Featured

Some ongoing issues for schools

(1) Are schools protecting students' mental health?

(2) What do those in the field say about what student/learning supports are most helpful?

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

>*Are schools protecting students' mental health?*

Interventions to promote mental health encompass not only strengthening individuals, but also enhancing nurturing and supportive conditions at school, at home, and in the neighborhood. All this includes a particular emphasis on increasing opportunities for personal development and empowerment by promoting conditions that foster and strengthen positive attitudes and behaviors(e.g., enhancing motivation and capability to pursue positive goals, resist negative influences, and overcome barriers). It also includes efforts to maintain and enhance physical health and safety and inoculate against problems (e.g., providing positive and negative information, skill instruction, and fostering attitudes that build resistance and resilience).

Here's an excerpt from a recent article that underscores the matter.

From: *Science Shows How to Protect Kids' Mental Health, but It's Being Ignored*

"...Scientific advances have identified effective school-based mental health practices, such as emotional-regulation training that teaches children how to cope with strong feelings, or screenings to detect mental health crises before they occur....

The way forward can be found in science-based psychosocial approaches.... We have identified effective methods to prevent emotional or behavioral distress by teaching children skills to cope with stressors, develop healthy social relationships and spot depression warning signs. For instance,... students who feel connected to others in school are less likely to experience indicators of poor mental health, as well as suicide plans and attempts....   Antiracism programs make schools less toxic for historically marginalized youth and improve the health and well-being of all students.

These approaches are not controversial. Methods to increase connectedness include classroom-management techniques that reinforce attentive, cooperative and collaborative behaviors, reduce peer victimization, and help youth understand how others feel and behave. Psychological prevention strategies can teach youth how to less frequently blame themselves for harsh experiences, help peers feel valued and included, and consider adaptive and healthy responses, even when confronted with aggression.

These programs require a commitment to the science of behavior and the deployment of innovative initiatives. And they need resources—to deploy these prevention approaches at scale and among populations most at need...."

More About Improving How Schools Address Mental Health Concerns

Our Center keeps developing resources related to this matter. Years ago we sent out the following:

>*Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Problems at School*

>*Prevention and Schools*

>*Embedding Mental Health into School Improvement Policy and Practice*

Recently, we responded to a request from *EdSource* to provided the following commentary:

>*Let's stop tinkering and really change how schools address mental health*

And 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, with mental health concerns fully embedded.

> **Protecting the Mental Health of Students' (and staff)**
> **Involves *Transforming* Student/Learning Supports**
>
> 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.**

For discussion and interchange

>**What do those in the field say about what student/learning supports are most helpful?**

In order to enhance the support we provide to schools, districts, and state departments of education, it would be extremely helpful if you would take a few minutes to share with us your views about the following:

What student/learning supports have been most effective in helping the many in need?

What additional student/learning supports are needed?

Here's what we already have heard from a Student Support Director:

From a Student Support Director

What student/learning supports have been most effective in helping the many in need?

"Built out MTSS- with common formative assessment in ELA and Math to identify students mastering standards and students requiring supplemental intervention;
 Targeted interventions using evidence-based strategies that offer double-dosing of core
   curriculum and intervention curriculum;
 Common intervention models between school sites to increase fidelity of implementation and outcomes;
 Intervention summer school- 20 days of guaranteed viable curriculum;
Dedicated What I need Time (WIN) time at elementary schools to provide supplemental/remediation time to not interfere with core instruction;
Middle/high school: tutorial and advisement periods built into schedule to offer supplemental supports and interventions- may include direct instruction in self-regulation strategies or skills around planning, organization and time management.
Goal setting conferences TK-5 where families meet with the teacher in the fall to set learning goals for the year.
Comprehensive counseling and guidance programs with staff dedicated to supporting implementation of school-wide SEL development and a responsive team to provide supplemental services in group or individual services.

What additional student/learning supports are needed?

Behavioral systems at the TK-5 level to mirror a well-built system of assessment and intervention support on the academic side.
Coaching and support for Tier I behavioral interventions in classrooms TK-5- with an emphasis on behavioral systems, positive behavioral support, and behavioral intervention strategies.
Enhanced culture and climate support at the late elementary and middle school levels around increasing empathy and kindness and decreasing derogatory communication and cyberbullying."

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

>>**Preparing School Boards for Sustainable Leadership**

>>**Improving mental health in schools**

>>**How GPS tracking of teens 24/7 impacts parent child relationships**

>>**Context matters: Diagnosing and targeting local barriers to success at school**

>>**The contribution of community service during the transition to adulthood to health in adulthood**

>>**School-Based Family Intervention Services**

>>**The Best Kids' Books on Mental Health of 2024**

>>**Promising Applications of AI in Education Research**

>>**Evidence-Based Guide: Suicide Prevention Strategies for Underserved Youth**

>>**Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning: Second Edition**

A Few Upcoming Webinars

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

12/18 Understanding anxiety
12/18 Community organizing
12/18 Choose the right evidence based program
1/8 Work stress and burnout
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
1/15 School avoidance
1/16 Blending and braiding funding streams
1/21 Creating a low stress environment
1/22 Creating a work-life balance
1/23 Conflict management
1/23 Leveraging evaluation for transformative growth
2/11 Prevention core competencies
2/12 Safe and inclusive schools
2/12 Students as equity leaders
2/19 Planning an IEP team meeting for your child with mental health challenges
4/22 Student led initiatives
5/8 Creating conditions for healthy disagreement

How Learning Happens (Edutopia's updated series of videos on 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.)

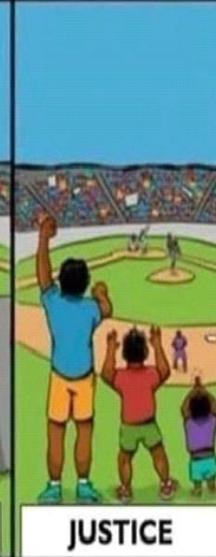**For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu**

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

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REALITY

One gets more than is needed, while the other gets less than is needed. Thus, a huge disparity is created.

EQUALITY

The assumption is that everyone benefits from the same supports. This is considered to be equal treatment.

EQUITY

Everyone gets the support they need, which produces equity.

JUSTICE

All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

INCLUSION

Everyone is INCLUDED in the game. No one is left on the outside; we didn't only remove the barriers keeping people out, we made sure they were valued & involved.

Instruction

Learning Supports

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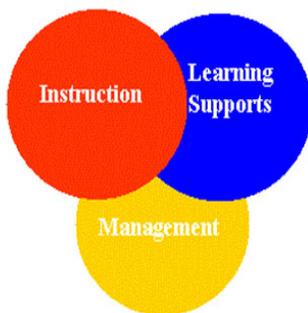
Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to promoting whole child development, advancing social justice, and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.