Featured

(1) What are your students doing for others this holiday season?

(2) Creating a nurturing school culture that enhances equity of opportunity

(3) Announcement about the 2025 Award Recipient

And, as always, you will find

(4) Links to more resources
**This community of practice *Practitioner* is designed
for a screen bigger than an Iphone.**

For discussion and interchange:
>*What are your students doing for others this holiday season?*

Holiday giving projects are a popular and positive way for schools to give students an opportunity to build authentic social and emotional skills, such as generosity and empathy. Here is one example of holiday giving by high school students.

From: *Instructor's class, students help young hospital patients*

"Class at Greene County Career Center modifies toy vehicles for kids with mobility issues
As an engineering and manufacturing instructor at Greene County Career Center, Doug Picard instills in his high school students the importance of human-centered designs. That means considering the side effects and consequences of each design, as well as serving the needs of those who will use it – including those who may be marginalized.

His students get firsthand experience practicing that concept as they participate in the Go Baby Go project, a nationwide program that aims to modify ride-on toy vehicles for kids with mobility issues. About half of his students enroll in college and tend to enter engineering pathways, he said. The other half enter the workforce, starting careers in fields like manufacturing or computer-aided design and drafting. Whatever their plans, students learn many skills from the Go Baby Go project, like reverse engineering, 3D design and printing, circuit construction and the general manufacturing process. They also learn about teamwork and collaboration.

This is the second year Picard's class has participated in the Go Baby Go program, with a local grant funding the toy vehicles. With help from the occupational therapy department at Dayton Children's Hospital, his students learn the nature of the children's disabilities.
Modifications may include side restraints, increased back support, adding a 5-point harness, overhauling the steering wheel or other changes. One child who used an oxygen tank received a 3D-printed tank holder added to the back of the vehicle.

He and his students plan to retrofit the toys and have them ready for eight patients from Dayton Children's between the ages of 2 and 6 before Christmas."

For more on this, see
>**Using the holidays to launch year round opportunities for social-emotional learning**

Also see:
>**Supporting students during the holidays: Suggestions for families**

>*Creating a nurturing school culture that enhances equity of opportunity*

Everyone agrees that schools should ensure a positive school climate. Less agreement exists, however, about what this means and how to accomplish it. This is especially so when the call is for developing a safe and supportive environment that also is nurturing and caring and that provides all students with an equal opportunity to succeed. Equity concerns are heightened when schools are viewed using the lens of how they interface with students who are struggling academically, acting out, and experiencing conflictual relationships with school staff and peers.

From: *Creating a school culture that nurtures young people*

"A nurturing school culture that prioritizes well-being along with learning is essential for keeping children in school and ending pushout — a critical step in dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline. Building and sustaining relationships in nurturing ways can help to create the sense of safety and support young people need for learning. The effectiveness of these practices increases when combined with strong family, school and community partnerships....

What Do We Mean by School Culture and Climate?

School culture refers to a school's physical and social environment and its community values as expressed through curricula, policies and practice. These values influence the decisions and ways things are done at the school.

School climate refers to how students and adults experience the school's environment and the extent to which it feels welcoming and inclusive for all students, especially students from historically marginalized groups...

Considering a holistic or "whole-child" development approach can help to create a more supportive school culture. In the article "Becoming a Village," Joy Masha points out five components to holistic child development:

>Physical development encompasses growth, honing motor skills and coordination, and engaging in activities that contribute to overall physical health and well-being.

>Intellectual development pertains to cognitive advancement, encompassing thinking, reasoning, problem-solving and the acquisition of new knowledge.

>Social development fosters interactions with others, nurturing social skills, empathy and cooperation. This facilitates the establishment of positive relationships within family, peer groups and the broader community.

>Emotional development entails nurturing the ability to understand and regulate emotions, fostering independence, resilience and the cultivation of healthy relationships.

>Spiritual development involves the formulation of personal values, moral principles and identity. It entails supporting the development of children's personality, beliefs and sense of purpose from an early age.

School culture that incorporates a whole-child approach to development understands that children thrive in learning environments that support their diverse abilities and needs. Positive school culture includes a safe and affirming environment where students feel they belong, supportive relationships among staff and students, and equitable supports for all students to meet high expectations, learn and thrive.

Building Family-School-Community Partnerships

The school is part of the community and only one aspect of a child's life and experiences. To fully support the well-being and learning of all children, schools must work collaboratively with families and communities. Creating a loving and nurturing school environment is a collective responsibility for families, educators and communities. Collaboration is essential...."

For more on this, see our Center resources

>*Enhancing Classroom Climate for All Students*

>*About School and Classroom Climate*

>*Designing School Improvement to Enhance Classroom Climate for All Students*

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

>>**Lost Opportunity: Afterschool in Demand, But Out of Reach for Many**

>>**Case Management in High Schools**

>>**Investigating ADHD Treatment Trajectories: Listening to Families' Stories About Medication Use**

>>**Using a Case Management Approach to Increase Student Success in the K-12 Setting**

>>**ADHD, parent perspectives and parent–teacher relationships: grounds for conflict**

>>**IDEA at 50: Tools and Insights for District Leaders**

>>**Referrals to Child Welfare Agencies for Child Maltreatment Continue to Rise**

>>**Teacher shortages hinder special education progress. What are the solutions?**

>>**Students Want Power, Not Worksheets**

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

12/17 Creating a low stress environment
12/17 Understanding grief
1/2 Building belonging in schools
1/5 AI in K-12 education
1/13 Positive classroom interactions
1/13 Artificial intelligence risks and benefits
1/14 School avoidance and mental health
1/15/26 Elevating school staff talent and recruiting
2/10 Strengthening school community partnerships
2/10 Prevention core conpetencies
2/24 Whole school approach
3/3 Strong leaders make strong schools
3/24 Student voice and advocacy

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)

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to promoting whole child development, advancing social justice, and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.

We are pleased to announce:

the 2025 National Award for

Transforming Student and Learning Supports

has been given to

Crosswell Drive Elementary School (Sumter, SC)

This school has shown exceptional commitment to making classroom and schoolwide systemic changes using existing resources in innovative ways to address barriers to learning and teaching and engage students. (Watch for the quarterly Center ejournal for a brief description of their work.)

Congratulations to

Crosswell Drive Elementary School

for moving forward in developing a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students!

Did our school get the award because we are so good at predicting rain?

No, we got it for our work on building arks!

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