Students & Schools: Moving Forward

(December, 2023 Vol. 28 #3) – *37 Years & Counting*

Featured

More than ready for winter break?
Preventing "Burnout" as the School Year Resumes

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Preventing "Burnout" as the School Year Resumes

Working in schools is a demanding job. In September, each evening's rest may be enough to restore energy and enthusiasm, By October, it may take all weekend. In November, approaching the holidays give one some respite. By December, most school folks are more than ready for a long break.

Anyone who works in schools knows the many challenges and frustrations, large and small, that confront staff and students each day. They cannot just be ignored, and they take a toll (e.g., affect staff and student morale and mental health).

Rather than suffer through it all, staff with an understanding of the causes of burnout and the impact on intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being can take a leadership role in helping prevent discouragement and disengagement. In this respect, here are a few resources from our Center:

>**Understanding and Minimizing Staff Burnout**

>**Teachers Can't Do it Alone!**
>**About Motivation**

>**About Teacher Mental Health**

>**Promoting Staff Well-being and Preventing Burnout as Schools Re-open**

We also have a Quick Finds on
>**Burnout**.
>**Wellness**
>**Motivation**

From other sources:

Can a supportive supervisor be a treasure for teachers? A multilevel analysis of the relationship between perceived supervisor support, work engagement, and burnout

Beyond burnout: A roadmap to improve educator well-being

Teachers aren't burned out, they are being set up to fail

Teachers' views of their school climate and its relationship with teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction

Here's a few edited excerpts from our resources:

An Intrinsic Motivational Perspective on Burnout

Any focus on minimizing burnout at a school site begins with an appreciation of the causes. This leads to an understanding that some of the problem arises from environmental stressors and some of the problem stem from characteristics and capabilities individuals bring to the situation. These causes play out differently with different roles and functions at a school. They all affect staff and student motivation.

The behavior referred to as burnout is a psychological phenomenon. One way to understand the problem is in terms of three psychological needs that are major intrinsic motivational determinants of behavior. these are

>the need to feel competent,
>the need to feel self-determining, and
>the need to feel interpersonally connected.

From this perspective, burnout can be viewed as among the negative outcomes that result when these needs are threatened and such needs are regularly threatened by the prevailing culture of schools.

As with so many problems, it is easiest to view burnout as a personal condition. And, as in many other instances, this would be the least effective way to understand what must be done over the long-run to address the matter.

The problem is multifaceted and complex. While stress-reduction activities often are prescribed, they are unlikely to be a sufficient remedy for the widespread draining of motivation. Reducing environmental stressors and enhancing job supports are more to the point, but alone these are insufficient strategies.

The solution requires reculturing schools in ways that maximize the enhancement of intrinsic motivation. this involves policies and practices that ensure a daily focus on (1) promoting staff and student well-being and (2) addressing barriers to teaching and learning.

Promoting Well-Being

School-based programs should include the following key elements:
- Welcoming newcomers into the school culture in a socially supportive way.
- Opening classroom doors and creating appropriate teams of staff and students who support, nurture, and learn from each other every day.
- Personalized staff development and support, including:
  >In-service programs that account for interests, strengths, collaboration;
  >Structure that provides personalized support and guidance
  >Instruction designed to enhance and expand intrinsic motivation for learning and problem solving.
- Restructuring school governance to enable shared decision-making.

For more on this, see the above listed resources and the following excerpt from:

>**Opening the classroom door: Strengthening collaborative relationships and enhancing student and teacher success**

"... Learning effectively from colleagues involves opportunities for mentors to model and guide change. This may take the form of team teaching. Another arrangement is for schools to use specialist personnel (e.g., school psychologists, counselors, special education resource teachers) to mentor and demonstrate rather than pursuing traditional consultant roles. That is, instead of telling teachers

what they might do to address student learning, behavior, and emotional problems, specialists could be trained to go into classrooms to model and then guide teachers in implementing new practices to engage and reengage students in learning. Teachers need to work closely with other teachers and school personnel, as well as with parents, professionals-in-training, volunteers, and so forth. Collaboration and teaming are key facets of mobilizing and enabling learning. These practices allow teachers to broaden the resources and strategies available in and out of the classroom to enhance learning and performance..."

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A *positive school climate has a strong direct effect on a teachers' personal resilience and compassion satisfaction, which in turn has a strong negative effect on teachers' burnout.*
UMaine researchers Sherry Pineau Brown and Catharine Biddle

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>Quick Links to Online Resources

Cultivating Purpose in Adolescence

Preventing and responding to bias and hate incidents in schools

How Urban and Rural School Districts Aim to Solve Alarmingly High Absentee Rates

Building Your Education Team

State Education Practices -- State-level PK-12 Web Tables describing major developments in state-level education policies.

How Schools Can Support Neurodiverse Students

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Almost every successful person begins with two beliefs: the future can be better than the present, and I have the power to make it so. – David Brooks

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Here's what was discussed in the *Community of Practice* during November
https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm
Note: *All community of practice editions contain Links to relevant shared resources*.
>School board member asks: *Why can't all students be mentors?*
>How are schools welcoming immigrant & other newcomer students and families?
>How tired are you of being bombarded by bad news about schools?
>What is authentic community service?
>What can schools do when problems are so severe?
>Rethinking breaktime
>Natural Opportunities for Enhancing Social and Emotional Development

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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Education is the difference between wishing you could help other people and being able to help them. Russell M. Nelson

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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
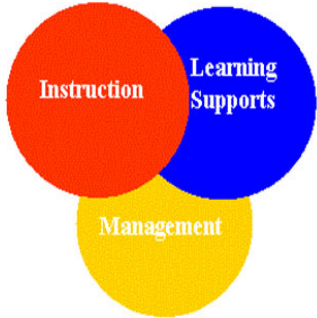
Here's a recent resource for improving student and learning supports:

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

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I try to take one day at a time, but sometimes several days attack me at once.

Jennifer Yane
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Feeder connections of schools keeps students together from kindergarten to high school.
Three new chiefs of Cedar Rapids (IA) schools are helping principals "grow as leaders" and hoping for better student outcomes under a new feeder school model implemented in the district this year. The chiefs each oversee one of three "areas" that include elementary schools, middle schools and high schools feeder patterns. Having area leaders over a high school, middle and elementary schools can help create "vertical integration" as students progress to each grade level. The feeder school system will help educators better plan what resources will be needed in each school building as students go through the system. Students can struggle significantly at the "transition points" between elementary to middle school and middle to high school. The feeder system is an attempt to mitigate that and "create community,"

Denver school leaders work to help hundreds of unhoused migrant students. Denver Public Schools officials estimate about 200 migrant students are unhoused as the city experiences a new surge of arrivals. The Homeless Education Network helps the district's migrant families not only enroll their children in school, but also with transportation. This could include helping students travel from one part of the city to another, using RTD, gas vouchers or other services. They also provide families with information about government services that may be available to them and even help the parents find job leads. The Homeless Education Network also provides cell phones to migrant parents to help them stay in touch with their children's schools.

Wisconsin politicians have specific goals for careers-focused education. To fill high-demand jobs, Wisconsin state leadership wants to significantly increase the number of K-12 schools that incorporate careers-focused programs into students' education. Specific plans for doing so are outlined in a 2022-26 strategic plan by the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment. Its goal is to find ways to fill jobs, recognizing that economists project Wisconsin will be without enough workers to fill holes left by baby boomers aging out of the workforce. Expanding K-12 programs is one way to address those workforce shortages. The push is for school districts to expand programs that give students on-the-job learning experience, or a head start on filling jobs with industry credentials or free college credit.

School districts across the country are on the front lines of the migrant crisis as children coming with their families across the U.S.-Mexico border enter classrooms. Education officials are trying to enforce vaccination requirements, find classroom space, change bus routes and hire more bilingual teachers to meet the needs of thousands of students who have survived traumatizing migration journeys. Chicago Public Schools have seen their first enrollment bump in 12 years thanks to the new arrivals. The district is in now enrolling about 1,000 additional English learner students. Since July, New York City Public Schools have received 11,000 students living in temporary housing — the only way the city tracks whether students likely are recently arrived migrants or asylum seekers. Denver Public Schools are seeing many full classrooms, with nearly 2,000 migrant students having arrived since July.

'No one wants kids dying in schools,' but Americans disagree on how to keep them safe.
Both parents and the general public at large agree that gun violence is one of the top concerns around K-12 education. According to the data, some are more inclined to support investing in social and emotional measures to enhance school safety over expanded security measures. These respondents favored approaches like guidance counselors, anti-bullying campaigns, and increased mental health education. While others favored expanded security measures, like metal detectors, bulletproof glass, and clear backpacks over social and emotional measures.

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From school safety story:

*For every dollar you spend on response, you must
spend equal amounts of time and effort on prevention.*

Amy Klinger, Educators School Safety Network

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>Comments and sharing from the field

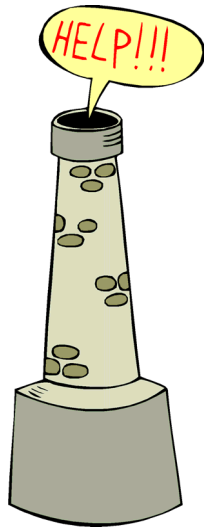**We were asked to tell you about these resources**

1. "Here is an article from the NHSC Youth Council Newsletter, Recommendations for Improving Student Mental Health in Schools, which sounds like youth are also taking their try at how to improve mental health in schools. They even come close, as close as we professionals, to a beginning try at prevention, and not just a "therapist" for every student. I haven't heard of the organization before, and they sound as on target as most reports from the field in your weeklies.
     Please keep up your significant work ethic and work that we Student/Learning Supports professionals need for improving our effectiveness and for learning how to build a living prevention and developmental environment better than it is and how it could be."
        https://www.sswaa.org/post/recommendations-for-improving-student-mental-health-in-schools

2. "I'm reaching out to you about a project that may interest you. As a former middle school teacher of 25 years who turned to mental health advocacy after my child's mental health crisis led to prison, I have been focused on upstream solutions to increase prevention and early intervention. We founded the Mental Health Literacy Collaborative to make mental health literacy education foundational in Pk-12 schools nationwide. Since we launched this spring, we have received tremendous support from leaders of education, mental health, policy, and advocacy. Here's our website: https://themhlc.org

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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
- 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