

School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
(10/6/21)

Contents

- >How are schools currently addressing the many COVID-related problems arising for students?
- >Responses related to position statement about mental health in schools
- >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

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

For discussion and interchange:

- >How are schools currently addressing the many COVID-related problems arising for students?

What's Happening?

A colleague raised questions about how schools are addressing the many COVID-related problems arising for students (e.g., How are schools connecting with parents/families of sick/hospitalized children? How are they providing emotional and academic supports for students in need? What are they doing for unvaccinated children? What about regular reporting to families?)

Let's hear from you.

Here's a start from what some colleagues have shared so far:

- (1) "In my district, students who are out due to COVID or quarantine are on independent study and coordinated with the school site. Each school has a liaison to coordinate work and connect with families. For those who are on campus, it's business as usual but wearing masks 100% indoors. For the first 2 weeks of the school year, we did school wide SEL lesson and making those connections with our students. These questions posed are in the front of my mind as well and I am eager to hear input from others."
- (2) "In my district teachers and all other staff are being trained through Panorama an educational program that addressed Social Emotional Learning (SEL program). The hope being that a trained staff will be able to work with children's SEL difficulties as they arise in the classroom while teaching. In addition, our district is contracting with Social workers from mental health clinics who will be assigned to counsel students that guidance, parents or child study teams have recognized to need counseling. All ongoing counseling will be provided in schools weekly in all schools in the Paterson School district. For children with medical notes bedside classes have always been an option for parents. We have not had any discussions on what bedside

classes will look like and if this will become an option for children with underlying conditions who may in fact get very sick if they return to school.

Governor Phil Murphy of New Jersey has mandated that all schools open this school year and there is no option for virtual learning. However, In my opinion bedside should now be virtual for whomever is unable to attend school. In terms of maintaining contact with the parents we have an attendance committee at our school. I believe this team will become key in our schools with maintaining contact with parents of children who maybe sick and out of school for extended periods of time. During the pandemic we had guidance counselors and security officers conduct home visits to students and parents who did not loggin virtually. I am not sure if this will continue with students who may not return to school due to an illness or hospitalization of themselves or their parent or guardian.”

- (3) “Our District monitors and communicates staff and student isolation/quarantine numbers daily on our COVID-19 Dashboard. This dashboard is visible to the public.

Our Back to School Plan is also available to our families on our District website. We are requiring all students, staff and visitors (vaccinated and unvaccinated) to wear face coverings. We believe this is a critical factor in keeping our students in school. In the plan we share with families that students who are out ill or quarantined will have an Individualized Learning Plan developed. Parents will be included in the development of that plan.

Should the District need to temporarily close a classroom or school, the following school day, at minimum, will be used by the teacher to prepare to transition during the closure (includes distribution of materials, such as devices, books, etc.). This will also allow families time to make appropriate arrangements for childcare or other supervision plans for their child(ren), if needed. Students may be provided with materials for asynchronous learning to occur during this transition period. In most cases, as appropriate, the classroom will transition to online learning for the duration of the temporary closure. Specific information will be shared by the building principal and/or classroom teacher during the transition period.

As of last year, our District implemented classroom circles/advisor time/homeroom at all grade levels. This is an opportunity for a teacher to check in each day with students. If a student expressed emotional distress that could not be addressed in the classroom, student services staff would be contacted to provide additional support. We also have social workers to support families who need additional support.”

- (4) “ I am pleased to share this roll out from our County Office of Education. I am interviewing an elementary principal and the Program Specialist for MH services to explore how much of the RCOE roll out may have filtered out to schools.

<https://www.rcoe.us/about-us/superintendent/superintendent-s-initiatives/mental-health-initiative>

Focus is on the academic aspects of exclusion, independent study contracts and getting students back to site asap. Elementary level. Many students are returning within a few days because the symptoms have subsided/proof of negative test.

There is no real plan outside of the supports that would be available if no covid. If parent initiates contact they are provided a 'warm handoff' to Care Solace, a service entity that interviews and connects the parents with appropriate resources. No deaths in our district, but if so, the family would be referred to Elisabeth Hospice for, 'sudden death' grief support.

The MH Program Specialist thought it a very good question, 'What to be done site wide if student should pass'. No actual plan in place right now, apparently. Thoughts come to mind such as using curriculum to promote conversations/discussions that allow students to share their thoughts and feeling. Write thoughts and feelings/good bye/share a positive about the student.

The district has 2 teams doing contract tracing. One for the staff and one for the students. Coordination for services through that access point originates in Student Services. I have a call in to interview those entities as well.”

- (5) “We are fortunate to be in a very resource rich community and have been able to contract for additional mental health support for all schools across our district. Our district learning supports staff have been meeting with principals and staff at each of our buildings to set the expectation that we will meet our students where they are when they return this school year. We know there will be stress and anxiety around any number of issues and we have asked our staff to lead with understanding, compassion and acceptance. We are also fortunate that Ramsey county (we are one of five districts serving Ramsey county) has several organizations with which we partner. Ramsey County Public Health and Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative are two of the organizations that have been working closely with our staff on providing additional supports to families through our schools. This has helped people recognize that individuals don't have to do this work alone. We have resources that are ready to assist, we just need to make these connections and create partnerships to best serve our students and families.”
- (6) “From what I hear from the people I work with is this:
Leaders in schools/ district are trying to keep it simple and targeted on the goal of keeping schools open.
School leaders stay in contact with parents via social media to explain they are following the CDC guidelines & address any challenges that come from parents.
Most leaders are focused on social-emotional support vs. academic achievement.
The biggest long-term concern is that many students have not returned to school- particularly those who were approaching 16 yrs. of age- juniors in high school when Covid-19 shut down the schools. The 15-17 year old students who may have found work to help support families whose adults lost jobs is a large group in a district where we're working a lot with Learning Supports. The Juvenile Justice department has said that truancy is their biggest challenge. Another school leader tells me that parents are using Covid-19 as an excuse to 'home school' their kids, and they are not following through with instruction.
The good news is that schools are using the Cares Act money to provide more mental health and social worker support.”
- (7) “Thank you for looking ahead and bringing up some very important questions! It's a wonderfully good thing for the people around you that you are reaching out and working on what to do better! These are big questions and all kinds of schools in a wide variety of geographic areas. Since I don't know [others] specific situation, I decided to pass along some resources and some of my own ideas in the hopes these will help you to realize what is the most important next thing to do.
- One of the most comprehensive sources of information for supporting students, teachers, and parents is the National Association of School Psychologists at <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/covid-19-resource-center>.
 - Many schools have a school psychologist assigned to their location for a certain period of time. In some places, the school psychologist is there full time; in other areas, the time might be one day per week, or month, or 'on call.' I suggest paying a visit to the school psychologist in your area for help in planning and organizing support systems.
 - There may already be groups/committees working on this. Find them and link up with them.
 - The NASP site also has information about ways to respond to overwhelming crises, such as hurricanes, school shootings, deaths, etc. Here is a link to those materials: <https://www.nasponline.org/professional-development/prepare-training-curriculum>
 - When I get overwhelmed with a big problem, I usually review charts of human needs. We all tend to believe that learning happens best when various needs are provided first. By scanning the charts, I can better see what is already in place and what we need in addition. Maslow's hierarchy is an oldie but a goodie. The bottom level is physiological needs. Obviously, hungry students don't learn as well as well-nourished students. Students who feel unsafe will struggle to keep their minds on academic subjects because they are always scanning the horizon for threats. Ideally, if you want

to make progress on the higher levels, there should be very few gaps in the lower levels. Maybe this will give you some ideas.

- Another system is the Search Institute’s “developmental assets” model. This is a list of 40 supports that help people to grow in a more positive direction. The more of these present in your life, the better. There are several free downloads available here: <https://www.search-institute.org/tools-resources/free-downloads/>
Sometimes I will scan the 40 assets list to identify which factors are present in a student’s life and which ones are missing. That easily converts to my own two lists—
 - 1) supports we need to continue to provide and
 - 2) how do we add-in these missing supports?

Here is a download specifically aimed at pandemic times:

<https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-checklist-Search-Institute.pdf>

- Personally, I find comfort in knowing that I am doing all I can do to survive. Conversely, I worry the most when I don’t know what to do or I have become so clobbered with the enormity of it all that I’m not taking basic precautions. I’m guessing having some daily routines at school regarding hand-washing, masking, distancing, ways of signaling feelings when masks are covering up the usual signals, reviewing rules and affirmations, etc. could provide a little bit of structure and let people relax in the ritual for a short time. No research base here—just a personal comment.
- I hear a lot of talk about students
- ‘falling behind’ or ‘not learning enough’. Isn’t this pre-pandemic thinking that really doesn’t apply now? The academic standards, ways of measuring progress, and traditional methods of enforcing progress (grade retention, shaming, etc.) were created by people for another period of time. Nothing about those expectations are set in stone. We can approach learning differently now.

There is so much to learn about being safe, knowing how a virus works, knowing how a vaccine works, knowing how to deal peaceably with people who have very different ideas from ourselves, understanding that there is great inequality in the world regarding access to treatment, learning the difference between loneliness and solitude, knowing how to use artistic expression to cope with (and sometimes overcome) the stress of it all, understanding how exercise and meditation contribute to health, realizing that negative emotions often spring from negative self-talk and that one needs to be vigilant and take active steps to stop and correct the ‘stinking thinking’ that we all do, knowing how to set up mutual aid groups when governmental systems fail, etc., etc. We don’t assign grades to these survival skills, but they are important and worthy of time in the ordinary school day. For some people, just showing up and sitting at a desk for a whole school day is a HUGE achievement and should be celebrated as such!”

We asked the colleague who initiated this sharing her reaction to the above:

Looks like folks are all over the board - so maybe a good thing to post a few of their responses. I guess I'm most distressed to read the words "business as usual" and giving lip service to SEL by doing a "school-wide lesson". On the other hand, I'm encouraged by those with detailed plans in place to support transitions to online/asynchronous options and connections to community services to support kids. And I'm especially hopeful to read the thoughts of #7 who said: "The academic standards, ways of measuring progress, and traditional methods of enforcing progress (grade retention, shaming, etc.) were created by people for another period of time. Nothing about those expectations are set in stone. We can approach learning differently now." This range of responses makes me realize all the more how important your work is - to support the good stuff already happening and educate others on the importance of addressing the need for learning supports. Thanks for sharing.

Is this topic being discussed in your locale?

Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

For discussion and interchange:

>Responses related to position statement about mental health in schools

We are receiving good responses to:

Schools and Mental Health: A Position Statement

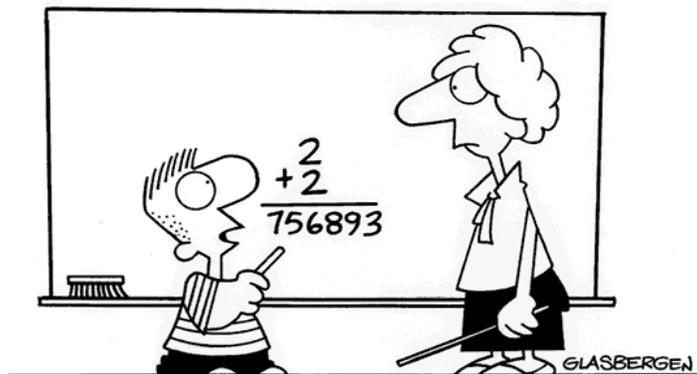
see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fall2021.pdf>

Let us know your position; send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Here are a couple of remarks the statement triggered:

- (1) You can add to your list the trend to reimburse through medical insurance services delivered at schools by school social workers and school psychologists for psychotherapy at the school site. Medicaid is charged for these services and most school social workers and school psychologists go along with this, filling out forms that declare they are doing psychotherapy. I am sure you can see the various implications of this. When I was a school social worker (29 years in Tucson Unified School District) I refused to do this and was placed under a disciplinary regimen until I retired in 2003. I was not hired to do psychotherapy and was not qualified to do it, although I counselled many kids and probably gave them the only counselling they ever got. But I refused to claim that I was providing a medically necessary service that had a diagnosis, as is required for medical insurance reimbursement. School social work is a most valuable service and ideally it reflects the kind of service you are promoting. Social work emphasizes the whole child and the whole environment too. That is not the same as psychotherapy. So thank you for persistently raising this issue.
- (2) I want to let you know that I appreciate your perspectives on the issues addressed below (others too). As a frequent presenter to a variety of education related audiences in Oregon, I'm glad to read your comments about the importance of what we call 'primary prevention' strategies. My colleague and I focus on four areas - Trauma, SEL, IDEA and Mental Health and approaches that can integrate, rather than isolate, these four initiatives. Our premise is that 'buying more staff' to respond to crises is, in the long run, more costly (in dollars and suffering) and less effective than working to reduce the root cause issues themselves, before a trajectory to crisis even starts. Best wishes and sincere thanks for your messages.

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**“In an increasingly complex world,
sometimes old questions require new answers.”**

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

How the pandemic has changed teachers commitment to remaining in the classroom

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/09/08/how-the-pandemic-has-changed-teacher-s-commitment-to-remaining-in-the-classroom/>

Tools For Supporting Emotional Wellbeing in Children and Youth

https://www.nap.edu/resource/other/dbasse/wellbeing-tools/interactive/?utm_source=NASEM+News+and+Publications&utm_campaign=788ad40405-Eblast_Youth_Wellbeing_COVID_2021_09_29&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_96101de015-788ad40405-103064593&goal=0_96101de015-788ad40405-103064593&mc_cid=788ad40405&mc_eid=eac5cd8a62

COVID-19 Information and Resources for Special Educators

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html#guidance>

Supporting the full return to in person learning

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Updated-Public-Health-School-Guidance.pdf>

Back to school checklist for families

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-year/school-year-2021-22/back-to-school-checklist-for-families>

COVID-19 planning, response and information: 2021-22 school reopening plans

<https://www.fmschools.org/covid-19-planning-response-and-information/>

Reducing Poverty-Related Disparities in Child Development and School Readiness: The Smart Beginnings Tiered Prevention Strategy that Combines Pediatric Primary Care with Home

Visiting <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10567-021-00366-0>

11 lessons from schools that kept Covid cases low

<https://hechingerreport.org/11-lessons-from-schools-that-kept-covid-cases-low/>

How districts can support students with disabilities amid school mask debates

<https://www.k12dive.com/news/how-districts-ca-supporting-students-with-disabilities-during-the-masking-debates/606882/>

Rural Perspectives: Enhancing Education and Training Support for Rural Residents

https://ednote.ecs.org/rural-perspectives-enhancing-education-and-training-support-for-rural-residents/?utm_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm_campaign=66e236eadb-Ed_Note_Daily&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_Ia2b00b930-66e236eadb-53599575

Latino Children Represent Over a Quarter of the Child Population Nationwide and Make Up at Least 40 Percent in 5 Southwestern States

<https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/research-resources/latino-children-represent-over-a-quarter-of-the-child-population-nationwide-and-make-up-at-least-40-percent-in-5-southwestern-states/>

SAMHSA provides Public Service Announcement (PSA) flyers designed to help parents and educators talk to children about alcohol and other substances

https://store.samhsa.gov/product/tthy-set-them-up-for-success-in-and-out-of-the-classroom-flyer/PEP20-03-01-037?utm_source=SAMHSA&utm_campaign=5bfe5905bb-New_Publications_2021_09_17_1600322&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_eelc4b138c-5bfe5905bb-167791969

A Few Upcoming Webinars

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

10/4 Working with Struggling Students During a Pandemic

10/6 Compassionate Leadership: Preventing and Addressing Compassion Fatigue and Burnout

10/6 LEND A HAND: A Crisis Management, Triage and De-escalation Model

10/7/21 Tips and tools for talking with school staff

10/11 Teen Dating: Keeping Teens Safe

10/12 Supporting Students to Build Emotional Regulation Pathways to Learning

10/13 Ethics and cultural competence

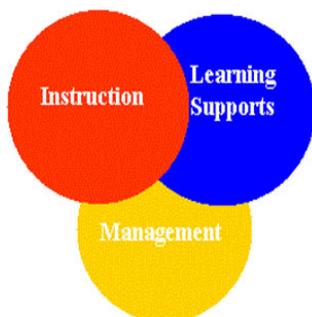
10/14/21 Working together: Supporting your child's mental health needs at school

- 10/14 Beyond Talk: Social emotional learning
- 10/19 McKinney-Vento School Selection Rights
- 10/20 The Science of Scaling-Up High-Quality Early Childhood Programs
- 10/20 Strategies & Best Practices for Returning to School
- 10/20 Accelerate Learning with Project-Based Learning
- 10/21 Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Students Experiencing Homelessness
- 10/27 Reducing Chronic Absence: Insights from Successful Principals
- 10/27 Understanding and Preventing Youth Hate Crimes and Identity-Based Bullying
- 10/28 Loss and Healing after a Pandemic: Supporting Youth After an Unprecedented Year

Webinar recording: Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth
<https://preventioninstitute.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4bf5a36bd9f72789255d49a&id=17f472fea9&e=b6757fd9d7>

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

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.

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

THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!

For new sign-ups – email 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/>)