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& counting**

**School Practitioner
Listserv**

**A Weekly Community of Practice Network
for Sharing and Interchange**



April 14, 2014

Request

>About data to support mental health in schools

Enhancing Student's Learning Supports

>Schools partnering with libraries and recreation centers:
A good idea for spring break and for summer

Featured Center Resource

>Sharing research to better understand what works
and what doesn't

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**Please forward this to a few colleagues you think might be interested.
The more who join, the more we are likely to receive to share.**

**For those who have been forwarded this and want to be part of
the weekly exchange, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu**

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Requ^{est}: “I am working with my school district to enhance the integration of mental health in schools. I have done some searching and found a lot of resources supporting why it is necessary for students to receive these services, and how to transform the current model into more synchronized scheme. As much as this information is crucial, I am looking for some empirical studies that show student improvement based on integrating mental health in schools. So far, I have not seen much. I am wondering if you could point me in the right direction by sharing some of the big studies going on related to school based services. I am passionate about this integration and want to access the best, most recent research there is. Any information you could share would be extremely appreciated.”

Center Response: There are data and then there are data. And there is our view that the best approach to moving mental health in schools forward is to embed the work into a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports. This provides an opportunity to pursue promotion of mental health and the prevention, as well as ameliorating mental health problems. See:

> *Embedding Mental Health into a Learning Supports Component: An Essential Step for the Field to Take Now* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingmh.pdf>

From this perspective, see:

What’s the Research-Base for Moving Toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports? – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/WhatstheEvidenceBase.pdf>

As to recent outcome studies specific to mental health in schools, here are abstracts from two articles published in the *Journal of School Mental Health*. Access them for additional references. <http://link.springer.com/journal/volumesAndIssues/12310>

> *The Impact of School Mental Health on Student and School-Level Academic Outcomes: Current Status of the Research and Future Directions* (2013)

Abstract: Summarizes areas of school mental health (SMH) research relevant to the interplay between students’ academic and social–emotional outcomes. After advancing a multidimensional conceptualization of academic success at the levels of individual students and schools, we summarize observational and intervention studies that connect students’ mental health to their academic achievement, with acknowledgment of the bidirectional relationship. Then, current and future directions of SMH research are discussed, including (a) the impact of SMH health initiatives and services on schools’ achievement, (b) the need to address the mental health of historically neglected subgroups of students, and (c) interdisciplinary collaborations necessary to support enhanced outcomes. Based on the findings from these literature integrations, we conclude with recommendations and implications for research and practice

(2) *School-Based Mental Health Programs for Students Who Have Emotional Disturbances: Academic and Social-Emotional Outcomes* (2011)

Abstract: Most schools offer some type of school-based mental health service to students, and there is a growing body of empirically rigorous studies examining the effects on academic and mental health outcomes for students. However, students classified as having emotional disturbances are under-represented in these studies. Using a convenience sample of four different types of school-based mental health programs, changes in achievement

levels and social and emotional functioning in youth with emotional disturbances served in special education ($n = 148$) were examined. Longitudinal results reveal there was improvement in either the emotional or social functioning of these youth in all four programs, while results for improvement in achievement levels were less consistent. Results reveal that in the targeted sample of programs with intensive or multifaceted services, there was improvement in academic as well as social and emotional functioning in these youth. Implications for school-based mental health services are discussed.

Listserv Participants: Let us know about data used locally to make the case for mental health in schools. Please send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Enhancing Student's Learning Supports:

**>Schools partnering with libraries and recreation centers:
A good idea for spring break and for summer**

From the Columbus City School District, OH –

<http://www.ccsosoh.us/protected/ArticleView.aspx?iid=3GUB&dasi=10>

“Columbus City Schools (CCS) is partnering with the City of Columbus and its Recreation and Parks Department to offer a Spring Break Reading Blitz. The Reading Blitz will be hosted by six Recreation Centers to help students and to encourage them to practice and strengthen their reading skills during Spring Break. The CCS Reading Department is also creating a Spring Break Reading Enrichment Packet that will include several reading passages, questions, and suggestions for reading activities. Community volunteers who have been working in CCS schools as Reading Buddies, as well as others, will assist students with their Spring Break Reading Enrichment Packet activities. In addition, CCS is partnering with Columbus Metropolitan Libraries to ensure that a variety of books are available for the students’ reading pleasure.”

As you think about plans for summer enrichment programs for students, focus on mobilizing volunteer organizations to work with youngsters in parks and local libraries. Think about strengthening both reading and writing by using activities that motivate engagement. For example, help students write stories about their lives; establish a “Young Authors” program with an opportunity for them to share their work by reading to others (senior citizens, preschool students).

Listserv Participants: What is planned in local schools/districts/communities to provide learning opportunities over the summer? Please share. [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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Featured Center Resource:

>Sharing research to better understand what works and what doesn't

A major emphasis in the Center's daily work is on reading, sharing, and using the latest research reports that apply to our mission as a policy and practice analysis center. As best we can, we zero in on whatever seems relevant to advancing the efforts of schools to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.

We include and circulate what we find through our monthly ENEWS, the section of our website that abstracts "News from Around the Country," inclusion in Online Clearinhouse Quick Finds, adding to the bibliography that offers a sampling of references for Mental Health in Schools, the weekly Practitioner, and special announcements.

And as important as positive findings are, we know that it is critical to note when sparse school funds are being used to support interventions that are paying too little dividends. It is also important to better understand the nature and scope of problems. See, for example, a recent review article in the *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 159-185. It is entitled:

>*Bullying in Schools: The Power of Bullies and the Plight of Victims* –
<http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115030>

Here is an excerpt from the April 1 news release about the review:

Schools have limited success in reducing bullying, new analysis finds

"... the most thorough analysis to date of studies on school bullying have found that K-12 schools' efforts to curtail bullying are often disappointing. The study revealed that schools are trying many different approaches to protect students, and while the more comprehensive programs have been the most effective, they require substantial commitment and school resources to be successful. ...

The review ... also debunks some common misconceptions about bullying. For example, while it was previously assumed that verbal aggression and exclusion were bullying tactics used more commonly by girls than by boys, the analysis revealed that boys use the tactics as much as girls do. ... gay and lesbian students and students who are overweight tend to get bullied significantly more than other students....

Children with social connections - even just one friend - are at less risk of suffering severe symptoms after being bullied.... That insight indicates that schools could do a better job of preventing bullying by making sure students are not isolated, for example, by not eating lunch alone.

Anti-bullying programs are evaluated based on whether they are reducing the number of bullying incidents on school grounds, but it might be more telling to consider how much schools are helping the students who are most severely and most frequently bullied. ...Such students are most likely to blame themselves, feel depressed and feel that nothing can be done to stop the bullying...."

<http://newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/schools-have-limited-success-in-271658.aspx>

Guide us to any reports you think we should share. Contact: Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Please share relevant resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences!

Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Note: Responses come only to the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA for possible inclusion in the next week's message.

We also post a broad range of issues and responses to the *Net Exchange* on our website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm> and to the *Facebook* site (which can be accessed from the Center's website homepage <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>)