

# Students & Schools: Moving Forward

(April, 2025 Vol. 29 #7) – 39 Years & Counting

## Featured

### **Strengthening Supports for End-of-Year Transitions**

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### **Strengthening Supports for End-of-Year Transitions**

Students are regularly confronted with a variety of transitions. Transitions can be stressful, and every transition can be a natural opportunity to promote positive learning and attitudes. Transitions are truly risky opportunities.

As the school year draws to an end, schools recognize the importance of providing transition support as students change classes, move to the next grade, move to a new school, move to middle school, move from high school to college/career. From the first grade-to-grade transition on, well-designed supports can make a great difference in the lives of students, their families, and school staff. This means planning ways that prepare for the transitions and that pursues follow-up to ensure the transition has gone well.

The focus is on

- celebrating what is ending and positively connecting with what is coming
- planning welcoming and orientation activities
- ensuring social support that facilitates positive acceptance and adjustment in the new situation and the beginnings of a strong new working relationships.
- assessing the degree of transition success
- implementing timely corrective interventions when transitions are not successful

### **About Supports for Transitions in General\***

A comprehensive approach to supporting transitions provides for:

- >Welcoming & social supporting newcomers (e.g., welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions; peer buddy programs for students, families, staff, volunteers)
- >Daily transitions (e.g., before school, breaks, lunch, afterschool)
- >Articulations (e.g., grade to grade, new classrooms, new teachers; elementary to middle school; middle to high school; in and out of special education programs)
- >Summer or intersession (e.g., catch-up, recreation, and enrichment programs)
- >Moving on to a career or higher education (e.g., counseling, pathway, and mentor programs)
- >Broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions (e.g., students, staff, home, business, higher education)
- >Capacity building to enhance transition activities

\*See the self-study survey on [\*Support for Transitions\*](#)

For more on Supports for Transitions, see our Center resources:

- > *Transitions to and from Elementary, Middle, and High School*
- > *Addressing Barriers to Successful Middle School Transition*
- > *Transitions: Turning Risks into Opportunities for Student Support*
- > *Supporting Successful Transition to Ninth Grade*
- > *Transition Programs/Grade Articulation/Welcome*
- > *Transition to College*

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*The past few weeks have shown an incredible upswell of energy from across the country, a willingness of people from all walks of life to defend our public schools, work toward racial justice and equity, and support those who are rising to meet these challenges.* Schott Foundation

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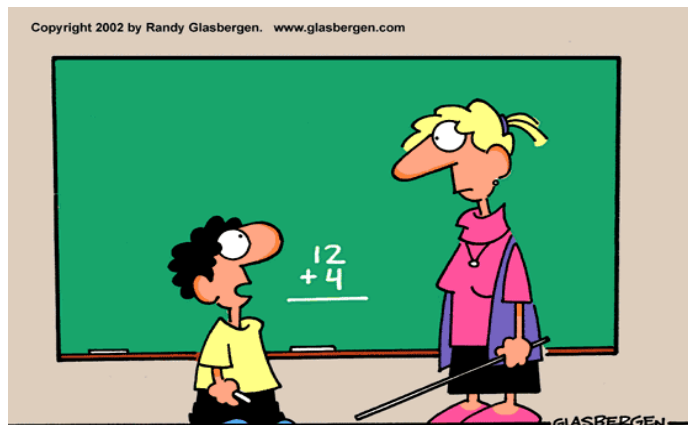
### >Quick Links to Online Resources

- >> **New Teacher Center**
- >> **Teacher Preparation Needs to Catch Up with School Reform**
- >> **Getting young people back on track**
- >> **What Motivates High School Youths to Want to Teach?**
- >> **Factors Influencing School-Based Mental Health Program Selection**
- >> **Ten Recommendations for Effective School-Based, Adolescent, Suicide Prevention Programs**
- >> **How schools can stop overwhelming teachers — and support them instead**

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*We must commit to fixing our education system at all levels or we will never be able to attract the right amount of talent to sustain jobs needed to move forward.* Brian Busey

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**“Do I get partial credit for simply having the courage to get out of bed and face the world again today?”**

**Here's what was discussed in the *Community of Practice* during March**  
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

Note: *All community of practice editions contain Links to relevant shared resources.*

- >“The more time students with disabilities spend in general classrooms the better they do academically.” Is that statement supported by research?
- >Perspectives on Preventing school violence
- >Eugene School District 4J Joins Lawsuit to Block Threat to Federal Funds
- >When is it essential to talk with (and not just at) students?
- >Perspectives on Universal School-based Mental Health Interventions
- >It's not about just throwing money at problems: Making Money Matter
- >Working on Recovery

If you missed the resources and news in previous issues of the *Community of Practice*, see  
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

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**>For more resources in general, see our website**  
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

**>For info on the status of upcoming conferences**  
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm>

**>For info on webinars**  
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

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*We must not isolate. We must stay in community. We must help the vulnerable.  
We must find ways to project an inspiring vision of the future.* Jane Fonda

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**>Calls for grant proposals**  
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm>

**> job and training opportunities  
when available**  
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm>

**National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports**  
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Our Center emphasizes the opportunity to start now to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students.

**Let Us Know about what ideas are being proposed for moving in new directions for transforming how schools address barriers to learning and teaching.**

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/learning supports, we can help. Send all info to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

**>A Few News Stories** (excerpted from various news sources)

**Cesar Chavez day March 31.** César Chávez Day is intended to promote service to communities in honor of Chavez's life and work. Fernando F. Chavez, the eldest son of Cesar Chavez, said “We’re happy that in the years ahead, public school children will learn how my father showed that even the poorest and most powerless people in our society can overcome grievous wrongs through personal sacrifice and non-violent, democratic means,”

**Pasadena Unified School District Board Approves Layoffs of Teachers, Staff Positions.** The Pasadena Unified School District board voted to approve the layoffs of over 150 teacher and staff positions. The decision comes after several district employees lost their homes in the deadly Eaton Fire that erupted on Jan. 7. the decision was forced by declining enrollment, rising costs and the expiration of Covid relief funds. To minimize the disruptions in classrooms, the cuts will be focused on the central office, and the district will find ways to help those impacted.

**How Schools Are Navigating Changes in Immigration Policies.** Denver Public Schools v. Noem, is a lawsuit filed by Denver Public Schools—Colorado’s largest public school district—against the Department of Homeland Security and Secretary of Homeland Security. It argues that the new directive gives Immigration and Customs Enforcement “unchecked authority” to enforce immigration in schools, and that the district has since been “hindered in fulfilling its mission of providing education and life services to the students who are refraining from attending Denver Public Schools for fear of immigration enforcement actions occurring on school grounds.” The school system is asking for a temporary restraining order to prohibit Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection’s enforcement of the policy. The San Lorenzo district in California has provided training for school administrators, and gave the school’s social workers, office managers, and counselors access to an attorney to know what they should do if federal agents show up, because they “never know” who the first contact might be for immigration officials.

**Family Engagement.** Across all public schools, leaders estimate that 39 percent of students have families who are “actively engaged” with the school. Six in ten public schools (60 percent) reported that it was somewhat or very difficult to engage their students’ families with their school. For the 2024-25 school year, 39 percent of public schools have a parent/family engagement specialist or outreach worker at their school, a decrease from 44 percent during the 2023-24 school year.

**Students Bring Friendship, Love of Learning to Paid Tutor Jobs .** Reading, writing, and math can be daunting for elementary school students. At Jackman Road Elementary School in Toledo (OH), sometimes all it takes is a friend to help it all make sense. Students from Bedford High

School have been busy helping their younger counterparts at Jackman Road Elementary School as part of the Students for Other Students program. The SOS program is a 501(c)(3) corporation that serves to fund peer tutoring programs across the country. The organization raises money from foundations, corporations, and individuals for the promotion, operation, and funding of peer tutoring programs in school districts to pay students to tutor other students who need extra help.

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From the above news story:

I want to be an elementary teacher, so I think this is a good experience for me. I love seeing how excited the kids are to work with us. It is something fun and they give me energy too. High school tutor

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### >Comments and sharing from the field

Response from a colleague regarding:

#### >*Implementation Science and School Improvement*

“I want to express my sincere gratitude for the excellent insights and thoughtful compilation in *Implementation Science and School Improvement*. I found the content incredibly valuable, and I especially appreciated the well-designed layout, including the easy-to-read pull quotes. Having reviewed over 100 articles for my literature review, I found your work to be particularly comprehensive and insightful. It significantly contributed to my thinking, especially as I refine my research focus on the leadership dimension—Advancing Educationally Significant Outcomes in K-12 Environments Through Implementation Science. Your article provided meaningful direction for my dissertation. Thank you again for such a compelling and well-crafted piece. Bravo!”

From a school board member, response to our report:

#### >*Building on MTSS to Enhance How Schools Address Barriers to Learning*

“I read your emails with interest. Connecticut has a report sponsored by the Dalio Foundation which conducted research and field studies across Connecticut to produce a report entitled 119K. <https://www.dalioeducation.org/report/> The report acknowledged 119k young people (mostly males) ages 14-26 were not engaged, were unmotivated and were largely unemployable. This conversation is not over and there is a bill before the CT State legislature to pilot a program to re engage youth. We have a successful program dealing with absenteeism called *Learner and Evaluation and Attendance Program*. The reason I am giving you this information is two fold. I think we have significant data to make changes but I don’t think we have comprehensive solutions.”

From a colleague in Oregon, response to the commentary:

#### >*Public Education on the Brink*

“Our district is one of the first to join a lawsuit against removing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. See [https://www.4j.lane.edu/24697\\_2?articleID=20670](https://www.4j.lane.edu/24697_2?articleID=20670) Eugene School District 4J will join a lawsuit seeking to block federal guidance that is disrupting operations and will destabilize funding resources and undermine educational programs and efforts that support the success of all students....”

Response to Practitioner discussion of:

#### >*‘The more time students with disabilities spend in general classrooms the better they do academically.’ Is that statement supported by research?*

“Great publication bringing all of us up to date with the efforts made to bring us forward in addressing the mental health of our children. How precious this effort has been. A magnificent effort. Perhaps the foundation needed for guiding our future in nurturing our children.”

Responses to commentary:

>**Public Education over the Brink**

- (1) “Throwing money at schools does not equate to school improvement. There needs to be a cultural shift of accountability.”
- (2) “I am happy to get this message and agree that schools must engage to help prevent mental, emotional and behavioral problems and proactively promote the well being and resilience essential to learning and social development. I did want to make sure you knew about the new National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine’s **Launching Lifelong Health** study report. I was part of the study and we have essentially named education as part of the public health and health care infrastructure of the US calling for full activation and empowerment of schools. Much more to share, but I did want to share this for now at the least. See especially chapter 8 and the specific recommendations in chapter 10 for schools. Integration with health care and ensuring a focus also on younger children prior to entering school is essential. See also the attached summary of the Engagement In Action Framework (EnAct!) that focuses on early childhood health and development using a systems integrated approach that calls for early care and education to engage families, educate them and ensure they are receiving comprehensive whole child and family health promotion and preventive services as already set forth in national Bright Futures Guidelines.”

**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 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](mailto: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](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

**THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF ENEWS**

Who Are We? Recently renamed the Center for MH in Schools and Student/Learning Supports, our national Center 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 Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.

**For more information about the Center and its many resources, go to the website at <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> or email [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu) or [adelman@psych.ucla.edu](mailto:adelman@psych.ucla.edu)**

**Send info to share with others or ask for specific resources by email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**