

Students & Schools: Moving Forward

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This resource is from the national

Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA – 38 Years & Counting

<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>

Featured

Ending the school year emphasizing success and hope

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Ending the school year emphasizing success and hope

“Celebrating during your final days together leaves students with stronger feelings of self-esteem, self-worth, connections, and happiness. Activities that bring everyone together to share memories and have some fun will create important memorable moments”

<https://www.studiesweekly.com/end-year-celebration-ideas/>

For most students (and staff), the end of the school year comes with a sense of relief. For some, it is a time of congratulations for accomplishments. For some, it is a temporary reprieve from problems experienced at school.

Special end of the year activities provide natural opportunities to foster hope, promote social emotional learning, support transitions. Planning celebrations is a natural opportunity to engage students and families. The challenge with respect to students who have had problems is to convey to them and their families what they have gained over the year (e.g., identifying whatever a student has done positively and how these gains can be built on in the coming school year).

The internet offers a range of year end celebration ideas, and here are edited excerpts from several articles on the topic:

From: *Surviving the end of the school year*

“The end of the school year can be challenging. ... Even though you may be stressed out, worn out, and are on the verge of checking out, it’s important to keep a positive attitude. ... Whether you do an end of the year countdown or just have a few special days or activities planned, give students something to look forward to. ... It’s important to set aside time for students to talk about and reflect on their school year. They can write about their experiences, draw a picture, or simply talk about it with their friends and teachers....

Take time to enjoy the last days of school. ... Help students get excited about what is to come next year and all that they will learn. ... Let your students help whenever possible. ... If you are able to, have a few of the teachers from the next grade level pop in to say hello and introduce themselves. ... Have students make a welcome banner for next year and write letters of advice to next year’s class. ...”

From: *Finishing the end of the school year strong*

“...Whether you’re watching your seniors go off to college, or your little 3rd graders become 4th graders, the end of the year means preparing students for their next steps. It’s time to start guiding students for what they can expect in the next grade or in the next phase of life. One idea is to have students and teachers from the next grade up come visit next year’s incoming students.

Another idea is to have students make introduction videos to send to their next teacher. Students can also write about what they’re most looking forward to, any questions they have, or things they’re nervous about...”

From: *Activities at the end of the school year*

“...Even if your students are staying in the same school, moving grades can be scary. Your students will have new teachers, different classrooms, and might even learn in a different wing of the school. You can use the last day to prepare students for the fall.

Walk your students down to where the next grade learns. Let them visit the different classrooms to see where they might have their homeroom periods next year. You can even introduce your students to different teachers who they might learn from. Even these small actions and interactions can make the changes that come with a new school year seem less intimidating. ...”

From: *High school seniors visit elementary schools ahead of graduation*

“...Dozens of high school seniors returned to their elementary schools for Senior Memory Walks, a program that began at the high school last year. During the visits, which lasted about half an hour, the seniors wore their graduation caps and gowns and high-fived the elementary school students, many of whom lined up and cheered for the teenagers and held up signs of encouragement...”

A special concern: *Safe Driving After Proms and Teen Parties*

From: *Dangerous Season for Teens*

“More than one-third of youth under the age of 21 killed in alcohol related fatalities died during the months prior to graduation season, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

From: *Prom Playbook: How Schools Can Keep Kids Safe*

For decades teachers, administrators and parents have worked to curb the dangerous activities that too often accompany prom. EducationWorld has put together a playbook addressing common pitfalls as well as proven strategies.

Let us know so the Center can share your plans for the end of the school year.

Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Supporting transitions is an all year and everyday concern. See

<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/ch5trans.pdf>

<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/transitionssurvey.pdf>

https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm

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Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened. — Dr. Seuss

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>Quick Links to Online Resources

- >Positive and negative experiences with supportive services and programming: gaps and recommendations from youth experiencing homelessness
- >Social media and youth mental health
- >Segregation and school funding: How housing discrimination reproduces unequal opportunity
- >Early childhood predictors of early school-age academic skills and resilience among children living in poverty
- >Public education funding in the U.S. needs an overhaul
- >Socioeconomic and racial segregation and discrimination: a student's perspective and analysis of the impact on schools
- >Understanding suburban school segregation: Toward a renewed civil rights agenda

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Being obsessed with your mental health is bad for your mental health. – Bill Maher

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Here's what was discussed in the *Community of Practice* during April

<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

- >Too many students with emotional, behavior, and learning problems? What can schools do immediately to start improving student/learning supports?
- >Improving Student/Learning Supports is Essential to Enhancing School Climate
- >Peer Influences on School Engagement and Disengagement
- >What Fosters School Connectedness?
- >Chronic absenteeism is a complex problem not solved by simple strategies
- >Should schools screen students for mental health problems?
- >A student-centered approach to education involves Personalized instruction and special assistance
- >“How to engage English language learners?”
- >How are schools dealing with the negative side effects of school mental health interventions?

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

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

>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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If you think your teachers are tough, wait til you get a boss. – Bill Gates

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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

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

Los Angeles Unified helps open permanent supportive housing complex. The Los Angeles Unified School District is celebrating the grand opening of a new housing complex that aims to help individuals and families transition from homelessness into permanent housing. The “affordable, permanent supportive housing project” was built with the cooperation and coordination of the school district and a nonprofit developer of affordable housing and services. Residents will have access to a range of accessible supportive services to enable them to regain personal stability and thrive long-term, including comprehensive case management, youth programs and after-school support, connections to health care services, education and employment resources, and life skills training.

Middle school to get 50 trees in state program. At an Arbor Day ceremony at the Westfield Middle School on April 26, a tree will be planted to kick off the school’s collaboration with the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Over 50 trees, one of the largest projects to date of the DCR’s Greening the Gateway Cities program in Westfield, will be planted around the entire perimeter of the school.

Elizabethtown High School students volunteer. A group of students from Elizabethtown High School (KY) volunteered at Warm Blessings. The school’s Community Volunteer Club helped load more than 120 hygiene bags, bread, produce and cases of meat to take to a distribution point. They brought groceries, counted, sorted and loaded vehicles with goods to give out to more than 100 people. They worked in the kitchen, coring, peeling and slicing apples for apple butter and squeezing oranges for fresh orange juice, then went to work on the herb garden, putting down fertilizer and prepping the soil.

Book Fairy early literacy project spreading its wings. Longtime family literacy advocate Pam Leo of Portland, Maine, is the Book Fairy. Through her nonprofit project, Leo has distributed thousands of children’s books across the Greater Portland area since 2016, on a mission to get books into the hands of as many kids as possible, as early as possible, and get parents reading to them. She holds drives for gently used children’s books at schools, churches and food drives. She searches at Goodwill stores regularly for books. Recently, she collected 300 early reader books and packaged them in groups of five, then gave them to the school to distribute to kids at random. Kids were given an hour to trade books with each other, which she said associated fun and excitement with reading.

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From the above LAUSD story

Students experiencing homelessness face a much steeper challenge in pursuing academic achievement because of the additional barriers they must overcome. We are steadfast in our resolve to mitigate those challenges, leverage our partnerships and resources to create opportunities and provide critical services to support our students and families. – Alberto M. Carvalho, LAUSD Superintendent

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>Comments and sharing from the field

We were asked to share this:

"I am emailing on behalf of our research team at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and UNC Behavioral Health Workforce Research Center. We are conducting a very brief, 5-10 minute survey of school district leaders across the U.S. to learn more about the types of school-based behavioral health services provided within districts. The survey is completely anonymous, and the data cannot be linked to specific individuals or school districts. Respondents will be entered into a drawing to win 1 of 25 electronic tablets (i.e., iPads) for participating...." If you are interested in participating, contact Nate Sowa, MD, PhD nate_sowa@med.unc.edu

Responses to [4/10/24 Practitioner item on chronic absences](#)

- (1) "Our work in school-based youth services supports the premise that chronic absenteeism is complex. Our work indicated widespread issues with family members. Solving one issue with students required addressing issues with parents and other members of the family. Multiple service assistance was required. Noted on dropouts was the issue of friendships. Students without friends in school makes it a lonely place. A place not exactly where you want to go. When students are tied into school policies that contribute to failure you guarantee chronic absenteeism."
- (2) "... Since the California Department of Education has said that some 548,000 did not return to in-person school in the '22-'23 school year, I hope you will agree that many of these former students, and others who have fallen by the wayside since then, cannot just be directed back to the same school and program they dropped out from, or did not return to after the worst of the Pandemic. ... "

See the following previous Center discussions about addressing attendance problems:

- >[Trying to address absenteeism? Transform student/learning supports!](#)
- >[Absenteeism: Beyond Reporting and Beyond Another Special Initiative](#)
- >[School Attendance: Focusing on Engagement and Re-engagement](#)
- >[School Attendance Problems: Are Current Policies & Practices Going in the Right Direction](#)

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



“Have a great summer and please do not throw your books in the air or run through the halls -- wait until the students have left the building.”

Reprinted from Funny Times / PO Box 18530 / Cleveland Hts. OH 44118
phone: 216.371.8600 / email: ft@funnytimes.com

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 or adelman@psych.ucla.edu

Send info to share with others or ask for specific resources by email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu