

(6/4/25) This continuing education resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured

(1) Summer learning: Service learning engages students with their community

(2) Providing student supports over the summer break

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:

>Summer learning: Service learning engages students with their community

While there are a variety of definitions for *service learning*, at the core is the idea of incorporating structured, authentic, community hands-on experiences into formal education. A service learning program is intended to provide meaningful, real world experiences that promote reflection on and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Schools often connect service learning to the academic objectives of a course and/or major field of study. The emphasis is not only on benefitting the learner but on benefitting the community (e.g., improving services) and ultimately society (e.g., inculcating citizenship values). Summer is a great time to connect students with their communities.

Service learning is widely viewed as a boon to improving students' civic and career-related knowledge and sense of responsibility, bolstering a wide range of 21st century skills, interests, attitudes, behaviors, and enhancing personal well-being. And for those of us concerned with matters related to engaging and reengaging students in school learning and reducing problem behaviors, service learning can play an integral role.

In so many ways, service learning can be a fundamental way to enhance efforts to meet school and societal roles in preparing the young for a positive and productive future.

For more on this, see our Center resources

>[*Service Learning in Schools*](#)

>[*Service-Learning and Community Service Clubs in Schools*](#)

>[*Youth Participation: Making It Real*](#)

>[*About Programs for After School Hours and Non-school Days*](#)

Relatedly, the Center has a Quick Find on

> [*Expanded Learning Opportunities*](#)

From: *Fostering student agency to transform education*

“To be prepared for life beyond school, students need opportunities to learn how to act for the betterment of the community and the world. School is about far more than academic preparation. Instead, it builds in our students a foundation of belonging, community, and shared purpose.

Both in and out of the classroom, students’ resilience and creativity inspire as they experience authentic collaboration which is not just a strategy but a catalytic force. Fostering connection elevates students, schools, and society....

To prepare students for the future, we must embrace more holistic learning practices that support their intellectual, social, and emotional readiness. Deep inquiry, project-based learning, competency-based portfolios, and real-time demonstrations of mastery provide authentic measures of student growth. By implementing these innovative strategies, we can create meaningful, relevant experiences that directly address the pervasive issues our youth experience, combating apathy and alienation while fostering engagement, emotional well-being, and student voice and agency.

Engaging students in meaningful, personally relevant experiences opens our ability to effectively address critical issues like mental health, absenteeism, and dropout rates. By exploring their interests, young people forge a deeper, more intrinsic connection to learning....

A student disenchanted with traditional curricula can thrive when they have the opportunity to work on projects related to their passions, such as environmental sustainability or the development of musical traditions and culture. Ultimately, when we align education with students’ personal interests, they not only acquire essential skills but also become better equipped to navigate their futures with confidence....

We need models where students actively engage with societal issues and voice their opinions. Schools must foster empathy and critical thinking to prepare students for the complex ethical debates that will define our future. Interconnected issues — such as immigration, technological disruption, global health crises, and resource scarcity — demand that today’s students are equipped for meaningful action....

These are six concrete steps we can take.

- >Integrate civic education and social justice – Give students a foundation in their learning about democracy, power, and inequality. Incorporating civic education into the curriculum fosters informed citizens who understand their role in democracy. Schools should teach students about the interconnectedness of local and global issues, empowering them to critically analyze systems of power and engage in collective action...
- >Create inclusive and safe learning environments – Foster a supportive atmosphere with zero tolerance for discrimination. A safe and inclusive environment is essential for all students....
- >Support comprehensive wellness initiatives – Implement wellness programs that include mental health and social-emotional learning...
- >Embed real-world problem solving – Incorporate hands-on, community-based projects. ...
- >Foster collaboration and shared best practices – Encourage partnerships among schools and organizations...
- >Hold political leaders accountable for reform – Demand equitable funding and policies prioritizing student agency. ..

In reimagining education, we must harness the collective strength of our communities. By empowering students to embrace their roles as changemakers, we can ensure that every voice is heard, valued, and nurtured – creating a brighter future for all....

This vision of education is one where each student’s unique talent and potential are uncovered, celebrated, and nurtured....”

For discussion and interchange:

>Providing student supports over the summer break

We hear a lot about summer learning loss, but there can also be summer loss related to social and emotional stability and growth.

Now is the time to ensure, map out, and communicate the supports that are available for students who have or will experience emotional or behavioral problems during the summer.

Here are a couple of related articles:

From: *How to address the mental health summer slide*

“...Here are three ways educators can support families and promote sound mental health practices during the summer and all year long.

1. Publicize available support

Remind youth and families that help is available outside of school. Start by compiling a list of local and national mental health supports. These could include:

Peer support groups

Telehealth services

Therapist directories ...

Post information on your website and create a flyer in the languages spoken by families in your community that can be distributed via email and posted on social media. Ask community gathering spots, such as gyms, churches and libraries, to distribute the flyers as well.

2. Offer activity suggestions

One potential cause of summertime mental health concerns is kids having too much time on their hands. Let them know about activities or camps where students can be active and socialize with others while maintaining a consistent schedule. When reaching out to families, include information about local agencies that provide free services or adjust fees on a sliding scale according to income. Consider also compiling a list of places students can work or volunteer, such as with pets, children or senior citizens.

3. Promote healthy habits

While never a substitute for needed therapy and medication, suggest several practices as a way to help students cope with stress, anxiety and depression. These include meditation or mindfulness training, regular exercise and maintaining a consistent sleep schedule....”

From: *Effect of Summer Holiday Programs on Children’s Mental Health and Well-Being: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis*

“... The current review highlights the quality and design issues of studies of summer programs targeting mental–emotional well-being....

Summer programs may form part of a broader mental health-promotion strategy. Summer programs could complement school-based interventions by providing further small gains, or at least preventing regression, during a potentially high-risk time for declines. This could lead to cumulative effects when interventions in school and summer settings are run side by side....

There are policy implications for these findings. Ensuring equitable access to mental health interventions is crucial so that the populations in need (e.g., disadvantaged families, those living with a greater number of risk factors for mental health disorders) are able to access them....

Disadvantaged children exhibited more significant improvements in self-perception and a trend toward better mental health..... Given the demonstrated improvements in academic and physical health outcomes, summer programs present a promising intervention strategy to mitigate health declines, especially in disadvantaged populations, during a potentially high-risk period.”

Here is what two colleagues shared about this matter:

1. “ The ongoing lack of access to both academic and emotional support remains a significant challenge for schools and families alike. However, one valuable lesson we’ve learned from the pandemic is that both online learning and telemental health services can be effective and accessible tools—particularly in addressing the diverse needs of students. In our state, especially in rural areas, many schools have adopted telemental health services to support students' emotional well-being. This approach has proven beneficial for several reasons:

- >Students are comfortable with technology, making virtual therapy a seamless experience.
- >Flexible scheduling allows students to connect with therapists before or after school, on weekends, and even during summer months.
- >Portability ensures continuity of care—if a student transfers to another school, they can continue working with the same therapist.
- >Low therapist turnover rates help maintain long-term therapeutic relationships.
- >Minimal to no cost for most families, as services are typically covered by Medicaid, which supports telemental health billing.
- >Parental involvement is easier, as sessions can be accessed from work, home, or even a vehicle using a smartphone, tablet, laptop, or desktop.

Recognizing these benefits, many school districts are proactively informing families that telemental health services remain available over the summer, both for students currently receiving services and for families seeking new support options for their children.

In addition to telemental health services, there are summer resources aimed at preventing learning loss and supporting students’ emotional development. One such resource is *Get Georgia Reading – Summer Resources for Parents: Summer Resources for Parents - Get Georgia Reading*, which provides access to programs and tools that promote learning and engagement.

Whether it’s a community-sponsored summer camp, a library’s lunch-and-learn program (which might pair school district meal services with literacy activities), or other learning and discovery-based experiences, summer engagement is critical. Staying active and connected helps children avoid the ‘summer slide’ and supports their emotional well-being. In contrast, isolation, inactivity, and lack of structured opportunities can lead to weeks that feel lonely and unproductive for many children.

By keeping families informed and connected to resources, we can make a meaningful difference in how students experience their summer—and how they return to school in the fall.”

2. “ We struggle to find teachers willing to work in the summer, even when we pay \$44 an hour. We have community partners at some schools that run programs, and that reaches some students from our 950 enrolled in our district. We have Extended School Year Services for qualifying students in Special Education. School based behavioral health is available year round for mental health and support. But for over 20 years, we find kids prefer the break to having services. We do some telehealth during the summer as requested by students in need, but since COVID they seem to prefer in person to online. We also ask our Mental Health professionals to reach out to families during the summer to check in and build rapport and connections with families. I think summer is usually positive for our students, unless they are significantly at risk due to poverty, isolation, lack of supervision, transportation challenges, and minimal access to learning resources.”

In your locale:

What student supports are provided over the summer?

How are the above topics being discussed?

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

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

- > **How the Education Department cuts could hurt low-income and rural schools**
- > **Federal cuts are already affecting disabled students**
- > **Friends forever? Correlates of high school friendship (in)stability from adolescence to young adulthood**
- > **Children's Health, Wellbeing and Academic Outcomes over the Summer Holidays**
- > **Problematic Social Media Use or Social Media Addiction in Pediatric Populations**
- > **The Power of the Like in Adolescence: Effects of Peer Influence on Neural and Behavioral Responses to Social Media**
- > **Mental Health Support for Black Families**
- > **How to Help Children Calm Down**
- > **64 Percent of American 3-Year-Olds Are Healthy and Ready to Learn**
- > **Addressing the Long-Term Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Children and Families**
- > **New Resource Library for PreK-12 Systems Change**
- > **How to Find a Telehealth Provider for Your Child**

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>

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| 6/4 Understanding social anxiety | 8/6 Student Connectedness Fosters Attendance and Engagement |
| 6/4 Data visualization for prevention | 8/20 Classroom participation and engagement |
| 6/4 Creating a culture of academic integrity | 8/21 Making the case for prevention |
| 6/5 Prevention planning | 9/18 The power of emotion regulation to drive k12 well-being |
| 6/11 Foster belonging and connectedness | 9/24 Family Engagement is the Foundation for Attendance and Learning |
| 6/11 Evidence based prevention | > <i>How Learning Happens</i> (Edutopia videos exploring how educators can guide all students, regardless of developmental starting points, to become productive and engaged learners. |
| 6/12 Student centered schools | > <i>Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth</i> (webinar recording) |
| 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 & collaboration | |
| 6/17 Responsive youth justice system | |
| 6/26 Weaving prevention into community life | |
| 7/16 Leveraging CDC's Mental Health Action Guide | |

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

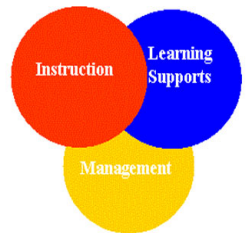
>moving school improvement policy from a 2 to a 3 component framework

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/>)**