

**29 Years &
Counting**



ENEWS

A Monthly Forum for Sharing and Interchange



February, 2015 (Vol. 19 #5)

Concerned about addressing barriers to student learning and teaching & re-engaging disconnected students? Concerned about equity of opportunity? Concerned about whole child development? This newsletter focuses on relevant policies and practices.



We encourage you to forward this to others. If this has been forwarded and you want to receive it directly, contact Ltaylor@ucla.edu



For more on resources from our national Center, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

WHAT'S HERE THIS MONTH

****Imminent Concern**

> *ESEA & Transforming Student and Learning Supports*

****News from around the country**

****This month's focus for schools to address barriers to learning**

> *February: Reducing Dropouts/Increasing Graduation Rates*

****2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports**

****UCLA Center Resources Update**

****Access links about:**

>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops

>Upcoming and archived webcasts, video, and online professional development

>Calls for grant proposals, presentations & papers

>Training and job opportunities

****A few other helpful resources accessible from the internet**

****Additional recent publications relevant to**

>School, family, & community

>Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics

>Child, adolescent, and young adults' mental and physical health

****Comments, requests, information, questions from the field**

IMMINENT CONCERN

ESEA & Transforming Student and Learning Supports

We understand that school improvement policy is fraught with controversies (often stemming from differences in social philosophy and related politics). However, as long as the ultimate intent of the ESEA is to improve how schools address factors that can interfere with student performance and achievement (i.e., barriers to learning and teaching), the reauthorization must avoid perpetuating (a) fragmentation and redundancy of interventions, (b) unnecessary referrals for services, and (c) marginalization of student and learning supports.

Unfortunately, most of what we see proposed and debated continues to reflect a fundamental disconnect with what a great many schools need to do in order “to ensure that all children have a fair, equitable, and significant opportunity to receive a high-quality education.” The reasons for the disconnect are the notion that better instruction and management along with a few “supplemental services” can do the job. The irony is that, while a significant proportion of the budget in many schools is devoted to interventions that address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students, Congressional policy makers discussing the reauthorization are yet to focus on the need for a fundamental transformation of these student and learning supports. Such a transformation is critical to enhancing equity of opportunity for students to succeed at school and beyond. Ignoring this facet of school improvement is a recipe for maintaining the unsatisfactory status quo that continues to plague too many students, their families, and their communities.

For a range of resources related to this concern, see
2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

And remember that whatever Congress does, state and local policy makers can and need to move forward in ending such marginalization.

Want to weigh in on all this?

Send your comments for sharing to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Ultimately, what matters most is for schools to find ways to improve the learning environment, reduce punitive approaches to school discipline, and provide greater social and emotional support. Anything less is just window dressing.

Pedro Noguera, executive director
Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the
Transformation of Schools, New York University

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

School recognized for student kindness. Newtown Kindness, a non-profit organization based in Newtown, Conn., informed Willowwind school staff in Iowa that the school will receive a Charlotte Bacon Act of Kindness Award. Newtown residents formed the organization after a shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in December 2012. Charlotte Bacon, 6, died in the shooting, along with 19 other children, six staff members, and the shooter. Willowwind's students participate in a program focused on doing random acts of kindness throughout the year. Projects are student-led and take place in locations such as the library and fire department. Students also host an annual day of service during school on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Students also worked on food drives for the Johnson County Crisis Center and fundraisers for the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, visiting Oaknoll Retirement Community in Iowa City. (1/21/15)

<http://www.press-citizen.com/story/news/education/2015/01/21/willowwind-recognized-kindness/22121189/>

Failing Grades: Nearly 500,000 fewer Americans passed the GED in 2014. Tutors say the old Graduate Equivalent Diploma (GED) test, which had been around since 2002, usually required about six months of studying – three to six hours a week – for a person of average intelligence to have a chance of passing. But the test changes have made passing the test more difficult. Changes were made to bring the test up to date, in some people's eyes. That meant adapting the test to reflect the new Common Core standards being taught in most high schools across the country, doing it online only and not on paper, and requiring more essays. According to the GED Testing Service, 401,388 people earned a GED in 2012, and about 540,000 in 2013. In 2014, according to the latest numbers, only about 55,000 have passed nationally. That is a 90 percent drop off from 2013. For those trying to take the GED test in 2014, passage of the high school equivalency is probably less likely than at any other point in the 70-year history of the test. (1/7/15)

<http://www.sacurrent.com/sanantonio/failing-grades-nearly-500000-fewer-americans-passed-the-ged-in-2014/Content?oid=2368410&showFullText=true>

New Plan to Get High School Dropouts into the Workforce. Ohio took its first steps to offer a brighter future to the state's 1.1 million citizens 22 years of age and older who have dropped out of high school. Five educational institutions have been selected to share \$2.5 million to develop a new approach to adult education — one that will link earning a diploma with free job training for in-demand careers.. During the planning phase, the five schools will determine how to contact potential students, assess their current knowledge and address potential challenges such as illiteracy. They also will engage industry leaders, determine the most in-demand jobs in their regions and identify the types of certifications graduates need to qualify for those positions. Each student in the pilot will enter a chosen career pathway program at his or her current ability level and work at the best-suited pace under a personalized “student success plan.” The student will simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an industry credential that will qualify him or her for jobs in manufacturing, medical technology and other in-demand industries. Students may receive instruction online, through video conferencing, academic coaching, work settings or a blend of classroom and online sources. Unlike in traditional classrooms, students will show they have mastered their courses by passing a competency-based job skills test. Program participants also receive career guidance. State data shows that Ohio adults without a high school diploma are twice as likely to live in poverty as those with a diploma. (1/9/15)

<http://education.ohio.gov/Media/Media-Releases/Ohio-Announces-New-Plan-to-Get-High-School-Dropout#.VLawEyvF9kR>

States considering requiring U.S. citizenship tests for graduation. Arizona's new law requiring high school students to pass the U.S. citizenship test in order to graduate appears likely to be adopted in a handful of other states this year, though educators warn it's not a fix-all solution to the nation's dire knowledge of civics. Arizona became the first to specifically require the U.S.

citizenship test, a 100-question exam that tests knowledge of facts on subjects like the Founding Fathers, the Bill of Rights and U.S. presidents. The Arizona-based Joe Foss Institute has set a goal of having all 50 states adopt the U.S. citizenship requirement for high school students by 2017, the 230th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution. The institute says legislatures in 15 states are expected to consider it this year. The Arizona law requires high school students to correctly answer 60 of 100 questions on the civics portion of the test for those aspiring to become U.S. citizens. Passing is required to earn a high school or GED diploma starting in the 2016-17 school year. Utah, South Dakota, Tennessee and other states have bills already presented or about to be introduced. The U.S. citizenship test requirement also comes amid a larger debate over concerns that testing required under No Child Left Behind and other laws has resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum — taking away time from instruction in topics like civics. (1/16/15)

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/national/states-consider-requiring-us-citizenship-test-for-graduation/article_66eb225e-4dc4-5276-9f80-58c5dd623f28.html

Justifying a Greater Role for Student Support Staff. Our Center's January 26 Community of Practice discussion focused on the topic of expanding the role of student support staff.*A related but not quite in tune with the Center's approach to this topic is an article in the District Administration magazine (<http://www.districtadministration.com/article/psychological-stress-schools>). It stresses the need for a greater role for school psychologists as indicated by the following quote: "Administrators should understand the wide range of training and knowledge that school psychologists have. We are trained to complete psychological assessments.... But we're also trained in school law, mental health, crisis interventions and research-based strategies to help improve instruction."

*Our Community of Practice discussion stresses that all student support staff need to be enabled to play a role in unifying the fragmented student and learning supports at a school and developing a comprehensive and equitable system to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students (see. See Practitioner 1/26/15 – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mhpractitioner/practitioner.pdf>).

Note: Each week the Center highlights newsworthy stories online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/linkstolatest.htm>

If you see a story that should be included, let us know. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu.

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Sitting down at the movie theater a woman notices a chicken is in the next seat. Amazed, she gasps out:

What are you doing at the movies?

The chicken replies: *Well, I liked the book.*

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THIS MONTH'S FOCUS FOR SCHOOLS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Reducing Dropouts/Increasing Graduation Rates

At this time of year, a special focus is critical with respect to minimizing student dropouts and maximizing graduation rates. (Time is running out for catching up; decisions are being made about who passes and who fails.)

“Most late high school dropouts (83%) listed a school-related (versus a family or employment related) reason for leaving. These reasons included missing too many school days, thinking it would be easier to get a GED, getting poor grades, and not liking school.” National Center for Education Statistics, Late High Schools Dropouts (2009)

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009307>

School factors can account for approximately two-thirds of the differences in mean school dropout rates. Available research suggests that being held back is the single strongest predictor of dropping out for both early and late dropouts (being held back one grade increases the risk of dropping out later by 40 to 50 percent, two grades by 90 percent). There is general agreement that schools must become more proactive in preventing problems.

See the U.S. Department of Education’s *Practice guide on Dropout Prevention*. Strategies presented include identifying and advocating for at-risk students, implementing programs to improve behavior and social skills, and keeping students engaged in the school environment. Online at

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dp_pg_090308.pdf

Collaborating for Dropout Prevention

At this critical juncture in the school year, teachers need to work with student and learning support staff to turn things around for students who are falling behind. Of special concern is re-engaging disconnected students and “catching-up” students who need special assistance. The need is for personalized instruction and problem solving. An in-depth conference and a series of follow-ups with the student and family usually is necessary to clarify specific factors related to the problem and formulate flexible steps to solve it. Special attention is paid to addressing any underlying factors interfering with school learning and performance. Engagement concerns require a focus on establishing and continuously enhancing a positive working relationship and monitoring the intervention steps closely to make immediate changes when a strategy isn’t working.

Here are a few specific matters for school staff to consider:

- *Rethink classroom and school-wide approaches to (a) enhance engaged, personalized learning and (b) provide students the learning supports they need to succeed.* Engagement involves practices based on an understanding of intrinsic motivation and that use classroom assessments that inform personalized intervention (e.g., response to intervention). Children at-risk need to be identified at a young age (as early as preschool). At every age interventions are needed to ensure students *feel* competent and interpersonally connected at school. Some need one-on-one support for awhile. Special attention must be given to re-engaging those who have disengaged.
- *Enhance the professional development of teachers and support staff.* Enhance teachers knowledge and skills to address a wide range of individual differences in motivation and capability. Expand support staff roles, functions, and capability to enable them to team with teachers *in the classroom* to ensure student engagement, personalized intervention, and special assistance.
- *Promote and provide more in- and out-of-school opportunities.* Such opportunities are needed from preK through high school. They range from tutoring and mentoring through

service learning and career advising. For instance, when older students (including potential dropouts) work with younger ones, both can improve their skills. And research indicates that when rigorous study in academic disciplines is linked to serious work on real needs (e.g., service learning), students' motivation to learn increases and there are academic, intellectual, civic, ethical, social, and personal benefits.

- *Offer multiple pathways.* Students need alternative career and vocational pathways that reflect high standards. The concept of multiple pathways focuses on ensuring choice among a variety of high school programs that prepare all students for both college and careers. The emphasis is on providing both academic and career foundations for advanced learning, training, and effective and responsible participation in society. Available choices reflect student interests and community strengths and opportunities. They include programs that provide real world training in areas where graduates can apply for living-wage jobs.
- *Introduce non-traditional approaches.* Well-designed educational alternative programs provide a nontraditional approach to curriculum by utilizing alternative teaching strategies. Programs focus upon the needs and interests of students by offering positive school experiences, which are geared for achievement, enhancement of positive self-concept, motivation, reduction of truancy, and reduction of disruptive behavior.

Need More?

For links to key references, empirically supported programs, and centers specializing in this and related topics, go to the Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Finds. Start with
>Dropout Prevention – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/dropout.html>

Also see the Quick Finds on:

- >Motivation, Engagement, Re-engagement – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/motiv.htm>
- >Barriers to Learning – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/barriers.htm>
- >Accommodations – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/idea.htm>

Over the long run, reducing dropouts/increasing graduation rates requires transforming student and learning supports (see the following information about the 2015 initiative).

Note: Integrating support for learning and teaching into the natural opportunities and phases of the school year provide unlimited opportunities. For a range of ideas organized by each month, see *Ideas for Enhancing Learning Supports at your school this month* on the homepage at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

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The secret in education lies in respecting the student.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson-

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2015 NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR TRANSFORMING STUDENT & LEARNING SUPPORTS

Many are advocating for the transformation of student and learning supports. *As an aid, below are some talking points we developed for the initiative.*

- (1) To date, all school improvement policy discussions have *marginalized* clarification of the essential need to focus on *transforming* how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.
- (2) As states pursue higher curriculum standards and as Congress focuses on reauthorizing the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), it is imperative to end such marginalization in order to enhance equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school and beyond.
- (3) If we are to end the marginalization of student and learning supports, it is imperative to focus on the need to fundamentally move school improvement policy from a two- to a three-component framework. (The current emphasis is mainly on instructional and management concerns; the third component that needs to be developed is a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system to enable schools to address the full range of factors interfering with student performance and achievement.)
- (4) Available research underscores the need and essential new directions for student and learning supports to improve student outcomes.
- (5) Trailblazing work is underway across the country (e.g., the state education agency in Alabama has adopted a three component approach to school improvement and is well underway in guiding 40 of its districts in developing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports). See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm>
- (6) The *2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports* builds on such efforts in order to pursue direct action aimed at moving districts and their schools forward in addressing the complex array of factors interfering with students not achieving good outcomes.
- (7) The specific aims are to transform student and learning supports in ways that (a) *unify* the many discrete practices and (b) *guide development of a comprehensive learning supports component* at school, district, and state levels.
- (8) Transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to enabling equity of opportunity, promoting whole child development, and enhancing school climate (and we stress that equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights).

For more information on all this, we refer folks to the webpages for the initiative <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html> .

If anyone would like us to elaborate on these talking points, we can be reached at adelman@psych.ucla.edu or Ltaylor@ucla.edu .

**LET US KNOW WHAT YOU SEE HAPPENING TO TRANSFORM
STUDENT AND LEARNING SUPPORTS**

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 supports, ***we can help***. Send all info to ltaylor@ucla.edu.

UCLA CENTER DEVELOPED RESOURCES – UPDATE

New

Resources for the 2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

- >Website section – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>
- >Book – *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive and Equitable System* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf>
- >Hot Topic to stimulate discussion – *ESEA & Transforming Student and Learning Supports* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/hottopic.htm>
- >Example Letter to Congressional education committees – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/congletter.pdf>

School Practitioner Community of Practice Interchange: Weekly Listserv

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

Topics explored in the last month included requests about:

- >*Addressing the many complex learning, behavior, and emotional problems at schools*
- >*Working with students with low motivation*
- >*Focus on intrinsic motivation: A fundamental concern in promoting whole child development and positive school climate*
- >*Teaching and addressing disruptive students*
- >*Justifying a greater role for student support staff*

Note: The latest interchange is on our website at

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm> (Also on our Facebook page)

Follow-up exchanges are posted on the Center website's Net Exchange –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm>

Center Featured Resource

>*Aids for Advocating for New Directions for Student and Learning Supports*

Ensuring equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school and beyond requires enlightened leadership and committed advocacy at all levels for new directions. As aids for the work, the Center has developed various resources. See, for example, *Call to Action & Outreach: Steps you can Take* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/call.htm>.

Also see resources in Section A of the Center's *System Change Toolkit for Transforming Student Supports into a Unified & Comprehensive System for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>.

ACCESS LINKS ABOUT:

- >Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops –**
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm>
- >Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers –**
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upcall.htm>
- >Training and job opportunities –** <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm>
- >Upcoming and archived webcasts and other professional development opportunities –** <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

Note: These links are on our homepage for easy access. Each is updated regularly. Just click on the indicated URL or go to our homepage at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

If you would like to add information to these, send it to ltaylor@ucla.edu

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES ACCESSIBLE FROM THE INTERNET

Effects of social media on mental health

http://healthymindsnetwork.org/system/resources/W1siZiIsIjIwMTQvMDgvMDEvMTJfMTJfMDNfNTE5X0hNTI9SQ183LnBkZiJdXQ/HMN_RB_7.pdf

Social media as a conduit for mental health interventions

http://healthymindsnetwork.org/system/resources/W1siZiIsIjIwMTQvMDgvMDEvMTJfMTJfMDNfNDk4X0hNTI9SQ181LnBkZiJdXQ/HMN_RB_5.pdf

Safeguarding children of arrested parents

http://www.theiacp.org/Portals/0/documents/pdfs/Safeguarding%20Children%20of%20Arrested%20Parents%20-%20Final_Web_v2.pdf

Equity in competence education: Realizing the potential, overcoming the obstacles

<http://www.studentsatthecenter.org/sites/scl.dl-dev.com/files/Equity-in-Competency-Education-cover.pdf>

Moving forward: Policies supporting transitions from high school to postsecondary

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/16/80/11680.pdf>

Guide to small group counseling

http://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Guid_Small_Group_Counseling_Guide_10-17-14.pdf

What research says about grade retention

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar08/vol65/num06/Grade-Retention.aspx>

National Mentoring Resource Center

<http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/>

Human trafficking in America's schools

<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools>

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The following text messages were exchanged on a cold winter day.

Son: "Windows frozen."

Mother: "Pour some warm water over them."

Son: "Computer now completely screwed up"

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ADDITIONAL RECENT PUBLICATIONS

(in print and on the web)

School, Family & Community

>Playing fair: The contribution of high-functioning recess to overall school climate in low income elementary schools. (2015). London, R.A., Westrich, L., Stokes-Guinan, K., & McLaughlin, M.J. *School Health*, 85, 53-60.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/josh.12216/abstract;jsessionid=33FA0ECBB9219737326B0F8DFD1E09D6.f02t01>

>Students' ratings of teacher support and academic and social-emotional well-being. (2014). Tennant, J.E., Demaray, M.K., Malecki, C.K., Terry, M.N., Clary, M., & Elzinga, N. *School Psychology Quarterly*. ePub
<http://psycnet.apa.org/index.cfm?fa=search.displayrecord&uid=2014-56438-001>

>Promoting an equitable and supportive school climate in high schools: The role of school organizational health and staff burnout. (2014). Bottiani, J., Bradshaw, C., & Mendelson, T. *Journal of School Psychology*, 52, 567-582.
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/00224405>

>The protective role of school friendship ties for substance use and aggressive behaviors among middle school students. (2015). Forster, M., Grigsby, T.J., Bunyan, A., Unger, J.B., & Valente, T.W. *Journal of School Health*, 85, 82-89.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/josh.12230/abstract>

>Cognitive ability at kindergarten entry and socioeconomic status. (2015). Larson, K., Russ, S.A., Nelson, B.B., Olson, L.M., & Halfon, N. *Pediatrics*, ePub(ePub): ePub. DOI 10.1542/peds.2014-0434

Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics

Ending child poverty now. (2015). Childrens Defense Fund.
<http://www.childrensdefense.org/library/PovertyReport/EndingChildPovertyNow.html>

>*Shame on U.S.* (2015). The Children's Advocacy Institute and First Star.
http://www.cachildlaw.org/Misc/Shame%20on%20U.S._FINAL.pdf

>The failure of zero tolerance. (2014). Skiba, R.J. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Problems*, 22, 27-33. <http://reclaimingjournal.com>

>Ferguson is about us too: A call to explore our communities. (2014). Cuenca, A. & Nichols, J.R. *Social Education*, 78, 248-253. <http://www.socialstudies.org/publications/socialeducation>

>Using cross-system communication to promote educational well-being of foster children: Recommendations for a national research, practice, and policy agenda. (2015). Day, A., Somers, C., Darden, J., & Yoon, J. *Children Schools*, 37, 54-62.
<http://cs.oxfordjournals.org/content/37/1/54.full>

>What can be done about the social determinants of mental health? (2015). Larsson, P. *Perspectives in Public Health* 135, 16-17. <http://rsh.sagepub.com/content/135/1/16.full>

Child, adolescent, and young adult's mental and physical health

>In their own words: Adolescents strategies to prevent friend's risk taking. (2014). Buckley, L., Chapman, R.L., Sheehan, M.C., & Reveruzzi, B.N. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 34, 539-561.
<http://jea.sagepub.com/content/34/4/539>

>Continuing care in high schools: A descriptive study of recovery high school programs. (2014). Finch, A.J., Moberg, D.P., & Krupp, A.L. *Journal of Child Adolescence Substance Abuse*, 23, 116-129. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1067828X.2012.751269#.VKHUxI4AQ>

>A systematic review of online youth mental health promotion and prevention interventions. (2015). Clarke, A., Kuosmanen, T., & Barry, M. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 44, 90–113. http://download.springer.com/static/pdf/174/art%253A10.1007%252Fs10964-014-0165-0.pdf?auth66=1421100496_060aefb57cf624b5d2a3cb16980705f5&ext=.pdf

>Emotional well-being and mental health: An exploration into health promotion in young people and families. (2015). Coverdale, G.E., & Long, A.F. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 135, 27-36. <http://rsh.sagepub.com/content/135/1/27>

FYI: Safety Lit is a useful resource for abstracts related to injury prevention policy and practice. [Http://www.safetylit.org](http://www.safetylit.org)

Note: The Center's Quick Find online clearinghouse at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> is updated regularly with new reports and publications such as those listed above. Currently there are over 130 alphabetized topics with direct links to Center materials and to other online resources and related centers. Let us know about publications and reports that should be included in this dedicated online clearinghouse. Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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*You can't live a perfect day without doing something for
someone who will never be able to repay you.*

John Wooden

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COMMENTS AND SHARING FROM THE FIELD

Feedback

A sample of folks we have heard from about *the 2015 National Initiative to Transform Student and Learning Supports*.

(1) "I am a principal. I am ready to move forward in support of developing a Learning Support Component to better address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. For more than twenty seven years, I have watched education take on many new faces in the name of school improvement. In every case I've found there to be no assistance for the group I now identify as "Flat-liners". Flat-liners are students who at some point early in their primary school years failed to make the connection when it comes to learning the basic fundamentals of education and that is how to read, write, and do mathematics. When it comes to special education assistance they don't qualify because they don't have a strength. School improvement curriculums are not designed to help them catch up but rather leave them farther and farther behind. I could go on about the systems' design but for the purpose of this email message I will end here. ...

Sincerely, MR. FED UP WITH LEAVING OUR CHILDREN BEHIND"

(2) "I read this message with great interest, because your initiative proposes a focus on intrinsic student motivation for engagement and re-engagement. It's clear to me, as a retired urban core elementary school principal, that engagement is essential to student success in school and beyond, to equity of opportunity, and to access civil rights.

This is not to place blame on students, particularly students from low income communities for a failure to engage, and to be intrinsically motivated to engage, because school staff and support

personnel have not found a way to enable that level of student involvement, particularly among students who have failed to 'keep up.'

By accident I found a way to do that, an astonishingly simple way, but there seems to be no interest at the school district level here, in university education departments, or among leadership of teachers or administrators unions to discuss it. It's as if adults have bought into the notion that public education is all about them, that student achievement is only a function of what they do, and that if students aren't achieving, it's the exclusive fault of adults. ...

The goals my students established (for themselves) were derived from their answers, across the student body, to this question: 'What can you do to make your school experience pleasant, to learn as much as you can, to make and keep as many friends as possible, and to keep yourself safe?'

Why would we not want our young people to think in these terms, and to make commitments to each other regarding what they can do? Why would we not want to give our students the opportunity to engage in self-control? Why would we not want our students to take responsibility for their learning outcomes?

For the children, I wish you all the best in your efforts to promote your Initiative."

Sharing

(1) "Just a note regarding a book *Building a Culture of Hope* by Bob Barr and Emily Gibson addressing a culture of hope for our schools. I thought the recommendations were very consistent with the learning supports initiative i.e. how schools can improve student performance, optimistic outlooks, feeling a sense of belonging, establishing pride, and establishing a sense of purpose. Connecting with community supports is one of many recommendations. Our national leaders should get the messages forwarded in their book. I will definitely be sharing it throughout Iowa and with our senators and representatives. It represents a great compilation of current and past research and the best practices of schools successful with our most challenged students."

(2) **The Improving Diversion Policies and Programs for Justice-Involved Youth with Behavioral Health Disorders: An Integrated Policy Academy-Action Network Initiative for 2015-16.** This initiative builds on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (Foundation) collaborative, continuing effort to accelerate reform of juvenile justice system responses to youth with behavioral health needs and will target the implementation of school-based and probation intake diversion programs. It will be coordinated by the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice at Policy Research Associates, Inc., and the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc. and will bring together up to four states from around the country. **Applications will be accepted through Friday, February 6, 2015.** Apply at <http://www.ncmhjj.com/projects/current-projects/diversion-behavioral-health-and-juvenile-justice-involved-youth/>

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Who Are We? The *national Center for Mental Health in Schools* 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 Project and Center are co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.

For more information about the Center and its many resources, go to the website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> or email Ltaylor@ucla.edu or adelman@psych.ucla.edu

Send info to share with others or ask for specific resources by email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu