

**ENEWS -- Another Center Resource for ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO LEARNING\***

**May, 2018 (Vol. 22 #8) – 31 Years & Counting**

**\*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>**

***What's Here***

**Resource links relevant to school improvement and personnel development**

**This month's special topic –End-of-the-Year Celebrations at All Levels: Hope, Congratulations, Safe Exuberance**

**Transforming student/learning supports – Call to Action**

**and more**

**Resources from Across the Country**

- >Diversity toolkit: cultural competence for educators – <http://www.nea.org/tools/30402.htm#S>
- >A Comprehensive approach to suicide prevention – <http://www.sprc.org/effective-prevention/comprehensive-approach>
- >About gamified learning and intrinsic motivation for classroom learning – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/gamil.pdf>
- >Keeping students first: Building community labor partnerships for strong schools – <http://schottfoundation.org/report/keeping-students-first-building-community-labor-partnerships-strong-schools>
- >2017 National Assessment of Education Progress – [https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading\\_math\\_2017\\_highlights/](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2017_highlights/)
- >About neurodiversity – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/neurodiv.pdf>
- >Supporting and responding to behavior: Evidence based classroom strategies for teachers – [https://osepideasthatwork.org/sites/default/files/ClassroomPBIS\\_508.pdf](https://osepideasthatwork.org/sites/default/files/ClassroomPBIS_508.pdf)
- >Body Image: What's the School's Role? – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/body-image.pdf>

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

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

### A few relevant journal publications

- >Combating chronic absenteeism: Bridging research and policy (2018), *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 23 (1-2), Special Issue. <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hjsp20/23/1-2?nav=tocList>
- >Promoting or suppressing resilience to mental health outcomes in at risk young people: The role of parental and peer attachment and school connectedness (2018), Stevenson, J.A. & Haley, E.B., *Journal of Adolescence*, 64, 13-22. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/journal-of-adolescence/vol/64/suppl/C>
- >Longitudinal examination of aggression and study skills from middle to high school: Implications for dropout prevention (2018), Orpinas, P. Raczynski, K. Hsieh, H. et al. *Journal of School Health* 83, 246-252. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/josh.12602>
- >The protective role of teacher-student relationships against peer victimization and psychosocial distress. (2018), Sulkowski, M.L & Simmons, J. *Psychology in the Schools*, 55, 137–150. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/pits.22086>

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*Some people drink from the fountain of knowledge, others just gargle* – Robert Anthony

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### The Education Commission of the States reported on:

The Council of Chief State School Officers and Scholastic Inc. study –  
*Barriers to Equity in Education*

See *The Teacher & Principal School Report* –

<http://www.scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport/barriers-to-equity.htm>

**They note:** Findings indicate that 87 percent of teachers and principals divulged that many students face barriers to learning. These barriers include social, emotional and behavioral issues, as well as factors related to poverty, family support, school climate, safety, substance abuse, mental health, community issues and attendance. For students dealing with these challenges, instruction alone is not enough, schools also need to provide comprehensive learning supports to achieve equity and raise student performance. Policymakers can help state and district leaders create support systems that ensure school, instructional and support services leaders co-create school improvement plans that impact student achievement.

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

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

## TRANSFORMING STUDENT AND LEARNING SUPPORTS

**Call to Action** – Data on the need for a unified and comprehensive system of support

Excerpt from the report: *Barriers to Equity in Education*

<http://www.scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport/barriers-to-equity.htm>

When teachers and principals are asked to describe what equity in education means to them, their comments center on themes around the access to resources and opportunities that each individual student needs to be successful.

No matter the lens through which educators view equity, principals and teachers across the country, whether by region, grade-level or metro status (i.e., city, suburban, town or rural), believe that equity in education should be a national priority. The vast majority of educators (87%) say that many of their students face barriers to learning that come from outside the school environment. Across region, grade-level and metro status, a majority of educators agree with this statement.

Educators in higher-poverty schools are more likely to say they have students who are experiencing outside barriers to learning, yet this still is prevalent among two-thirds of educators in low-poverty schools.

Overall, less than half of teachers (39%) and principals (48%) agree that most of their students start the school year academically prepared for grade-level work. This varies dramatically by school poverty levels, with educators in high-poverty schools being far less likely to agree. Principals, who in their roles have insight into their entire school's population, report having students who are facing many situations that can impede learning. Nine in 10 or more say they have students who are experiencing family or personal crisis, are in need of mental health services or are living in poverty.

A large majority also reported students coming to school hungry, in need of healthcare, who are homeless or in temporary housing, as well as those in need of English language support. The percentage of principals who have students experiencing family or personal crisis and students in need of mental health services does not vary significantly by school poverty level. However, principals in higher-poverty schools are more likely to have the other student populations asked about in the survey.

Many principals, regardless of grade level, region, metro designation or poverty level, report seeing an increase in the population of students experiencing each of these barriers in the past three years. In fact, 65% of principals and 58% of teachers who have been in their schools for three years or more say that at least one of these groups has grown.

### MAKING THE CASE FOR TRANSFORMING STUDENT/LEARNING SUPPORTS

- At the Community Schools conference in Baltimore, May 3, 2018

*It Takes 3! A Bold Approach to School Improvement*

Dr. Rhonda Neal Waltman, Sr. Director - Scholastic Education

Elisa Alvarez, Sr. Advisor - New York DOE - Bronx

*How do school and community leaders ensure that resources positively impact student learning and achievement outcomes? This session will examine how to apply the Learning Supports Framework to organize and integrate community school supports in a large urban district.*

- National school based health care convention, Indianapolis, June 25 workshop

*Pathway to Equity: A School and Community System to Address Mental Health*

Merrienne Dyer, BS, M. ED, Ed. S, Ph D

*How can schools, families, and communities address the pervasive inequity in educational outcomes for children who experience trauma and mental health challenges? In this workshop, the presenter will describe their use of the Learning Supports Framework (based on the work of Adelman and Taylor at UCLA) to organize and integrate supports to address the barriers through a systemic process.*

## WHERE'S IT HAPPENING?

We are receiving an increasing number of requests about what sites we recommend contacting and perhaps visiting to see efforts that are being made to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports (i.e., efforts to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching). **Please let us know about schools/districts that would be good to contact.** Send to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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*Education: the path from cocky ignorance to miserable uncertainty* – Mark Twain

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## News from around the country related to addressing barriers

>**Lack of progress seen in US students.** The results of the latest Nation's Report Card are in and the news isn't good. Fourth-graders made no improvements in math or reading, while eighth-graders' scores were flat in math and only slightly improved in reading, according to results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Overall, only roughly a third of American eighth-graders are proficient in reading and math along with about 40 percent of fourth-graders. The results show that racial disparities persist. African-American students were out-performed by their white peers at both grade levels. 4/10/18 <https://www.apnews.com/816ee8bfbfb84fa78dc343452a7cd179/Betsy-DeVos-laments-lack-of-progress-seen-in-US-students>

>**High teacher turnover helps fuel educators' marches on statehouses.** Long-term wage struggles have made the profession difficult for current teachers and unattractive to those who might choose it as a career. And many across the country have taken up the mantle to push the conversation forward in state legislatures. Teachers in Kentucky, Arizona, West Virginia and Oklahoma have already taken to the streets, and educators in other states are beginning to pursue similar organizing tactics, all because trying to make a living in their chosen profession has become a near-impossible challenge. Teachers earn about 30 percent less than other educated workers, and the attrition rate for the profession in the United States is twice that of most Western countries. 4/8/18 <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/high-teacher-turnover-helps-fuel-educators-march-statehouses-n863541>

>**Puerto Rico to close 283 schools amid sharp enrollment drop.** Puerto Rico's Department of Education announced Thursday that it will close 283 schools this summer following a sharp drop in enrollment amid the island's long economic slump and the continued departure of families after Hurricane Maria. Enrollment has dropped by more than 38,700 students since last May. After the closures, 828 public schools will remain operational. The announcement of closures came two weeks after Gov. Rossello signed a bill for implementing a charter schools pilot program in 10 percent of public schools and offering private school vouchers to 3 percent of students starting in 2019-2020 as part of an education overhaul. Those who oppose the closures say they worry about transportation logistics and the needs of special education children. An estimated 30 percent of Puerto Rico students receive specialized education, twice the average on the U.S. mainland. The drop in enrollment comes as roughly a half million people have fled Puerto Rico for the U.S. mainland in the past decade during the long recession, including an estimated 135,000 since Hurricane Maria in September. Puerto Rico closed 150 schools from 2010 to 2015, and last year announced it would be closing another 179 schools. 4/5/18 <https://apnews.com/642ea22aa7cf48dba088ce9c7992a8f4>

>**Stoneman Douglas students question new security measures regulating backpacks.** Marjory Stoneman Douglas High created a new environment, with clear backpacks, bag searches, I.D. lanyards, police officers at every entrance and a student body skeptical that any of it will make them safer. District officials say Stoneman Douglas, the site of a Feb. 14 shooting that killed 17, is serving as a pilot for possible districtwide security changes. Some schools already have more cops on campus, and dozens are now armed with AR-15 rifles. The district says it's expediting plans to

provide fencing and gates at about 100 schools. The district limited the number of places students could enter Stoneman Douglas in the morning to four, with guards stationed at each spot. Metal-detecting wands weren't being used Monday but are being considered, officials said. The police presence was heavy and will remain so at least until the end of the school year, officials say. Gov. Rick Scott is providing up to eight Florida Highway Patrol officers to guard the school, and extra Broward Sheriff's deputies and district police officers are also stationed there. 4/2/18  
[http://www.richmond.com/news/national-world/ap/stoneman-douglas-students-question-new-security-measures-regulating-backpacks/article\\_d36a1bf1-2f7b-5a0c-969e-18613cefd638.html](http://www.richmond.com/news/national-world/ap/stoneman-douglas-students-question-new-security-measures-regulating-backpacks/article_d36a1bf1-2f7b-5a0c-969e-18613cefd638.html)

>**Students collect over 1K books.** PRIEST RIVER (Idaho). Through a recent book drive, students are helping spread the love of literature throughout the community. The Priest River Community Foundation wanted to promote literacy in the community, because a lot of kids are behind when they get to kindergarten. To achieve their mission, PRCF gave schools a \$1,000 grant to organize a community literacy team. The team consists of members from the school district and from the community. Their goal is to get books into places where families tend to spend time (such as the Food Bank, the laundromats, the Mercantile and the Tire Center.) 4/4/18  
[http://www.bonnercountydailybee.com/local\\_news/20180404/students\\_collect\\_more\\_than\\_1k\\_books](http://www.bonnercountydailybee.com/local_news/20180404/students_collect_more_than_1k_books)

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Quote from the above Idaho article:

*What we've learned from all of this, and we've been doing this a few years ... if the kids are picking the books, the books they really want to read, the interest and their reading has just skyrocketed. –Principal Susan Luckey*

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## Comments and sharing from the field

**We were asked to share the following:**

- (1) “We recently completed the short film, “*Confidence Boost*”, in the hope of helping the many young people that deal with bullying issues. We’ve paid attention to your thoughts on school bullying and violence in the past. That’s the reason we’re attempting to contact you. Our request is that you may make those in your organizations aware of this project. Also sharing any information or advice you may feel helpful would be welcomed. We intend to make this film available to schools and other anti-bullying organizations for the purpose of awareness and education. We are asking for any ideas you may have because, this is one of the few bullying films that have a LGBT lead character. Here’s a link to our media kit, and the trailer: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/XK82gKYNBjNeg>
- (2) “Please consider sharing our information with your subscribers. Our company provides FREE health and mental health content online for teachers to teach these invaluable topics. (We also have a robust social emotional learning program, but that is for sale.) The website is <http://www.YourSelfSeries.com> – Teens can use the site to learn all about who they are as they learn about all sorts of topics, not the least of which is their mental health. Our roadblock is getting the word out, but the content is free. I just did a webinar for the folks at ASHA (American School Health Assoc.) to explain how to use the free website. You can watch that webinar here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAxppwwg0Jo&feature=youtu.be>”

**And we thank everyone who send us feedback – here are a couple of examples:**

>“I was searching for information on how other school districts are utilizing School Social Workers in addressing students with behavioral problems. Also our own district is asking all the school social workers, psychologists and counselors for further ways we can support our most challenged students. In searching the web I came across your article on how school social worker roles are changing. You have great information that is very pertinent to our daily roles as school social workers.”

>“I wanted to reach out to thank you for all your efforts and the regular emails. They are always filled with extremely valuable information. Our district is in the process of examining our current social emotional, behavioral and mental health services in order to address any gaps and align our efforts to more adequately serve the whole child.”

### **This Month’s Special Topic –End-of-the-Year Celebrations at All Levels: Hope, Congratulations, Safe Exuberance**

*More than one-third of youth under the age of 21 killed in alcohol related fatalities died during the months prior to graduation season, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. ... 1,012 died during the months of April, May and June.*

From: *Dangerous Season for Teens: Prom and Graduation Time*  
[http://alcoholism.about.com/cs/teens/a/blcc030514,htm](http://alcoholism.about.com/cs/teens/a/blcc030514.htm)

A special focus for this month is on fostering hope, promoting social emotional learning, supporting positive celebrations, and preventing related tragedies.

The end of the school year is a favored time for everyone. For most students, it is a time to be congratulated and to celebrate. For some, it is a temporary reprieve from problems experienced at school. This is the time to help everyone find hope for the future and experience a sense that they have accomplished something worthwhile. And it is a time to help them celebrate in ways that minimize tragedy.

#### **Celebrations**

The key to focusing on hope and accomplishment is to identify whatever a student has done positively, clarify how the student can build on this in coming years, and convey all this personally to the student and family. Drawing on what we know about personal motivation, the focus needs to be on specifics that can enhance feelings of competence, self-determination, and connectedness to significant others; minimize messages that threaten such feelings.

With respect to end of the year celebrations, each is something to cherish, and the anticipation of each represents a natural opportunity to promote social and emotional learning (e.g., enhanced understanding of self and others, increased sense of responsibility for self and others, expanded social problem solving skills). Of special concern are teen parties and proms. The need is to provide guidance and support and to do much more to minimize negative side effects.

For a motivational perspective and natural opportunities, see

>*School Engagement, Disengagement, Learning Supports, & School Climate* –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schooleng.pdf>

>*Natural Opportunities to Promote Social-Emotional Learning and MH* –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practicenotes/naturalopportunities.pdf>

#### **Safe End of the Year Student Celebrations**

Most schools try to address this concern. If a workgroup has not developed a set of ideas for countering problems, it is time to do so. And it can help to ask some recent graduates to participate with planning work groups. Here’s what some recent grads have told us:

- 1) ... what my high school did toward the end of the year that was different than many other schools was the type of ‘grad night’ we had. Whereas many schools rent out [a local entertainment center] and have dances there and go on rides and many students get intoxicated before attending, at my school grad night was held on campus. The parents worked it and there were different activities like fake gambling, craps tables, dancing, a smoothie bar, food, and "crash room" to sleep since it went until 5am, rock climbing, a palm reader, inflatable jumper obstacle course, face painting, kareoke and much more. When I tell friends from other high schools/friends I made at college, the majority give me positive feedback saying that it sounds like a lot more fun than what they did. I think this is because instead of having the



whole [entertainment center] where groups can get separated and remain in cliques ..., it was in our gym and outside in what was called "senior park;" So it remained tight knit, so to speak, making it easier to spend time with a a lot of different students and not get lost in a large area. Also, because parents worked the booths, students did not show up intoxicated. There was no re-entry allowed and because it was on campus, even if a few students did decide to drink before the event, it lessened the danger of driving on a freeway to get there because it is possible that they could simply walk over to the school. ... It was a night that I will never forget and one of my greatest memories and it was in a positive setting and a good way to have safe fun.

- 2) In my own experience, I remember one of my teachers speaking in class about two weeks before prom and trying to give us some perspective on the event. She wanted us to have a good time, but also acknowledged the enormous stress that it caused for some people. My teacher encouraged us to view it as just another dance and to focus on graduating instead. She had chaperoned so many proms over the years and shared with us some of the very negative things she saw happen when students weren't using their best judgment. While trying to downplay the event may seem like being a killjoy to some, many of my friends and I found it reassuring to hear from an adult that life indeed does go on past these high school celebrations because most students were very much caught up in a prom and end-of-the-year craze. I think teachers and/or counselors should engage students in conversations like these months before prom to temper the frenzy that can accompany the event and possibly prevent the unwise decisions students make at prom and post-prom parties. It is of course perfectly acceptable to be happy and excited about prom, but I think there is much potential for danger when students blow it into epic proportions. Another thing that my high school did, which looking back I now view as a wise decision, was to not have a prom queen or king. The end of the year was just too filled with other anxiety-inducing events to have so much stress and energy expended on that. We simply had a homecoming king and queen in the fall, and I think that greatly reduced the tension around prom time.

For a range of ideas about safe end of year celebrations, see such websites as  
>*Student Against Destructive Decisions* (SADD) at <http://www.sadd.org>

**Topics in April's School Practitioner Community of Practice**

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

- 4/4/18: >"Auditing" school climate: Guidelines for leaders
  - >Support staff working in classrooms reduce behavior problems
  - >About reducing suspensions
- 4/11/18: Racial conflicts in the school and the community
- 4/18/18: About the White House's recommendations for school safety
- 4/25/18: How social emotional learning fits into the bigger learning support framework

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Schools are a significant source for the promotion of factors that we know predict resilience: being a part of a safe and supportive community, having a strong connection to one or more supportive adults, and the provision of opportunities to build and develop academic, social, athletic, and artistic talents and skills. Tali Raviv

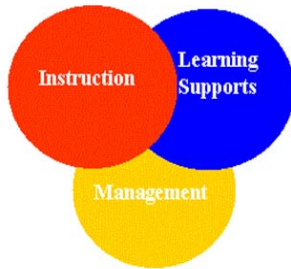
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***Let Us Know What You See Happening to Transform Student and Learning Supports***

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](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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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 is the report from the National Summit on the**

***Every Student Succeeds Act and Learning Supports:  
Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching  
to Enhance Equity of Opportunity –***

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

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

Who Are We? Recently renamed, we are 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 – email [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)