School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)

January 24, 2018

Topic: Connecting schools, juvenile justice, and the community

Center Comments

Responses from the Field

Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

Center Resources relevant to this concern

> **Note:** *Go to* http://smhp.psych.ucla **for links to other resources including**
> >**Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops**
> >**Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers**
> >**Training and job opportunities**
> >**Upcoming webcasts & other professional development opportunities**

This resource is from the
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA

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Given shrinking education budgets, we have been asked to increase our outreach to make our free resources more available (e.g., for planning, professional development, etc.).

So please feel free to share with anyone you think might benefit (e.g., forward our resources to individuals and share on listservs and websites).

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For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

For previous postings of community of practice discussions, see
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm

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Note: In keeping with the *National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports*, this is being sent to and forwarded by over 100,000 school and community stakeholders concerned about (1) daily matters confronting schools, (2) promoting whole child development and positive school climate, and (3) the transformation of student and learning supports.

This week: Connecting schools, juvenile justice, and the community

Request: "We've been plagued with juvenile crimes in our communities and what I've learned over the past year, most kids are committing crimes during school hours, there's very little parental involvement or parental accountability for students to attend school. We are a community seeking solutions and it seems there's a huge disconnect between our schools, juvenile court and the community. Is this something you can help us with?"

Center Comments: This concern fits into the general efforts to establish effective school-community collaboration (including engaging families and other neighborhood stakeholders). From our perspective, here are links to a few recent resources that address these matters along with a caution about not focusing the effort too narrowly.

>*Community Outreach and Collaborative Engagement* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/ch7comm.pdf

>*Home Involvement, Engagement, and Re-engagement in Schooling* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/ch6home.pdf

>An example of a district-community collaboration – the School District of La Crosse (WI)
>>brief Video – http://youtu.be/-QmhekE7__k
>> brief blog – Family & Youth Subcommittee (Rebuilding for Learning Steering
Committee) – http://www.lacrossepartnersinlearning.com/the-blog/

**Note of Caution: In addressing the concern raised, much more is needed than what is being touted as initiatives for "Integrated Student Support" (ISS). See
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/dec8.pdf**

Responses from the Field: We shared this concern with a number of colleagues; here is a sample of what we have received so far:

(1) The solutions lie within the community. I guess my only advice is for this community to get organized around these problems. Perhaps a "general", well publicized series of open meetings where all segments of the community could come together (school, law enforcement, juvenile justice, parents, social services, etc.). At the first meeting, there would need to be a couple motivational leaders to briefly speak to the importance of framing the problems and talking about the need for action. Then, there should be an opportunity for the audience to break into discussion groups (perhaps by area of interest/expertise?) to focus on what they care about the most and capture key points in writing that reflect their views of the problems.

Then I would reconvene the large group, collect the summaries and ask for volunteers to continue working on the problems identified by the large group. (There would need to be some plan in mind prior to the meeting so that next step goes smoothly.) Volunteers could be organized by programs/services, clientele served, or whatever makes the most sense based on their area of interest/expertise. Ask groups to identify a leader and set a meeting date/timeframe to address the issues from the large group that best fit their area.

Knowing that the problems will be complex, it will be important to have diverse perspectives represented on each of the workgroups and a skilled person to facilitate the group. Thought should be given to "assignments" for each of the workgroups so expectations are clear and volunteers understand their tasks. For example, each work group should address policies and practices for their problem areas (collected from the large group). They should have guidance to help them study the issues, collect data, review researched-based practices/policies and then make recommendations. Such expectations will help "justify" the need for change in an objective, factual way.

From there, recommendations should be shared with those groups/agencies that are best positioned to address these recommendations. After that, the next general public meeting should include the work done, recommendations made, and a response from the agencies that will make some changes. From there, it's a matter of collecting data to check progress and communicate, communicate, communicate.

We're talking systems change here……very gradual and very intensive. It will be difficult for someone with a full time job to take on this type of organizational change. Ideally, this community should develop an outline of what needs to happen in this process, hire/enlist support from someone with expertise to guide them through the process and ensure that they have the capacity to carry through with the plans. Not easy and takes a lot of planning. Perhaps a first step is to simply get some of the "movers and shakers" into the same room to talk about a process?

(2) This is a gigantic question that I assume has been attacked already in a variety of ways for some time. The writer asks for "something" to help the community, which then makes me wonder about helper fatigue, desperation, lack of resources, etc. I'm sure we have all been so thwarted and overwhelmed that we would just like to have somebody confidently point out a direction. Any direction. Dare I take this on? All I really have to offer is what I have noticed by working in public schools for decades. So, here goes...

In my experience, I've noticed that people tend to get involved when they value the activity and believe they stand a reasonable chance of doing well at it. If certain students aren't coming to school and neither are their parents, you will need to find out why your programs can't compete with the alternatives.

I suspect it could be difficult for people working inside the schools and the courts to imagine what would bring students and parents to the classroom door, clamoring to get in. But perhaps together you could identify community leaders in the key stakeholder groups and ask them for their ideas. Discussions of this type probably work best in comfortable, informal settings one-on-one. Meet on the community leaders' schedules. Share some food. Don't let transportation or child care issues get in the way.

You need to find out not only what people want and need, but also what are the roadblocks to accessing school services they way they are currently structured. It could be that at least some of your offerings are highly valued and people want to participate —— BUT —— something of a higher priority gets in the way.

In this early, information-gathering phase, the goal is to better understand the situation. It will be tempting to slip into making plans or promises, or wanting to explain why the current programs are really the best/only way to do business. Don't go there. Just find out what's going on and how all that makes schooling look like a relatively unattractive/unprofitable use of time.
When everybody agrees on a clear description of the problem, then you can begin to think about ways to prevent the roadblocks and make the schooling experience unexpectedly more rewarding than anybody imagined. I suspect some of the problems will have immediate, simple solutions. Ultimately, you want to know what would it take to make students and parents absolutely delighted that they came to school, and want to do it again soon.

(3) The issue is so widespread throughout the nation one has to wonder if anyone knows exactly what to do. The most promising efforts center around collaborative efforts between agencies and community members--the establishment of common goals and sharing resources to address the goals. Police Departments who have assigned staff to address juvenile crime indicate that some positive impacts can be realized. The key is to establish what juveniles are involved and establish what has to be addressed. Juveniles coming from broken homes need assistance to direct their lives. Human services, mental health agencies, recreation facilities, churches etc. could be helping with the lack of parenting. More than likely, schools in this community are challenged with dropout issues. One has to consider whether the schools and agencies are collaborating in collocating services. A one on one contact program will probably help get connections going. It will take some full time staff to get collaboratives going. Shared resources between the agencies may be able to get staff in place to address the issues.

(4) It takes community to build community. I would suggest partnering with the folks that you want by inviting them to focus groups or problem solving groups that assist with the whole community addressing the problems. I work in a very challenging community, and we are always reaching out to our police and juvenile justice folks. Convening often helps us understand how they decide who to work with. I know that many times communities get together and point fingers at the

folks who are not "doing their job". When we get closer to building relationships with them, we start to learn that they are most often under funded and under staffed. In our community we have begun to meet with all our faith based partners, and state agency folks. There are few short term solutions, neighborhood boards, school partnership initiatives with Boys and Girls clubs, YMCA Parks and Rec and other non-profits that may have grants. Anything sustainable, should be efforts and partnering with people who live in the community and want to assist with the schools. It comes slow and in time.

Here is a response from a university student who regularly contributes to the Center's work:

When I worked at the middle school, I had to interact with students who had gone through the juvenile system and saw many parents who were not really invested in their students' education or behavior, so I can relate to this person's request. There is a disconnect between schools, especially low-income schools ..., the juvenile system, and the community. One of the things that I noticed was that the students who had a record for misbehaving in the classroom were most receptive when they were involved in activities that made use of their strengths. For example, I had a group of students who were always being sent out of the classrooms for disrupting class time. My colleagues and I from the College Center had a Girls Build [the community] club during lunch and although the club was primarily composed of female students, we encouraged the group of male students that misbehaved to help our club out. They would help the school club set up and clean up after their events. They were also invited to our lunch meetings which to my surprise, the boys attended and participated by sharing their ideas about future events for the ... club. Slowly but surely, the boys started coming into the College Center to do their homework and talk to me and my colleagues if something was bothering them. From that moment on, whenever my colleagues and I would walk into their classrooms and they were misbehaving even after the teacher told them to stop, we would intervene by telling them to stop and pay attention to their teacher and they would listen to us. My point in this experience, is that students who have a background of behaving and committing crimes during school hours, do really listen to those who take the time to listen to them. All of those students I worked with had amazing stories to tell, stories that their teachers or the school board never take the time to ask about and that would explain to some extent the misbehavior of these students. With this said, my first suggestions for schools is to have a healthy outlet for these students to vent, such as having a College Center or something else that is not necessarily a club and is just a safe space for these students to spend their lunch time in a supervised location. Another important thing that I feel is often overlooked, is that sometimes teachers just send students out of their classrooms, leaving them to roam around the school unsupervised making them more prone to do things they should not be doing. Instead, of sending them to the dean or a restorative justice activity (I am not sure if restorative justice is a more prevalent practice now a days), they should be sent to a place where they can continue their coursework so that they do not fall behind. One of the reasons that students act out is because according to them, they are already "failing the class" so there is no point in doing the work. Therefore, instead of sending students out of the classroom with no work, these students are just missing another class session assignment- it's just a cycle that never ends.

I also understand that many of the low-income schools that experience these crimes during school hours are located in communities with high crime rates themselves. I know it is sometimes impossible to keep community negative influences from infiltrating into school campuses, but I believe there are ways to minimize its impact. One way to help the situation is to have community police roaming the neighborhood before, during, and after school hours. The reason I say before school, is that much of the negative influences that would take place, would occur as the students walked to school, so by the time the students got to school they would come in with items that should not be on school grounds. I did come to see police on campus during the students' lunch time. Although schools might do this for safety concerns, I think that it sends students the negative

message that they are delinquents versus the students that they are. Therefore, in my opinion intimidating students to behave, such as by having police officers act as supervisors during lunch, can at times be counterproductive. When it comes to parental involvement, it can be difficult to make parents understand their children's behavior/learning at school when they do not see that how the way they are raised/treated at home affects their learning. The first moment of interaction that comes to mind between parents and their child's learning is during open house and parent conference. However, even these events are sometimes low in parent attendance or the parents who actually need to attend do not show up. Therefore, before the start of the school year there should be an event (offer several event dates and time options to accommodate for guardian's schedule, and maybe even offer one-on-one appointments if needed), where administrators/teachers go over student and parent expectations, and the consequences for the student if they misbehave along with resources inside and outside the school that can be helpful (e.g. financial assistance, legal assistance, psych. services...). I know that a parent contract is sometimes sent home and returned by the student. However, these are often overlooked by parents and are not read, just signed. Until parents are involved in their student's education, the integration of the community can take place because these same parents are the same residents living in the surrounding community; if you have inactive parents, you will have an inactive community. Many schools get complacent and believe that just making recorded phone calls and having flyers to encourage them to get involved is enough, when in reality more personalized methods can be taken (e.g. school personnel going personally to deliver flyers to the parents whether that means going to the students' home. This is a method used by my high school that I personally found efficient). Therefore, I believe schools can help connect the dots by improving parental involvement in terms of accommodating to parents' needs and making it easier for them to participate in their child's education. These are just some of my ideas on the topic. I hope it helps in some way, or at least sparks a conversation on this persistent issue.

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Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

What can you add to this discussion about how your community and schools address these concerns?

Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Additional Center Resources relevant to this concern:

The concerns raised are complex and reflect why we think prevention, early-after-onset intervention, and a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of supports is essential in schools and communities. Here are three Quick Finds that link to resources (from our Center and from others) that might be useful to share with those concerned with addressing these barriers to learning:

(1) Collaboration - School, Community, Interagency; community schools –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p1201_01.htm

Here is a sample of the Center resources on that page:
>>*Community Outreach and Collaborative Engagement*
>>*Self-study Survey on Community Outreach and Collaborative Engagement*
>>*Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement. Guidebook* (in series, Safe
      and Secure: Guides to Creating Safer Schools)
>>*School-Community Partnerships: A Guide* .

>>*Sustaining School-Community Partnerships to Enhance Outcomes for Children and Youth: A Guidebook and Tool Kit*
>>*Understanding Community Schools as Collaboratives for System Building to Address Barriers and Promote Well-Being*

(2) Home Involvement – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/homework.htm

Here is a sample of the Center resources on that page:
>>*Home Involvement, Engagement, and Re-engagement in Schooling*
>>*Self-study Survey* on "Home Involvement, Engagement, and Re-engagement in Schooling"
>>*Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement. Guidebook* (in series, Safe and Secure: Guides to Creating Safer Schools)
>>*Policy & Practice Report* on "Enhancing Home Involvement to Address Barriers to Learning: A Collaborative Process"
>>*Connecting Schools, Families, and Communities*
>>*The Impact of Parent Expectations and Home and Neighborhood Influences on Education Goals*
>>*Parent and Home Involvement in Schools*
>>*Engaging and Re-engaging Families When a Student is Not Doing Well*
>>*About School, Home, and Community Connecting and Collaborating to Address Barriers to Learning*
>>*Engaging the Strengths of Families, Youth, and Communities in Rebuilding Learning Supports*
>>*Engaging and Re-engaging Families When a Student is Not Doing Well*

(3) Juvenile Justice – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/juvenilejustice.htm

Here is a sample of the Center resources on that page
>>*Dropout Prevention*
>>*Engaging and Re-engaging Students in Learning at School*
>>*Working with Disengaged Students*
>>*Youth Gangs and Schools*
>>*Youth Risk Taking Behavior: The Role Schools*

For more, see our two most recent books:

(1) *Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*
available for free at this time -- download from the link on the Center's homepage --
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/

and

(2) the just published *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System* –
https://titles.cognella.com/transforming-student -and learning -supports -9781516512782.html

**>*Did you miss the quarterly ejournal for Winter 2018? It had articles on:*

Contents:
1. *Evolving School Improvement Plans to Better Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching*
2. *Updates on Advancing Efforts to Transform Student & Learning Supports*
3. *Who Else is Working to Transform Student/learning Supports*

4. *Two Cautionary Notes:*
      >About Piecemeal Approaches
      >About Settling for an Integrated Services Initiative
  5. *Center Assistance for Transforming Student/ Learning Supports*

You can access this resource and more from the Center's homepage
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/
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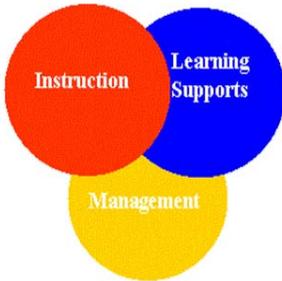
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For information about the
 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

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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/)

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights;
transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to
enabling equity of opportunity, promoting whole child development,
and enhancing school climate.
          National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

          School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students"
          But when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.
                                        Carnegie Task Force