



**30 years  
& counting**

**School Practitioner  
Listserv**

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



*March 20, 2017*

**Request**  
*>Mental Health Education for Students: What works?*

**Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives**

**Comments from a Principal**  
*>In response to the Center's focus on student and learning supports*

**Featured Set of Center Resources**  
*>About current education policy changes related to addressing poverty and other barriers to learning*

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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](mailto: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.**

**R** **request:** “I am specifically interested in the current systems in place at schools that aim to educate teens about mental health and how effective they are.”

**C** **enter Comments:** Given the widespread propensity to focus mainly on mental health *problems*, we always recommend looking broadly at mental **HEALTH** education and how schools can provide a range of learning experiences that promotes social and emotional development, as well as preventing and fostering understanding of problems.

For a quick overview of information and resources, start with the Center’s online clearinghouse Quick Find on

> *Mental Health Curriculum* – [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/xf/p2311\\_01.htm](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/xf/p2311_01.htm)

(1) Here are some examples of what’s there related to teaching students about:

(A) positive mental health

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

> *About positive psychology* – <http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/positivepsychology.pdf>

> *Empathy, compassion, and addressing student misbehavior* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/empath.pdf>

(B) resilience and coping

> *Resilience in schools* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resili.pdf>

> *Mindfulness and schools* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mindful.pdf>

(C) responding to specific mental health concerns and about mental illness

> *Impact of a mental health curriculum on knowledge and stigma among high school students* <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0890856716300442>

> *Effectiveness of Universal School-Based Mental Health Awareness Programs Among Youth in the United States: A Systematic Review* – <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/josh.12461/full>

(2) With regard to whether the programs are effective, -- see

> *A systematic review of the effectiveness of mental health promotion interventions for young people* – <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2458-13-835>

We think such programs should be viewed as part of efforts to improve schools and enhance school climate. Thus, we recommend also looking for evidence of more than before and after program knowledge. In thinking about this, see:

> *Designing School Improvement to Enhance Classroom Climate for All Students* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schoolclimate.pdf>

> *Schools as Caring, Learning Communities* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/caring.pdf>

- (3) For a look at what states are doing, see the Education Commission of the States (ECS) summary of state legislation on *Health: Mental Health.*:  
<https://b5.caspio.com/dp.asp?AppKey=b7f93000695b3d0d5abb4b68bd14&id=a0y70000000CbozAAC>

Here is a sample

>Oklahoma (HB 1623) – Permits boards of education to adopt a suicide and student drug abuse policy; directs the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to develop and make available to school districts suicide prevention and awareness curriculum...

>Utah (HB 298) – Directs a district to offer a parent seminar each year, using either a locally-developed curriculum or a curriculum developed by the state board, that includes information on substance abuse; bullying; mental health, depression, and suicide awareness; and Internet safety...

>Virginia (SB 640) – Adds mental health education and awareness to the list of topics that shall be covered in family life education curricula....

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**Invitation to listserv participants:**

***So now let's hear from you!***

**What can you share about strengthening students understanding about positive mental health as well as of mental illness?**

**Share lessons learned. Comments. Recommendations.**

**Send your responses to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

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**C**omments from a Principal – in response to the Center's focus on student/learning supports

"I don't normally respond to emails centered around issues of policy, as I am typically too busy with running the elementary school I lead to do so. I decided to opt-in today, though. I work at a school that is full of students who have been disadvantaged in life by so many circumstances. Our school is 98% free and reduced lunch status, making us a Title I school. With just over 300 students, the poverty is extremely concentrated in my inner city-rural school. Our corner of the county we are located in is concentrated in crime, joblessness, mental health issues, and high mortality rates in comparison to the rest of the county. My children have the highest rates of homelessness, poverty, single-parent homes, and crime rates out of all the children in the school district here. We decided as a team, that until the crises and trauma that our students were experiencing were addressed, true academic reform could not take place in this building. Some of our initiatives have included placing an onsite therapist at the school to meet the mental health needs of our students. We are also in the process of developing a collaboration with the local community college so that our school can be the site of high school diploma classes and job-readiness skills classes for some of our parents. Our hope is to become a hub for services that most of our parents cannot get to due to transportation issues; to truly become a community school. If our school is to move to the next level by insuring educational equality, it will take all major stakeholders from health, human services, the local college and community college, county and city government, as well as the parents and community members at large partnering with the school to build a new framework that is inclusive and holistic in meeting such a diverse range of needs. Poor is not just poor. There is a complexity and diversity to poverty that we

must recognize and address in partnership with those who live the reality if real, sustainable change is achieved. Thank you for asking for my input today. While I have several items on my checklist that still needs my attention, I needed to add my voice to this dialogue. I needed to remind myself that while there is much still to be done, we have at least begun the work here. I appreciate your willingness to be a part of the solution."

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## **F**eatured Set of Center Resources

### **>About current education policy changes related to addressing poverty and other barriers to learning**

As part of the Center's ongoing focus on school improvement policy, we promote the National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports. For an overview of the initiative, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html> . The initiative stresses that:

***Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights;  
transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to  
enabling equity of opportunity and promoting whole child development.***

As the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) takes hold, work related to the initiative has stressed how to use the act to move forward with transforming student and learning supports. ESSA offers opportunities, but it also continues the piecemeal approach to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students and families. See the Center's analysis entitled:

**>Every Student Succeeds Act, Equity of Opportunity, and Addressing Barriers to Learning –**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/essaanal.pdf>

Abstract:

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) recognizes that significant numbers of students require supports to successfully meet challenging state academic standards. This brief (1) analyzes the act to assess how it addresses the nature and scope of supports to address barriers to learning and re-engage disconnected students and (2) presents frameworks and prototypes for improving how schools provide student and learning supports.

The analysis finds the legislation clearly underscores that student and learning supports permeate efforts to enable every student to succeed. At the same time, the act muddies the nature and scope of such supports by scattering references to them throughout the various Titles, Parts, Subparts, and Sections. That is, by addressing barriers to learning in a piecemeal and mostly indirect manner, ESSA conveys a fragmented picture and a lack of coherence with respect to essential supports.

The shift to more local control is discussed as an opportunity for state and local stakeholders to escape the limitations of the federal act and move away from existing fragmented and marginalized approaches for dealing with factors interfering with student success. As aids for systemic change, the brief highlights frameworks and prototypes for developing a unified and comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching – with an emphasis on enhancing equity of opportunity for success at school and beyond.

As basic resources to guide transformation efforts, we provide the

**>System Change Toolkit for Transforming Student Supports –**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

And we have developed a new work entitled: ***Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System.*** Available from Cognella in April – <https://titles.cognella.com/>

**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THE INTERCHANGES BECOME!**

Sign-up for the Listserv mailings – email [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto: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/>)



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\*For ongoing information about the

***National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports***

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

See, for example, 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> .

And note that our new book detailing the prototypes and related resources will be available in April from Cognella – <https://titles.cognella.com/> .

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