Info from the Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Helping New Teachers Succeed

Given the current situation, many new teachers are starting out this school year feeling even more ill-prepared than usual, especially with respect to addressing behavioral and mental health concerns.

This raises the question: *What's the best way for a school to support new teachers?*

(1) The first matter clearly involves a welcoming induction into daily school life and facilitating connections for collegial support (see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/kickoff.pdf).

(2) Then, schools must face up to the reality that teachers can't and should not be expected to work alone in the classroom

Excerpt from http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/classroomredes.pdf

> "Opening the classroom door can enhance student support, staff development, and outcomes. The crux of the matter is to ensure in-class collaborations. Collaboration and teaming are key to facilitating personalized instruction and special assistance, creating a stimulating and manageable learning environment, and generally addressing barriers to learning and teaching. To further enhance engagement and learning, opening the doors provides opportunities to broaden the range of enrichment activities by inviting in community colleagues and volunteers who have special knowledge, skills, and talents.
>   Collaboration also provides an avenue to improving personalized on-the-job professional development for teachers and student support staff. These professionals have much to teach each other. For example, student support staff (e.g., school psychologists, counselors, social workers, nurses) have specialized expertise. Their training prepares them to provide targeted direct assistance and support to students and their families. Currently, they tend to offer what they know through consultation with colleagues which is viewed by them as a form of collaboration. However, effective collaboration with teachers involves much more than consultation and making recommendations. It encompasses learning from teachers about classroom teaching and then working with teachers in their classrooms to improve how classroom design and practices can more effectively address learning, behavior, and emotional problems."

(3) Improve the schoolwide system of student/learning supports, For example, ensure that the system (a) promotes healthy development, prevents problems, intervenes quickly and effectively as soon as problems are noted, and plays an effective role related to chronic and severe problems and (b) advances practices related to all 6 major domains of support. (See http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/summer2022.pdf .)*

(4) With specific respect to mental health in schools, ensure there is a focus on promoting social-emotional development as well as addressing social-emotional problems and that this focus is embedded into a school's curriculum and pursued through the many natural learning opportunities ("teachable moments") that arise each day.

(5) With specific respect to on-the-job personnel development, it is essential to plan with an appreciation that there are limits to how much can be learned in a given period of time, and the best learning requires a personalized approach. (See the Center's Quick Find menu for links to aids for personnel development – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm .)