

**School Practitioner Community of Practice**  
(A network for sharing & exchange)  
(5/13/20)

**Contents**

**>Contrasting perspectives:**

**>>From the U. S. Department of Education**  
***Learning must continue for all students***

**>>From “We are teachers”**  
***Sometimes the best thing you can do for a student is to back off***

**>An example of district decisions related to tight budgets**

**>Links to a few other relevant shared resources**  
**(Scroll down to read about the above and for hotlinks to resources)**

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

**This resource is from the**

**Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA**

*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](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

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

\*\*\*\*\*

***For discussion and interchange:***

**>Contrasting perspectives:**

**(1) From the U. S. Department of Education**  
***Learning must continue for all students***

**(2) From “We are teachers”**  
**>>*Sometimes the best thing you can do for a student is to back off***

**(1) Excerpt from U.S. Department of Education – News Release April 27, 2020**  
<https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-devos-reiterates-learning-must-continue-all-students-declines-seek-congressional-waivers-fape-lre-requirements-idea>

U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos today reaffirmed her long-held position that individualized education must take place for all students, including students with disabilities. As a result, the Secretary is not recommending Congress pass any additional waiver authority concerning the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), reiterating that learning must continue for all students during the COVID-19 national emergency. As requested by Congress in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Secretary DeVos examined certain federal education laws to determine what, if any, additional waiver authority the Secretary believes is necessary to provide limited flexibility to state and local education agencies during this

unprecedented time. The Secretary determined there is no reason that a student's access to FAPE cannot continue online, through distance education or other alternative strategies.

"We undertook this task acknowledging the reality that most students and teachers are at home today; yet, America's teachers want to keep teaching and students need to keep learning," said Secretary DeVos. "While the Department has provided extensive flexibility to help schools transition, there is no reason for Congress to waive any provision designed to keep students learning. With ingenuity, innovation, and grit, I know this nation's educators and schools can continue to faithfully educate every one of its students." As the Department reviewed applicable federal law, it did so with these core principles in mind:

The health and safety of America's students, teachers, parents, and administrators is a top priority.

- > Learning must continue for all students.
- > Decision-making must be based on what is best for students, not the "system."
- > Parents must be informed about the impact waivers will have on their children's education and consent to those changes.
- > Services typically or historically provided in person must naturally occur differently....

## (2) From "We are teachers" –

Excerpt from: *When The Best Thing You Can Do for a Student is Back Off: Let's cut these kids some slack.* <https://www.weareteachers.com/back-off-students/>

A teenager sits outside a Subway with a laptop. His dad's work is in danger of shutting down, so having Internet access at home isn't a priority right now. Now he sits on the sidewalk, trying to do his work and keep from getting behind. And all I can think is, "What are we having him do that's so important that he's outside a fast-food restaurant to access Wi-Fi? Can't we just give him a break?" Widespread school closures are unprecedented, and everyone is trying desperately to find their footing—kids as well as teachers.... I'm suggesting that, in this time of crisis, sometimes the best thing we can do is to back off students.

Equity has become even more of an issue with the move to distance learning. Not all students have access to the technology required for online learning. Kids who do have devices may have to share them with family members. Reliable Wi-Fi or even Internet access at all are not givens. Many kids have parents who are working and are unable to help them with the educational content much less troubleshoot tech issues.

Kids who already faced obstacles to learning (special education students, English language learners, students experiencing homelessness) may now find those challenges insurmountable. They may not be getting their regular support services and lack accommodations to make online school work for them.

Many families are being economically impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and have had to prioritize their financial survival. Food security is also a primary concern. Older students may be providing childcare for younger siblings or performing other household management tasks that keep them from participating in online schooling.

This is a scary time. Kids have real fears about coronavirus and are feeling the same anxiety and stress as adults. There are concerns around being quarantined and the uncertainty of our constantly evolving situation. Students who have experienced other trauma may find it even more difficult to cope, especially if home isn't a safe and supportive place for them.

So what do we do? When it comes to placing demands on students in any of these situations, we need to back off.... Record your online learning sessions so students can watch them at their convenience. Send hard copies of materials to those without access to technology. Find alternative methods for working toward students' IEP goals.

The last thing we want is for kids to fall through the cracks, especially at a time when they're so vulnerable. Backing off students doesn't mean we stop loving and caring for them. It means we're calling and checking in. We're providing as much of a safety net as we can. And we're prioritizing their physical and mental health. If that means letting go of uncompleted work, then that's what we have to do.

## From Colleagues Across the Country

We shared the U.S. Department of Education announcement with a range of school staff continuing to interact with students; here is a sample of what they shared:

- (1) “We are experiencing challenges in access whether it is teachers not having the bandwidth or students having no access... the biggest equity gap is the ones who know how to navigate technology and the ones who don’t. Age is not always the problem, but it is often the challenge. Meaning that there is a huge resistance to learning tech even when support there to teach kids. On the positive side the ones who are adept are having more connection and success than they ever have with families. My student support team reports the same. While students are not accepting services, the parents are welcoming the human touch via tech to have someone listen and support them through these times.

Per Secretary DeVos, it may be a blessing in disguise. I have found that if there is no incentive for teachers to teach, they don’t teach if there is any resistance. Holding us accountable for providing FAPE and figuring it out has been a challenge for all, yet one we need to embrace and help our families. This is the time to advance tech skills and learn and maximize our tech capacities... cuz while I’m hopeful we will not be In lock down as long as this one, we are likely to face this again and in my opinion, we will be held accountable to teach our kids at a distance and expected to have them learn.”

- (2) “Some schools have provided "banked" time for the services students are not currently receiving. Others, I am afraid, are getting the same as other students...on-line sessions...that is for those who are participating in them.

I am afraid we will be seeing many more dropouts...those who will not be returning to school once it opens....both general ed and SpEd students...From my experience, if the districts do not reach out/search out those students who are not currently participating in the on-line sessions, or return to school when they re-open....that many more young people will be giving up on their education and not pursuing a diploma. The districts I am familiar with do not have a history of doing this kind of outreach to re-engage students, as you and Howard have spoken about in some of the newsletters. This will be very important to re-emphasize as schools start to re-open. ...”

- (3) “I do agree we have an obligation to serve students. I am concerned however about our state having different consent rules than the rest of the country which will open us up to extensive litigation. I am afraid this risk of litigation will cause fewer services to be provided even though I hope I am very wrong on that. I believe we will wait to see what flexibility is given explicitly. Every student is impacted by the closure- it is impossible to examine or predict the impact this will have on students and families as the permanence and stability we all need has been shaken to the core. Students with disabilities are not exempt from this, in fact it may impact them more, because school provides much more of the organized social structures people with disabilities require to interact successfully with friends and others. For this reason, we are continuing mental health supports as a priority as it is the base of the hierarchy of needs for us all.”

## Listserv Participants:

***What are your views about this matter?***

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

## **An Example of the Decisions Districts Are Making Related to Tight Budgets**

Excerpt from the Richmond Times-Dispatch

[https://www.richmond.com/news/local/hanover/mechanicsville-local/hcsb-addresses-instruction-plans-coronavirus-financial-impacts/article\\_013918da-8962-11ea-a22a-b3f5a0f8f7e0.html](https://www.richmond.com/news/local/hanover/mechanicsville-local/hcsb-addresses-instruction-plans-coronavirus-financial-impacts/article_013918da-8962-11ea-a22a-b3f5a0f8f7e0.html)

The County School Board addresses instruction plans, coronavirus financial impacts

Calculating the budget impacts of an ongoing pandemic that has shuttered most of America's economy is tricky in the best of circumstances. Finding and filling those holes on a tight deadline is even more difficult, but that's the situation facing county school officials.

The County School Board met electronically, to begin considering that problem, but firm answers are still not set in stone....

Not unlike other localities or school systems, the Superintendent said reworking the 2021 budget is a bit like starting over. "We wish we had better news to bring you, but, as has been stated, this situation is not unique to our County Public Schools. Everyone is having to look very hard and start the budget process from scratch with the reality of this new situation."... Initial indications there will not be funding for a pay increase for next year in addition to other cuts, including additional counselors and increased funding for at-risk students in the state budget....

The Assistant superintendent for Instruction updated the board on continuing at-home learning programs, the current meal distribution program and plans for the upcoming year. She said the county began the remote instruction program with a two-week agenda designed to keep students engaged in learning for a short period of time and expanded to a program allowing students to complete work assignments for this year....

She said the remote learning program recognizes that many students do not have access to devices or broadband internet, and paper packets have been distributed to those students. Special education teachers are closely monitoring those students and designing remote programs to ensure continued instruction and engagement by those communities.

Officials also are focusing on plans once schools reopen.... Instruction will attempt to build on lessons learned during the current remote learning experience and design unified and consistent approaches toward digital resources. Teachers also will receive additional professional training in digital and blended learning, and options are being explored that would allow students to show "evidence of learning outside of traditional methods."

Summer school could provide the answer for some students to re-enter classroom learning settings, but whether or not they will take place is unknown at this time....

**And here's a webinar about mitigating the negative impact of school budget cuts:**

### **COVID-19, Education Funding, and School District Budgets**

[https://edpolicyinca.org/events/pace-webinar-covid-19-education-funding-and-school-district-budgets?utm\\_source=PACE+All&utm\\_campaign=689fd1e0c4-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2019\\_08\\_29\\_05\\_32\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_9f1af6b121-689fd1e0c4-522725185](https://edpolicyinca.org/events/pace-webinar-covid-19-education-funding-and-school-district-budgets?utm_source=PACE+All&utm_campaign=689fd1e0c4-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_08_29_05_32_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_9f1af6b121-689fd1e0c4-522725185)

## >Links to a few other relevant shared resource

### About Re-opening Schools

*A Plan to Safely Reopen America's Schools and Communities* – AFT's Guidance for imagining a new normal for public education, public health and our economy in the age of COVID-19 [https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/covid19\\_reopen-america-schools.pdf](https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/covid19_reopen-america-schools.pdf)

*A Blueprint for Back to School*

<https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/A-Blueprint-for-Back-to-School.pdf>

#### From the Center at UCLA

> *Plan Ahead to Support the Transition-back of Students, Families, and Staff*

> *Re-opening Schools with a Sense of Exciting Renewal: Generating Hope*

> *Re-engaging the Disconnected in Instructional Activity*

> *Addressing Grief and Loss*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/spring20.pdf>

> *Rethinking schools in planning to re-open*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/may2020.pdf>

> *Task Forces Forming to Provide Recommendation for Re-opening Schools: Student/Learning Supports Leaders Need to be at the Table*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/taskforces.pdf>

*Half of all school employees aren't teachers: this recession will endanger their jobs*

<https://www.the74million.org/article/half-of-all-school-employees-arent-teachers-this-recession-will-endanger-their-jobs/>

*School Nurses in U.S. Public Schools* <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020086>.

*Coronavirus Disease 2019 – National Resources*

<https://www.nasn.org/nasn/nasn-resources/practice-topics/covid19>

*COVID-19 Update: State Policy Responses and Other Executive Actions to the Coronavirus in Public Schools* <https://www.ecs.org/covid-19-update/>

*Monitoring Educational Equity*

[https://www.nap.edu/login.php?record\\_id=25389&page=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nap.edu%2Fdownload%2F25389](https://www.nap.edu/login.php?record_id=25389&page=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nap.edu%2Fdownload%2F25389)

*Parenting after Trauma: Understanding Your Child's Needs: A Guide for Foster and Adoptive Parents*

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/healthy-foster-care-america/Documents/FamilyHandout.pdf>

*Helping Foster and Adoptive Families Cope With Trauma*

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/healthy-foster-care-america/Documents/Guide.pdf>

*Healthy Foster Care America - resources from AAP*

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/healthy-foster-care-america/Pages/default.aspx>

*Young Children in Foster Care* <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/young-children-foster-care>

*Learning at home during COVID-19: 8 tips for fostering children's self-regulation and promoting creativity* <https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/children-self-regulation>

*Mapping the Link between Life Expectancy and Educational Opportunity*

<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/mapping-the-link-between-life-expectancy-and-educational-opportunity>

*CASEL CARES: SEL Resource During COVID-19* – <https://casel.org/resources/>

## Webinars

A series from the National Youth League Council [https://www.nylc.org/events/event\\_list.asp](https://www.nylc.org/events/event_list.asp)

>5/20 – *Tackling Health and Wellness through Service-Learning*

>6/17 – *Addressing Education Equity through Service-Learning*

>7/15 – *Building Peace through Service-Learning*

>8/19 – *Addressing Environmental Challenges through Service-Learning*

For more webinars, go to the our Center’s links to *Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

**For links to activities to pursue while schools are closed, see**

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/homeactivity.pdf>  
and previous special editions of the Community of Practice.

Here’s another good list of *Family Resources for Remote Learning*  
[https://childmind.org/guide/family-resources-for-remote-learning/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=VIEW&utm\\_campaign=Weekly-04-21-20](https://childmind.org/guide/family-resources-for-remote-learning/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=VIEW&utm_campaign=Weekly-04-21-20)

### **Activity for today**

Choose one of the podcasts below for a shared listening experience with your kids – learn about how the world works, about music, or hear an adventure story.

*Story Pirates* (Stories) <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/story-pirates/id719585944?mt=2>

*Classical Kids* (Stories & music) <https://www.classicalmpr.org/topic/classical-kids-storytime>

*Noodle Loaf* (Music) <http://noodleloafshow.com/>

*Aaron's World* (Science/stories) <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/aarons-world/id366130254>

*Earth Rangers* (Nature) <https://www.earthrangers.com/podcast/>

*Animal Sound Safari* (Nature) <https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/animal-sound-safari/>

*Brains On!* (Science) <https://www.brainson.org/>

*Wow in the World* (Science) <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510321/wow-in-the-world>

*Tumble* (Sci) <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/tumble-science-podcast-for/id984771479?mt=2>

## About Celebrating Graduation this Year

Barack and Michelle Obama will deliver commencement speeches for the class of 2020

Two online graduations for high school seniors

>*Graduate Together: America Honors the High School Class of 2020* will be a 1-hour multimedia event featuring several guests, and it will air on Saturday, May 16, at 8 p.m. ET on ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC as well as other broadcast and digital streaming partners.

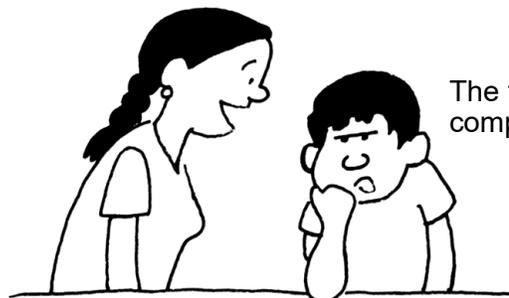
>On June 6, the Obamas will take part in YouTube's "Dear Class of 2020," which will stream live starting at 3 p.m. ET.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/barack-obama-giving-high-school-commencement-speech-class/story?id=70512666>

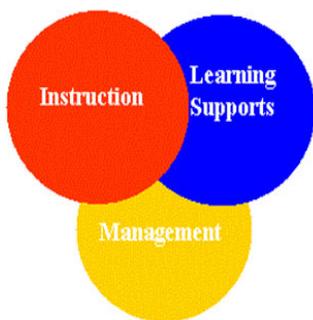
And in New Jersey, high school principal Glenn Lottmann recently unveiled his plan for this year's graduation. It starts with about 315 seniors being driven by their parents or guardians to assemble in a procession at Woodbridge High School. Each student will receive their diploma through the car window.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/graduation-during-coronavirus-a-little-pomp-under-the-circumstances-11588348440>

What are you upset about now?



The teacher didn't believe that the computer ate my homework!



\*\*\*\*\*

**For information about the**

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

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

Also online are two related free books

*Improving School Improvement*

[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

*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)

\*\*\*\*\*

DEAR READER:

**Everyone has a stake in the future of public education.** This is a critical time for action. Send this resource on to others. Think about sharing with the growing number who are receiving it. AND Let us know about what we should be including.

For those who are employed by state and local education agencies and schools, we know you are busy. It would be great to share what actions you are taking to address immediate concerns and how you are anticipating the problems that will arise when schools reopen.

*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.*

**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/>)***