

School Practitioner Community of Practice

(A network for sharing & exchange)

April 18, 2018

Some Resource Updates From the Field

Links are provided to the following:

- (1) *School engagement and intentional self-regulation*
- (2) *School safety strategies and their effects on school-based violence*
- (3) *Youth homelessness*
- (4) *Violence and mental health: Prevention and early detection*
- (5) *Supporting social and emotional learning*
- (6) *Changing the narrative about young men of color*
- (7) *Who is in special education and who has access to related services?*

Topical Exchange:

>About the White House recommendations for school safety

Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

Learning From Others:

>Social emotional learning: A process, not a product

Note: Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla> for links to other resources including

- >Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops
- >Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers
- >Training and job opportunities
- >Upcoming webcasts & other professional development opportunities

This resource is from the
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA

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Given shrinking education budgets, we have been asked to increase our outreach to make our free resources more available (e.g., for planning, professional development, etc.).

So please feel free to share with anyone you think might benefit (e.g., forward our resources to individuals and share on listservs and websites).

For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

For previous postings of community of practice discussions, see
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

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Some Resource Updates From the Field:

- > *School engagement and intentional self-regulation: A reciprocal relation in adolescence* – <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/journal-of-adolescence/vol/64/suppl/C>
- > *School safety strategies and their effects on the occurrence of school-based violence in U.S. high schools* – <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15388220.2016.1193742>
- > *Prevalence and correlates of youth homelessness in the United States* – <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1054139X17305037>
- > *Violence and mental health: Opportunities for prevention and early detection* – <https://www.nap.edu/read/24916/chapter/1>
- > *Supporting social and emotional learning* – series of eight briefs published by Penn State University and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – www.rwjf.org/socialemotionalllearning
- > *The boys aren't broken, the systems are: Changing the narrative about young men of color* – <http://vue.annenberginstitute.org/issues>
- > *Who is in special education and who has access to related services?* – <https://www.brookings.edu/research/who-is-in-special-education-and-who-has-access-to-related-services-new-evidence-from-the-national-survey-of-childrens-health/>

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Topical Exchange:

Concerns have been raised about steps being taken to make schools safer.

Below is an excerpt from the White House briefing on the matter.

Which of the steps do you endorse? Which do you oppose? What's missing?

"HARDENING OUR SCHOOLS:....

- The Administration will assist States to train specially qualified school personnel on a voluntary basis.
 - >Department of Justice (DOJ) assistance programs will be leveraged to enable schools to partner with State and local law enforcement to provide firearms training for school personnel.
 - >The Administration will support the transition of military veterans and retired law enforcement into new careers in education.
- The Administration will encourage States' Attorneys General to audit school district compliance with State emergency preparedness activities.
- Federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, will partner with States and localities to support a public awareness campaign modeled on "See Something, Say Something" to encourage awareness and reporting of suspicious activity.

STRENGTHENING BACKGROUND CHECKS AND PREVENTION: ... support legislation and reforms to strengthen background checks and law enforcement operations.

- Administration is calling on every State to adopt Extreme Risk Protection Orders
 - >Direct the Department of Justice to provide technical assistance to States, at their request, on establishing and implementing ERPOs.
 - >Allow law enforcement, with approval from a court, to remove firearms from individuals who are a demonstrated threat to themselves or others and temporarily to prevent individuals from purchasing new firearms.
 - >Carefully to ensure the due process rights of law-abiding citizens are protected.
- Improve the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. Support the legislative framework that will help improve the accuracy and effectiveness of NICS.

- >Hold Federal agencies more accountable for reporting information to NICS and will incentivize States to improve their reporting to the system.
- >Supports the framework of the STOP School Violence Act, which provides for State-based grants to implement evidence-based violence prevention programs.
- >Grants will provide States with funds for training, technology, and technical assistance to help schools identify and prevent violent acts.
- The Administration requests that Congress provide funding in 2018 to jump start implementation of this evidence-based program in middle and high schools nationwide.
- The Administration will audit and make accountability improvements to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's tip line, and will promote its use.
- DOJ will provide emergency and crisis training for local law enforcement.

MENTAL HEALTH REFORM: Propose an expansion and reform of mental health programs, including those that help identify and treat individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others.

- Propose increased integration of mental health, primary care, and family services, as well as support for programs that utilize court-ordered treatment.
- Call for a review of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, and other statutory and regulatory privacy protections.
 - >Reviews will determine if any changes or clarifications are needed to improve coordination between mental health and other healthcare professionals, school officials, and law enforcement personnel.

INVESTIGATION: In addition to these immediate actions, establish a Federal Commission on School Safety chaired by Secretary Betsy DeVos and will recommend policy and funding proposals for school violence prevention.

- Establish a Federal commission to address school safety and the culture of violence.
- While the Administration is taking immediate action on school safety, the Federal commission will develop a process to evaluate and make recommendations on school safety.
- The commission will study and make recommendations on the following areas of focus:
 - >Age restrictions for certain firearm purchases.
 - >Existing entertainment rating systems and youth consumption of violent entertainment.
 - >Strategies to advance the science and practice of character development in youth and a culture of connectedness.
 - >Effects of press coverage of mass shootings.
 - >Repeal of the "Rethink School Discipline" policies.
 - >Best practices for school buildings and campus security from Federal Government components, including the Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, and also from other State, local, and private sector sources.
 - >A plan for integration and coordination of Federal resources focused on prevention and mitigation of active shooter incidents at schools.
 - >Opportunities to improve access to mental health treatment, including through efforts that raise awareness about mental illness and the effectiveness of treatment, reduce barriers to the recruitment of mental health professionals, and provide training related to violence prevention.
 - >Best practices for school-based threat assessment and violence prevention strategies.
 - >The effectiveness and appropriateness of psychotropic medication for treatment of troubled youth.
 - >Ensuring that findings are sufficiently supported by existing and additional Federal, State, and local funding sources."

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-taking-immediate-actions-secure-schools/>

COMMENTS FROM THE FIELD:

(1) *We asked several colleagues to comment on this matter and here are the first responses:*

>“We should listen to and endorse the youth and their recommendations to ban assault rifles and large ammunition clips. We should support research and support the encourage helping professions talking to families about the dangers of firearms access. We should support the voluntary removal of firearms from access for persons who are suicidal, depressed or have disordered thoughts. Secure weapon storage should be legislatively supported.

We should encourage schools to be connected to all their students, to support social-emotional instruction, class meetings, advisories. When concerns are raised about student there should be policies that monitor the intervention plan and its implementation. Positive discipline should be encouraged and suspension minimized.

I support mandated weapon removal but also encourage voluntary removal when possible.

Mental health access should be easier to access than a SWAT team response. Schools should have plans in place to address mental health emergencies. Mental health mobile crisis teams should be resourced and connected to in-school health and mental health supports.

What the youth did in connecting the violence of the street to the violent school shootings should be reflected in our recommendations. Children suffering from ACES are casualties of violence both emotionally and biologically. Our youth leaders see this but nothing in these suggested plans reflects that.

Strengthening background checks and removing the private/gun show sale loopholes.

Supporting positive school and community conditions will have measurable results - if we choose to measure such results.”

>“My personal training and experience as a school psychologist requires that I look for evidence-based interventions, implemented with integrity, with data gathered all along the way so that we can observe what changes, if any, appear to be related to our adjustments. In addition, for decades, professional associations such as the National Association of School Psychologists have published research reports and position papers that suggest solutions to school violence need to be developed in collaboration with the school stakeholders and take into consideration the multiple, interacting layers of the school community. We already know that ‘top-down directives’ and ‘one-shot, quickie inservice trainings to staff’ do not work well. Therefore, we know that serious, enduring interventions need to be maintained across time with intention and the accompanying financial and administrative support. Also there needs to be systematically collected hard data to measure progress and make mid-course correction decisions.

I am dismayed that these proposals are almost all after-the-fact reactions to social conditions that have developed over decades. I believe it is more powerful, while being less expensive, first to do hard work in the area of prevention. We think of hardening our schools because universally, people who are hurting, frustrated, humiliated, or rejected and see no other options to improve their condition will lash out.

One fact is clear from previous research: all of us are capable of violence if sufficiently stressed. Therefore, to reduce the threat of violence, we first need to eliminate or mitigate many of the conditions that push people to violence. Hardening as specified below, will not sufficiently impact cultural stressors, and may actually increase them. Another fact just recently surfacing from the research: we may not need to harden all areas of the country equally! (see <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/honor-bound/201802/school-shootings-are-they-truly-random>).

One problem I’ve noticed in too-busy, inflexible schools: even if they have adopted a school violence prevention/social-emotional learning curriculum/process, they often cherry-pick subsections that are easy to quickly implement and fail to install the entire program. Even if the curriculum says they have done the research and they know implementing only bits and pieces will not work, school will not use the entire package because ‘there isn’t enough time.’ We need to give the schools the luxury of deciding their own priorities and time schedules.

The Federal Government may already have much of the needed research at hand and what really needs to be done is move now to the implementation phase.”

see <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/sites/default/files/assets/What-Works-Violence-factsheet-and-insert.pdf>

(2) *Here is an excerpt from the perspective of a Chicago student about these concerns:*

Trust me, where I'm from schools are already harder than you could imagine. We get up extra early every day to allow time to wait in line for the metal detectors. We're disproportionately affected by zero-tolerance policies that funnel us into the school-to-prison pipeline....

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/why-hardening-schools-wont-stop-violence-and-school-shootings>

(3) *Perspective from a couple of researchers:*

Three Supportive Ways School Districts Can Create Healthy Schools and Reduce Threats of Weapon Violence – <http://aasa.org/totalchild.aspx?id=42378&blogid=83505>

“...One vision for our nation’s schools upholds the belief that the path toward lasting safety comes from welcoming, caring, and supportive environments. This path focuses on improving school climate, engaging in social emotional learning (SEL), and fostering a compassionate community, in addition to offering a high-quality academic program. This vision advocates for humane social supports, institutional linkages, and community resources for those students struggling with mental health, societal obstacles, and family or community strife.

Another vision is a response to mass shootings. This strategy uses tools and ideas that originate in law enforcement, prison architecture, and military and anti-terror strategies. This approach tries to “harden” schools and aims to protect students from murder by creating prison-like, high-security environments patrolled by armed staff members.

This is not only a philosophical and ideological debate, it also raises a set of empirical and scientific questions. We believe the answers are quite clear. Decades of well-conducted, large-scale studies from across the world strongly support one vision and not the other. *Schools with a positive climate, where SEL is integrated into their DNA, have significantly less bullying and victimization, and have lower weapon use, threats by a weapon, and students reporting they have seen or know of a weapon on school grounds.* There is no evidence for the success of ‘hardening’ schools with armed staff members, zero-tolerance measures, and harsher law enforcement measures. In fact, the lion’s share of findings and studies point to negative outcomes of these approaches, including higher drop-out rates, a school-to-prison pipeline, higher expulsion and suspension rates, and climates of fear or restricted freedom....”

(4) *Our Center’s perspective is reflected in this blog prepared in response to a request from the American Association of School Administrators:*

Healthy schools don’t wait to react to tragic events. They are proactive in working with their surrounding community to improve schools in ways that promote healthy social-emotional development and prevent problems, as well as having a comprehensive system in place to handle problems.

So, it is essential that folks understand that developing a healthy and positive school climate involves more than enhancing school safety. School climate is an emergent quality. That is, it emerges as school improvement efforts fully reflect our society's commitment to equity, fairness, and justice. And, if the commitment to ensuring equity, fairness, and justice is to be meaningful, it cannot be approached simplistically.

Schools (and society at large) certainly must enhance safety and do more to address mental health concerns. However, schools must embed all such efforts into comprehensive school improvements that effectively close the wide-spread opportunity and achievement gaps. Such improvements start with designing instruction in ways that account for a wide range of individual differences and circumstances. But, the work can’t stop there if we are to make schools healthier places and assure all students an equal opportunity to succeed at school (and beyond). In particular, school improvement policy and planning needs to face up to transforming the way schools address the many barriers to learning and teaching that are encountered each day. This

requires immediately moving on from current student/learning support practices and reactive and limited special initiatives.

For too long, comprehensive efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students have been marginalized in school improvement policy. While gun violence is on everyone's mind, let's not pretend that the route to improving school climate and health is through cameras, metal detectors, locks, more police on campus, armed teachers, and the like. As student protestors across the country are declaring: *WE DESERVE BETTER!*

Current events and the shift to more local control established by the Every Student Succeeds Act provide the opportunity for moving forward to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports at every school. Such a transformation won't be easy. This is core challenge for all leaders pursuing school improvement as they heed the call for healthier and safer schools. Fortunately, they can build on pioneering efforts to transform student/learning supports that are underway across the country (see the *National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports*. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>. Such efforts recognize that: *Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights and that transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to enabling equity of opportunity, promoting whole child development, and enhancing school climate.*

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Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

**Now it's your turn!
What do you suggest?**

Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Learning From Others:

>"While current SEL research, organizations, and educators can see clearly the promise of SEL, how to explicitly integrate SEL strategies into the teaching & learning community and how to implement SEL core components in a school culture are much less clear. In fact, unlike other areas of classroom instruction, the term 'best-practices' in the domain of SEL does not yet exist. As such, we are designing classroom instruction in hopes of developing consistent best practices through the intersection of theoretical education and adolescent developmental frameworks into our professional learning communities...

Perhaps one of most complex aspects of SEL implementation we have explored has been treating SEL as its own content. Rather than using a program or a stand-alone curriculum, we are viewing SEL as a core component of teaching and learning within each discipline and in all aspects of our high school community. This means working with every teacher, team, division, and department to first understand SEL as an interdisciplinary content area. While our teachers are experts in their discipline, few recognize SEL as the nexus of adolescent development, neurocognition, psychology, and education theories.

From: *Social emotional learning: A process, not a product*

http://psychlearningcurve.org/social-emotional-learning/?utm_source=Psych+Learning+Curve&utm_campaign=4fde2a9b1d-school_trauma_4_9_18&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ff6044c3a5-4fde2a9b1d-174482877

Listsrv Participants: *What are your views on this?* Send the information for sharing to Ltaylor@ucla.edu



***For information about the
National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning
Supports
go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>**

Just published:
> *Transforming Student and Learning Supports:
Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System –*
[https://titles.cognella.com/transforming-student -and learning -supports -
9781516512782.html](https://titles.cognella.com/transforming-student-and-learning-supports-9781516512782.html)

*If you missed the following, you can access them and more from the Center's homepage –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>*

> *The quarterly ejournal for Spring 2018.*

Contents:

- > *Time for Straight Talk about Mental Health Services and MH in Schools*
- > *Improving School Climate Starts with Understanding that it's an Emerging Quality*
- > *Hot Topics & Hot Issues*

> *The April ENEWS' discussion of helping students and families plan successful transitions to a new grade or a new school*

> *The new report: ESSA and Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching:
Is there Movement toward Transforming Student/Learning Supports?
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/2018%20report.pdf>*

> *The new free book: Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom & Schoolwide*

**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND
INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!**

For new sign-ups – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.

**We post a broad range of issues and responses to the *Net Exchange*
on our website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm>
and on *Facebook* (access from the Center's home page <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>)**