

School Practitioner Community of Practice

(A network for sharing & exchange)

March 7, 2018

Some Resource Updates From the Field

Links are provided to the following:

- (1) *School shooting raises concerns about enhancing school capacity to provide mental health assistance*
- (2) *Guidance for Responding to school walkouts*
- (3) *School safety and security measures*
- (4) *Reaching out to diverse populations: What can schools do to foster family-school connections?*
- (5) *Developing a collaborative team approach to support family and community connections with schools*
- (6) *How to approach student walkouts*

Corrected links:

- >Youth engaged for change
- >Know your rights: Student walkouts and political speech at school

Topical Exchange:

- >Anticipating school walkouts

Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

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 shooting raises concerns about enhancing school capacity to provide mental health assistance* – [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mhpractitioner/practitioner\(2-21-18\).pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mhpractitioner/practitioner(2-21-18).pdf)
- > *Responding to school walkout demonstrations* – https://rems.ed.gov/docs/LL_Vol3Issue1.pdf
- > *CCSSO Recommended Guidance on Student Walkouts* (updated: February 23, 2018) – https://www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/CCSSO%20Guidance%20on%20Student%20Walkouts_22318_0.pdf
- > *School safety and security measures* – <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=334>
- > *Reaching Out to Diverse Populations: What Can Schools Do to Foster Family-School Connections?* <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/rb/rb5-diverse.pdf>
- > *Developing a Collaborative Team Approach to Support Family and Community Connections With Schools: What Can School Leaders Do?*
<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/rb/research-brief3.pdf>
- > *How to Approach Student Walkouts* – just prepared by education agencies and associations in Michigan. (We have put it on our website to make it immediately accessible to everyone – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/walkout.pdf>)

Corrected Links:

- > *Youth engaged for change* – <https://youth.gov/feature-article/youth-engaged-change>
- > *Know your Rights: Student walkouts and political speech at school* – <https://www.aclunc.org/our-work/know-your-rights/walkouts-and-political-speech-at-school>

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Topical Exchange:

> *Anticipating school walkouts*

As we noted in the March ENEWS (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mar18.pdf>), we received the following request last week:

*We are looking for advice about the best way to handle the school walk out days.
Can we get ahead of this? We live in a very conservative area, very pro gun.
We are concerned about the potential for conflict.*

Center Comments: This, of course, is not a concern limited to any one locale (e.g., see <http://wsav.com/2018/02/20/savannah-students-plan-to-participate-in-nationwide-school-walkout-to-honor-the-17-victims-of-parkland-massacre/> -- also search the web for updates).

Here are some examples of districts preparing for walkouts.

- > “In a news release, Fresno (CA) Unified Superintendent Bob Nelson urged students to voice their opinions on gun control in other ways, suggesting they share their concerns with elected officials; discuss it in class; coordinate rallies or use their school’s free speech area between classes.” <http://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/education/article201227609.html>
- > “Softening his stance somewhat with an updated memo Wednesday, Superintendent Todd Gray said Waukesha (WI) School District students can participate in the March 14 National School Walkout if their parents excuse them from school to attend the event.... ‘We acknowledge that individuals have a right to demonstrate to support a cause,’ Gray wrote. ‘Therefore, if parents wish to excuse their children from school to attend such an event or demonstration, that is their right.’”
<https://www.jsonline.com/story/communities/waukesha/news/waukesha/2018/02/20/waukesha-students-faculty-who-participate-national-school-walkout-could-face-punishment/357293002/>

>“... Beaufort (SC) County principals will be discussing with students in the weeks leading up to the first ‘walkout’ — finding a way for students to express themselves without leaving the school building and without disrupting the school day....”
<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/local/education/article201399139.html>

Here are a few of the walkouts planned for March and April across the country:

- >Wednesday, March 14 — A 17 minute walkout at 10:00am to honor the 17 victims of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.
- >Saturday, March 24 — #MarchforOurLives in Washington, DC and communities throughout the nation.
- >Friday, April 20 — #NationalSchoolWalkout will commemorate the 19th Anniversary of the Columbine High School Shooting at 11:00am CST"

Last week, we quickly sent out links to a few resources about how schools are and should respond to walkouts/protests (including those in the above list of resource links). We also asked for sharing about what is being circulated. We will continue to share what we hear about.

Here are a few thoughts from the Center we want to share at this time.

Obviously protests about keeping student safe must make student safety a primary concern. Convening the local leaders (mayor, city council, police) with district/school leaders (including school safety officers) to discuss how to work together to maximize the positive aspects of students mobilizing to talk about school safety issues is a good example for students, families, and communities about collaborating to prevent violence.

From our perspective, each walkout is an educational opportunity. It is important to facilitate student planning groups. And while gun control is on the forefront of most students’ agenda, they also may want to consider addressing other concerns that play a daily role in school safety (e.g., enhancing supports for students who are isolated, alienated, bullied, etc.).

With a long-term agenda in mind, this is a time to organize student/staff/community working groups focused on school safety. Schools that have learning support leadership teams can readily reach out to school and community stakeholders and facilitate mapping and analyzing what a school is currently doing and then recommend ways to improve crisis response and prevention.

For resources related to these matters, see the following:

- >Mapping and analyzing student/learning supports –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/tool%20mapping%20current%20status.pdf>
- >About a leadership team for student/learning supports –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/resource%20coord%20team.pdf>
- >Center Quick Find on *Crisis Prevention and Response* --
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2107_01.htm
Listed there, for example, are:
 - >>Chapter on *Crisis Assistance and Prevention* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/book/ch8crises.pdf>
 - >>Self-study survey on *Crisis Assistance and Prevention* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/toolsforpractice/crisissurvey.pdf>
- >Center Quick Find on *Safe Schools and violence prevention* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2108_03.htm
See for example:
 - >>*Rethinking How Schools Address Student Misbehavior & Disengagement*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/newsletter/spring08.pdf>
- >Center Quick Find on *Youth Development* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/youthdev.htm>
See for example:
 - >>*Youth Participation: Making it Real* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/youthpartic.pdf>
 - >>*About Promoting Youth Development in Schools* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/yd.pdf>
 - >>*About student voice and participation* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/voice.pdf>

Comments from the Field:

Many comments filled the media this week. Here is one that stressed more than gun control:

Reforming gun laws is essential, but that alone is not sufficient to solve the problem. The data point of gun violence altercations is what we consider a 'thermometer' indicator - it's an important metric for understanding current conditions around love and support in communities, but there is a wide range of policies and practices that together institutionalize the violence and hate which lead to tragic outcomes. Our overarching goal has to be concretizing the supports, policies and practices that create healthy living and learning environments where all young people have the supports that they need to thrive. Instead of institutionalizing policies that protect systems of destruction, our collective goal should be having all young people grow up, be able to make mistakes and still ultimately succeed in loving systems from birth.

John H. Jackson, Schott Foundation President & CEO

From two colleagues:

(1) "Generally speaking, I think it's best to be proactive rather than reactive. If there is a concern that students will express opinions that could cause a stir in the community, it might be good for the school administration (and the Board of Education) to issue a public statement about their concerns.

The BOE statement should begin with a recognition that differences of opinions as well as strong emotions exist in the community and how both have been heightened by recent events. Then the Board needs to walk right down the middle of the issue by talking about the importance of students being in school and their dedication to making the school the safest place possible. They should speak to the importance of staff being connected to students and their families, providing opportunities for students to express their feelings and concerns, and then invite comments from the public. Responses from the Board should be timely and balanced.

This public statement should be immediately followed by a public statement from administration that highlights efforts to afford the students a stellar learning experience. They could provide examples of how staff reach out and support every student, existing programs and current efforts to support students and their learning. Similarly, invite parents to become more involved in the school and appropriate activities (and name them).

This administrative statement should also carry a message to students who wish to express their views. Explain how walk-outs only disrupt the educational process and afford students other options. Then this becomes a 'teachable moment' rather than one that potentially divides the community and creates conflict. Set up a committee of staff and students (maybe student government) to discuss and create options for students to express their political opinions and concerns on these issues. Specifically, government teachers or those who sponsor the debate team could facilitate activities in their classes or outside of school to discuss/debate current events. Whatever the teachers and students decide, the administration needs to find ways to channel their energy in a balanced way.

Ultimately, the goal is to teach 'democracy' and 'advocacy' without a bully pulpit and to afford students this learning opportunity."

(2) "This is what our state associations suggested:

School district administration and school board should consider the following:

1. Emphasize and clarify to all students, staff, and members of the public that the events are not a sponsored or organized by the school district.
2. Review existing policies and procedures that address unexcused absences/walkouts/unsanctioned assemblies.
3. Engage stakeholders in discussions. Stakeholders may include the staff, student leaders, parents, law enforcement, and the media. Clear and consistent communication of school district expectations and policies will build trust, reduce tensions, and promote safety and order. Be aware that some stakeholders will not agree with those who protest/walkout. Capitalize on the stakeholder connections to help share and spread the school district's expectations and policies.
4. Establish school district expectations and policies for stakeholders that are consistent with

promoting citizenship. For example:

- a. How will school districts respond if protests/walkouts occur on school district property? Considerations may include: safety, liability, student age, weather, visitors, etc.
- b. What are the options for students who do not want to participate in the protest/walkout?
- c. Will academic and/or disciplinary consequences be imposed upon students who participate?
- d. What are the expectations for staff?
- e. How will parents and members of the public be treated?
- f. Will the school district communicate with the media and will the media have access to the school district property, students, and/or staff?

Since each community, school district, and school building is unique, the details on how to handle these possible protests/walkouts must be decided locally.”

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Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

How are schools in your locale planning to handle school walkouts?

Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Finally, here is the note of caution we shared in *About School Shootings* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/shooting.pdf>

Not Another Ad Hoc Set of School Interventions

It is unlikely that a safe and nurturing learning environment will emerge simply by developing a better violence prevention program. Such programs can help, but ultimately what a school needs is a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system for addressing barriers to development and learning and re-engaging disconnected students.(For more on this, see *Violence Prevention and Safe Schools* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/violence/violence.pdf>)

That is why we say the time has come for schools to move away from stand-alone programs for addressing problems such as violence, bullying, substance abuse, and so forth. Just adding another program worsens the marginalized, fragmented, and piecemeal status of student and learning supports.

Rather than reacting with yet another discrete program, it is essential to focus some of the current discussion on catalyzing and leveraging systemic change. For schools, we suggest that the aim should be to take another step toward transforming how schools go about ensuring that all students are safe, develop fully, and have an equal opportunity to succeed at school and beyond.

It is time to embed advocacy for discrete programs into advocacy for unifying and developing a comprehensive and equitable system. Addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students is a school improvement imperative. Developing and implementing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student and learning supports is the next evolutionary stage in meeting this imperative.

See the information and call to action related to the National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Let us know what you think about this.

We will have more on this in the next quarterly e-journal.

Did you miss?

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>

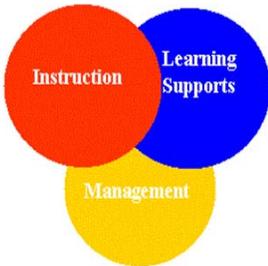
Also if you missed any of the following, you can access them and more from the Center's homepage – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>

>**The March *ENEWS*' discussion of helping students who experience a Spring Slump**

>**The quarterly *ejournal* for Winter 2018 articles on**

1. *Evolving School Improvement Plans to Better Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching*
2. *Updates on Advancing Efforts to Transform Student & Learning Supports*
3. *Who Else is Working to Transform Student/learning Supports*
4. *Two Cautionary Notes:*
 - >*About Piecemeal Approaches*
 - >*About Settling for an Integrated Services Initiative*
5. *Center Assistance for Transforming Student/ Learning Supports*

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



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)

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/>)