

Students & Schools: Moving Forward*

October, 2020 (Vol. 25 #1) – 34 Years & Counting

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**Concerned about addressing barriers to student learning and teaching & re-engaging disconnected students? about equity of opportunity? about whole child development? about school climate? All that and more is our focus.*



We encourage you to forward this to others. If this has been forwarded and you want to receive it directly, contact: Ltaylor@ucla.edu



For more on resources from our national Center, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

- >>Equity of opportunity now and for the rest of the year depends on
 - (1) enabling school adjustment: in person and online
 - (2) outreach to reengage disconnected students

As the transition to the new school year evolves, some students are experiencing difficulties adjusting to the various challenges (new health and safety precautions for in school instruction; demands on technology and self-discipline for online learners). Others are not showing up.

These critical matters are added burdens for school staff. In addressing these concerns, the tendency is to ask teachers to do more. But teachers cannot and should not be expected to take these problems on by themselves. *Student and learning support staff are essential as schools play their role throughout the coming year in addressing various factors that interfere with learning and teaching.* This is the time for staff development and school planning focusing on the following matters.

(1) Enabling School Adjustment: In person or online

It is particularly poignant to see a student who is trying hard, but can't keep up.

Over the first few weeks, teachers realize quickly who has and hasn't made a good adjustment to the new formats for school learning. This is the time to address any problems before they get worse. If adjustment problems are not addressed, student motivation for school dwindles.

The first month is the time for all school staff to start to work collaboratively and proactively. In particular, it is time for student support staff to join with teachers to intervene before adjustment and school disengagement problems become severe and pervasive. Special attention needs to be

given to enhanced personal contacts with the youngster and family to build a positive working relationship. Examples of things to explore in discussion with them include:

- the student's assets (e.g. positive attributes, interests, hobbies, what the youngster likes about school)
- what the youngster doesn't like about school and the reasons for "dislikes" (e.g., Are assignments seen as too hard? as uninteresting? Is the youngster embarrassed because others will think s/he does not have the ability to do assignments?)
- other possible causal factors (health/safety restrictions, technology demands)
- what the youngster and those in the home think can be done to make things better (including extra support from a volunteer, a peer, friend, etc.)

Of course, this is just a way to improve understanding of the problem and hopefully a start in building a good working relationship. The bigger consideration is how to provide the type of *learning supports* for the youngster and all others manifesting learning, behavior, and emotional problems. In this context many schools are discussing MTSS and hopefully will incorporate a broad focus in doing so. See our recent brief discussions about this:

> *MTSS: It's just a starting point for transforming student/learning supports*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/MTSSbuild.pdf>

> *Much Discussion of MTSS, Little Discussion of Student/Learning Support Staff and Developing MTSS into a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/july19init.pdf>

For more in-depth discussion and as resources for staff development and school planning, see three related free books

> *Improving School Improvement*

> *Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*

> *Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*

Access them by going to: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

Listserve participants: *How are local schools personalizing learning supports for students having problems adjusting to this new school year (in person or online)?*

Please share so we can let others know. Ltaylor@ucla.edu

(2) Outreach to reengage disconnected students

Excerpt from: *As Schools Go Remote, Finding 'Lost' Students Gets Harder*
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/us/schools-covid-attendance.html>

Early data for the new school year suggests that attendance in virtual classrooms is down, possibly because students are working or caring for siblings. ... Disengagement was especially high in poorer communities, including many urban school systems. ...

Last spring, Massachusetts school officials reported dozens of families to the state's Department of Children and Families because of issues related to their children's participation in remote learning. The Boston Globe reported last month Districts with large Black and Latino populations filed the most reports....

But Hedy Chang, the director of Attendance Works, a national group that promotes solutions to chronic absenteeism, said many districts had in fact eased up on harsh truancy rules. ...

In Washington, D.C., public schools this fall will send “We Miss You” postcards to students who skip virtual class and call not just parents but other relatives and emergency contacts to track them down. In California, a law passed in June requires school districts to develop “re-engagement strategies” for students who go missing from distance learning. And in Mississippi, schools will dispatch attendance officers to the homes of students who don’t show up for online instruction. ... “When a student misses a day or a period, we are asking staff to reach out to the family to ask, ‘Is everything OK? Are there any barriers we can assist you with?’” Dr. Simon said.

This fall, Ms. Sheerhan plans to go further, with home visits to welcome each student to her class and additional visits as the weeks go by to continue keeping tabs on them. “I think I can do this on their front lawns and keep a distance,” she said. “I won’t get to every student every week, but possibly visit five per week.”

For a toolkit of strategies, see

> *School Attendance: Adapting to Our New Normal and New Strategies for Chronic Absence*
<https://www.preventionworksct.org/resources/school-based-prevention-resources/attendance-works-toolkit.html>

And again, see the references cited in the previous section about broadening work related to MTSS, as well as the three free books cited as resources for staff development and planning in addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

Listserv participants: *How are local schools doing outreach to “lost” students?*

Share so we can let others know. Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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What we need is a kind of quilt of different sources of care in support of learning, between other parents, community-based based organizations, churches and child care centers themselves.

Elliot Haspel

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>Quick Links to Online Resources

Indicators for Dynamic School Decision-Making

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/indicators.html>

Covid-19: Education resource roadmap <https://www.fema.gov/>

Resources for learning at home <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus/resources-for-learning-at-home>

Recommendations on Starting School During the COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://www.apa.org/ed/schools/teaching-learning/recommendations-starting-school-covid-19.pdf>

Risk and Resilience in Family Well-Being During the COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2020-34995-001.pdf>

If you missed our recent quarterly ejournal, it contained the following:

- > *Assisting Kids with Online Instruction*
- > *Talking with Kids When Assisting with Learning*
- > *To Push or Not To Push*
- > *Common Tips from the Internet*

Online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.htm>

Here's what was discussed in the *Community of Practice* during September

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

Note: All community of practice editions contain *Links to relevant shared resources*.

Contents:

- >Analysis of school reopening plans: Moving Forward
- >What can be done for parents challenged by online learning schedules?
- >Request from a teacher leader about enhancing online learning engagement
- >About COVID-19 and School Climate
- >Does remote schooling increase or decrease cyberbullying?
- >What's happening to strengthen online student & staff support?
- >About layoff protections and shortages
- >What's your view about Learning Pods?
- >Can remote learning produce good outcomes?

Other recent discussions worth revisiting

8/26/20

- >About creative models for teaching during the pandemic
- >Supporting parents/families as co-teachers

8/19/20

- >Reconnecting with students who didn't participate in online learning

8/12/20

- >What should online schooling do to promote positive social development?

If you missed the resources and news in the Special Editions of the Community of Practice prepared in relation to the crisis, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

>For more resources, see our website
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

>For info on the status of upcoming conferences
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm>

>For info on webinars
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

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Start every day off with a smile and get it over with.

W.C. Fields

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>Calls for grant proposals
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm>

**> job and training opportunities
when available**
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm>

A Time of Transformation

excerpt from: *From the Field: Education Research During a Pandemic*
<https://www.aera.net/Publications/Journals/Educational-Researcher/Educational-Researcher-496>

“Education researchers have been impacted by COVID-19 as school closures interrupted ongoing education research, including clinical trials, case study and ethnographic inquiry in schools, and longitudinal studies using federal, state, or district administrative data. The recommendations we present here focus on immediate and future actions education researchers can take to support public health and educational institutions dealing with a pandemic. Clearly not exhaustive, our recommendations are intended to prompt the education research community to collectively consider how the field’s efforts can both inform the knowledge base and support frontline educators and health care researchers dealing with COVID-19....

Recommendations for Education Researchers

Education researchers can certainly volunteer with public agencies or nonprofits (i.e., foodbanks, hospitals, Meals on Wheels) or help produce personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care workers, and we would encourage these activities. However, our recommendations focus on capitalizing on our skills, resources, and training to minimize future educational, social, and public health problems. First, the education research community has unique potential to provide immediate aid to public health researchers as well as to state education agencies (SEAs), districts, and schools faced with the urgent challenge of providing remote instruction and services. This aid may require researchers to take the lead, work shoulder-to-shoulder with educational organizations, or play a support role. Second, we must prepare for a future that will entail schools reopening but perhaps under substantively and significantly different conditions and possibly for a short period of time before returning to remote learning.

Immediate Support to Public Health and Educational Institutions

>Supporting COVID-19 research efforts...

>Synthesizing and translating research – The education research community can provide support to educational leaders by synthesizing and translating research. SEAs, districts, and schools find themselves ill prepared to confront the many challenges associated with COVID-19, although some may be more prepared than others. The challenges can be greater for districts and schools serving large numbers of traditionally underserved students, including students receiving free and reduced meals, students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and students in rural communities, and those facing resource constraints and high-stakes accountability pressure to accelerate improvement. The nation’s deep economic divide is particularly evident as less affluent and more rural districts struggle to provide tablets, laptops, and internet access while more affluent districts focus on supporting their teachers’ transition to online instruction....

>Organizing and providing professional development opportunities – Education researchers can draw from their expertise and research to develop timely professional development opportunities. Many education-related organizations have developed resource pages focused on COVID-19... Researchers can also respond to district- and school-level PD needs by organizing and/or providing PD for crisis management, finance and budgeting, distance learning, telemental health, and other evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes....

Future Supports and Research Efforts

Partnering with states, districts, and schools to evaluate and improve new practices
Education researchers are well positioned to partner with SEAs, districts, and schools to evaluate new practices and make recommendations for improvement. Prior to COVID-19, many states, districts, and schools were already leveraging their own administrative data systems to track attendance, inform school closures, and guide the distribution of school meals...”

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Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.
Albert Einstein

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Let Us Know:

About what ideas are being proposed for transforming schools as they re-open.

And if anyone is thinking about increasing the capacity of a district or school with respect to developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports, we can help. Send all info to ltaylor@ucla.edu

>A Few News Stories (excerpted from various news sources)

Safety Concerns Over COVID-19 Driving Some Educators Out of the Profession. According to a national poll, nearly one in three teachers say COVID-19 has made them more likely to resign or retire early. That number includes a significant number of new or young teachers—one in five teachers with less than 10 years' experience. It also includes 40 percent of teachers with 21 to 30 years' experience, who are presumably leaders and mentors on their school campuses, and 55 percent of those with more than 30 years. Even more significantly, as the U.S. continues to struggle to diversify its teaching workforce for the benefit of all students, 43 percent of Black teachers say they're now more likely to retire to leave early.

<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/safety-concerns-over-covid-19-driving-some-educators-out>

LAUSD enrollment decline continues during online learning, with unexpected drop of 6,000 kindergarteners. Enrollment at the Los Angeles Unified School District has continued its downward trend for the 2020-21 academic year, with the decline in kindergarten enrollment — especially in the school system's lowest-income neighborhoods — about three times as large as in recent years. Enrollment in kindergarten so far this year is 36,914, according to figures released Monday by L.A. Unified — down about 6,000 students or 14% from last year. The two prior years, kindergarten enrollment had dropped about 2,000 students each year. In addition to a drop in kindergarten enrollment, some principals also are reporting that attendance in live online transitional kindergarten through first-grade classes is particularly low. Anecdotal numbers suggest that, in many cases, only 50% to 75% of kindergartners and first-graders are making it to live online sessions. Under state law, parents do not have to enroll their children in kindergarten. Starting in first grade, however, schooling is mandatory, although parents are allowed to homeschool their children.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-08-31/lausd-kindergarten-enrollment-drop>

Seattle Mayor announces \$95 million investment for K-12 education. Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan announced that the City of Seattle will invest nearly \$95 million dollars over six years in K-12 educational supports through the Department of Education and Early Learning's (DEEL) School-Based Investments (SBI). In addition, DEEL has awarded \$4.9 million over three years to expanded learning and college and career readiness programs. Both investment packages are funded through the voter approved Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise levy, and will fund programs beginning this school year.

https://mynorthwest.com/2129385/seattle-investment-k12-education/?utm_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm_campaign=b5b23b8d62-ED_CLIPS_09_04_2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a2b00b930-b5b23b8d62-53611723

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At the City, we took a hard look at our investments so that we could best serve Seattle students furthest from educational justice.

Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan

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Comments and sharing from the field

(1) We were asked to share the following news report from the NY Times:

How One District Got Its Students Back Into Classrooms
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/20/us/school-covid-reopening.html>

Here's an excerpt:

When schools shuttered in March, David Miyashiro, the superintendent of the Cajon Valley Union School District, immediately started connecting with families and teachers. During hundreds of calls, Zoom meetings and socially distanced in-person gatherings, he heard desperate pleas from poor parents torn between work and home instruction, or who needed support for high-needs students.

Mr. Miyashiro vowed to reopen schools in the fall, and over the coming months, he took steps to pave the way. ... Now, at a time when many low-income districts are staying remote, Cajon Valley has opened its 27 schools for a mixture of in-person and remote instruction. It was, in the minds of Mr. Miyashiro and many educational experts, a small victory for poorer students who, studies show, have been disproportionately hurt by remote instruction. ...

After a set of marathon negotiations in late August with the unions, the district announced a plan under which most students could choose between full-time remote instruction or a blended course of study starting with two days a week in person, up to full-time. (Three of the district's schools have opened for classes five days a week.)

Mr. Miyashiro praised the union for bringing forward safety concerns he had failed to see, and committed to using the rest of his federal stimulus funding to offer wraparound services — nutrition, recreation, distance-learning support — for families who need support during the three days that students are not in school. Thirty percent of children's families opted for all-remote learning until December, while the rest have returned two days a week.

Updated Sept. 22, 2020

Mr. Miyashiro said the hybrid plan is the right one, for now. But he continues to worry about the divide between families who have choices and those who do not. He has heard from parents with resources that they are organizing home "learning pods" with other families, or sending their children to specialty camps that offer tutoring.

Meanwhile, low-income families whose children are socially isolated or often home alone have been asking him for child care. These conversations crystallized for him the devastating impact the pandemic is having on low-income families, many of whom rely on the school for food, before and after-school care, counseling and learning support.

"This crisis is just making equity so much worse," he said.

(2) From the field:

I really admire the work you're doing with the School Mental Health Project at UCLA. I believe studying the impact of mental health of students as a barrier to educational learning is a vital topic to examine. Both from the perspective of a teacher and of a student. I think in the current environment, where the definition of a school day is increasingly getting blurred, it is crucial to examine the psychological effects it has on the well-being of students....

Why are you upset?

School started!



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.

For information about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

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

Also online are three related free books

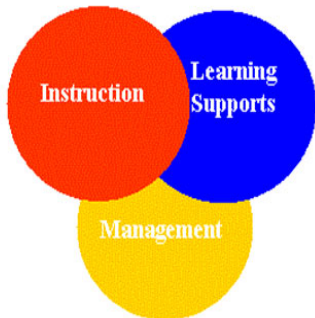
>Improving School Improvement

>Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide

>Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change

Access them at:

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html



THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF ENEWS

Who Are We? Recently renamed the Center for MH in Schools and Student/Learning Supports, our national Center was established in 1995 under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project (which was established in 1986). We are part of the Department of Psychology at UCLA. The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.

For more information about the Center and its many resources, go to the website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> or email Ltaylor@ucla.edu or adelman@psych.ucla.edu

Send info to share with others or ask for specific resources by email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu