

(6/11/25) This continuing education resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured

(1) How will education cuts impact students? (Part 2)

(2) How are schools facilitating factors that promote resilience?

And, as always, you will find

(3) 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 two)

Here are two responses sent to us in answer to the following matters discussed in our 5/8 email.

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?

What do you think can be done to minimize negative outcomes for students?

>“No matter what I say or write, the school community—and the broader community—must begin the journey back to each other. We have great collaboratives, but we’ve lost much of what we used to call “community,” where schools and neighborhoods pulled together during difficult times.

If the federal government reduces its role in education—particularly through cuts to critical programs like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Title I, or mental health grants—students with learning, behavioral, and emotional challenges will be disproportionately affected. These students depend on federally supported services to succeed in school. When resources shrink, the risks grow: academic progress can stall, behavioral issues may escalate, and school environments can become more reactive than supportive.

As we all know, IDEA funding—already underfunded—provides essential services such as special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and specialists like school psychologists and speech-language pathologists. If those federal dollars are reduced or eliminated, school districts may face impossible decisions—delaying services, increasing caseloads, or removing positions altogether. In these scenarios, students who need the most support are often left with the least.

However, school districts are not without options. While they can’t always prevent federal cuts, they can take proactive steps to minimize harm and maintain a commitment to equity.

Districts should begin planning now, before any cuts are implemented. One step is to strategically use local funds or reallocate existing resources to prioritize core special education services. This might involve protecting critical positions—such as special education teachers, case managers, and school psychologists—while temporarily scaling back elsewhere. It’s not easy, but school districts managed similar rebalancing during the Great Recession of 2007–2008.

Districts can also expand their efforts to apply for state or local grants and seek partnerships with foundations and community organizations to sustain essential services. For example, some Georgia districts are working with local mental health agencies to embed counselors in schools, using a blend of state and SAMHSA funding (which may not be subject to federal cuts). But that type of planning

needs to be done as soon as possible.

Another important strategy is to invest in training general education teachers in inclusive practices and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). When general education staff are equipped to support diverse learners, the pressure on special education services is reduced—especially valuable when resources are tight. Differentiated instruction, trauma-informed teaching, and co-teaching models can bridge service gaps. In addition, implementing frameworks like Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) can help schools proactively meet student needs before they require more intensive (and expensive) interventions. It's well documented that a positive school climate creates a strong sense of community—where people look for solutions and work together. This sense of community is how schools overcome setbacks. While PBIS is research-based and widely implemented, it's not the only path to improving school climate. Regardless of the framework chosen, schools need to focus now—before cuts come—on improving school climate in measurable, sustainable ways.

I've grown cautious about the phrase "data-driven," as it's taken on so many meanings that it risks becoming meaningless. Still, especially during financial uncertainty, districts should cultivate strong data systems to track student outcomes, identify service gaps, and guide resource decisions. More importantly, they should use data to highlight what is working. Don't wait until funding is cut to showcase successful strategies. When school boards and communities can see clear evidence of the impact of special education and behavioral supports, they're more likely to advocate for sustaining them—and more willing to shift or find funding to hold the line until better days arrive.

We must not forget advocacy. When educators and community members speak with a unified voice, it sends a powerful message: investing in vulnerable students is not optional—it's foundational to any vision of educational excellence. A district can say, "...and we have the data to prove it—our students are making progress."

In the face of federal disinvestment, districts must become both protective and innovative. But that innovation requires foresight and planning now. Protect the students who need support the most. Don't take for granted the methods by which services are delivered—study them, identify what works, and protect those strategies as top priorities if cuts are expected.

If we stay focused on equity, resilience, and student well-being—and begin the difficult conversations now about what may come—we can prepare. And while doing so, we must identify and celebrate what is working - that cannot be emphasized enough. Sometimes we see something is effective but aren't sure exactly why it's working. Find it, study it, and create a plan to sustain it and protect it. Now is the time."

>"The proposed budget eliminates funding for school mental health that was given in the Biden administration. So, mental health clinicians and counselor positions will likely be cut in many districts. Therefore, the need for a solid learning support system for prevention and intervention is ever more important.

The impact of Title funding and moving to different departments with the elimination of the Dept of Ed is still unclear.

The reduction to Medicaid would have a negative impact on schools. Many children would lose vision, hearing, speech, and pediatric care. That creates more barriers to learning.

The continued lack of action on gun control and assault on DEI heightens those barriers.

The support for moving funding to private charters and religious schools will hurt some school districts. In short.... schools will have more barriers to learning"

Do you have views to share about the impact of the cuts on students?

Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

What is the school doing about the budget cuts?



They've converted the afterschool program into daily cookie sales.

For discussion and interchange:

>How are schools facilitating factors that promote resilience?

From: *Promotive Factors Within Neighborhood, Family, and School Contexts for Adolescents*

About Resilience and Promotive Factors – “The theory of resilience posits that certain factors exist within individuals, relationships, communities, and society that promote positive development and wellbeing, or resilience, despite being exposed to risks or adversities.

Promotive factors do not just mean the absence of risk; rather, they include

- >individual assets (e.g., aspects of one’s identity, self-regulation),
- >supportive relationships (e.g., healthy relationship qualities),
- >community strengths (e.g., social connectedness) and
- >societal resources (e.g., educational opportunities)....

To promote positive youth development and resilience for youth, there needs to be safety, bonding, and attachment within families, schools, and neighborhoods, while also providing adolescents opportunities, skills, and recognition for prosocial involvement and behaviors.

For example, if an adolescent is given opportunities to engage in activities in positive ways, develops the skills they need, and is then recognized for these activities and skills, they will feel more bonded or attached to their family, school, or neighborhood. Also, if an adolescent feels safe and more attached or bonded within their regularly frequented contexts and relationships, they are less likely to engage in problematic behavior....

Adolescents who have fewer sources of protection across contexts may be at a heightened risk for problematic outcomes, including negative health, substance use, and mental health outcomes....

Even in the absence of promotive factors in school or neighborhood contexts, youth with family-based promotive factors reported lower levels of adverse outcomes. Given many existing programs are designed to be implemented in group settings, such as schools and community-based organizations, more prevention programs should be designed to ensure that family strengths among youth can be effectively leveraged. Family-based prevention programs have also demonstrated significant impacts on children and adolescents’ behavioral, social-emotional, and mental health....”

Center Comments: There is growing realization that schools need to embed a focus on fostering resilience into efforts to facilitate social and emotional development and to begin this at the onset of schooling. At the same time, research clearly indicates that external factors (related to neighborhood, family, school, and/or peers) are primary challenges causing most learning, behavior, and emotional problems manifested at school. Schools must proactively improve how they address such challenges

Our Center’s approach is to ensure that promotive factors are embedded into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports. Early in our work such a system was piloted at the Elizabeth Learning Center in Cudahy, CA. On the following page, see how the school described its focus on strengthening families.

For more on this, see our Center resources

The Role of School and Home in Promoting Student Engagement

The Impact of Parent Expectations and Home and Neighborhood Influences on Education Goals

Engaging the Strengths of Families, Youth, and Communities in Rebuilding Learning Supports

Protective Factors (Resiliency)

About Resilience and Schools

Opening the school gates: Elizabeth Learning Center

"...A family comes to the school to get health care and counseling services. A young mother shows up a school for adult-education classes, confident with the knowledge that her child is safe at a no-cost child-care center in the next room. ...

At the Elizabeth Learning Center, the Family Center is essentially the nerve center of the Learning Supports structure. In any given day, parents walk in to sign up for adult education classes or for volunteering, students come in for counseling appointments, and various committees and panels meet to discuss planning and operations. ...

The school has made clear its commitment to the Learning Supports structure in its decision to pay a full-time release teacher to coordinate the center. It also pays for five 15-hour-per-week "community representative" positions, in which parents coordinate different aspects of the Learning Supports programs.

The Family Center plays host to a wide variety of different counseling services. In addition to a five-day-a-week school psychologist, the school also offers students and families weekly appointments with a social worker, a special-education psychologist, a marriage and family counseling intern, and a social work intern. A carefully designed referral plan helps teachers find appropriate resources for students and helps families get the help they need...

The Family Center also serves as home to the transition support services, in which new students and parents get the red-carpet treatment when they arrive at the school's doorstep. This kind of support is necessary, organizers say, because the high student body turnover at the school means new faces all the time....

New parents receive a packet filled with maps, schedules, and information about the school, including an application to be a volunteer. Although most materials are available in both English and Spanish. Some parents may have problems understanding the unfamiliar forms. Thus, parents who are trained to help new parents with the paperwork volunteer valuable time to aid in the transition.

Parents, of course, are also involved in a host of other volunteer positions at the school, from assisting in school safety and maintenance tasks, to monitoring the lunchroom and the schoolyard, to helping out in the classrooms....

Elizabeth Learning Center, working with the district Adult Education Department, has also developed an array of adult education offerings, from English as a Second Language, to computer skills, to knitting. Nearly 1,000 adults participate in the classes, which are offered from anywhere between 7:30 in the morning until 9:00 at night.... If a student is having a hard time with English in the classroom, the referral system works such that the adult education coordinators then contact the parent to see if he or she wants to take an ESL class.

But what really distinguishes the Elizabeth Learning Center adult education offerings is the on-campus child-care program for which the parents themselves have assumed responsibility. Parents attending the classes may bring their child to the child-care center for the nominal cost of \$1 per day. And parent volunteers in turn staff the center, a large room adjacent to the adult classroom. The center serves children between the ages of one to 14, and generally hosts 25 children in the morning, 55-60 in the afternoon, and 10-15 at night.

Last but not least, Elizabeth Learning Center is perhaps most deeply connected to the community through its on-campus health clinic. The clinic provides a range of health services, including primary health care, prescriptions, care for acute conditions such as asthma, health education and nutritional counseling, immunizations, and screening for tuberculosis, diabetes, and cholesterol. It represents a community collaboration, with support from St. Francis Medical Center and California State University. The clinic provides services to all Learning Center students free of charge; parents and siblings of students pay according to ability. And not surprisingly, the Family Center and the health clinic are coordinated so that they share referrals for health, counseling, and other family services. ..."

In your locale: How are the above topics being pursued?

Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

- > **Schooling and Children's Mental Health: Realigning Resources to Reduce Disparities and Advance Public Health**
- > **Artificial Intelligence and Improving Student Supports**
- > **Understanding the Protective Role of Adolescent-Adult Relationships Among Minoritized Youths in Neighborhoods Impacted by Community Violence**
- > **Effects of Peer Tutoring on Emergent Bilinguals' Academic Achievement**
- > **What We Now Know About Parental Engagement**

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>

6/11 Foster belonging and connectedness
6/11 Evidence based prevention
6/12 Student centered schools
6/12 Building empathy and resilience
6/12 Moving the needle on attendance
6/12 Embedding prevention implementation in the community
6/16 Nurturing connections with children
6/17 Positive family engagement
6/17 Leveraging alliances and collaboration
6/17 Responsive youth justice system
6/26 Weaving prevention into community life
7/16 Leveraging CDC's Mental Health Action Guide
8/6 Student Connectedness Fosters Attendance and Engagement
8/20 Classroom participation and engagement
8/21 Making the case for prevention
9/18 The power of emotion regulation to drive k12 wellbeing
9/24 Family Engagement is the Foundation for Attendance and Learning

How Learning Happens (Edutopia's updated series of videos explores how educators can guide all students, regardless of their developmental starting points, to become productive and engaged learners.)

Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth (webinar recording)

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

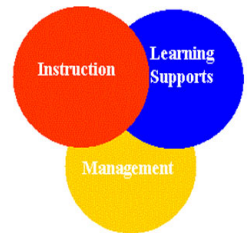
>moving school improvement policy from a 2 to a 3 component framework

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/>)