Featured

(1) How will education cuts impact students?

(2) Why is it important to have student voices at the table?

(3) A student's perspective on a school cell phone ban

And, as always, you will find
(4) Links to a few other resources relevant to continuing education

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

For discussion and interchange:

>*How will education cuts impact students? (part one)*

On 5/1, we asked: (1) *How will the changes and cuts in the way the federal government plays its role in the nation's education system impact students experiencing learning, behavior, and emotional problems?* (2) *What do you think can be done to minimize negative outcomes for students?*

This week and next we will share the responses we have received. Here are the first two:

1. "This is the question that should be dominating the news, our print media, and our professional education-related conferences. But it is not. And that, in many ways, exacerbates the problem.

   Children in school respond to the world around them. They bring tensions, uncertainty and fears into school along with their backpacks and bookbags. But these don't just get stored in their cubbies. Our kids walk around with all of this every day. And guess what? Their teachers are no different. Yes, they are professionals and they should be able to leave their worries and concerns in the car along with their sunglasses. But it's hard to do, especially for teachers who are parents. They see their students and can't help thinking about their own children. And they feel anxious.

   So, the uncertainties of what is happening in education, combined with the uncertainties and the definite negatives related to employment , immigration status, and the economy, lead to less focus, less retention, and less stamina over the course of the learning day. This accelerates over the course of the learning week. And when home life is similarly disaffected, the lack of respite leads to greater and greater negative spirals of distraction and discontent.

   Under these circumstances, having safe, supportive, kind, and caring schools is more important than ever. And students' having the SEL skills to recognize and manage their emotions, interact effectively in group contexts and be good, honest, ethical problem-solvers is more important than ever. The latter takes more time to achieve than the former. Honestly, for that reason, I worked with National Professional Resources to quickly create a publication to help teachers address the all-important culture and climate in their classrooms, as well as schools more generally. This is the resource: https://nprinc.com/building-a-positive-classroom-climate-to-engage-students

   Bottom line: the cuts must be understood in Bronferbrenner's ecological model. With the kids in the middle of the ecological circle, the cuts and changes impact every ecological level and it all impinges on the students."

2. "Yes aren't we all worried about that. It is not as if the support was sufficient to begin with but the problem with these cuts is there is no coherence, no way to plan going forward. In the past, we had no child left behind with its draconian dictates and race to the top which had its share of winners and way more losers. But now we just have chaos.

So how to respond? Well, first it is worth considering how resilient many principals are with limited resources. So I suspect we will see that here, some schools and communities coming

together led by a principal with a vision. Second, I have spent my career working in the most struggling schools in Philadelphia and Chicago and what I learned is that you work with the resources you have and not wait for the ones you want. I think we are going to see this as well. It is a premise of global health and a key aspect of a public health model to task shift from professionals to community members and triage scant professional services where most needed.

I suppose there is a silver lining if schools are more integrated into their communities. But I don't mean to sugarcoat this as these cuts are cruel and impactful and the least well-off communities will suffer the most...."

We welcome others to share about this matter. Send to **Ltaylor@ucla.edu**

For discussion and interchange:

>Why is it important to have student voices at the table?

For many years, it has been commonplace at meetings across the country to hear: "If we are going to plan for young people, we need their voices at this table."

However, reasons for bringing young people to the table vary. Advocates range from those who appreciate the importance of understanding the perspective of youth, on through those who also are dedicated to promoting youth development and empowerment, and on to those who stress that youth participation benefits families, adults, organizations, planners, policy makers, communities, and society in general.

As a stimulus for discussion, here is an excerpt from a recent article that shares the voices of over 270,000 high school students across more than 10 years. It highlights how academic pressure, family expectations, and modern societal challenges contribute to unhealthy stress levels.

From: *Stressed, tired, and yearning for support*

"... many students, particularly those from marginalized groups, report feeling isolated and unsupported at school. They offer practical suggestions for families, educators, and schools to address these issues.

To better understand today's students, we must explore the extent to which they feel a sense of well-being and belonging at school. While we often rely on grades and test scores to measure students' academic progress, we frequently overlook other critical dimensions of their experience that are inextricably linked to success in school....

The predominant concern we hear from students is that the pressure from academic workloads and expectations significantly contributes to their overall stress. In both our quantitative and qualitative research, students consistently report overall workload, homework, tests/quizzes, finals, and assessments as their top sources of stress. These numbers are even higher for students from traditionally marginalized groups, such as Black students, students who identify as girls/women, or those who identify as gender diverse....

A second source of stress for adolescents is the feeling of pressure from parents and caregivers to do well in school. In our qualitative data, students expressed a desire for parents to understand the demands of modern school life. In addition to personal struggles common among teens of all generations, current teens' lives are rife with new stressors and sources of worry. Hgh schoolers in 2025 have lived through a pandemic during formative developmental years, seen increased school violence, and witnessed growing concerns about climate change.

Teens also face intense pressure and comparison on social media. Acknowledging the unique circumstances teens currently face can help parents and educators offer authentic support, so teens know they are not navigating this complexity alone....

Isolation and lack of belonging. Belonging is defined as "an individual's experience of feeling that they are, or are likely to be, accepted and respected as a valued contributor in a specifi c environment". Research shows that when students of all ages and stages feel like a part of their community, they are more likely to thrive.

This means that when students feel like they belong, they tend to perform better academically.

Conversely, feeling isolated or unsafe may prevent academic engagement. Belonging is context-specific — students may feel comfortable in some classrooms but isolated in others. In general, though, students desire more personal connections, including with teachers, which highlights the need for schools to foster climates of care, warmth, and approachability in educational settings....

Unfortunately, we find that many students report not feeling supported or included at school. While most students (70%, on average) report having an adult at school they can confide in when facing personal problems, many still do not feel a sense of belonging at school. Additionally, students from historically marginalized groups — such as those who identify as gender diverse, as girls/women, or as Black — experience an even more acute lack of belonging. This shows that students from different backgrounds experience school climate and culture differently, underscoring the need for more inclusive school environments for all students....

Students report feeling more connected and engaged when they perceive their school environment as inclusive and supportive. Key factors contributing to a positive school culture include respectful and understanding relationships between staff and students, opportunities to connect with teachers and peers, policies that accommodate individual needs, and an overall atmosphere that promotes mutual respect and encouragement.

Many schools are already working on creating a climate of care and can build upon existing community structures to increase student belonging. We also encourage educators to consider what might inadvertently impede belonging or create barriers to connection. We have found the following strategies to be particularly effective....

Student well-being is complex and nuanced. If we are truly aiming to understand the student experience, we must start by intentionally and authentically listening to what students have to say. We have seen schools employ various methods to achieve this, from adults shadowing students for a full school day to conducting focus groups and surveys. Too often, we assume we know what is best for students without considering that they can be the best, most important sources to consult — especially when it comes to their well-being.”

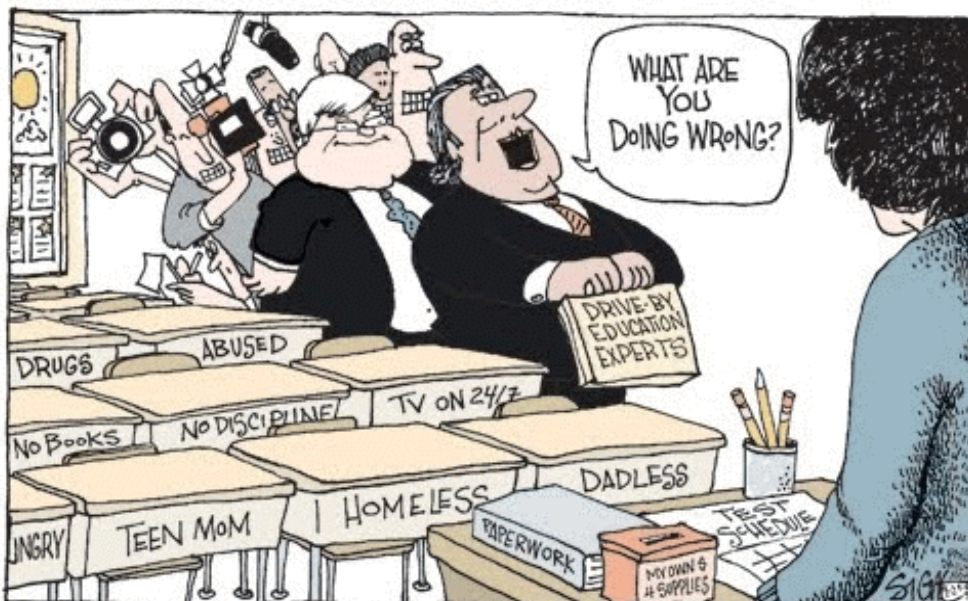For more on this, see the following Center resources

>*Youth Participation: Making It Real*

>*About Student Voice and Participation*

>*Talking with Kids When Assisting with Learning*

Also see the Center Quick Find
>*Youth Development*

3

Abigail Kim, a 10th grader, wrote this commentary for her school's student-run publication.

From: *Students easily subvert LAUSD phone ban, so what's a better plan?*

"Let's be honest: many of us know how to bypass our Yondr pouches.

In the age of social media and being chronically online, smartphones have become extensions of our bodies and Los Angeles Unified's attempt to minimize classroom distractions through the Yondr phone ban has sparked considerable debate.

While the intention behind locking away devices is commendable, the execution has been less than effective, calling into question the practicality of such measures.

We've all seen them, the gray and green pouches with magnetic locks. The Yondr pouches, designed to lock students' phones during school hours, have faced significant challenges. Despite their widespread adoption, many students have found ways to bypass the system.

Students have hacked the pouches, purchased their own magnets, banged them against tables, used fake phones or have simply avoided using them altogether. Not only does this undermine the policy's effectiveness, but it also highlights a glaring oversight in anticipating student ingenuity.

LAUSD spent no small amount on this program, allocating around seven million dollars for equipment to enforce the policy, with about 80% of eligible middle and high schools opting for Yondr pouches.

Funds that could have gone to hiring new teachers, improving facilities or enhancing school meals were blown on pouches that many students don't even use.

Of course, restricting device usage can lead to improved student engagement and academic performance. Studies have shown that banning mobile phones enhanced student performance among low-achieving students without negatively impacting high-achievers. Schools have also reported a decrease in cyberbullying incidents and more frequent face-to-face interactions among students.

While the benefits of reducing distractions is clear, the practicality of such bans remains questionable.

The effectiveness of the pouches relies heavily on constant administrative enforcement and student integrity. Overpowering cell phone addictions, student opposition to the phone ban and the inability of administrators to constantly breathe down our necks have diminished compliance with the policy.

Investing in education staff, infrastructure and student welfare programs might have yielded more tangible benefits than attempting to enforce a policy that students are adept at undermining.

Banning phones is not inherently flawed. In fact, it aims to foster a more focused and interactive learning environment. However, the district's Yondr approach has been unrealistic and financially imprudent.

A more practical strategy, such as creating phone-free zones in classrooms and study areas while allowing usage during lunch or passing periods, would be a more feasible solution. Though no system is perfect, a more flexible structure can reduce the temptation to sneak phones out during class.

Technology is inescapable. Rather than waging an unwinnable war against phones, LAUSD should lead the way in creating a more balanced approach, one that truly prepares students for success in the real world."

What's your experience with banning phones in school? Let us know. Ltaylor@ucla.edu

> *How are the above topics being discussed in your locale?*
>
> Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Links to a few other relevant shared resources

> **Teacher Retention in High-Poverty Urban Schools: The Role of Empowerment, Leadership, and Collaboration**
> **Using Social Media to Promote Life Skills Among Adolescents: A Debate on Opportunities, Challenges, and Implications for Health and Education**
> **A Qualitative Investigation of Foster Youth Mental Health Outcomes: Measuring What Matters**
> **Hesitations & Motivations for Participating in Implementation Projects: Assessing Readiness & Fit**
> **Problematic Social Media Use or Social Media Addiction in Pediatric Populations**
> **Youth and Socially Interactive Technologies**
> **The Good and Bad of Social Networking use by Children and Adolescents**
> **Why Faculty Aren't "Playing" with AI (and What To Do About It)**
> **A Restorative Alternative to Out-of-School Suspensions**
> **Stop labeling kids and start revealing their strengths**

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

5/21 Getting help for children's mental health needs
5/21 Youth development beyond school hours
5/21 Understanding adjustment disorders
5/22 How AI is expanding in schools
5/22 Protecting schools, protecting students
5/22 Community centered prevention
5/27 Creating a low stress environment
5/29 Healthy disagreement
5/29 Understanding depression
5/29 End student boredom
6/2 Raising resilient children
6/3 Prevention science: application to practice
6/3 Personalized postsecondary planning
6/4 Understanding social anxiety
6/4 Data visualization for prevention
6/4 Creating a culture of academic integrity
6/5 Prevention planning
6/12 Moving the needle on attendance
6/12 Embedding prevention implementation in the community
6/16 Nurturing connections with children
6/17 Leveraging alliances and collaboration
6/17 Responsive youth justice system

To Listserv Participants

- *Please share this resource with others. (Everyone has a stake in the future of public education and this is a critical time for action.)*

- *Let us know what's going on to improve how schools address barriers to learning & teaching and reengage disconnected students and families. (We can share the info with the over 130,000 on our listserv.)*

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

Looking for information? *(We usually can help.)*

Have a suggestion for improving our efforts? *(We welcome your feedback.)*

We look forward to hearing from you!   Contact: ltaylor@ucla.edu

The work of the **National Initiative for Transforming Student/Learning Supports** emphasizes that:

> **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.**

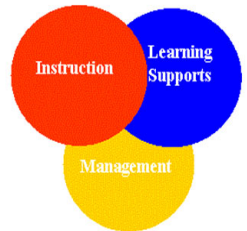Our research indicates that transforming student/learning supports involves

> *>moving school improvement policy from a 2 to a 3 component framework*

and

> *>unifying and developing* student/learning supports *into a comprehensive and equitable intervention system*

See:

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

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/ **)**