

## Getting the School Year Off to a Good Start

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As a principal wrote us recently:

*“‘resources’ seem to be dwindling in all areas. This year we have big cuts in certain areas, but this could also allow us to uncover different/creative ways to reach students - as we are forced to work smarter with less personnel and the onus is placed back on the classroom teacher. However, it could place a huge stress on teachers who are lacking the skill to seek out alternative solutions. As education looks to reframe our support services and incorporate more comprehensive systems, it is ironic, that with cuts could come gains.”*

With this in mind, here are a few recent resources from the Center designed to help with school improvement. (More are available – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/> )

For Superintendents and Principals

**>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>

**>Connecting Schools in Ways that Strengthen Learning Supports**

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

**>Improving Teaching and Learning Supports by Addressing the Rhythm of a Year**

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

or go to the Center's website homepage and click on the icon labeled: *Ideas for Enhancing Support at your School: This Month.*

**>Implementing Response to Intervention in Context**

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

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For Teachers and Student and Learning Supports Staff

We find that the resources listed above for superintendents and principals are of interest to many teachers and student and learning supports staff. For example, because starting a new school year is a critical transition period, "Getting off to a Good Start" is the first monthly theme in the online resource entitled: *Ideas for Enhancing Support at your School*. As with all transitions, specific supports often are needed. Schools can play important prevention roles by addressing two basic matters:

- (1) **Welcoming and Social Support** -- Provide all staff, including office staff, with training and resources so they can create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere to everyone who enters the school. For resources, see:

>**Welcoming and Involving New Students and Families** – Guidelines, strategies, and resource aids for planning, implementing, and evolving programs to enhance activities for welcoming and involving students and families in schools.

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

- (2) **Address Initial Adjustment Problems Immediately** -- In the first few weeks of a new school year, teachers note students experiencing difficulties adjusting. If the problems are not addressed, student motivation dwindles and problems increase. The start of the year is the time to be proactive. This is the time for staff development to focus on strategies for responding quickly to address problems. This is the time for student support staff to work with teachers in their classrooms to intervene before problems become severe and require referrals for out of class interventions. For resources on this see:

>**Enabling Learning in the Classroom** – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/enabling.htm>

And for the long run, the following resource may be a useful continuing education focus:

>**School Engagement, Disengagement, Learning Supports, & School Climate**

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



**Please forward this to anyone you think might be interested.**



**If this was forwarded to you, you can receive future resources from the Center at UCLA directly by sending an email to [smhp@ucla.edu](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu) to provide us with your contact information.**

