need to be better at that so that every adult a student comes into contact with — from the moment they get on a bus in the morning, the moment they get off in the afternoon — every adult has been trained and has been given some tools to work with kids around social, emotional skills. Corey Harbaugh, Paw Paw schools' curriculum director

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>Quick Links to Online Resources

School Districts in Socially Vulnerable Communities Faced Heightened Challenges after Recent Natural Disasters <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-104606.pdf>

Keeping the Promise: educational resources for our Afghan guests <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/keeping-the-promise/index.html>

Youth Engagement in Practice <https://www.air.org/resource/brief/youth-engagement-practice>

COVID-19 CARE PACKAGE: Tools for addressing loneliness <https://standtogether.ucla.edu/loneliness/>

Older Neighbors and The Neighborhood Context of Child Well-Being: Pathways to Enhancing Social Capital for Children <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajcp.12520>

How Has the Pandemic Changed the Way Educators Think About Homework? <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2022-01-19-how-has-the-pandemic-changed-the-way-educators-think-about-homework>

Transforming University-Based Teacher Education: Preparing Asset-, Equity-, and Justice-Oriented Teachers Within the Contemporary Political Context <https://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=22728>

Social connectedness, sleep, and physical activity associated with better mental health among youth during the COVID-19 pandemic <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/social-connectedness-sleep-physical-activity-associated-better-mental-health-among-youth-during-covid-19-pandemic>

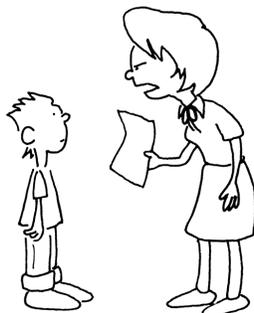
The Conflict Campaign: Exploring Local Experiences of the Campaign to Ban “Critical Race Theory” in Public K–12 Education in the U.S., 2020–2021 <https://idea.gseis.ucla.edu/publications/the-conflict-campaign/>

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It's like I'm teaching three different levels instead of one. The students who still stay at home 'sick' and have to join via Zoom, the ones that opted for online last year and didn't learn as much, and the kiddos who have been in person the entire time. Laura Spurgeon, fourth-grade teacher

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Where's your homework?



It's still working at home!



LATEST FROM THE CENTER AT UCLA

REPORTS

2021-22: Addressing Learning, Behavior, and Emotional Problems Through Better Use of Student and Learning Support Staff <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/supports.pdf>

Enhancing Student/Learning Supports in Classrooms
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/classroomredes.pdf>

About Connecting Students with the Right Forms of Mental Health Assistance
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/connect.pdf>

Evolving Community Schools and Transforming Student/Learning Supports
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/evolvecomm.pdf>

New Directions for School Improvement Policy <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/policynd.pdf>

Implementation Science and Complex School Changes
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/implemreport.pdf>

BOOKS

Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change

Improving School Improvement

Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide

all 3 are available at this time as free resources. Access at

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System. Published by Cognella

<https://titles.cognella.com/transforming-student-and-learning-supports-9781516512782.html>

QUARTERLY eJOURNAL <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.htm>

> *Countering LD and ADHD False Positive Diagnoses: Another Pandemic Challenge*

> *About Using the Relief Funds to Begin Transforming Student/Learning Supports*

And here's what was discussed in the Community of Practice during January

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

Note: All community of practice editions contain Links to relevant shared resources.

> Giving resources to students experiencing problems who want to better understand themselves

> About Bibliotherapy for Youngsters

> The focus on schools in the Surgeon General's report on youth MH

> About multitiered system of supports/response to intervention (MTSS/RtI)

> About "mental health lay workers" in schools

> About supporting those affected by crises

> Practitioner discussion of the topic "the volume of students needing help is overwhelming"

> About guidelines for using relief funds for homeless students

> Planning on applying for a Full Service Community Schools grant?

> Moving Upstream to Improve Children's MH – Community & Policy Change

If you missed the resources and news in the Special Editions of the Community of

Practice prepared in relation to the crisis, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

For an update on how the center is responding to the Coronavirus crisis, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/centercorona.pdf>

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

>For info on the status of upcoming conferences
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm>

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

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What UCLA administrators are saying to all of us at the university, and what everyone working in education at all levels deserves to hear from school boards, SEAs, LEAs, principals, and each other:

It is too much, and it has gone on too long, and we recognize that in addition to intense work demands some of you have experienced deep losses, illness, and profound disruptions to your lives.... Your outstanding efforts to support students and maintain academic continuity under these circumstances are inspiring and deeply appreciated. Let us all take care of ourselves and one another. We sincerely hope that these intense demands will soon be in the rearview mirror.

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

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

Our Center emphasizes the opportunity to start now to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students. See

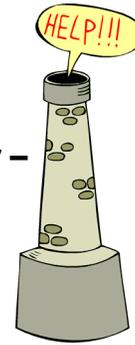
ACTION STEPS for Improving How Schools Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching – including mental health concerns
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/actionsteps.pdf>

For more, see the

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

And Let Us Know Whether Ideas Are Being Proposed for Transforming Schools.
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

The message from teachers and students is loud and clear –



>**A Few News Stories** (excerpted from various news sources)

The Great Exodus': Superintendents Resigned in Doves as Culture Wars Hit Schools in 2021.

School district administrators across the nation have left public education in droves this year, citing the COVID-19 pandemic, critical race theory issues and school systems already strained by growing staffing shortages. In Washington, there were 60 superintendent openings last year. Typically, the state sees about 40 changes annually. Oregon, which has roughly a hundred fewer school districts, had 30 new superintendents in the last year and there are already 22 new openings for the coming school year. Kentucky, which has the fewest school districts of the three states, is now averaging 30 superintendent changes per year. Although superintendents had a difficult 2020, most of them say 2021 was much worse.

<https://www.newsweek.com/great-exodus-superintendents-resigned-droves-culture-wars-hit-schools-2021-1662382>

Mississippi receives over \$500K for K-12 school support. Mississippi is receiving \$543 million from the federal government to implement health measures to keep K-12 schools open during the ongoing pandemic and provide internet access, tutoring and mental health support to students. The money is part of a \$1.6 billion federal package Mississippi has received as part of its portion of American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds. The U.S. Department of Education is providing \$130 billion in American Rescue Act funds for K-12 education to all 50 states, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico. Mississippi Department of Education officials say they have hired 25 new medical staff on-site in schools and encouraged districts to host vaccination drives on campus. The department is also using the federal funds to support a new behavioral telehealth project staffed by school staff in response to mental health concerns that may have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Educators will also be trained on behavioral management techniques. In addition, the department will use the funding for intensive tutoring, summer learning and extended day programs and for improving internet connectivity and access to technology for all students, particularly for rural students and students from low-income backgrounds. <https://apnews.com/>

Storms, lost class time, staff shortages: Look back at what schools faced in 2021. Louisiana schools faced all kinds of hurdles in 2021 — rebuilding from old and new hurricanes, an unprecedented winter storm and the first standardized test results since COVID-19 made its mark. While fewer teaching candidates may be entering the profession, more are exiting. In Louisiana 60% of classroom teachers leave after 10 years, and 50% leave in the first five years. One in three new teachers were leaving the profession within their first year before the pandemic. The state is taking a grow-your-own approach to tackling its teacher shortage problem, which educators say will require a change in messaging about the profession. The work needed to make the classroom a place people want to be and stay starts early, like starting Educators Rising clubs in middle and high schools as well as a pre-educator pathway. It allows high school students to take dual enrollment education courses before they get to college.

<https://www.theadvertiser.com/story/news/2021/12/29/storms-lost-class-time-staff-shortages-look-back-what-academy-schools-faced-in-2021-covid-hurricane/9028878002/>

How 2021 Set the Stage for a Seismic Overhaul of Education. The coronavirus pandemic in 2021 laid the groundwork for a reexamination of what's asked of public schools, how they're supported, and how they serve students and their families. With more than \$200 billion in federal aid directed to the K-12 system to help schools reopen safely, hire additional staff and begin making inroads on the academic, social and emotional learning loss incurred over the last two year, schools have

seen an influx of resources like never before – and they stand to gain even more. The pandemic also highlighted how public schools are much more than just a place for learning. They provide a whole host of community support – from food to health care to internet connections, job training, language services and more. And research shows school leaders are intent on finding a way to ensure they can continue providing a wide range of support when the pandemic is over. Parent voices are expected to increase in influence moving ahead into the new year.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2021-12-30/how-2021-set-the-stage-for-a-seismic-overhaul-of-education>

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The pandemic has required educators and practitioners to deeply reconsider the purpose of school in a shifting world. What role can and should our institutions play in our society?

One lesson that comes up again and again... is that our schools and community organizations are central to how we live and thrive, and that these institutions have an important role to play in supporting students' mental health and wellbeing. Dr. Debora Broderick

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Comments and sharing from the field

We were asked to share information on this Call for Papers from the *Journal of School Psychology* – “Special Issue on Causes and Consequences of Emerging Violent Extremism in the U.S. and Implications for School Safety, Student Mental Health, Families, and Communities” Go to:

<https://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-school-psychology/call-for-papers/special-issue-on-causes-and-consequences-of-emerging-violent-extremism-in-the-u-s-and-implications-for-school-safety-student-mental-health-families-and-communities>

Responses to Community of Practice Practitioner

>Response to 1/13 *Countering false positive diagnosis...* “Also, what is interesting is that interventions being done at schools with state and fed monies seem to only be targeting Gen ed students. SpEd students only getting SpEd interventions but yet with no further support staff, pay for intervention classes/ resources offered.”

>Response to 1/19 ongoing discussion about “the volume of students needing help is overwhelming.” From the teacher featured: “Thank you for sharing my focus plan. The first part (student seating) has worked well overall. The other parts have been disrupted by mandated testing and a week of distance learning, but I'll get to them as soon as we get back in-person! Also, I'm very interested in hearing your response to the superintendent's question: "What can we do to advocate for a different structural model in our school calendars and instructional days so teachers can truly get the support they have always needed?" I too have wondered how to best advocate for a more equitable structural model.”

We asked the superintendent to expand on her response and this is what she said:

"I am picturing advocacy and lobbying for legislation that supports changed systems that:

1) create a longer work year for teachers (higher pay) so they have enough time to plan their year and get strong professional development and training.

2) for elementary: a restructuring of the school day so that teachers have time for collaboration, lesson study, planning, and assessments. The Japanese model has academic teachers responsible for morning instruction and then while students go off to specialty classes such as music, art, PE, independent reading, etc., the academic teacher has 2-3 hours to truly dedicate time to their lessons. The demands on teachers to do better has increased ten-fold over the past twenty years.

To sum it up: teaching, when done well, is exhausting. The teacher's capacity to complete a full day of teaching and then turn around and plan for effective lessons the next day is simply not possible. Other professionals are afforded time and capacity to fully complete their jobs well. The teaching day structure as it stands now does not allow for the true expectations of the profession itself. I do know that high school and middle school teaching might be slightly different due to prep periods in their schedules. Elementary teachers do not get this type of guaranteed prep time across the board, yet they are required to be an expert teacher in all subjects."

Back from the teacher: “Thank you for the follow up. I've worked both elementary and

secondary and agree with your superintendent's response. In both cases I tend to work about 60-70 hours each week in order to plan to meet my students' needs. Unfortunately, doing the majority of my planning during off-contract time limits the amount of collaboration I can do, which in turn limits my professional growth. It would be helpful (especially in the current political environment) to connect with others who are working toward the goal of a more realistic approach to education and educators' time. Do you know of any people who are advocating for such changes?"

We responded: *Here are some resources exploring this matter:*

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/19/09/gift-teacher-time>

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/value-of-a-teachers-time-jose-vilson>

<https://www.timeandlearning.org/sites/default/files/resources/timeforteachers.pdf>

Nice for Us to Hear

- >A principal's response to 1/12/22 practitioner "Thank you for sharing this information as it is very useful! Much appreciated!"
- >"Send a big Texas thanks you for the all work, posts, links, resources and resources that is shared for many, many years."
- >"You do such important and impressive work; congratulations and loads of thanks for all you send our way. Like others, I read and use, but don't acknowledge what you do often enough. MY great thank you!"

Invitation to Listserv Participants:

Everyone has a stake in the future of public education. This is a critical time for action. Send this resource on to others. Think about sharing with the growing number who are receiving it. AND Let us know about what we should be including.

Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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 or adelman@psych.ucla.edu

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