Featured

>*What can schools do when problems are so severe?*

>*Rethinking breaktime*

>*Natural Opportunities for Enhancing Social and Emotional Development*

>*Links to a few other relevant shared resources*

For discussion and interchange:

>*What can schools do when problems are so severe?*

Request from a colleague:

I work in alternative high school. Do you have materials on program components that are essential for improving attendance, academics, behavior, and ultimately graduation rates? We have MTSS in place. By time kids get to us, the years of poor attendance, social-emotional difficulties and academic failure are extremely difficult to remediate, especially given the impoverished, generally single parent homes environments that the kids live in.

Comment from the Field:

We shared this request with a colleague who works with alternative schools and here is his edited reply:

The strategy for alternative schools is to consider the 'student first' and curriculum second for establishing a pathway for success. ... The outcomes for students in alternative learning environments are quite different so success must be measured accordingly. (Not all students are there to graduate from high school.) Note the following for defining success:
>Learner attained one or more of the following measurable outcomes related to stated goals:
- Improved/maintained academic development/course completion
- Improved career potential
- Improved personal/social/emotional behavioral development
- Entered competitive employment
- Meet transition goals
- Entered post-secondary career technical training
- Entered Armed Services
>Credential Attainment
- Earned the Specialized Course Completion Credential
- High School Diploma
- Transferred/Earned GED Diploma
- Transferred/Earned Adult High School

The goals of the student must be established as per the list of possibilities (why the student is in the school/program).

Support services must have been considered first. It might take a while before students can enter into academic learning.

It is very important to identify what is alternative about your alternative, and what is student can expect to experiences in an alternative learning environment. Students can identify policies in schooling that contribute to their failure. Alternative schools should consider policies and rules that create student expectations of success.

For more on this, see our Center resources:

>*Alternative Schools and Alternative Education*

>*Personalizing Learning and Addressing Barriers to Learning*

> *Engaging and Re-engaging Students in Learning at School*

>*Working with disengaged students*

For discussion and interchange:

>**Rethinking breaktime**

From: *Making Space: Exploring the "Thirdspace" of Breaktime in Middle School*

"The early adolescent years of middle school are some of the most important developmentally as they are marked by rapid developmental changes that affect young people's appearances, priorities, and passions—all of which affect their schooling experiences... It is a period of opportunity to discover new vistas, to form relationships with peers and adults, and to explore one's developing identity. It is also a period of resilience that can ameliorate childhood setbacks and set the stage for a thriving trajectory over the life course...

   Non-academic environments are central locations for positive youth development. In these spaces, youth—particularly youth who have been marginalized in school environments—have opportunities to build relationships with peers and adults, learn new skills, feel a sense of safety and belonging, develop their identities, and importantly, have fun. Although schools are much more structured spaces than out-of-school environments, there may be potential for similar youth benefits during non-instructional time in middle school. There is a substantial body of research that supports the importance of a positive school climate to promote academic success ...

   The main unstructured time in middle schools happens at scheduled breaks, including the free time surrounding the midday lunch break. No longer primarily an opportunity for child development through play, middle school breaktime—a time akin to what is called recess in elementary schools—is a time for students to exercise autonomy, socially interact, and form their identities....

   Learning happens everywhere, not just in classrooms. Breaktime spaces may be marginal to the structure of the academic schedule, but they are central to middle school education. When students forgo their breaktime to wait in long lines or are constrained in their autonomy by the space available to them, this impacts their abilities to develop socially, emotionally, and physically. Breaktime is an important learning space for students, and educators and policymakers must recognize its value in supporting students' well-being."

**Natural Opportunities for Enhancing
Social and Emotional Development**

Breaktime is not the only natural opportunity for promoting youth development.

Also think about before school, lunch,and after school as such natural opportunities. However, as with all learning experiences at school, increasing the focus on natural opportunities for personal and social growth requires advocacy, planning, and building the capacity of school staff. At most schools, student support professionals represent natural leaders for pursuing all this. As a starting point, such staff can form a small work group dedicated to moving the agenda forward. The group can:

- "map" natural opportunities for promoting social-emotional development
- identify situations that are interfering with positive growth
- clarify ways for staff to play a role in maximize use of opportunities to promote positive growth and minimize negative experiences.

For more on school opportunities to promote social and emotional development, see

>*Natural Opportunities to Promote Social-Emotional Learning and MH*

>*Schools as Caring, Learning Communities*

>**Links to a few other relevant shared resources**

Alternative schooling

Culturally responsive ways to teach Thanksgiving

Teaching Thanksgiving responsibly

Students' ratings of school climate as a moderator between self-esteem and internalizing
   symptoms in a community-based high school population

A Blueprint for Scaling Tutoring Across Public Schools

Personalized Learning as Transformative Learning: Alternative Education Lessons

Helping young adults find their purpose

Public Service Announcement Elevating the Teaching Profession

The U.S. Department of Education Announces New Tools to Tackle Antisemitism, Islamophobia,
   and Related Forms of Discrimination and Bias

How school boards and districts can pursue new directions that-improve the ways schools
   address barriers to learning and teaching --
   An interview with Howard Adelman by the international organization – *Faculti*

A Few Upcoming Webinars

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

11/28 Worry and anxiety
11/28 Authentic classroom engagement
11/29 Effective communication with the IEP team
11/29 Cultural awareness at work
11/30 Combatting racism
12/4 Address disproportionality in special education
12/5 Youth violence reduction
12/6 Create Cultures of Joy, Motivation, and Support
12/6 Increasing attendance
12/6 Creating a Welcoming Environment
12/7 Building a healthy school culture
12/7 Boosting mental health
12/12 Post traumatic growth
12/13 Supporting Full Student Participation
12/14 Highlighting school success
12/19 Using data to address equity

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To Listserv Participants

- **Please share this resource with others. (Everyone has a stake in the future of public education and this is a critical time for action.)**

- **Let us know your views about the topics shared and about what's going on to improve how schools address barriers to learning & teaching and reengage disconnected students and families. (We can share the info with the over 130,000 on our listserv.)**

- **For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu**

- **Looking for information? (We usually can help.)**

- **Have a suggestion for improving our efforts? (We welcome your feedback.)**

We look forward to hearing from you!

Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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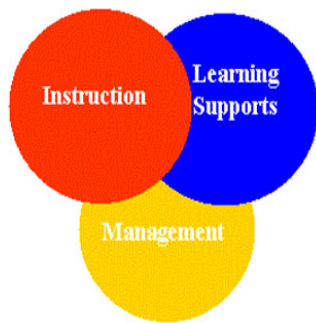
For information about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
go to https://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.

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"I've been in there. There's a fridge, a pop machine, two microwaves.... But I think 'lounge' might be overselling it."

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

For new sign-ups –Send to 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 https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm
and on Facebook (access from the Center's home page https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/)