

## **School Practitioner Community of Practice**

(A network for sharing & exchange)

*April 3, 2019*

### **Topics for discussion**

**>Personalizing interventions to address attendance problems**

**>Cesar Chavez Day as the kick off for a year of service**

### **Links to a few other relevant resources & other topics of concern**

**Note:** Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla> for links to other Center 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

**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).***

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**For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

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

### **Topic for Discussion –**

**>Personalizing interventions to address attendance problems**

**From a colleague:** “I am thinking about creating a guided interview or assessments for staff working with adolescents struggling with attendance. It is my concern that our current well- intentioned discovery interviews with young people miss some of the more intersectional and granular reasons for lack of attendance and so interventions are often not specific enough, collaborative enough or durable enough. I am not finding a comprehensive assessment online that covers the salient points that drive the problem of low attendance. ... I am seeking to create a brief assessment to be conducted by staff that will allow for a more robust discovery phase and for targeted interventions....”

**Center Response:** Reducing school absences is one of the most challenging matters facing schools. The complexity of attendance problems stems from the reality that the causes of absences are reciprocally determined and so is the success of interventions.

In addressing the problem, staff discussion should begin by exploring two questions:

*What factors lead to student absences?  
How can schools more effectively address the problem?*

Here's a statement from recent research to further stimulate discussion:

*Placing school attendance problems in an ecological context is necessary to understand the systemic influences and drivers of the various forms of school absenteeism.... Evidence [indicates] the association between school-related factors and school refusal specifically, and to some extent school attendance problems more generally. The school-related factors are:*

- >order, safety, and discipline;*
- >academic performance and perceptions of the academic program;*
- >social relationships with peers, teachers, and other staff;*
- >school facilities;*
- >and school connectedness....*

Sociocultural drivers of the school experience clearly have the potential to create an alienating environment and the marginalizing experience of racism for youth and families from a minority culture. Although not well studied, the challenges for minority culture youth in "mainstream" schools is likely to contribute to all forms of absenteeism...."

From: "Reflections on the Field of School Attendance Problems: For the Times They Are a-Changing?" (2019) in the *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice's* special issue on attendance.  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/cognitive-and-behavioral-practice/vol/26/issue/1>

In our work, we stress that students who do not experience school as good for them are unlikely to view schooling as a right or a responsibility. Indeed, they probably experience it as an infringement on their self-determination. This affects their motivation (e.g., generates avoidance motivation, psychological reactance) and often leads to disengagement. From this perspective, addressing the problem requires strategies that look first at identifying school wide factors that might be addressed to reduce the number of students with attendance problems. The focus is on what can change at the school to reduce avoidance and increase student/learning supports, especially supports that can re-engage disconnected students. (As many teachers and student support staff will admit, their professional preparation did not, and their continuing education does not, focus on how to re-engage students and families who have become disengaged from the school.)

Because personalizing interventions requires clarifying a student's perceptions, interviews must encompass the youngster's view of what at the school could be changed to increase her/his attendance.

Here are some strategies we suggest that teachers, support staff, administrators pursue to personalize working with students to address attendance problems:

- >Clarify student perceptions of the problem* – This involves interviews that talk openly with students (e.g., about why they have become disengaged) so that steps can be planned for how to alter the situation and negative perceptions.

We have some interviewing and monitoring tools that can be adapted as guides for this (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/interviewtools.pdf> ).

- >Reframe school learning* – In the case of those who have become disengaged, it is unlikely that they will be open to schooling that looks like "the same old thing." Major changes in approach are required if they are even to perceive that anything has changed. Minimally, changes must be made so that these students (a) view the teacher as supportive and not controlling and (b) perceive content, outcomes, and activity options as personally valuable and obtainable. This includes eliminating threatening evaluative measures; reframing content and processes to clarify purpose in terms of real life needs and experiences and how procedures can be effective – especially those designed to help correct specific problems.

- >*Renegotiate involvement in school learning* – New and mutual agreements must be developed and evolved over time through conferences with the student and where appropriate including parents. The intent is to affect perceptions of choice, value, and probable outcome. The focus throughout is on clarifying awareness of valued options, enhancing expectations of positive outcomes, and engaging the student in meaningful, ongoing decision making. For the process to be most effective, students should be assisted in sampling new processes and content, options; there should be valued enrichment opportunities; and there must be provision for reevaluating and modifying decisions as perceptions shift. In all this, it is essential to remember that effective decision making is a basic skill (as fundamental as the three Rs). Thus, if a student does not do well initially, this is not a reason to move away from student involvement in decision making. Rather, it is an assessment of a need and a reason to use the process not only for motivational purposes but also to improve this basic skill.
- >*Reestablish and maintain an appropriate working relationship* (e.g., through creating a sense of trust, open communication, providing support and direction as needed)

Maintaining engaged attendance requires a continuous focus on:

- ensuring that the processes and content
  - >minimize threats to feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to valued others,
  - >maximize such feelings, and
  - >highlight accomplishments (included here is an emphasis on a school enhancing public perception that it is a welcoming, caring, safe, and just institution)
- guiding motivated practice (e.g., providing opportunities for meaningful applications and clarifying ways to organize practice)
- providing continuous information on learning and performance
- providing opportunities for continued application and generalization (e.g., ways in which students can pursue additional, self-directed learning or can arrange for additional support and direction)

For more, see the Center’s online clearinghouse Quick Find on *Attendance*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/attendance.html>

## Topic for Discussion –

### >**Cesar Chavez Day as the kick off for a year of service**

*Real education should consist of drawing the goodness and the best out of our own students. What better books can there be than the book of humanity?* – Cesar Chavez

For many April 1 this year was holiday – just a day off school/work. Leading up to the day, some schools reviewed who Cesar Chavez was and why a special day was established.

As a follow up learning opportunity, schools might discuss that Cesar Chavez, like Martin Luther King, Jr., stressed the relationship between education and service. He stated: *The end of all education should surely be service to others*. As described by his family, Cesar believed that people have an obligation to contribute to their community. In establishing a special day, states emphasized highlighting the life and contributions of Cesar Chavez in the context of providing instruction and service opportunities for students. (see [https://www.calstate.edu/cce/initiatives/cesar\\_chavez\\_day.shtml](https://www.calstate.edu/cce/initiatives/cesar_chavez_day.shtml))

Note: “The Cesar Chavez Education Fund (CCEF) is dedicated to building a just society through education. It is focused on transforming the lives of youth and seniors through enrichment and education. The Education Fund is comprised of three departments — Academic Services, Community Services, and Senior Services — and directly serves and works to impact approximately 5,000 school-aged students, adults and seniors each year. Our goal has been to transform our educational system by contributing through our various funds high-quality programs to Latinos, working families and their children.

CCEF increases educational opportunities for students who can benefit from additional academic and enrichment services to achieve a high level of learning. CCEF focuses on practical educational

instruction and products for K-12 students. The services are coordinated and designed to supplement education without replicating existing school instruction. We take a holistic approach, where in addition to academics, we have a strong focus on service learning to build character....”

<https://chavezfoundation.org/education-fund/>

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**Share with us your comments  
about the above topics or other related matters!!**

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

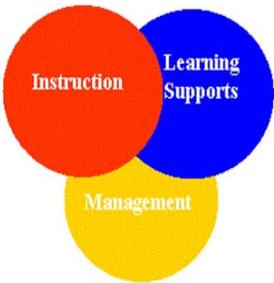
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**Links to a few other relevant resources & other topics of concern**

- >Screened Out? Some States May Underidentify Schools with Low-performing Student Subgroups  
[https://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TSI-Screener-Chart\\_FINAL.pdf](https://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TSI-Screener-Chart_FINAL.pdf)
- >Connecting the Dots: A Resource Guide for Meeting the Needs of Expectant and Parenting Youth, their Children, and their Families <https://cssp.org/resource/connecting-the-dots/>
- >School Resource Officers, School Law Enforcement Units, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)  
[https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/school-resource-officers-school-law-enforcement-units-and-ferpa?utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name=&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=](https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/school-resource-officers-school-law-enforcement-units-and-ferpa?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)
- >50 State Comparison: K-12 Special Education Funding  
<https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-k-12-special-education-funding/>
- >View from the Classroom: The Reality of Underfunding in New York’s Schools  
[http://www.aqeny.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/equityreport\\_FINAL\\_digital.pdf?link\\_id=1&can\\_id=9cbc219690344488b53b3bf9d05b4b81&source=email-release-view-from-the-classroom-report-on-schools-tour-finds-that-underfunding-is-depriving-students-of-educational-opportunities&email\\_referrer=email\\_514897&email\\_subject=release-view-from-the-classroom-report-on-schools-tour-finds-that-underfunding-is-depriving-students-of-educational-opportunities](http://www.aqeny.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/equityreport_FINAL_digital.pdf?link_id=1&can_id=9cbc219690344488b53b3bf9d05b4b81&source=email-release-view-from-the-classroom-report-on-schools-tour-finds-that-underfunding-is-depriving-students-of-educational-opportunities&email_referrer=email_514897&email_subject=release-view-from-the-classroom-report-on-schools-tour-finds-that-underfunding-is-depriving-students-of-educational-opportunities)
- >In Many States, High School Discipline Is Outdated  
<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2019-03-20/commentary-eye-for-an-eye-is-ancient-modernizing-high-school-discipline>
- >Lawnmower Parents Are the New Helicopter Parents & We Are Not Here for It  
<https://www.weareteachers.com/lawnmower-parents/>

About a unified, comprehensive. and equitable system of learning supports, see:  
**Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide** —  
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

On embedding student/learning supports into school improvement, see  
**Improving School Improvement**  
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)  
*Both are available at this time as free resources.*



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For information about the  
**National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports**  
go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>  
*Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights;  
transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to  
enabling equity of opportunity, promoting whole child development,  
and enhancing school climate.*

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*The teacher says you didn't turn  
in your homework. How come?*



*The homework she assigned wasn't  
evidence-based, so I didn't do it!*

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

**For new sign-ups – 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/> )**