

**School Practitioner Community of Practice**  
(A network for sharing & exchange)  
(6/24/20)

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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:**

>**Students and schools addressing social justice and equity**

- (1) From: *6 teen girls were the organizers behind Nashville's massive Black Lives Matter protest*  
[https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Living/teen-girls-organizers-nashvilles-massive-black-live-matters/story?id=71129776&cid=clicksource\\_4380645\\_14\\_post\\_hero\\_card\\_hed](https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Living/teen-girls-organizers-nashvilles-massive-black-live-matters/story?id=71129776&cid=clicksource_4380645_14_post_hero_card_hed)

A group of six teenage girls who met on Twitter were responsible for a massive protest in Nashville in support of the Black Lives Matter movement that drew thousands of people. The girls, all freshmen through juniors in high school and ages 14 to 16, took just five days to organize the peaceful demonstration that saw as many as 15,000 people march in Nashville on June 4 to protest police killings of black men and women.

"We felt like we needed to do more because change is not going to just happen overnight," Emma Rose, 15, a sophomore in Franklin, Tenn. "We're teens and we weren't seeing any youth speaking up because they didn't feel like they have a voice. We wanted to show teenagers and youth that we need you guys and we do have a voice," she said.

Emma Rose and her five co-organizers started a group text chat after meeting on Twitter and formed an organization, Teens 4 Equality, to help them organize the protest. They spread the word by reaching out to other organizations like Black Lives Matter and making a flyer that they shared on social media. When asked what she had learned by organizing her first protest, Mikayla replied, "No matter what you are or who you are, if you put your mind to it, you can make a difference. A week ago I did not think I would be capable of doing something like this."

Their Teens 4 Equality organization now has nearly 25,000 followers on social media and is already planning a second protest this Fourth of July, Independence Day. "It's going to be red, black and blue instead of red, white and blue because we felt like there's not really a ton to celebrate in our country when it's this shattered and broken and the systems aren't how they should be," said

Emma Rose, adding the protest will also include a voter registration drive. "We think it's not a time to really be celebrating a country that's divided.

- (2) National Association of Secondary School Principals blog excerpt from *an open letter to school leaders* <https://blog.nassp.org/2020/06/03/an-open-letter-to-school-leaders/>

None of us is doing ok right now, especially our black students. Each horrific incident of state-sanctioned violence against black Americans intensifies the trauma for black students, already suffering disproportionate isolation and fear from the COVID-19 pandemic. And you, leaders of the learning organizations that are central to so many of their lives, are reaching out to them with solace and support.... This moment in time calls on us as leaders to build our own cultural competence to recognize and address the racial disparities in our discipline policies and our academic systems, and in our use of school resource officers. It calls on us to lead conversations with all students and stakeholders that will build culturally responsive schools....

- (3) Some school districts are rethinking having school police on campus as they review the issues raised by protesters for social justice.

Here's an excerpt from: *Teachers Union Calls For Disbanding School Police Department* [https://laist.com/latest/post/20200608/teachers\\_union\\_defund\\_police\\_los\\_angeles\\_school\\_department](https://laist.com/latest/post/20200608/teachers_union_defund_police_los_angeles_school_department)

For decades, the Los Angeles Unified School District has commanded its own, independent police force — one of the largest school police departments in the nation. But the district's powerful teachers union may soon call to dismantle the L.A. School Police Department. The board of directors for United Teachers Los Angeles recently voted 35-2 to call for stripping down the L.A. School Police Department. The policy proposal must win a vote of another body of UTLA members before it becomes the union's official stance. In the last week, the Minneapolis and Portland school districts have voted to cut ties with local police departments. Activists are pressuring Chicago Public Schools to end its police contract, too. Unlike LAUSD, though, those school districts didn't operate their own police departments. In recent years, UTLA has sided with activists who opposed the L.A. School Police on certain policy questions — for instance, on ending the district's policy on random student searches.

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**Listserv Participants:**

In addition to broad federal, state, county, and city policy changes related to housing, health, employment, and policing, what can schools do immediately to enhance equity of opportunity and counter racial injustices?

*Let's hear what you have to say about this and other matters!*  
Send to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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**For discussion and interchange:**

**>Diversity as a Focus for a School's Learning Supports Leadership Team**

We recently saw that a school was looking to hire a diversity and inclusion specialist. Rather than hiring yet another specialist, we suggest that this is another opportunity to begin transforming student/learning supports by establishing a Learning Supports Leadership Team at the school – see

>*Best Practices in the Use of Learning Supports Leadership Teams to Enhance Learning Supports* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/bestpract.pdf>

One function of such a team is to set up and guide workgroups for priority matters such as enhancing equity of opportunity and countering racial injustices. A workgroup would take on most of the tasks indicated below that were included in the job description the school formulated for a diversity and inclusion coordinator:

**Examples of Tasks Related to a School’s Efforts to Enhance Diversity & Inclusion**

- >Provide strategic leadership for diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice.
- >Improve recruitment, welcoming, induction, development, and retention of diverse faculty and staff.
- >Provide resources for faculty with respect to curriculum design and student support (e.g., advise, promote, and support relevant curricula and instruction related to the study of race, gender, ethnicity, nation and nationhood, class, and religion and their intersections).
- >Improve recruitment, welcoming, social and academic supports, and retention of students from diverse backgrounds.
- >Provide guidance and support for the development of positive relationships among the various diversity and inclusion-related groups in the school.
- >Improve responses to diversity- and equity-related issues among the student body
- >Support and develop student leadership in matters related to diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice.
- >Improve staff and professional development related to diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice.
- >Enhance collaboration between the school and local communities of color to serve these communities better and to support the school’s outreach

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**Listserv Participants:**

*Tell us what you want to share about this and other matters!*

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

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**For discussion and interchange:**

**>Staff Mental Health: What’s being done to appreciate the effort beyond the call of duty**

This has been a difficult time for many folks whose formal role is to promote the well-being of children and youth. Promoting staff mental and physical wellness is a critical concern. With respect to school personnel, one aspect of this is taking time to show appreciation for the extraordinary efforts of teachers, support staff, and administrators.

Here are some suggestions from some colleagues:

(1) From a state department of ed leader

“This is something of which I keep finding myself wishing I had time to focus, but unfortunately, have not had that time. One thing I have been recommending that's not very celebratory, but would be appreciated, is for districts to document the training and learning that school personnel had to engage in order to be prepared to deliver services remotely and include it as continuing education units of credit. Different states manage this a little differently, but typically all licensed employees are required to earn CEUs to maintain licensure. If districts could provide documentation of the number of hours that licensed personnel engaged in their own learning to enhance their own skills, such as webinars and other online training, it could be used for CEUs.”

(2) From a state department of ed colleague

"It has been a very difficult time for staff. Here are some guiding questions that might support finding the right activities:

How can you renew the sense of belonging?

How can you provide courage and motivation to continue the work?

What does your staff value?

Depending on your staff and needs of your school community may consider some of these options. These are some things I have tried:

Personal Notes with sincere appreciation and encouragement

Run thank you messages on electronic signs

Sign on each teachers door

Relaxation Space

Recognition Heart Bulletin Board

Small gifts

Media Recognitions

1 on 1 celebration meetings or virtual chats"

(3) From a school counselor and former state ed leader

"Since a face-to-face recognition isn't possible to thank teachers, I think we have to turn to on-line options (or dare I suggest snail mail?) similar to what schools did at the end of this school year.

>Finding photos (or videos) of teachers and students working together and including activities like plays or music concerts, fundraisers, sports and images of all the "extra" events teachers organize for students. I'd put them into a slide show (or Youtube video) with captions about the many wonderful things they do routinely that go unnoticed. I'd make sure I included a shot of every staff member and had comments that included everyone in some fashion. Then I'd post it on home page of the school website. Notices of the posting should be shared through the schools emails to all staff, students and parents.

>I would solicit comments from students (and possibly parents of younger students) by asking questions like: How has your teacher helped you improve while learning online? Or what has your teacher done to make learning online more interesting/fun? Or.... whatever is appropriate for the grade level related to on-line learning. These comments could also be posted on the school's website, perhaps on the appropriate teacher's home page. They could also scroll across the homepage, the school's electronic sign, be printed the in local paper, etc. The point is to show the community what students think about staff and the extra lengths they've gone to help students.

>The school board could issue a "decree" or "resolution" about having the best staff and state why. This could be published in the local paper/posted online. And if the district has a "small town" paper, the board may strike a deal with the editor to highlight student comments about the teachers in each edition over the summer. It would be a "Teacher Spotlight" and feature a grade level with comments from that level.

>A snail mail option would be for each principal to write a simple "thank you" to each staff member. (The supt. could be responsible for "district" staff such as bus drivers, custodial staff or food service.) I received a letter from my principal when I left for another job in 1999. I still have that letter today as it was personalized and showed how much my work was appreciated. (Absolutely no form letters!) Handwritten is best but printed works if there is a signature and/or personal comment at the end.<sup>5</sup> Another option would be to offer a zoom meeting (maybe more than one depending on the size of the staff) with a board member, the supt. and the principal facilitating the meeting. Each could make a brief statement about teacher efforts coming

from 3 different perspectives. As with the letters already mentioned, comments of the principal (if not all 3 leaders) need to be personalized to the group on the zoom. For example, the zoom may include K - 2 teachers with the board member talking about outstanding student performance or what the board member has heard from parents of that age group. The supt could talk about her/his observations when walking through the building, and the principal could talk about specific efforts/activities/accomplishments of individuals in that group. Or, the zoom may include the HS math and science departments and speak to the accommodations these teachers made to engage students, the extra time spent preparing lessons and assignments, etc.

>If there is a "meeting", I'm sure teachers will also want any news/decisions to date about what might happen in the fall. If there is none, they need to be told that along with how (possibly when) they will be notified. Administrators could also use this opportunity to ask staff for comments, concerns and suggestions (in the zoom comment section - not necessarily for discussion). These notes should then be used in decision making regarding the fall semester....and let staff know they were heard. Regardless of the option(s) selected, affirming efforts, recognizing hardships and giving hope is the best "reward" I can think of for a caring staff. Similarly, the responses administrators receive from students and families about staff will likely be rewarding for them as well. I believe this act of "paying it forward" will come back to them many times over."

#### (4) From a school psychologist

In my experience, really nice appreciations are personalized to the individual. A blanket email saying "thanks to all the staff for their extraordinary efforts"--not so much. It's more work, and it takes knowing something about the person, that individual's stresses and challenges, likes & dislikes. I'm hoping folks are more open to changing how we used to do business pre-covid19. What once was broken but tolerated is now clearly seen as inadequate and unacceptable.

We used to give teachers whiteboards because that was the latest & greatest, but then required teachers to buy their own whiteboard markers, erasers, and whiteboard cleaner sprays. In the future, maybe we could get feedback from staff about what latest & greatest stuff would really be appreciated, and then not cause that "upgrade" to also upgrade the workload and personal out-of-pocket expense.

Previously, we organized our schools according to the agricultural calendar (kids need to help with the harvest), four rows of five desks in a room, students placed in seats alphabetically, students with special needs sent to a different place, bells telling us when to move in a line from here to there. Living in a contagious environment throws everything into a cocked hat. Maybe the way out is very different. We need to be willing to say "thanks" to the old ways that have served us so well and then develop new ways that are more adaptable. ,,,

Actually involving educational staff, actually listening to what they say, supporting their humanity and their health instead of making people work while sick or work overtime for free because the principal provides pizza--that would be a wonderful way to say "thanks for your extraordinary efforts"!

Here's hoping re-opening efforts in your area put people before profits and keep new infection rates low."

## Here's what we hear from school staff

- >"I keep a positive conversation in my self-talk, knowing how much I appreciate all the teachers and support staff and administrators. It sure does take a team of professionals to help our students get the services they need to succeed."
- > "Every year our Superintendent and the School Board hold an event at our Administrative Building. There are speeches and an ice cream social. This year it will be a virtual meeting on Zoom or Microsoft Teams or some other platform. It is really very nice."
- >"We have a virtual staff meeting sometime next week but I think that's it. What a year....."

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### Listserv Participants:

What's being done to initiate mutual appreciation in your school, district, community?

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

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### >Links to a few other relevant shared resource

*Workplace Mental Health: Employee Support Guide*

<https://mhanational.org/employeesupportguide>

*A New Reality: Getting Remote Learning Right*

An Educational Leadership Special Report | Volume 77

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/summer20/vol77/num10/toc.aspx>

*Accommodations, Modifications, and Intervention at a Distance*

[http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/summer20/vol77/num10/Accommodations,-Modifications,-and-Intervention-at-a-Distance.aspx?utm\\_source=SmartBrief&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EL\\_Special\\_Report](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/summer20/vol77/num10/Accommodations,-Modifications,-and-Intervention-at-a-Distance.aspx?utm_source=SmartBrief&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EL_Special_Report)

*What Will Return to School Look Like This Fall? A Look Inside Hybrid Learning Plans*

[https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/hybrid-learning-return-to-school?utm\\_medium=email&\\_hsenc=p2ANqtz-PSKp4NshPAiQ-XMSs\\_Ln3V0QhpG6r0REIP8jVj7YwotNM8IYS1qbOXsDYneGK\\_KeXcy1wRuZTGuqC\\_P9QoK7the3AA&\\_hsmi=89739315&utm\\_content=89739315&utm\\_source=hs\\_email&\\_hsCtaTracking=00d6f865-4a61-4847-b0f8-a42164c70db4%7C45d1169c-acb6-44e6-9284-582bd0e84c1b](https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/hybrid-learning-return-to-school?utm_medium=email&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-PSKp4NshPAiQ-XMSs_Ln3V0QhpG6r0REIP8jVj7YwotNM8IYS1qbOXsDYneGK_KeXcy1wRuZTGuqC_P9QoK7the3AA&_hsmi=89739315&utm_content=89739315&utm_source=hs_email&_hsCtaTracking=00d6f865-4a61-4847-b0f8-a42164c70db4%7C45d1169c-acb6-44e6-9284-582bd0e84c1b)

*Navigating New and Flexible Funding Streams for Kids During Covid-19*

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b75d96ccc8fedfce4d3c5a8/t/5ecfedd3b686a432c76333ff/1590685140367/CFP+Emergency+Funding+Guide+V5+4.21+dyk.pdf>

*Stronger Together | a Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California's Public Schools*

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/documents/strongertogether.pdf>

*Race matters* <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/series/race-matters-america-in-crisis>

*12 Therapy And Wellness Resources For Black Mental Health*

<https://idontmind.com/journal/12-therapy-and-wellness-resources-for-black-mental-health>

*Collaboration and Addressing Student Needs: A Rural District's Response to COVID-19*

<https://edpolicyinca.org/>

*COVID-19's Impact on English Learner Students: Possible Policy Responses*

<https://edpolicyinca.org>

*Tip Sheet: Telehealth for Transition Age Youth and Young Adults: Privacy, Emotional Safety and Welfare During Covid-19 and Beyond* <https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/telehealth-tip-sheet.pdf>

*Black LGBTQ youth are under significant stress right now. Here's how to check in on their mental health, according to a psychologist*  
<https://www.businessinsider.com/how-young-black-lgbtq-people-take-care-mental-health-now-2020-6>

## 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)
- >*The Well-Being Series: Connections During COVID-19: Mental Wellness Webinars For Families & Educators* <https://mhccnetwork.org/centers/northwest-mhcc/well-being-series>
- >6/24 - *How to Support Successful STEM Learning Online*
- >6/29 – *Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services*
- >6/30 - *Technology Based Outreach to Increase Access to Care and Support in Times of Crisis*
- >7/15 – *Building Peace through Service-Learning*
- >8/19 – *Addressing Environmental Challenges through Service-Learning*

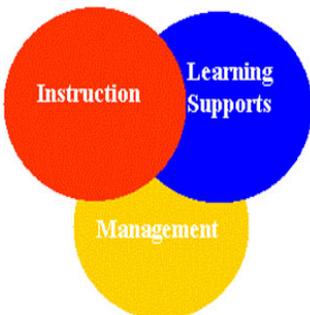
For more webinars, go to the our Center's links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

In case you missed it, the latest Quarterly eJournal is now online. See

- >*Schools Re-opening: Safety Plus Enhancing Equity of Opportunity and Social Justice*
  - >*The Role of Schools in Promoting Whole Child Development and Learning?*
- <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.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>  
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)

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***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.***

**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 as schools reopen.*

***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/>)***