

**School Practitioner Community of Practice**  
(A network for sharing & exchange)  
(2/16/22)

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**(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).*

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**For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

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

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**For discussion and interchange:**

**>What to do about the pandemic's impact on the mental health of student and school staff**

**Requests from colleagues for data:**

We have had a flurry of requests for information on the pandemic's impact on student and school staff mental health.

**Center Comments:**

As would be expected, data gatherers have been busy. (Browse a sample of what comes up with a Google Scholar search.)

However, at this point, unequivocal data are not available. For obvious reasons, some of the first studies have focused on the impact on college students. The largest sets of data on K-12 comes from surveys. Most of the findings are from the 2020-2021 school year. While all the findings have methodological limitations, the following conclusions seem warranted:

- (1) some students and staff have coped rather well;
- (2) those reporting a mental health impact indicate symptoms ranging from mild to severe;
- (3) data on prevalence rates related to specific diagnosable problems remains controversial;
- (4) speculations are being made about the potential (and individually unpredictable) long-term mental health impact;
- (5) the impact on students and staff warrants increased efforts to provide special assistance for those seeking help and for those whose functioning has been impaired.

While we are on the watch for the latest findings, there are enough regular cries for help to warrant concentrated immediate action and steps to minimize longer-term impact on students, staff, schools, and society at large.

Not surprisingly, we are regularly hearing from teachers who feel overwhelmed by the pandemic challenges. A major concern is that they are encountering an increasing number of students experiencing learning, behavior, and emotional problems. And the mental health problems are expected to be exacerbated because of how schooling has been disrupted. As a recent article reports:

### **More High Schoolers Are off Track to Graduate**

After the first full school year disrupted by COVID, many states saw lower graduation rates for the class of 2021. And since ninth grade success is considered a key predictor of whether a student will graduate on time, some educators are now particularly worried about younger teens whose entire high school trajectories have been shaped by COVID.

“They can’t see the light at the end of the tunnel,” said Franciene Sabens, a counselor who’s noticed the ninth and 10th graders at her southern Illinois high school are struggling more than older students this year. “They’re trying to find their groove, and they haven’t had real, normal school in two years.”

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/2022/2/8/22923631/ninth-grade-credit-recovery-high-school-graduation-pandemic>

Reflecting on all this, we are reminded of the saying:

*No more prizes for predicting rain; only prizes for building arks!*

Our position is that data before the pandemic indicated the challenges at school were difficult, and all available evidence indicates the pandemic has exacerbated matters. New data being gathered and reported will be interesting and used in various ways.

*At the same, action is needed.*

COVID-19 certainly has underscored that schools must play a greater role in addressing mental health concerns.

The fundamental question is: *How schools can best play that role?*

In this respect, we stress that there are immediate needs, **AND** there is a major opportunity to move in better directions.

We have laid this out in a recent Center report entitled:

*>We won't Argue Against Adding More Counselors,  
BUT ...*

*Addressing Student Mental Health Concerns Involves Much More than Increasing  
the Number of Mental Health Providers*

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

Here’s the abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored that schools must play a greater role in addressing mental health concerns. In reaction, some policy makers are rushing to increase mental health staff in schools. A stated goal is to have a mental health professional in all schools. Given the long-standing short-fall in every category of student/learning support staff at schools, such a goal is being widely lauded. In the long-run, however, this one-faceted approach is a marginal way for addressing the complex array of problems students and their schools are experiencing in the wake of COVID-19. This report highlights the need for schools to rethink their current approaches to addressing emotional, behavioral, and learning problems. We outline how to evolve the current emphasis on a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of school/community supports. And we offer some first steps for moving ahead.

## Here Are Two Recent Media Headlines

>Michigan schools hiring hundreds of mental health staffers

>Plan to increase mental health staff in schools - 250 million measure would seek to add 10,000 clinicians across state [California]

We note: While personnel increases in smaller states will be less dramatic, the tendency in most places is the same, namely to add a few more "mental health" staff. (At first glance, adding 10,000 in California appears like a lot, but there are a little over 10,000 schools in the state.)

We also note that Secretary Cardona recently noted that schools are reporting an uptick in students struggling with behavior and mental health this year and emphasized that

*We cannot expect classroom teachers to do it all.*

Unfortunately, he limited his recommendations for addressing the need for student/learning supports related to MH to calling on districts to use their pandemic aid to hire more mental health staff and to pay community health partners for help.

Maximizing the benefits of mental health in schools and doing a better job of supporting teachers and students requires an ambitious agenda for transforming student/learning supports. Our Center's work stresses developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students (not just adding another staff member to provide mental health services). Achieving such a goal is vital to enhancing equity of opportunity for all students at school and beyond.

For those ready to move forward, see

>*ACTION STEPS for Improving How Schools Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching—including mental health concerns* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/actionsteps.pdf>

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### Share with the Field

Studies are important. *And so is sharing experiences from the field!*

We do share many experiences, practices, ideas, comments that are sent to us.

And we want to encourage the sharing of more lengthy experiential reports by suggesting that folks put the material online and send us the URL and a brief description so we can include it in this community of practice forum.

(Send all communications to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu) )

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*With all the mental health problems at school, the staff seems to spend more time putting out fires than anything else.*



*Someone needs to take some time to install sprinklers, teach about prevention, and definitely remove the matches!*

**For discussion and interchange:**

**>Secretary Cardona's Vision for Education**

From: *U.S. Department of Education Press Release*

<https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-cardona-lays-out-vision-education-america>

In a major address at the Department of Education, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona laid out his vision for continued recovery through the pandemic and his priorities for broader investments in America's education system to ensure all students can succeed and thrive.

Secretary Cardona laid out key actions in four priority areas that will guide the Department's work over the coming months and years:

- > Support students through pandemic response and recovery.
  - Engaging families as core partners to educators
  - Addressing missed instruction through intensive tutoring, extended learning time, and other evidence-based practices
  - Increasing access to social, emotional, and mental health supports for all students
  - Encouraging every student to participate in at least one extracurricular activity
- > Boldly address opportunity and achievement gaps.
  - Increasing funding for Title I schools and for IDEA in order to close gaps in access to educational opportunity
  - Providing every family the opportunity to start on a level playing field through free, universal pre-K and affordable high-quality child care
  - Investing in, recruiting, and supporting the professional development of a diverse educator workforce, including special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and bilingual educators so education jobs are ones that people from all backgrounds want to pursue
  - Challenging states and districts to fix broken systems that may perpetuate inequities in our schools..."

(The third priority is to *make higher education more inclusive and affordable*; the fourth is to *ensure pathways through higher education lead to successful careers*. For more on these, see the press release.)

**A Call for Papers**

We were asked to share the following Call for Papers which is being widely disseminated nationally and internationally. The focus is on:

*Causes and consequences of emerging violent extremism in the US and implications for school safety, student mental health, families, and communities*

This project, which was just officially launched, involves facilitating transdisciplinary partnerships across education, branches of psychology, and many other fields of study (e.g., public health, political science, anthropology, history, sociology, etc.) to address issues relating to violent extremism, schools, students, and families.

<https://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-school-psychology/call-for-papers/special-issue-on-causes-and-consequences-of-emerging-violent-extremism-in-the-u-s-and-implications-for-school-safety-student-mental-health-families-and-communities>

Deadline for submission is September 1, 2022.

## >Links to a few other relevant shared resources

- American Rescue Plan Partnership, Assistance, Transformation, and Heightened Support  
<https://compcenternetwork.org/resources/resource/7150/arp-partnership-assistance-transformation-and-heightened-support-arp-paths>
- Social determinants of health <https://www.mhanational.org/social-determinants-health>
- Just in Time training <https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/ccp-toolkit/just-time-web-based-training>
- Ready to Respond: Mental Health Beyond Crisis and COVID-19  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/ready-to-respond-compendium.pdf>
- Addressing teacher and staff shortages  
<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Teaching/Addressing-Teacher-and-Staff-Shortages-with-ESSR-a>
- The struggle over defining, reporting restraint and seclusion in schools  
[https://www.k12dive.com/news/the-struggle-over-defining-reporting-restraint-and-seclusion-in-schools/618570/?utm\\_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm\\_campaign=46b1238026-ED\\_CLIPS\\_02\\_10\\_2022&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1a2b00b930-46b1238026-53599575](https://www.k12dive.com/news/the-struggle-over-defining-reporting-restraint-and-seclusion-in-schools/618570/?utm_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm_campaign=46b1238026-ED_CLIPS_02_10_2022&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a2b00b930-46b1238026-53599575)
- More high schoolers are off track to graduate. Here's how schools can help  
<https://www.chalkbeat.org/2022/2/8/22923631/ninth-grade-credit-recovery-high-school-graduation-pandemic>
- Top 5 insights for improving family-school collaboration during COVID and beyond  
[https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2022/01/26/top-5-insights-for-improving-family-school-collaboration-during-covid-and-beyond/?utm\\_campaign=brookings-comm&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=202949778&utm\\_source=hs\\_email](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2022/01/26/top-5-insights-for-improving-family-school-collaboration-during-covid-and-beyond/?utm_campaign=brookings-comm&utm_medium=email&utm_content=202949778&utm_source=hs_email)
- Understanding the Well-Being of LGBTQI+ Populations  
[https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25877/understanding-the-well-being-of-lgbtqi-populations?utm\\_source=All+DB+ASSE+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=6a45868d83-dbase-whatsnew-dec-2021&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_e16023964e-6a45868d83-275364672](https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25877/understanding-the-well-being-of-lgbtqi-populations?utm_source=All+DB+ASSE+Newsletters&utm_campaign=6a45868d83-dbase-whatsnew-dec-2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e16023964e-6a45868d83-275364672)

## 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>

- 2/17 Helping Youth Navigate Dangers in the Digital Age
- 2/22 Paving the Way to College for Students Experiencing Homelessness
- 2/24 Redesigning Schools to Embrace Today's Conditions
- 2/24 Working Towards Positive Educational Outcomes: Mental Health and Special Education
- 3/8 McKinney-Vento School Selection Rights
- 3/30 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility
- 3/2 National Summit on Youth Homelessness
- 3/15 Essential Tools for Effective Homevisits
- 3/16 Equity, Race, Gender and the Assistant Principal

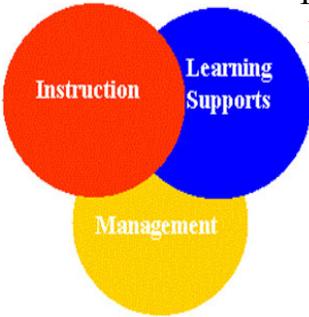
Series On: **Building a National Movement to Prevent Trauma and Foster Resilience**  
[https://psu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_\\_AYYzYI0T4yXthlOdDLBVw](https://psu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN__AYYzYI0T4yXthlOdDLBVw)

- 1/21: Building the Movement in the Education and Health Care
- 2/4: Building the Movement with Child Welfare and Justice Systems
- 2/18: Building the Movement through Transformative Justice and Faith-Based Communities
- 3/4: Building the Movement with Populations with High Prevalence of Trauma
- 3/18: Building the Movement with Foundations and the Private Sector
- 4/1: Building the Movement to Address Global Crises
- 4/15: Building the Movement through Policy and Advocacy

Webinar recording: *Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth*

<https://preventioninstitute.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4bf5a36bd9f72789255d49a&id=17f472fea9&e=b6757fd9d7>

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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.

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**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](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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

**For new sign-ups – email [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto: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/> )**