

(7/9/25) This continuing education resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured

(1) How can students lead an initiative to improve attendance?

(2) A state safety net for children whose parents are deported

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 can students lead an initiative to improve attendance?

What are the plans for addressing chronic and other predictable challenges in the coming school year? Are students being seen as a resource in improving student/learning supports?

The news story below gives ideas about creating student led initiatives.

From: ***To Tackle Chronic Absenteeism, This DC High School Lets Students Lead***

“...Woodson is a partnership between XQ Institute and DC Public Schools to improve the high school experience.... One of the principles guiding this work is youth voice and choice: creating authentic, regular opportunities for students to build agency and develop their identities....

In addressing chronic absenteeism, leaders at Woodson seized on the opportunity to bring students into the fold. School leaders met with about 70 students eager to improve their high school experience and presented them with attendance data,... From those 70 students, the school selected 10 mentors and charged them with leading a pilot program to boost attendance numbers. Known as the Attendance Pep Squad, these 10 students gather every Tuesday at lunch to strategize. Their goal is twofold:

>first, identify students who might benefit from peer mentorship.

>second, come up with creative ways to change the culture around attendance.

During the fall semester, they developed an innovative outreach event — a playful, low-stakes peer networking gathering during which students exchanged stories and identified common experiences. Potential mentees also shared their schedules, academic interests, and any obstacles they were encountering, enabling mentors (along with school leaders) to determine how best to pair students. About 22 students opted in to receive a peer mentor, and the program began in December of last year.

The Pep Squad also took steps to strengthen their fellow students' sense of belonging. They organized a “Winter Spirit Week,” strategically timed for the week before winter break when attendance rates typically dip. They set up scavenger hunts, social activities and games, and a school-wide assembly to celebrate and close out the week. The results exceeded expectations. In the 2023–24 school year, the Thursday before winter break had an attendance rate of just 42.6 percent. After the Pep Squad's initiative, that number soared to 76 percent. Even the Friday before the break — one of the toughest days for any school to manage — recorded just under 60 percent. ...

While Woodson isn't declaring victory by any stretch, its early success suggests an alternative to conventional approaches, which often focus on imposing stiffer penalties on students who miss too much school. But these approaches don't address root problems — and they can backfire if they erode positive relationships, alienate students, and put counterproductive burdens on school

staff. In contrast, when students are afforded leadership opportunities that give them agency and voice, they feel like they belong and are eager to step up. ...

There are no silver bullets when it comes to the very complex problem of chronic absenteeism, but it's increasingly clear that making students feel like they are part of the solution is a step in the right direction."

For more ideas on including students as part of student/learning supports, see our Center resources:

- > *Youth participation, making it real*
- > *Cross-Age Peer Mentorship Programs in Schools*
- > *Peer Tutoring: Part of Learning Supports*
- > *About Student Voice and Participation*

For more on improving attendance, see the Center's Quick Find on
> *Attendance*



*I know you don't want to go to school, but if kids don't go to school,
more parents will have severe mental health problems*

A State Safety Net for Children Whose Parents Are Deported

From: *Washington State looks to strengthen safety net for children whose parents are deported*

"Detained immigrant parents worried who will pick their children up from school. Mothers who've been deported with infants while their older kids are left behind in the U.S. These are among the situations the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network is hearing about these days, according to Executive Director Catalina Velasquez. The immigrant rights group's hotline is receiving a steady stream of calls.

"Nobody wants to have to think about making a plan for who will become a guardian to their children if they are deported, but it is, unfortunately, a grim reality that immigrant communities have to face," Velasquez said in a statement. "Our communities also have to navigate multiple complex systems and bureaucracies in order to make safety plans," she continued.

A new Washington state task force aims to assess those systems..... In its first report, issued publicly this month, the task force found Washington state faces multiple gaps in supports for separated immigrant families. Gov. Bob Ferguson established the Family Separation Response Task Force in January...

The task force, housed in the state Department of Children, Youth and Families, includes representatives from about two dozen state agencies and partners with groups like Velasquez's....

The Department of Children, Youth and Families only gets involved if U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement can't find anyone to care for the children. Usually, parents identify a relative or neighbor to watch them. The task force's final report is due in the winter.

How to prepare:

- > Advocates recommend families plan for the possibility that federal authorities could detain them.

Important steps include figuring out who will watch children if parents are detained or deported, ensuring the children have passports, and writing down any important medical info."

For resources and answers to frequently asked questions, see dcyf.wa.gov/EOTaskForce

From: *Washington State Family Separation Rapid Response Team*

“The Family Separation Rapid Response Team is working to improve policies and practices statewide to protect children whose parents or guardians are detained or deported due to immigration status. The Team was created by Executive Order 25-04 ... on Jan. 27, 2025.

The goals of the Team are to:

- Recommend improvements to statewide policies and practices
- Develop and share resources with families at risk of separation
- Collaborate with trusted community-based organizations ...

Resources for Families:

Parents are encouraged to create a safety plan which identifies who would take care of their child(ren) if they are detained or deported.

Download a sample Immigrant Safety Plan (now available in English, Spanish, and Arabic)

Know Your Rights: Civil Immigration Enforcement in Washington

Rapid Response Hub — Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs

Economic Services - Economic Services Administration, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

Resources for Partners/Providers:

Information and Resources for DCYF Providers

Group Care Providers - Guidance for Requests from Immigration Enforcement Officials

Caregivers - Guidance for Requests from Immigration Enforcement Officials

WAISN Resource Finder

Protections for Immigrant Students in Washington's K–12 Public Schools

Keep Washington Working Act Guidance for state and local partners

Report potential violations of the Keep Washington Working Act by emailing the Washington Attorney General's Office at civilrights@atg.wa.gov or by calling 1-833-660-4877 (options are in Spanish and English). ...”

From: *States Should Help Parents When Deportation Looms*

“...Child welfare agencies must be proactive partners in preserving families — not passive bystanders. The law recognizes a parent's constitutional right to “the companionship, care, custody, and management” of their children. That right, and the best interests of the child, must guide how child protection systems respond to immigration enforcement. Here's what states should do:

- >First, states should equip families — regardless of citizenship or immigration status — to plan ahead. Parents should be encouraged to designate standby guardians or caretakers and provide emergency contact information to schools and agencies. In 2021, ICE compiled a list of state-specific guardianship forms. California law already mandates that schools distribute resources about their placement preferences to families. These simple steps help ensure that children stay with trusted relatives or family friends ..
- >Second, agencies must honor parental preferences for placement whenever possible. If a parent identifies a safe, willing caregiver, that arrangement should be respected — even if the parent is detained or deported. States should make clear that such placements are not grounds for terminating parental rights, or even for any court intervention. New York has passed legislation to protect this principle...
- >Third, states must ensure that parental rights are not terminated simply because a parent has been deported or lives in a country with fewer resources. A finding of unfitness must be based on the individual circumstances of each case — not assumptions about poverty or geography. And if a case enters juvenile courts, courts must explore whether reunification in the country of origin serves the interests of the family
- >Finally, child protection agencies must facilitate meaningful parental involvement. Parents should be able to participate in hearings and maintain regular contact with their children, even during detention or after deportation. This requires coordination with ICE and foreign consulates to enable phone and video visitation and to locate and engage parents...”

For more on this, see:

How Today's Immigration Enforcement Policies Impact Children, Families, and Communities

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

- >>Individual and collective teacher support towards students in urban schools
- >>Making Meaningful Connections: Facilitating Schoolwide Family Engagement With Culturally Diverse Families
- >>A qualitative evaluation of a whole-school approach to improving resilience in childhood and adolescence
- >>Family Engagement: Developing Relationship-Rich Partnerships
- >>Gaps in Achievement or Opportunity? How Achievement Gap Discourse Affects Teachers' Beliefs and Priorities
- >>Blueprint for a National Prevention Infrastructure for Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders

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>

7/9 Personalizing tutoring
7/9 Building social connections
7/14 Transform after school learning
7/14 Expanding opportunities for English learners
7/15 Rethinking school safety
7/16 Leveraging CDC's Mental Health Action Guide
7/17 Advocacy, ethics, and sustainability in prevention
7/23 Investing in young people
7/24 Problematic Media Use: Screening and Intervention
7/29 Promoting healthy communities
7/29 Adolescent substance abuse prevention
7/30 Conflict management and problem solving
8/5 Harnessing the power of anxiety
8/6 Student Connectedness Fosters Attendance and Engagement
8/7 Supporting multilingual student success /
8/20 Mental health and special education
8/20 Understanding anxiety
8/20 Classroom participation and engagement
8/21 Making the case for prevention
8/25 Understanding anxiety in children and youth

How Learning Happens (Edutopia's series of videos)

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

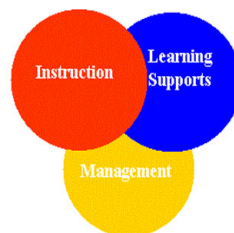
>moving school improvement policy from a 2 to a 3 component framework

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>.