

(3/22/23) This resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured

**>Some schools are being closed: Supporting students and families
in making transitions**

**>Teaching about social justice as an approach to commemorating
Cesar Chavez**

**>Enhancing Home Involvement in School and “Things Teachers Should
Never Do in a Parent Meeting”**

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

For discussion and interchange:

**>Some schools are being closed: Supporting students and families
in making transitions**

When schools are in the process of closing down, we get requests about what to do. As indicated below, we respond that stakeholders need first to be certain that closure is necessary. If it is, we offer information on supporting transitions.

(1) The National Education Association advocates strategies to prevent school closing. See [*How Educators Are Stopping School Closures*](#)

Here’s an excerpt:

Closing schools has been a simplistic and destructive response to the issue of low enrollment — especially when schools are attended mostly by Black or brown students. ... When neighborhood schools close, whether it’s in urban or rural communities, students are forced to attend schools farther from their homes. The new distance—plus the trauma of displacement — can affect student attendance and performance. ... Parents, especially from lower-income families without reliable transportation, also face challenges in getting to their children’s schools. This curtails their opportunities to volunteer in classrooms or attend after-school plays or sporting events — or even parent-teacher conferences. ...”

For more on school closures, see

>Closing a School Best Practices Guide

This guide is divided into five chapters:

Gathering facts, Deciding which school to close, Making the decision, Making the transition, Disposing of surplus property

>Declining enrollment and school closures:

How districts can better manage a difficult process

(2) When closures are inevitable, anticipating the impact and developing supports to address the transitions are essential.

Here are a few basics to consider in addressing transitions:

(A) *Develop a community "campaign"* as a key element in helping make the changes go smoothly. If there isn't a plan for such a campaign (e.g., people to take the lead, steps to

take in making the transition, etc.), a group can be formed with appropriate representation from teachers, support staff, families, and students. The group can help ensure that the information about the rationale for closure and plans for addressing concerns and problems concerns are well communicated. Particular attention should be paid to communicating plans for supporting student, family, and staff transitions (e.g., addressing concerns related to orientation and induction, social and emotional impact, transportation, etc.). In addition to direct communications to students, families, and staff, useful communication aids include brief documents that are circulated widely, information meetings, social media exchanges, website postings, and news media coverage.

- (B) *Provide transition supports* with specific respect to school closing and reconfiguration, as with all grade and school changes, requires special planning and implementation. While staff, students, and families might not have had a significant role in making the decision, they will be essential and invaluable partners in making the changes work.

For example: The student/learning support staff and leadership team at the closing schools can work with the staff and leadership team at “receiving” schools in planning the transition. Plans could include current students, families, and staff at the new school hosting welcoming orientations, walk throughs, introductions to academic and social supports, and more. A welcoming buddy process for new students, families, and staff can be especially helpful (see *Welcoming and Involving New Students and Families*). If there is a Parent Teacher Association or other organized parent groups, they could play a strong welcoming and social support role (including recruiting and inducting new families).

If possible, think about ways to make the reconfiguration special. Something that the new situation has that the old one didn't. (“Something we didn't have before that we have now.”) This could involve reaching out to community organizations to enhance resources, such as volunteers, classroom speakers, afterschool enrichment opportunities, transformation of student/learning supports, etc.

- (C) *Personally connect with students, families, and staff who are greatly displeased with the decision* and aren't ready to promote the change. (“My school is being taken away from me,” “I'm losing my classroom which I have cleaned and decorated and worked in for years,” etc.) Such folks are experiencing feelings of loss and anger. Principals can play an important role in working with such individuals. Particular attention needs to be given to (a) validating their concerns and feelings of loss about what they are leaving and (b) showing them how they will be valued at the new school.
- (D) *Finally, some will not make a good transition and will need to be quickly identified and provided with personalized and, if necessary, special supports.* For example, students who are floundering can be identified within the first few weeks of entry using Response to Intervention and then provided with essential student/learning supports. (See *Response to Intervention* and *Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions*.)

For more on *Supports for Transitions*, see the Center's Quick Find

>[*Transition Programs/Grade Articulation/Welcome*](#)

Teaching about Social Justice as an Approach to Commemorating Cesar Chavez

*Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed.
You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read.
You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride.
You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore.*

Cesar Chavez

From: ***Who Was César Chávez?***

César Chávez was an American labor leader and civil rights activist who used perseverance, humility, and non-violent methods to better the lives of farmworkers who were working in unsafe conditions for low pay. Together with Dolores Huerta and Filipino labor groups, they created the United Farmworkers Union which fights for the rights of laborers. César Chávez led strikes, marches, and even undertook a personal hunger strike to raise awareness for his causes. His efforts changed the lives of many people, and in recognition for his nonviolent activism and support of working people, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1994. March 31 is César Chávez' birthday and is now a US federal commemorative holiday.

For more on teaching students about this important civil rights activist and social justice, see

>Chavez Foundation

>Hispanic history

>Teaching Social Justice in Theory and Practice

For discussion and interchange:

>Enhancing Home Involvement in School and “Things Teachers Should Never Do in a Parent Meeting”

Ironically, endeavors to involve families whose youngsters are doing poorly often result in parents becoming less involved. For example, a parent of such a youngster usually is called to school to explore the child's problems and often leaves with a sense of frustration, anger, and guilt. It is not surprising, then, that the parent subsequently avoids school contact as much as feasible. Understanding the problem of increasing home involvement as a process of engaging and, as necessary, reengaging individuals helps rethink such encounters and makes engagement and reengagement central in designing interventions to enhance home involvement.

In general, research findings over the past 40 years have consistently shown home involvement in schooling has a positive impact on youngster's attitudes, aspirations, and achievement. The tasks ahead include expanding the focus beyond thinking only in terms of parents and expanding the range of ways in which schools connect with those in the home. In particular, more intensive efforts must focus on those in the home who have the greatest influence on a student's well being and with whom it has proven difficult to connect. New approaches must be developed and evaluated to clarify how best to outreach and involve those who are reluctant to engage with the school, especially if they have a child who is not doing well. Also, to avoid marginalization and minimize fragmentation, it is essential to embed home involvement interventions into an overall approach for addressing factors interfering with school learning and performance and fully integrate the work into school improvement policy and practice.

For resources on enhancing home involvement, see our Center's Quick Find on

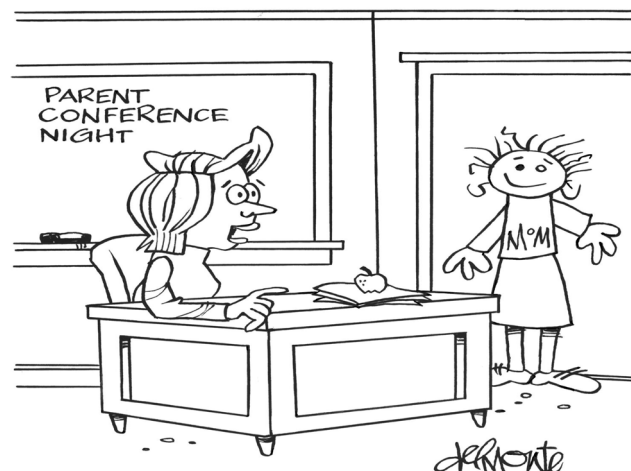
[>Home Involvement in Schooling](#)

For a brief overview discussion, see

[>Home Involvement, Engagement, and Re-engagement in Schooling](#)

From: [6 Things Teachers Should Never Do in a Parent Meeting](#)

1. *Never come empty-handed* – At the very least, make sure to have a pen and notepad. And..., bring a fellow teacher or administrator. If you do, make sure to introduce them and explain that they're there to take notes and offer insight if needed. Other things to consider bringing to help clarify points and move the meeting faster: Samples of work.... Documents that can be useful such as tardy logs, parent contact logs, class sign-out sheet(s),... Data—grades, test scores, absences, etc.
2. *Never start on a rocky note* – Look at the difference between these two meeting openers from a teacher: “Thanks so much for being willing to meet today. I’m confident that between the three of us, we can address what’s going on with your child and formulate a plan for moving forward. Does that sound good? OK, first of all, he’s a bright kid. ...” in contrast to: “My next class starts in 20 minutes, so I’ll just get right into it: I’m really concerned about your child’s work habits. Work is rarely turned in on time, and when it is, it’s either incorrect or only partially done. I don’t know what to do anymore.” Starting on a positive note doesn’t have to look like rattling off a list of carefully worded euphemisms. Set parents at ease by communicating that you are on their team, and that you want to work together on the next game plan.
3. *Never make assumptions* – In the same way that we wouldn’t want a parent making negative assumptions about us or the way we teach, make sure you’re not doing the same with their parenting. Ask questions of parents as partners...
4. *Never agree to anything you’re unsure about* – The pressure to say “Sure!” can feel overwhelming in a parent meeting, especially if you tend to err on the side of people-pleasing. But you can do more harm than good by agreeing to a plan, request, or suggestion that you haven’t had time to fully think through. There’s nothing wrong with saying, “I can’t commit to that right now, but I’ll make sure to get back to you tomorrow when I’ve had time to think it through.”
5. *Never take the bait* – Parent meetings can get stressful fast. Some parents may try to get you to comment on other children’s behavior or performance or what you think of school personnel or policies. ...This is another reason to have another person present in the meeting....”
6. *Never tolerate abuse* – If a parent ever starts yelling, using threatening language, or being physically threatening (even if it’s just standing up during a heated conversation), hopefully an administrator intervenes to end the meeting. But if they don’t for some reason, end it yourself. “It’s clear this meeting is no longer productive. We’ll reschedule for another time.” Leave immediately.



“Hello, Mrs. Henderson. I recognize you from your daughter’s drawing”

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

Dropout intentions in secondary education: Student temperament and achievement motivation as antecedents

Investigating teachers' job satisfaction, stress and working environment: The roles of self-efficacy and school leadership

The effects of closing urban schools on students' academic and behavioral outcomes

Cultivating Compassion for Self and Others: A School-Based Pilot Study for Peer-Nominated Caring Adolescents

Reducing social media use significantly improves body image in teens, young adults

From Criminalization to Education: A Community Vision for Safe Schools in LAUSD

Evidence for Social and Emotional Learning in Schools

More districts receiving dedicated homeless student funding, but rural areas still lag

What to Do (and Not Do) When Children Are Anxious

A Few Upcoming Webinars

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

3/22 Transforming kindergarten

3/22 Exploring the staff shortage impact on education

3/22 Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Students Experiencing Homelessness

3/23 Supporting Vulnerable and At-Risk Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care

3/28 Classroom Strategies for Building Equity and Student Confidence

3/28 McKinney-Vento School Selection Rights

3/28 Young Adults and Customized Employment

3/29 Proactive Crisis Planning for Children with Mental Health Challenges

3/29 Disrupting PD Day in Schools with Continuous Professional Learning Experiences

3/29 Elevating Culturally Affirming and Sustaining Services and Practices in Youth Service Agencies

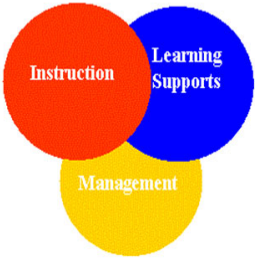
3/30 Belonging and Engagement: The Keys to Showing Up

4/13 Community-Based Alternatives to Youth Incarceration

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!
Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu



For information about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

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/>)