

Featured

>Seeking family input to improve student success

>About threat assessment

>Update from Hawai`i on Impact on Schools

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

For discussion and interchange:

>Seeking family input to improve student success

Research findings consistently indicate the value of home support for schooling. For students who are not doing well at school, efforts to enhance home involvement are a basic element of the overall approach to addressing factors interfering with school learning and performance. Here is one example of how a school district is seeking input to make improvements.

From: *Pittsburgh schools seeking input from families*

“Pittsburgh Public School officials are seeking input from district families about their children’s experiences last school year. ... The survey will help officials better understand the needs and expectations of students and their families.

“We value the input of parents and guardians, as they play a crucial role in the achievement of our students,” Superintendent Wayne Walters said in a statement. “The information gathered from the survey will inform the District’s work to improve student outcomes and experiences.”

The survey covers various topics such as academic support, resources, communication and engagement with teachers and staff, school safety, access to technology, special education supports and health initiatives.”

Center Comment: Despite the long-standing call by policy makers and researchers for schools to enhance parent involvement, the challenges in doing so have confounded many schools. Our analyses indicate that this will continue to be the case as long as the focus fails to account for the variety of individuals providing “parenting” and until “involvement” is designed as a mutually beneficial, equitable, and engaging process.

Instead of just focusing on parent involvement also think about students being raised primarily by grandparents, aunts, older siblings, “nannies,” and in foster homes. Primary child caretakers differ. That is why we stress the term *home* involvement.

Other home involvement complications stem from factors such as caretaker economic status, work schedules, immigrant status, ethnic and racial considerations, single parent families, number of youngsters in the home, homes where English is not spoken, extended families, military families, families where a parent is in prison, foster homes, and homeless families and youngsters. In addition, some caretakers have disabilities, and some are dysfunctional.

Home situations also differ in caretaker attitudes about school. Such attitudes often reflect personal past experiences as well as current encounters and how well their youngsters are doing at school.

(Remember, some have more than one youngster who is not doing well.) Involving reluctant primary caretakers is difficult and often handled at school as a low priority.

In general, as with students, parents and other caretakers vary in their personal motivation and ability to participate. And as with many students who are not doing well at school, (re)establishing productive working relationships with some caretakers involves addressing individual psychosocial and educational barriers and doing so in a personalized way

For more on home involvement, see our Center resources:

- >[*Parent/Home Involvement and Engagement in Schools*](#)
- >[*Home Involvement, Engagement, and Re-engagement in Schooling*](#)
- >[*Home involvement survey*](#)
- >[*Parent and Home Involvement in Schools*](#)
- >[*Enhancing Home Involvement to Address Barriers to Learning: A Collaborative Process*](#)

For discussion and interchange:

>About threat assessment

Schools must respond to, minimize the impact of, and prevent school and personal crises. This requires school-wide and classroom-based interventions. At the same time, there is growing concern about how often the ways in which students respond to and cope with the demands of growing up are labeled as pathological and sensationalized.

Here are a couple of perspectives on these concerns:

From: [*School Threat Assessments: Beyond Risks to Treatment Recommendations*](#)

“School is a place for learning and social and emotional growth, where students should feel safe and secure as they develop and ideally flourish. However, violence in schools has begun to weigh on the minds of learners, educators, and guardians, with active shooter drills, added physical security measures, and tragedies of school violence. Child and adolescent [mental health providers] are increasingly called upon to evaluate children or adolescents who make threats....

Although the immediate task is to identify risk and to ensure safety, there is a real therapeutic opportunity to help those students who might need emotional and/or educational support.... Linking mental illness and school-related violence can inaccurately reinforce negative stigma and the myth that those with mental illness are violent. Most individuals with mental illness are not violent but, rather, are victims of violence. ...

The impact of school violence can be significant, leading to disruption in the school community and negative mental health and educational outcomes. Students who make threats often struggle with learning challenges, trauma, and other mental health concerns. These students deserve comprehensive and compassionate evaluations and, if applicable, quality mental health care that is affordable, timely, and affirmative...”

From: [*Characteristics of Students Who Make Threats Toward Others at School*](#)

“...Threat assessment is much more than a risk assessment; it is also an intervention providing essential ... treatment recommendations that could change the course of students’ educational careers and emotional well-being... Many students were felt to need extensive educational interventions, ranging from educational classification, in-school counseling, and changes in class placement to more structured and supportive classroom settings or therapeutic schools. Students with impulse control problems and low frustration tolerance need intensive counseling

interventions to help them develop coping skills to deal with distressing situations...

School-based threat assessment teams are essential to the evaluation of student threats. Close collaboration between the... clinician and the school-based threat assessment team and school administrators enhances effective threat assessment. Expansion of programs with professionals trained in threat assessment and in-school counselors who can monitor and support the needs of students through their educational careers is highly desirable..."

For more on this, see our Center resources

- >[*Threat Assessment: Resources and Cautions*](#)
- >[*Countering the Over-pathologizing of Students' Feelings & Behavior: A Growing Concern Related to MH in Schools*](#)
- >[*Labeling, Screening, and Over-pathologizing*](#) – Chapter 6 in *Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*
- >[*Developing Systems at a School for Problem Identification, Triage, Referral, and Management of Care*](#)
- >[*When a Student Seems Dangerous to Self or Others*](#)
- >[*Screening/Assessing Students: Indicators and Tools*](#)
- >[*Crisis Assistance and Prevention: A Self-study Survey*](#)

>[**Links to a few other relevant shared resources**](#)

[**Family and school engagement**](#)

[**National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement**](#)

[**Campus liaisons for students who have experienced foster care**](#)

[**Engaging Community Health Workers/Youth Ambassadors to Improve Health Literacy**](#)

[**Do More to Ensure Schools Meet Obligations to Students With Disabilities, Feds Tell States**](#)

[**Social Forces, Social Justice, and School Attendance Problems in Youth**](#)

[**Children and youth in the climate crisis**](#)

[**Strengthening Youth Mental Health: A Governor's Playbook**](#)

[**Mixed Signals in Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Well-Being Indicators in the United States: A Call for Improvements to Population Health Monitoring**](#)

[**Back to School Dos and Don'ts**](#)

[**Talking to Kids About Back-to-School Worries**](#)

[**"At Risk" Framing of Black Youth Can Fuel Anti-Blackness in Research and Practice**](#)

[**Anti-LGBTQ+ Policies Are Linked to Depression in Black and Latinx Youth**](#)

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>

- 8/16 Paving the Way to College for Students Experiencing Homelessness
- 8/16 Youth psychological strength
- 8/17 Addressing school refusal
- 8/17 Start the school year strong
- 8/17 Addressing school refusal
- 8/21 Difficult conversations with staff
- 8/23 Strategies for School and District Leaders
- 8/24 Addressing tough topics
- 8/25 Wellness
- 8/25 Learning mental health through film
- 8/29 Elevating Professional Development
- 8/29 McKinney-Vento 101: Basic Requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act
- 8/30 Bullying and discriminatory harassment differences
- 8/31 Social determinants of mental health

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



Update on Schools, Staff, Families and Students Impacted by the Fires in Hawaii

From: **Hawai'i State Department of Education**

<https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/maui-school-closures.aspx> Maui Update

Aug. 10, 2023

“...While the Department is working to solidify next steps for what school operations will look like for West Maui, we are also trying to ensure we can account for all students, staff and families. The extended closures are also aimed at allowing students, families and staff to care for themselves and loved ones and start to reestablish their bearings during this stressful and devastating time....

Schools in Upcountry, South and Central Maui will have phased reopening plans to first bring back staff, followed by students. This will give school teams time to assess damage and capacity to welcome students back safely....”

Aug. 11, 2023

“...With the status of reopening West Maui schools unknown, families impacted by the wildfires are encouraged to re-enroll their child(ren) at another public school near their residence, even if their residence is temporary....

Schools statewide will be welcoming the immediate enrollment of students impacted by the wildfires. Displaced families experiencing unstable housing conditions will be eligible to enroll at a school under provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act, which relaxes standard enrollment procedures.

For families facing unique circumstances in an area that has adequate internet connection, the Department’s State Distance Learning Program is available to students. With this option, parents may select between asynchronous learning (flexible schedule for accessing lessons and assignments) or synchronous learning (real-time participation in virtual classes through video conferencing)....

How you can help: In response to the outpouring of generosity toward the recovery of West Maui school communities, the Department is partnering with the Public Schools of Hawai'i Foundation to support impacted school communities....”

From the Hawaii State Teachers Association

<https://www.hsta.org/news/recent-stories/maui-teacher-houses-displaced-families-after-ta-king-in-15-overnight/>

“On the night deadly wildfires raged through Lahaina, a teacher from a local Elementary School took in 15 evacuees, many of them teachers. The teacher was in close contact with Hawaii State Teachers Association and was texted names and numbers of people looking for a place to stay. She didn’t hesitate to invite them into her home....

Fortunately, all 15 people were able to return to their homes. Then, she teamed up with her roommate to house displaced Lahaina families for three nights at Malama Speech Therapy Services. The facility, outfitted with air conditioning, internet, a mini fridge, and even toys and games for kids, was comfortable for families. The operation reflects a community effort. Neighboring businesses, Valley Isle Fitness and Maui Powerhouse Gym, provided showers. Maui Powerhouse also donated clothes, and friends and family chipped in air mattresses and hygiene supplies....”

Supt. Keith Hayashi's Message to Lahaina Schools

August 13, 2023

Aloha Lahaina teachers, administrators, staff, students and families,

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for the strength, leadership and courage you've shown throughout this tragedy that has shaken Lahaina, our Maui communities and all of Hawai'i. The loss you are experiencing is unimaginable - the loss of loved ones, of homes and neighborhoods, of a school and a community.

You are our priority. For our employees, I want to assure you that your jobs are safe and that you will continue to be paid while on administrative leave when schools are closed. For those who have relocated, even temporarily, the Office of Talent Management is working on a reassignment and relocation process for any team members who need it. Employment will be there when the time is right for you to return, wherever that may be. We are also prioritizing pending payments for casual hires. We will share more personnel-related information, including next steps and a point of contact shortly. Please prioritize taking care of yourself and your loved ones during this time.

For our families and students, our priority is to provide a safe learning environment. We are reopening most Maui schools this week, welcoming our employee teams on Monday and our students on Wednesday. King Kekaulike High, Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary, Lahaina Intermediate and Lahainaluna High remain closed and will reopen when it is safe to return. Sadly, King Kamehameha III Elementary on Front Street was damaged beyond repair. While assessments are being made about the closed campuses, we are looking at other options for our students who remain in West Maui including our King Kamehameha III Elementary students. For students and families who were displaced by the fires and are living outside of Lahaina, we encourage you to enroll your keiki in the neighborhood school where you are staying, even if your housing situation is temporary. When children are in school, we can provide support including meals and mental health support.

We are establishing a dedicated phone line to help answer questions from staff and families. Mental health supports - in person and telehealth counseling - are also being set up for employees and students; resources can be found here in the meantime:

<https://sites.google.com/k12.hi.us/maui-school-resources/home>.

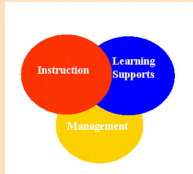
We will keep you informed of new developments and we sincerely appreciate your patience and understanding during this most challenging time.

I want to recognize Canoe Complex Area Superintendent Rebecca Winkie, as well as her Lahaina principals Jennifer Everett, Gary Kanemori, Stacy Bookland and Richard Carosso for leading through this tragedy with compassion for their teams and communities while experiencing this terrible tragedy first-hand.

Our hearts are heavy, and the road to recovery will be long, but I have faith in our collective strength to support one another and our students. Together, we will heal, we will rebuild, and Lahaina and Maui will thrive once more.

Our students look up to us not just as educators, but as beacons of hope and resilience. I want to thank you for your dedication to caring for our students and their families and your communities.

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports



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.

For information about the *National Initiative* go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

It is essential to continue to urge districts/schools to play an increasing role in helping to transform student/learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system.

Our Center has many resources online focusing on transforming student/learning supports that can be used for discussion, continuing education, and planning. As a start, see, the following brief resources:

- > ***Rethinking Student and Learning Supports***
- > ***Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions***

The work is detailed in three free books:

- > ***Improving School Improvement***
- > ***Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide***
- > ***Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change***

Note: We caution that, unless they are evolved from their current limitations, moves to MTSS and Community Schools will exacerbate the prevailing marginalization and fragmentation of student/learning supports in school improvement policy and practice. See

- > ***Rethinking MTSS to Better Address Barriers to Learning***
- > ***Evolving Community Schools and Transforming Student/Learning Supports***

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 <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm> and on Facebook (access from the Center’s home page <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>)