

**School Practitioner Community of Practice**  
(A network for sharing & exchange)  
(4/20/22)

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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:**

**>More perspectives on school screening for student problems (e.g., emotional, learning, potential for suicide and violence)**

In a March issue of the Community of Practice *Practitioner*, we explored the school’s role in screening problems [[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practitioner\(3-16-2022\).pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practitioner(3-16-2022).pdf) ]. We took the position that

*Schools already have good sources for screening a student’s problems; they don’t need to waste resources by adopting another screening instrument*

Since then, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has released draft recommendations about *Screening for Depression, Suicide Risk and Anxiety in Children and Adolescents* (<https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/public-comments-and-nominations/opportunity-for-public-comment>). Their recommendations generally support concerns about universal screening.

And it also is worth noting that the March 2022 Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary Principals also raises concerns about schools’ screening students for mental health needs (<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/01926365221084269>):

...Screening students for mental health difficulties is quite different from the typical academic screening we do in schools. ... the legal and ethical implications and resources needed from development to full implementation are quite different and require new ways of thinking and new skills for many school leaders....

Secondary school leaders might consider working with the school psychologist or other assessment and mental health experts to further explore the details of a quality universal mental health screening program along with systemic reforms to provide comprehensive school based

mental health services through a multi-tiered system of support. Finally, school leaders striving to implement the recommendations of this primer might consider using the results of universal screening assessments to establish school improvement goals as a means of prioritizing students' mental health needs parallel with more traditional academic school improvement goals....

Schools may be feeling the pressure to implement universal mental health screening given the increase in mental health difficulties experienced by students and the availability of federal funding, but published research has not yet suggested this pressure exists or is leading to increased interest in development and implementation of screening programs. Finite and sustainable funding for mental health screening assessments and establishing partnerships with community mental health providers will be an ongoing challenge for schools, and school leaders should consider resisting any pressure to start screening hastily before weighing the considerations noted in this primer. As such, it would behoove school leaders to use CARES and ESSER funds to support the mental health needs of students in their schools, and model what it means to consider the academic and social emotional well-being of all students....”

And here’s a response from the field about our March comments:

“I appreciate your report.... chapter 6 resonates with me on every level. I would like to share my personal reflections on the chapter:

1. What I have been shocked by during the pandemic is that media would cover the learning losses more than students' caregiver losses. The more prevalent narratives on the impact of COVID on students seem to be the gravity of "falling behind". When we say, "Class of 2021 will have achieved much lower than before", what does it say to students? They could not meet friends during the lockdown, adults were panicking and fighting with each other over masks and vaccines, George Floyd happened, 150,000 children lost their caretakers due to COVID. But we are still worried about SAT scores. How is the grievance processed in schools? How are the schools helping students who are angry with racial injustice in this country? Moreover, the GOAL of caring for students' mental health has been focusing on boosting their academic outcomes. Why can't promoting students' mental health stand alone as an important developmental domain of a human being? This reflects the persistent lens of mental health as a subsequent component in a student's well-being.
2. Labeling affects students' identity. Vygotsky claimed that what we say to children becomes their internal voice. Applying his theory, when a student experiences challenges inside themselves, if others label them as problematic students the student might have even a harder time overcoming the challenges. I remember reading a quote from Annette Breaux, a renowned teacher and public speaker, "9 times out of 10, the story behind the misbehavior won't make you angry; it will break your heart".
3. Labeling and screening alone cannot help students. I personally believe we need to bring students as an agency to collectively resolve mental health issues rather than provide students with adult-directed solutions. Are adults hasty to "fix" the problem as soon as possible to get students moving, or are they really, sincerely curious about what is going on in the "problematic" student's life to help them overcome the psychological challenges? At the same time, when students are constantly assessed, and teachers are assessed based on the result of the assessment of students, and schools are assessed by all these assessments and funded accordingly, can we really help students individually? How can we approach this holistic, deep-rooted, systematic problem? I admire Alfie Kohn's work and the quote in your report resonated a lot.

I also sometimes struggle with narratives in education and public policy field regarding children's mental health in early childhood. Even though I am not supposed to as a prospective scientist, I feel uncomfortable when researchers would classify a 3-year-old as ADHD if they cannot sit still on the cold, hard wooden chair focusing on didactic instructions (it is natural that 3-year-olds run, skip, hop, jump all day). And if 4-year-old shrieks when their peer takes their toy, that 4-year-old would be showing "signs of aggression" based on a 20-minute screening session (not saying that the "aggressive" behavior is permitted but saying that does not mean the child needs to be labeled as an "aggressive" child).... Hopefully, I'm articulating my message regarding early childhood mental health.

## **What we learn from kids**

From: T. Courtney, *What if Covid's silver lining could be what we learn from the kids?*  
<https://edsources.org/2022/what-if-covids-silver-lining-could-be-what-we-learn-from-the-kids/669777>

The unanimous conclusion in educational literature has been that 2020 and 2021 will be a generational burden on kids. And it's true. This pandemic has hit us all hard: educators, parents, and most powerfully, kids. We need to talk about ways to address it, correct it, and be mindful of how our tax dollars can address it.

Yet, there's something quite special happening in my classroom right now. It's something that has been revealing itself in larger and larger ways, and I am not alone in noticing it. It doesn't show up in test data, and it isn't discussed in any periodical or book that I've seen, either. But it's there nevertheless — a type of silver lining under the voluminous gray cloud of quarantines and distance learning.

"They're writing incredible stories," said Mrs. Reed at a rare teacher's lunch gathering last week, "Not that my crew last year wrote much online at all."

"Reading more books than they've ever read before in my class," said Ms. Petrivelli. Everyone's head was nodding up and down. "When we were on the computer, it wasn't the same with computer programs."

I've had similar conversations with teachers coast to coast. I can't help but think, anecdotally mind you, that many teachers are genuinely seeing something-something that we've missed in all the articles and stories about the issues our kids have now....

As people with boots on the ground, my colleagues and I would like to ask a few questions for someone smarter than me to follow up on:

As we discussed the kids more, several friends suggested something I hadn't considered.

"I had some parents right there with me while we were online, the whole day," Ms. Flippo said. "I think that definitely had something to do with a few children engaging more now."

What if, we wondered, parental engagement online was having similar effects as parental engagement before Covid? Wouldn't that be a silver lining to understanding parental engagement and how we can do it better?..."

Another wondering I've been discussing with colleagues is that there is never a time when students go unsupervised on our campuses. Yet, during distance learning, many kids went unsupervised the entire day. The benefits of independent study on educational achievement have been well researched for years. What effect did independence during quarantine have on student stamina? On engagement? On student responsibility?

Earlier this year, many kids spoke to me about their joy to be in a brick-and-mortar class... kids seemed overjoyed to be among friends. When, we wonder, was the last time we really considered what friends mean to each other in our classes? How might we consider friendship as a learning engagement tool in future years?...

Kids may not have learned as much as we'd have liked the last couple of years, but what if we, as educators, can learn a few positive things ourselves from what they went through while at home? We've all read about the negatives. But before we go back to business as usual, let's consider, look for and learn from any positives our kids may have brought back with them.

**Be a community of practice participant.**

**Share your experiences, views, comments**

Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

## For discussion and interchange:

### >Welcoming newcomers to school – and can we learn from Europe's response to Ukraine's refugee students

Starting school, changing schools, moving to the next grade level, encountering hassles before and after school, during lunch – students (and their families) are confronted with a variety of transitions every day and throughout each year of schooling. Many schools pay too little attention to providing supports for transitions, and schools vary in how much time they spend transitioning-in newcomers. When this is the case, opportunities are missed for promoting social and emotional development, addressing barriers to learning, and preventing learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

Transition stressors can be barriers to school adjustment and thus learning and teaching; they also

can exacerbate other factors that interfere with learning at school. Such stressors can lead students and their families, especially those who are particularly vulnerable, to behave in counterproductive ways and can have life-shaping consequences. Transitional problems can be viewed as stemming from external or internal factors or both.

Supports for all transitions need to be a major facet of every school's system of student/learning supports. A particular set of concerns arise when with respect to immigrant and refugee students.

For resources related to *Supports for Transitions*, including a focus on welcoming newcomers, see the Center's online clearinghouse Quick Find on the topic – [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101\\_01.htm](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm)

Also see our Chapter on the topic at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/ch5trans.pdf> and the self-study survey at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/transitionssurvey.pdf>

Here's an excerpt from:

#### *Europe's Schools Show 'Huge Solidarity' to Welcome Ukraine's Refugee Children* <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/ukraine-refugee-children-schools-europe-education/>

Schools are trying to find places for the over 1.5 million children who've fled Ukraine....

From Ireland to Poland, countries are expanding classes, fast-tracking the registration of Ukrainian teachers, translating curriculums, and offering online lessons to ensure children uprooted by the war do not lose out on education....

Poland, which is hosting more than 2 million Ukrainians, has changed the law to increase class sizes, is boosting funding for education, and has set up a hotline for parents. It has registered more than 100,000 students, with about half of Polish schools now containing Ukrainian children. Those who speak some Polish are entering mainstream classes. Others are taught separately while they learn the language. The government has also waived normal hiring rules to allow Ukrainians who speak Polish to work as teaching assistants....

Despite the war, some schools in Ukraine are still running online lessons which pupils can access from outside the country. Children in Poland who want to follow the Ukrainian curriculum are being offered support to get online...

*After your first day at the new school  
how do you like it?*



## >Links to a few other relevant shared resources

Cardona: “We are at the doorstep of a new chapter in American education”

[https://corp.smartbrief.com/original/2022/04/cardona-we-are-at-the-doorstep-of-a-new-chapter-in-american-education?utm\\_source=brief](https://corp.smartbrief.com/original/2022/04/cardona-we-are-at-the-doorstep-of-a-new-chapter-in-american-education?utm_source=brief)

Does early childhood education help to improve high school outcomes?

<https://srcd.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cdev.13752>

Innovations 4 youth <https://i4y.berkeley.edu/home>

Teaching students to work in groups

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/step-step-guide-teaching-students-work-groups>

What Kept Students, Staff Going During the Pandemic

<https://www.the74million.org/article/what-kept-students-staff-going-during-the-pandemic-three-case-studies-from-new-national-report/>

Summer Matters <http://www.summermatters.net/>

Students with disabilities <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgg>

Collected Research on Autism Spectrum Disorder

[https://www.psychologicalscience.org/publications/observer/obsonline/2022-april-autism-spectrum-disorder.html?utm\\_source=APS+Emails&utm\\_campaign=3c8d97abbd-PSU\\_040822&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_d2c7283f04-3c8d97abbd-62625175](https://www.psychologicalscience.org/publications/observer/obsonline/2022-april-autism-spectrum-disorder.html?utm_source=APS+Emails&utm_campaign=3c8d97abbd-PSU_040822&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d2c7283f04-3c8d97abbd-62625175)

Report: 1,586 School Book Bans and Restrictions in 86 School Districts Across 26 States

<https://pen.org/press-release/report-1586-school-book-bans-and-restrictions-in-86-school-districts-across-26-states/>

A Poor People’s Pandemic Report: Mapping the Intersections of Poverty, Race and COVID-19

<https://www.unsdsn.org/a-poor-peoples-pandemic-report>

Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey — United States, January–June 2021

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/su/pdfs/su7103a1-a5-H.pdf>

Five-Year Trends in US Children’s Health and Well-being, 2016-2020

[https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2789946?guestAccessKey=41fde697-e79f-411c-bed3-743faeb63055&utm\\_source=For\\_The\\_Media&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_campaign=ftm\\_links&utm\\_content=tf&utm\\_term=031422](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2789946?guestAccessKey=41fde697-e79f-411c-bed3-743faeb63055&utm_source=For_The_Media&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ftm_links&utm_content=tf&utm_term=031422)

Embedding Equity Into Disaster Preparedness Efforts in Child Welfare

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/equity\\_disaster\\_preparedness.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/equity_disaster_preparedness.pdf)

## 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>

4/20 How are states developing a stronger teacher workforce

4/28 Basic Requirements of the McKinley-Vento Act

4/28 Youth mentoring research symposium

4/29 Too few or too many? Prevention over or under identification for special ed services

5/5 Cultivating leadership effectiveness and wellness

5/5 Collaborations to Build and Maintain Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems

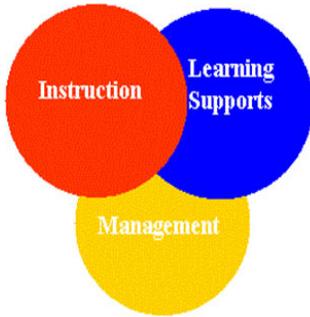
5/10 Support challenging students

5/18 Legal and Ethical Considerations of Working with Students with Disabilities

5/24 Strengthening Family Coping Resources During Challenging Times

5/25 What promotes engagement

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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/> )**