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& counting**

**School Practitioner
Listserv**

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



January 16, 2017

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day:
Another Opportunity to Focus Students on Service**

Featured Center Resource
**>Empathy, Compassion, and Addressing
Student Misbehavior**

Request from a colleague
**>Looking for Examples of Places Working on Developing a
Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System of
Student and Learning Supports**

Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

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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**

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

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Note: In keeping with the *National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports*,* this is being sent to and forwarded by over 114,000 school and community stakeholders concerned about (1) daily matters confronting schools, (2) promoting whole child development and positive school climate, and (3) the transformation of student and learning supports.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: Another Opportunity to Focus Students on Service

**Life's most urgent and persistent question is
"What are you doing for others?"**

Martin Luther King Jr.

Following up on the discussion of opportunities for students to engage in service learning throughout the year, it is important to note that, among other things, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day has come to be known as a day of service <https://www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday> .

So this is a great time for schools to engage students in service efforts that can enhance empathy and compassion.

Here are a few more resources to aid in planning:

- > *Learning to Give* – <http://www.learningtogive.org/get-started/calendar>
(includes planning for a year of giving)
- > *National Youth Leadership* – <https://nylc.org/>
- > *How to use service learning to engage students* – <https://www.edutopia.org/service-learning-fowler-how-to>
- > *United We Serve* – <https://www.serve.gov/>

**An individual has not started living until he can rise above the
narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader
concerns of all humanity.**

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Featured Center Resource

> *Empathy, Compassion, and Addressing Student Misbehavior*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/empath.pdf>

Excerpt from section of this resource on *Schools and Empathy*

“Those who advocate for schools to focus more on promoting empathy and compassion point to literature that suggests that doing so will

- inhibit aggressive behaviors, such as bullying
- increase prosocial behaviors
- strengthen intergroup relations and build a positive school community
- improve academic performance

With specific respect to empathy, advocates also stress that enhancing both cognitive and affective empathy are necessary for the most beneficial results. They recognize that increasing cognitive empathy is easier for schools since it is intentional and intellectually based, but they stress that research suggests that affective empathy can play a stronger role in mediating behavioral problems.

And, while there is considerable consensus that increasing empathy in appropriate ways is good for student functioning and school climate, there is less consensus about how schools should do this. The increasing emphasis on whole child development is focusing more schools on both curricular and natural opportunities to promote empathy and compassion. These matters, of course, are an essential focus in pursuing any social-emotional curriculum. They also can be embedded into other areas of the curriculum (e.g., literature, history, science). And, they can be

part of teachable moments that arise throughout the school day.

And, of course, in any school, all this depends on teachers, student support staff, administrators, and other staff appreciating the potential benefits and enhancing their capacity to promote empathy and compassion. This includes modeling related behavior and enhancing student engagement in ways that foster moral development.”

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Rquest: “I read your report *School Improvement: What’s Missing* a few years ago and I was reenergized. As a middle-school principal in a large district and a great advocate for public schools in general, I firmly believe that if we are going to make gains and provide opportunities for all students, we need to look at a universal model like the comprehensive and unified system of learning support you have articulated, leverage and align the resources and great talent in our respective communities, and work towards a global understanding of how our aligned supports complement our school improvement efforts and cannot most effectively exist in isolation of one another.

I am hopeful that you might guide me in the direction of further research around specific districts, schools, or states who have implemented components of this school improvement component, with some qualitative and quantitative outcomes. My hope is to use this framework, find schools in our district that have “improved” and see how many of those enabling components you outline are in place in each of those schools, whether strategically or as a matter of chance. For example, I believe we have some schools qualifying as “improving” who brought in great principals (leadership), expectations for collaboration around a guaranteed and articulated curriculum, a wealth of resources for teacher’s professional development, and/or community partnerships. Though these schools are classified as improving, my hunch is that should we look at a more cohesive framework such as yours, create universal and systemic structures for these schools to survey their resources and make plans to improve and align around each one of your components, we could, indeed, improve all schools, **at scale**. Our district is an incredibly diverse and large school system. Though I believe I can find improving schools within the district and posit a research question and study that might help ignite even more study, my hope is that you might be able to provide the best expert guidance: You are, after all, the primary source.”

Center Response: Always nice to hear about work being undertaken. (For a quick update on our efforts, see our latest quarterly e-journal at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/Winter17.pdf>)

Also, see “Rethinking Education Initiatives: Lessons Learned and Moving Forward” <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/sum16.pdf>

As to various places where they are working with a comprehensive and unified framework for learning supports (or are starting to do so or have flirted with the work), we don’t have as much info as we would like. We have tried to compile places and lessons learned – see Where’s it Happening? <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm>

In looking at this, start with those that have reported some data:

>Alabama’s statewide initiative –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing2.htm#alabama>

see initial data – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/firstout.pdf>

>Gainesville (GA) City Schools – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm>

(see the case study done by the Education Development Center and published by Scholastic. <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/face/pdf/my-books/gacasestudy2013.pdf>

We think folks are on the right track in (a) valuing a cohesive framework for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students, (b) rethinking systemic operational

infrastructures, (c) mapping and analyzing resources, and (d) strategically planning improvements around a three component framework for school improvement policy and practice for going to scale across a district. That is what Alabama is trying to do (and there are lessons to be learned from their efforts).

Comment back to Center: “I read your latest update, and what I most appreciate is your vigilance and consistency with this school improvement model. I have been able to find many studies about the impact of various school improvement initiatives, often with the initial ‘bump,’ so ‘it must work.’ There are limited, if any, studies that provide a comprehensive framework such as yours and track its longitudinal effect on student learning. (These are typically MTSS studies with results that are limited and not impressive, to say the least.) Researching school improvement feels to me very much like I am reading through studies in search of proving the single tool that will work for all schools and communities, and yours is the only model that I believe conveys true school and community improvement as having myriad tools at the ready.

Our district developed what they called the CAG drivers a few years ago and each of the components read a lot like the barriers presented in your model. Schools were asked to set goals around one of these drivers and create their own enabling component around that single barrier they would be addressing. Though I think the ideas were on the right track, schools weren’t seeing the forest through the trees.....

I am excited about this work, and I so appreciate frameworks that *truly* provide solutions for **all** students. I feel like school-based jobs are full of thank yous and appreciation weeks, but this vital work of researchers, practitioners, and experts, is often thankless. So, thank you.”

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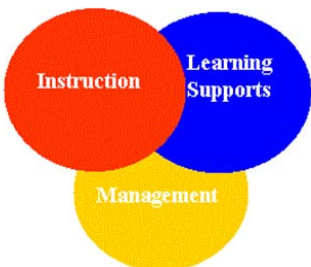
Invitation to listserv participants:

We regularly receive requests asking where school/district are implementing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports. If you have any experiences you can share, please let us know.

Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THE INTERCHANGES BECOME!
Sign-up for the Listserv mailings – 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/>)



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

And note that our new book detailing the prototypes and related resources is now in press.

For a preview, contact Ltaylor@ucla.edu