



School Practitioner Listserv

29 years & counting A Weekly Community of Practice Network for Sharing and Interchange



June 15, 2015

Request from a colleague

>*How to improve partnering among researchers and school staff to improve mental health interventions*

From the Field

>*What some colleagues suggest about the matter*
>*Example of one district's guidelines*

Featured Set of Center Resources

>*Developing working relationships at schools*

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**Please forward this to a few colleagues you think might be interested.
The more who join, the more we are likely to receive to share.**

**For those who have been forwarded this and want to be part of
the weekly exchange, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu**

**For previous recent postings of this community of practice, see
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>**

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Note: In keeping with the *2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports*, this community of practice network has expanded in number of participants and topics discussed.* The thematic emphasis is on (1) daily concerns confronting those working in and with schools, (2) the transformation of student and learning supports, and (3) promoting whole child development and positive school climate.

R equest from a colleague:

“I know there are many barriers inherent to implementing mental health interventions in schools, such as not having administrative staff on board or gaps in communication between researchers and teachers/school administrators. How can we improve partnership between researchers and school staff to better implement mental health interventions for children and adolescents in a school setting?”

C enter Response:

The starting place is for researchers to enhance their understanding of the culture of schools. A resource for this is the National Association of State Boards of Education’s *How Schools Work and How to Work with Schools* (2014) – <http://www.nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/NASBE-HSW-FINAL.pdf>

Here’s an excerpt:

“...Schools are a natural ally for most sectors in a community, offering access to a large percentage of youth in the community to engage on any number of different issues. However, accessing schools is not an easy task. Before even initiating contact to propose an idea or concept for a program, intervention, or partnership, there are numerous steps that the individual or organization must consider and actions they must take....

As you prepare for discussions with education officials or school staff, it is helpful to keep these key principles in mind:

- >Education’s primary goal is to educate students, so any actions proposed must support—either directly or indirectly—this goal.
- >Health, safety, development, and well-being may be secondary priorities for the education partner.
- >Concerns about safety, in particular, can affect access to some schools.
- >Like all professional worksites, schools are busy places; your involvement with them must be carefully planned.
- >School leaders and personnel have multiple responsibilities and priorities and your issue may not be one. It is your responsibility to know what their priorities actually are.
- >The needs of schools differ from district to district and often from school to school within the same district. Don’t make assumptions based on one class or one school.
- >Education decision-making is diffused and variable. Some decisions are made at school level, while others are made at the district level and still others at the state level. Further, multiple people or groups are usually involved in the decision-making process.
- >There are often several levels of review that must be conducted before decisions are made, so the decision-making process could take a long time.
- >Education leaders recognize they cannot address all of their needs alone; they need outside help, but that help must conform to their governing laws, rules, regulations, and practices.

>Education, like other sectors, has its own acronyms and terminology. People and organizations wanting to engage with schools should become familiar with their acronyms, terms, and phases...

Like all relationships, a certain amount of give and take is required when working with the education sector. Because of its unique place in a community, schools are often a flashpoint for deeply held—and often conflicting—beliefs, viewpoints, and ideals....

Prepare a detailed initial proposal, which should include, at a minimum:

- >A description of your proposed intervention (curriculum, policy, practice, personnel, services, or program), including a description of how your proposal will help educators meet their goals of positively impacting academic achievement, reducing educational disparities, and/or streamlining or maximizing assets and resources;
- >A description of how your proposal builds onto or amplifies ongoing work that the education partner is already doing, if possible;
- >Metrics on the target population, including the potential number of people affected/served by the intervention;
- >If the intervention is targeted to a small group, such as one classroom or one grade, how it might be scaled up to include the whole school, school district, or state;
- >The total potential cost of the intervention, broken out between costs to be incurred by the school system and by the person/organization approaching the school (for policy interventions, consider the potential costs of implementation, including unintended and intended consequences);
- >The time commitment needed to effectively implement the intervention. If your request is going to take time away from academics, educators will want to know how much time and how your intervention will support academic achievement;
- >The staff commitment necessary, such as how many staff members are needed and for how long;
- >The staff training if needed, including who will conduct the training; when the training will occur; and who is going to bear the cost of the training.
Remember, teachers require compensation for any training outside their core hours, and if they are trained during school, schools will need to find and pay substitute teachers;
- >The proposed start and end times of the initiative;
- >The projected impacts and desired outcomes of your proposed intervention (the more this can be quantified, the better); and
- >A description of any approvals that may be needed to implement your request.

Note that for many surveys, parents will need to provide consent for their child's participation, and the types of questions asked would be limited..."

Also, if you have time, read the introduction to Seymour Sarason's classic work on *The Culture of School and the Problem of Change* –

[http://www.daneshnamehicsa.ir/userfiles/file/Resources/5-1\)%20Change/INTRO_%20Revisiting%20The%20Culture%20of%20the%20School.pdf](http://www.daneshnamehicsa.ir/userfiles/file/Resources/5-1)%20Change/INTRO_%20Revisiting%20The%20Culture%20of%20the%20School.pdf)

Listserv Participants:

Let's hear from school folks and those who come into schools from the "outside" about what would enhance partnerships for improving mental health in schools. Send comments to Ltaylor@ucla.edu



From the Field

To start the process, here are two comments from colleagues we asked to respond.

(1) "I think the key to answering this very important question is framing engaged scholarship in a way that allows researchers to actively participate alongside practitioners in collectively solving problems faced in schools each day. I have seen this work best when the researchers first spend time getting to know the site and context before jumping in to suggest changes or the implementation of research based practices. For example, the counselors at our school are very interested in restorative justice principles and are seeking to create understanding and practices school-wide that will address problems like bullying. What a researcher might do in this context could help the counselors translate their interest into learning and practice. We've been using some of the improvement science literature to help us think about cycles of improvement and there's a clear role for researchers to play in those cycles."

(2) "One thing we should be doing is submitting grants together – researchers and schools together; working more with school personnel in the development of intervention so they are not perceived as just imported from outside."

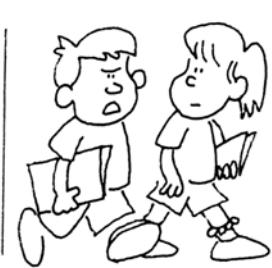
***The teacher punished me
for something I didn't do!***



What didn't you do?



My homework.



Example of One School District's Guidelines for Researchers

(From LAUSD <http://achieve.lausd.net/research>)

Excerpt:

"Research conducted in LAUSD or with its resources must be justified in terms of the anticipated benefit to the District and not merely to the advancement of knowledge. LAUSD encourages research in the following areas:

- Improving educational outcomes across all or selected subgroups of students
- Improving the design and delivery of services that promote learning
- Improving the management of the school environment
- Improving parent involvement in education..."

"The following research questions are provided to give researchers a general idea of the questions of greatest importance to the different District offices....

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES:

Wellness Centers (School-based health clinics)

- Do the services provided by the Wellness Centers affect academic achievement and other school-related outcomes?

Chronic Absenteeism

- What are the long-term impacts of chronic absenteeism in the early grades (Kindergarten, 1st grade) on academic success/high school graduation?
- Is there a correlation between years of chronic absenteeism and dropout rates?
- Are there significant differences in the relationship between chronic absenteeism and academic outcomes by ethnicity? Dropout Prevention
- What are the early indicators of non-graduation outcomes?
- Is school attendance for 9th graders a key indicator of whether students drop out of school?

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

- What types of reading and math curricular programs and instructional strategies/methodologies currently in use in LAUSD or other urban school districts are most effective for students with particular learning disabilities as measured by state tests, district assessments, attendance, attitude, etc.?
- What types of curricular programs and instructional strategies/methodologies currently in use in LAUSD or other urban school districts are most effective for students with autism spectrum disorders and related disabilities?
- How effective is the LAUSD behavior intervention program in improving academic, social, or behavioral outcomes for students with disabilities?
- What types of programs, strategies, and/or supports have been effective in reducing disproportionality in urban school districts? How has over-representation been reduced in categories that have traditionally been difficult to address (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, language classification, and eligibility/disability)?
- What types of use are related to teacher reflection about/changes in instruction? What systems and processes do school leaders use to evaluate their own progress?"

Featured Set of Center Resources

The following Center resources were prepared specifically to help developing working relationships at schools:

>*Want to work with schools? What's involved in successful linkages?* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/publications/54_want_to_work_with_schools.pdf

>*Working Collaboratively: From School-Based Teams to School-Community-Higher Education Connections* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/worktogether/worktogether.pdf>

For more, see the Center's online clearinghouse Quick Find on *Collaboration* –

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p1201_01.htm

*For information about the *2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports*, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Also see: *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf>

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to enabling equity of opportunity and promoting whole child development

Please share relevant resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences!
Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Note: Responses come only to our Center at UCLA for possible inclusion in the next week's message.

We also post a broad range of issues and responses to the *Net Exchange* on our website at

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

and to *Facebook* -- access from the Center's home page

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