

(4/2/25) This continuing education resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured

(1) How Important is What This Middle School Student Has to Say?

(2) How unified and comprehensive are “whole-school” approaches?

And, as always, you will find

(3) 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:

>How Important is What This Middle School Student Has to Say?

From: *Student Column: Dana Herbert, Walker Mill Middle School, Capitol Heights, MD*

“I wish the adults in my life better understood that being a middle schooler is not as easy as it looks. Stress is constantly being put on you. Not just while pursuing your educational prowess, but stress is being put on you physically, mentally and socially. Middle schoolers face the adversity of continuously getting good grades, handling conflict (internal and external) and being socially accepted....

Middle school is tricky. We come straight out of elementary school and people start to really grow and blossom into their true personalities. This is a good thing for young people. They get to find out who they truly are and express themselves in a way that makes them comfortable....

In sixth grade, you just came from elementary school. You get acclimated to middle school and how it works, but it is fairly easy because you just got to middle school. But in seventh grade, it starts to pick up and get even more challenging. Since you are progressing through your middle school years, as you grow, the workload grows too. You have seven different classes to do work from, which is a lot already....

The constant and continuous schedule of work every day causes students to lose motivation for school and burn out. But burning out is not what you think it is. From personal experience, burning out for me is having no motivation to complete any work. I do not even want to get out of the bed in the morning to go to school. I am not social anymore, even with my friends and family and mostly just spend time in my bed. After facing a burnout, what do you think a student’s grades would look like? This brings me to my next point.

One last thing middle school students have to face is mental health problems..... Social problems in school, grades and for some people, home life can have an affect on their mental health..... A bad mental state can cause less school participation, grades dropping and a bad social life.... So, being a middle schooler is not easy.... Instead of trying to understand what we go through, why not try to just help us get through it? Do not invalidate, provide a safe space for students to come to you for their problems. And have an open mind, do not think that middle schoolers have it easy because they do not.”

Center Comment – Knowing what students are thinking and feeling is an essential facet of personalizing instruction and of providing special assistance for those who need it. The problem for school staff is how to facilitate a student entering into an open dialogue. For many students, this requires a teacher or student support staff member who can build a working relationship.

(See *Improving Working Relationships Inside the Classroom*)

For more on the importance of “student voice,” see the following Center resources:

- > *About Student Voice and Participation*
- > *Talking with kids*
- > *Addressing Barriers to Successful Middle School Transition*

For discussion and interchange:

> **How unified and comprehensive are “whole-school” approaches?**

From: *Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of the Effectiveness of Whole-school Interventions Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Risk Behaviors in Adolescence*

“Whole-school interventions are a systems-based approach to health promotion and prevention for youth. These interventions hold vast potential in mitigating the escalating rates of mental disorders and risk behaviors in the developmentally-sensitive period of adolescence....

Modeled on the World Health Organization’s Health-Promoting Schools Framework, whole-school interventions strive for change across eight domains:

- (i) school curriculum,
- (ii) school social-emotional environment,
- (iii) school physical environment,
- (iv) school governance and leadership,
- (v) school policies and resources,
- (vi) school and community partnerships,
- (vii) school health services, and
- (viii) government policies and resources ...

Whole-school interventions, informed by the Health-Promoting Schools Framework, offer a holistic, systems-based approach to promoting mental health and preventing risk behaviors among adolescents. ...”

Center Comments: While the emphasis of our Center’s *National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports* encompasses a whole school, whole community, and whole child approach, it moves beyond the limitations of the above conceptualization. In particular, it provides a more unified and comprehensive approach and stresses that effective system transformation will require actions such as

- (1) expanding current school improvement policy from a two to a three component framework so that the agenda for student/learning supports is no longer marginalized,
- (2) designing and developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable classroom and schoolwide system for student/learning supports that weaves together school and community efforts to promote healthy development and address barriers to learning, development, teaching, and parenting,
- (3) reworking existing operational infrastructure to first unify intervention activity and then, over a period of several years, develop a comprehensive and equitable approach,
- (4) facilitating system transformation (including going to scale in substantive ways and sustaining effective changes).

We have highlight all this in;

> *Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child*

and we provide

- (1) recent guides in

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

and (2) indepth discussions in

- >*Improving School Improvement*
- >*Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*
- >*Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*

How are these topics being discussed in your locale?

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



"William is... energetic."



"Listen, we appreciate the euphemisms, but you can just say it - he's a pain in the butt."

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

- >>[How Would Cutting Federal Aid to Schools Affect Student Achievement?](#)
- >>[A systematic review of psychosocial suicide prevention interventions for youth](#)
- >>[Referral Rates for School Threat Assessment](#)
- >>[Enduring associations between student–teacher relationships](#)
 - >>[Multilevel Interventions That Protect and Promote Youth Autonomy Could Reduce Depression at Scale](#)
- >>[Unlocking the potential Professional Learning Communities](#)
- >>[Uneven Adoption of Artificial Intelligence Tools Among U.S. Teachers & Principals](#)
- >>[More than 8 in 10 districts to keep or expand summer learning](#)
- >>[A Gradual Release of Responsibility Over Student Devices](#)
- >>[AFT, school districts sue to block Education Department dismantling](#)
- >>[State-level Data for Understanding Child Welfare in the United States](#)
- >>[Scholar Douglas Harris Debuts New ‘Wikipedia’ of K–12 Research](#)
- >>[For enhancing home involvement with the school – Building Your Education Team](#)

A Few Upcoming Webinars

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

- 4/2 Creating a culture of consistency
- 4/2 Understanding loneliness
- 4/2 Promoting healthy relationships
- 4/2 Teams Make All the Difference for Supporting Attendance
- 4/3 Sustainability planning
- 4/3 Confidence and self-esteem
- 4/4 Selective mutism in schools
- 4/9 Addressing bullying
- 4/16 A crisis plan for mental health problems
- 4/22 Telling stories with data
- 4/22 Student led initiatives
- 5/7 Racial Justice in Discipline
- 5/8 Creating conditions for healthy disagreement
- 5/14 Health, Well-being and Safety is Essential to Showing Up
- 8/6 Student Connectedness Fosters Attendance and Engagement
- 9/24 Family Engagement is the Foundation for Attendance and Learning

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

>[Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth](#) (webinar recording)

To Listserv Participants

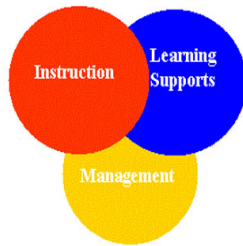
- *Please share this resource with others. (Everyone has a stake in the future of public education and this is a critical time for action.)*
- *Let us know what's going on to improve how schools address barriers to learning & teaching and reengage disconnected students and families. (We can share the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



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.
National Initiative for Transforming Student/Learning Supports

Thinking about improving 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***
- (3) ***Building on MTSS to Enhance How Schools Address Barriers to Learning***

These works 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.

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/>)