

(6/17/26) **This continuing education resource is from the national Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA**

### **Featured**

**(1) So the school has done a threat assessment (or screened for some other problem) – WHAT COMES NEXT?**

**(2) Working Collaboratively to Improve Student/Learning Supports**

And, as always, you will find

**(3) Links to more resources**

**This community of practice Practitioner is designed for a screen bigger than an phone.**

### **For discussion and interchange:**

**>So the school has done a threat assessment (or screened for some other problem), what comes next?**

As we noted last week, more and more schools are being mandated to screen for problems. Here's excerpts from a recent article that asks:

**>How do schools support students after a behavioral threat assessment?**

“Many states require schools to use behavioral threat assessment and management, which is intended to prevent violence by assessing student threats of violence and managing risk through appropriate interventions or services. Although many studies have examined disciplinary responses following a school threat assessment, few studies have examined the nature and prevalence of services provided to these students.

This study examined services delivered to a Florida statewide sample of 23,134 students who received a threat assessment during the 2021–2022 school year. Approximately three-quarters of students received at least one service, most commonly parent consultation (45%), mental health services (33%), restorative practices (24%), and increased monitoring (20%). There were variations in services associated with threat seriousness, student race, and disability status...

Schools primarily provided services based on threat severity and student needs (e.g., disability status, age). Students making serious threats were more often subject to increased monitoring and referred for mental health services, while those making transient threats participated in restorative practices, which is consistent with general recommendations regarding mental health assessment for more serious cases. In addition, it seems logical that students making substantive threats would receive increased monitoring because of concern that they had serious intent to carry out their threat...

Specifically, threat assessment training should support the development of a common understanding of the threat assessment process and the focus on identifying supportive interventions to resolve conflicts and problems that often underlie a serious threat...

In less severe cases, school-based mental health professionals can check in periodically with students. In more severe cases, school-based mental health professionals often have connections with local community-based mental health professionals and can refer students for services outside of school.

Finally, schools need to ensure school communities and stakeholders (e.g., students, parents) understand and value threat assessment as a tool to support school safety....”

## Center Perspective:

### What Comes After a Threat Assessment or Problem Screening?

Conducting a threat assessment or identifying a student's learning, behavior, or emotional difficulty is only the beginning. Whether the concern involves a potential threat, chronic disengagement, behavioral challenges, or emotional distress, the critical question is – *What do schools do next?*

Focusing too narrowly on the immediate problem – such as managing a potential act of violence or addressing a specific presenting problem – can lead to short-term solutions that fail to address underlying causes or prevent recurrence. Instead, schools must embed responses to threats and other student problems within a unified and comprehensive system of student/learning supports that addresses a full range of factors interfering with schooling and learning.

Schools routinely encounter a wide spectrum of concerns, including academic struggles, conduct problems, trauma, anxiety, depression, social disconnection, and family stressors. Threatening behavior is often one manifestation of these broader difficulties. Therefore, responses to threats should not be separated from efforts to address other learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

From our Center's perspective, every incident – whether it involves a threat or another significant concern – should serve as a wake-up call. It highlights the urgent need to strengthen how schools support students and families in a proactive, systemic way. Specifically, it underscores the necessity of enhancing school capacity in four interrelated domains:

1. *Promoting Healthy Development and Well-Being* – Schools must prioritize universal approaches that foster social-emotional development, positive behavior, engagement in learning, and a sense of connectedness. Establishing a safe, inclusive, and supportive school climate reduces not only the risk of violence, but also many other problems.
2. *Preventing Problems* – Effective systems emphasize problem prevention across all domains – academic, behavioral, and emotional. Schools need ensure that they are maximizing students' and staff feelings of self-determination, competence, and connection with significant others and minimizing threats to such feelings.
3. *Responding Quickly and Comprehensively When Problems Arise* – When a threat is made or a problem is identified, schools must respond with coordinated, multidisciplinary action. This includes not only ensuring immediate safety, but also assessing underlying factors such as unmet learning needs, emotional distress, family challenges, or social isolation. Effective response plans address root causes and provide supports that reduce the likelihood of recurrence across all types of concerns.
4. *Providing Access to Specialized and Intensive Support* – Some students require more intensive and ongoing assistance. Schools must facilitate access to specialized interventions, including mental health services, personalized learning supports, and community-based resources. Follow-up, monitoring, and continuity of care are essential for students with complex, severe, or chronic needs – whether related to threats, behavior, or emotional functioning.

Ultimately, the aim is not just to respond effectively to individual incidents – whether threats or other problems – but to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching. Each identified concern provides insight into gaps in current supports and opportunities for systemic improvement that reduces problems and promotes safety, well-being and engagement.

For more on *What comes next?* – see our Center Quick Finds – for example:

- >[\*Safe Schools and Violence Prevention\*](#)
- >[\*Prevention for Students "At Risk"\*](#)
- >[\*Early Intervention\*](#)
- >[\*Resilience/Protective Factors\*](#)

For guides to transforming student/learning supports, see:

- >[\*Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions\*](#)
- >[\*Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Starting the Process\*](#)

### **For discussion and interchange:**

#### **>Working Collaboratively to Improve Student/Learning Supports**

With the fracturing of the U.S. Department of Education, it is more important than ever that student support personnel at state departments of education, districts, and schools come together to map and analyze their roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for collaboration. Strengthening alignment across these levels is essential to ensuring that all students have equitable access to a unified and comprehensive system of learning and student supports.

The current heightened interest in mental health in schools has brought new personnel into schools, districts, and community agencies. These additions expand the pool of available resources. However, simply adding personnel is not sufficient, and gains are too often offset by the loss or reduction of other staff.

A critical next step is to formally connect all existing student/learning support staff. Doing so is fundamental to coalescing a cohesive and effective learning/student support leadership team.

In building such a leadership team, it is essential to include the full spectrum of school and community-based personnel who are focused on a shared set of concerns. In addition to counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, family liaisons, after-school staff, and student support administrators, schools and districts must ensure that staff associated with federally supported programs are actively involved. These programs represent significant resources that too often operate in isolation rather than as part of an integrated system.

Key federal programs to include are:

- Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Education Agencies
- Title I, Part C: Education of Migrant Children
- Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
- Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction (Teacher and Principal Training and Recruitment)
- Title III, Part A: English Learners (EL)
- Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE)
- Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)
- Title V, Part B: Rural and Low-Income School Program (RLIS)
- Title IX, Part A: Homeless Children and Youth (McKinney-Vento Act)
- Education of Students in Foster Care

Too often, the resources connected to these initiatives are fragmented, underutilized, or narrowly focused. Bringing their representatives into collaborative planning and implementation processes can significantly enhance the reach, coherence, and effectiveness of student/learning supports.

For smaller districts and schools, the composition of a leadership team focused on improving student/learning supports may differ. In such settings, teachers, paraprofessionals, behavior interventionists, and other school staff often play multiple roles and collectively constitute the primary support system. Their inclusion as equal partners in planning and decision-making is essential to building a functional and responsive support framework.

Ultimately, the goal is to weave together all available resources into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system that provides a strong and reliable safety net for every student. This requires moving beyond fragmented and marginalized efforts toward shared ownership, collective planning, and continuous communication. Creating such a system is not the responsibility of any single role or program – it is a fundamental expectation for all who are engaged in promoting student learning, well-being, and success.

### **Summer – A Time to Think, Plan, and Move Forward**

Over a school year, it is hard to find enough time to stop, think, and plan new ways of doing things.

It's a bit like Winnie the Pooh's experience going downstairs. As Milne describes it:

"Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it."

Summer months provide an opportunity to think long enough to plan better ways of doing things.

In particular, the summer allows staff who work year round to develop student/learning supports into a more effective system.

**Here are some resources from our Center to help with this:**

***An Agenda for Improving Student/Learning Supports: A Month by Month Guide for Systemic Change with Existing Resources***

***Resource Mapping and Management to Address Barriers to Learning: An Intervention for Systemic Change***

***Addressing Barriers to Learning: A Set of Surveys to Map What a School Has and What It Needs***

***Developing Resource-Oriented Mechanisms to Enhance Learning Supports***

***Resource Oriented Teams: Key Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Education Supports***

***Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions***

***Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Starting the Process***

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

- >>The State of Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management in K–12 Public Schools
- >>Referral Rates for School Threat Assessment
- >>Beyond Policing: Understanding Threats to School Safety
- >>Screening for Mental Health Problems in US Public Schools
- >>Enhancing Young Learners’ Engagement: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective
- >>Understanding the Links Between Youth Homelessness and Educational Disconnection
- >>Research on Effectiveness of Professional Development
- >>Are Initiatives to Improve School-Based Mental Health Services Hindering Efforts to Transform Student/Learning Supports?

**A Few Upcoming Webinars**

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

- 6/17 Strong Teacher-Student Relationships
- 6/17 Coaching for Change: Providing Tier 1 Classroom and Behavior Management Feedback
- 6/17 Youth mental health and well being
- 6/23 Understanding loss and grief
- 6/24 Federal investments in whole child wellbeing
- 6/24 Coalition and community capacity building for prevention
- 7/8 Equity centered leadership
- 7/9 Supporting new teachers
- 7/14 Real world prevention that drives behavior change
- 7/22 Engaging youth voices to improve prevention
- 7/30 Connecting systems for effective prevention
- 7/30 Shifting environmental conditions to enhance prevention
- 8/12 Strategies for Supporting New Teacher Happiness and Success
- 9/29 Leading Teams: Building Capacity for Teacher Leaders

*How Learning Happens* (Edutopia’s series of videos explores guiding all students, regardless of their developmental starting points, to become engaged learners).  
*Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth* (Webinar recording)

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**The Case for Systemic Redesign of Student/Learning Supports**

Fundamental, systemic redesign is urgently needed for how schools address factors interfering with learning and teaching. Immediate action is essential to move beyond crisis driven responses toward a cohesive, proactive, and equitable system of student/learning supports.

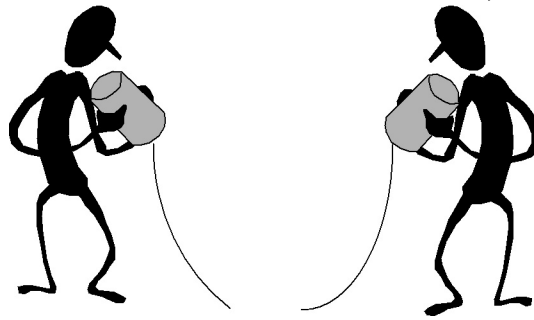
For guidance and resources on how to pursue this transformation, see the

>*National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports.*



Can you define collaboration for me?

*It's like teamwork, but many more emails.*



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### To Listserv Participants

We hope you will share this resource with others who may find it helpful.

And 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 140,000 on our listserv.)

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

**Send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

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**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! Contact: [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

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

*Who Are We?* 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 and now is named the

*Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports.*