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Re: New Center Guide for Practice –  
Engaging and Re-engaging Students in Learning at School

Attached is a report entitled:  
Engaging and Re-engaging Students in Learning at School  
(Also online at http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engagingandre-engagingstudents.pdf)

As the school year progresses, an increasing concern is not only on how to enhance engagement in learning, but how to re-engage those students who have become actively disengaged in classroom instruction.

Engagement is associated with positive academic outcomes, including achievement and persistence in school; and it is higher in classrooms with supportive teachers and peers, challenging and authentic tasks, opportunities for choice, and sufficient structure. Conversely, for many students, disengagement is associated with behavior problems, and behavior and learning problems may eventually lead to dropout. The degree of concern about student engagement varies depending on school population.

From a psychological perspective, student disengagement is associated with situational threats to feelings of competence, self-determination, and/or relatedness to valued others. The demands may be from school staff, peers, instructional content and processes. Psychological disengagement may be internalized (e.g., boredom, emotional distress) and/or externalized (misbehavior, dropping out). Re-engagement depends on use of interventions that help minimize conditions that negatively affect intrinsic motivation and maximize conditions that have a positive intrinsic motivational effect.

In this guide, we briefly highlight the following matters because they are fundamental to the challenge of student (and staff) disengagement and re-engagement:

- Disengaged students and social control
- Intrinsic motivation
- Two key components of motivation: valuing and expectations
- Overreliance on extrinsics: a bad match
- Focusing on intrinsic motivation to re-engage students

We hope you will forward this guide for practice to colleagues to stimulate widespread discussion about these important matters. We also invite you to indicate any other folks to whom you think we should send this.

And watch for our upcoming quarterly journal/newsletter which leads off with an article entitled: School Dropout Prevention: A Civil Rights and Public Health Imperative.

We look forward to continuing to work with you in the best interests of children, their families, neighborhoods, and schools.