

(12/11/24) **This continuing education resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA**

Featured

Some ongoing issues for schools

(1) SEL, Winter holidays, and food & toy drives

(2) About socioeconomic factors and achievement gaps

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

>SEL, Winter holidays, and food & toy drives

Much of the focus on the schools role in facilitating social and emotional development has been on curricular approaches for SEL. More attention is needed to the many authentic and natural opportunities that provide schools with options for developing compassion, caring, and empathy.

(See *Natural Opportunities to Promote Social-Emotional Learning and MH.*)

Currently, the winter holidays offer a range of ways schools and students can celebrate by thinking of others. For example:

From: *What can I contribute to my school as a student?*

>“The best contribution kids can make to their schools is to befriend kids that have no friends. Don’t judge kids or feel sorry for them. At lunch, in class or in the hallways when you see kids alone talk to them. Get to know them- perhaps you will make a new friend. We are all unique. Remember just because people don’t look the same doesn’t mean people don’t have big hearts and something in common. You might be surprised. The more people you meet, the more you will learn too. Treat everyone the same. Don’t meet people because you feel sorry for them. Meet them because you genuinely have an interest to do so. Everyone needs a true friend....”

>“As a student, there are many meaningful ways you can contribute to your school community. Here are some ideas:

>>Academic Contributions

Peer Tutoring: Offer to help classmates who may be struggling with subjects you excel in.

Study Groups: Organize or participate in study groups to foster collaborative learning.

>>Extracurricular Involvement

Join Clubs: Participate in or start clubs that align with your interests

Event Planning: Help plan school events like dances, fundraisers, or cultural celebrations.

>>Community Service

Volunteer: Engage in community service projects organized by your school or local organizations.

Environmental Initiatives: Start or join initiatives like recycling programs or school clean-up

>>Personal Initiatives

Mentorship: Mentor younger students, helping them navigate school life and academics.

Help with Technology: Assist teachers or students with technology issues

Art and Decor: Contribute to the school’s aesthetic by creating art displays

>>Advocacy and Awareness

Awareness Campaigns: Raise awareness about important issues like mental health, diversity, or environmental concerns through campaigns or presentations.

Student Council: Get involved in student government to represent your peers and advocate for their needs.

>>Simple Acts of Kindness

Random Acts of Kindness: Small gestures, like complimenting peers or helping someone carry their books, can positively impact the school environment.

By taking initiative in these areas, you can make a significant difference in your school community while also developing valuable skills and relationships.”

And what about this?

From: ***Should Urban Schools Participate In a Toy Drive For The Holidays?***

“Toy drives, food drives, and donations are regular occurrences in K-12 schools and students enjoy giving gifts or food to get extra points for class competitions, or just to help another organization in need. I often wonder about our donations? Every year, teachers, in a low income school districts would partake in this sometimes week-long or month long drive. Personally, I would drive to the store to help my class with the donations that were needed. Even though my students couldn’t give, I would have at least something from my class to give when the collector came around with the bin of toys or food.

Teachers, pretty much felt obligated to participate in the latest donation and gift fund; but it often concerned me that we would ask our students who were in urban populations, low social economic status, and impoverished neighborhoods to give or donate. I think we were all a paycheck away from poverty as teachers but as I watched year after year, students bring in their canned food I’d wonder was this the answer? I would see many students walk in with one can as if they wouldn’t benefit from keeping it themselves. I would see parents come to the school personally and give, not because they could afford it but because their child wanted to participate in the drive. I remember one year, we had a homeless student donate to “Helping the Homeless.” I often wondered if we were doing the right thing or is it like taking from the less fortunate to give to the less fortunate....”

For discussion and interchange

>About socioeconomic factors and achievement gaps

From: ***The role of socioeconomic factors in achievement gaps: Schools can help mitigate factors by providing family supports***

“Results from a new study from the Fordham Institute find truth in what educators have long said: Achievement gaps in school are impacted by factors outside of a local educational agency’s control, such as exposure to poverty and racial inequities. Researchers concluded, however, there are still steps that education and state officials can take to mitigate the effects of outside variables on children once they’re at school.

Using data from the National Center for Education Statistics’ Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010–11, Fordham researchers were able to track the same children from kindergarten through fifth grade, taking into account “opportunity factors” — or socioeconomic status measures — in children’s lives.

These factors include cognitive stimulation (e.g., playing games or doing arts and crafts), emergent literacy activities (e.g., reading to one’s child; number of books the child owns), parent-child activities (e.g., visits to the zoo, bookstore or library), family rules for watching TV (e.g., how much time the child is allowed to watch TV and when), household income and parents’ jobs and education levels.

According to the report, these factors are intertwined. “One factor for racial/ethnic achievement gaps is between-group differences in socioeconomic status (SES), particularly exposure to poverty. For example, Black and Hispanic students perform, on average, at significantly lower levels academically than Asian and white students, which is primarily because Black and Hispanic students are more likely to grow up in less-resourced homes and neighborhoods,”

researchers wrote. “Moreover, other factors contributing to racial and ethnic achievement gaps include bias, cultural insensitivity, stereotypes, and individual and systemic racism. Here, socioeconomic factors are simply one part of the story.”...

Recommendations for state and local policymakers include:

Supporting programs to help parents earn their high school diplomas or higher education credentials by increasing access to adult education and lifelong learning opportunities. This could include funding for adult education classes, online learning platforms and community college courses.

Investing in high-quality early childhood education, especially in underprivileged communities, since achievement gaps are already evident by elementary school, including as early as kindergarten.

Providing economic support and financial aid for low-income families.

Addressing racial and ethnic disparities by adopting policies and curricula that reflect diverse cultures and programs that specifically support under-represented students.”

Center comments: Dealing with multiple, interrelated concerns, such as poverty, child development, education, violence, crime, safety, housing, and employment requires multiple and interrelated solutions. Promoting well-being, resilience, and protective factors and empowering families, communities, and schools also requires the concerted effort of all stakeholders.

Schools are located in communities, but are often “islands” with no bridges to the “mainland.” Families live in neighborhoods, often with little connection to each other or to the schools their children attend. Nevertheless, all these entities affect each other, for good or ill. Because of this and because they share goals related to education and socialization of the young, schools, homes, and communities must collaborate with each other if they are to minimize problems and maximize results.

For more on this concern, see our Center resources

>Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement

>Enhancing Home Involvement to Address Barriers to Learning: A Collaborative Process

Are these topics being discussed in your locale?

Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

>>Engaging students to help improve school climate

>>Essential Conditions for Partnership Collaboration within a School-Community Model of Wraparound Support

>>A Paradox of School Social Organization: Positive School Climate, Friendship Network Density, and Adolescent Violence

>>Family factors related to adolescent screen media use and mental health outcomes: A systematic review and recommendation for practices

>>Perceived Peer Integration, Parental Control, and Autonomy Support: Differential Effects on Test Anxiety

>>The Rise and Fall of the Teaching Profession: Prestige, Interest, Preparation, and Satisfaction Over the Last Half Century

Few Upcoming Webinars

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's [Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts](#)

- 12/11 Using data to inspire hope in instructional coaching
- 12/11 Resolutions and goal setting
- 12/12 Welcoming newcomers
- 12/13 School threat assessment <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/events/school-threat-assessment>
- 12/17 Rethinking the Principalship
- 1/13 Wraparound fidelity
- 1/14 Use cultural humility to shape a prevention coalition
- 1/14 How to have a successful and equitable student program
- 1/15 Adapting evidence based programs
- 1/16 Blending and braiding funding streams
- 1/23 Leveraging evaluation for transformative growth
- 2/11 Prevention core competencies
- 2/12 Safe and inclusive schools
- 2/12 Students as equity leaders
- 4/22 Student led initiatives
- 5/8 Creating conditions for healthy disagreement

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](#)

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

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! Contact: ltaylor@ucla.edu



"I'm going to refer you to a cardiologist."

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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.

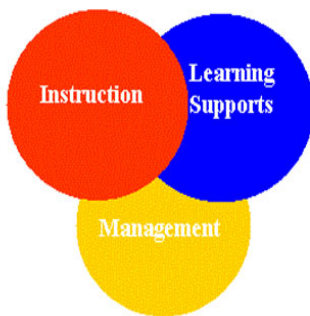
For example, see our recent guides that provide a roadmap for moving in new directions:

- (1) *Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions*
- (2) *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Starting the Process*

These provide prototypes for new directions and first steps for moving forward on a monthly, schedule. The first steps outlined involve

- (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

Links to resources are provided to aid in carrying out each task.



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.

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

For new sign-ups – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.

We post a broad range of issues and responses to the Net Exchange on our website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm> and on Facebook (access from the Center's home page <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>)