

Students & Schools: Moving Forward*

May, 2019 (Vol. 23 #8) – 33 Years & Counting

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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 special reports and journal publications

- >State comparison of school improvement policies
<https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-states-school-improvement-policies/>
- >Parent and educator guide to school climate resources
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaguidetoschoolclimate041019.pdf>
- >After a school tragedy: readiness, response, recovery resources
<https://mhccnetwork.org/centers/mhcc-network-coordinating-office/after-school-tragedyreadiness-response-recovery-resources>
- >Lifestyle behavior and mental health in early adolescence (2019). K. Loewen, K. Maximova, J.P. Ekwaru, E.L. Faught, M. Asbridge, A. Ohinmaa, & P.J. Veugelers. *Pediatrics*, 143, e20183307
<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2019/04/17/peds.2018-3307>
- >The impact of school-based volunteering on social capital and self- and collective efficacy among low-income mothers (2019). M. Vidal de Haymes, S. O'Donoghue, & H. Nguyen. *Children & Schools*, 41, 79–88. <https://academic.oup.com/cs/article/41/2/79/5364049>
- >Parental divorce is not uniformly disruptive to children's educational attainment (2019). J. Brand, R. Moore, X. Song, & Y. Xie. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*. (Online)
<https://www.pnas.org/content/early/2019/03/25/1813049116>

>The social economics of adolescent behavior and measuring the behavioral culture of schools (2019). M. Wong, P. Chung, R. Hays, et al. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28, 928–940
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-018-01325-0>

>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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*Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter
and those who matter don't mind. – Dr. Seuss*

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A special focus on –

End-of-the-Year Celebrations at All Levels: Hope, Congratulations, Safe Exuberance

The end of the school year is a special time. It is a time to help students find hope for the future and experience a sense that they have accomplished something worthwhile. And it is a time to help them celebrate in ways that minimize tragedy.

The key to focusing on hope and accomplishment is to identify whatever a student has done positively, clarify how the student can build on this in coming years, and convey all this personally to the student and family. Drawing on what we know about personal motivation, the focus needs to be on specifics that can (a) enhance feelings of competence, self-determination, and connectedness to significant others, and (b) minimize messages that threaten such feelings. (See *School Engagement, Disengagement, Learning Supports, & School Climate* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schooleng.pdf> .)

With respect to end of the year celebrations, each is something to cherish, and the anticipation of 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). Of special concern are teen parties and proms. The need is to provide safe options, guidance, and support and do much more to minimize negative side effects.

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. ...1,012 died during the months of April, May and June.

From: Dangerous Season for Teens: Prom and Graduation Time Increase Alcohol Fatalities

Two Students Share a Bit about Safe End-of-the-Year Student Celebrations

Most schools try to address this concern. If a workgroup has not developed a set of ideas for countering problems, it is time to do so. And it can help to ask some recent graduates to participate with planning work groups. Here's what some recent grads have told us:

- 1) "... what my high school did toward the end of the year that was different than many other schools was the type of 'grad night' we had. Whereas many schools rent out [a local entertainment center] and have dances there and go on rides and many students get intoxicated before attending, at my school grad night was held on campus. The parents

worked it and there were different activities like fake gambling, craps tables, dancing, a smoothie bar, food, and "crash room" to sleep since it went until 5am, rock climbing, a palm reader, inflatable jumper obstacle course, face painting, karaoke and much more. When I tell friends from other high schools/friends I made at college, the majority give me positive feedback saying that it sounds like a lot more fun than what they did. I think this is because instead of having the whole [entertainment center] where groups can get separated and remain in cliques ..., it was in our gym and outside in what was called "senior park;" So it remained tight knit, so to speak, making it easier to spend time with a lot of different students and not get lost in a large area. Also, because parents worked the booths, students did not show up intoxicated. There was no re-entry allowed and because it was on campus, even if a few students did decide to drink before the event, it lessened the danger of driving on a freeway to get there because it is possible that they could simply walk over to the school. ... It was a night that I will never forget and one of my greatest memories and it was in a positive setting and a good way to have safe fun."

- 2) "In my own experience, I remember one of my teachers speaking in class about two weeks before prom and trying to give us some perspective on the event. She wanted us to have a good time, but also acknowledged the enormous stress that it caused for some people. My teacher encouraged us to view it as just another dance and to focus on graduating instead. She had chaperoned so many proms over the years and shared with us some of the very negative things she saw happen when students weren't using their best judgment. While trying to downplay the event may seem like being a killjoy to some, many of my friends and I found it reassuring to hear from an adult that life indeed does go on past these high school celebrations because most students were very much caught up in a prom and end-of-the-year craze.

I think teachers and/or counselors should engage students in conversations like these months before prom to temper the frenzy that can accompany the event and possibly prevent the unwise decisions students make at prom and post-prom parties. It is of course perfectly acceptable to be happy and excited about prom, but I think there is much potential for danger when students blow it into epic proportions. Another thing that my high school did, which looking back I now view as a wise decision, was to not have a prom queen or king. The end of the year was just too filled with other anxiety-inducing events to have so much stress and energy expended on that. We simply had a homecoming king and queen in the fall, and I think that greatly reduced the tension around prom time."

For more ideas, see *Project Celebration* <https://www.txdot.gov/driver/kids-teens/celebration.html>

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A graduation ceremony is an event where the commencement speaker tells thousands of students dressed in identical caps and gowns that 'individuality' is the key to success.

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Did you miss the following discussions?

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

- > *Personalizing interventions to address attendance problems*
- > *Cesar Chavez Day as the kick off for a year of service*
- > *Guiding and supporting volunteers at school*
- > *Mapping hot spots in schools: Working to improve school climate and prevent violence*
- > *Are we making progress in reducing mental health problems of children and youth?*

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Teacher: *Which book has helped you the most in your life?*
College Student: *My parents' check book!*

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Youth Voices

The importance of youth voices is widely acknowledged. See

>*About Student Voice and Participation* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/voice.pdf>

Our Center is fortunate to have many undergraduate voices participating in what we do. To share what we are learning from them, we have put a set of their personal experiences and perspectives online. The most recent resource is entitled:

>*A Look at Gaming Culture and Gaming Related Problems:
From a Gamer's Perspective* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/gaming.pdf>

For other personal perspective resources, you will find the following ones at

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/materials/trainingpresentation.htm#fact>

- >*A personal look at self-reliance and help seeking*
- >*A Personal Look at a Student's Selective Mutism*
- >*A personal perspective on depression among latino students*
- >*A Personal Perspective on the Teach for America Program*
- >*A University Student Reflects on the Good and Bad of Social Networking*
- >*A University Student's Perspective on Bullying Prevention in Schools*
- >*A Student-initiated, Student-run, and Student-funded Center for Retaining Underrepresented Minority University Students*
- >*A Student's Perspective of Test Anxiety*
- >*Being an International Student in the U.S.A.: In Her Own Words*
- >*Eating Disorders: Schools Might Be Adding to the Problem*
- >*First Year Transition into Higher Education: One Student's Experiences*
- >*In-Class Presentations: A Potential Barrier to Success at School?*
- >*Normalization and Popularization of Mental Illness and Its Impact: Personal Experience and a Look at Research Findings*
- >*Selective Mutism: A Student Reflects on Her Misdiagnosis, Experiences, and Outcomes*
- >*Student Perceptions of School Physical Education Programs*

We also have developed many resources from special projects undertaken by graduate and undergraduate students working in the center. See

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/materials/trainingpresentation.htm#fact>

And as a resource for understanding youth subcultures, we have a series of information resources on online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/youth/youthintro.pdf>

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I didn't graduate with honors. I was honored just to graduate. - Melanie White

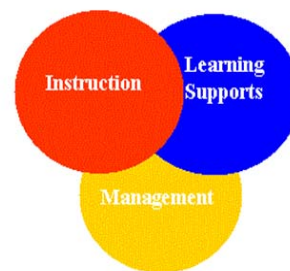
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About Transforming Student and Learning Supports

(1) Former Superintendent of Gainesville City Schools (GA) Merrienne Dyer presented at the 2019 ASCD conference. She focused on:

>*Addressing Mental Health: Providing a System for Support and Learning* https://e19.ascd.org/conference_schedule_new.cfm

Abstract: Educators are challenged to address the barriers to learning presented by issues of mental health. Efforts to support students often result in fragmented services that interrupt classroom learning. This session described a system of expanded, or schoolwide, mental health supports that organizes, aligns, and integrates mental health supports in instructional practices and school organization. Based on the foundational work of Drs. Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor at UCLA, she offered research- and evidence-based examples of how schools can support positive mental health for both students and adults. She identified organizational elements and specific strategies to promote mental health and provide social-emotional supports, identify shared family-school-community designs for wrap-around services, and include students and other stakeholders in the process.



See also, the case study of Gainesville City Schools efforts to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students – <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/face/pdf/my-books/gacasestudy2013.pdf>

(2) Here is a synthesis of what has been reported by districts as they have moved to create an operational infrastructure for unifying and developing a comprehensive and equitable system of learning/student supports:

1. At the district-level, they have established and institutionalized a *Learning Supports Leadership Team* under a director of learning supports (e.g., an assistant superintendent) to frame and facilitate development of the system.

>The leadership team includes an administrative leader for learning supports, staff involved with efforts to address barriers to learning, a community resources representative, a bargaining unit representative, student and parent representatives (when appropriate and feasible), others who have a particular interest and ability to help with the functions.

>Examples of team functions are: (a) aggregating data across students and from teachers to analyze school needs, (b) mapping resources at school and in the community, (c) analyzing resources and formulating priorities for system development, (d) recommending how resources should be deployed and redeployed, (e) unifying and coordinating resources and connecting with community resources, (f) planning and facilitating ways to strengthen and develop the system, (g) developing strategies for enhancing resources, (h) establishing work groups as needed, and (i) social marketing.

The team is fully integrated with the infrastructure mechanisms focused on instruction and management/governance.

2. At every school, the district facilitates establishment and institutionalization of a *Learning Supports Leadership Team* under a director of learning supports (e.g., an assistant principal). The team composition and functions parallel those described for the district-level.

For a detailed guide, see:

>*Key Leadership Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Student & Learning Supports* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf

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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With careful planning and preparation, our staff likes to be spontaneous.

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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

NY budget to boost after-school programs for at-risk kids. New York's new state budget includes more dollars for after-school programs for the state's most vulnerable children. The \$175.5 billion spending plan includes \$10 million in new funds to support after-school programming for more than 6,000 additional students. The money will target communities with high levels of gang activity, with a special focus on homeless students and those at risk of being recruited into a gang. Nearly 75,000 students are already participating in similar after-school programs around the state.

https://www.richmond.com/news/ap/ny-budget-to-boost-after-school-programs-for-at-risk/article_fabb863b-d3e3-5b69-80d4-448127c23836.html

California's public schools enrollment down, Hispanic and charter school students on the rise.

Overall enrollment is down from 6.24 million in 2014–15 to 6.19 million in 2018–19, a decrease of 0.8 percent. Also during that time, the percentage of white students decreased from 24.6 percent to 22.9 percent and the percentage of black students decreased from 6 percent to 5.4 percent. However, between 2014–15 and 2018–19, the percentage of Hispanic/Latino students increased from 53.6 percent to 54.6 percent, a trend that has held for several years as California's demographics continue to a shift the state toward a so-called "majority-minority" population. For enrollment in charter and noncharter schools over a four-year span, the numbers broke down this way: While overall enrollment non-charter schools is decreasing between 2014–15 and 2018–19, enrollment in charter schools has increased from 9.2 percent to 10.6 percent of the public school population statewide.

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/04/01/state-number-of-hispanic-charter-school-students-on-the-rise/>

Career fair focuses on jobs outside college paths. With a focus on students who aren't committed to a four-year college, the second annual Career and Education Opportunity Fair at Manchester (CT) High School's gym connected high school students with local leaders in technical education, public service careers, and apprenticeships. The school's guidance counselors ensured that all seniors who weren't yet set on a college program for the fall would attend the fair, and it was also opened up to juniors and college-bound seniors who wanted to explore their options. Hayes said the fair had about 60 tables of programs and hundreds of students attending.

https://www.journalinquirer.com/towns/manchester/career-fair-focuses-on-jobs-outside-college-paths/article_d933c182-5a19-11e9-bb22-379f761f01b3.html

More education studies look at cost-effectiveness. Foundations, policymakers, and even the U.S. Department of Education's research agency are pushing for more tools and research to help educators understand the costs of education programs.... Beginning this grant cycle, the federal Institute of Education Sciences formally required all future evaluation studies to analyze the costs to implement an intervention, including staff, training, equipment and materials, and other expenses, both at the start of and to maintain the programs over time.

https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2019/04/10/more-education-studies-look-at-cost-effectiveness.html?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Issue:%202019-04-10%20K-12%20Education%20Dive%20New%20letter%20%5Bissue:20336%5D&utm_term=Education%20Dive:%20K12

Federal data show decreasing rates of bullying and violence in schools. Despite perceptions that schools are less safe, data show that bullying, violence and crime have decreased in the 20 years since the Columbine High School shooting. The percentage of students in grades nine through 12 who reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during the previous 12 months decreased from 9% in the 2000-01 school year to 6% in 2016-17 school year. During that same time, the percentage of students ages 12 to 18 who reported being afraid of being attacked or harmed at school decreased from 6% to 4%, as did the percentage of students who reported that gangs were present at their school, from 20% to 9%. Overall, the percentages of public schools recording incidents of crime and reporting incidents to the police were lower in the 2015-16 school year than in every prior survey year to date.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2019-04-17/20-years-after-columbine-shooting-federal-data-show-bullying-violence-and-crime-in-schools-is-down>

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We can't do everying at once, but we can do something at once. – Calvin Coolidge

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Comments and sharing from the field

(1) We received this comment related to the 4/10 practitioner discussion about supporting volunteers:

The primary reason tutors have limited success with "unmotivated" students or students who see no relevance in the subject matter is because the tutors receive no training in active listening. The typical tutor's response to the "negative" viewpoints of the person being tutored is to defend against, convince with argument, or even lecture the student as to why that student's viewpoint is wrongheaded, shortsighted or lacking. Instead, if the tutor were to work towards fully understanding the view, paraphrasing it back, and working towards a deeper conversation about that position, the tutor would not only gain better rapport, but also start the process of helping the person set realistic goals, develop ideas as to how to achieve those goals, and increase motivation to achieve them.

(2) We were asked to share this:

I have enjoyed the articles on your site (particularly related to parents and community involved in schools). I am an educator of 26 years in Fresno Unified School District and have been a teacher, vice principal, principal, and currently serving as the district administrator in the parent involvement office ("Parent University"). I would like to submit an article I wrote a couple years ago for the ACSA publication (Leadership magazine) about the difference between communicating and connecting with parents.

We did add this article to our Quick Find on *Parent/Home Involvement* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/homework.htm>

**Information is online about the*

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

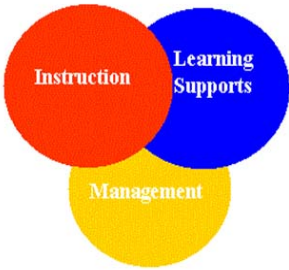
Also online are two free books

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