Students & Schools: Moving Forward*

April, 2019 (Vol. 23 #7) – *33 Years & Counting*

What's Here

Quick Links to Resources from Across the Country

A special focus on

Helping Students and Families Plan Transitions to a New Grade/New School

About transforming student/learning supports

Comments, requests, information, questions from the field

and more

Concerned about addressing barriers to student learning and teaching & re-engaging disconnected students? about equity of opportunity? about whole child development? about school climate? All that and more is our focus.

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We encourage you to forward this to others. If this has been forwarded and you want to receive it directly, contact: Ltaylor@ucla.edu
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For more on resources from our national Center, see
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

Quick Links to Resources from Across the Country

A few relevant special reports and journal publications

>*Future Savings: The Economic Potential of Successful Transitions From Foster Care to Adulthood* https://www.aecf.org/resources/future-savings/

>*Preparing School Leaders for Success* https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2812.html

>*Adolescent Development Explained* http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/explained

>*School and Society in the Age of Trump* https://idea.gseis.ucla.edu/publications/school-and-society-in-age-of-trump

>Adolescent Risk Behavior: Differentiating Reasoned And Reactive Risk-taking (2019). J. Maslowsky. O. Owotomo, E. Huntley, & D. Keating. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 48*, 243–255 https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10964-018-0978-3.pdf

>The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies (2019) E.. Raposa, J. Rhodes, G. Stams, et al. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 48,* 423–443 https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10964-019-00982-8.pdf

>Multisystem-Involved Youth: A Developmental Framework and Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice (2019) S. Vidal, C. Connell, D. Prince, J. Tebes. *Adolescent Research Review, 4*, 15-29. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40894-018-0088-1

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It is amazing how quickly the kids learn to drive a car,
yet are unable to understand the lawnmower, snow-blower or vacuum cleaner. Ben Bergor
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A special focus on

Helping Students and Families Plan Transitions to a New Grade/New School

How are schools planning to use the coming months to facilitate successful transitions?

From the first grade-to-grade transitions to the move to middle school and high school and from special programs and to post school living and work, challenges arise that are life shaping and call for well-conceived supportive interventions. Schools do anticipate such transitions and make some efforts to assist students and their families. Ideally, the interventions foster positive expectations, help initiate development of supportive working relationships, and follow-up to ensure the transition has been a good one.

In particular, interventions are needed that

- provide closure related to what the student is leaving behind
- enhance articulation between the old and the new
- welcome newcomers and ensure they have the type of social support that facilitates positive acceptance and adjustment in the new setting
- assess transition success
- implement timely corrective interventions when transitions are not successful

For a brief overview, see
>*Transitions to and from Elementary, Middle, and High School*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/transitionstoandfrom.pdf

For a more detailed discussion, see

>*Supports for Transitions* (a chapter from *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/ch5trans.pdf

For a self-study survey, see

>*Supports for Transitions* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/transitionssurvey.pdf

For more on the topic, see the following Quick Finds:

>*Transition Programs/Grade Articulation/Welcome* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm
>*Transition to College* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/Transitiontocollege.htm

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Just when I discovered the meaning of life, they changed it. George Carlin
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About Support for a Full Range of School Related Transitions

Students are regularly confronted with a variety of transitions. Transitions can exacerbate problems or be used as natural opportunities to promote positive learning and attitudes and reduce alienation. Schools need to build their capacity to address transitions proactively and in the process be guided by their goals for enhancing personal and social functioning.

A comprehensive focus on transitions requires school-wide and classroom-based systems and programs designed to (a) enhance successful transitions, (b) prevent transition problems, and (c) use transition periods to reduce alienation and increase positive attitudes toward school and learning.

Supports for transitions encompass school-wide and classroom interventions focused on
- welcoming and on-going social support for newcomers (e.g., welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions; peer buddy programs for students, families, staff, volunteers)
- daily transitions (e.g., before school, breaks, lunch, afterschool)
- articulation for changes (e.g., grade to grade, new classrooms, new teachers; elementary to middle school; middle to high school; in and out of special education programs)
- summer or intersession opportunities (e.g., catch-up, recreation, and enrichment)
- school-to-career/higher education (e.g., counseling, pathway, and mentor programs; broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions; students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education)

All this calls for broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions (e.g., students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education) and related capacity building.

Anticipated overall outcomes are reduced alienation and enhanced motivation and increased involvement in school and learning activities. Over time, transition supports can play a major role in reducing school avoidance and dropouts, as well as enhancing the number who make successful transitions to higher education and post school living and work. Supports for transitions contribute to a caring school climate and can play a significant role in reducing student transiency.

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Did you miss the following discussions?

In March's School Practitioner Community of Practice
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm

>Connecting schools and community MH/behavioral health systems

>Cautioning legislators about mandating MH screening of students

In the Spring quarterly e-journal:
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/spring19.pdf

>Improving How Schools Address Barriers to Learning & Teaching:
  Escaping Old Ideas and Moving Beyond Current Trends
>More Police on School Campuses?
>Bringing Empirically Supported Prototypes/practices to Schools

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> Teachers and public education have been subjected to one failed experiment after another over the past decade. It's time to get back to measuring teachers and schools by the things that make them valuable and to admit that the past 10 years may have led us in some wrong directions.
>
> Mark Simon
> @#@#@##

About Transforming Student and Learning Supports
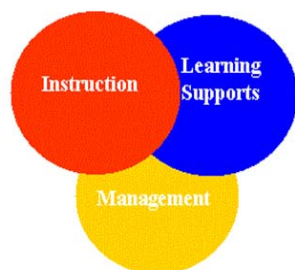
(1) **Regional education agencies**. While our discussions have emphasized states, districts, and schools, we do not want to ignore the importance of regional educational support agencies. For example, see how the Great Prairie Area Educational Agency (AEA) in Iowa has adapted the work we did with the Iowa Department of Public Instruction.
https://www.gpaea.org/services/learning-supports

(2) **Reducing barriers to learning.** We note that Kenton County (KY) reports that each school has a *Reducing Barriers to Learning committee*. "This is an inclusive committee that is comprised of teachers, assistants, parents, business partners, police, community agency representatives and other interested community members. This committee is working on school wide issues and trends that could be identified as general barriers to student learning. The overall objectives of this committee become embedded in the school's Consolidated Planning Document. Topics being explored include Staff Wellness, Relationship Issues for Students, Building a Unified School Climate, Creating Healthy Alternatives for Students and How to work effectively with your Business Partner. Interested parents and community members are urged to join their school-level Reducing Barriers to Learning committee." http://www.kenton.k12.ky.us/Content2/266

(3) **Sample of feedback on the proposed legislation:** *Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching: Ensuring a Three Component Approach to School Improvement*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/draftbill.pdf

>From a Chief State School Officer: *Thank you for keeping us in the loop on your advocacy efforts. We do incorporate many parts of your model into our current turnaround work. Much of this can be done without enabling legislation and in many instances we have enabling legislation. I have shared your work with our turnaround specialists.*

>From a state board of education member: *Thank you for your initiative on this important matter of identifying external and internal barriers to education. This is an important variable that I've been discussing for a long time with my colleagues.... Often educators seem to feel they are resigned to merely treating the symptoms of this problem of barriers as you describe, without being able to cure the disease.*

>From a state legislator: *Thank you for sending this! As a past teacher and principal I understand well the need to support children in the third component you shared.*

>From a state legislator: *This is a pretty helpful frame shift! Thanks for sending.*

Let Us Know:
  (1) About any presentations on this topic
  (2) What you see happening to transform student and 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 supports, *we can help.* Send all info to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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A conclusion is the place where you got tired of thinking.

Steven Wright

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News from around the country related to addressing barriers

1.3 Million Homeless Students: New Federal Data Show a 70 Percent Jump in K-12 Homelessness Over Past Decade, With Big Implications for Academic Performance. Utilizing data from 44 states, the report shows that students who experienced homelessness during the 2016-17 school year had a graduation rate of 64 percent — compared with a 77.6 percent graduation rate among other low-income students, and a national average of 84.1 percent.
https://www.the74million.org/1-3-million-homeless-students-new-federal-data-show-a-70-percent-jump-in-k-12-homelessness-over-past-decade-with-big-implications-for-academic-performance/

What do you do for hundreds of homeless students? You open a Family and Youth Resource Center! North Thurston Public Schools (WA), the largest school district in Thurston County with more than 14,000 students, also has a real-world problem faced by communities and school districts throughout the country: homelessness. The district was home to nearly 900 homeless students during the 2017-18 school year. The plan is to open a Family and Youth Resource Center which is envisioned as a one-stop destination for school supplies, food and clothing, but also as a place to do laundry, take a shower and to potentially meet with other social service providers. There were 886 homeless students in the district last year. The majority of them were considered to be "doubled-up" with friends or family members, but others also were in shelters, or not sheltered (living in a car or tent), or living out of hotels and motels, district data show. Over the past decade, the number of homeless students has increased from around 300 to close to 900. Some of that increase can be attributed to the district being more diligent about identifying homeless students, but other factors include the lingering effects of the Great Recession, followed by the affordable housing crisis.
https://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article226231970.html

Schools get creative with classroom seating. Walk into Jeff Conner's classroom at Union High School (Evergreen, WA) and you'll wonder if you've entered a Silicon Valley tech startup rather than a geometry class. Students sprawled out on a couch, leaning over small, circular tables. Others sat at tables with large whiteboards for surfaces. More still sat at desks that could be propped into a standing position. It's an example of how Evergreen Public Schools ... is looking at creative seating options for students as it moves ahead building new schools and renovating existing campuses. Though the 26,000-student district is still in the early phases of planning and designing new buildings, renderings featuring poufs and couches suggest straight-backed chairs and desks in rows are a thing of the past. The district contracted with David Jakes, a former teacher turned consultant, to design and pilot new classroom furniture and layouts in several classrooms. Jakes said he was tasked with designing classrooms that reflect the personalized learning the district is developing — the idea that students are encouraged to make choices about how they learn.
https://www.columbian.com/news/2019/mar/06/evergreen-public-schools-gets-creative-with-classroom-seating/

Social media linked to rise in mental health disorders in teens, survey finds. Mental health issues have risen significantly over the last decade and the rise of digital media may be one reason why, according to a national survey. The research, published by the American Psychological Association, found sharp increases in the number of young adults and adolescents who reported experiencing negative psychological symptoms — specifically in those born in 1995 or later, known as iGen.

Coincidentally, the greatest spike in symptoms occurred in 2011, around the same time social media bursts onto the scene. No corresponding increase was observed in older adults. Recent studies have shown that more social media use is associated with increased reported symptoms of social anxiety, social isolation, and feelings of loneliness.
https://www.nbcnews.com/health/mental-health/social-media-linked-rise-mental-health-disorders-teens-survey-finds-n982526

You do all you can: Beauregard High School students working to rebuild after deadly tornado. Like hundreds of high school kids, 3 p.m. on Sunday 3/3/19 changed their lives forever. The days ahead will be about helping everyone else pick up the pieces. While emergency service crews, volunteers, politicians, cell-phone companies, and professional crisis aid centers descend into this small city within Lee County (AL), there is one group of people that is working as hard as any of the rest. It's the community of high school students who call this town home. These kids have been thrust right in the middle of one of Alabama's most tragic national disasters.
https://www.al.com/news/2019/03/beauregard-high-school-kids-working-to-rebuild-town-after-deadly-tornado.html

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Quote from Alabama tornado story:

The best I could do was help clean up, and help get their lives back together. We're not rich around here. We can't buy people new houses. I mean, we could offer people places to stay, but that's about it. You just feel bad. You do all you can to help.

Nathan Ferguson, high school football player

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## A Request and a Few Comments about the Center's Resources

>*I am thinking about creating a guided interview or assessments for staff working with adolescents struggling with attendance. It is my concern that our current well intentioned discovery interviews with young people miss some of the more intersectional and granular reasons for lack of attendance and so interventions are often not specific enough, collaborative enough or durable enough. I am not finding a comprehensive assessment online that covers the salient points that drive the problem of low attendance. In my agency, interviews and mentoring related to attendance are implemented by clinical and non-clinical staff so I am seeking to create a brief assessment to be conducted by staff that will allow for a more robust discovery phase and for targeted interventions to be implemented.* **[Send responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu]**

>In reading *Emerging Insights from States' Efforts to Strengthen Social and Emotional Learning* by Linda Dusenbury and Roger P. Weissberg (https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CSI-Insights.pdf), we were pleased to see the following comment from one state:

>*Thought some of you might find the work of Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor interesting as you work on SEL. They were instrumental in helping form our foundation for Learning Strategies and Supports that are now part of our growing MTSS process across the state.*

>*Just wanted to say I've taught a mental health in schools course for school psychologists since 2005. You've become my most reliable source for keeping that course current and teaching trends and issues in my program. It''s become possible to perfectly structure that course using only the resources you''ve provided. Well done, your efforts make a difference.*

>*I just wanted to reach out and thank you for the fantastic newsletters I was able to access online that were related to student attendance. I am definitely appreciative of the resources and knowledge provided on the UCLA website. Thank you so much for your work.*
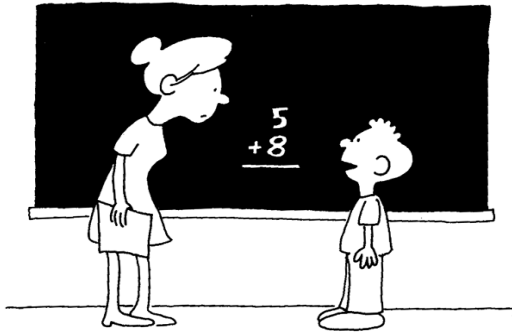
There already are so many problems in the world I really don't think you should be introducing another one.

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*Information is online about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

Also online are two free books

Improving School Improvement
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

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The solution to adult problems tomorrow depends in large measure upon how our children grow up today. Margaret Mead

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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

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