

# Students & Schools: Moving Forward

(July, 2024 Vol. 28 #10) – 38 Years & Counting

## Featured

***Dissatisfied with How Schools Focus on Mental Health Concerns?  
Using the Summer to Improve What Happens in the Fall***

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***Dissatisfied with How Schools Focus on Mental Health Concerns?  
Using the Summer to Improve What Happens in the Fall***

Over a school year, it is hard to find enough time to stop, think, and plan new ways of doing things. It is a bit like Winnie the Pooh’s experience going downstairs. As Milne describes it:

“Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it.”

At most schools, administrators, support staff, and teachers have had to keep “bumping their heads” as they struggle each day to meet the demands on them. This usually means reacting with a limited set of piecemeal and fragmented strategies. The summer months provide an opportunity to think about and plan better ways of doing things. In particular, staff who work year round can plan proactively to develop student and learning supports into a more effective system. Summer also allows for related professional development.

Now is the time to set a process into motion that can lead to development of a comprehensive, cohesive, and equitable component of school improvement for addressing barriers to student learning, promoting healthy development, and reengaging disconnected students. Such a component is being referred to by SEAs, LEAs, and schools as a learning supports component.

Planning and developing such a component not only can end fragmented and redundant approaches, it can move toward eliminating the counterproductive competition for resources and end the marginalization of student/learning support staff. All this is essential for meeting the needs of the many rather than just a few and doing so more effectively.

Building a learning supports component at a school requires developing a mechanism that enables the learning/support staff to work together on a regular basis *to develop a better system* for addressing the many factors that interfere with students succeeding at school. See

***>What is a Learning Supports Leadership Team?***

One of the first tasks to undertake in planning improvements is to map and analyze existing activity and resources. See:

>*Initial Listing of Current Resources Used at a School for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching*

>*Mapping & Analyzing Learning Supports* A tool outlining a six step process that can be used by school improvement planners and decision makers to chart all current activities and resource use (e.g., school, district, community) as a basis for evaluating the current state of development, doing a gap analysis, and setting priorities for moving forward.

And as a planning aid, see:

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

Other planning and implementation aids can be accessed from:

>*Transforming Student and Learning Supports: A System Change Toolkit*

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*You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.*

A.A. Milne

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### >Quick Links to Online Resources

>>**Risk and Resilience Focusing on Depression and Conduct Disorder: A Comprehensive Literature Review**

>>**Strengthening School Connectedness to Increase Student Success**

>>**Student leadership in family-school partnerships**

>>**Exploring Factors Associated with District Approaches to Identifying and Supporting Student Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs**

>>**Students as Co-Researchers in a School Self-Evaluation Process**

>>**The Effects of Problem-Based, Project-Based, and Case-Based Learning on Students' Motivation**

>>**Social Media and Mental Health in Children and Adolescents: Expert Recommendations**

>>**Warehouses of Neglect: How Taxpayers are Funding Systemic Abuse in Youth Residential Treatment Facilities**

>>**Challenge Success Releases Student Voice Report on Well-Being, Belonging Across US High Schools**

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*Education is critical to any person's success in life. If we don't try to improve the quality of public education, it will affect the outcome of the whole nation.* Ray Potts

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

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

- >Graduation: Celebrations and Taking Steps to Increase Graduation Rates
- >Promoting work based learning this summer
- >Social-Emotional Curriculum Isn't a Good Fit for Every Student
- >Supporting the Transition to High School
- >14- to 24-year-old: A critical period
- >Can unnecessary student mental health referrals be reduced?
- >Increasing Concern About the Complexity of Attendance Problems
- >Absenteeism: Yet Another Reason for Transforming Student/Learning Supports

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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*Part of what I like about being a pediatrician is that children have incredible capacity for growth and resilience, and I truly believe that if we provide them with the support they need at this time, we will see an incredible capacity for thriving and success.* Rebecca Dudovitz, MD

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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)

**Engineering + empathy lead Greene County students to help children in hospital.** Students at Greene County Career Center (OH) spent the past semester modifying toy cars for use by children who use wheelchairs as part of their engineering classroom work. Five children staying at Dayton Children's Hospital will receive the cars made in Doug Picard's Advanced Engineering Systems class. Picard received a \$2,500 grant through the Ohio STEM Learning Network and Battelle for the project. The cars are both more fun for the children and less expensive than a wheelchair, which can be outgrown easily by a three- or four-year-old but cost their family thousands of dollars. The class made 11 cars in total with six backups. The students in the class were told what the disabilities were, but not how to design around them. Some students added padding for the kids so that it could support an arm, for example, or the student might have to change the way the car moves forward to accommodate for a weak leg.

**Children of Flint water crisis make change as young environmental and health activists.** Ten years ago in Flint the mayor pressed a button to stop the flow of Lake Huron water supplied by Detroit. That set in motion a lead and bacteria public health crisis from which the city has not fully recovered. But dozens of children of the water crisis — now teenagers and young adults — have turned their trauma into advocacy. They provide input on public health initiatives, participate in social issue campaigns, distribute filters and provide free water testing for homeowners.

**Hands-on learning.** More than 400 high school students descended on the Klamath (OR) Community College campus for its annual Career Day, showcasing what the college has to offer. Students learned to draw blood from lifelike dummies, tried their hands at CPR, used the Jaws of Life to peel back rooftops of wrecked vehicles; all part of the hands-on experience the college offers in a variety of disciplines. About 50 local employers, ranging from forest products to law enforcement, were kept busy speaking with students about career choices, too. Students got to partake in aviation and driving simulations, experience augmented and virtual reality programs, study anatomy on a virtual patient and run the gauntlet of a physical testing course.

**School Bookworm Mobile starts summer rounds.** Johnson City (TN) School's roving library started its summer tour this week, bringing free reading material to stops at public parks. It will travel the city during the month of June, topping at parks and offering snacks and books to area children.

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*Where you see wrong or inequality or injustice, speak out, because this is your country. This is your democracy. Make it. Protect it. Pass it on.* Thurgood Marshal

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## >Comments and sharing from the field

Reply to 5/16 Center commenary **“More Referrals for MH Services than Necessary”**

“I would argue that some schools need more school-based mental health professionals, not mental health laypersons who cannot do the heavy lifting. These are schools that are not privileged like those in wealthier areas with multiple counselors at a junior high with an administrative assistant, a school social worker for their school only, and a school psychologist with the NASP recommended ratio of 1:500. Perhaps we are talking about two different types of schools where the privileged school has many school-based-resources and they refer children with minor issues for mental health services within the school and in the community; whereas, other schools in less privileged areas are overwhelmed with assessments for suicide risk and threats and are referring those with significant trauma as the triage practice hasn't yet gotten to the students with the minor issues. In these less privileged schools, there are fewer school-based behavioral health providers and many of them might be stretched thin as counselors create the master schedule and do scheduling, social workers are getting food and clothing distributed weekly and have several other schools to serve, and school psychologists have a ratio of 1:1000+.”

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**“Remember, graduates — if you are not completely satisfied with your education, your ignorance will be cheerfully refunded.”**

### 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)