

**School Practitioner Community of Practice**  
(A network for sharing & exchange)  
(6/9/21)

**Contents**

- >How are federal stimulus funds being used to address barriers to learning and teaching? *Will the work be sustainable when the special funding ends?*
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(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).*

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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>

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**For discussion and interchange:**

- >How are federal stimulus funds being used to address barriers to learning and teaching? *Will the work be sustainable when the special funding ends?*

From:

*School Leaders Say Stimulus Cash Will Go a Long Way—But Deep Funding Challenges Remain*  
<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/school-leaders-say-stimulus-cash-will-go-a-long-way-but-deep-funding-challenges-remain/2021/06>

Many school district leaders said federal coronavirus relief funds will help in the short term, but long-term needs may not be met, according to an EdWeek Research Center survey. Those surveyed said they also are working to ensure that investments they make now will be able to be sustained when the relief funding runs out.

From *What schools can do with their Covid stimulus money*  
<https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/08/politics/k12-schools-covid-relief-money/index.html>

About \$128 billion was approved by Congress in March as part of the most recent stimulus, nearly double the amount sent to K-12 schools from the previous two Covid-19 relief packages. The money comes at a time when schools, some of which are chronically underfunded, are facing the unprecedented challenge of bringing all students back into the classroom for in-person instruction five days a week.... The massive influx of funds is intended to help schools return to normal, but could also help start to fix some of the problems that existed before the pandemic.

As a step in understanding what schools are doing and then sharing the information, we sent the following request to a few colleagues across the country:

At this moment, districts and schools are making critical decisions about how to best invest the relief money that the federal government is providing. We know that a portion will be spent on immediate needs (e.g., adding a few more student and learning support staff). However, it is unclear whether a significant portion will be spent on initiating bold and innovative ways to transform student and learning supports to better address a broad range of barriers to learning and teaching and enhance equity of opportunity.

Our Center wants to share whatever is happening to use the relief funds in ways that can produce sustainable systemic improvements. And we want to highlight recommendations from leaders such as you. Please share what you are seeing and what you recommend related to how the funds can initiate significant system changes that reduce the achievement and opportunity gaps.

### Here's the first responses we received:

1. "We are struggling to figure this out. We are not very well organized with how to spend. And we are struggling with getting people to work differently on behalf of kids. There is money, but human resources are the challenge! Like you always say, we cannot have the fragmented ways of doing things. Good people are burning out and we need new veins of gold to tap into for opportunities to children ... not sure what that looks like especially if it's the same old same old."
2. "We are using our funds to help students recover from the loss of learning time. We have implemented an extended school year for students (more teachers teaching summer school) and an after-school standard recovery program."

- 3." Students are facing complex problems related to the pandemic that interfere with their learning and schools are facing unprecedented challenges in addressing these problems. Every district potentially faces different challenges based on student needs so that every district may need to implement different solutions. Before initiating any new programs or services, schools must connect with their community to figure out the depth and breath of the problems that exist.

School leaders need to assemble student support staff (counselors, nurses, tutors, sped teachers, etc.) to meet with community-based leaders who provide services to youth and their families (mental health, housing/shelters, food banks, law enforcement, etc.). The conversation needs to focus on what is the level of need (using hard data), what is already being done, and what still needs to be addressed. Once school staff have a better understanding of the needs students have in their day-to-day lives outside of school, it will become apparent what needs to happen for them inside of the school.

For example, spending money on computers and hotspots for distance learning was a great idea when students need to be isolated. Now that in-person classes are on the horizon, can that technology be put to better use? Should equipment be set up in homeless shelters or youth centers? Should schools be coordinating with shelters to offer tutoring? Should the local food bank offer take-home meals at the school? What about the 'dropouts' that failed to connect virtually? Might community services such as law enforcement know where these students are or where to look for them? Who in the community can make connections to get these students back in the classroom and what will it take to keep them there?

There are hundreds of questions. The only way to find answers to these questions is for schools to work with their community. Right now, districts have resources to build bridges and collaborate with their communities to support student learning. Will schools take a visionary step toward organizing resources around student needs? Or, will they use their resources to continue the 'piece-meal' approach that has plagued districts for decades? My hope is that thoughtful, progressive school leaders will choose to put their districts on a path that begins with community conversations about eliminating barriers to student learning. Once the barriers are identified (with data) and priorities are set, school leaders and staff will understand how to maximize their resources for the benefit of all students."

4. "Our district is coming up with a plan for additional monies received for students who are homeless. Our district has one of the highest percentages of MV students in our County, but thankfully, we have been awarded the homeless grant for the past several years so we have a comprehensive homeless program we refer to as Project HERO (Homeless Education Renewing Opportunities). When the pandemic hit and school closures occurred we were able to provide immediate supportive services to our families, such as holding weekly food distributions, connections with community housing agencies and community donors that met needs like PPE, etc. This year, we will focus our efforts on school stability and success. We have a partnership

with United Way and have a financial literacy program that helps families build financial goals. We have a partnership with housing provider and the city that offer a housing program for 2 years rental assistance with case management, but this program is very limited. I feel like the housing authority and schools are so divided, more partnerships are needed, time and advocacy is needed. Success in school is also affected by mental health needs, so we expanded our services with school social workers and community partnerships. We will be offering tutoring and summer school, but I feel like even though these services are available many of our families do not access them. So active outreach and engagement is needed. Finding where students have moved to and conducting outreach is also needed. In our district, we go to local motels, resource centers, libraries and large apartment complexes to recruit preschool-6th grade students not enrolled in school. The tangible items like clothing, school supplies, technology, wifi, hygiene items are also needed, but thankfully many community partners offer these donations. I think additional case managers and onsite mentors are needed, many times being a homeless liaison is overwhelming. Please feel free to reach out if you need specifics, but I think a UCLA report gave good insight: <http://transformschools.ucla.edu/stateofcrisis/>

5. “The programs in play mainly are virtual, making little sense because the students needing supports failed in the virtual arena already. Or, fragmented and available only to 12 students per grade level as recommended by teacher. If students are referred to special ed, they are not referred to learning loss programs because that is considered, 'double dipping'. A heavy push for increasing mental health staff has been made. SEL staff is increased from 4 to 6. No other increases are in the works.”

### **Our Center’s Perspective**

As you may have noted, our Center has sent out several messages about all this recently. See

- > *Here We Go Again: In the Rush to Spend Federal Stimulus Funds Schools are Attending to Immediate Individual Needs Without Addressing the Opportunity to Make Necessary Systemic Improvements* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/3-24-21.pdf>
- > *Mental health Concerns are Becoming a School Priority: But How Best to Address the Priority Remains Controversial* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/4-15-21.pdf>
- > *About How Temporary Relief Funds for Schools are Used* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/4-23-21.pdf>
- > *About Temporary Relief Funds and Mental Health in Schools* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/5-28-21.pdf>

And several years ago, we stressed how funding stream integration can promote development and sustainability of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports.

- > See: *About Funding Stream Integration* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fundinginteg.pdf>

### **Now would be a helpful time to share what’s being planned in your locality to sustain improvements made with relief funds.**

Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

### **For discussion and interchange:**

- > **How about using relief funds to transform the way schools address mental health concerns?**

Substantive systemic changes require guidance and support from professionals with mastery level competence for creating a climate for change, facilitating change processes, and establishing an institutional culture where key stakeholders continue to learn and evolve. Over the years we have

worked with SEAs, LEAs, and schools to transform student and learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system. Project funding often has been used to create a Learning Supports Leadership Team and convert some student support staff into system change agents. The change agents were dubbed “Organization Facilitators,” and they worked with and coached administrators and student/learning support staff in making transformative system changes. The work is highlighted in a new report from the Center.

> *Implementation Science and Complex School Changes*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/implemreport.pdf>

**A System Change Toolkit has been developed to provide resource aids for efforts to improve student/learning supports.** Go to

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

Among the aids and tools included there are:

- > *What is a Learning Supports Leadership Team?*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resource%20coord%20team.pdf>
- > *Organization Facilitators: A Key Change Agent for Systemic School and Community Changes* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/orgfacrep.pdf>
- > *Mapping & Analyzing Learning Supports (A School Improvement Tool for Moving toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports)*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/tool%20mapping%20current%20status.pdf>
- > *Enhancing a School Board's Focus on Addressing Barriers to Learning & Teaching*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schoolboardfocus.pdf>
- > *Developing a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: First Steps for Superintendents Who Want to Get Started*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/superstart.pdf>
- > *Establishing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports at a School: Seven Steps for Principals and Their Staff* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/7steps.pdf>

**Is this topic being discussed in your locale?**

Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

**>Links to a few other relevant shared resources**

7 ways to focus stimulus spending on students with disabilities

<https://www.eschoolnews.com/2021/05/10/7-ways-to-focus-stimulus-spending-on-students-with-disabilities/>

Nation’s skeletal school mental health network will be severely tested

<https://hechingerreport.org/nations-skeletal-school-mental-health-network-will-be-severely-tested/>

Youth Violence Prevention: Building Local Power and Empowering Youths

<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/>

Community safety realized: Public health pathways preventing violence

<https://www.preventioninstitute.org/publications/community-safety-realized-public-health-pathways-preventing-violence>

How to fight burnout

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/how-fight-burnout>

Can TV shows help teens navigate bullying, depression and other mental health issues?

<https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/tv-shows-and-teen-s-mental-health>

4 Steps for Humanizing Personalized Learning

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2021-05-17-4-steps-for-humanizing-personalized-learning>

## States Address Special Education During COVID-19

[https://ednote.ecs.org/states-address-special-education-during-covid-19/?utm\\_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm\\_campaign=c9c228f9b3-Ed\\_Note\\_Daily&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1a2b00b930-c9c228f9b3-53599575](https://ednote.ecs.org/states-address-special-education-during-covid-19/?utm_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm_campaign=c9c228f9b3-Ed_Note_Daily&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a2b00b930-c9c228f9b3-53599575)

## Opportunities for Achieving Equity in Adolescence

<https://nap.edu/resource/25388/interactive/opportunities-for-achieving-equity-in-adolescence.html>

## A Population Health Perspective on Middle School Success (Activities, Programs, and Policies: Proceedings of a Workshop, 2021)

[https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25807/a-population-health-perspective-on-middle-school-success-activities-programs?utm\\_source=NASEM+News+and+Publications&utm\\_campaign=1be925f843-Final\\_Book\\_2021\\_05\\_25\\_25807&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_96101de015-1be925f843-111508970&goal=0\\_96101de015-1be925f843-111508970&mc\\_cid=1be925f843&mc\\_eid=c6078b349c](https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25807/a-population-health-perspective-on-middle-school-success-activities-programs?utm_source=NASEM+News+and+Publications&utm_campaign=1be925f843-Final_Book_2021_05_25_25807&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_96101de015-1be925f843-111508970&goal=0_96101de015-1be925f843-111508970&mc_cid=1be925f843&mc_eid=c6078b349c)

## Public colleges shock students by sending them to costly debt collection agencies/

<https://hechingerreport.org/public-colleges-shock-students-by-sending-them-to-costly-debt-collection-agencies/>

### A Few Upcoming Webinars

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

6/10 McKinney-Vento 101: Basic Requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act

6/16 Diversity and Difference

6/16 What will we keep, transform and let go in the next school year?

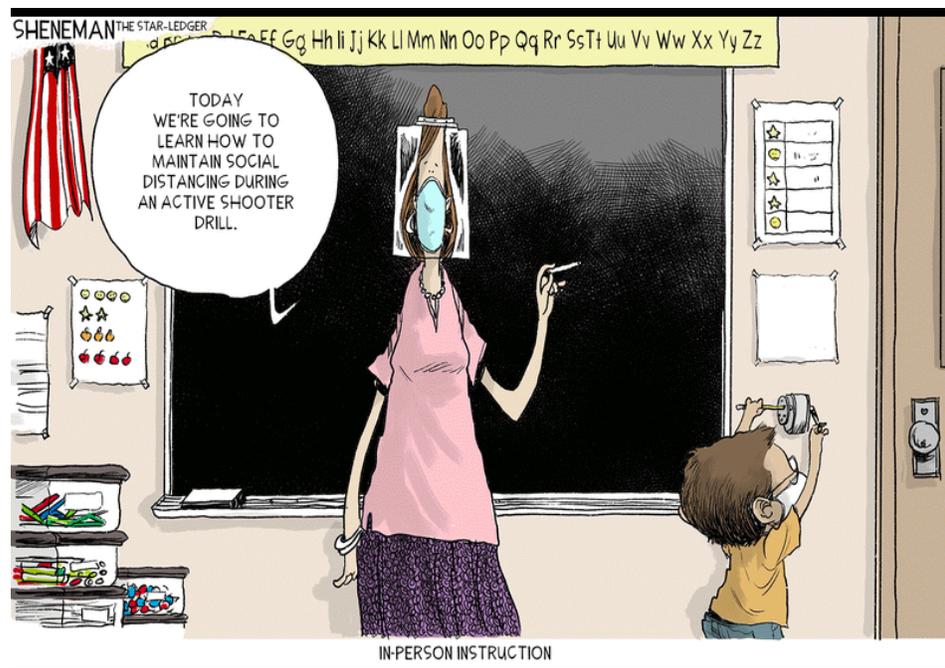
6/22 Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Students Experiencing Homelessness

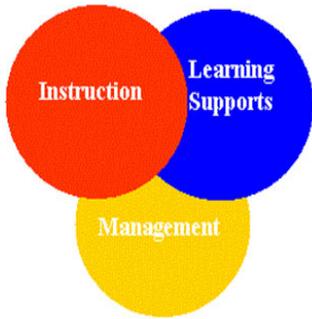
7 /20 Pursuing Equitable Outcomes: Exploring the Intersection of Race and Disability in K-12 Education

8/4 Welcomed: Embracing Students, Families and Educators in the New School Year

9/29 Fully Present: Leveraging Attendance Data to Ensure Ongoing Success

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





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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 promoting whole child development, advancing social justice, and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.

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**Invitation to Listserv Participants:**

**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.**

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

**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/> )**