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**School Practitioner
Listserv**

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



May 19, 2014

FYI (For Your *Inspiration*)

**>Out of the box thinking about opportunities
for summer learning**

Feedback from Colleagues

**>What to say to school staff about broadly integrating
mental health providers from the community**

Featured Center Resource

>Addressing the Plateauing of Achievement Data

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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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FYI (For Your *Inspiration*)

>Out of the box thinking about opportunities for summer learning

Chicago Expands Citywide Summer of Learning and Earning Initiative with Over 10,000 Additional Learning And Employment Opportunities

http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/mayor/press_room/press_releases/2014/apr/mayor-emanuel-announces-expanded-citywide-summer-of-learning-and.html (4/9/14)

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced Chicago's youth will now have access to an additional 10,000 academic and job training opportunities through partnerships across the City as part of 2014's Summer of Learning and Earning, a citywide initiative to keep youth ages 4 to 24 active and engaged this summer. The "Summer of Learning and Earning 2014" will provide more than 215,000 opportunities for young people, including interactive activities at parks, libraries, schools, museums and cultural institutions, colleges and universities; community- and faith-based programs, jobs through at City and County departments and sister agencies; and self-paced, online learning activities.

"In the wake of last year's incredibly successful summer programming, I am pleased to see our citywide summer initiatives growing and thriving as we work to support the educational and career goals of all Chicago students and young adults," said Mayor Emanuel. "Providing additional opportunities in the summer months is an important way to keep our youth safe, active and engaged, and ensure our students are graduating 100% college ready and 100% college bound."

The Summer of Learning and Earning calls together the entire city to an all-hands-on-deck effort to make summer count and support science, technology, engineering, art, and math learning for students of all ages. One Summer Chicago will also add an additional 2,000 job opportunities. Since the Mayor has taken office, job opportunities for youth have increased from 14,000 to 22,000.

"The City's summer programming will be our biggest and best ever, with 22,000 job and internship opportunities designed to build 21st century skills and prepare our youth to succeed in school, work and life" said Commissioner Evelyn Diaz of the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services. ...

"The students and their projects from last year's program were so impressive that we jumped at the chance to support DFSS' 2014 One Summer Chicago effort," said Glenn Tilton, chairman of the Midwest for JPMorgan Chase. "Learning is a key to change and we believe that this program can help individuals acquire the knowledge and skills needed to become productive, engaged citizens."

The Summer of Learning and Earning will use resources throughout the city to provide a wide range of academic enrichment opportunities for students and young adults, allowing them to stay academically on track and cultivate important job skills during the summer months. In addition to CPS programs, museums, cultural

institutions, colleges and universities, and community- and faith-based organizations will all offer a wide range of programs to keep students academically engaged throughout the year and combat summer learning loss. Many programs will focus in the critical science, technology, engineering, art and math disciplines.

“Learning doesn’t just take place in a school house. At City of Learning we believe that all Chicago is and can be a campus where when young people create poetry, design clothing, design video games, make films, explore nature — they learn the important math, science, arts and leadership skills that they need to succeed”, said Dr. Nichole Pinkard, DePaul University professor and head of the Digital Youth Network, which leads the initiative....

For more information concerning programs related to the Summer of Learning and Earning, parents and students can apply and register online at the following websites:

- Learning activities- Chicago City of Learning: www.chicagocityoflearning.org
- Summer jobs- One Summer Chicago: www.onesummerchicago.org
- Parks programming- Chicago Park District: [www.chicagoparkdistrict](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.org)

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Feedback from a colleague:

>What to say to school staff about broadly integrating mental health providers from the community

"I would look at this through the lens of classroom and school climate. Starting in the classroom, if a teacher is dealing with a behavior that significantly and consistently threatens the climate of the classroom, and he/she is unable to address, I would say out-of-class intervention is required. The type of behaviors that we see that end up being referred to mental health are usually more marginalized than most common behaviors. A social worker or counselor will usually get involved before referring out to the community and it is usually then that more info is gathered to see if the student is currently dealing with any traumatic issues beyond the scope of the school professional. So two prompts for a mental health referral: 1) Significant impact on school climate or safety 2) Discovery of a past traumatic event that could currently be impacting a student's current functioning beyond the level of competence of the school staff We are currently trying to get some of our community mental health professionals to do some professional development with teachers around mental health and deescalation tactics in the classroom. Our time will be much better spent in prevention and building relationships with our community partners."

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Featured Center Resources

>Addressing the Plateauing of Achievement Data

Once again, reports about achievement test findings underscore the “plateau effect.” As noted by U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan:

"... student achievement at the high school level has been flat in recent years [see report http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_g12_2013/#/]. Just as troubling, achievement gaps among ethnic groups have not narrowed. We project that our nation's public schools will become majority-minority this fall -- making it even more urgent to put renewed attention into the academic rigor and equity of course offerings and into efforts to redesign high schools. We must reject educational stagnation in our high schools, and as a nation, we must do better for all students, especially for African-American and Latino students." 5/7/14
<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/statement-us-education-secretary-arne-duncan-national-assessment-educational-pro>

Our Center has focused on the plateau effect for many years. See

>*Data on the Plateau or Leveling Off Effect of Achievement Test Scores* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/plateau.pdf>

>*Data Related to the Need for New Directions for School Improvement* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/data.pdf>

Our previous analyses are still painfully current:

"The problem is that improved instruction and school management alone *do not appropriately address significant barriers to learning and teaching*. Most policy makers and administrators know that by itself good instruction delivered by highly qualified teachers cannot ensure that *all* students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. And, the straight forward psychometric reality is that in schools where a large proportion of students encounter major barriers to learning, the often reported initial increases in test score averages tend to plateau after a few years. The compelling reality is that too many students and too many schools continue not to do well. Thus, in terms of both enhancing equity of opportunity for students and strengthening public education, one major imperative is to move in new directions that focus directly on effectively addressing barriers in ways that lead students to re-engage in classroom learning....

It is clear that schools understand and are responding to barriers to learning and teaching. However, most district plans for student support are maintaining policies and practices that have not been effective enough. All districts focus to some degree on the need for safe and drug free schools, parent and community involvement, discipline problems, and compensatory and special education. Few are developing a system to comprehensively address the many factors interfering with students having an equal opportunity to succeed at school. It is noteworthy that the majority of recent survey respondents indicate they are not aware of any school improvement planning

designed to develop a comprehensive systemic approach for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.” (From: *New Directions for Student Support: Current State of the Art* --

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/policyissues/current%20state%20of%20the%20art.pdf>

The plateau effect reflects diminishing returns for current school improvement policy and practice and calls for doing something more than just focusing on instructional improvements. From our perspective, the data underscore the need to develop a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports so all students can better profit from good instruction. Indeed, we suggest that the plateau is inevitable as long as schools do not enhance school improvement policy to fully integrate such an approach to addressing barriers to learning and teaching. See

>*Why New Directions are an Imperative* (School improvement policy and practice continues to pay too little attention to rethinking student and learning supports)
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/whynewdirectionsimperative.htm>

Also see:

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

Listserv participants: How are you using “plateau” data (e.g., related to achievement, attendance, graduation) and other data to make the case for developing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports? What help do you need? We look forward to hearing from you. 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/>)