



ENEWS

A Monthly Forum for Sharing and Interchange



October, 2008 (Vol. 13 #1)

ENEWS is one of the many resources provided by the School Mental Health Project/ Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. This electronic newsletter is sent to those concerned with enhancing policies, programs, and practices related to addressing barriers to student learning and to promoting mental health in schools. For more on what our federally supported national Center offers, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>



We encourage you to forward this to others. If you have been forwarded this ENEWS and want to sign up to receive it directly, please let us know.

Contact smhp@ucla.edu



WHAT'S HERE THIS MONTH

****Emerging Issue**

>Are Student/Learning Supports Being Disproportionately Cut in the Current Budget Crunch?

****News from around the country**

****Recent publications relevant to**

>Children's mental and physical health

>Family, school & community

>Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics

****This month's focus for school to address barriers to learning**

>October – Ensuring All Students Make a Good Adjustment to the New School Year

****Other helpful Internet resources**

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>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops

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****Comments, requests, information, questions from the field**



EMERGING ISSUE

>Are Student/Learning Supports Being Disproportionately Cut in the Current Budget Crunch?

Even before the current budget crisis, student/learning supports often were among the first to go when budgets were tight. Currently, school boards and district administrators are making hard decisions about what to cut and who to lay off. The re-emerging issue is: Is there a tendency to cut-back on student/learning supports disproportionately? If so, is this tendency exacerbated by the belief that community agencies can be used in place of the programs and services that are cut?

The issue isn't about the cuts, per se. When budgets are tight, tough decisions have to be made.

The issues are (1) whether the cuts are disproportionate and, if so, (2) whether the rationale underlying the decisions is sound.

Some thoughts related to this matter have been offered in connection with the Center's latest Hot Topic online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/hottopic.htm>

We look forward to hearing from you about this matter which has major implications for addressing psychosocial and mental health concerns that affect the well-being of all students and all school stakeholders. Send your comments to ltaylor@ucla.edu



**NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

Financial Cutbacks for Schools; Financial Crisis for Families and Students

While budgets cutting is inevitable, it must be acknowledged that every cut in resources to a school exacerbates harm to children. And, this is especially the case for schools serving low-income families and for every student who is not doing well at school.

>SCHOOLS BRACING FOR HUGE CUTBACKS

With the state facing a projected \$900 million budget shortfall by 2011, education officials are considering some of the most severe cuts to public schools in Hawaii in recent memory. The department was notified of about \$5.7 million that has been removed from its budget by the state Department of Budget and Finance. 9/22/08.

<http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2008809220331>

>FUNDING CUTS PUT SCHOOLS ON DEFENSIVE AGAIN

After erasing the money for innovation and improvement, the state [Nevada] cut another 14% statewide. Cuts were made to programs for gifted and talented student, career and technical education and other programs that have helped students graduate and find success in life. Many schools now say their fir2st priority is making sure a child has food, shelter and medical care, necessary precursors to academic success. 8/28/08.

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2008/aug/28/funding-cuts-put-schools-defensive-again/>

>HARD TIMES HITTING STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

With mortgage foreclosures throwing hundreds of families out of their homes each month, dismayed school officials say they are feeling the upheaval: record numbers of students turning up for classes this fall are homeless or poor enough to qualify for free meals. In interviews, educators in many states said they were seeing more needy families than at any time in memory. The problems in many districts can be traced to battered state budgets. Nationally, about 15 million (of 50 million) students qualify for free lunches (family of four with include under \$27,560). 9/1/08. <http://www.nytimes.com>

>A PLACE TO LEARN, NO PLACE TO LIVE

In Minneapolis, teachers have recently been trained to watch for students who hoard food or wear the same outfit for several days, both signs of homelessness. Minneapolis estimates that about 5,500 of its 35,000 students – about one out of six – are homeless or lack permanent housing at some point during the school year. That’s up 18% over the year before. Roughly 80 % of Minneapolis’ homeless kids spend at least part of the year in local shelters, while others jump between motels, homes of friends or relatives and other temporary homes. Recent achievement data indicate that homeless students are more likely to fall behind than other low-income students. 9/8/08. <http://www.startribune.com>

>A TEACHABLE MOMENT

Diane Ravitch, a historian of education who has spent decades studying and writing about the often dispiriting process of school reform said... “The fundamental issue in American education - I say this after 40 years of having read and studied and written about the problems - is one that is demographic” Poor children, Ravitch said, simply face too many problems outside the classroom. “If you don’t buttress whatever happens in school with social and economic changes that give kids a better chance in life and put their families on a more stable footing, then schools alone are not going to solve the problems of poor student performance. There has to be a range of social and economic strategies to support and enhance whatever happens in school.” 8/14/08 <http://www.nytimes.com>

Increasing Focus on Dropout Prevention

>DROPOUT PERSUASION

While students are legally permitted to drop out of school once they turn 16, Baltimore schools chief Andres Alonso says it’s unacceptable that they’re allowed to go without a fight. The system will host two daylong resource fairs with a variety of social service providers on hand to address the obstacles preventing them from finishing high school, from drug addiction to lack of transportation to lack of child care. The system will work with over-age students to find an appropriate placement. Any dropouts who return will be provided with an individualized re-entry plan outlining the support the student is to receive. 9/19/08. <http://www.baltimoresun.com>

>SOME CALIFORNIA DROPOUTS FINISH HIGH SCHOOL BUT DON’T SUCCEED BEYOND

One in five California students who dropped out of 10th grade in 2004 returned to school and earned their diploma within four years. A slightly smaller percentage earned a high school

equivalency degree. In all, 54% received some sort of high school degree or were still in school working toward that goal. But few were progressing past that. 90% had either never enrolled in college or had enrolled and dropped out. 9/12/08. <http://www.latimes.com>

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“Dropping out is more of a process than an event...and there are a lot of telltale signs along the way. It means there are a lot of places in a child’s school career where we could intervene to help. It really is going to take some systemic change. Anything short of that is not going to be that successful ultimately.”

Russell Rumberger

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Note: Each week the Center highlights newsworthy stories online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/newsitems.htm>

Also access other news stories relevant to improving mental health in schools through links at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/linkstolatest.htm>



RECENT PUBLICATIONS (IN PRINT AND ON THE WEB)

Children’s Mental and Physical Health

- >School-based mental health checkups: Ready for practical action? (2008) S. Shirk & N. Jungbluth. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 15(3) 217-223.
- >Violent adolescents and their educational environment: A multilevel analysis (2008) J. Thurnherr, J., et al., *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*. Epub. <http://www.jrnldbp.com>
- >Adolescent nonsuicidal self-injury: Who is doing it and why? (2008) E. Lloyd-Richardson. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, 29, 216-218. <http://www.jrnldbp.com>
- >Social skills training for secondary students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders: A review and analysis of the meta-analytic literature. (2008) R. Clayton, et al., *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 16(3) 131-144. <http://ebx.sagepub.com>
- >Children’s stigmatization of childhood depression and ADHD: Magnitude and demographic variation in a national sample (2008) J. Walker, et al., *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 47(8) 912-920. <http://www.Jaacap.com>
- >Examining ethnic, gender, and developmental differences in the way children report being a victim of “bullying” on self-report measures (2008). A. Sawyer, et al., *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 43(2) 106-114. <http://www.sciencedirect.com>

Family, School and Community

>Coping with youth suicide and overdose: One community's efforts to investigate, intervene, and prevent suicide contagion. (2008) K. Hacker, et al. *Crisis*, 29(2) 86-95. <http://www.hhpublish.com/journals/crisis/>

>*Strengthening parents' ability to provide the guidance and support that matter most in high school* (2008) T. Taylor & J. Dounay. Educational Commission of the States. <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/78/48/7848.pdf>

>Family partnerships that count (2008) J. Allen. *Educational Leadership*, 66(1) p. 22-27. <http://www.ascd.org>

>Children and terrorism-related news: Training parents in coping and media literacy. (2008) J. Comer, et al., *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 76(4) 568-578. <http://www.apa.org/journals/ccp.html>

>School violence assessment: A conceptual framework, instruments, and methods. (2008) R. Benbenishty, et al., *Children & Schools*, 30(2) 71-81.

Policy, Systems, Law, Ethics, Finances & Statistics

>*Present, engaged, and accounted for: The critical importance of addressing chronic absence in the early grades* (2008) H. Chang & M. Romero, National Center for Children in Poverty, <http://www.nccp.org>

>Recommendations to reduce psychological harm from traumatic events among children and adolescents. (2008) Task Force on Community Preventive Services. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 35(3) 314-316. <http://sciencedirect.com>

>*Service-learning policies and practices: A research-based advocacy paper* <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/78/58/7858.pdf>

>*Impacts of early childhood programs* (2008) E. Issacs & E. Roessel, Brookings. <http://www.brookings.edu>

>*Reversal of Fortune: A New Look at Concentrated Poverty in the 2000s*. (8/8/08) E. Kinesbone & A. Berube. Brookings. <http://www.brookings.edu>

>An interdisciplinary model of school absenteeism in youth to inform professional practice and public policy (2008) C. Kearney. *Educational Psychology Review*, 20(3) 257-282. <http://www.metapress.com>

>*Use of mental health services in the past 12 months by children aged 4-17 years: United States, 2005-2006*. (2008) G. Simpson, et al., National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/>

>Disseminating evidence-based practice for children and adolescents: A systems approach to enhancing care. American Psychological Association, Task Force on Evidence-based Practice with Children and Adolescents (2008)

<http://www.apa.org/pi/cyf/evidence.html>

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“Now a larger number of low income people live amid the circumstances that we need to be concerned about...that high poverty brings, which includes lack of investment, lack of local job opportunities, poorer performing schools, higher crime rates, and the poor physical and mental health that goes along with all of those problems.”

Alan Berube

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Note: The Quick Find online clearinghouse at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> is updated regularly with new reports and publications such as those listed above. Currently there are over 130 alphabetized topic pages with direct links to Center materials and to other online resources and related centers. Let us know about publications and reports that should be included in this dedicated online clearinghouse. Ltaylor@ucla.edu



****THIS MONTH'S FOCUS FOR SCHOOLS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

October – Ensuring All Students Make a Good Adjustment to the New School Year

While some students greet each new year and changes in teachers and classmates with excitement, others are not so optimistic. The initial weeks of getting used to changes works well enough for some, for others much more is needed.

The first months of each school years present opportunities/challenges to school staff.

Teachers, administrators, and support staff meeting students for the first time can pay special attention to which students are not doing well. The challenge is not to add the student's name to a list of “cases.” Anticipating that some students will need extra support, especially in the transition from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school, calls for proactive planning. The welcoming/orientation programs we put in place to support these students can make the new school year is something special.

To support both students and teachers, student support staff are moving into classrooms to provide interventions. In some cases this involves planning with the teacher on how to address times when problems frequently occur. In elementary schools, this often means plans for moving students from the playground into a learning mode after lunch. For middle school students, this may involve plans with student leaders on how to provide options during nutrition and lunch to promote cooperative social exchanges. For high school students, this often involves streamlining the check-in process following an absence or tardy so the student returns to class as quickly as possible with a positive attitude for learning.

As the school year starts, assessing the “business as usual” practices of a school is crucial. Rather than ignore procedures that are not part of an environment that nurtures

students, families, and staff, it is time to make changes. A *Welcoming Program* in the front office? Support for afterschool homework clubs? Support groups for new teachers and staff?

In thinking about *Response to Intervention*, it is important to consider first changes in the environment that would allow more students to be successful. If more is needed, it is time to look at the interactions of groups of students who are having difficulty adjusting and then ensure programs fit their needs. Finally, if there are some students who need specific individual interventions, accommodations must be made so they can succeed.

For ideas to share with others about creating a supportive environment that engages students, families, and staff, see

>*What Schools Can Do to Welcome and Meet the Needs of All Students and Families*
Contents include: Schools as Caring, Learning Communities, Welcoming and Involving New Students and Families, Volunteers to Help Teachers and Schools Address Barriers to Learning, Parent and Home Involvement in Schools, and much more. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/welcomeguide.htm>

>*Addressing Barriers to Learning: A Set of Surveys to Map What a School Has and What It Needs.*

This resource provides surveys for 6 program areas and related system needs that constitute a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach to address barriers and thus enable learning. The areas are (1) classroom-focused enabling, (2) crisis assistance and prevention, (3) support for transitions, (4) home involvement in schooling, (5) student and family assistance programs and services, and (6) community outreach for involvement and support (including volunteers). <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Surveys/Set1.pdf>

Note: In planning for the year, a major focus should be on anticipating major concerns that arise over the course of the school year. Such concerns provide natural opportunities to address potential barriers to learning and teaching in ways that support the school's mission. As a guide, see the "calendar" of monthly concerns and themes by clicking on "Ideas for Enhancing Support at Your School this Month" which is on the Center's home page at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>



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Summer vacation was over and Little Johnny returned back to school.

Only two days later his teacher phoned his mother to tell her that he was misbehaving.

"Wait a minute," she said. "I had Johnny with me for three months and I never called you once when he misbehaved!"

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****OTHER HELPFUL INTERNET RESOURCES**

>*Dropout Prevention Practice Guide.* What Works Clearinghouse
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

>*Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom.* What Works Clearinghouse.
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/>

>Increasing student attendance: Strategies from research and practice
<http://www.nwrel.org/request/2004june/Attendance.pdf>

>Parents' Guide to Truancy
<http://www.hamfish.org/>

>Electronic media and youth violence: A CDC issue brief for educators and caregivers.
http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/electronic_aggression.htm

>Inhalant Use and major depressive episodes among youths aged 12 to 17:2004-2006
<http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k8/inhalantsdepress/inhalantsdepress.cfm>

>Homelessness Resource Center. <Http://www.homeless.samhsa.gov>

>Assessing what kids think about themselves: A guide to adolescent self-concept for out of school time program practitioners
http://www.childtrends.org/files//child_trends-2008_08_20_rb_selfconcept.pdf

>Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center
<http://rems.ed.gov/>

>Preventing youth suicide in rural America: Recommendations to states
<http://www.sprc.org/library/ruralyouth.pdf>

>Parents' reports of the school readiness of young children from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2007.
<Http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008051>

>Notices to Local Education Agencies and State Education Agencies regarding responsibilities under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/hottopics/>

>Best Evidence Encyclopedia, *Data-driven reform in Education*, Johns Hopkins University <http://www.bestevidence.org>

>Beyond the GED: State strategies to help former dropouts earn a high school diploma
<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/78/47/7847.pdf>

Note: For a wide range of relevant websites, see our Gateway to a World of Resources at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/gateway/gateway_sites.htm

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Mom: *How did you find school today?*

Kid: *I just hopped off the bus - and there it was!*

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****LINKS TO**

>Upcoming Initiatives, Conferences & Workshops
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm>

>Calls for Grant Proposals, Presentations & Papers
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm>

>Training and Job Opportunities
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm>

Information on each of these is updated on an ongoing basis on our website. Just click on the indicated URL or on What's New on our website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>. If you would like to add information on these, please send it to ltaylor@ucla.edu



****UCLA CENTER – BRIEF UPDATE**

The following highlights some of the products from this month's Center activity. We continuously update our resources, so for other documents that were updated this month, see *What's New* at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/review.htm>

>Moving Toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: The Next Evolutionary Stage in School Improvement Policy and Practice – This policy brief stresses that a *paradigm shift* is underway. With growing concern about reducing dropouts, closing the achievement gap, and ensuring all students have an equal opportunity for success at school, pressure is increasing for expanding the nature and scope of school improvement efforts. Prevailing school improvement policies, planning, and practices have not been effective in dealing with factors leading to and maintaining students' problems, especially in schools where large proportions of students are not doing well.

The complexity of factors interfering with learning, development, and teaching underscore the need not only to coalesce current efforts but to transform them by ensuring school improvement plans encompass the development of a comprehensive system of learning supports as primary and essential in addressing the variety of factors that interfere with a school accomplishing its mission.

Evidence from institutional indicators and pioneering work on moving in new directions to enhance student and learning supports all herald a *paradigm shift* supporting development of a comprehensive and systemic approach. See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/paradigmshift.pdf>

>Expanding the focus on dropouts to strengthen learning supports for all students at all grades

Our quarterly Journal/newsletter (Fall, 2008) focuses on “School Dropout Prevention: A Civil Rights and Public Health Imperative.” Related features include the recommendations from What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide on Dropout

Prevention and a feature on re-engaging students in learning. As with all Center resources, we hope you will share this widely as a stimulus for work in and with schools. See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.htm>

>**Focus on impact of economic crisis on schools and families**

The new Hot Topic on our website is in response to a question we received from a student support staff who was concerned about staff reductions. Underlying the request is concern that at a time when many students and their families are facing hardships and need more support, school are cutting back on staff because of their own financial crises. See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> and click on Hot Topic for our take on this concern and comments from a wide range of others. This “discussion” was part of our weekly Mental Health in Schools Practitioner Listserv. If you would like to be added to the weekly exchange, please send an email to smhp@ucla.edu

>**New Directions for Student Support: New Resources**

Guide for Practice

Engaging and Re-engaging Student in Learning at School

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/engagingandre-engagingstudents.pdf>

Policy and Practice Brief

Moving Toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: The Next Evolutionary Stage in School Improvement Policy and Practice

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/briefs/paradigmshift.pdf>

>**Powerpoint Slides and Handouts for Presentations**

We have received many requests for copies of the various handouts we use in our presentations. So, we have organized a set of online modules in both powerpoint and PDF formats. The topics are:

Mental Health in Schools: Becoming an Integrated Part of the School Improvement Agenda

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/mhpresentation.htm>

Enhancing School Improvement: Addressing Barriers to Learning and Reducing the Achievement Gap

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/presentations.htm>

Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching to Enhance School Improvement

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/lppresentation.htm>

If you find these helpful, feel free to use & adapt them in any way. Also, let us know about any other modules you would like us to develop.

Note: We continually update the resources on our website. A convenient way to access information is through the Quick Find online clearinghouse. Alphabetized by topic, you can access information on 130 topics relevant to addressing barriers to learning. Each includes links to Center Resources, online reports, other centers focusing on the topic, and relevant publications. Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> and click on Quick Find. If you would like to add a resource, let us know. ltaylor@ucla.edu

For more information on the UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools, go to the website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> or contact Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor, Co-directors at the School Mental Health Project/Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA, Department of Psychology, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563. Phone (310) 825-3634. Toll Free (866) 846-4843; Fax (310) 206-5895; Email: smhp@ucla.edu



Check out our sister center, the Center for School Mental Health at <http://csmh.umaryland.edu> or contact Mark Weist, Director, CSMH, University of Maryland at Baltimore, Department of Psychiatry, 737 W. Lombard St. 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. Toll Free (888) 706-0980. Email: csmh@psych.umaryland.edu



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“The average pencil is seven inches long, with just a half-inch eraser – in case you thought optimism was dead.”

Robert Brault

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****COMMENTS, REQUESTS, INFO, QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD**

(1) *Announcement*: We have been asked to share the following: “The What Works Clearinghouse [has released] a new "practice guide", *Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom*. Staff of the Center for Education and Human Services here at SRI wrote the guide, working with a distinguished panel of behavior experts from education and mental health fields.”

[Http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides)

(2) *About Our Focus on School Dropout Prevention in the Fall Quarterly*: “While drop out prevention is rather important, shouldn't we also consider some type of "drop back in" programs for those purported half a million drop outs each year. These are real people that need support to get their diplomas so that have any chance in the future and to end the generational cycle. For example, just yesterday, I was working with a 7th grader regarding some discipline issues and after counseling the student the mother became involved in the process. She shared that she was from an innercity low income area and had her child in the 7th grade and she is now 25. She said that she moved to our rural community to escape the inner city and to provide a better life for her child. However, she is now 25 and after dropping out of school in the 7th grade to have her child was having difficulty finding work. We discussed for a while and indicated she wanted to enroll at our Adult school to get her high school diploma which I helped her get enrolled. Then, a few hours later, after counseling another 7th grader and parent regarding behavioral issues, I'm a School Psychologist and Director of Student Services by the way, the mother indicated that she also wanted to continue on and finish high school as she was currently working in a dead end job at Burger King and realizes now after having a child how important school is to your future. She dropped out of a comprehensive high school in the 11th grade and tried a continuation high school, then independent study before dropping out completed. She also eagerly enrolled in the adult school. However, I

just can't help wondering how much support is available for them as they are going to need a lot of help to get through the program. And with the 500,000 students a year dropping out, we literally have millions out in society with limited educational skills and virtually no resources. Can you imagine trying to raise a family on a budget supported by Burger King? The family I'm referring to had to take a bus as they didn't even own a car...They are getting by day-to-day and trying as best they can to raise their own families....Yes, the goal would be to keep them from dropping out in the first place, but the reality is they are dropping out, have been for many years, and we need to provide programs and support to help them 'drop back in.'...thanks..."

THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF E-NEWS

See below for source identifying information

Who Are We? Under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Department of Psychology at UCLA, the national Center for Mental Health in Schools was established in 1995. The Project and Center are co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.

A description and evaluation of the Center's work and impact is available at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

For more information about the Center or about ENEWS, contact Center Coordinator Perry Nelson or Center Co-Directors Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor at:
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