Concerned about addressing barriers to student learning and teaching & re-engaging disconnected students? Concerned about equity of opportunity? Concerned about whole child development? This newsletter focuses on relevant policies and practices.

We encourage you to forward this to others. If this has been forwarded and you want to receive it directly, contact ltaylor@ucla.edu

For more on resources from our national Center, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

WHAT’S HERE THIS MONTH

**IMMEDIATE CONCERN

>Student Adjustment to New School Year, New Grade, New School

**News from around the country

**This month’s focus for schools to address barriers to learning

>Getting off to a good start: INVEST NOW . . . OR PAY LATER!

**National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports in 2016

**UCLA Center Resources Update

**Access links about:

>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops

>Upcoming and archived webcasts, video, and online professional development

>Calls for grant proposals, presentations & papers

>Training and job opportunities

**A few other helpful resources accessible from the internet

**Additional recent publications relevant to

>School, family, & community

>Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics

>Child, adolescent, and young adults’ mental and physical health

**Comments, requests, information, questions from the field
IMMEDIATE CONCERN
Student Adjustment to New School Year, New Grade, New School

It's a new year and a time for a strong start toward preventing problems and enhancing learning supports.

Most teachers know that it is only a matter of weeks (sometimes days) after students enter a new school or begin a new year that it will be evident which students are experiencing difficulties adjusting (e.g., to new content and standards, new schools, new teachers, new classmates, etc.). It is particularly poignant to see a student who is trying hard, but is disorganized and can’t keep up. If these difficulties are not addressed, student motivation for school dwindles, and behavior problems increase.

Many schools are proactive in addressing such problems in the earliest stages. Others wait and react after the problems become severe and pervasive and require referrals for out-of-class interventions. Too many schools simply let teachers cope as best they can.

But teachers can't do it alone.

Addressing student school adjustment problems requires a strong collaborative approach. Key to this is that teachers open the classroom door (a) to bring in more help (e.g., volunteers trained to work with students -in -need; resource teachers and student support staff to team up with the teacher in the classroom) and (b) to facilitate personalized professional development.

An imperative immediate focus is on

• ensuring what goes on in the classr oom (and school -wide) creates and maintains a stimulating, caring, and supportive climate and doesn’t overrely on social control strategies
• enhancing teacher capability to prevent and handle problems and reduce need for out of class referrals (e.g. see Challenges and opportunities in the classroom – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/winter08.pdf

For more on addressing student adjustment, see the section of this ENEWS on “This month’s focus for schools to address barriers to learning.”

And please let us know what local schools are doing to address school adjustment problems

Send your comments for sharing to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.

John F. Kennedy

@#@#@##
NEWS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

> Do students need homework? Research shows elementary schools may be assigning too much homework, with kindergartners receiving an average of 25 minutes a day. A Texas teacher recently announced a no-homework policy in a letter which has gone viral. http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2016/0823/Should-second-graders-get-homework-Maybe-not-says-Texas-teacher

> Counselors in NY Tasked With ‘Whatever it Takes’ to Help Students Succeed. When classes start this September, more than 100 extra guidance counselors and social workers will stream into some of New York City’s most fragile schools. They are all part of the education department’s Single Shepherd program, and their job description is as simple as it is daunting. http://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2016/08/23/one-on-one-counselors-tasked-with-whatever-it-takes-to-help-students-succeed/#.V73RMW9TFIt

> Corporal Punishment in U.S. Schools. Corporal punishment has declined rapidly, however a new Education Week investigation finds more than 109,000 students were paddled, swatted, or otherwise physically punished in U.S. classrooms in 2013-14. See online report. http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/corporal-punishment-in-us-schools.html?cmp=eml-eb-sr-corporal-20160823

> Summer reading examines gun violence, race relations. Incoming students at Santa Monica High School are exploring issues around gun violence and strained race relations. As stories of shootings spark tensions across the nation between different communities and demographic groups, local students are getting a fictional but realistic look at society through “How It Went Down,” a 2014 novel by Kekla Magoon. http://smdp.com/santa-monica-high-summer-book-examines-gun-violence-race-relations/156481

> Iowa Summit on School Climate and Culture. Des Moines School district hosted over 1,000 educators to cover the latest research and best practices for improving student behavior, learning how a multi-cultural classroom can be an asset and how one's own culture and identity may affect others. Other topics included identifying the social and emotional needs of students, as well as better connecting with families to support learning at home. http://www.richmond.com/news/ap/article_61f3d958-75ad-56ff-837e-95dc954bd441.html

Back to school fair offers school supplies. The Aurora IL Back to School Fair was launched 21 years ago by a group of residents in response to community violence. It is a collaborative effort to help limited-income families get their children prepared for the first day of school. Families receive backpacks for their children filled with school-related supplies and books, as well as free dental health screenings and required immunizations and a food voucher for the Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry. http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/aurora-beacon-news/news/ct-abn-aurora-school-supplies-st-0808-20160807-story.html

Support for migrant students. Migrant students are faced with a unique set of challenges that often hampers their educational pathway. The children make moves at least every three years to accompany their parents or guardians who are a migratory workers. The large number of moves, and other responsibilities at home, make it difficult for the students to graduate, This year, the Centralia School District (WA) received a federal grant to provide a Migrant Summer School. The program has a 14-year-old and a 15-year-old who prior to joining the school district last fall had never attended school before. To help the students during the regular school year, the district has been working to expand its EL program, especially at the middle school and high school levels. http://www.chronline.com/in-centralia-summer-school-gives-some-migrant-students-ahead/article_ac18fc22-5b83-11e6-a254-7370c0e6e8a0.html

Note: Each week the Center highlights newsworthy stories online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/linkstolatest.htm
If you see a story that should be included, let us know. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu.
I. Welcoming and Orienting – See

>What Schools Can Do to Welcome and Meet the Needs of All Students and Families
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/WELMEET/welmeetcomplete.pdf

>Welcoming and Involving New Students and Families
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/welcome/welcome.pdf

>Easing the Impact of Student Mobility: Welcoming and Social Support
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/easimp.htm

After welcoming students, families and staff to the new school year, it is essential to connect students and their families with others who can provide ongoing social supports related to engagement at the school and in the community (paying particular attention to anyone who seems disconnected).

II. Connecting Students and Families with Social Supports

Social supports are necessary to:
(a) endorse and facilitate participation
(b) account for cultural and individual diversity
(c) provide social, emotional, and academic supports to improve participation skills
(d) address barriers to learning and teaching and enable participation.

A Few Examples of Interventions

>Student Transition-in Phase
- Teacher introduces students to classmates and program
- Peer "buddy" is identified (to work with in class, go to nutrition and lunch with – at least for first 5 days)
- Designated students introduce and invite new students to out of class school activities

>Parent Transition-in Phase
- Designated staff or volunteer (e.g., a parent) either meets with parents on registration day or contacts parent during next few days to discuss activities in which they might be interested
- Designated parent invites and introduces new parent to an activity in which the new parent has expressed interest or may find useful
- At first meeting attended, new parent is given a welcoming "gift" (e.g., calendar with school name; coupons donated by neighborhood merchants)

>Student Becomes Involved in School Activities
- Over first 3 weeks staff monitors student's involvement and acceptance. If necessary, designated students are asked to make additional efforts to help the student enter in and feel accepted by peers.

>Parent Becomes Involved in School Activities
- Over the first month, staff monitors involvement and acceptance. (If necessary, designated parents are asked to make additional efforts to help the parents enter in and feel accepted.) In all these facilitative efforts, established peers (students, parents, staff colleagues) can play a major role as welcomers and mentors. For some, connection is straightforward because they are motivationally ready and able to engage. Some individuals, however, need just a bit more personalized assistance.
III. Enabling School Adjustment

Over the first few weeks, teachers realize quickly who has and hasn’t made a good adjustment to their classroom and to the school. This is the time to address any problems before they get worse. If adjustment problems are not addressed, student motivation for school dwindles, and behavior problems increase. Misbehavior often arises in reaction to learning difficulties. What appears as a school problem may be the result of problems at home.

The first month is the time to be proactive. This is the time for staff development to focus on the type of strategies described below. This is the time for student support staff to work with teachers in their classrooms to intervene before problems become severe and pervasive and require referrals for out-of-class interventions.

For guidelines and strategies, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rhythms.pdf#page=5

In addition to the links already cited, the following links to Center resources connect with aids for interventions and for structured personnel development:

- **Support for Transitions to Address Barriers to Learning** – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/transition_tt/transitionsfull.pdf
- **Enabling Learning in the Classroom** – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/enabling.htm

For more, use the Online Clearinghouse Quick Find menu at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm

Here are a few relevant examples:

- **Transition Programs/Grade Articulation/Welcoming** – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm
- **Classroom Focused Enabling** – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/classenable.htm
- **Motivation** – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/motiv.htm
- **Response to Intervention** – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/responsetointervention.htm

**Note:** Integrating support for learning and teaching into the natural opportunities and phases of the school year provide unlimited opportunities. For a range of ideas organized by each month, see *Ideas for Enhancing Learning Supports at your school this month* on the homepage at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

@#@#@#

*Don’t find fault, find a remedy.*  
Henry Ford

@#@#@#
...The Learning Supports framework gives our system the ability to address the shifting changes in society and culture. Addressing chronic absenteeism, lack of basic living essentials, language barriers, disabilities, and family needs are not something that can be done by school counselors or the administration alone. It is the work of the entire school, and must be ubiquitous in the school culture and embraced by the entire community.

As a district, we are working diligently to create the infrastructure needed to proactively address barriers to student learning by developing a comprehensive system of supports.

**Organizing:** Our first step was to reorganize our central office into the three-component model: Instruction, Management and Learning Supports. This was important because it helped our school community understand that a systemic shift in culture was occurring; this was not just another initiative.

**Mapping:** Next, we formed a system-wide team (with central office and school representatives) and mapped our school and community resources for addressing learning, behavioral, emotional and physical problems. We realized that we already had many supports in place, but their effectiveness was compromised by fragmentation. Each school was reacting to student needs, but lacked a comprehensive approach.

The mapping process enabled us to take a close look at what was working and could be expanded, and what was not working and needed to be changed or removed. We too often do things because "we've always done them that way." Now we are being very thoughtful about why we do what we're doing, and we're not afraid to change policies, procedures, interventions, strategies, etc.

**Using Data to Clarify, Then Respond to Students’ Needs:** In our first year, we targeted attendance issues, and this has remained a focus for us. When looking at our overall attendance rate, the problem was not obvious in the numbers, but we had too many students at risk of failure. As we drilled into the data, we realized we needed some alternatives to our "traditional" school program. We needed a framework that would allow us to be proactive.

Now we are more flexible and offer multiple blended learning and virtual opportunities to meet various needs, and ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed in school. There is a constant focus at both the school and district level on addressing absences quickly and keeping students engaged.

Through our mapping process and while analyzing student data, we realized we had a number of students who needed counseling services but had been unable to travel to receive those services. In response, we have partnered with United Way and the Mental Health Center to provide at-risk counseling services within our schools. And for prevention, we are now developing curriculum for a redefined student advisory program to put comprehensive supports in place.

Although we had advisory and mentoring programs in place, the review and audit process helped us realize we needed more. One of the most important components in our redefined program is to ensure that every student has a personal relationship with an adult who will strive to connect students with school and community services they need before they become at-risk.

... We will continue to expand systemic supports to eliminate barriers to student learning and promote whole child development and a positive school climate that keeps students engaged in their learning. ...


...
“Together We Can! Creating connected systems of care is a key strategy of La Crosse’s Rebuilding for Learning (RfL) effort. The RfL initiative is directly inspired by the groundbreaking work of Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.... Adelman and Taylor note that the collaboration necessary to create connected systems and seamless interventions requires “horizontal and vertical restructuring of programs and services.” That’s fancy parlance for saying we must change the status quo. Over the years the children we serve have changed (for example, they tend to be more culturally and socioeconomically diverse, with more complex needs) and the research has evolved as to how we can best serve them. To be successful, we must respond accordingly.

Each year since the inaugural RfL summit in 2011, we’ve come closer to closing service gaps and creating connected systems. ... This year saw a host of new prevention initiatives1 aimed at assisting “at-risk youth.” RfL has helped promote an environment where these new programs, far from being isolated efforts, are being coordinated in impressive ways. This is all in addition to service restructuring underway within La Crosse County and the School District of La Crosse. Sure, we have a long way to go in achieving our goals for connected and seamless systems of supports. As we close the year, however, it’s appropriate to pause and appreciate how far we’ve come. In 2016, we’re poised to continue to make significant strides in that journey, and it’s exciting to think that we’ve only scratched the surface of what’s possible. Together we can and will ensure every child in La Crosse has the opportunity to succeed!

Additional update from La Crosse (August 2016) – “We wanted to provide you with an quick update (and some attachments) relative to our rapidly approaching Rebuilding for Learning Summit VI. We are excited to share that our anticipated attendance will be around 1,000 (this includes all of our district educators). The collaboration with the City of La Crosse, La Crosse County, and the School District of La Crosse is stronger than ever! We have so many wonderful developments as a result of identifying and removing Barriers to Learning that one email couldn't possibly provide justice to the work being effectuated. ...”

(3) Upcoming Presentation at the **Learning Forward Conference** in Vancouver, BC


**State Policy Matters: Principals Advance Teaching and Learning**

Presenters: Rhonda Waltman, Scholastic Education; Linda Felton-Smith, Alabama Department of Education; Merrianne Dyer, Scholastic Education

Will discuss how the state used its learning supports model as the catalyst for training aspiring principals while supporting on-the-job principals.

*For more information on all this, we refer folks to the webpages for the initiative http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html .

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU SEE HAPPENING TO TRANSFORM STUDENT AND LEARNING SUPPORTS

And if anyone is thinking about increasing the capacity of a district or school with respect to developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student supports, **we can help.** Send all info to ltaylor@ucla.edu .
New

Research Notes:

> About physical and mental health effects of racism and discrimination on African Americans – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/racism.pdf

Information Resources:

> A student’s perspective of test anxiety – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/textanx.pdf
> Addressing the language barriers: English language learners, bilingual education, and learning supports – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/biling.pdf
> About school gardens and other campus green spaces – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/garden.pdf
> Cross-age peer mentorship programs in schools – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mentoring.pdf

School Practitioner Community of Practice Interchange: Weekly Listserv http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm

> Using current data as a measure of school climate: Good idea or bad? (8/8/16)
> About framing evidence based interventions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching (8/15/16)
> Social media: Is it an added distraction and barrier to learning? (8/22/16)

Note: The latest School Practitioner and archived previous ones are on our website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm (Also on our Facebook page) Follow-up exchanges are posted on the Center website's Net Exchange – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm

Recently Featured Center Resources

For improving classroom and school climate

See our online clearinghouse Quick Find on Classroom and School Climate for a range of resources from our Center and from others. http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/environments.htm

Here are two of the Center resources listed there:

> Designing School Improvement to Enhance Classroom Climate for All Students – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schoolclimate.pdf
> About School and Classroom Climate – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schoolclassroomclimate.pdf

For more extensive resources, see the continuing education modules and guides listed.
ACCESS LINKS ABOUT:

> Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm
> Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm
> Training and job opportunities – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm
> Upcoming and archived webcasts and other professional development opportunities – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm

Note: These links are on our homepage for easy access. Each is updated regularly. Just click on the indicated URL or go to our homepage at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

If you would like to add information to these, send it to ltaylor@ucla.edu

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES ACCESSIBLE FROM THE INTERNET

Resources related to bilingual education

> Effective Teaching Strategies for English Language Learners - http://www.supportrealteachers.org/strategies-for-english-language-learners.html

Resources related to ADHD

> Resource Guide on Students with ADHD and Section 504 – http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201607-504-adhd.pdf
> Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder – http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd

Resources for peer programs/mentoring


@#@#@#@#

When an employment application asks:

Who is to be notified in case of emergency?
I always write – “A very good doctor.”

@#@#@#@#
ADDITIONAL RECENT PUBLICATIONS

School, Family & Community


Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics


Child, adolescent, and young adult's mental and physical health


FYI: Safety Lit is a useful resource for abstracts related to injury prevention policy and practice. http://www.safetylit.org

Note: The Center’s Quick Find online clearinghouse at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu is updated regularly with new reports and publications such as those listed above. Currently there are over 130 alphabetized topics with direct links to Center materials and to other online resources and related centers. Let us know about publications and reports that should be included in this dedicated online clearinghouse. Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu
Oh yeah, it’s raining on me again!

No more prizes for predicting the rain, only prizes for building arks.

Don Edward Beck

COMMENTS AND SHARING FROM THE FIELD

“I was working on a blog post for our blog at Caring 4 Our Kids, a resource for parents of kids with ASD, when I came across your site. It was helpful so I thought maybe I send over some other resources that I loved. Maybe your other reader would like them too.

>Sesame Street Autism Resources for Parents – http://autism.sesamestreet.org/
>S Reduce the Noise: Help Loved Ones with Sensory Overload Enjoy Shopping
   https://www.retailmenot.com/blog/sensory-overload-while-shopping.html
>S Going to the Orthodontist with CFS
>S Estate Planning for Parents of Special Needs Kids –

THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF ENEWS

Who Are We? The national Center for Mental Health in Schools was established in 1995 under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project (which was established in 1986). We are part of the Department of Psychology at UCLA. The Project and Center are co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.

For more information about the Center and its many resources, go to the website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu or email Ltaylor@ucla.edu or adelman@psych.ucla.edu

Send info to share with others or ask for specific resources by email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu