

# Students & Schools: Moving Forward\*

March, 2020 (Vol. 24 #6) – 34 Years & Counting

## What's Here

### For Discussion

**>Spring Slump: What Should Be Done to Help Students Stay Motivated**

### 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:

**>Spring Slump: What Should Be Done to Help Students Stay Motivated**

Excerpt from "Spring Slump" – by Amanda Gray – <https://ndsmcobserver.com/2010/02/spring-slump/>

*I noticed a trend lately a sleepy, tired and sad trend. We're growing, slowly but surely, more impatient and grumpy as the year progresses. I'm calling this phenomenon the 'Spring Semester Slump.' It's common sense, really. We start out the school year relatively excited to be back on campus, with friends, possibly even excited to be in class. Fall break comes, and while it's well-appreciated, we can come back to school without much coaxing. School has yet to get truly difficult ... This goes out the proverbial window, however, after Fall Break.... Winter Break cannot come fast enough. Those three beautiful weeks are the shortest three weeks of my life.... After that brief respite, spring semester begins.*

While a second semester slump may have a small effect on motivated and successful students, there is a sense of mounting frustration for students who aren't doing well (socially, emotionally, academically) that can lead to problems in attendance and effort. For some, it is just that the school year seems so long and their motivation lags. For others, it is clear that they aren't doing well and are unlikely to catch up. For those in their last year at a school, a version of "senioritis" hits, and they hope to coast through and survive the last few months.

**This is a good time for school staff to discuss how they understand the reduced engagement (energy/motivation/effort) and then plan ways to counter the "slump" (e.g., enhance motivation for school and for learning during the coming months).**

With respect to addressing motivational concerns, we suggest discussions include a focus on reducing avoidance motivation to school and classroom and enhancing intrinsic motivation.

Here are a few Center resources that may be helpful:

>*Working with Disengaged Students*

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

>*Engaging and Re-engaging Students and Families*: (four Continuing Education modules)

I: Motivation: Time to Move Beyond Behavior Modification

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

II: Strategic Approaches to Enhancing Student Engagement and Re-engagement

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

III: Enhancing Family Engagement and Re-engagement

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

IV: Embedding Engagement and Re-engagement into a Unified and Comprehensive System of Student and Learning Supports <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engageiv.pdf>

For more see the Center's Quick Find online clearinghouse on *Motivation*:

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

### Did you miss the following online discussions?

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

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

- *About the rising number of students described as anxious*
- *Supporting students/families following natural disasters*
- *Broadening understanding of social emotional learning*
- *Strengthening School-Home Connections: Challenges and strategies*
- *Self-report may exaggerate severity of mental health problems*

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*Blaming teachers for the problems in education is like blaming doctors for people being sick.*

Anonymous

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## Quick Links to Resources from Across the Country

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

*The impact of school safety drills for active shooting* <https://everytownresearch.org/school-safety-drills/>

*Why neighborhoods and the policies that shape them matter*

<https://www.rwjf.org/content/rwjf/en/blog/2020/01/why-neighborhoods-and-the-policies-that-shape-them-matter.html>

*How to build empathy and strengthen school community*

<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/how-build-empathy-strengthen-school-community>

*Agents of their own success: Self-advocacy skills and self determination for student with disabilities in the era of personalized learning*

<https://ncld.org/research/agents-of-their-own-success-self-advocacy-skills-and-self-determination-for-students-with-disabilities-in-the-era-of-personalized-learning>

*Hundreds of teachers rally for more public education funding*

<https://www.wric.com/news/politics/capitol-connection/hundreds-of-teachers-to-rally-for-more-public-education-funding/>

*First do no harm: Practical ways schools can work against systemic inequities for all of their students*

[http://psychlearningcurve.org/practical-ways-schools-can-work-against-systemic-inequities-for-all-of-their-students/?utm\\_source=Psych+Learning+Curve&utm\\_campaign=b90aa4e54b-do-no-harm&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_ff6044c3a5-b90aa4e54b-174482877](http://psychlearningcurve.org/practical-ways-schools-can-work-against-systemic-inequities-for-all-of-their-students/?utm_source=Psych+Learning+Curve&utm_campaign=b90aa4e54b-do-no-harm&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ff6044c3a5-b90aa4e54b-174482877)

*The comprehensive community mental health services for children with serious emotional disturbances program: Report to congress*

[http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001UaJu\\_6dHG2IMxbUstrmqROvqaQ1RbFTpQRZAR5vmqez\\_fhimDssREKv4yNngzN6dYf2GQRJtYkYHfqVpAL9yb8LSmuccbdW0uV8r2jZUb\\_kPfeF0FxitBVDRUd1feqjcjyrMA0hP1VzKvCq5VNbcSguAJG2FFN\\_NSA77zx95G--Q7KFCya1UoJD8xB6ZNVaerg7ae95jTQvLtnoiUw\\_bV34knyiu8k2DPtwbUZygXVO-fS0t\\_WBAzDUwYRF8dNiOSK33SwL8oyGmui44AuE8hSbKhMr2tyWt3DLFga815jfLXBmsNC-pbaKrNtoNjL74fC3pRDvmWZ-L5\\_3HCgBeEma1B\\_EG0Tv9DvLZD6XMjJMw=&c=kgMGfUkuQZbUQgavMCWVYcFKQjcWPJ9CMcAKg0PaqUQAubWtxNQ\\_pA==&ch=Sep9XvWzf\\_OKVmy6xJGm5vv4Tg-fTonfPIDkqteIVTKTY7F9\\_7MrQ==](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001UaJu_6dHG2IMxbUstrmqROvqaQ1RbFTpQRZAR5vmqez_fhimDssREKv4yNngzN6dYf2GQRJtYkYHfqVpAL9yb8LSmuccbdW0uV8r2jZUb_kPfeF0FxitBVDRUd1feqjcjyrMA0hP1VzKvCq5VNbcSguAJG2FFN_NSA77zx95G--Q7KFCya1UoJD8xB6ZNVaerg7ae95jTQvLtnoiUw_bV34knyiu8k2DPtwbUZygXVO-fS0t_WBAzDUwYRF8dNiOSK33SwL8oyGmui44AuE8hSbKhMr2tyWt3DLFga815jfLXBmsNC-pbaKrNtoNjL74fC3pRDvmWZ-L5_3HCgBeEma1B_EG0Tv9DvLZD6XMjJMw=&c=kgMGfUkuQZbUQgavMCWVYcFKQjcWPJ9CMcAKg0PaqUQAubWtxNQ_pA==&ch=Sep9XvWzf_OKVmy6xJGm5vv4Tg-fTonfPIDkqteIVTKTY7F9_7MrQ==)

*The nation's English-learner population has surged: 3 things to know*

[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning-the-language/2020/02/english\\_learner\\_enrollment\\_increases.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning-the-language/2020/02/english_learner_enrollment_increases.html)

“Adolescent profiles of marginalization and connection at school: relations with academics and mental health.” (2020) in the *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 30(S1), 209–225.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jora.12460>

“After-school programs and children's mental health: Organizational social context, program quality, and children's social behavior” in the *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 1-14. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15374416.2019.1683849>

**>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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*I may be wrong, but I'm thinking it's easier to say: “We're going to become a compassion-infused organization rather than a trauma-informed organization”. One is a more positive image that we're going to increase our compassion. The other is a more threatening image that we have a more traumatized population that we take care of.*

Arnd Herz

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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 the following:

- (1) From the former superintendent of Gainesville (GA) City Schools – *I want to share with you the latest initiative as Gainesville City continues to use the learning supports system. The Deputy Supt, and I are presenting at ESEA next week the story of our journey with Learning Supports, the changes we made to work in 3 components, and the evolution of the work in the last 10 years.*

*Abstract of the presentation.* Overcoming the most challenging barriers to learning is possible when a school and community work together to promote equity and opportunity. Challenges to mental health are presented by trauma, toxic stress, anxiety, depression, and other adverse experiences of children and families. This presentation shares the work of Gainesville City Schools, GA, to apply professional learning to practice. The district has organized, aligned, and integrated supports that have improved learning, discipline, graduation rates, and school climate. The inclusion of student and family voice in decision-making is included. The work of integrating the community and university partners in the "Hub Center" where families and students can readily receive supports will be described. A description of roles and responsibilities for supports will be shared. Participants will leave with specific strategies and actions to apply in their schools and communities.  
<https://www.eceanetwork.org/sched/E20/session/organize-align-and-integrate-success-with-mental-health-and-wrap-around-supports>

- (2) From a report on a North Carolina School Mental Health Initiative  
<https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/instructional-resources/behavior-support/mental-health>

“As schools have attempted to meet the mental health needs of children and youth, they tend to offer a myriad of programs designed to address mental health needs, including the Character Education curriculum used in the classroom; health education; anti-bullying programs; adolescent pregnancy prevention programs; safe and drug-free school programs; counseling provided by school counselors, social workers, psychologists and nurses; classroom mentors; licensed therapists providing services to students in the school setting; Response to Intervention (RtI); Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) – the list could go on.

Although many of the aforementioned programs are viewed as effective, these types of programs and efforts are frequently viewed as “add-ons” rather than as an integral part of the student’s education since they are not “academic” (Adelman & Taylor, 2006).\*

There are seldom coordinated efforts demonstrated between the support programs that exist and even less coordination between these types of programs and curriculum planning within the school. As a result of a lack of intentional coordination within the existing instructional curriculum and supports developed in a school, programs such as those referenced above are often not maintained when changes in funding, personnel, policies, leadership, or even a lack of teacher “buy in” adversely impact the long-term sustainability of these school mental health paradigms....

If schools are truly going to address the many reasons that students are not succeeding in school, it is time to reassess how to achieve that mission (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2007). ... states that serve as examples of a comprehensive approach to student learning supports: Iowa's “System of Learning Supports: A State Department Education Initiative” (Iowa Department of Education, 2004), Hawaii's “Comprehensive Student Support System: A Statewide Initiative” (Hawaii Department of Education, 2000), Michigan’s “Safe and Supportive Schools” (Michigan Department of Education, 2015), and Alabama’s “Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports” (Alabama State Department of Education, 2013).

**Let Us Know:**

- (1) About any school improvement policy makers 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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*The status quo always favors neutrality which in truth is never neutral at all but supports those who stand against change.*

Michael Eric Dyson

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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**

**Teachers unions call for rethinking lockdown drills.** About 95% of American public schools conduct some form of regular active shooter safety drill, sometimes called a lockdown or active threat drill. But concerns are growing that these drills have not been proven effective in preventing violence and that they may even traumatize some students. Now the advocacy group Everytown For Gun Safety is joining with the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association — the nation's largest education unions, with several million members — in calling for schools to reassess the use of lockdown drills. The groups say they do not recommend active shooter training for students. And if schools do choose to do these drills with students, they shouldn't be unnecessarily realistic and schools should give plenty of warning. Plus, they should be done with age-appropriateness and sensitivity toward children with special needs or those who have experienced trauma.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/02/11/804468827/2-big-teachers-unions-call-for-rethinking-student-involvement-in-lockdown-drills>

**Rural schools court homegrown teachers.** In the last decade, the U.S. has moved from a teacher surplus to a major shortage, and researchers project the country will likely be about 200,000 teachers short by 2025. In Illinois, the period 2010 to 2016 saw a 53% decline in graduates from teacher preparation programs, outpacing even the national downturn among young people, according to the Illinois State Board of Education. Across the country, a movement to train homegrown educators is gaining momentum, according to the University of Texas Center for Education Policy. Some programs provide tuition aid to college students in exchange for a commitment to teach at an under-resourced school upon graduation. Others target teachers' aides and parents, helping them attain their teaching certificates, then get jobs in their communities. In urban areas, Grow Your Own programs are largely seen as a grassroots solution to racial inequality, as racial and ethnic minorities made up just 20% of U.S. public school teachers in 2015-16, but about 51% of all public school students. <https://thesouthern.com>

**Governor creating a state department bureau to avoid school shootings.** Iowa will become the latest state to create an organization within state government designed to prevent school shootings under a plan announced Gov. Kim Reynolds. She’s creating a Governor’s School Safety Bureau within the Iowa Department of Public Safety. It would cost \$2 million to start and \$1.5 million annually to operate. Full-time bureau instructors will train local law enforcement officers and school staff in identifying and responding quickly in a consistent way. The plan calls for hiring two additional state agents with cyber training to identify and address early threats. Iowa Department of Public Safety Commissioner said most school threats are made online through anonymous messaging systems or gaming platforms. The new agents will be trained to investigate, identify and act on such threats. The plan also includes a 24-hour tip line, web-based application and app for smart phones to allow students to anonymously report tips. <https://apnews.com/>

**New, Proactive Civil Rights Compliance Center within Office for Civil Rights.** The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Education will launch the Outreach, Prevention, Education and Non-discrimination (OPEN) Center to focus on proactive compliance with federal civil rights laws. The OPEN Center will provide assistance and support to schools, educators, families, and students to ensure better awareness of the requirements and protections of federal non-discrimination laws. OCR will, through the provision of targeted support to recipient institutions and the public, also be able to work more proactively—prior to the filing of complaints—to ensure that schools are aware of their obligations under federal civil rights law. <https://www.ed.gov/>

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Quote from Office for Civil Rights story above:

The OPEN Center is all about strengthening civil rights compliance through voluntary, proactive activities. Instead of waiting for violations to occur before responding, OCR will get in front of the problem, partnering with educators and other institutions to better protect students. As the name implies, we want to be a better resource, more welcoming and supportive of students, families, educators, and communities.

Assistant Secretary Kenneth L. Marcus

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## Comments and sharing from the field

1) In the Center’s practice notes on *The Role of Schools in Promoting Whole Child Development and Learning* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wholechild2.pdf>, we asked:

*What should and shouldn't happen in classrooms, school wide, and out of school to promote success and well being at school and beyond FOR ALL CHILDREN?*

We received the following from a Principal – “What should happen? Teachers should be focused on standards based instruction for all students.. the students' education is the top priority of the teacher. Beyond the formal education, teachers should be noticing as much about their students as possible... daily moments of care and questioning should provide a tremendous amount of knowledge about individual students in a matter of weeks. Then, hopefully, teachers can share concerns with school social workers or guidance counselors for additional supports that students might need. Also in the secondary classroom, there should be ongoing support of college and career topics for the encouragement and planning of post high school college and career. Students should never graduate high school with no plan in place for their next steps.”

(2) FYI – Shared from the field:

“ I have some new books out:

>*Why School: Reclaiming Education for All of Us-Revised and Expanded*

<http://mikerosebooks.com/why-school-.html>

>*Back to School: Why Everyone Deserves a Second Chance at Education*

<http://mikerosebooks.com/back-to-school.html>

>Public Education Under Siege (a collection edited with Michael Katz). Now in paperback.  
<http://mikerosebooks.com/public-education-under-siege.html>  
 Visit my website [www.mikerosebooks.com](http://www.mikerosebooks.com) and blog <http://mikerosebooks.blogspot.com>  
 >Last blog entry: *Some Thoughts on Character Education, Non-Cognitive Skills, Grit, and the Formation of Public Discourse About Education*

(3) Another colleague sent us an updated and expanded edition of his book entitled: *Student Mental Health* <https://www.amazon.com/Teachers-Student-Mental-Health-Education/dp/0393708640>

(4) Some nice comments about Center resources:

- >From a Director of Special Education – “I am not sure how I got on this website. I think I was desperate one day looking for information to help our students and signed on to receive emails. What you have provided here is a gold mine of valuable resources for my district. I created a folder for staff to refer to on an as-needed basis. The information is useful, practical and best of all applies to the struggles we are facing today. Bless you! Keep it coming:)”
- >Re. the Center’s *Education Leaders’ Guide to Transforming Student and Learning Supports* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/transguide.pdf> “Hello, Thank you for all of your great materials! I especially love this guide. I was wondering if there is anyway I can use Exhibit 2 and plug in my own schools information? This is my situation exactly. Thank you!  
 Director of Integrated Services, Health Services
- >“Please continue to send me resources that I may utilize in my work in the public school system. Thank you for sharing with me.”

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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

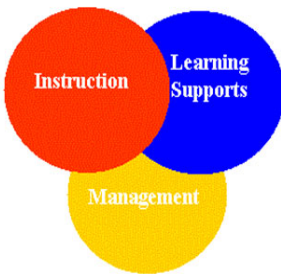
**Improving School Improvement**

[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:*



Let’s build on current adoptions of MTSS to develop a truly unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports.

See our take on this:

>*Rethinking MTSS to Better Address Barriers to Learning*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/fall19.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)