Students & Schools: Moving Forward*

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Let's resolve to make 2023 the year we turnaround the problems of:

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The Teacher Turnover Crisis:
Retaining Teachers is a Critical Challenge for the New Year

As the Alliance for Excellent Education reported in 2014:

> Roughly half a million U.S. teachers either move or leave the profession each year-attrition that costs the United States up to $2.2 billion annually. This high turnover rate disproportionately affects high-poverty schools and seriously compromises the nation's capacity to ensure that all students have access to skilled teaching. .... Researchers estimate that more than one million teachers, including new hires, transition into, between, or out of schools annually.8 High-poverty schools experience a teacher turnover rate of about 20 percent per calendar year—roughly 50 percent higher than the rate in more affluent schools. The estimate of the percentage of new teachers leaving teaching after five years ranges from 40 percent to 50 percent, with the greatest exodus taking place in high-poverty, high-minority, urban, and rural public schools.
> http://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PathToEquity.pdf

Common reasons reported for leaving include

- inadequate support from the school administration
- problems with students (e.g., dealing with discipline, lack of motivation, accommodating individual differences and learning problems)
- dealing with parents
- insufficient resources and support
- late placement and split grade assignments
- too limited faculty input into school decision-making
- low salaries

We agree with those who suggest that a multifaceted approach is needed.

Considerable consensus has formed around the need to address seven basic interrelated matters. They are: (1) salaries, (2) recruitment, (3) preservice professional preparation, (4) induction into the profession, (5) personalized on-the-job (inservice) learning, (6) student and learning supports, and (7) a career ladder. As discussed in our Center's 2012 Center report on *Improving Teacher*

Retention, Performance, and Student Outcomes, the need is to establish a unified approach that encompasses all seven elements (see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newteach.pdf).

None of this is easy. Think about the problems of establishing salaries and recruitment practices that can compete effectively for a large pool of the best and the brightest college graduates. Think about transforming preservice professional preparation to effectively equip educators for jobs in schools where students come from diverse economic, social, racial, and cultural backgrounds (including students newly arrived in the country and the many for whom English is a new language to master).

The immediate needs at schools, of course, are for positive induction of new teachers, personalized on-the-job (inservice) learning, and provision of student and learning supports (see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newteacher.pdf).

Teacher Can't Do It Alone: Moving Beyond Mainly Discussing Instruction

Teachers, and especially novice teachers, cannot and should not be expected to do it alone. Successful classrooms require teacher collaboration with others to effectively personalize instruction, overcome barriers to teaching and learning, and reengage disconnected students.

Classroom doors need to be open and teachers need to invite in others who can help improve instruction and provide special student assistance as needed. This includes collaborating with other teachers and with student and learning support staff, and professionals-in-training, as well as strategic use of parents and volunteers.

Beyond the classroom, teachers must be supported by school-wide student and learning supports focusing on factors interfering with good instruction and productive learning. A wide range of external and internal barriers to learning and teaching pose pervasive and entrenched challenges to educators across the country, particularly in chronically low performing schools. Failure to directly address such barriers ensures that (a) too many students will continue to struggle in school and (b) too many teachers will suffer the effects of having to deal with problems that stress them and the system. School-wide efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching involve developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports. See:

>*Rethinking Student and Learning Supports* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fall22.pdf

Concluding Comments

With little guidance and support teachers feel frustrated and helpless and are at risk of dropping out. Students pay a price for the loss. Society suffers because of the time, money, and effort lost in recruiting and preparing these professionals. All this threatens the survival of public education, and our democracy.

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Reengaging Students in Learning Can Help Retain Teachers

By this point in the year, school staff (and parents) are painfully aware that for some students "school isn't working."

The holidays are over. Teachers look around the classroom and see that some students are passively disengaged and seem bored or burned out; others are actively disconnected – often to the point of acting out at school or not attending. Disengaged students reflect low and negative intrinsic motivation and tend to have a negative effect on staff intrinsic motivation. It is discouraging and frustrating for all concerned.

Building a strong, positive relationship with difficult students is a challenge. Looking for the strengths, building on the competence, and re-establishing relationships of mutual respect is best achieved when teachers and support staff work as a team.

The following are some ideas for starting to turn things around.

First ask WHY? Why are some students not engaged in classroom learning? Why are they misbehaving? Certainly factors away from school may be at play, but often there are common school-related reasons, such as a student

- not experiencing sufficient success in learning, so s/he gives up

- not having a good relationship with the teacher, so s/he reacts/resists

- not having connected with a supportive group of friends, so s/he feels isolated/alienated.

Any of the above can set a negative cycle into motion and cause trouble for the whole class.

Then, Work on Reestablishing a Positive Working Relationship. Here are some steps we have found work:

1. *Set up a series of individual conferences.*
   At this point in the school year, administrators need to support teachers by facilitating time for them to conference individually with each student who is of particular concern. In some cases, the student's parents need to be invited in. The focus is on renewing positive relationships and reengaging the student in classroom learning. Student support staff can play a role in arranging such conferences and then covering the class while the teacher holds the conference. The discussions focus on
   (a) *why* the concerns have arisen (without getting into a "blame-game"),
   (b) some *new ways* that the student proposes for making things better for all involved,

   (c) arriving at some *mutual* agreements (not one-way "contracts").

2. *Provide some immediate opportunities for a positive change of "image" at school.*
   For students who have acquired a negative reputation, it is critical to develop some immediate opportunities for them to take on an attractive, positive role (e.g., lead on a team, special helper, photographer for school activities, part of the design group for the school's website, etc.).

3. *Add some extra caring support.*
   Use volunteers, aids, peers to provide additional support to these specific students – making certain the tone is one of caring not censure and that the support provides real opportunities to discover the value of learning and is not another monitoring device.

4. *Personalize instruction.*
   In designing learning opportunities, personalization focuses on more than the student's current capabilities. Critically, it also accounts for personal interests and intrinsic motivation in order to enhance feelings of competence, control over one's efforts, and positive connection with teachers and peers. Special assistance and accommodations also may be needed with respect to presentation of material, workload, feedback, and more.

5. *Facilitate motivated "homework" activities.*
   In assigning homework, maintain the focus on connecting the student with intrinsically motivating activities and projects. Such activities can consolidate something that has been learned recently or lay a foundation for future learning (e.g., school reading and writing projects). Examples include students (a) carrying out special roles, (b) making vidoes while on trips to special places and later

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bringing them to school to include in learning activities/projects, (c) viewing videos that teach as well as entertain, and so forth.

6. *Keep making them feel cared about and positively special.*

Beyond what is usual practice with all students, teachers and support staff need to keep taking special steps to continue enhancing the engagement of these students. Again, use of volunteers, aids, peers, mentors can be productive.

Some Students Disengage Because of Problems with Peers

Don't forget that for many students there is nothing as important in school as their peer relationships. Bullying and hostile relationships may be at play and require school-wide attention. Some students, however, only need a bit of help in connecting with peers in a positive way. Teachers working with student support staff can create a range of opportunities both inside the classroom, schoolwide, and in the neighborhood to address these problems.

In particular, this is the time of year to consider how the school is promoting social and emotional development. There are programs and curriculum designed for this, but every day there are natural opportunities for schools to enhance students' positive relations with each other (e.g., in class, during breaks, before and after school, during lunch, at student activities). Think about the benefits for social emotional development that can be fostered during cooperative learning and team play and when groups of students engage in project learning or are involved in service learning in the community, etc.

For resources related to reengaging students, see the Center's online clearinghouse *Quick Finds* on:

>*Motivation* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/motiv.htm

>*Classroom Focused Enabling* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/classenable.htm

>*Response to Intervention* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/responsetointervention.htm

Also see,

>*Student Engagement and Disengagement: An Intrinsic Motivation Perspective and a Mental Health Concern* http:/smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/intrinsic.pdf

>*Engaging and Re-engaging Students in Learning at School* http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engagingandre-engagingstudents.pdf

>*Engaging and Re-engaging Students and Families*
Unit I: Motivation: Time to Move Beyond Behavior Modification
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engagei.pdf
Unit II: Strategic Approaches to Enhancing Student Engagement & Reengagement
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engageii.pdf
Unit III: Enhancing Family Engagement and Re-engagement
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engageiii.pdf
Unit IV: Embedding Engagement and Re-engagement into a Unified and Comprehensive System of Student and Learning Supports
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engageiv.pdf

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What the new year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you bring to the new year. Vern McLellan

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National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports – **2023**

Our Center resolves to continue to emphasize the opportunity to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students.

For an overview, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

Based on input from across the country, it is clear that this is the time for action.

As an aid for moving forward, we have developed a brief guide. See

>*Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefguide.pdf

Please let us know about what ideas are being proposed in your locale for transforming how schools provide student/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/learning supports, we can help. Here's how the Center provides technical assistance and coaching

- Upon request to ltaylor@ucla.edu, we offer immediate technical assistance related to mental health in schools and student/learning supports

- For those leaders focusing on transforming how schools address barriers to learning and teaching, the Center's co-directors offer free distance coaching and technical assistance – see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/coach.pdf

- Two Center field associates are available on a fee for services basis to provide workshops and coaching – see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fieldassoc.pdf

>Quick Links to Online Resources

Compassion Resilience Toolkit https://compassionresiliencetoolkit.org

School and Family Factors Predicting Adolescent Cognition Regarding Bystander Intervention in Response to Bullying and Victim Retaliation
https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10964-018-0941-3

Identifying Gaps in Youth Employment Programs' Capacity to Address Mental Health Needs
https://nyec.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/NYEC-2022-Mental-Health-Report.pdf

Probation Reform: A Tool Kit for Juvenile Justice State Advisory Groups
https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/CJJ_Probation_Reform_tool_kit_for_State_Advisory_Groups.pdf

The Role of Social-Emotional Factors in Bystanders' Judgments and Responses to Peer Aggression and Following Retaliation in Adolescence
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1063426619870492

Trends and Changes in Approaches to School Safety
https://ednote.ecs.org/trends-and-changes-in-approaches-to-school-safety/?utm_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm_campaign=57f3256d21-Ed_Note_Daily&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a2b00b930-57f3256d21-53599575

How History and Research Can Better Protect Children from School Shootings
https://www.governing.com/now/how-history-and-research-can-better-protect-children-from-school-shootings

NYC schools Chancellor David Banks lays out $205 million plan to improve special education
https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2022/12/1/23488843/nyc-banks-special-education-asd-nest-horizon-path?utm_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm_campaign=de14a85ff0-ED_CLIPS_12_07_2022&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-de14a85ff0-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D

Strengthening Mental Health Support Services for Refugee Children Resettled in the U.S.
https://www.srcd.org/research/strengthening-mental-health-support-services-refugee-children-resettled-us

Reducing Child Poverty for Our Youngest Children Requires That We Consider Their Unique Needs
https://www.childtrends.org/publications/reducing-child-poverty-for-our-youngest-children-requires-that-we-consider-their-unique-needs

Studying Mental Health Problems as Systems, Not Syndromes
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/09637214221114089

Supporting Children with Disabilities – An Interactive Resource
https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/26702/interactive/?utm_source=NASEM+News+and+Publications&utm_campaign=2e754720e1-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2022_12_14_04_16&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-2e754720e1-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D&mc_cid=2e754720e1&mc_eid=eac5cd8a62

2022-2023 Trends Report: The Top 5 Trends Impacting Learners Today
https://www.wiley.com/en-us/network/trending-stories/2022-2023-trends-report-the-top-5-trends-impacting-learners-today?elq_mid=66999&elq_cid=16547834&utm_campaign=41360&utm_source=eloquaEmail&utm_medium=email&utm_content=EM1_WEPAPG_PMULTI_CROSS_CROSS_NP_Courseware%20Demo%20Request_2211_WV6W8

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I suspect that if we continue to "show appreciation" for teachers through bagels and fruit plates, soon we won't have anyone left at the buffet. Elizabeth Dampf

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Here's what was discussed in the Community of Practice during December
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm

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

>How should a community-based psychologist respond to a school's call for help after a crisis?
>Student Transitions: An often neglected domain of student/learning supports
>Time for straight talk about mental health in schools
>How are the kids? Is the "new normal" being mentally unwell?
>Learning loss: Fact or stigma?
>Using the holiday season for service learning? Earth could use some help

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

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

>For info on webinars
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm

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I firmly believe, when I'm teaching or when I'm principal, that relationships with
students have to be at the basics If they don't think you care about them, then they
don't care what you have to say. We're a really large school, but I really try to get out
and talk to the kids, greet them on their way in and say goodbye to them at the end
of the day and just try to be positive with them. I just celebrate whatever victories
they may have that day, small or big. Hal Bender, KY Principal

>Calls for grant proposals
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm

> job and training opportunities
when available
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm

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

Effective school solutions releases new national polling of administrators & parents on mental health care in schools. 90% of administrators and nearly 60% of parents believe that there is a growing youth mental health crisis, while about 60% of administrators say the problem is the same as or worse than a year ago. While schools have made progress tackling the youth mental health crisis and 80% of parents believe that schools should play a role in the delivery of mental health, educators say that districts continue to face significant hurdles when it comes to early identification of students with mental health challenges.
https://ess-web-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/FINAL_ESS_ZogbyPollPR12.13.22b.pdf

Citing staff shortage, Alabama starts paying student teachers to lead classrooms. Alabama school districts are getting creative in how they recruit and retain teachers. One solution: Paying student interns during their time in the classroom. Two experiments are underway. The first, started during the pandemic, allows schools to pay student interns to lead a classroom – without a lead teacher overseeing them. The second will begin in January, when Tuscaloosa City begins paying student interns a stipend during their traditional internship teaching alongside a lead teacher. If an intern is serving as a long-term substitute in a Title I school for four or more consecutive weeks, federal education regulations require the school to notify parents.
https://www.al.com/educationlab/2022/11/citing-staff-shortage-alabama-starts-paying-student-teachers-to-lead-classrooms.html

Growing Into Leadership After Growing Up With Shootings. A generation that grew up doing active shooter drills is now old enough to run for office. And gun control is a top priority. This midterm election, advocates for tighter gun restrictions feel finally heard, with hundreds of their volunteers and endorsed candidates elected up and down the ticket. A survey of 15- to 25-year-olds taken in May-June of this year by Murmuration/Walton Family Foundation found that "stopping school shootings" ranked as the most important issue to the America they want to live in, with reducing gun violence and mass shootings ranking tied for second with protecting access to clean water and air.
https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2022-11-28/growing-into-leadership-after-growing-up-with-shootings

New York schools embrace thousands of migrant children with needs beyond the classroom. New York City public schools have absorbed more than 7,200 children this year who were placed in repurposed hotels or homeless shelters with their parents. While the department said it does not track students' immigration status, most of the children are likely migrants who arrived in New York this year, often after being bused to Manhattan by officials in Texas. The arrival of thousands of students who don't speak English, lack permanent legal status, live in

temporary housing, need basic necessities and often have endured dangerous, traumatic journeys to reach the U.S. has posed significant operational challenges for New York City's public schools. Educators at P.S. 145 have offered migrant children dual language instruction in English and Spanish, breakfast and lunch, school supplies, uniforms and after-school programs so their parents can find work, as well as free haircuts, iPads, laundry services, MetroCards and donated clothes. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/immigration-new-york-public-schools-migrant-children

"Kids Seem to Be a Paycheck": How a Billion-Dollar Corporation Exploits Washington's Special Education System. Universal Health Services collected more than $38 million in tax dollars for special education services that families and former teachers say it largely didn't provide. Universal Health Services, has for years skimped on staffing and basic resources while pressuring managers to enroll more students than the staff could handle. School districts pay programs, called nonpublic agencies, to provide specialized instruction for students whose needs can't be met in traditional public schools. But dozens of complaints filed with the state and school districts in recent years, along with interviews with 26 former administrators, teachers and assistants, show that the program received public money without providing the services or education that its students needed or that taxpayers paid for. The program collects about $68,000 in annual tuition per student — more than triple the average per-pupil cost for a K-12 student in Washington — while a student with the highest needs can bring the school as much as $115,000 a year. https://www.propublica.org/article/washington-special-education-schools-funding-abuse

In the dark and cold of Bucha, Ukrainian children cling to youth, and remember the classmates they've lost. A group of kids bundled up against the cold, trudging toward school this week could have been a scene from virtually anywhere. But the morning school run in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha is anything but normal. Regular power cuts mean it's not only cold, but dark as they make their way into their school building. Soon a generator kicks on, bringing warmth and light — both of which are in short supply in many of the children's homes. At the generator-powered school in Bucha, there is a memorial where the names of children killed in the war are written on a wall. "Every morning at 9 a.m. there is a minute of silence," the Principal said, "because we must never forget them."
https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ukraine-news-russia-war-putin-energy-bucha-children-war-crimes/

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I really do not want my pictures in your offices, for the President is not an icon, an idol or a portrait. Hang your kids' photos instead, and look at them each time you are making a decision.   Volodymyr Zelensky

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Comments and sharing from the field

(1) Nice words: in response to: *About the Daily Supports Teachers Need*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/12-1-22.pdf

"I so appreciate all of your efforts to bring the team of providers who work for whole child success together rather than splinter against each other at the expense of the vulnerable youth we serve. My heart and efforts are with you."

(2) Sharing: in response to *How are Schools Minimizing Stress and Preventing Student and Staff "Burnout"?* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/dec2022.pdf

"You asked to hear about good practices addressing school staff burnout. While our team isn't in a school, we have supported many schools in implementing our resource, The Compassion Resilience Toolkit. https://compassionresiliencetoolkit.org/
    We have collaborated with the Department of Public Instruction in Wisconsin, Kentucky, and Arizona to share this resource across their states along with individual schools in Pennsylvania,

New York, Minnesota, and Nebraska. I very much appreciated your focus on the need for systems to take responsibility around staff burnout. So often the narrative is about individual self-care and this just contributes one's sense of fatigue. We incorporate building compassion resilience at the system, team, and individual level in the Compassion Resilience Toolkit just for this reason. Our Coaching for Success project came to mind as I reviewed the email Sue forwarded about the additional supports teachers need. We have been working in Milwaukee the last two years to explore what impact it could have to shift some of the time student support staff use doing 1:1 pull-out interventions with students to instead providing 1:1 coaching to teachers on the implementation of their SEL knowledge. We're hopeful this will lead to healthy teachers, more connections between teachers and students, more in-classroom time for students, and higher academic outcomes as a result."

(3) Two responses to: *How federal agencies contribute to fragmenting the role schools play in addressing the problems of children and youth* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/11-17-22.pdf

>I would say the lack of parent involvement is a contributing factor. No one is taking care of their children. We rush them off to school at three years of age. Parents work 10 hours a day. We promote sport like crazy which leaves a small amount of time as we shuffle our kids from here to there and grab fast food on the way home to stare mindlessly into our screens in a house lonely with family all around us. Real life conversations and real family involvement is the answer not more government involvement.

>They need to use their budget to establish places in states yesterday to help the growing number of children with behavioral and emotional issues. We need places affordable in state for students to get help that is affordable to families.

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.)

- **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

"We'll both have the homework."

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 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