



July, 2016 (Vol. 20 #10)

## Emerging Issue

**>How High a Priority Should Schools Place on Addressing Behavior Problems?**

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

**>Turning Learning Supports into a Major Systemic Component**

### AND

**\*\*News from around the country**

**\*\*National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports Update**

**\*\*UCLA Center Resources Update**

**\*\*Access links about:**

- >Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops
- >Upcoming and archived webcasts and online professional development
- >Calls for grant proposals, presentations & papers
- >Job and training 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**

*Note: In keeping with the National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports,\* this newsletter has expanded its thematic emphasis to encompass (1) daily concerns confronting those working in and with schools, (2) policies and practices relevant to the transformation of student and learning supports, and (3) promoting whole child development and positive school climate.*

*\*For more on the national initiative and the many resources from our Center, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>*

**We encourage you to forward this to others. If this has been forwarded and you want to receive it directly, contact [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

## EMERGING ISSUE

### >How High a Priority Should Schools Place on Addressing Behavior Problems?

A recent research report\* stresses, yet again, the link between learning and the behavioral, social, and emotional needs and the problems experienced by students. (93 percent of educators surveyed said they agree that behavioral issues get in the way of learning).

The majority of the educators surveyed also stated that such matters should be a high priority. (74 percent of surveyed educators said that addressing the needs of students whose academic challenges are rooted in social and emotional issues should be a top priority for their school, but only 56 percent said it currently is.)

\*2800 educators were surveyed by *YouGov* on behalf of *Kickboard* – see <https://www.kickboardforschools.com/blog/post/new-research-school-culture-across-america>

***Do you agree that a high priority should be given to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students and families?***

***Can you tell us where this is the case?***

Send your comments for sharing to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

\*\*\*\*\*

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

## NEWS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

**Schools struggle to find and support homeless youth.** The number of K-12 students identified as being homeless during the 2013-14 school year was double the number identified in 2006-07. While a portion of that increase can be attributed to better identification and tracking by schools, the last recession also forced more families out of their homes, and recovery has been slow. (Education Dive, June 16) <http://www.educationdive.com/news/schools-struggle-to-find-and-support-homeless-youth/420974/>

**Students learn about careers in health care through MedStart Camp.** MedStart gives Montana high school juniors and seniors hands-on experiences in health care. The camp targets rural, minority, low-income and first-generation college-bound students. Activities include practicing using syringes, earning CPR and AED certifications, exploring other fields of science, and learning about financial aid and money management. Campers' fees are paid for by GEAR-Up, a federal program that awards financial assistance to students. The GEAR-Up scholarship pays for the full tuition of MedStart and travel stipend for the students. 6/16/16  
[http://missoulain.com/news/local/students-learn-about-careers-in-health-care-through-medstart-camp/article\\_73a25249-e26b-5482-a17d-ff2da65b1ba8.html](http://missoulain.com/news/local/students-learn-about-careers-in-health-care-through-medstart-camp/article_73a25249-e26b-5482-a17d-ff2da65b1ba8.html)

**District staff focus on families in poverty.** Nearly 65 percent of Tuscaloosa City Schools' students qualify for free or reduced lunch. During the staff development simulation, "The Face of Poverty" principals and administrators were split up into different groups, each consisting of four people to

form a family. Each family received packets of bus passes, money and budget sheets. Throughout the morning, each group was faced with a challenge, such as a medical emergency. The intent was to provide a glimpse into the reality of how poverty affects education. The latest ACT proficiency results showed only 20 percent of 3rd-graders living in poverty are proficient in reading, compared to 79 percent for 3rd-graders above the poverty line. 6/12/16

<http://www.tuscaloosaneews.com>

**A look at chronic absenteeism across america.** The problem of students habitually missing school varies widely from state to state, with about one-third of students in the nation's capital absent 15 days or more in a single school year, according to an Associated Press analysis of government statistics. (ABC News, June 8) <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/chronic-absenteeism-america-39696584>

**Disparities continue to plague U.S. schools.** The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) unveiled new data from the 2013-2014 school year showing gaps that still remain too wide in key areas affecting educational equity and opportunity for students, including incidents of discipline, restraint and seclusion, access to courses and programs that lead to college and career readiness, teacher equity, rates of retention, and access to early learning. (6/7/15)

[http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/persistent-disparities-found-through-comprehensive-civil-rights-survey-and-erscore-need-continued-focus-equity-king-says-0?utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name=&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=](http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/persistent-disparities-found-through-comprehensive-civil-rights-survey-and-erscore-need-continued-focus-equity-king-says-0?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)

**A backlash against schools as high security fortresses.** A Los Angeles Unified School district policy of mandatory bag checks and random metal detector scans fits a nationwide trend of schools beefing up security. But a coalition of educators says that the trend has gone too far. A coalition of teacher's unions, charter schools, civil rights groups, and educational organizations across Los Angeles that is urging the district to revise its school security policy, which calls for daily, random metal detector and locker searches at all L.A. Unified secondary and co-located charter schools. Some studies suggest that using metal detectors, along with drug-sniffing dogs, increased police presence, and other security measures, produces mixed results, at best. A 2011 review of 15 years of literature on the effects of metal detectors found that there was insufficient evidence to prove that their use had any positive effects on student and staff behavior or perceptions. 6/3/16

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2016/0603/A-backlash-against-L.A.-schools-as-high-security-fortresses>

**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](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu).

@@@##

From article on metal detector scans at school

***It's not the fortified entrance way with the metal detector that makes the school secure. It's the people beyond that entrance. Any type of equipment or hardware is going to be a supplement to but not a substitute for human relationships and behavior.***

Kenneth Trump

@@@##

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

### >Turning Learning Supports into a Major Systemic Component

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

At most schools, support staff have had to keep “bumping their heads” as they struggle each day to meet the demands on them. This usually means reacting with a limited set of piecemeal and fragmented strategies. The summer months provide an opportunity to think long enough to plan better ways of doing things. In particular, it allows staff who work year round to further develop student and learning supports into a more effective system. Summer also allows for related personnel development.

Effective use of the summer months can set a process in motion that can lead to development of a unified, comprehensive, equitable component that systematically addresses barriers to learning and teaching and re-engages disconnected students and families. Such a component has been called an enabling or learning supports component. Planning and developing such a component not only can end fragmented approaches, it can move toward eliminating the counterproductive competition for resources and end the marginalization of student supports.

Here are some steps and resources:

**Develop a Leadership Team to Begin Planning** – see

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resource%20coord%20team.pdf>  
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/resource\\_oriented\\_teams.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf)

**Formulate an Intervention Design** – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/aladesign.pdf>

**Focus Initially on Addressing Pressing Concerns** – see

[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/infrastructure\\_tt/examplesofareas.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/infrastructure_tt/examplesofareas.pdf)

**Map and Analyze Resources to Identify Critical Gaps and Plan Ways to Fill Them** – see

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resourcemapping/resourcemappingandmanagement.pdf>  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Surveys/Set1.pdf>

**Start Long-range Planning for System Development** – see

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf>  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

**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>

@#@@#@#

***It ain't the heat, it's the humility.***

*Yogi Berra*

@#@@#@#

## **NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR TRANSFORMING STUDENT & LEARNING SUPPORTS\***

### **Making Progress Visible**

**Websites:** Websites are key tools in featuring accomplishments related to work on unifying and developing a comprehensive and equitable system of learning supports. Here is an example from Illinois – <http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports/>

Summer is a great time to create/update a section of a state/district/school website to display a *system of learning supports*. The Center's *Toolkit for System Change* offers a prototype – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/lswel1.htm>

Let us know about websites we should share with others. Send URL's to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)  
#####

**Presentations:** The following is the abstract for a presentation made at the June 2016 National Family and Community Engagement Conference

#### **The Case for a Learning Supports Approach: Why doesn't every student learn?**

Every district wants to help students reach their full potential and become successful members of a community and workforce. Despite the hard work of school staff and families, districts are increasingly concerned about the lack of growth in student performance. Clearly, not all students come to school every day motivationally ready and able to learn. Many students experience barriers that interfere with their ability to be physically, emotionally or mentally present. This session introduces participants to Adelman and Taylor's Learning Supports Framework, a roadmap for schools to partner with families and communities to implement a comprehensive system of supports that helps ensure all students have the opportunity to benefit from quality instruction.

#####

**Workshops:** Again this summer, the Alabama Megaconference (July 2016) will feature major presentations on their statewide progress developing a *Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students and families. See – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/alaconf.pdf>

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

### **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](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu) .

@# @# @#

***Politics is the art of looking for trouble, misdiagnosing it  
and then misapplying the wrong remedies.***

Groucho Marx

@# @# @#

## **UCLA CENTER DEVELOPED RESOURCES – UPDATE**

### **New**

#### **>Quarterly ejournal**

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/sum16.pdf>

Featured articles:

- >>*Rethinking Education Initiatives: Lessons Learned and Moving Forward*
- >>*Understanding diversity to better address barriers to learning*

#### **>Information Resources**

- >>A personal perspective on the Teach for American Program

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/tfa.pdf>

- >>Retaining New Teachers

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newteachers.pdf>

### **Updated Resource Packets**

- >*Sexual minority students* – [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sexual\\_minority/lgbt.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sexual_minority/lgbt.pdf)

- >*Behavioral Initiatives in Broad Perspective* –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/behavioral/behini.pdf>

- >*School Based Health Centers* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sampler/hlthctrs.pdf>

### **School Practitioner Community of Practice Interchange: Weekly Listserv**

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

- >What's the best approach to designing a mental health plan for our district?
- >What contributes to the differences in student motivation in suburban v. urban schools?
- >Poverty and barriers to learning (6/6/16)

\*\*\*\*\*

- >How much treatment/intervention should take place within the school v. out in the community  
in coordination with the school? What evidence is there for making these decisions?

- >Strengthening the intervention continuum (6/13/16)

\*\*\*\*\*

- >Needed: a school-community response to a local substance abuse problem

- >Sharing technical assistance, coaching, mentoring (6/20/16)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Note:** The latest School Practitioner and archived previous ones are 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>

### **Recently Featured Center Resources**

#### **>For Strengthening the intervention continuum**

Introduction into federal policy of response to intervention (RTI) and positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) led to widespread adoption and adaptation of the three tier intervention pyramid. As originally presented, the pyramid highlights a continuum of three different levels of intervention and suggests the percent of students at each level. Currently, schools are referring to this continuum as a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS). While the focus on levels has made a positive contribution, it is time to move beyond the limitations of current MTSS thinking to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student and learning supports.

Such a system has two facets:

- >a *continuum of school-community interventions* consisting of subsystems for
  - promoting effective schooling and whole child development
  - preventing problems experienced by teachers and students
  - addressing such problems as soon as feasible after they arise
  - providing for students who have severe and chronic problems.

and

- >a *cohesively organized and delimited set of “content” arenas* for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students in the classroom and school-wide. These arenas encompass the range of concerns a school copes with each day.

The following Center resources provide guidance on strengthening the intervention continuum and framing it with a cohesively organized and delimited set of "content" arenas.

- >*Moving Beyond the Three Tier Intervention Pyramid Toward a Comprehensive Framework for Student and Learning Supports*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/threetier.pdf>

- >*Embedding Mental Health into a Learning Supports Component: An Essential Step for the Field to Take Now*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingmh.pdf>

- >*Introduction to a Component for Addressing Barriers to Student Learning –*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/introductionbrief.pdf>

- >*Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System –*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf>

- >*30 minute Introductory webinar on Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System –*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/powerpoint/briefintrosldesrec.pptx>

Accompanying PDF handouts – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/intropphandouts.pdf>

#### **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](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)



## OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES ACCESSIBLE FROM THE INTERNET

- > *A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism* (UNESCO) – <http://www.charterforcompassion.org/images/menus/Education/PDFs/244676e1.pdf>
- > *A Practitioner's Resource Guide: Helping Families To Support Their LGBT Children* – <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/A-Practitioner-s-Resource-Guide-Helping-Families-to-Support-Their-LGBT-Children/PEP14-LGBTKIDS>
- > *Youth Aware of Mental Health* – <http://www.y-a-m.org/>
- > *Federal Autism Activities: Agencies Are Encouraging Early Identification and Providing Services, and Recent Actions Could Improve Coordination* – <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-446> Highlights: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/677366.pdf>
- > *The importance of at-risk funding* – <http://www.ecs.org/the-importance-of-at-risk-funding/>
- > *Gun control: Student discussion guide* – [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/gun-control-america-discussion-guide.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/gun-control-america-discussion-guide.shtml)
- > *Conditions of Education* (2016) – <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>

We received the following request:

"I work with student and staff assistance teams several schools. One school in particular has experienced a number of students in 4th and 5th grade using social media to talk about suicide. The team is working to discover the source of the trend as more and more students were on the topic. Granted, it is a small percentage of students involved; the team's sense of urgency to address these incidents is heightened by the school year coming to an end. Some of the students involved are already receiving services; other students come as a surprise to the team because of their good performance in academics and behavior. Members on the team are keeping touch with all of the students and have been in touch with their parents. We find that the focus of much of the curricula to deal with the subject are geared to teens. Any help from your center on the question of preteens would be appreciated."

Here are a few resources we provided as a starting point in response to the above request:

- > *Suicide Prevention Quick Find* – [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p3002\\_02.htm](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p3002_02.htm)
- > *At-Risk for Middle School Personnel* – <https://www.kognito.com/products/pk12/>
- > *Look, listen, link curriculum for students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades* – [http://www.yspp.org/curriculum/look\\_listen\\_link.htm](http://www.yspp.org/curriculum/look_listen_link.htm)
- > *Suicide among pre-adolescents* – <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2010/10/suicide.aspx>
- > *Facts and warning signs for suicidal thoughts in children* – <https://www.verywell.com/youth-suicide-facts-1066787>
- > *What to do is your child is talking about suicide* – <http://www.d11.org/pip/Parents/Suicide.pdf>
- > *State Estimates of Past-Year Serious Thoughts of Suicide Among Young Adults: 2013 and 2014* – [http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report\\_2387/ShortReport-2387.pdf](http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report_2387/ShortReport-2387.pdf)

@#@#@#

***I dream of a better tomorrow, where chickens can cross the road and not be questioned about their motives.***

@#@#@#



## ADDITIONAL RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### School, Family & Community

- >Classroom and teacher support in kindergarten: associations with the behavioral and academic adjustment of low-income students. P. Lee & K.L. Bierman (2015). *Merrill Palmer Quarterly*, 61, 383-411. [http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.13110/merrpalmquar1982.61.3.0383?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.13110/merrpalmquar1982.61.3.0383?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)
- >Promoting a positive middle school transition: A randomized-controlled treatment study examining self-concept and self-esteem. V.A. Coelho, M. Marchante, & S.R. Jimerson (2016). *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, ePub <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10964-016-0510-6>
- >A vicious cycle: a social-psychological account of extreme racial disparities in school discipline. J.A. Okonofua, G.M. Walton, & J.L. Eberhardt (2016). *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 11, 381-398. <http://pps.sagepub.com/content/11/3/381>
- >The school-to-prison pipeline: Disproportionate impact on vulnerable children and adolescents. C.A. Mallett (2016). *Education & Urban Society*, ePub <http://eus.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/04/15/0013124516644053>

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

- >Is an Ounce of Prevention Still Worth a Pound of Cure? Community-Based Interagency Collaboration to Enhance Student and Family Well-Being. J.A. Anderson (2016). *The School Community Journal*, 26, 9-24. <http://www.adi.org/journal/CurrentIssue/CurrentIssue.pdf>
- >The role of schools in children and young people's self-harm and suicide: systematic review and meta-ethnography of qualitative research. R. Evans & C. Hurrell (2016). *BMC Public Health*, 16. <http://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-016-3065-2>
- >A children's rights perspective on the participation of youth in juvenile court. S. Rap (2016). *International Journal of Children's Rights*. 24, 93-112. <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/15718182-02303006>
- >Exposure to community violence and the trajectory of internalizing and externalizing symptoms in a sample of low-income urban youth. J.J. Taylor, K.E. Grant, C.A. Zulauf, P.J. Fowler, D.A. Meyerson, & S. Irsheid (2016). *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, ePub <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15374416.2016.1152553>

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

- >Protocols or principles? Reimagining suicide risk assessment as an embedded, principle-based ongoing conversation in youth work practice. P. Ranahan (2016). *Child and Youth Services*, ePub <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/wcys20/current>
- >Ending Conversion Therapy: Supporting and Affirming LGBTQ Youth. (2015) HHS Publication No. (SMA) 15-4928. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA15-4928/SMA15-4928.pdf>
- >The protective role of friendship quality on the well-being of adolescents victimized by peers. O., Cuadros & C. Berger (2016). *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, ePub <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10964-016-0504-4>
- >Who helps whom? Investigating the development of adolescent prosocial relationships. L. van Rijsewijk, J.K. Dijkstra, K. Pattiselanno, C. Steglich, & R. Veenstra (2016). *Developmental Psychology*, 52, 894-908. <http://psycnet.apa.org/index.cfm?fa=search.displayrecord&uid=2016-25752-003>

**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](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

@#@@#

**A positive attitude may not solve all your problems but it  
will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort.**

Herm Albright

@#@@#

### **COMMENTS AND SHARING FROM THE FIELD**

About the Policy Notes: *Piecemeal Policy Advocacy for Improving Schools Amounts to Tinkering and Works Against Fundamental System Transformation* –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/tinkering.pdf>

(1) “I read the email regarding piecemeal school changes work against system transformation. You are right on target. Another part of this systemic issue is that when special programs and/or initiatives are created they hire less experienced professional staff because it appears that cost is a priority over effectiveness.” (from a principal)

(2) “I have never responded to an article before, but this one touched a chord with me. As and educator that has spent 23 of 25 years working in Title I schools what you state in this article is what I constantly deal with. Another new program to boost student learning, or we have always done it and it works and none of these things come with any evidence.

Over the past 10 years what I have seen work best and it has improved student outcomes, is when teachers are given time to work together to become crystal clear on what they want student to say or do. I call it the DuFour model of PLC work. Teachers break apart the standards, figure out learning outcomes and develop lessons. They are not given canned programs, but use curriculum as tools to guide student learning. Monitoring student learning with tracking tools. Holding students accountable to work completion. Supporting students who are struggling. When we start adding additional piecemeal components to schools like SEL or ‘whole child learning’ it is more words. What does it mean? What does it look like in a school? How do schools understand how to implement these idea(l)s. Then the PD comes from ‘experts’ and teachers try to add on in the limited amount of time they have each day with students. It becomes another stand alone in a system of stand alones.

I am tired of hearing we are preparing students for the 21st century. We are here. We are preparing students for the jobs of tomorrow. Educators have always done that. Did anyone tell the teachers in the 40s they were preparing students to become the engineers to put men on the moon? Or the 50s and 60s for the personal computer? I have been a principal at 2 different CA schools in two different districts, both Title I schools, where I have witnessed student growth. It takes time, there has to be a cultural shift and a belief by staff that all students can learn. Some times it means long time teachers need to move on to create this new culture of collaboration. This cannot be lip service. Supports must be put in place. When students ‘feel’ like they are believed in, have a chance to succeed and are given work they can do climate improves.

Educators become educators because they care about kids and want them to succeed. Do we know what success looks like? Not always for every student. I bet if we were all crystal clear about what was expected, teachers would instruct and students would hit

whatever bar was expected of them. System reform will not come from the Feds, the State or even the local board of district office. True reform will come at schools, with strong principals, excellent caring teachers that are supported not directed from above and afar.

Thank you for putting this out there about true school reform. There are many practitioners like me that need people like you sharing this information.” (from a principal)

#####

Feedback on the June ENEWS issue: *Concerns about making school climate an accountability measure* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/enews/june16.pdf>

“I’m gravely concerned about the article on school climate and the statements about the importance of school climate. School improvement follows school climate, not the other way around as you suggest. Research shows that stabilizing a school’s climate is the foundation necessary for improving a school. As teachers have told us around the state that once the school climate is stabilized and students and staff feel safe, secure, and engaged school improvement can then occur because the conditions for learning have been improved. An unstable school climate is one of the major barriers to teaching, and in some schools is the number one barrier. Georgia has implemented a School Climate Rating for each school that is calculated using multiple measures. We have seen a strong correlation between the School Climate Ratings and student achievement, and we have seen the School Climate Ratings improve after implementation of PBIS, as well as increases in graduation rate and improved teacher retention.”

The Center did send a clarifying response to the above concern and including it in the Policy Notes: *Piecemeal Policy Advocacy for Improving Schools Amounts to Tinkering and Works Against Fundamental System Transformation* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/tinkering.pdf>  
We were pleased that the response back stated: “Thank you for graciously allowing me to discuss this with you. I have the greatest respect your work.”

#####

We were asked to share the following:

(1) “The National Dropout Prevention Center has printed my article on cyberbullying. You have permission to disseminate it to those on your network. Franklin Schargel  
<http://dropoutprevention.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/NDPN-Newsletter254.pdf>

(2) “I’m impressed by your website and drawn deeper and deeper into its resources. Thank you very much for it. I’m wondering if you are familiar with the recent book *Every School* by Donald Nielsen. It addresses total system transformation in a way that I think dovetails with your goals, and puts “boots on the ground”, so to speak. I recommend looking at it.”

### THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF ENEWS

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](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu) or [adelman@psych.ucla.edu](mailto:adelman@psych.ucla.edu)

Send info to share with others or ask for specific resources by email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)