

Students & Schools: Moving Forward*

July, 2019 (Vol. 23 #10) – 33 Years & Counting

What's Here

Quick Links to Resources from Across the Country

A special focus on

Helping School Staff Learn More about:

>Learning Supports

>Providing Special Assistance In the Classroom

Transforming student/learning supports

>How Well Do State Legislatures Focus on Improving School Efforts to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching?

>Some Notes

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.**



We encourage you to forward this to others. If this has been forwarded and you want to receive it directly, contact: Ltaylor@ucla.edu



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 resources, reports, and journal publications

Children Affected by Trauma Selected States Report Various Approaches and Challenges to Supporting Children <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/698684.pdf>

The Condition of Education 2019 <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>

Child care and early education <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/698961.pdf>

What Teens Need from Schools <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/current-issue.aspx>

Empowering Change Agents: Youth Organizing Groups as Sites for Sociopolitical Development(2019) C. Nicholas, H. Eastman-Mueller, N. Barbitch. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 63, 46-60. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15732770/2019/63/1-2>

The Under- and Over-Identification of Autism: Factors Associated With Diagnostic Referral (2019) I. Smith, D. Swain, H. Murphy, T. Ollendick & S. White. *Journal of Clinical and Child Psychology*, 48 (3) 393-399. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28715237>

Intersection of school safety, mental health and wellness, and family and community issues (2019) Adelman, H. S., Taylor, L, Dwyer, K., Mayer. M. pages 3-28. In D. Osher, M. Mayer, R. Jagers, K. Kendziora, & L. Wood (Eds) *Keeping Student Safe and Helping them Thrive*. Praeger Publishing Co. (also available as an ebook)

>For more resources, see our website
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>
>For info on upcoming conferences, initiatives, workshops
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm>
>For info on webinars
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

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Summer: *The time of the year when parents realize just how grossly underpaid teachers actually are.*

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A special focus on –

>Helping School Staff Learn More about Learning Supports

At some time or another, most students bring problems with them to school that affect their learning and perhaps interfere with the teacher’s efforts to teach. In some geographic areas, many youngsters bring a wide range of problems stemming from restricted opportunities associated with poverty and low income, difficult and diverse family circumstances, high rates of mobility, lack of English language skills, violent neighborhoods, problems related to substance abuse, inadequate health care, and lack of enrichment opportunities. Such problems are exacerbated as youngsters internalize the frustrations of confronting barriers and the debilitating effects of performing poorly at school. In some locales, the reality often is that over 50% of students are not succeeding. And, in most schools in these locales, teachers are ill-prepared to address the problems in a potent manner. Thus, when a student is not doing well, the trend increasingly is to refer them directly for counseling or for assessment in hopes of referral for special help – perhaps even special education.

Given this state of affairs, all school staff need to learn as much as they can about learning supports.

- Teachers need to learn more about how to address interfering factors and to work with others in doing so
- Support staff need to learn more about how to work with teachers and other staff (and to do so in classrooms as much as is feasible), as well as learning how to work more productively with district and community resources to enhance practices for prevention and for responding quickly when common problems arise
- Administrators need to learn more about leading the way by expanding policy, enhancing operational infrastructure, and redeploying resources to ensure development of a comprehensive system of learning supports for addressing barriers to learning, development, and teaching

Summer also provide an opportunity to think long enough to plan better ways of doing things. In particular, it allows staff who work year round to further develop student and learning supports into a more effective system (e.g., a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports).

See the Center’s Quick Find menu of over 130 topics for links to resources that can support staff and system development – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm>

For example. see:

- >Classroom-based Learning Supports**
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/classenable.htm>
- >Transition Programs/Grade Articulation/Welcoming**
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm
- >Parent/Home Involvement and Engagement in Schools**
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/homework.htm>

For specific aids focused on system change and development, see the

- >System Change Toolkit** <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

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Over a school year, it is hard to find 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.

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A special focus on –

>Helping School Staff Learn More about Providing Special Assistance in the Classroom

The Summer issue of the Center's eJournal provides the following as a basis for staff discussion about providing more special assistance in the classroom. Topics covered:

- School Improvement Must Broaden the Approach to Response to Intervention
- Doing More to Demystify Remediation & Special Education
- Ensuring a Wide Range of Accommodations
- A note about special assistance and ESSA

Access at: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/summer19.pdf>

Did you miss the following discussions?

How prepared is your school to play an effective role when a natural disaster occurs?

What supports do schools provide to homeless student over the summer?

"Disruptive Person Letters" –Isn't there a better way to work with parents when frustrations and tensions are high?

These were explored in June as Part of the Weekly School Practitioner Community of Practice.
See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

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If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.

-Ignacio 'Nacho' Estrada

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Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Some Notes

New Policy Report

>How Well Do State Legislatures Focus on Improving School Efforts to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching and Re-engage Disconnected Students?

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Legisanal.pdf>

About the report:

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has stimulated states to revisit school improvement. Previously, our Center analyzed ESSA and the related consolidated state plans using the lens of how the federal legislation and state plans address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. Such analyses provide a critical look at school improvements meant to reduce the opportunity and achievement gaps. (Links to these previous analyses are at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>.)

The analyses of ESSA indicates the focus on student/learning supports continues to be ad hoc, piecemeal, and scattered. The analysis of state plans indicates poorly conceived approaches that continue the long-standing fragmentation and marginalization of efforts to improve how schools address barriers to learning and teaching. In general, the plans emphasize pursuing discrete problems with discrete interventions. In doing so, student and learning supports for addressing complex learning, behavior, and emotional concerns often are implemented redundantly, with

counterproductive competition for sparse resources and poor outcomes. This tends to maintain the marginalization of student and learning supports with respect to the school improvement agenda. To round out our analyses of state efforts to improve how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students, we have surveyed state legislation and this policy report highlights what we found and offers some suggestions for legislative attention.

>Some Notes

(1) From a colleague at a large high school district:

“... I believe we are making progress in our District. We now have a new Executive Director for Student and Family Services. We have never had an entire department dedicated to removing barriers to learning. I consider this a huge step in the right direction....It truly was a great experience for me to have worked with you virtually. Your guidance was invaluable to us. As a District, we seem to be reviving student services. Thank you for all the support you provided us....”

(2) The Washington DC Senior High Alliance for Parents, Principals and Educators noted: (<https://sites.google.com/site/shappesite/policy/office-of-the-state-supt-state-boe-1>)

“The State Board of Education voted on and passed the OSSE submission of the accountability plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act. As noted below in the talking points, we had hoped to see broader measures than attendance, re-enrollment, grad rates and academic performance at the high school level....”

In support of their concerns, they referenced the following from our Center at UCLA:

“ESSA Plans Continue to Give Short Shrift to Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching Need more evidence about how marginalized efforts to significantly improve student and learning supports continues to be in school improvement policy and practice? See “analyses” presented in Education Week of the state plans related to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)”

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2017/04/a_look_at_which_states_have_tu.html

Then, use our Center’s earlier analysis of ESSA for an appreciation of how the legislation and plans continue the piecemeal approach to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students and families. See “ESSA, Equity of Opportunity, and Addressing Barriers to Learning.

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/essaanal.pdf>

... If states and LEAs are to move away from existing fragmented and marginalized approaches for dealing with factors interfering with student success, they will need to use the transition to local control as a time to plan beyond the limitations of federal formulations.

As our analysis underscores, attention to transforming HOW schools can improve efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. With this in mind, the Center report also highlights frameworks and prototypes that can be used as planning aids and guides in developing a unified, comprehensive, equitable, and systemic approach for transforming student/learning supports.”

(3) Upcoming presentation in Georgia by Dr. Merrienne Dyer

<https://www.gaschoolcounselor.org/2019-pre-conference-sessions>

Topic: *System of Supports: Creating and Sustaining Healthy Schools and Communities.*

Schools, families, and communities are challenged with issues of trauma, substance abuse, poverty, mental illness, and other pervasive barriers to learning. This session will describe a systematic, school-wide approach that organizes, aligns, and integrates the work of the school to address these barriers to learning. Based on the foundational work

of Drs. Linda Taylor and Howard Adelman from the UCLA Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, the focus is on a learning supports pathway approach.

(4) A colleague notes that the work is rewarding and hard:

As a high school counselor for several years I've been following the amazing work and leadership that you provide. It's incredible work and has been instrumental in shaping more unified and intensive supports for our students. ... I have developed a stronger interest in macro interventions.... I'm wholly committed to community bridge building and believe the whole-child approach is a must. But I have first hand experience on how complicated the multi-system process can be when trying to unify supports and remove barriers to learning.

Let Us Know:

(1) **About any state legislators you think we should contact**

(2) **About efforts you know about focused on transforming student/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/learning supports, we can help. Send all info to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Life has no remote. You have to get up and change it yourself. Mark Cooper

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>Calls for grant proposals & presentations
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm>

> job and training opportunities
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm>

News from around the country related to addressing barriers

One quarter of Duval's third graders at risk of repeating third grade. Tension in Duval County Public Schools (FL) is high, with 10 failing schools... The state Department of Education released its results from the Florida Standards Assessment language arts test that third-graders throughout the state took. For context, 58 percent statewide scored a Level 3 or higher. Conversely, 25 percent in Duval scored a Level 1, deeming those students at risk to repeat third grade. The statewide percentage of Level 1 scorers is 20 percent. To move on to fourth grade, a third grader must score at least a like Lake Forest Elementary, which Level 2 or qualify for an exemption. That means exactly one quarter of Duval County's third-graders are at risk of repeating third grade.

In schools was largely criticized for its low performance at last week's Florida Board of Education meeting, more than half of the school's third-graders scored a Level 1, placing the students at risk of repeating third grade...Duval County Public Schools had 10 schools participating in a turnaround program this school year. Next school year, Superintendent Diana Greene projected 11 schools would undergo a turnaround plan.

<https://www.jacksonville.com/news/20190527/one-quarter-of-duvals-third-graders-at-risk-of-repeating-third-grade>

District using vans to enhance attendance. Detroit Superintendent Nikolai Vitti was driving through the city early one Sunday morning when the sight of church vans picking up members to take them to services gave him an idea for combating absenteeism in the district. The vans, he realized, were a way for church leaders to overcome barriers that prevent members from attending services. "I thought we needed to do the same thing as a district," Vitti said recently. The district now plans to purchase six 10-passenger vans that will serve dual purposes: In addition to providing

transportation for special education students who require door-to-door service, the vans will also be used, likely by attendance agents to pick up chronically absent students and take them to school. The vans would be assigned to schools with particularly high rates of chronic absenteeism. It's an unusual tactic that could help the district address a staggering problem: Seventy percent of district students were labeled chronically absent during the last school year, meaning they missed 18 or more days of school. This year, the district made a significant investment in combating chronic absenteeism, spending \$9 million to put an attendance agent in nearly every school. The district has also tried to address issues that might affect attendance, such as improving school culture, improving customer service, and ensuring every school has art or music classes
<https://www.freep.com/story/news/education/2019/05/28/detroit-public-schools-absent-vans/1253365001/>

Chicago Public Schools begins sending layoff notices. School officials began notifying 220 teachers and 498 support staffers that they'll lose their jobs at the end of the school year. The district says it expects most of those employees to eventually be re-hired to full-time positions elsewhere in CPS after they're laid off next month, as part of the district's "annual staff adjustment" process. The staffing shuffle happens each year as principals across the district eliminate positions in response to declining enrollment, shifting demographics, program changes, and other issues.
<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2019/5/31/18647663/cps-teacher-layoffs-cps-2019-chicago-public-schools-union-ctu>

States that spend the most (and least) on education. Schools in some states receive much larger sums of money -- up to three times more per pupil -- than in other states. Where the money comes from differs, too. And how schools opt to spend their funding varies significantly from state to state. The U.S. Census Bureau recently released its Annual Survey of School System Finances, depicting revenues and spending for all public elementary-secondary school systems in 2017. Schools in New York spent \$23,091 per pupil, the highest tally of any state, followed by the District of Columbia, Connecticut, New Jersey and Vermont. By comparison, spending totaled less than \$8,000 per student in Idaho, Oklahoma and Utah. Nationally, federal funding accounts for about 8 percent of education funding, while the rest is split nearly evenly between state and local sources.
<https://www.governing.com/topics/education/gov-state-education-spending-revenue-data.html>

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*I wish there was a way to know you're in the good ol' days
before you've actually left them.* Ed Helms

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Sharing from the field

"I wrote an article in one of our state based educational publications. The theme of the publication was next level leadership' the article is *The equitable shift toward next level leadership.*"(<https://www.scasa.org/Files/Spring%202019%20Palmetto%20Administrator.pdf>)

*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

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