



A Center Policy Report . . .

Another Initiative? Where Does it Fit?

A Unifying Framework and an Integrated Infrastructure for Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Promote Healthy Development

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Executive Summary*

Another Initiative? Where Does it Fit?

A Unifying Framework and an Integrated Infrastructure for Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Promote Healthy Development

Schools are constantly confronted with another project, another program, another initiative to address students' learning, behavior, and emotional problems, make school safe, and/or promote healthy development. This raises concerns about: *How does it all fit together?*

Because so many programs have evolved in a piece meal manner, across the country it is not unusual for staff in a district and at a school to be involved in "parallel play." This contributes to widespread counterproductive competition and wasteful redundancy. Effectiveness is compromised. So are efforts to take projects, pilots, and demonstration programs to scale. This raises concerns about: *What systemic changes are needed?*

One response to all this has been the call to enhance coordination among the many overlapping programs, services, and initiatives. Clearly, a more unified and cohesive approach is needed. However, the emphasis on enhancing coordination is insufficient for addressing the core problem which is *marginalization* in school policy, planning, and practices of the whole enterprise devoted to addressing barriers to learning.

This report was developed to delineate a unifying intervention framework and an integrated infrastructure for the many initiatives, projects, programs, and services schools pursue in addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. As aids for moving forward, several tools are included.

A Unifying Concept
for Ending
Marginalization &
Fragmentation of
Learning Supports

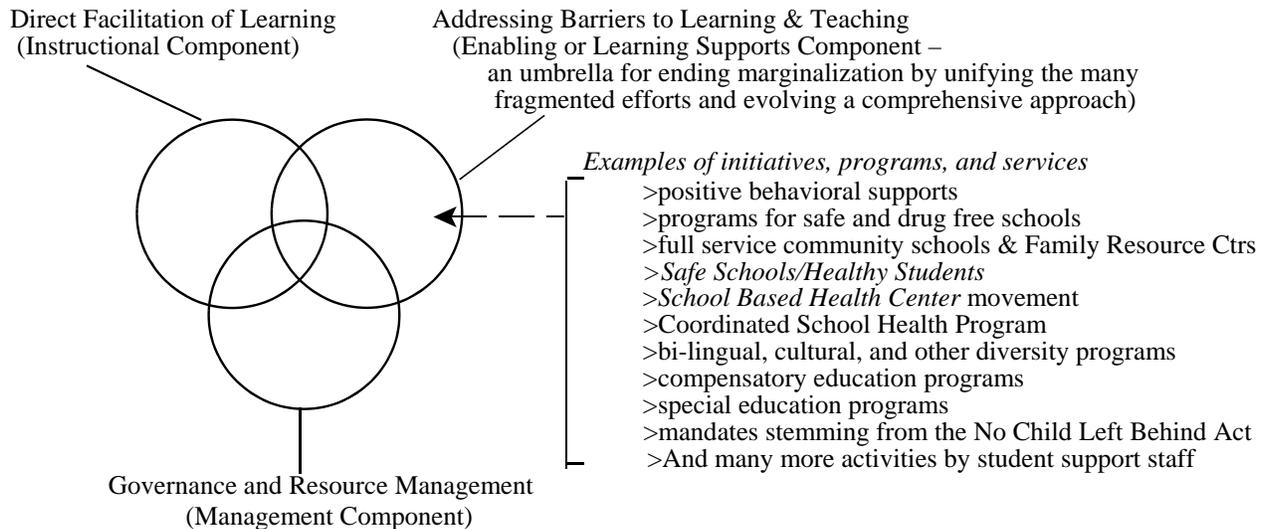
The unifying concept of an *Enabling or Learning Supports Component* is presented as an umbrella under which the many fragmented initiatives, projects, programs, and services can be pulled together. That is, such a Component can house all efforts to prevent and minimize the impact of the many problems interfering with learning and teaching and can do so in ways that maximize engagement in productive learning and positive development. For the school and community as a whole, the intent is to produce a safe, healthy, nurturing environment characterized by respect for differences, trust, caring, and support.

An Enabling or Learning Supports Component focuses on enhancing policy and strategic collaboration to develop comprehensive approaches that maximize learning and in the process strengthen the well-being of students, families, schools, and neighborhoods. This is accomplished by fully integrating the enterprise into a school's efforts to improve instruction (see Figure on next page).

*This report comes from the *Center for Mental Health in Schools* at UCLA. The full report is online at: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

Given the current state of school resources, efforts to establish and institutionalize an Enabling or Learning Supports Component clearly must be accomplished by rethinking and redeploying how existing resources are used. The work requires weaving school owned resources and community owned resources together to develop comprehensive and cohesive approaches. The work also must take advantage of the natural opportunities at schools for addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems and promoting personal and social growth.

Needed: Revised Policy to Establish an Umbrella for School Improvement Planning Related to Addressing Barriers to Learning and Promoting Healthy Development



An Enabling or Learning Supports Component is operationalized into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive framework that incorporates two frameworks. One is the continuum framing the scope of desired intervention; the other is a conceptualization that organizes the “content” of efforts for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and does so with appreciation of the role played by efforts to promote healthy development.

A Continuum of Interventions to Meet the Needs of All Children and Youth

By viewing programs, services, projects, and initiatives along a continuum of student needs, schools and communities are more likely to provide the right interventions for the right students at the right time. Such a continuum encompasses efforts to positively affect a full spectrum of learning, physical, social-emotional, and behavioral problems in every school and community by

- promoting healthy development and preventing problems
- intervening as early after the onset of problems as is feasible
- providing special assistance for severe and chronic problems.

Such a continuum encompasses efforts to enable academic, social, emotional, and physical development and address learning, behavior, and emotional problems at every school. Most schools have some programs and services that fit along the entire continuum. However, the tendency to focus mostly on the most severe problems has skewed things so that too little is done to prevent and intervene early after the onset of a problem. As a result, the whole enterprise has been characterized as a “waiting for failure” approach.

Framing the Content of Learning Supports

Pioneering efforts have operationalized the content of an Enabling or Learning Supports Component into six programmatic arenas. In effect, they have moved from a “laundry-list” of programs, services, and activities to a defined content or “curriculum” framework that categorizes and captures the essence of the multifaceted ways schools need to address barriers to learning.

The six content arenas organize learning supports into programs for

- *enhancing regular classroom strategies to enable learning* (e.g., improving instruction for students with mild-moderate learning and behavior problems and re-engaging those who have become disengaged from learning at school)
- *supporting transitions* (e.g., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes, daily transitions, etc.)
- *increasing home and school connections*
- *responding to, and where feasible, preventing school and personal crises*
- *increasing community involvement and support* (e.g., outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers)
- *facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed.*

Combining the continuum of interventions with the six content arenas provides a “big picture” of a *comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach*.

The resulting matrix creates a unifying umbrella framework to guide rethinking and restructuring of the daily work of all staff who provide learning supports at a school. When it is used as a tool for mapping and analysis of resources and identifying gaps and redundancies, it helps increase effectiveness and efficiency of the supports for learning.

An Integrated Infrastructure

Developing and institutionalizing a comprehensive component for learning supports requires infrastructure mechanisms that are integrated with each other and are fully integrated into school improvement efforts. Along with unifying the various initiatives, projects, programs, and services, the need at a school is to rework infrastructure to support efforts to address barriers to learning in a cohesive manner and to integrate the work with efforts to promote healthy development and with instruction.

The report outlines how existing infrastructure mechanisms can be integrated to address marginalization, fragmentation, counterproductive competition, and wasteful redundancy. It delineates organizational and operational functions and highlights how the mechanisms for carrying out such functions can be woven together into an effective and efficient infrastructure.

Specifically discussed are

- leadership for an Enabling or Learning Supports component,
- a Learning Supports Resource Team,

- ad hoc and standing work groups for a resource team,
- integrating the component into the school infrastructure,
- a learning supports resource mechanism for a family of schools.

Facilitating the Systemic Changes

What is proposed, of course, requires major systemic changes that address the complications stemming from the scale and different settings of public education. Such complications emphasize the importance of change agents.

Substantive changes require guidance and support from professionals with mastery level competence for creating a climate for change, facilitating change processes, and establishing an institutional culture where key stakeholders continue to learn and evolve.

Building on what is known about organizational change, the report highlights the role of a designated *Organization Facilitator* as a key agent for change. Organizational Facilitators are one of several *temporary* mechanisms created to facilitate and guide systemic change. This specially trained professional embodies the necessary expertise to help school sites and complexes implement and institutionalize substantively new approaches in ways that adapt to setting and scale.

Concluding Comments

With appropriate leadership, significant work can be accomplished with respect to *restructuring*, transforming, and enhancing school-owned programs and services and community resources. In doing so, the focus needs to be on *all* school resources, including compensatory and special education, support services, adult education, recreation and enrichment programs, and facility use, and *all* community *resources* – public and private agencies, families, businesses; services, programs, facilities; institutions of higher education; professionals-in-training; and volunteers including professional making pro-bono contributions.

The long-range aim is to weave all resources together into the fabric of every school and evolve a comprehensive component that effectively addresses barriers to development, learning, and teaching. As leaders and policy makers recognize the essential nature of such a component, it will be easier to braid resources to address barriers. In turn, this will enhance efforts to foster healthy development.

When resources are combined properly, the *end product* can be cohesive and potent *school-community partnerships*. Such partnerships seem essential if we are to create caring and supportive environments that maximize learning and well-being for all.

For a related policy discussion, See: *School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?* online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsmissing.htm>

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Preface

Another project, another program, another initiative to address students' learning, behavior, and emotional problems, make school safe, and/or promote healthy development.

How does it all fit together?

As we have facilitated the work of the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*, this question has been raised with us about a variety of initiatives that schools, districts, and states are pursuing. And, it has been consistently stressed that the current state of affairs is unsatisfactory and reflects a set of systems-based issues and problems.

*Addressing the key systemic issues and problems
is exactly the point of the National Initiative.*

Much of our Center's ongoing analytic work focuses on clarifying fundamental systemic factors that interfere with developing comprehensive, multifaceted, cohesive, and cost-effective efforts to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development. Besides clarifying what's wrong, the emphasis is on what needs to be done to unify the many fragmented efforts and evolve a comprehensive approach and integrate it fully with instruction to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

The point of the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support* is to focus on correcting the *systemic* problems that have resulted in marginalization, fragmentation, and counterproductive competition. The Initiative is not advocating some competing "model." It is attempting to provide a unifying umbrella concept and frameworks for dealing with problems related to (1) policy deficiencies, (2) fragmented approaches to intervention, (3) the need to rethink infrastructure at school, district, regional, and state levels, and (4) the need to enhance strategies to accomplish essential systemic changes in sustainable ways. (These matters are outlined in the original concept paper for the New Directions Initiative – online at:

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/newdirections.pdf>

and in the subsequently developed brief – online at:

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/assuringnochild.pdf>)

The following document was developed to highlight the current state of affairs and illustrate the value of a unifying framework and integrated infrastructure for the many initiatives, projects, programs, and services schools pursue in addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Specifically, it highlights how initiatives can be embedded into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive framework and outlines how existing infrastructure mechanisms can be integrated to address marginalization, fragmentation, counterproductive competition, and wasteful redundancy. As aids for moving in these directions, several tools are included.

Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor

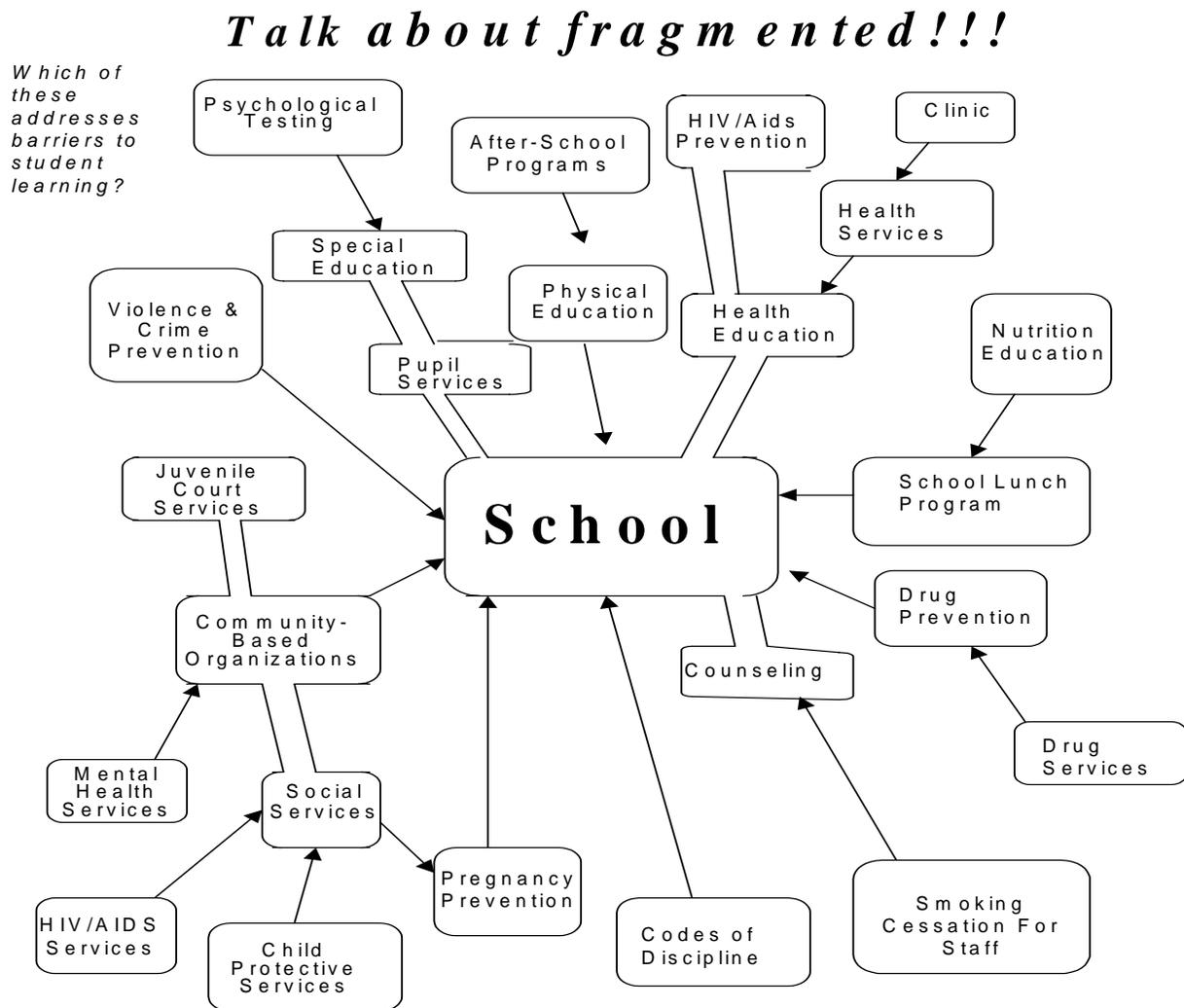
Another Initiative? Where Does it Fit?

A Unifying Framework and an Integrated Infrastructure for Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Promote Healthy Development

Currently, most districts offer a range of programs and services oriented to student needs and problems. Some are provided throughout a school district, others are carried out at or linked to targeted schools. Some are owned and operated by schools; some are from community agencies. The interventions may be for all students in a school, for those in specified grades, for those identified as "at risk," and/or for those in need of compensatory or special education.

Looked at as a whole, a considerable amount of activity is taking place and substantial resources are being expended. However, it is widely recognized that interventions are highly fragmented (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Fragmented programs and services



Adapted from : *Health is Academic: A guide to Coordinated School Health Programs* (1998). Edited by E. Marx & S.F. Wooley with D. Northrop. New York: Teachers College Press.

Many of the programs and services are generated by special initiatives and projects. These include, among many others, initiatives for positive behavioral supports, programs for safe and drug free schools, full service community schools and Family Resource Centers, special project initiatives such as the *School Based Health Center* movement, the *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* projects, and the *Coordinated School Health Program*, efforts to address bi-lingual, cultural, and other diversity concerns, compensatory and special education programs, and the mandates stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act.

With respect to organization, various divisions and their staff usually are found to deal with the same common barriers to learning, such as poor instruction, lack of parent involvement, violence and unsafe schools, poor support for student transitions, disabilities, and so forth. And, they tend to do so with little or no coordination, and sparse attention to moving toward integrated efforts. Furthermore, in every facet of a district's operations, an unproductive separation often is manifested between staff focused directly on instruction and those concerned with student support. It is not surprising, then, how often efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching are planned, implemented, and evaluated in a fragmented, piecemeal manner. And, given the fragmentation, it is commonplace for those staffing the various efforts to function in relative isolation of each other and other stakeholders, with a great deal of the work oriented to discrete problems and with an overreliance on specialized services for individuals and small groups.

Schools confronted with a large number of students experiencing barriers to learning pay dearly for this state of affairs. Moreover, it is common knowledge that such schools don't come close to having enough resources to meet their needs. For these schools in particular, the reality is that test score averages are unlikely to increase adequately until student supports are rethought and redesigned. More broadly, schools that ignore the need to move in new directions related to providing learning supports remain ill-equipped to meet their mission to ensure that all youngsters have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Coordination:
Necessary but
Not Sufficient

Because so many programs have evolved in a piece meal and ad hoc manner, across the country it is not unusual for staff in a district and at a school to be involved in "parallel play." This contributes to widespread counterproductive competition and wasteful redundancy. Effectiveness is compromised. So are efforts to take projects, pilots, and demonstration programs to scale.

The core problem
that must be
addressed is
marginalization

One response to all this has been the call to enhance coordination. Clearly, schools are enmeshed in many overlapping programs, services, and initiatives designed to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development. Clearly, a more unified and cohesive approach is needed. However, the emphasis on enhancing coordination is insufficient for addressing the core problem which is *marginalization* in school policy, planning, and practices of the whole enterprise devoted to addressing barriers to learning.

Evidence of the degree to which this is the case is readily seen in school improvement planning guides and school governance. (See our analysis of the deficiencies of prevailing guides in: *School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?* online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsmissing.htm>) The marginalization is a major factor contributing to and maintaining fragmented planning, implementation, and evaluation.

A Unifying Concept
for Ending
Marginalization &
Fragmentation of
Learning Supports

Ending the marginalization and fragmentation requires adopting a unifying concept that provides an umbrella for a wide range of initiatives, programs, and services (see Figure 2). An *Enabling or Learning Supports Component* illustrates such a concept. The intent of such a component is to prevent and minimize the impact of as many problems as feasible and to do so in ways that maximize engagement in productive learning and positive development. For the school and community as a whole, the intent is to produce a safe, healthy, nurturing environment characterized by respect for differences, trust, caring, and support.

An Enabling or Learning Supports Component focuses on enhancing policy and strategic collaboration to develop comprehensive approaches that maximize learning and in the process strengthen the well-being of students, families, schools, and neighborhoods. This is accomplished by fully integrating the enterprise into a school's efforts to improve instruction (see Figure 2B).

All this, of course, requires major systemic changes that address the complications stemming from the scale of public education. This means the changes must be based on frameworks and procedures that can be adapted to fit every school in a district and modified for small and large urban, rural, suburban settings.

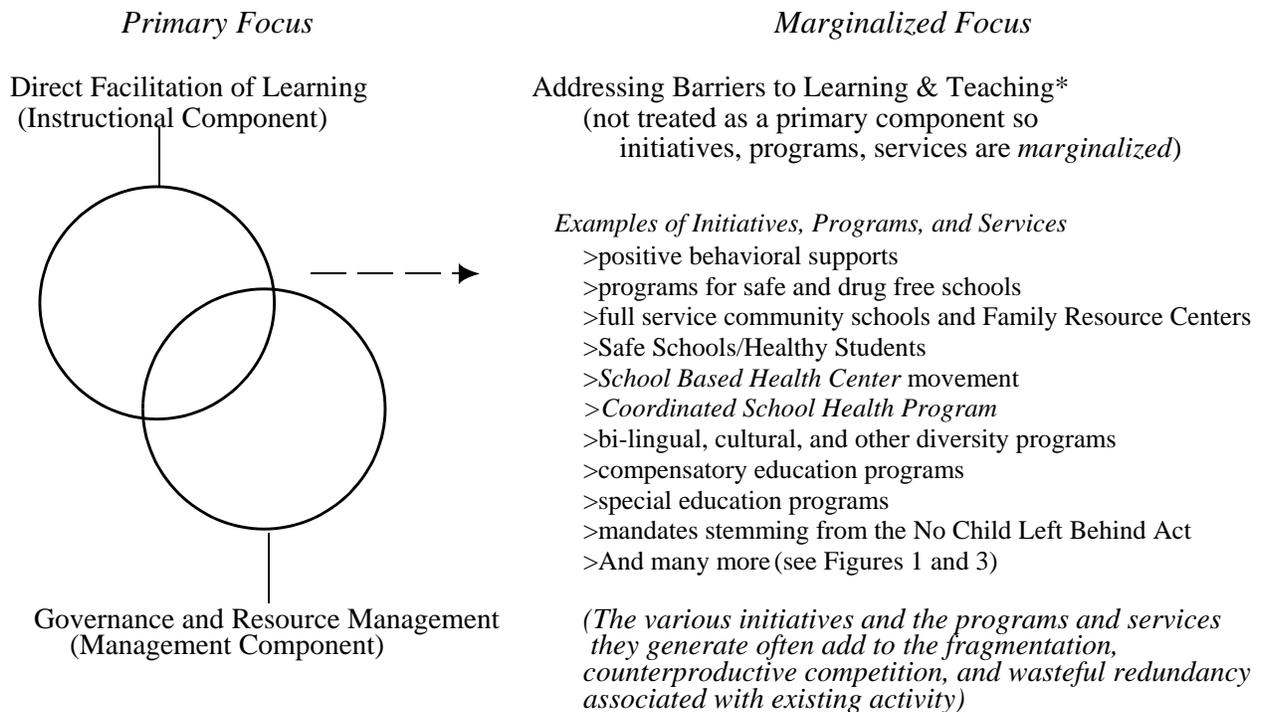
Given the current state of school resources, efforts to establish and institutionalize an *Enabling or Learning Supports Component* clearly must be accomplished by rethinking and redeploying how existing resources are used. The work requires weaving school owned resources and community owned resources together to develop comprehensive and cohesive approaches. The work also must take advantage of the natural opportunities at schools for addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems and promoting personal and social growth. This encompasses a focus on promoting the well-being of teachers and other school staff so that they can do more to promote the well-being of students. As is the case for students, staff need supports that enhance protective buffers, reduce risks, and promote well-being.

Safe, supportive,
healthy, and caring
schools

In short, the ideal is to install a well-designed and nonmarginalized component for addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development at every school. This encompasses a commitment to fostering staff and student resilience and creating an atmosphere that encourages mutual support, caring, and sense of community. Staff and students must feel good about themselves if they are to cope with challenges proactively and effectively. Properly implemented, such a component can foster smooth transitions, positive informal encounters and social interactions; facilitate social and learning supports; provide opportunities for ready access to information and for learning how to function effectively in the school culture. (For any school, a welcoming induction and ongoing support are critical elements both in creating a positive sense of community and in facilitating staff and student school adjustment and performance.) School-wide strategies for welcoming and supporting staff, students, and families at school *every day* are part of creating a safe, supportive, healthy, caring school – one where all stakeholders interact positively with each other and identify with the school and its goals.

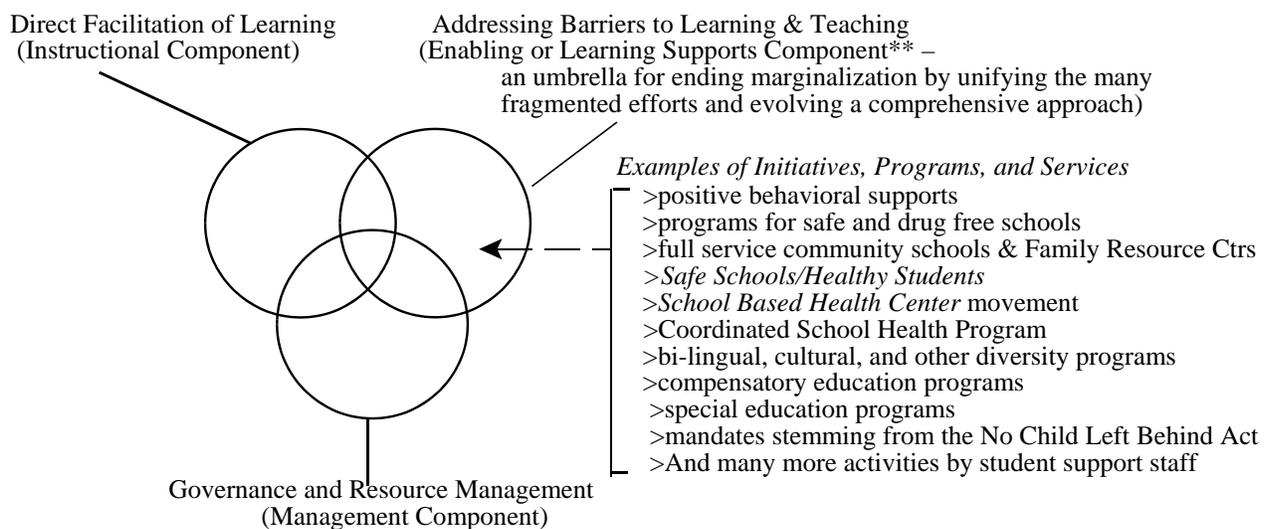
Figure 2. Improving school improvement planning

A. Current School Improvement Planning



*While not treated as a primary and essential component, schools generally offer some amount of school-owned student “support services” – some of which links with community-owned resources. Many types of student support personnel staff the interventions (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, etc.). Schools have been reaching out to community agencies to add a few more services. All of this, however, remains marginalized and fragmented in policy and practice.

B. Needed: Revised Policy to Establish an Umbrella for School Improvement Planning Related to Addressing Barriers to Learning and Promoting Healthy Development



**An example of a framework for such a component is provided in Figure 2.

Operationalizing an Enabling or Learning Supports Component

Various states and localities are moving in the direction of the three component approach for school improvement illustrated in Figure 2B. In doing so, they are adopting different labels for their component to address barriers to learning. For example, the state education agencies in California and Iowa and various districts across the country have adopted the term *Learning Supports*. So has the New American Schools' Urban Learning Center comprehensive school reform model. Because the Urban Learning Center model was listed in legislation for Comprehensive School Reform, the concept of a Learning Supports Component is being adopted in schools in California, Oregon, Utah, and other locales. Some states use the term *Supportive Learning Environment*. The Hawai'i Department of Education calls it a *Comprehensive Student Support System (CSSS)*. Building on Hawai'i's pioneering work, legislation has been proposed in California for a *Comprehensive Pupil Learning Supports System*. Whatever the component is called, the important point is that a component for addressing barriers to learning is seen as necessary and on a par with the instructional component (complementing and overlapping it). The bottom line is that there is growing understanding that efforts to address barriers to development, learning, and teaching can no longer be marginalized in policy and practice.

Whatever the component is called, it needs to be operationalized to fit local schools. In doing so, two frameworks provide guidance. One is the continuum framing the scope of desired intervention; the other is a conceptualization that organizes the "content" of efforts for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and does so with appreciation of the role played by efforts to promote healthy development.

A Continuum of Interventions to Meet the Needs of All Children and Youth

By viewing programs, services, projects, and initiatives along a continuum of student needs, schools and communities are more likely to provide the right interventions for the right students at the right time (see Figure 3). Such a continuum encompasses efforts to positively affect a full spectrum of learning, physical, social-emotional, and behavioral problems in every school and community by

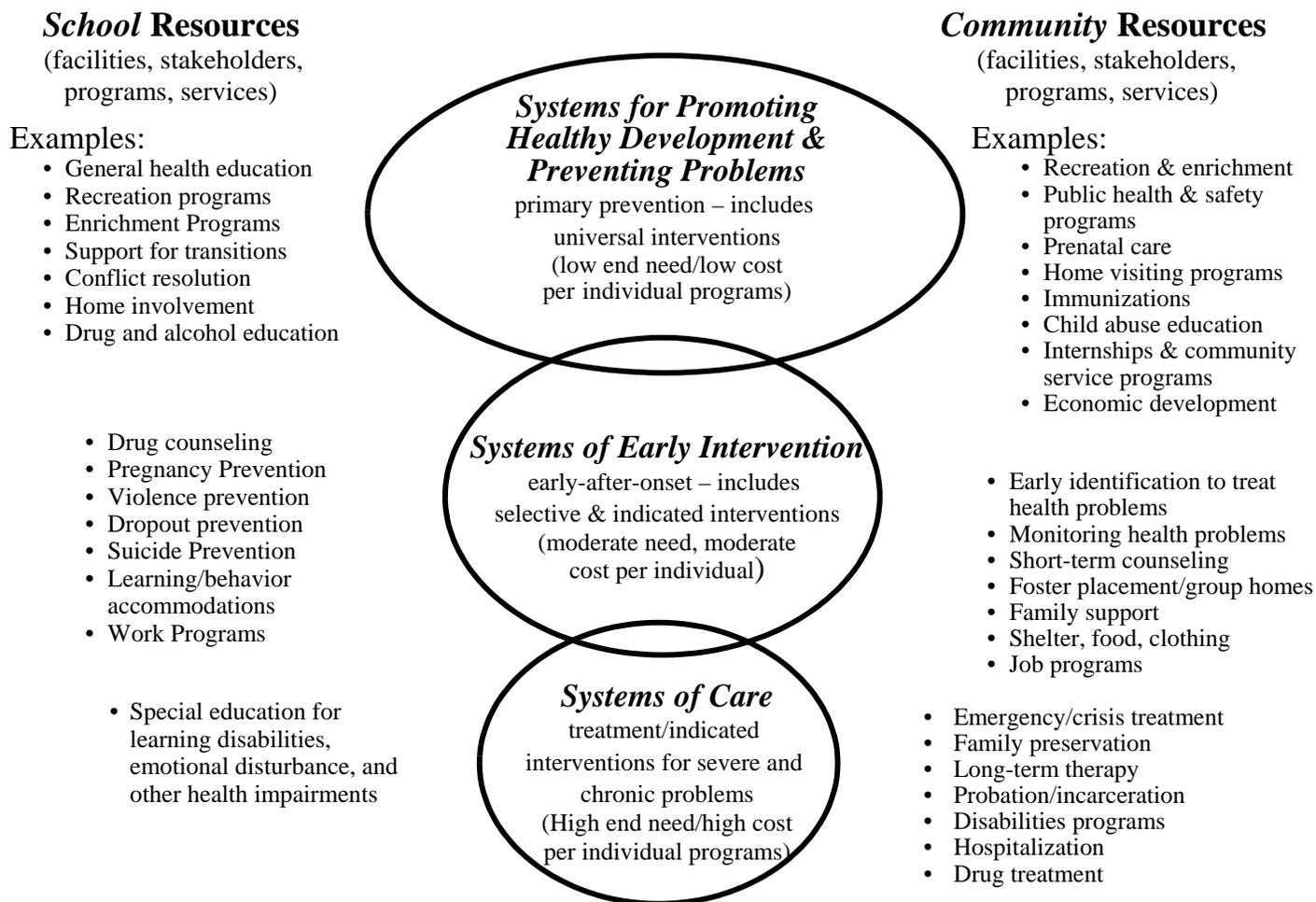
- promoting healthy development and preventing problems
- intervening as early after the onset of problems as is feasible
- providing special assistance for severe and chronic problems.

Note that, as illustrated in Figure 3, the effectiveness of such a continuum depends on *systemic* design. That is, at each level the emphasis is on developing a system – not just having an initiative or programs. Moreover, all levels need to be interconnected systemically.

Figure 3. Interconnected Systems for Meeting the Needs of All Students

Providing a *CONTINUUM OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & SERVICES*

Ensuring use of the *LEAST INTERVENTION NEEDED*



Systemic collaboration* is essential to establish interprogram connections on a daily basis and over time to ensure seamless intervention within each system and among *systems of prevention, systems of early intervention, and systems of care.*

- *Such collaboration involves horizontal and vertical restructuring of program and services
- within jurisdictions, school districts, and community agencies (e.g., among departments, divisions, units, schools, clusters of schools)
 - between jurisdictions, school and community agencies, public and private sectors; among schools; among community agencies

(From various public domain documents authored by H.S. Adelman and L. Taylor and circulated through the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. Adapted by Permission.)

Such a continuum encompasses efforts to enable academic, social, emotional, and physical development and address learning, behavior, and emotional problems at every school. As noted, most schools have some programs and services that fit along the entire continuum. However, the tendency to focus mostly on the most severe problems has skewed things so that too little is done to prevent and intervene early after the onset of a problem. As a result, the whole enterprise has been characterized as a “waiting for failure” approach.

**Framing the
Content of
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Pioneering efforts have operationalized the content of an Enabling or Learning Supports Component into six programmatic arenas. In effect, they have moved from a “laundry-list” of programs, services, and activities to a defined content or “curriculum” framework that categorizes and captures the essence of the multifaceted ways schools need to address barriers to learning.

The six content arenas organize learning supports into programs for

- *enhancing regular classroom strategies to enable learning* (e.g., improving instruction for students with mild-moderate learning and behavior problems and re-engaging those who have become disengaged from learning at school)
- *supporting transitions* (e.g., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes, daily transitions, etc.)
- *increasing home and school connections*
- *responding to, and where feasible, preventing school and personal crises*
- *increasing community involvement and support* (e.g., outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers)
- *facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed.*

For a sampling of relevant outcome data, see: *Addressing Barriers to Student Learning & Promoting Healthy Development: A Usable Research-Base* – online at

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/BarriersBrief.pdf>

**Matrix
Framework:
What’s Being Done,
What’s Missing?**

Combining the continuum of interventions with these six content arenas provides a “big picture” of a *comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach*. The resulting matrix creates a unifying umbrella framework to guide rethinking and restructuring the daily work of all staff who provide learning supports at a school (see Figure 4). The matrix can be used to guide mapping and analysis of resources and identifying gaps and redundancies, thus increasing effectiveness and efficiency of the supports to learning (See Appendix A).

Figure 4. Matrix for reviewing scope and content of a component to address barriers to learning.*

		Scope of Intervention		
		Systems for Promoting Healthy Development & Preventing Problems	Systems for Early Intervention (Early after problem onset)	Systems of Care
Organizing around the Content/ "curriculum" for addressing barriers to learning & promoting healthy development	Classroom-Focused Enabling			
	Crisis/ Emergency Assistance & Prevention			
	Support for transitions			
	Home Involvement in Schooling			
	Community Outreach/ Volunteers			
	Student and Family Assistance			
		Accommodations for diversity (e.g., differences & disabilities)	Specialized assistance & other intensified interventions (e.g., Special Education & School-Based Behavioral Health)	

*General initiatives and specific school-wide and classroom-based programs and services can be embedded into the matrix. Think about those related to positive behavioral supports, programs for safe and drug free schools, full service community schools and Family Resource Centers, special project initiatives such as the *School Based Health Center* movement, the *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* projects, and the *Coordinated School Health Program*, efforts to address bi-lingual, cultural, and other diversity concerns, compensatory and special education programs, and the mandates stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act.

Also Needed:
An Integrated
Infrastructure

Accomplishing organizational and operational functions requires mechanisms, and such mechanisms need to be woven together into an effective and efficient infrastructure. Developing and institutionalizing a comprehensive component for learning supports requires infrastructure mechanisms that are integrated with each other and are fully integrated into school improvement efforts.

Infrastructure must be redesigned to ensure the integration, quality improvement, accountability, and self-renewal related to *all three* components illustrated in Figure 2B. This necessitates rethinking infrastructure at school and district levels with respect to mechanisms for daily (1) governance, (2) leadership, (3) planning and implementation of specific organizational and program objectives, (4) coordination and integration for cohesion, (5) communication and information management, (6) capacity building, and (7) quality improvement and accountability.

In redesigning mechanisms to address these matters, new collaborative arrangements must be established, and authority (power) redistributed (easy to say, hard to accomplish). Reform obviously requires ensuring that those who operate essential mechanisms have adequate resources and support, initially and over time. Moreover, there must be appropriate incentives and safeguards for individuals as they become enmeshed in the complexities of systemic change.

**Structure
Follows
Function**

Structure follows function is a fundamental organizational principle. Based on careful delineation of functions, an infrastructure must be developed to enable their accomplishment in a way that ends marginalization of the work. Minimally, the need is for infrastructure mechanisms to steer and do work on a regular basis. And, since the work overlaps with that of others, the need is to establish and maintain decision making connections with the instructional and management components in a school and district and with the community.

The following are some major examples of functions needed to develop a nonmarginalized approach to addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development:

- delineating and operationalizing the vision
- enhancing support for and developing a policy commitment to ensure necessary resources are dispensed for accomplishing desired functions
- establishing leadership and institutional and operational mechanisms (e.g., infrastructure) for guiding and managing accomplishment of desired functions (including facilitation of communication, cooperation, coordination, integration)
- aggregating data from schools (across students and from teachers to analyze school needs) and from neighborhood to analyze system needs
- mapping, analyzing, managing, redeploying, and braiding available resources to identify the most pressing priorities for strengthening programs and systems and developing new ones, as well as for enabling accomplishment of procedural and operational functions

- advocacy, governance, planning, implementation, and evaluation related to desired functions (including developing strategies for enhancing resources)
- coordinating and integrating school resources & connecting with community resources
- defining and incorporating new roles and functions into job descriptions
- building capacity for planning, implementing and evaluating desired functions, including ongoing stakeholder development for continuous learning and renewal and for bringing new arrivals up to speed
- defining standards & ensuring accountability
- social marketing

Functions encompass specific tasks, such as mapping and analyzing resources; exploring ways to share facilities, equipment, and other resources; expanding opportunities for community service, internships, jobs, recreation, and enrichment; developing pools of nonprofessional volunteers and professional pro bono assistance; making recommendations about priorities for use of resources; raising funds and pursuing grants; and advocating for appropriate decision making.

(Highlighted in a later section are an additional set of temporary functions related to accomplishing the systemic changes involved in establishing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach – “getting from here to there.”)

*Not
Another
Team!*

Recognition of the need for infrastructure mechanisms frequently leads to organizing a special group (e.g., teams, councils, collaboratives) at a school and/or in a community. Every new initiative (e.g., positive behavioral supports, the Coordinated School Health Program, Safe Schools/Healthy Students) seems to call for such a mechanism. Most such groups are not well-integrated into the existing institutional infrastructure and often do not establish effective subgroups to work on specific tasks. All this contributes to marginalization and fragmentation. It also has led school administrators and staff to react: *Not another team!* is a commonly heard protest.

What Infrastructure Mechanisms are Used in Your District/School?

(1) List the infrastructure mechanisms currently in place

THEN:

(2) Diagram how these existing infrastructure mechanisms connect (or do not) to work with each other.

Framing an
Integrated
Infrastructure

Along with unifying the various initiatives, projects, programs, and services, the need at a school is to rework infrastructure to support efforts to address barriers to learning in a cohesive manner and to integrate the work with efforts to promote healthy development and with instruction. The following discussion outlines such an infrastructure.

**Leadership
for an Enabling
or Learning
Supports
Component**

At schools (urban, rural, suburban, small, large), obviously administrative leadership is key to ending the marginalization described above. Thus, the question arises: Who is the administrative leader for an Enabling or Learning Supports Component at a school? If no one's job description includes such a role and no one has overall accountability for the Component, it will remain marginalized – with all the implications that accrue to such a status. (See Appendix B for a job description for such an administrative leader.)

In addition to an administrative leader, a component to address barriers to learning needs “champions” to advocate for and steer the work. For example, at the school level, it also helps to establish a leadership body to ensure overall development of the component. These advocates must be competent with respect to the work to be done and highly motivated not just to help get things underway, but to ensure the changes are sustained over time. Their responsibility is to ensure the vision for the component is not lost and to provide input to administrators and other key stakeholders. This leadership group should be fully connected with groups guiding the instructional and management components. Each school leadership body needs to be linked formally to the district mechanism designed to guide development of enabling/learning supports components at schools. Such a group should not be too large. For example, at a school level, it might include one or two other key school leaders, perhaps a key agency person or two, a few well-connected community “champions,” and perhaps someone from a local institution of higher education. Such a group can meet monthly (more often if major problems arise) to review progress, problem solve, and so forth.

**Analyzing Administrative Leadership for Evolving
Learning Supports Systemically in Your District/School**

- (1) Identify all who have administrative leadership responsibility for all the interventions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.
- (2) Who has overall responsibility and accountability for ensuring that all the activity is systematically and cohesively designed, implemented, and evaluated?
- (3) If no one has overall responsibility and accountability, discuss the implications related to the problems of marginalization, fragmentation, counterproductive competition, and wasteful redundancy.
- (4) What leadership mechanisms are in place to advocate and steer efforts to improve how barriers to learning and teaching are addressed?
- (5) What systemic changes are needed to improve how activity is systematically, cohesively, and comprehensively designed, implemented, and evaluated?

**A Learning
Supports
Resource
Team**

Another key is a unifying mechanism that brings together staff leaders of major initiatives, projects, and programs addressing barriers to learning to focus on how all *resources* for learning supports are used at the school. While every school is expending resources for learning supports, few have a mechanism to both ensure appropriate *overall* use of what exists and enhance the pool of resources. Rather, analyses indicate a widespread tendency to establish separate mechanisms (e.g., teams) for each major initiative, project, and program. The result is an unintegrated infrastructure.

Creation of a unifying, resource-oriented group is essential for braiding together existing school and community resources and encouraging increasingly cohesive intervention efforts. Such a group contributes to cost-efficacy by ensuring all activity is well-planned, implemented, and evaluated.

Early in our work, we called the school level resource-oriented mechanism a Resource Coordinating Team. However, coordination is too limited a descriptor of the team's role and functions. It is better called a *Learning Supports Resource Team*. Properly constituted, such a team works with the school's administrators to expand on-site leadership for efforts to address barriers comprehensively and ensures the maintenance and improvement of a multifaceted and integrated approach.

One primary and essential task a learning supports resource-oriented mechanism undertakes is that of enumerating school and community programs and services that are in place to support students, families, and staff. A comprehensive "gap" assessment is generated as resources are mapped and compared with surveys of the unmet needs of and desired outcomes for students, their families, and school staff. Analyses of what is available, effective, and needed provide a sound basis for formulating priorities and developing strategies to enhance resource use and link with additional resources at other schools, district sites, in the community. Such analyses also can guide efforts to improve cost-effectiveness.

As discussed later in this report, a learning supports resource-oriented mechanism for a complex or family of schools (e.g., a high school and its feeder schools) and one at the district level provide mechanisms for analyses on a larger scale. This can lead to strategies for cross-school, community-wide, and district-wide cooperation and integration to enhance intervention effectiveness and garner economies of scale.

When we mention a Learning Supports Resource Team, some school staff quickly respond: *We already have teams like that!* When we explore this with them, we usually find what they have are teams for specific initiatives and programs and/or a *case-oriented team* (i.e., a team that focuses on individual students who are having problems). To help clarify the difference between resource and case-oriented teams, we contrast the functions of each. A case-oriented team focuses on individual students and is concerned with triage, referral, case monitoring/management, case progress review, and case reassessment. A resource-oriented team deals with such functions as aggregating data across students and from teachers to analyze school needs, mapping resources in school and community, analyzing resources, identifying the most pressing program development needs at a school, coordinating and integrating school resources and connecting with community resources, establishing priorities for strengthening programs and developing new ones,

It is essential to differentiate between case- and resource-oriented mechanisms

planning and facilitating ways to strengthen and develop new programs and systems, recommending how resources should be deployed and redeployed, and developing strategies for enhancing resources. A Learning Support Resource Team is used as a unifying mechanism into which the separate mechanisms are embedded and constituted as work groups. This ensures overall cohesion, ongoing development of school learning supports interventions and systems, and movement toward a comprehensive, multifaceted approach.

A unifying, resource-oriented team can reduce fragmentation and enhance cost-efficacy . . .

Minimally, a unifying, resource-oriented team can reduce fragmentation and enhance cost-efficacy by assisting in ways that encourage programs to function in a coordinated and increasingly integrated way. For example, the team can coordinate resources, enhance communication among school staff and with the home about available assistance and referral processes, and monitor programs to be certain they are functioning effectively and efficiently. More generally, this group can provide leadership in guiding school personnel and clientele in evolving the school's vision, priorities, and practices for learning supports and enhancing resources.

Although a resource-oriented mechanism might be created solely around psychosocial programs, it is meant to focus on resources related to all major learning supports programs and services. Thus, it tries to bring together representatives of all these programs and services. This might include, for example, school counselors, psychologists, nurses, social workers, attendance and dropout counselors, special education staff, physical educators and after school program staff, bilingual and Title I program coordinators, health educators, safe and drug free school staff. It also should include representatives of any community agency that is significantly involved with the school. Beyond these providers, such a team needs the component's administrative leader and is well-advised to add the energies and expertise of regular classroom teachers, non-certificated staff (e.g., front office, food service, custodian, bus driver) parents, and older students.

. . . to ensure all youngsters have an equal opportunity to succeed at school

Appropriately formed, trained, and supported, a resource-oriented team complements the work of the site's governance body through providing on-site overview, leadership, and advocacy for all activity aimed at addressing barriers to learning and teaching. Having at least one representative from the resource team on the school's governing and planning bodies ensures infrastructure connections for maintaining, improving, and increasingly integrating learning supports and classroom instruction. Having an administrator on the team provides the necessary link with the school's administrative decision making about allocation of budget, space, staff development time, and other resources. Having representatives of relevant unions promotes guild support.

It is conceivable that one person could start the process of understanding the fundamental resource-oriented functions and delineating an infrastructure to carry them out. It is better, however, if several stakeholders put their heads together. Where creation of "another team" is seen as a burden, existing teams, such as student or teacher assistance teams, school crisis teams, and healthy school teams, have demonstrated the ability to do resource-oriented functions. In adding the resource-oriented functions to another team's work, great care must be taken to structure the agenda so sufficient time is devoted to the additional tasks. For small schools, a large team often is not feasible, but a two person team can still do the job.

What “Teams” Exist Related to Major Student/Learning Supports Initiatives, Projects, and Programs in Your District/School?

(1) List all teams you know about.

THEN:

(2) Diagram how they connect (or do not) to work with each other.

(3) Could the various groups be reconstituted as standing work groups under a unifying Learning Supports Resource mechanism?

(4) What systemic changes are needed to move forward in putting the pieces together to evolve a unified Learning Supports Component?

Ad Hoc and Standing Work Groups for a Resource Team

Teams for specific initiatives and programs can be reconstituted as work groups

Work groups are formed as needed by a Learning Supports Resource Team to address specific concerns (e.g., mapping resources, planning for capacity building and social marketing, addressing problems related to case-oriented systems), develop new programs (e.g., welcoming and social support strategies for newcomers to the school), implement special initiatives (e.g., positive behavior support), and so forth. Such groups usually are facilitated by a member of the resource team who recruits a small group of others from the school and community who are willing and able to help. The group facilitator provides regular updates to the resource team on work group progress and brings back feedback from the Team.

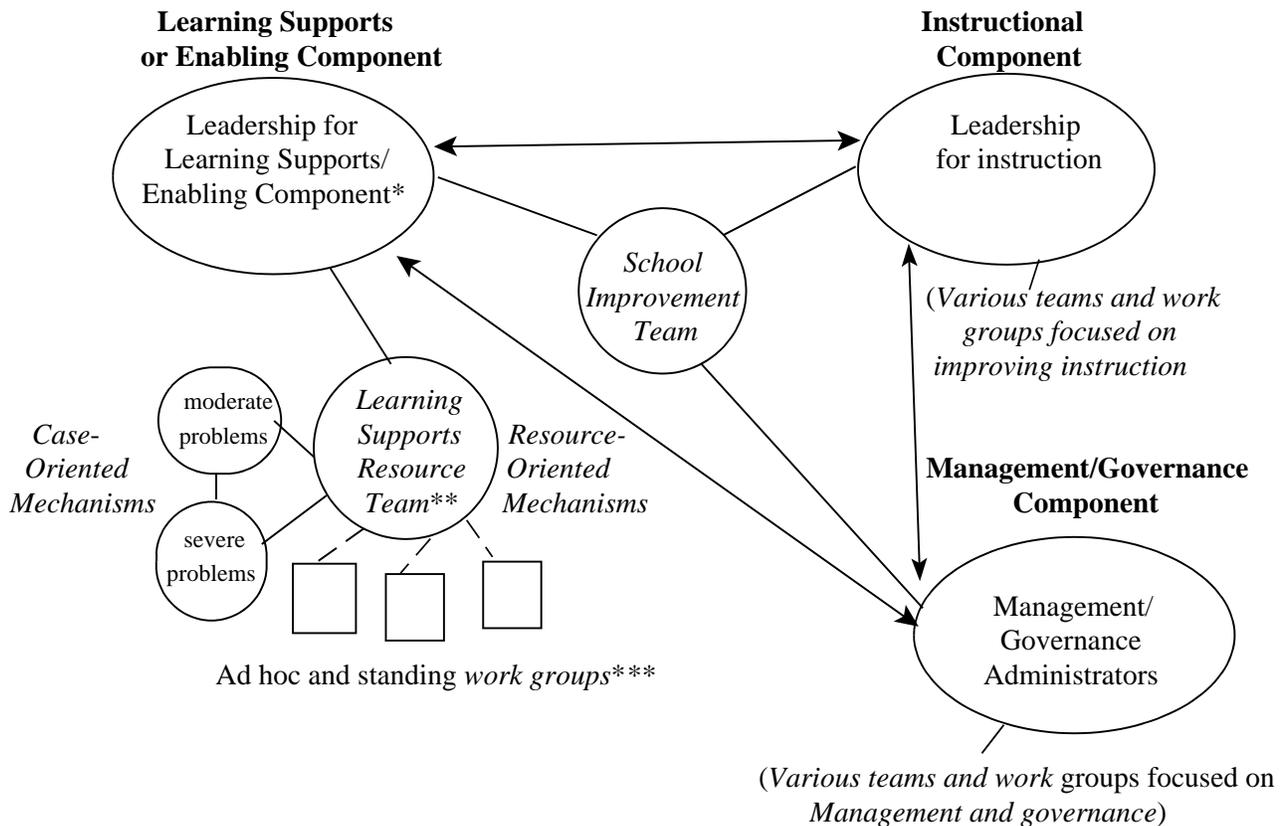
Ad hoc work groups take on tasks that can be done over a relatively short time period, and the group disbands once the work is accomplished. *Standing* work groups focus on defined program areas and pursue current priorities for enhancing intervention in a given arena. For example, a standing work group might be established for any of the six content areas of the Enabling Component.

No leader in education will argue against maximizing a school’s capability for addressing barriers to student learning and teaching. And, with increasing accountability for student outcomes and dwindling budgets, there is little choice about rethinking use of existing resources for learning supports.

Integrating the Component into the School Infrastructure

The following Exhibit illustrates the type of infrastructure that needs to emerge at the school if it is to effectively develop a comprehensive component to address barriers to learning. Note especially the links among the three components, and the connection within the various groups involved in planning, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining learning supports.

Exhibit
Example of an Integrated Infrastructure at the School or District Level



*A Learning Supports or Enabling Component Leadership Group consists of advocates/champions whose responsibility is to ensure the vision for the component is not lost. It meets as needed to monitor and provide input to the Learning Supports Resource Team.

**A Learning Supports Resource Team is the key to ensuring component cohesion, integrated implementation, and ongoing development. It meets weekly to guide and monitor daily implementation and development of all programs, services, initiatives, and systems at a school that are concerned with providing learning supports and specialized assistance.

***Ad hoc and standing work groups – Initially, these are the various “teams” that already exist related to various initiatives and programs. Where redundancy exists, work groups can be combined. Others are formed as needed by the Learning Supports Resource Team to address specific concerns. These groups are essential for accomplishing the many tasks associated with such a team’s functions.

A Learning Supports Resource Mechanism for a Family of Schools

Schools in the same geographic or catchment area have a number of shared concerns, and schools in the feeder pattern often interact with students from the same family. Furthermore, some programs and personnel already are or can be shared in strategic ways by several neighboring schools, thereby reducing costs by minimizing redundancy and opening up ways to achieve economies of scale.

A multi-site council can help ensure cohesive and equitable deployment of resources, yield economies of scale, enhance outcomes for students, and improve cost-benefit ratios.

A multi-site council can provide a mechanism to help ensure cohesive and equitable deployment of resources and also can enhance the pooling of resources. Such a mechanism can be particularly useful for integrating the efforts of high schools and their feeder middle and elementary schools and connecting with neighborhood resources. This clearly is important in addressing barriers with those families who have youngsters attending more than one level of schooling in the same cluster. It is neither cost-effective nor good intervention for each school to contact a family separately in instances where several children from a family are in need of special attention. With respect to linking with community resources, multi-school teams are especially attractive to community agencies who often don't have the time or personnel to make independent arrangements with every school.

In general, a group of schools can benefit from a multi-site resource mechanism designed to provide leadership, facilitate communication and connection, and ensure quality improvement across sites. For example, a multi-site body, or what we call a *Learning Supports Resource Council*, might consist of a high school and its feeder middle and elementary schools. It brings together one-two representatives from each school's resource *team* (see Exhibit on the following page).

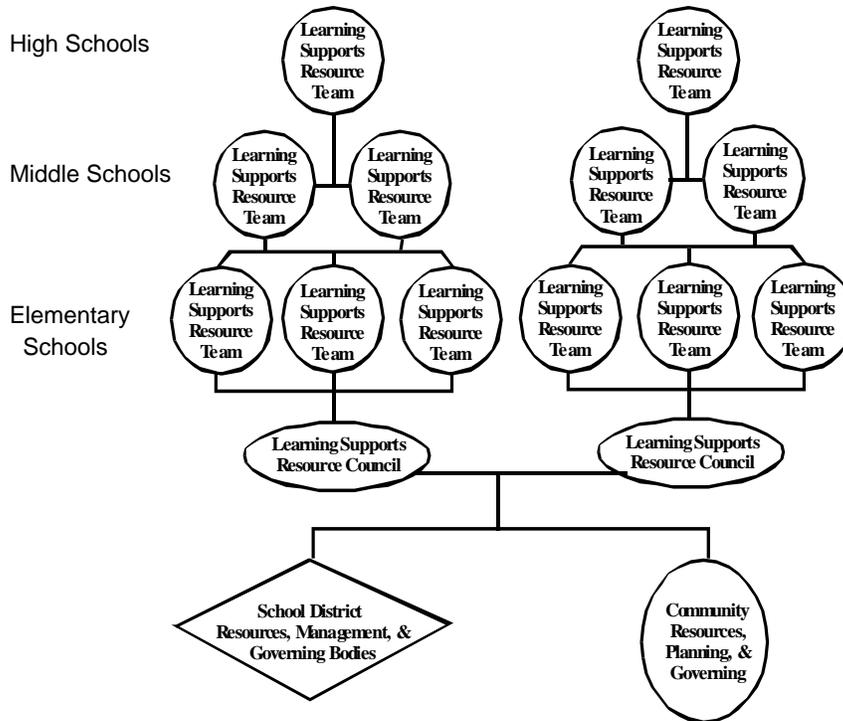
The Council meets about once a month to help (a) coordinate and integrate programs serving multiple schools, (b) identify and meet common needs with respect to guidelines and staff development, and (c) create linkages and collaborations among schools and with community agencies. In this last regard, it can play a special role in community outreach both to create formal working relationships and ensure that all participating schools have access to such resources.

When resource-oriented mechanisms are created in the form of a "team" or council, they also are vehicles for building working relationships and play a major role in solving turf and operational problems.

More generally, the Council provides a useful mechanism for leadership, communication, maintenance, quality improvement, and ongoing development of a comprehensive continuum of programs and services. Natural starting points for councils are the sharing of needs assessments, resource maps, analyses, and recommendations for reform and restructuring. Specific areas of initial focus would be on local, high priority concerns, such as addressing violence and developing prevention programs and safe school and neighborhood plans.

Representatives from Learning Supports Resource Councils would be invaluable members of planning groups (e.g., Service Planning Area Councils, Local Management Boards) and other school-community collaboratives. They bring info about specific schools, clusters of schools, and local neighborhoods and do so in ways that reflect the importance of school-community partnerships.

Exhibit Resource-oriented Mechanisms Across a Family of Schools



A Few Final Comments About Leadership and Infrastructure

It is clear that building a learning supports or enabling component requires strong leadership and new positions to help steer systemic changes and construct the necessary infrastructure. Establishment and maintenance of the component requires continuous, proactive, effective teaming, organization, and accountability.

Administrative leadership *at every level* is key to the success of any systemic change initiative in schools. Given that an Enabling or Learning Supports Component is one of the primary and essential components of school improvement, it is imperative to have designated administrative and staff leadership for the component at school and district levels. Everyone at the school site should be aware of who in the school district provides leadership, promotes, and is accountable for the development of the component. It is imperative that such leadership be at a high enough level to be at key decision making tables when budget and other fundamental decisions are discussed.

Leadership that ensures no child is left behind

At the school level, a administrative leader for the component may be created by redefining a percentage (e.g., 50%) of an assistant principal’s day. Or, in schools that only have one administrator, the principal might delegate some administrative responsibilities to a coordinator (e.g., Title I coordinator or a Center coordinator at schools with a Family or Parent Center). The designated administrative leader must sit on the resource team and represent and advocate team recommendations at administrative and governance body meetings. (Again see Appendix B for job description.)

Besides facilitating initial development of a potent component to address barriers to learning, the administrative lead must guide and be accountable for daily implementation, monitoring, and problem solving. This individual is

the natural link to component leaders in the family of schools and at the district level and should be a vital force for community outreach and involvement.

There is also the need for a staff lead to address daily operational matters. This may be one of the learning supports staff (e.g., a school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse) or a Title I coordinator, or a teacher with special interest in learning supports. In general, these leaders, along with other key staff, embody the vision for the component. Their job descriptions should be reframed to delineate specific functions related to their new roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities. (See Appendix B for a job description for such a staff lead.)

Systemic
Change: The
Role of a
Designated
Organization
Facilitator as a
Key Agent for
Change

Substantive changes require guidance and support from professionals with mastery level competence for creating a climate for change, facilitating change processes, and establishing an institutional culture where key stakeholders continue to learn and evolve. For instance, a considerable amount of organizational research in schools, corporations, and community agencies outlines factors for creating a climate for institutional change. The literature supports the value of (a) a high level of policy commitment that is translated into appropriate resources (leadership, space, budget, time); (b) incentives for change, such as intrinsically valued outcomes, expectations for success, recognitions, and rewards; (c) procedural options from which those expected to implement change can select those they see as workable; (d) a willingness to establish mechanisms and processes that facilitate change efforts, such as a governance mechanism that adopts ways to improve organizational health; (e) use of change agents who are perceived as pragmatic – maintaining ideals while embracing practical solutions; (f) accomplishing change in stages and with realistic timelines, (g) providing feedback on progress; and (h) institutionalizing support mechanisms to maintain and evolve changes and to generate periodic renewal. An understanding of concepts espoused by community psychologists such as empowering settings and enhancing a sense of community also can make a critical difference.

Good ideas and missionary zeal are sometimes enough to change the thinking of individuals; they are rarely, if ever, effective in changing complicated organizations (like the school) with traditions, dynamics, and goals of their own.
Seymour Sarason

Building on what is known about organizational change, our Center staff for many years has been working on a change model for use in establishing, sustaining, and scaling-up school and community reforms. In this context, we have developed a position called an *Organization Facilitator* to aid with major restructuring. This specially trained change agent embodies the necessary expertise to help school sites and complexes implement and institutionalize substantively new approaches.

Organizational facilitators are one of several *temporary* mechanisms created to facilitate and guide systemic change. Once systemic changes have been accomplished effectively, all temporary mechanisms are phased out – with any essential new roles and functions assimilated into regular structural mechanisms. To illustrate the infrastructure context in which an Organizational Facilitator works, it helps to think in terms of four key temporary mechanisms that we view as essential to successful systemic change. These are: (1) a site-based *steering* mechanism to guide and support replication, (2) a site-based *change team* (consisting of key site-stakeholders) that has responsibility for coalition building, implementing the strategic plan, and maintaining daily oversight (including problem solving, conflict

resolution, and so forth), (3) a *change agent* (e.g., organization facilitator) who works with the change team and has full-time responsibility for the daily tasks involved in creating readiness and the initial implementation of desired changes, and (4) *mentors* and *coaches* who model and teach specific elements of new approaches.

- ***Steering.*** When it comes to schools, systemic change requires shifts in policy and practice at several levels (e.g., a school, a "family" of schools, a school district). Each jurisdictional level needs to be involved in one or more steering mechanisms. A steering mechanism can be a designated individual or a small committee or team. The functions of such mechanisms include oversight, guidance, and support of the change process to ensure success. If a decision is made to have separate steering mechanisms at different jurisdictional levels, an interactive interface is needed between them. And, of course, a regular, interactive interface is essential between steering and organizational governance mechanisms. The steering mechanism is the guardian of the "big picture" vision.
- ***Change Agent and Change Team.*** During replication, tasks and concerns must be addressed expeditiously. To this end, a full time agent for change plays a critical role. In our work with schools, we use an Organizational Facilitator as the change agent. One of this facilitator's first functions is to help form and train an on-site change *team*. Such a team (which includes various work groups) consists of personnel representing specific programs, administrators, union chapter chairs, and staff skilled in facilitating problem solving and mediating conflicts. This composition provides a blending of outside and internal agents for change who are responsible and able to address daily concerns.

*If we want to bring .
. . . quality, equity,
and new life to our
system—we
must trust in a vision
and a process of
change.
—Dwight Allen*

With the change agent initially taking the lead, members of the change team (and its work groups) are catalysts and managers of change. As such, they must ensure the "big picture" is implemented in ways that are true to the vision and compatible with the local culture. Team members help develop linkages among resources, facilitate redesign of regular structural mechanisms, and establish other temporary mechanisms. They also are problem solvers -- not only responding as problems arise but taking a proactive stance by designing strategies to counter anticipated barriers to change, such as negative reactions and dynamics, common factors interfering with working relationships, and system deficiencies. They do all this in ways that enhance empowerment, a sense of community, and general readiness and commitment to new approaches. After the initial implementation stage, they focus on ensuring that institutionalized mechanisms take on functions essential to maintenance and renewal. All this requires team members who are committed each day to ensuring effective replication and who have enough time and ability to attend to details.

- ***Mentors and Coaches.*** During initial implementation, the need for mentors and coaches is acute. Inevitably new ideas, roles, and functions require a variety of stakeholder development activities, including demonstrations of new infrastructure mechanisms and

program elements. An Organization Facilitator is among the first providing mentorship. The change team must also identify mentors indigenous to a particular site and others in the system who have relevant expertise. To expand the local pool, other stakeholders can usually be identified and recruited as volunteers to offer peer support. A regularly accessible cadre of mentors and coaches is an indispensable resource in responding to stakeholders' daily calls for help. (Ultimately, every stakeholder is a potential mentor or coach for somebody.) In most cases, the pool will need to be augmented periodically with specially contracted coaches.

With the above as context, we turn to a more detailed look at an Organizational Facilitator as an agent for *school change*. As suggested above, such an individual might be used as a change agent for one school or a group of schools. A cadre of such professionals might be used to facilitate change across an entire district. The focus might be on changes in a few key aspects or full-scale restructuring.

Regardless of the nature and scope of the work, an Organization Facilitator's core functions require an individual whose background and training have prepared her/him to understand

*If we replace
anonymity with
community, sorting
with support, and
bureaucracy with
autonomy, we can
create systems of
schools that
truly help all
students achieve.*
—Tom Vander Ark

- *the specific systemic changes (content and processes) to be accomplished* (In this respect, a facilitator must have an assimilated understanding of the fundamental concerns underlying the need for change.)
- *how to work with a site's stakeholders as they restructure their programs* (e.g., how to be an effective agent of change).

As can be seen in the Exhibit on the following page, the main work revolves around planning and facilitating:

- infrastructure development, maintenance, action, mechanism liaison and interface, and priority setting
- stakeholder development (coaching -- with an emphasis on creating readiness both in terms of motivation and skills; team building; providing technical assistance; organizing basic "interdisciplinary and cross training")
- communication (visibility), resource mapping, analyses, coordination, and integration
- formative evaluation and rapid problem solving
- ongoing support

Exhibit

General Domains and Examples of Task Activity for Change Agents

1. Infrastructure tasks

- (a) Works with governing agents to further clarify and negotiate agreements about
 - policy changes
 - participating personnel (including administrators authorized to take the lead for the systemic changes)
 - time, space, and budget commitments
- (b) Identifies 1-2 staff (e.g., administrator and a line staff person) who agree to lead the change team/s)
- (c) Helps leaders to identify members for the Change and Program Team(s) and prepare the members to carry out functions

2. Stakeholder development

- (a) Provides general orientations for governing agents
- (b) Provides leadership coaching for site leaders responsible for systemic change
- (c) Coaches team members (about purposes, processes)

Examples: At a team's first meeting, the Organization Facilitator offers to provide a brief orientation presentation (including handouts) and any immediate coaching and specific task assistance that team facilitators or members may need. During the next few meetings, coaches might help with mapping and analyzing resources. They might also help teams establish processes for daily interaction and periodic meetings.

- (d) Works with leaders to ensure presentations and written information about infrastructure and activity changes are provided to the entire staff and other stakeholders

3. Communication (visibility), coordination, and integration

- (a) Determines if info on new directions (including leadership and team functions and membership) has been written-up and circulated. If not, Facilitator determines why and helps address systemic breakdowns; if necessary, effective processes are modeled.
- (b) Determines if leaders and team members are effectively handling priority tasks. If not, the Facilitator determines why and helps address systemic breakdowns; if necessary, effective processes are modeled.

(cont.)

Exhibit (cont.)

General Domains and Examples of Task Activity for Change Agents

- (c) Determines if change and program teams have done the following (and if not, takes appropriate steps)
 - mapped out current activity and resources
 - analyzed activity and resources to determine
 - > how well they are meeting desired functions and how well coordinated/integrated they are (with special emphasis on maximizing cost-effectiveness and minimizing redundancy)
 - > what needs to be improved (or eliminated)
 - > what is missing, its level of priority, and how and when to develop it
 - written-up and circulated information about all resources and plans for change
- (d) Determines the adequacy of efforts made to enhance communication to and among stakeholders and, if more is needed, facilitates improvements
- (e) Determines if systems are in place to identify problems related to functioning of the infrastructure and communication systems. If there are problems, determines why and helps address any systemic breakdowns
- (f) Checks on visibility of reforms and if the efforts are not visible, determines why and helps rectify

4. Formative Evaluation and rapid problem solving

- (a) Works with leaders and team members to develop procedures for formative evaluation and processes that ensure rapid problem solving
- (b) Checks regularly to be certain there is rapid problem solving. If not, helps address systemic breakdowns; if necessary, models processes.

5. Ongoing Support

- (a) Offers ongoing coaching on an "on-call" basis
 - For example: informs team members about ideas developed by others or provides expertise related to a specific topic they plan to discuss.
- (b) At appropriate points in time, asks for part of a staff meeting to see how things are going and (if necessary) to explore ways to improve the process
- (c) At appropriate times, asks whether participants have dealt with longer-range planning, and if they haven't, determines what help they need
- (d) Helps participants identify sources for continuing development/education

Concluding Comments

With appropriate leadership, significant work can be accomplished with respect to *restructuring*, transforming, and enhancing school-owned programs and services and community resources. In doing so, the focus needs to be on *all* school resources, including compensatory and special education, support services, adult education, recreation and enrichment programs, and facility use, and *all* community *resources* – public and private agencies, families, businesses; services, programs, facilities; institutions of higher education; professionals-in-training; and volunteers including professional making pro-bono contributions. (See Appendix C for information about using federal education legislation to facilitate moving toward a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach to addressing barriers to learning by creating a cohesive system of learning supports).

The long-range aim is to weave all resources together into the fabric of every school and evolve a comprehensive component that effectively addresses barriers to development, learning, and teaching. As leaders and policy makers recognize the essential nature of such a component, it will be easier to braid resources to address barriers. In turn, this will enhance efforts to foster healthy development.

When resources are combined properly, the *end product* can be cohesive and potent *school-community partnerships*. Such partnerships seem essential if we are to create caring and supportive environments that maximize learning and well-being for all.

Ultimately, only three things matter about educational reform. Does it have depth: does it improve important rather than superficial aspects of students' learning and development? Does it have length: can it be sustained over long periods of time instead of fizzling out after the first flush of innovation? Does it have breadth: can the reform be extended beyond a few schools, networks or showcase initiatives to transform education across entire systems or nations?

—Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink

Some References

Detailed examples of efforts to use an Enabling or Learning Supports Component as an umbrella concept for addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development

See the following documents:

Iowa State Department of Education working with the Iowa Collaborative for Youth Development (2005). *Fulfilling a Promise, Investing in Iowa's Future: Enhancing Iowa's Systems of Supports for Learning and Development*

>Brief Summary online at: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/iowabriefsummaryofdesign.pdf>

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Hawaii Department of Education (2004). *Comprehensive Student Support System*.

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Multnomah Education Service District (2005). *Policy for Learning Supports to Enhance Achievement*

>Online at: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/multnomah.pdf>

See a list of resource aids related to the topic that can be downloaded at no cost:

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/NewDirectionsSomeResources.pdf>

A few of our most recent published work related to the topic include:

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Appendix A

Using the Matrix as a Tool for Mapping, Analyses, and Decision Making

Schools and districts are in the best position to map and analyze the scope and content of existing activity addressing barriers to learning, development, and teaching, how programs fit together, what's missing, and what to do. The matrix in Figure 4 provides a framework for the work and is reproduced as Exhibit A on the following page so that this Appendix can be copied and used as a tool.

General initiatives and specific school-wide and classroom-based programs and services can be embedded into the matrix. Think about those related to positive behavioral supports, programs for safe and drug free schools, full service community schools and Family Resource Centers, special project initiatives such as the *School Based Health Center* movement, the *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* projects, and the *Coordinated School Health Program*, efforts to address bi-lingual, cultural, and other diversity concerns, compensatory and special education programs, and the mandates stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act.

In working with the matrix, a picture emerges as to

- (1) what resources are being expended,
- (2) who should be working together,
- (3) what's working and what's not, and
- (4) what needs strengthening and where major gaps exist.

All this provides an essential basis for reducing redundancy and counterproductive competition and setting priorities in deploying and redeploying resources to develop a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach for addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development.

We suggest using the matrix in the following manner:

Step 1. Enlarge/Reproduce the Matrix so there is room to enter the wide range of school-focused initiatives, projects, programs, and services that currently are being implemented.

Step 2. Try to recall as many of the initiatives, projects, programs, and services as you can and enter them into the various cells of the matrix. (Some will go into more than one cell.)

Step 3. Review the examples illustrated in Exhibit 2. Add any that are in use that you forgot to include.

Step 4. Identify which cells are well covered with effective interventions and which cells have only weak interventions or no significant interventions.

Step 5. Identify what needs to be done as the highest priorities to strengthen the work (e.g., coordinating interventions, integrating interventions, strengthening intervention related to specific cells, filling gaps, ending ineffective practices to redeploy the resources, etc.)

Exhibit 1. Matrix for reviewing scope and content of a component to address barriers to learning.*

		Scope of Intervention		
		Systems for Promoting Healthy Development & Preventing Problems	Systems for Early Intervention (Early after problem onset)	Systems of Care
Organizing around the Content/ "curriculum" for addressing barriers to learning & promoting healthy development	Classroom-Focused Enabling			
	Crisis/ Emergency Assistance & Prevention			
	Support for transitions			
	Home Involvement in Schooling			
	Community Outreach/ Volunteers			
	Student and Family Assistance			
		Accommodations for diversity (e.g., differences & disabilities)	Specialized assistance & other intensified interventions (e.g., Special Education & School-Based Behavioral Health)	

*General initiatives and specific school-wide and classroom-based programs and services can be embedded into the matrix. Think about those related to positive behavioral supports, programs for safe and drug free schools, full service community schools and Family Resource Centers, special project initiatives such as the *School Based Health Center* movement, the *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* projects, and the *Coordinated School Health Program*, efforts to address bi-lingual, cultural, and other diversity concerns, compensatory and special education programs, and the mandates stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act.

Exhibit 2. Six Areas and Specific Examples of Learning Supports

The following is a brief overview of each of the six learning support areas operationalized for an Enabling or Learning Supports Component.

(1) Classroom-Based Approaches encompass

- **Opening the classroom door to bring available supports in** (e.g., peer tutors, volunteers, aids trained to work with students-in-need; resource teachers and student support staff work in the classroom as part of the teaching team)
- **Redesigning classroom approaches to enhance teacher capability to prevent and handle problems and reduce need for out of class referrals** (e.g. personalized instruction; special assistance as necessary; developing small group and independent learning options; reducing negative interactions and over-reliance on social control; expanding the range of curricular and instructional options and choices; systematic use of prereferral interventions)
- **Enhancing and personalizing professional development** (e.g., creating a Learning Community for teachers; ensuring opportunities to learn through co-teaching, team teaching, and mentoring; teaching intrinsic motivation concepts and their application to schooling)
- **Curricular enrichment and adjunct programs** (e.g., varied enrichment activities that are not tied to reinforcement schedules; visiting scholars from the community)
- **Classroom and school-wide approaches used to create and maintain a caring and supportive climate**

Emphasis at all times is on enhancing feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to others at school and reducing threats to such feelings.

(2) Crisis Assistance and Prevention encompasses

- **Ensuring immediate assistance in emergencies so students can resume learning**
- **Providing Follow up care as necessary** (e.g., brief and longer-term monitoring)
- **Forming a school-focused Crisis Team to formulate a response plan and take leadership for developing prevention programs**
- **Mobilizing staff, students, and families to anticipate response plans and recovery efforts**
- **Creating a caring and safe learning environment** (e.g., developing systems to promote healthy development and prevent problems; bullying and harassment abatement programs)
- **Working with neighborhood schools and community to integrate planning for response and prevention**
- **Capacity building to enhance crisis response and prevention** (e.g., staff and stakeholder development, enhancing a caring and safe learning environment)

(3) Support for Transitions encompasses

- **Welcoming & social support programs for newcomers (e.g., welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions; peer buddy programs for students, families, staff, volunteers)**
- **Daily transition programs for** (e.g., before school, breaks, lunch, afterschool)
- **Articulation programs** (e.g., grade to grade – new classrooms, new teachers; elementary to middle school; middle to high school; in and out of special education programs)
- **Summer or intersession programs** (e.g., catch-up, recreation, and enrichment programs)
- **School-to-career/higher education** (e.g., counseling, pathway, and mentor programs; Broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions; students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education)
- **Broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions** (e.g., students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education)
- **Capacity building to enhance transition programs and activities**

(4) Home Involvement in Schooling encompasses

- **Addressing specific support and learning needs of family** (e.g., support services for those in the home to assist in addressing basic survival needs and obligations to the children; adult education classes to enhance literacy, job skills, English-as-a-second language, citizenship preparation)
- **Improving mechanisms for communication and connecting school and home** (e.g., opportunities at school for family networking and mutual support, learning, recreation, enrichment, and for family members to receive special assistance and to volunteer to help; phone calls and/or e-mail from teacher and other staff with good news; frequent and balanced conferences – student-led when feasible; outreach to attract hard-to-reach families – including student dropouts)
- **Involving homes in student decision making** (e.g., families prepared for involvement in program planning and problem-solving)
- **Enhancing home support for learning and development** (e.g., family literacy; family homework projects; family field trips)
- **Recruiting families to strengthen school and community** (e.g., volunteers to welcome and support new families and help in various capacities; families prepared for involvement in school governance)
- **Capacity building to enhance home involvement**

(5) Community Outreach for Involvement and Support encompasses

- **Planning and Implementing Outreach to Recruit a Wide Range of Community Resources** (e.g., public and private agencies; colleges and universities; local residents; artists and cultural institutions, businesses and professional organizations; service, volunteer, and faith-based organizations; community policy and decision makers)
- **Systems to Recruit, Screen, Prepare, and Maintain Community Resource Involvement** (e.g., mechanisms to orient and welcome, enhance the volunteer pool, maintain current involvements, enhance a sense of community)
- **Reaching out to Students and Families Who Don't Come to School Regularly – Including Truants and Dropouts**
- **Connecting School and Community Efforts to Promote Child and Youth Development and a Sense of Community**
- **Capacity Building to Enhance Community Involvement and Support** (e.g., policies and mechanisms to enhance and sustain school-community involvement, staff/stakeholder development on the value of community involvement, “social marketing”)

(6) Student and Family Assistance encompasses

- **Providing extra support as soon as a need is recognized and doing so in the least disruptive ways** (e.g., prereferral interventions in classrooms; problem solving conferences with parents; open access to school, district, and community support programs)
- **Timely referral interventions for students & families with problems based on response to extra support** (e.g., identification/screening processes, assessment, referrals, and follow-up – school-based, school-linked)
- **Enhancing access to direct interventions for health, mental health, and economic assistance** (e.g., school-based, school-linked, and community-based programs and services)
- **Care monitoring, management, information sharing, and follow-up assessment to coordinate individual interventions and check whether referrals and services are adequate and effective**
- **Mechanisms for resource coordination and integration to avoid duplication, fill gaps, garner economies of scale, and enhance effectiveness** (e.g., braiding resources from school-based and linked interveners, feeder pattern/family of schools, community-based programs; linking with community providers to fill gaps)
- **Enhancing stakeholder awareness of programs and services**
- **Capacity building to enhance student and family assistance systems, programs, and services**

Appendix B

Leadership at a School Site for an Enabling or Learning Supports Component:

Job Descriptions

Given that an Enabling or Learning Supports Component is one of three primary and essential components of a comprehensive school reform model, it is imperative to have designated administrative and staff leadership. These may be specified as the Enabling or Learning Supports Component's

- > **Administrative Lead** – may be an assistant principal, dean, or other leader who regularly sits at administrative and decision making “tables”
- > **Staff Lead for Daily Operations** – may be a support service staff member (e.g., a school psychologist, social worker, counselor nurse), a program coordinator, a teacher with special interest in this area.

These leaders, along with other key staff, embody the vision for the Enabling or Learning Supports Component. Their job descriptions should delineate specific functions related to their roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

The major functions for these lead personnel involve the following spheres of activity with respect to addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development:

I. Enhancing interventions and related systems within the school

- > **Coordination and integration of programs/services/systems**
- > **Development of programs/service/systems**

II. Enhancing school-community linkages and partnerships through coordination and integration of school-community resources/systems

III. Capacity building (including stakeholder development)

Administrative Lead for an Enabling or Learning Supports Component

For the Enabling or Learning Supports Component to be, in fact, one of three primary and essential components in school improvement, it is imperative to have an administrative leader who spends at least 50% of each day pursuing functions relevant to the Component. This leader must ensure that the school's governance and advisory bodies and staff have an appropriate appreciation of the Component and account for it in all planning and decision making.

Examples of Specific Job Duties

- > Represents the Enabling or Learning Supports Component at the decision making and administrative tables to address policy implementation, budget allocations, operational planning, infrastructure development and maintenance, interface with instruction and governance, information management, development of an effective communication system, development of an effective system for evaluation and accountability with an emphasis on positive accomplishments and quality improvement
- > Provides support, guidance, visibility, public relations, and advocacy for the Component at the school and in the community (e.g., maintaining a high level of interest, support, and involvement with respect to the Component)
- > Ensures effective communication, coordination, and integration among those involved with the Component and among the three components (i.e., the Enabling/Learning Supports Component, the Instructional Component, and the Management/Governance Component).
- > Leads the Component Steering Committee which reviews, guides, and monitors progress and long range plans, problem solves, and acts as a catalyst to keep the Component linked to the Instruction and Management/Governance Components.
- > Participates on the Learning Supports Resource Team to facilitate progress related to plans and priorities for the Component.
- > Mentors and helps restructure the roles and functions of key Learning Supports staff (e.g., pupil services personnel and others whose roles and functions fall within the arenas of the Component); in particular, helps redefine traditional pupil serve roles and functions in ways that enables them to contribute to all six arenas of the Component.
- > Anticipates and identifies problems and provides rapid problem solving (including a focus on morale).
- > Identifies capacity building impact and future needs related to the Component (e.g., status of stakeholder development and particularly inservice staff development) and takes steps to ensure that plans are made to meet needs and that an appropriate amount of capacity building is devoted to the Component.
- > Meets with the Staff Lead for daily Learning Supports operations on a regular basis to review progress related to the Components and to discuss and advocate for ways to enhance progress.

Staff Lead for Daily Operations of an Enabling or Learning Supports Component

The staff lead works under the direct supervision of the school's Administrative Lead for the Component. The job entails working with staff and community resources to develop, over time, a full array of programs and services to address barriers to student learning and promote healthy development by melding school, community, and home resources together. Moreover, it involves doing so in a way that ensures programs are fully integrated with each other and with the Instructional and Management/Governance Components at the school.

The essence of the staff lead's day-by-day functions is to be responsible and accountable for ongoing progress in developing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach to addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development. This encompasses systems related to (a) a full continuum of interventions ranging from primary prevention through early intervention to treatment of serious problems and (b) programs and services in all content arenas of an Enabling or Learning Supports Component. (Note: The arenas have been delineated as: 1) enhancing regular classroom strategies to enable learning, 2) providing support for the many transitions experienced by students and families, 3) increasing home and school connections, 4) responding to and preventing crises, 5) facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed, and 6) expanding community involvement and support.)

Examples of Specific job duties:

- > Has daily responsibility to advance the agenda for the Component; carries out daily tasks involved in enhancing the Component; ensures that system and program activity is operating effectively; provides daily problem-solving related to systems and programs.
- > Organizes and coaches the Learning Supports Resource Team and its various work groups.
- > Monitors progress related to plans and priorities formulated by for the Component.
- > Monitors current Component programs to ensure they are functioning well and takes steps to improve their functioning and ongoing development (e.g., ensuring program availability, access, and effectiveness).
- > Participates in the Leadership Group to contribute to efforts for reviewing, guiding, and monitoring progress and long range plans, problem solving, and effectively linking with the Instructional and Management/Governance Components.
- > Provides support, guidance, visibility, public relations, and advocacy for the Component at the school and in the community (e.g., maintaining a high level of interest, support, and involvement with respect to the component).
- > Supports capacity building for all stakeholders (staff, family members, community members).
- > Ensures all new students, families, and staff are provided with a welcome and orientation to the school and the activities related to addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development.
- > Coordinates activity taking place in the Family Center (where one is in operation).

- > Ensures effective communication, coordination, and integration among those involved with the Component and with the Instructional and Management/Governance Components
- > Anticipates and identifies problems and provides rapid problem solving (including a focus on morale).
- > Acts as the liaison between the school and other entities (e.g., community resources) who work with the site related to enabling activity.
- > Ensures that the activities of other entities (e.g., community resources) who work with the site related to addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development operate under the umbrella of the Component and are well-coordinated and integrated with daily activities.
- > Meets with the Administrative Lead for the Component on a regular basis to discuss and advocate for ways to enhance progress.

Examples of Generic Criteria for Evaluating Performance for this Position

I. Related to interventions to enhance systems within schools

A. Coordinates and integrates programs/services/systems (e.g., demonstrates the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate mechanisms for collaborating with colleagues to ensure activities are carried out in the most equitable and cost-effective manner consistent with legal and ethical standards for practice – examples of mechanisms include case-oriented teams; resource-oriented teams; consultation, coaching and mentoring mechanisms; triage, referral, and care monitoring systems; crisis teams).

B. Facilitates development of programs/service/systems (e.g., demonstrates the ability to enhance development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of interventions for equitably addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development; works effectively to bring others together to improve existing interventions and to fill gaps related to needed prevention programs, early-after-onset interventions, and specialized assistance for students and families)

II. Related to interventions to enhance school-community linkages and partnerships

Coordinates and integrates school-community resources/systems (e.g., demonstrates the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate mechanisms for collaborating with community entities; facilitates weaving together of school and community resources and systems to enhance current activity; enhances development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of interventions for a diverse range of students and their families)

III. Related to capacity building

Supervises professionals-in-training; facilitates welcoming, orientation, and induction of new staff, families, and students; represents component in planning arenas where budget, space, and other capacity building matters are decided (e.g., demonstrates the ability to coach, mentor, and supervise professional-in-training; provides orientation to the Learning Support component for newly hired personnel; ensures effective support for transitions of all newcomers)

Appendix C

Using Federal Education Legislation in Moving Toward a Comprehensive, Multifaceted, and Integrated Approach to Addressing Barriers to Learning

Both the *No Child Left Behind Act* and the 2004 reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* provide opportunities to redeploy federal funds to creating a cohesive system of learning supports.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (PL 107-110)

This last reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act continues to enable making the case for using a percentage of the allocated federal funds for enhancing how student/learning supports are coalesced. For example, under Title I (Improving The Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged), the need for coordination and integration of student supports is highlighted in the statement of Purpose (Section 1001) # 11 which stresses “coordinating services under all parts of this title with each other, with other educational services, and, to the extent feasible, with other agencies providing services to youth, children, and families.” It is also underscored by the way school improvement is discussed (Section 1003) and in Part A, Section 1114 on schoolwide programs. Section 1114 (a) on use of funds for schoolwide programs indicates:

“(1) IN GENERAL- A local educational agency may consolidate and use funds under this part, together with other Federal, State, and local funds, in order to upgrade the entire educational program of a school that serves an eligible school attendance area in which not less than 40 percent of the children are from low-income families, or not less than 40 percent of the children enrolled in the school are from such families

(J) Coordination and integration of Federal, State, and local services and programs, including programs supported under this Act, violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start, adult education, vocational and technical education, and job training.”

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html#sec1114>

The need is also implicit in Part C on migratory children, Part D on prevention and intervention programs for neglected, delinquent, or at-risk students, and Part F on comprehensive school reform, and Part H on dropout prevention, in Title IV 21st Century Schools, and so on.

Mechanisms for moving in this direction stem from the provisions for flexible use of funds, coordination of programs, and waivers detailed in Titles VI and IX.

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html>

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 Public Law No: 108-446

Using IDEA funds to coalesce student/learning supports is emphasized in how Title I, Part B, Section 613 (Local Educational Agency Eligibility) discusses (f) Early Intervening Services:

“(1) IN GENERAL- A local educational agency may not use more than 15 percent of the amount such agency receives under this part for any fiscal year . . . , in combination with other amounts

(which may include amounts other than education funds), to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening services, which may include interagency financing structures, for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade 3) who have not been identified as needing special education or related services but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment.

(2) ACTIVITIES- In implementing coordinated, early intervening services under this subsection, a local educational agency may carry out activities that include—

(A) professional development (which may be provided by entities other than local educational agencies) for teachers and other school staff to enable such personnel to deliver scientifically based academic instruction and behavioral interventions, including scientifically based literacy instruction, and, where appropriate, instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software; and

(B) providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports, including scientifically based literacy instruction.” ...

“(5) COORDINATION WITH ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965- Funds made available to carry out this subsection may be used to carry out coordinated, early intervening services aligned with activities funded by, and carried out under, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 if such funds are used to supplement, and not supplant, funds made available under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 for the activities and services assisted under this subsection.”

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/index.html?src=mr>

Additional Related Center Resources

Addressing What's Missing in School Improvement Planning: Expanding Standards and Accountability to Encompass an Enabling or Learning Supports Component

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/enabling/standards.pdf>

Community Schools: Working Toward Institutional Transformation

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/csinstitutionaltrans.pdf>

Designing Schoolwide Programs in Title I Schools: Using the Non-Regulatory Guidance in Ways that Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/DOEGuidance.pdf>

Developing Resource-Oriented Mechanisms to Enhance Learning Supports - A Continuing Education Packet

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/developing_resource_oriented-mechanisms.pdf

Frameworks for Systemic Transformation of Student and Learning Supports

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/frameworksforsystemictransformation.pdf>

Moving Toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: The Next Evolutionary Stage in School Improvement Policy and Practice

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/paradigmshift.pdf>

Resource Oriented Teams: Key Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Education Supports (August, 2007)

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf

Toward Next Steps in School Improvement: Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/towardnextstep.pdf>

Transforming School Improvement to Develop a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: What District Superintendents Say They Need to Move Forward

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/superintendentssay.pdf>

What is a Comprehensive Approach to Student Supports?

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/whatiscomp.pdf>