

(11/6/24) **This continuing education resource is from the national Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA**

## Featured

**Some ongoing issues for schools**

**>Day after the election: How will you address the elephants in the room?**

**>Colleague asks for “real” examples of schools addressing prevention**

**>About Engaging students in active learning**

And, as always:

**>Links to a few other resources relevant to continuing education**

**This Community of Practice Practitioner is designed for a screen bigger than an Iphone.**

**For discussion and interchange:**

**>Day after the election: How will you address the elephants in the room?**

What will be the varied student reactions? Who will be too distracted to work? What are the opportunities for emphasizing and teaching core values (e.g., mutual respect, empathy)?

From: *Day After Election Guide: A Resource for K-12 Educators and Administrators*

“... The key message from the Day After Election Guide is that a school’s plan for the day after the election should actually be their plan for the entire school year. That means that classroom lessons, educator professional development, and communication with parents and guardians throughout the school year should clearly establish and reinforce expectations about how to show respect for one another and how to explore controversial or difficult subjects....

Administrators should consider opportunities during the 2024-2025 school year to send messages to parents and guardians about the school’s expectations and plans related to the Presidential election... Messages should encourage the entire school community to partner in embracing core values connected to respect, dialogue, empathy, and cooperation. They should highlight any events or initiatives that the school or district is undertaking, and they should encourage families to have respectful dialogues that complement the school’s approach,....”

From: *Teaching after the Election*

“...When deciding how to talk about the election, it can be helpful to bear in mind your own goals for teaching and learning, the fact that major events can be distracting and make it more difficult to teach and learn, and that students in your class may have differing perceptions of what is at stake in the election in light of their own histories and identities....”

From: *Returning to the Classroom after the Election*

“...we have been hearing from many instructors seeking guidance on how to talk with their students in the days following the election. Depending on many factors, you may or may not choose to engage students in conversation about the election results....

If you do choose to engage students on this topic, it will be important to acknowledge the range of perspectives and intense emotions that are likely present in your classroom. These guidelines on discussing difficult topics may be helpful for framing a conversation where students with diverse experiences and points of view can engage productively with one another. ...”

From: *What Teachers Can Do Now*

“...Although this list is directed at teachers, I believe it’s also relevant for parents and anyone else who works with children, teens, or college students....

If this election has taught us anything, it’s that a whole lot of us don’t trust each other. This division pushes us more deeply into our own corners, which only exacerbates the problem. The more we can do to make our classrooms places where real people know and trust one another, where we learn each other’s stories and uncover the things we have in common, the better we’ll get at embracing our differences....

We have to learn new ways of talking with people who disagree with us. The skills are nothing new, but so many of us are completely out of practice when it comes to thoughtful discourse. It can be taught. And we need to provide students with plenty of practice in speaking honestly about their opinions without being insulting....”

From: *Election Conversations: The School Counselor’s Role*

“All students have the right to attend a safe school environment where views can be discussed with dignity and respect in a manner that is free from abuse and harassment. School counselors play a vital role in helping ensure students learn to have respectful conversations about politically charged issues. Individual views may differ, but all students deserve to be treated with respect regardless of their political beliefs, socioeconomic background, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, abilities, religion and other factors. During an emotionally charged period, such as during election cycles, it is important to remind that everyone has a right to their own opinion....”

From: *Supporting Student Well-being During and After Elections: A Guide for School Social Workers*

“Elections can be a stressful time for students and their families, with high emotions and political divisions often impacting the school environment. School Social Workers (SSWs) are in a unique position to support students’ mental and emotional well-being during these times, creating a space for students to process their feelings, understand diverse perspectives, and feel safe. Here are some key ways SSWs can help students navigate the election landscape....”

## For discussion and interchange:

### >A colleague asks:

“ Do you have any “real” examples of:

1. schools assessing prevention needs (with or without the assistance of community partners) such as implementing the Youth Risk Behavior Survey or a social norms survey  
and

2. schools monitoring the data and evaluating their efforts (with community partners such as universities or other ways)

*Hopefully, participants on this community of practice will be able to help this colleague. Send your responses to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu) .*

Below we offer a few comments on the matter:

### Center Comments:

Surveying at schools is a matter we have been addressing on many levels for a long time. In general, schools not only do not “assess” primary prevention needs, they have a history of focusing on primary prevention through ineffective interventions (e.g., DARE) or special initiatives that are implemented as pilots and demonstrations that are short-lived and never

scaled up. The current focus is on “Universal” interventions that emulate public health campaigns, but only superficially.

Most assessments at schools focus on secondary (e.g., targeted students) and tertiary (e.g., for chronic and severe problems) prevention concerns, These currently are being discussed in the context of MTSS and increasingly being described as surveying student behavioral health or well-being.

Coincidentally, because Idaho is conducting a statewide pilot surveying student well-being, we devoted a **recent issue** of our community of practice *Practitioner* to discussing this policy and the controversies related to such surveys and first-level screening.

Rather than assessing kids to determine prevention needs, we encourage schools to map and analyze the resources they are using in order to identify and fill critical intervention gaps. We emphasize that this is best done using a well-defined intervention framework. We recommend a framework that encompasses a full intervention continuum and six domains of student/learning supports. We recently highlighted this for our school and community stakeholders. See <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/8-8-24.pdf> .

For more on prevention, see our Center’s Quick Find

>*Prevention for Students "At Risk"*

And here are few Center developed documents on the topic:

>*Screening Mental Health Problems in Schools*

>*Prevention and schools*

>*Preventing Student Problems: What are the Barriers?*

### For discussion and interchange:

>*About engaging students in active learning*

Because of its central importance in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students, we regularly offer material for discussions about (re)engaging students at school.

Students hear... and some even listen. They see, and some “get it”. They become actively involved, talk with others, make/build, and they develop competence and self-determination.

Or as Benjamin Franklin said more directly:

***Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.***

From: *Encouraging Deeper Learning in Middle and High School*

“.. elements of deeper learning for students...emphasized a shift to hands-on, often project-based instruction designed to engage students actively in their own learning.... District leaders’ reports suggest that the activation of students in their learning seems to be a key factor in district leaders’ mental models of critical thinking...”

Leaders’ primary examples of successful teaching of critical thinking skills involve (1) teachers posing high-level questions to students and (2) students learning problem-solving skills through real-world project-based learning....

Applied forms of learning are ones that district leaders also indicated that students requested.... District leaders frequently highlighted as most effective promoting critical thinking such elements as applied tasks, problem-solving, or giving students choice...”

From: *Learning by doing*

“...High school students often complain about the lack of connection between what they learn in the classroom and the real world. Apprenticeships and other work-based learning options make those connections for students, while giving them outlets to experiment...

While registered apprenticeships offer many advantages, the programs can be a heavy lift for both school districts and employers. Traditional comprehensive high schools are in many ways not designed for learning to occur outside of their walls. At the same time, employers must do some things not common in the world of work: They agree to mentor the students, train for certain skills, and be monitored by school officials.

Scheduling is challenging for both schools and employers. Some states have more stringent requirements around student seat time, so employers must be flexible about student working hours. Transportation for students to travel from school to work is another barrier and an equity issue for students who don't have access to cars or other modes of transportation... Nonprofits or community-based organizations can step in to connect schools and employers and work out the sticking points between the two..”

Here are a couple of relevant resources:

>*Project Based Learning and Student Engagement*

>*Active Learning and Student Engagement*

*How is student (re)engagement being addressed in your locale?*

Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

>**Links to a few other relevant shared resources**

>>**Student Engagement in Learning Is Low. Survey Offers Clues on How to Bring Them Back**

>>**Family engagement**

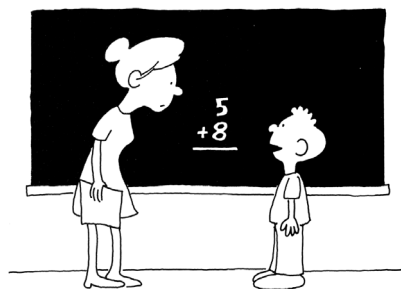
>>**Teachers' Experiences with School Violence and Lockdown Drills**

>>**Districts Try with Limited Success to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism**

>>**How Are U.S. Public School Superintendents Doing?**

>>**Well-being and School Improvement**

>>**Helping Classmates to Get Along**



*The homework you assigned wasn't evidence-based, so I didn't do it.*

## A Few Upcoming Webinars

*For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts*

- 11/6 Empower foster and adoptive families
- 11/6 AI and education leadership
- 11/7 Building a culture of safety and support
- 11/7 How to get all teachers to be the best teachers
- 11/12 Leadership to ignite school improvement
- 11/13 AI in education: promise and peril
- 11/13 Spark career interest in a new way
- 11/13 Addressing at risk factors for youth substance Misuse
- 11/14 Understanding stigma and bias
- 11/14 Balancing academics, extracurriculars and college application stress
- 11/14 Coordinating across state and local levels
- 11/19 Understanding social anxiety
- 11/20 Creating an evaluation plan for your child with mental health needs
- 11/20 Coordinated care for eating disorders
- 11/26 Family involvement
- 12/3 Managing holiday stress
- 12/4 Shaping AI for human centered education
- 12/18 Understanding anxiety
- 1/23 Leveraging evaluation for transformative growth

***How Learning Happens*** (Edutopia's updated series of videos explores how educators can guide all students, regardless of their developmental starting points, to become productive and engaged learners.

Webinar recording: [Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth](#)

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### To Listserv Participants

- **Please share this resource with others.** (Everyone has a stake in the future of public education and this is a critical time for action.)
- **Let us know what's going on to improve how schools address barriers to learning & teaching and reengage disconnected students and families.** (We can share the info with the over 130,000 on our listserv.)

**For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

*Looking for information?* (We usually can help.)

*Have a suggestion for improving our efforts?* (We welcome your feedback.)

**We look forward to hearing from you!**

Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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## Guides to Transforming Student and Learning Supports

Through the [\*National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports\*](#), our Center emphasizes the opportunity to start now to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students.

***If you are aware of efforts underway to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching, please share with us.***

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 have many resources to help in moving forward.

For example, see our recent guides:

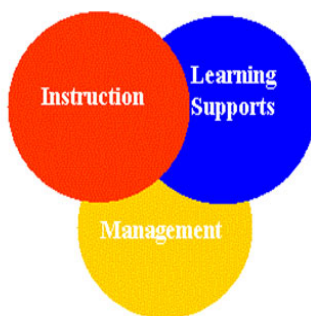
### (1) [\*Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions\*](#)

To provide a roadmap for moving in new directions, we developed a companion document that details first steps for moving forward, suggests a monthly schedule, and provides links to resource aids for pursuing them. See:

### (2) [\*Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Starting the Process\*](#)

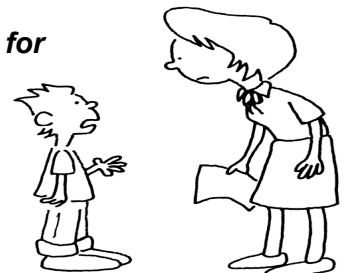
To begin with, this resource details STEP 1 which can begin in November and should take about a month or two to complete. It involves delineating what is in place and recommending system changes and provides resources for each of the following Step 1 tasks:

- (a) mapping existing student support activities and operational infrastructure,
- (b) analyzing what has been mapped,
- (c) identifying priorities for and clarifying the benefits of system changes,
- (d) developing recommendations for system changes,
- (e) building a critical mass of support



**Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to promoting whole child development, advancing social justice, and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.**

***I guess now folks can stop arguing about who to vote for and start arguing about the results!***



Our Center is dedicating the 2024-2025 school year to renewing the ways we strive to help schools and communities improve and strengthen student/learning supports so all students have equity of opportunity to succeed at school. In moving forward, we will (1) accelerate our ongoing efforts to provide resources to the field at large and (2) advance efforts to implement and sustain new directions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, with an emphasis on replication to scale in school districts. And, of course, this encompasses embedding a full range of mental health concerns into everyday life at schools.

***We look forward to finding better ways to work with you.***

**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!**

For new sign-ups – email [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

**Also send resource ideas, requests, comments,  
and experiences for sharing.**

**THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF THE PRACTITIONER**

Who Are We? Recently renamed the Center for MH in Schools & 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.