

Students & Schools: Moving Forward

(May, 2025 Vol. 29 #8) – 39 Years & Counting

Featured

Planning Much Needed End-of-the-year Celebrations ...
and Being Proactive in Making What Comes Next Good for Students and Schools

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Planning Much Needed End-of-the-year Celebrations ...
and Being Proactive in Making What Comes Next Good for Students and Schools

More than ever, the end of this school year is a time for celebrating accomplishments and enhancing hope for the future.

Planning needs to ensure that everything positive about students' achievements and enhanced well-being is accentuated and communicating specific ways in which the coming year will be even better. And all this needs to be conveyed in personal ways to students and families and through public interchanges with a wide range of other stakeholders.

- >In general, year end planning involves ways to survive, end strong, celebrate, and move on with hope.
- >End-of-the-year planning for teens, of course, involves special attention to concerns about concerns that arise about proms and parties. Such events are meant to be celebrations and something to cherish. Each represents a natural opportunity to promote social and emotional learning (e.g., enhanced understanding of self and others, increased sense of responsibility for self and others, expanded social problem solving skills). Schools have a critical role to play in providing effective guidance and support and minimizing negative side effects related to such events.
- >Planning to make what comes next hopeful involves a specific focus on supporting successful transitions and a general focus on improving school student/learning supports.

A Google search for “end of the school year” provides some relevant resources (<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=end+of+the+school+year>). So does a search of what is on our Center's Website (<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/websrch.htm>).

As stimuli for discussion, here are excerpts from some articles about all this:

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: ***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.

From: ***Strengthening Supports for End-of-Year Transitions***

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

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

Schools have long wrestled with how best to deal with student and schooling problems.

The COVID-19 pandemic and other recent events have increased the number of such problems. This pressing reality along with growing concerns about social injustice and

increasing criticism of public education have heightened calls for changes in how schools play a role in addressing such matters. This is a pivotal time for making fundamental system changes.

Advocates differ in what they want to have happen. So, let us state at the outset that our advocacy and this brief guide focuses on making fundamental changes in how districts and schools use student and learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching. We see a shared role for schools, communities, families, and youngsters in moving forward. In pursuing this shared role, we emphasize weaving together the broadest available set of school, home, and community assets. We also emphasize systemic changes in how student and learning supports are organized as strategic changes are planned, prioritized, budgeted, implemented, and evaluated (e.g., who provides oversight, leadership, capacity building, ongoing support).

Let us know your plans for the end of the school year so we can share them with others. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

**Planning to Improve Student/Learning Supports? See the
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

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In the face of adversity, connection and collaboration are more important than ever. Collectively we are stronger, and by working together, we can continue to create an environment where creativity and exploration can flourish, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Tracy Johnson

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>Quick Links to Online Resources

- >>**School-Sponsored Before, After, and Extended School Year/Out of School Time Programs**
- >>**Finding Unity in Community: How Building Consensus Can Shift the Dynamics of Support**
- >>**The Gender Gap in Teen Experiences**
- >>**Center for Mental Health Implementation Support**
- >>**Adapting a Positive Psychology Intervention**
- >>**The Unintended Negative Consequences of Help in Childhood**

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Message to students at climate change convo:

You have the power to shape the world you want to live in, Your fresh ideas can help solve problems that adults haven't figured out yet. Your actions can affect more than you think.

Isadora Peres de Souza, Klamath Community College

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

Note: All editions contain Links to relevant shared resources.

- >How Important is What This Middle School Student Has to Say?
- >How unified and comprehensive are "whole-school" approaches?
- >What contributes to depressed mood among adolescents?
- >About children in foster care
- >What is the role of school leadership in enhancing students' equity of opportunity?
- >Helping others brings children happiness
- >Student well-being and social support
- >About the Wellness Coach Model for Enhancing Student Supports

If you missed the resources and news in previous editions, 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>

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

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

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Students engage in out-of-school activities by choice, which means they take ownership of their learning. Unlike in school, where they follow a set curriculum, these activities let them explore their passions, take risks, and build relationships with peers who share their interests.... — Bibb Hubbard

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

As special ed students are integrated more at school, teacher training is evolving. General education teachers are more likely than ever to be working with students who have special needs. And a new kind of degree is also becoming more common: Dual-licensure or "unified" degree programs aim to prepare students to earn both general education and special education certification. These programs are sprouting up across the country, including at Texas A&M, Wichita State University, The Ohio State University and the University of Northern Iowa.

When teachers in training encounter questions in their internship classrooms, they can workshop them in real time with expert faculty. Challenges that come up include figuring out the appropriate learning accommodations for students with disabilities and working with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), which are legal documents that outline the services and accommodations each student is entitled to.

Continue your Career in Public Service and Shape the Future as a Maryland Educator.

Maryland needs innovative, inspiring teachers! Maryland public schools welcome professionals transitioning from federal government roles. Besides teaching, there are many operational positions in areas like finance, human resources, safety and security, food services, transportation, and facilities management. Reach out to your local school system to learn more about available opportunities. Discover exciting career opportunities at the Maryland State Department of Education! Explore available positions and learn more about how you can contribute to shaping the future of Maryland's students.

Thousands of educators, parents, families, students, and community leaders send a message to federal, state, and local elected officials around the nation – holding hundreds of walk-in events throughout the country in support of the strong public schools and other protections students and communities need to thrive. Walk-ins are positive actions where parents, educators, students, grandparents, caregivers, and families, along with neighbors and community leaders, gather in front of their school 30-45 minutes before the school day begins to discuss what they want for the school and community. Walk-ins are used to celebrate positive achievements, collaborate with school officials, or protest harmful school conditions and policies.

Telling the Class of 2025's story since 2012. Oregon Public Broadcasting has been following 27 students since they were in first grade as part of the Class of 2025 project to track the state's progress toward 100% high school graduation. Over that time, many of them have changed schools, sometimes more than once. Kids have endured divorce and domestic violence, job losses and even tragic deaths. At the same time, they've become older brothers or favorite aunts, peer confidants and language interpreters. They've learned what they're good at — and worked on what's hard. The class of 2025 navigated middle school during a pandemic. Students confronted the significant learning and social challenges of doing school from home, as they dealt with teen life without the usual in-person network of friends and teachers. Now in their senior year, there's a lot students have on their plate — everything from what to wear to prom to what comes next after graduation.

Playing catchup: more school kids falling behind since Covid. In more conservative states, there continue to be concerted pushes for school choice expansions. In more liberal states, there are calls for increased public school funding and high teacher pay. On Feb. 27, Idaho Gov. Brad Little, a Republican, approved a new \$50 million school choice tax credit program which allows for \$5,000 tax credits for as many as 50,000 students not attending public schools. The Idaho Education Association teachers union opposes the vouchers.

In Wisconsin, the statewide teachers union is more supportive of Democratic Gov. Tony Evers' education plans — including an \$80 million push for literacy tutors and coaches.

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From the above story “Telling the Class of 2025’s story since 2012.”

There’s this stereotype that ... teenagers are going to be influenced to do bad things, but the evidence suggests that teenagers are just as likely to support and form relationships around really pro-social things, like academics. There’s that opportunity to provide that sense of belonging in school and the opportunity to have those supports for what you’re doing in your classes.... Melissa Witkow, a psychology professor at Willamette University.

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>Comments and sharing from the field

Responses to *So much is changing: Where do schools need to go from here?*

- >“I appreciate your informative newsletters. Despite our current political climate and the looming threats - please continue the invaluable work that you do.”
- >“I think one implication of the times we are in is that it might be wise to assume ALL students are disconnected, disengaged, and trauma-beset. That's the tactic we are taking with our SEL/SECD work. I think this is consistent with your approach to school-wide transformation. What I think it ‘adds’ is that it's not for the sake of any subgroups ... it's for the sake of ALL students, no matter how ‘advantaged’ they otherwise seem to be....”

Response to *How Important is What This Middle School Student Has to Say?*

>“I wish to deeply express my sincere thanks for the opportunity to hear what students are feeling about Middle School. I wish to extend my gratitude. My aim is to make certain that I am giving correct support. Students need that more than ever”

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

*I thought you'd be happy that the
end of the school year is nearly here.*



But so are report cards.

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