

Students & Schools: Moving Forward

(November, 2023 Vol. 28 #2) – 37 Years & Counting

Featured

Want to address learning loss for all students?

Build a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System of Learning Supports

Also in this issue

>Quick links to online resources

>A Few Stories Excerpted from Various News Sources

>Comments and sharing from the field

Want to address learning loss for all students?

Build a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System of Learning Supports

About learning loss: a recent news report cites teachers as saying:

I've never seen anything like it!

What are schools doing about it. A major emphasis naturally is on “high-dosage tutoring.” And there is a continuing emphasis on improving instruction and curricula, with special concern for cultural and other group and individual differences and social emotional learning and enhanced use of technology. More mental health services and mentoring also are being advocated.

Good stuff for some students, but not enough for the majority in need.

As always, too little attention is being paid to enhancing the school’s role in addressing barriers to learning and teaching by developing a more potent approach to providing student/learning supports.

*School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students.
But when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.*

Carnegie Task Force on Education

Every school has some resources devoted to addressing barriers to learning and teaching. Some devote as much as 25% of their budget to such concerns. But in most schools, student and learning supports are fragmented and marginalized and focused on a relatively few students with major behavior, learning, and emotional problems.

A unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports is essential for enabling all students to have an equal opportunity for success at school. Such a system encompasses resources, strategies, and practices that provide physical, social, emotional, and cognitive supports in the classroom and schoolwide. In developing the system, schools can build on current adoptions of MTSS by

- (1) turning the continuum into three overlapping intervention subsystems that link school and community interventions in ways that integrate, coordinate, and weave resources together **AND**
- (2) coalescing the laundry list of fragmented programs and services into a circumscribed set of domains of support.

(See references at https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

Ready to Move Forward? Go to:

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

Our public schools are the heart of our communities, the sites of our Friday Night Lights rituals and a source of hope for children in our state... It's not because every teacher or school is perfect and not because every effort to support our students is successful. They're not. But I know every child matters, most teachers are giving it their all, and my own child's future depends on the well-being of the children around him. – Daphne Hoffacker

>Quick Links to Online Resources

The Costs of Caring: Navigating Material Challenges When Adults Informally Host Youth Facing Homelessness

Examining holistically the experiences of mentors in school-based programs: A logic analysis

The Development of Early Adolescents' Social Perspective Taking

The Chronicle of Evidence based Mentoring

Behavioral threat assessment in schools

Why Schools Must Focus on Tech-Free Experiences Too

Race bias and gender bias in the diagnosis of psychological disorders

Sexual Health Facilitators' Guide to Responding to Youth's Questions About Sex

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

- >What's the current state of student supports? the future?
- >Community Schools and MTSS Provide a Platform for Transforming Student/Learning Supports
 - >Why are school-community collaborations so difficult to establish and maintain?
 - >Can schools counter hate?
 - >"Has the pandemic changed the way we build teens' self-esteem?" asks a high school student
- >Updates on How Hawai'i schools and communities are supporting students/family/staff in the aftermath of the Maui fire
- >How should a parent respond when a school's practice undermines their child's positive attitudes?
- >Providing housing for homeless students by districts and communities

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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All children start their school careers with sparkling imaginations, fertile minds, and a willingness to take risks with what they think. — Ken Robinson

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

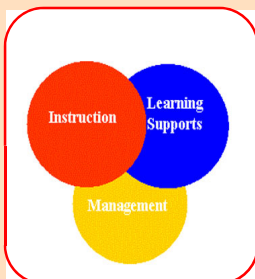
> job and training opportunities
when available
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm>

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



Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to promoting whole child development, advancing social justice, and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.

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America has always been at its best when we understand that diversity is our promise - not our problem. – Congressman Elijah Cummings

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

8th grade woodshop class building tiny home for family in need. As part of their woodshop class, eighth-grade students at Nicolas Junior High School in Fullerton are building a tiny home that will eventually benefit a homeless family in their school district. Jeremy Davis with the Fullerton School District said, "Our goal is to help transition a family from being homeless into a place where five months down the road, they've saved up enough that they can then transition into permanent housing, and another family could come in."

The 192-square-foot home will be built on an 8X24 trailer to fit a queen-sized loft bed, one pull-out smaller bed, a full bathroom, a kitchenette, and a small desk area. Thanks to some grant money and a bit of mentoring from a few engineers and construction experts, the build promises to be a beneficial undertaking for the kids and the community. Taking the experience a step further, another group of students is working on a documentary about how the tiny home came to be.

There's good news on mental health as new school year starts. Three and a half years after the pandemic halted in-classroom education, scrambling the worlds of students throughout the country, parents are seeing a rebound in their children's mental health. As the new school year starts, parents are reporting that their kids are improving academically, too. A new Harris Poll of parents and legal guardians of school-age children confirms the pandemic's widespread impact. Roughly a third of respondents say their child's emotional health and behavioral health suffered because of the pandemic, while 43% say it hurt their child's social development. At the same time, though, almost half of all parents say their child's emotional, behavioral, social and physical health has improved over the past year.

Schools fine-tune services to address influx of migrant students. As hundreds of thousands of migrant students enroll in U.S. schools annually, districts are responding in a variety of ways to help welcome students to schools, as well as support their academic and social needs once they are enrolled. Chicago Public Schools said it is working with urgency to enroll newcomer students. It has deployed mobile units to local police stations and other temporary shelters in recent weeks to ensure all children are provided access to services.

The district also launched a pilot welcome center to streamline delivery of services for a specific area of the city. It organized transportation from shelters in other parts of the city to the welcome center in an effort to serve families while still ensuring that children are enrolled in schools near their shelters, according to the district.

Fueled by teacher shortages, 'Zoom-in-a-room' makes a comeback. Live, online instruction in school has long linked students to subjects they couldn't otherwise take, like A.P. Calculus or Latin. But as districts struggle to fill teaching vacancies, they are increasingly turning to companies like Proximity to teach core subjects. Districts are spending thousands, sometimes millions, of dollars on virtual teachers. The practice — derided at the height of the pandemic as "Zoom-in-a-room" — is raising eyebrows as students return to school and continue to grapple with the lingering effects of remote learning. A dozen companies offering virtual teaching have reached "meaningful scale." Given shortages, district leaders insist a virtual teacher is better than none at all.

First underground school to be built. Ukraine's first underground school will be built in the north-eastern city of Kharkiv. More than 360 educational facilities have been destroyed and over 3,000 damaged since the start of 2022. Only a third of Ukraine's schoolchildren currently study in-person. Many of those pupils have been forced to attend classes in underground metro stations and other makeshift shelters. The EU's Fundamental Rights Agency said many schools in the 27-member bloc were struggling to integrate children who have fled the war in Ukraine. It said there were currently about 1.3 million Ukrainian children in the EU.

Governor signs bill banning willful defiance suspensions for middle, high school students.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 274 putting an end to suspensions for “willful defiance” for middle and high school students, as well as suspensions and expulsions due to tardiness or truancy. California law already banned suspensions for “willful defiance” among elementary school students. Those opposing “willful defiance” suspensions have argued the disciplinary tool has been used as a justification to punish students for smaller infractions, such as talking back to a teacher, and disproportionately impact students of color.

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From the above story about banning suspensions:

Instead of kicking them out of school, we owe it to students to figure out what’s causing them to act out and help them fix it. The punishment for missing school should not be to miss more school. Students, especially those with behavioral issues, need to be in school where teachers and counselors can help them succeed. — California Sen. Nancy Skinner

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>Comments and sharing from the field

A couple responses to 9/28/23 editorial:

Mental Health in Schools: Why is Federal Support Focused so Narrowly?

>“I read the article on Mental health in the schools regarding narrow funding. A while back we did a lot to explore merging community services/collocating services. Joining existing funding sources to implement collocations remains a pathway to addressing student needs. Perhaps we should be reaching back and bringing forth collocation of community services. Sharing common goals can facilitate community services in our schools.”

>“Well stated. My concern is that with few exceptions, the money will disappear without a trace. Praise for your noble pursuit. I've come to think significant improvement requires wholesale change.”

Some general input:

>“In my last position as Director of Pupil Services and Special Education for a School District, I was on your student supports listserv. I am now the Director of Special Education for a cooperative education agency I would love to be added to the listserve. It was informative and useful in supporting our school district then, and I see value in sharing the information with the 38 districts I support in our region.”

>“I so appreciate all of your perseverance in supporting whole child success through these decades. I just returned from a conference and my presentation on school based mental health counseling - confidential while collaborative, was attended by over 100 and gratefully received. This shows how people across the nation agree with you.”

>“Keep spreading your message. Too few people are listening.”

We were asked to tell you about these resources

> “It is time for everyone to come together and do our part to promote suicide prevention awareness, share resources, and extend a helping hand to those who may need it most. To do our part, we have a guide on our website that explores risk factors, warning signs, and how/where to get help for students in healthcare:

Suicide Awareness & Prevention for Healthcare Students -

<https://www.edumed.org/resources/suicide-awareness-and-prevention-guide/>

We would really appreciate it if you could help more students and their support systems connect with this guide by adding it as a resource on your site. Suicide awareness and prevention begins with education, and that's what we aim to provide with this page.”

>”I am reaching out to ... share this announcement out about our upcoming Peer-to-Peer Webinar. We would love to invite school and district staff as well as school partners to join us for this informative webinar. Please feel free to share with your networks. Nov 16
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zE9_WBaOQ_au2W14RWbMeQ#/registration

About last week’s message: *Israel and Hamas conflict has schools wrestling with what to do*
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/10-26-23.pdf>

We received a number of responses, but only one suggesting resources to help schools, It came from a County Superintendent. Here’s what she sent:

“If you scroll down you will see a section on Crisis Conversations, with suggestions about how to have discussions with young people. I think there are any number of ideas that would be helpful to teachers and school administrators.

Support for Classroom Discussion on the Hamas-Israel War

https://icsresources.org/wp-content/uploads/Support-for-Classroom-Discussion-on-the-Hamas-Israel-War_final2.pdf

How to Talk to Children About Israel Today (video) <https://vimeo.com/873043020/00a8ecffb9>

Talking to Children About Violence in Israel <https://www.jfcs.org/?p=48219>

Also see reports, updates and analysis on antisemitism around the world.”

<https://view.adlmail.org/?qs=8ea44f5bb32b94aa3972713762a7c5b85cf4bb34d2f0d721a04802b73e3be941f477d479d1055378224e9698abab619cb8ba32e36eacbfd7e9a0ee54b3fca566fa26f9a50c5b87d6e8393f55f8653ba1>

She also offered ideas about things students can do to make themselves and others feel better. In this context, she commented: “When we do something kind, it makes the other person happier. It makes us happier too!”

Students can:

- Take on chores for which they get paid, and donate the money to a good cause.
- Set up a lemonade stand, or bake cookies, or knit/crochet small animals and sell them; then donate the money to a good cause.
- Donate their baby sitting money to a good cause

A few other things they can do, which don't involve money, include:

- Tutor a younger child who needs help with reading or math
- Invite a child who is standing alone to join in a game
- Volunteer at an animal shelter
- Help others at school, at home, in the neighborhood
- Compliment others at school, at home, in the neighborhood
- Smile at people; it's contagious!

Something else they can do that will make them feel better about the world:

- Think about 3 things they are grateful for before going to sleep
- Keep a journal of all the nice things that happen to them, and/or the nice things they've done for others

Why do you look so sad?



They said at school I have a disease called learning loss!

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

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