

School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
(11/17/21)

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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

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:

In response to our October 20th Community of Practice *School Practitioner* entitled:

>*High absenteeism calls for extensive outreach and comprehensive efforts to reengage disconnected students* [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practitioner\(10-20-2021\).pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practitioner(10-20-2021).pdf)

we received these suggestions from a colleague:

“Sooo many barriers! Where we live, it’s likely parents may be undocumented so they are frightened to answer the door. I bring a Spanish speaking Latina with me. I try not to look official!! And take my name badge off! I try to bring something with me to give them. Food, School supplies, gift cards, Ppe... if no one is there, I leave a We Miss You card and my contact info.

I just did a home visit and I know they were home, but did not answer the door. I left the card and two brand new backpacks ?? on the doorstep of two high schoolers who stopped coming. Then I went back and this time they opened the door and talked to me!! ?? I found out there horrific barriers. Problem is, we have a long waiting list to refer kids to counseling!!!

I have been known to show up at a door where I have made multiple attempts to get them to answer the door...with a piping hot pizza delivery! It works to start that relationship building need! I got the student’s phone number and we texts almost ever day to help him with anxiety and to take small steps to get to school. First step, walk out the door and practice walking to bus stop..next step get on bus and stay just a couple hours.....

Most of all, they need to know they are not in trouble and that I am there to help!!”

We also noted the following article about :

From: *Disruptions to schooling fall hardest on vulnerable students*

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-education-pennsylvania-mckeesport-3698f746536a1a7ae6f21b66b78f5e47>

Even as schools have returned in full swing across the country, complications wrought by the pandemic persist, often falling hardest on those least able to weather them: families without transportation, people with limited income or other financial hardship, people who don't speak English, children with special needs.

Coronavirus outbreaks in school and individual quarantine orders when students get exposed to the virus make it a gamble on whether they can attend classes in person on any given day. Many families don't know where to turn for information, or sometimes can't be reached.

And sometimes, because of driver shortages, it's as simple as the school bus not showing up.... For some families, it's a matter of not having the private resources to deal with breakdowns in the public education system. For others, language barriers or other communication issues leave them uninformed about things like programs that let students return to school despite virus exposures, as long as they test negative for infection.

And while some students can keep up with school remotely during quarantines, others receive little to no instruction, or they lack internet or devices to connect....The effects of unpredictable stretches at home can mirror those of chronic absenteeism and lead to long-term harm to learning, said Robert Balfanz, a research professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education. "The irregularity of your attendance is as important as the total amount you miss," Balfanz said. "It lingers with you because you miss key moments of learning that everything else builds upon, and that can even lead to later frustrations."

Some families have had more guidance than others in navigating unexpected, unstructured periods of learning at home...."

Listserv Participants: *What can you share about successful practices for reengaging students who are reluctant to return to school?* Ltaylor@ucla.edu

For discussion and interchange:

>Establishing a New School Mental Health Unit OR Fully Embedding Mental Health into Ongoing Efforts to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching?

Request from a colleague:

Would you have any resources/best practices on developing a mental health department at the county office of education level? Our superintendent has asked our department to look into how this department would look and what functions they will support school districts with.

Center Comments: With respect to mental health, schools can provide the supports needed to promote positive mental health, prevent problems, address them as soon as they arise, and increase access to more intensive interventions when they are needed. An opportunity to focus on enhancing how schools address mental health concerns can be used to broaden and strengthen what schools do not only to address emotional problems, but behavior and learning problems as well. However, moving forward requires countering trends to pursue a narrow view of how schools can address mental health concerns.

We find that *embedding* mental health into the broader school agenda for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students is essential to ending the marginalization of mental health in schools (and the resultant fragmentation and counterproductive competition for limited resources). See

>Schools and mental health: A position statement
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fall2021.pdf>

The summary in that brief states:

In sum, advancing mental health in schools is about much more than expanding services and creating full service schools. It is about playing a major role in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and enhancing equity of opportunity for students to succeed at school and beyond. It is time to rethinking student/learning supports in ways that

- (1) coalesce all school efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students into a unified component and integrating the component as a primary and essential facet of school improvement policy

- (2) move beyond a limited MTSS framework to build the continuum of interventions into a consolidated set of subsystems weaving together school and community resources
- (3) organize the supports needed each day at schools into a delimited set of domains crossing the continuum to establish a framework for developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports over several years

Current student and learning support staff and any new hires must be asked to begin the task of transforming how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students. The aim is to bring all the fragmented and marginalized activity into a unified and cohesive component of school improvement and, over the coming years, develop the component into a comprehensive and equitable system of student and learning supports.

As first step, we recommend pulling together a leadership team to work on the matter (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resource%20coord%20team.pdf>).

The team's first task is to map and analyze existing activity and resources currently being used for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students

(see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/tool%20mapping%20current%20status.pdf>).

In working with SEAs, LEAs, and schools, we find that such mapping provides structure for sharing what is currently going on, identifying redundancies and gaps, and planning priorities and strategies for moving forward.

Additional resources that may be helpful:

> *Prototype Strategic Plan for Guiding SEAs and LEAs in Developing a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports*

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

> *Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*

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

Note: It is important to counter the idea that improving mental health in schools is mainly a matter of increasing the number of providers of direct services. We have addressed this matter in several brief resources at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/aboutmh/aboutmhover.htm> (For example, see *Time for Straight Talk about Mental Health Services and MH in Schools* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mhinschools.pdf>)

With respect to going beyond the limitations of the MTSS framework as usually presented, see *Rethinking MTSS to Better Address Barriers to Learning* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fall19preview.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

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

School Funding: Making the grade 2021

<https://edlawcenter.org/research/making-the-grade-2021.html>

Community-Care Strategies for Schools During the Coronavirus Crisis

https://selcenter.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/05/Brief_Community_Care_Strategies.pdf

Improving Social and Emotional Learning and Outcomes

https://compcenternetwork.org/sites/default/files/R6CC%20SEL_InformationalResources.pdf

Definition of wellness

<https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/wellness-definition.html>

More than 101,000 New York City Students Experienced Homelessness in 2020-21
<https://advocatesforchildren.org/node/1875>

3 Steps School Leaders Can Take to Support Teachers Right Now
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/tangible-steps-school-leaders-can-take-support-teachers-year>

Setting Up Strong Family Engagement in the Early Grades
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/setting-strong-family-engagement-early-grades>

How Schools Can Stem the Toxic Tide of Technology
<https://www.edweek.org/technology/opinion-how-schools-can-stem-the-toxic-tide-of-technology/2021/11>

How to Set Limits on Screen Time
<https://childmind.org/article/screen-time-during-the-coronavirus-crisis/>

The Rise of Virtual Schools: Selected Findings from the Third American School District Panel Survey
https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA956-5.html

What's Next for the Local Control Funding Formula?
<https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/whats-next-local-control-funding-formula>

Quick Finds

- >Attendance <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/attendance.html>
- >Barriers to learning <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/barriers.htm>
- >Parent/Home Involvement and Engagement in Schools
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/homework.htm>
- >Prevention for Students "At Risk" <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/prevention.html>

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>

11/18 Introduction to youth hate crimes

11/20 Supporting SEL Through the Library

11/22 MH Impacts of Surviving COVID-19: Implications for School Mental Health Systems Leaders and Providers

12/7 Working Towards Positive Educational Outcomes: Mental Health and Special Education

12/7 Compassionate School Practices: Alleviating Stress and Furthering Well-Being

12/8 Navigating the Ins and Outs of Community Resources

12/9 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility

12/15 McKinney-Vento School Selection Rights

12/15 Empowering assistant principals to lead learning communities

12/16 Co-Creating Leadership Development Opportunities for Immigrant & Refugee Youth

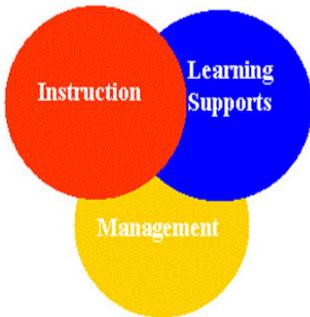
12/16 Preventing youth hate crimes in schools and communities

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

The principal is asking
parents about what students
would like more of at school.



Great, tell her we want more mental health days.



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/>)**