*Mental Health in Schools
UCLA Center
Program and Policy Analysis +*

A Center Policy Report

Addressing What's Missing in School Improvement Planning:

Expanding Standards and Accountability to Encompass
an Enabling or Learning Supports Component

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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Health Resources and Services Administration
Maternal and Child Health Bureau

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Abstract

Based on analyses and recommendations reported in *School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?*, the present report proposes ways to (a) reorganize school improvement guidance and (b) expand standards and accountability to encompass a component to address barriers to learning and teaching. In doing so, the work highlights the need and a focus for new directions for student support.

Specifically suggested is that school improvement guides be reorganized with two interacting dimensions in mind: One encompasses three primary and essential components of an integrated systems approach to schooling. The other stresses five key areas of concern for systemic improvement related to each component. The three components are those encompassing comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive efforts to (a) facilitate instruction, (b) address barriers to learning, and (c) govern, lead, and manage schools. The key areas of concern are (a) framing and delineating intervention functions, (b) reworking infrastructure, (c) enhancing resource use, (d) continuous capacity building, and (e) continuous evaluation and appropriate accountability based on delineated standards and quality indicators.

Because school improvement planning across the country is "standards-based" and accountability driven, establishing standards and expanding the current focus of accountability are important facets of ensuring high levels of attention and support for development of comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to address barriers to learning. Therefore, much of this report is devoted to delineating standards and outlining an expanded framework for school accountability for a component to address barriers. Standards are organized in terms of the five key areas of concern.

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an Enabling or Learning Supports Component**

As everyone who cares about leaving no child behind knows:

School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students.
But, when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.
Carnegie Task Force on Education

Meeting the challenge stemming from factors that interfere with learning and teaching is an absolute *imperative* given how many schools are designated as low performing, how difficult it has been to close the achievement gap, and the continuing concerns about school safety. Meeting the challenge requires rethinking how schools can more effectively use *all* support programs, resources, and personnel. Meeting the challenge involves addressing what's missing in school improvement planning.

Current School Improvement Guides are Deficient

In a recent report, our Center staff analyzed school improvement planning guides.* Our analysis indicates that such guides do not adequately focus on the need for schools to play a significant role in addressing barriers to learning and teaching. This is not surprising given the narrow focus of prevailing accountability mandates stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act. That is, rather than building the type of comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach that can produce improved academic performance, prevailing accountability measures are pressuring schools to maintain a narrow focus on strategies whose face validity suggests a direct route to improving instruction. The implicit underlying assumption of most of these teaching strategies is that students are motivationally ready and able each day to benefit from the teacher's instructional efforts. The reality, of course, is that in too many schools the *majority* of youngsters are not motivationally ready and able and thus are not benefitting from the instructional improvements. For many students, the fact remains that there are a host of external interfering factors. The failure of school improvement planning guides to address such factors comprehensively and systemically means that the guidance is fundamentally flawed.

As the Center's report on school improvement planning states:

> Guides for planning attend most carefully to what is mandated and measured. The planning guides we reviewed stressed meeting the demand for standard-based and result-oriented school improvement mainly by elaborating on prevalent thinking about school practices, rather than considering fundamental systemic change. In doing so, they reflect adherence to the failed assumption that intensifying and narrowing the focus of school improvement to matters directly related to instruction and behavioral discipline are sufficient to the task of continuously raising test scores *over the long-run.* This assumption ignores the need for fundamentally restructuring school and community resources in ways that enable learning. It also maintains the *marginalization* of efforts to address major barriers to learning and teaching.

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*School Improvement Planning: What's Missing? (2005). This policy report, prepared by our Center, is available online at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsmissing.htm

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As a result, prevailing approaches to school improvement do not encompass comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approaches for enabling learning through addressing barriers. This is especially unfortunate in schools where large proportions of students are not doing well. Thus, one of the poignant ironies of continuing to proceed in this way is that the aim of providing equity of opportunity for many students is undermined.

While improved instruction is necessary, it is not sufficient in many instances. Students who arrive at school on any given day with diminished motivational readiness and/or abilities need something more. That something is best addressed when school improvement planning focuses comprehensively on addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

The report stresses that a basic question that needs to be asked if we are to improve schools is:

*Why don't schools do a better job in addressing
learning, behavior, and emotional problems?*

And, it suggests that a substantial part of the answer is that:

*Efforts to address such problems are marginalized in
school policy and daily practice.*

The report notes that among the many negative results of such marginalization are:

C Planning and implementation of a school's approach to addressing barriers to learning and teaching usually are conducted on an ad hoc basis.

C Support staff tend 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.

C In some schools, the deficiencies of current policies give rise to such aberrant practices as assigning a student identified as at risk for grade retention, dropout, and substance abuse to three counseling programs operating independently of each other. Such fragmentation not only is costly, it works against cohesiveness and maximizing results.

In reaction to such problems, reformers of student/learning supports have tended to focus mainly on the symptom – fragmentation. As a result, the main prescription for improving student supports has been to enhance coordination. Better coordination is a good idea. But it doesn't really address the problem that school-owned student supports are marginalized in policy and practice. And, for the most part, so is community involvement at schools. Moreover, the trend toward fragmentation is compounded by most school-linked services' initiatives. This happens because such initiatives focus primarily on coordinating *community* services and *linking* them to schools using a collocation model, rather than braiding and *integrating resources and systems*.

The report concludes that:

The marginalized status and the associated fragmentation of efforts to address student problems are long-standing and ongoing. The situation is likely to go unchanged as long as school improvement plans continue to ignore the need to restructure the work of student support professionals. Currently, most school improvement plans do not focus on using such staff to develop the type of

comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approaches necessary to address the many overlapping barriers to learning and development. At best, most reformers have offered the notions of *Family Resource Centers* and *Full Service Schools* to link community resources to schools (e.g., school-linked services) and enhance coordination of services. Much more fundamental changes are needed.

Addressing barriers to learning and teaching must be made an essential and high level focus in every school improvement planning guide. To do less is to ensure too many children are left behind.

Every school improvement plan must meet this challenge by ensuring it focuses on development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach to addressing barriers to learning, development, and teaching. Development of such an approach requires shifts in prevailing policy and new frameworks for practice. In addition, for significant systemic change to occur, policy and program commitments must be demonstrated through effective allocation and redeployment of resources. That is, finances, personnel, time, space, equipment, and other essential resources must be made available, organized, and used in ways that adequately operationalize policy and promising practices. This includes ensuring sufficient resources to develop an effective structural foundation for systemic changes, sustainability, and ongoing capacity building.

Specific Recommendations from *School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?*

#1 Every school improvement planning guide should have a focus on development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive learning supports system which is fully integrated with plans for improving instruction at the school.

#2 Guidelines for school improvement planning should delineate the content of an enabling or learning supports component.

#3 Guidelines for school improvement planning should incorporate standards and accountability indicators for each area of learning supports content.

#4 Guidelines for school improvement planning should specify ways to weave school and community resources into a cohesive and integrated continuum of interventions over time.

#5 Guidelines for school improvement planning should include an emphasis on redefining and reframing roles and functions and redesigning infrastructure to ensure learning supports are attended to as a primary and essential component of school improvement and to promote economies of scale.

A final recommendation is for researchers.

Current initiatives for program evaluation and research projects should be redesigned to include a focus on amassing and expanding the research-base for building and evaluating such an enabling or learning supports component, with a long-range emphasis on demonstrating the component's long-term impact on academic achievement.

**The Call is for New
Directions for
Student Support**

Essentially, the need is for new directions for student support.* The call is for improvements that amount to much more than tinkering with existing roles, functions, and job descriptions. National leaders recognize that the time has come for major rethinking, reforms, and restructuring.

Most people hear the term *student support* and think mainly about pupil service personnel (e.g., school psychologists, counselors, social workers, nurses) and the special services such staff provide. But, schools need and have many more resources for meeting the challenge of ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Besides traditional support staff, learning supports are provided by compensatory and special education personnel (e.g., Title I staff, resource teachers who focus on prereferral interventions), and personnel who provide a variety of school-wide programs (e.g., after school, safe and drug free school programs). New directions stem from rethinking how *all* these resources are used.

To move in new directions, schools need to

    C enhance their understanding of why programs and services designed to address barriers to learning and teaching are so fragmented, marginalized, and counterproductively competitive with each other

    C rethink how to redeploy existing resources to move toward developing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive "enabling" or learning supports component at every school

    C include the enhanced understanding and rethinking as a primary and essential focus in school improvement planning.

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*Relevant references and resources are included at the end of this report.

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Reorganizing School Improvement Guides

There is considerable variability in how school improvement guides are organized. As a step toward ensuring guides stimulate thinking about new directions for student support, we propose the following reorganization of such planning tools.

Given its mission and vision, efforts to improve a school should be conceived with two basic, interacting dimensions in mind. One encompasses three primary and essential components of an integrated systems approach to schooling. The other stresses five key areas of concern for systemic enhancement related to each component.

What are the three primary and essential components of an integrated systems approach to schooling?

Analyses of school policy and practice lead to the conclusion that the primary focus currently is on efforts to facilitate instruction and learning (the *Instructional Component*) and efforts to govern, lead, and administer (the *Management Component*). These two components certainly are the emphasis in prevailing efforts to improve schools. This emphasis is shaped by demands for every school to adopt high standards and expectations related to academics and be more accountable for academic results. As the introduction to this report has stressed, however, there is a third component that needs systemic attention. This component involves all the supports that are needed to enable learning and teaching by addressing barriers. We call it an *Enabling* or *Learning Supports Component*.

What are key areas of concern for systemic improvement releated to each component?

For purposes of organizing school improvement around broad, systemic concerns, it helps to cluster such concerns into a set of circumscribed key areas for action. Our analyses suggest five key areas: (1) framing and delineating intervention functions, (2) reworking infrastructure, (3) enhancing resource use, (4) continuous capacity building, and (5) continuous evaluation and appropriate accountability based on delineated standards and quality indicators.

The two dimensions are illustrated in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Two dimensions for organizing school improvement planning

Major Components of Schooling

	Instruction	Enabling Learning	Management
Framing and delineating intervention[1] functions			
Reworking infrastructure[2]			
Enhancing resource use			
Continuous capacity building			
Continuous evaluation & appropriate accountability			

Key Areas of Concern for Systemic Improvement

[1]We use the term *intervention* here to encompass the idea of planned actions that result from a desire to produce positive changes. For the Instructional Component, intervention is concerned with facilitating teaching and learning (e.g., curriculum content, curriculum scope and sequence, teaching and learning methods). For the Enabling Component, intervention is concerned with enabling learning by addressing barriers (e.g., through a continuum of integrated systems and delineated content arenas). For the Management Component, intervention is concerned with school governance, leadership, and administration (e.g., organizational and operational functions).

[2]At the school level, *infrastructure* is concerned with (a) the mechanisms for carrying out functions related to each component, (b) how these mechanims are linked within the component, and (c) how they are integrated across components.

Expanding Standards and Accountability to Encompass an Enabling or Learning Supports Component

The focus of the remainder of this report is on the recommendation in *School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?* regarding the need for delineating standards for an Enabling or Learning Supports Component.

School improvement planning across the country is "standards-based" and accountability driven. Given these realities, efforts to reform student support in ways that move it from its current marginalized status must delineate a set of standards and integrate them into school improvement planning. Establishing standards is another facet of ensuring high levels of attention and support for development of comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to address barriers to learning in ways that enhance students' strengths.

After standards are formulated, they must be thoroughly incorporated in every school's improvement plan. This is a necessary step toward making the policy commitment visible at every school, and it establishes the framework for ensuring relevant accountability. And, relatedly, efforts must be made to expand the accountability framework so that accountability demands support the ongoing development of comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to addressing barriers and promoting healthy development.

Delineating Standards and Quality Indicators

The starting point is policy. Policy needs to state that every school should develop a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. Policy commitments must indicate that such a component is essential to ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. Policy statements must indicate that the intent is to enable student learning through a full range of effective and efficient learning support interventions (thus, the label: *Enabling* or *Learning Supports Component*). For the school and community as a whole, the intent is to enhance policy and strategic collaboration to produce a safe, healthy, nurturing environment characterized by respect for differences, trust, caring, and support with the intent of strengthening the well-being of students, families, schools, and neighborhoods.

Policy guidelines should clarify that the component is designed to house all efforts to prevent and minimize the impact of the many problems interfering with learning and teaching and should do so in ways that maximize engagement in productive learning and positive development. This includes programs that promote and maintain safety and physical and mental health, school readiness and early school-adjustment services, social and academic supports, and interventions provided prior to referral for special services and those for meeting special needs. Encompassed are compensatory and special education mandates and a host of special initiatives and projects. With specific respect to the school's mission, all this requires policy, leadership, infrastructure, and accountability that fully integrates the Component into a school's efforts to improve instruction and management (see Exhibit 2 below).
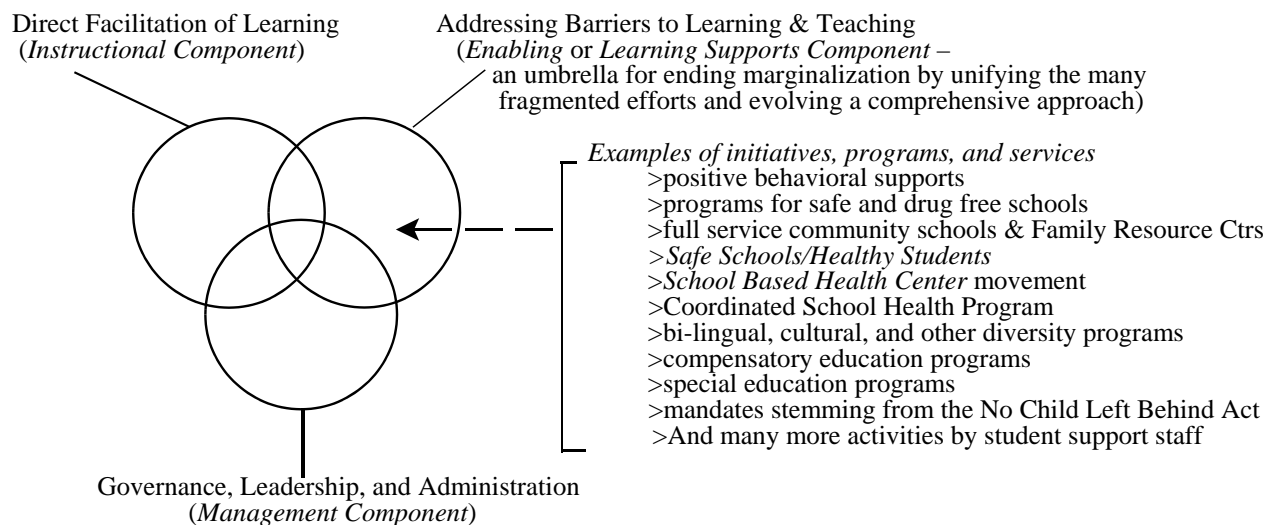
As a starting point in drafting a set of standards, we began with the *Guidelines for a Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Barriers to Learning* (see Appendix A). We also drew on the lessons learned from the analysis of current school improvement planning guides and from pioneering efforts to develop standards, guidelines, and related quality indicators for an Enabling Component by one school district and the quality student support criteria and rubrics developed by the Hawai`i Department of Education.

The following five major standards and related quality indicators
have been formulated to guide development of
an Enabling or Learning Supports Component.

Area: *Framing and Delineating Intervention Functions*

> *Standard 1*. **Establishment of an overall *unifying intervention framework* for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.**

An Enabling or Learning Supports Component is fully integrated into the school's comprehensive education plan. The Component is operationalized into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive intervention framework. One facet of this framework is the continuum delineating the scope of desired intervention. The other facet is a conceptualization that organizes the "content" arenas for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, with due appreciation for the role played by efforts to promote healthy development. Because of the importance of each of the content arenas, specific standards for each are delineated as an addendum after the following quality indicators are stated.

Quality Indicators for Standard 1:

C The school leadership team has detailed an *intervention* design for an Enabling or Learning Supports Component (i.e., a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching) and has delineated a plan for its full and ongoing development.

C Compensatory and special education mandates are fully addressed and embedded into the Component, as are all special initiatives and projects for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

C The school plan for the Component is implemented in ways that build on what exists and that moves toward full development in phases and in keeping with established priorities.

C School stakeholders express understanding and support for the importance of fully developing the Component.

C The continuum of programs and services are organized into a set of *integrated systems*. The systems range from promoting healthy development, and preventing problems – through responding to problems soon after onset – to 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 and through connections with home and community resources.

C Rather than a fragmented, "laundry-list" of programs, services, and activities, the learning supports are organized into a concise content or "curriculum" framework that categorizes and captures the essence of the multifaceted ways schools need to address barriers to learning (see example in Exhibit 3).

C The continuum of interventions is combined with the content arenas to create the unifying umbrella framework for the Component (see example in Exhibit 4). The intervention matrix is used as a tool to guide ongoing development of the Component (e.g., mapping and analysis of resources, identifying gaps and redundancies).

C All interventions are embedded within the matrix framework and are designed to meet basic functions a school needs for addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development.

C Learning supports are applied in all instances where there is need and are implemented in systemic ways that ensure needs are assessed and addressed appropriately, with as little disruption as feasible of a student's normal involvement at school and with appropriate referrals and support for follow-through when necessary.

C   There is an emphasis on practices and integrated systems that reduce the need for referral of individuals for specialized assistance, including "prereferral interventions and response to intervention strategies that emphasize enhancing the fit with instruction through personalization (i.e., matching a student's motivation as well as capabilities).

C   Programs and services (including assessment activity) are based on state of the art best practices for addressing barriers to learning and promoting positive development.

C   Library, multimedia, and advanced technology resources are used as appropriate to facilitate intervention efforts. This includes the school's computerized information management system, which should incorporate a broad range of data related to the Component's work with students and families.

Exhibit 3. Six content arenas for a component to address barriers to learning

Pioneering research has organized learning supports programs into the following six content arenas:*

C   *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)

C   *supporting transitions* (e.g., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes, daily transitions, etc.)

C   *increasing home and school connections*

C   *responding to, and where feasible, preventing school and personal crises*

C   *increasing community involvement and support* (e.g., outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers)

C   *facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed*.

A positive *school climate and culture* is an emergent quality that stems, in part, from effectively and efficiently addressing barriers to learning and teaching and promoting the well-being of students, their families, and staff.

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*Specific examples of the work in each arena are provided in a set of self-study surveys. These are available online at no cost from the website of the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. See: *Addressing Barriers to Learning: A Set of Surveys to Map What a School Has and What It Needs* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Surveys/Set1.pdf

In addition, two books written by the co-directors of the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA include an extensive discussion of the six arenas and new directions for addressing barriers to learning. The books are entitled:
    >>The School Leader's Guide to Student Learning Supports (2006)
    >>The Implementation Guide to Student Learning Supports (2006)
See: http://www.corwinpress.com/author.aspx?aid=530711

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

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Scope of Intervention

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	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

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Accommodations for diversity (e.g., differences & disabilities)   Specialized assistance & other intensified interventions (e.g., Special Education & School-Based Behavioral Health)

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*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.

Standard 1 addendum: *Specific Standards for the Content Arenas of*
an Enabling or Learning Supports Component

While the number and labels for designated content arenas may differ, as Standard 1 states: Schools need to deal with a conceptualization that organizes the "content" arenas for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, with due appreciation for the role played by efforts to promote healthy development. And, as the relevant quality indicator in Standard 1 indicates: Rather than a fragmented, "laundry-list" of programs, services, and activities, the learning supports need to be organized into a concise content or "curriculum" framework that categorizes and captures the essence of the multifaceted ways schools need to address barriers to learning. To illustrate standards for content arenas, the following uses the six arenas designated in Exhibits 3 and 4.

>Standard 1a. *Continuous enhancement of 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)

Specific Quality Indicators for Standard 1a:

- C Classroom teachers invite available supports into the classroom to enhance assistance for students (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)

- C Support is provided to teachers to redesign classroom approaches in ways that 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)

- C Teachers are provided with personalized professional development to enhance their capability to meet the needs of a wider range of individual differences (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)

- C There is a variety of accessible curricular enrichment and adjunct programs to enhance students positive attitudes toward teachers and school (e.g., enrichment activities are available for all students and are not tied to reinforcement schedules)

- C Classroom approaches are used to create and maintain a caring and supportive climate through a consistent emphasis on enhancing feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to others at school and reducing threats to such feelings.

>Standard 1b. *Continuous enhancement of a programs and systems for a full range of transition supports* (e.g., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes, daily transitions, etc.)

Specific Quality Indicators for Standard 1b:
- C School-wide and classroom welcoming and social support programs for newcomers are visible and in operation (e.g., welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions; peer buddy and mentoring programs for students, families, staff, volunteers)

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- There are daily transition programs for before school, breaks, lunch, afterschool (including moving from location to location)

- Articulation programs are implemented each year and encompass extended orientations and follow-up interventions for those who are having difficulty in the new setting (e.g., grade to grade – new classrooms, new teachers; elementary to middle school; middle to high school; in and out of special education programs)

- As needed, there are summer or intersession programs (e.g., catch-up, recreation, and enrichment programs)

- School-to-career/higher education transition interventions begin in elementary school and are integrated at every grade through graduation (e.g., counseling, pathway, and mentor programs)

- There is broad involvement of stakeholders in planning transition supports (e.g., students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education)

- Capacity building is provided for all stakeholders involved in enhancing transition programs and activities

Standard 1c. Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to increase and strengthen home and school connections

Specific Quality Indicators for Standard 1c:

- Interventions are available to help address 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)

- Mechanisms for communication and connecting school and home are regularly used, reach most homes, and are designed to enhance interchange, collaboration, and networking with primary caretakers (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)

- Homes are regularly involved in student decision making (e.g., families are encouraged and supported in enhancing capabilities for involvement in program planning and problem-solving)

- Regular programs are offered to encourage and enhance capabilities for home support of learning and development (e.g., family literacy; family homework projects; family field trips)

- Families are recruited regularly to play a role in strengthening 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 is provided for all stakeholders involved in enhancing home involvement

Standard 1d. Continuous enhancement of programs and systems for responding to, and where feasible, preventing school and personal crises (including creating a caring and safe learning environment)

Specific Quality Indicators for Standard 1d:

C Immediate assistance is provided in emergencies so students can resume learning

C Follow up care is provided as necessary (e.g., brief and longer-term monitoring)

C A school-focused Crisis Team is in place and has a response plan

C Crisis prevention programs are in operation (e.g., bullying and harassment abatement programs).

C If there are high priority gaps in crisis prevention efforts, a work group is developing programs to fill the gaps.

C Staff, students, and families have been instructed with respect to response plans and recovery efforts

C Prevention programs are integrated into systems to promote healthy development and prevent problems)

C School staff work with community members and agency representatives to integrate planning for response and prevention

C Capacity building is provided for all stakeholders involved in enhancing crisis response and prevention

Standard 1e. Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to increase and strengthen community involvement and support (e.g., outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers)

Specific Quality Indicators for Standard 1e:

C Outreach programs are operating on a regular basis 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)

C Outreach programs encompass strategies for screening, preparing, and maintaining community resource involvement (e.g., mechanisms to orient and welcome, enhance the volunteer pool, maintain current involvements, enhance a sense of community)

C Interventions are implemented on a daily basis to reach out to students and families who don't come to school regularly – including truants and dropouts

C School staff work with community members and agency representatives to connect and integrate school and community efforts to promote child and youth development and a sense of community

C Capacity building is provided for all stakeholders involved in enhancing 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")

Standard 1f. Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to facilitate student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed.

Specific Quality Indicators for Standard 1f:

C Extra support is providing as soon as a need is recognized and is provided in the least disruptive way (e.g., prereferral interventions in classrooms; problem solving conferences with parents; open access to school, district, and community support programs)

C Referral and support for follow-through for students and families with problems are provided in a timely manner and are based on response to extra support (e.g., response to intervention, identification/screening processes, assessment, referrals, and follow-up – school-based, school-linked)

C Access to direct interventions for health, mental health, and economic assistance is enhanced through integrated school-based, school-linked, and community-based programs and services

C Systems have been developed and in operation for care monitoring, management, information sharing, and follow-up assessment to coordinate individual interventions and check whether referrals and services are adequate and effective

C Mechanisms have been developed and in operation 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)

C Mechanisms have been developed and in operation to enhance stakeholder awareness of programs and services

C Capacity building is provided for all stakeholders involved in enhancing student and family assistance systems, programs, and services

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About School Climate and Culture

As noted in Exhibit 3, a positive *school climate and culture* emerges, in part, from effectively and efficiently addressing barriers to learning and teaching and promoting the well-being of students, their families, and staff. Therefore, school climate is not treated as a separate arena, rather it is an anticipated emergent quality. From this perspective, it becomes an overall quality indicator for the entire school (i.e., for the impact of improvements related to all three components).

Area: *Reworking Infrastructure*

Standard 2. **Establishment of an *integrated infrastructure* framework for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.**

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 a unified approach for providing learning supports, 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 and with the management/governance mechanisms (see example in Exhibit 5). More specifically, infrastructure must be designed 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.

Quality Indicators for Standard 2:

C The school leadership team has detailed an *infrastructure* design for an Enabling or Learning Supports Component and has delineated a plan for its full and ongoing development.

C There is a designated *administrative leader* for an Enabling or Learning Supports Component. This leader's job description delineates specific roles, functions, and accountabilities related to planning, capacity building, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability of the Component and is expected to allocate at least 50% of each day to pursuing functions relevant to the Component. This leader meets regularly with the school's governance and advisory bodies and staff to represent the Component's concerns in all planning and decision making.

C In addition to an administrative leader, a *broad-based leadership body* is in place to ensure overall development of the Component. This body consists of advocates who are responsible for ensuring the vision for the component is not lost and who provide input to administrators and other key stakeholders. Besides the administrative leader for the component, this body should include one or two other key school leaders, perhaps a key agency person or two, a few well-connected community "champions," and even someone with relevant expertise from a local institution of higher education. Such a group meets monthly (more often if major problems arise) to review progress, problem solve, and so forth.

C A resource-oriented team (e.g., a *Learning Supports Resource Team*) for the Component is functioning effectively as part of the school's infrastructure. The team is responsible for bringing together the administrative leader and 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 and to encourage increasingly cohesive and systemic intervention efforts. It also monitors and enhances the work of case-oriented teams such as Student Assistance Teams and IEP teams. The team is a mechanism to ensure appropriate *overall* use of what exists (including braiding together existing school and community resources). It also works to enhance the pool of resources. In addition, the team guides the Component's (a) capacity building agenda, (b) development, implementation, and evaluation, and (c) full integration with the instructional and governance/management components.

C Work groups are formed as needed 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 arenas of the Enabling Component.
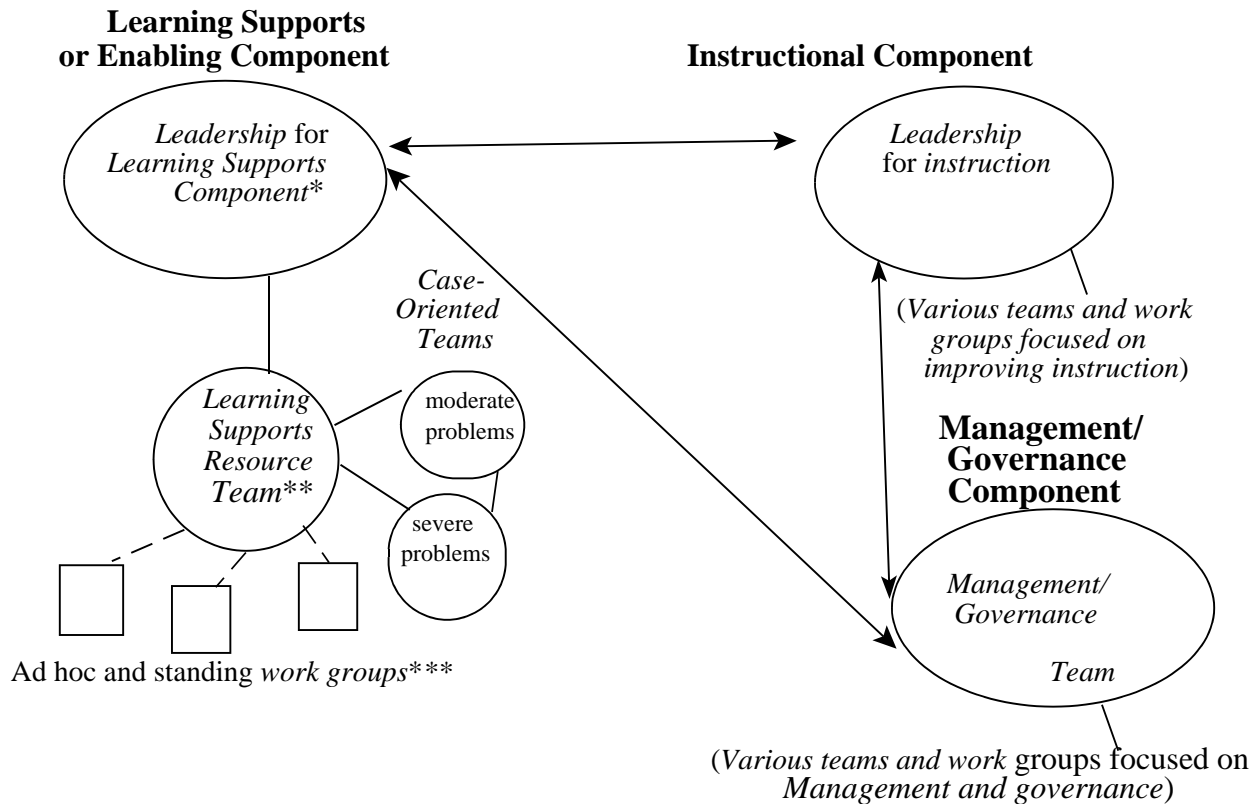
C The Component is fully integrated into the school infrastructure. There are organizational and operational links within the various groups involved in planning, implementing, capacity building, evaluating, enhancing quality, and sustaining learning supports. There also are links connecting the Component with the instructional and governance/management components and with general mechanisms at the school for communication, information management, and problem solving with students, staff, families, and the community. Routine procedures are in place to ensure all activities are implemented in a manner that coordinates and integrates them with each other.

C The school's computerized information management system, email, website, voicemail and other advanced technology are used to facilitate effective and efficient communication of information and the functioning and integration of all infrastructure mechanisms.

C A multi-site learning supports resource mechanism for a "family" of schools (e.g., a *Learning Supports Resource Council*) brings together representatives from each participating school's resource *team* (see example in Exhibit 5). A family of schools are those in the same geographic or catchment area that have shared concerns and among whom some programs and personnel already are or can be shared in strategic ways. An especially important group of schools are those in a "feeder pattern" (elementary, middle, high school) where it is common for a school at each level to interact with students from the same families. The multi-site resource mechanism ensures cohesive and equitable deployment of resources, improves connections with neighborhood resources, and enhances the pooling of resources. It reduces individual school costs by minimizing redundancy and pursuing strategies to achieve economies of scale.

Exhibit 5. Example of an integrated infrastructure

The following example 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.

**Learning Supports
or Enabling Component**

Instructional Component

Leadership for
*Learning Supports
Component**

Leadership
for *instruction*

*Case-
Oriented
Teams*

(*Various teams and work
groups focused on
improving instruction*)

*Learning
Supports
Resource
Team***

moderate
problems

**Management/
Governance
Component**

severe
problems

*Management/
Governance*

Team

Ad hoc and standing *work groups****

(*Various teams and work* groups focused on
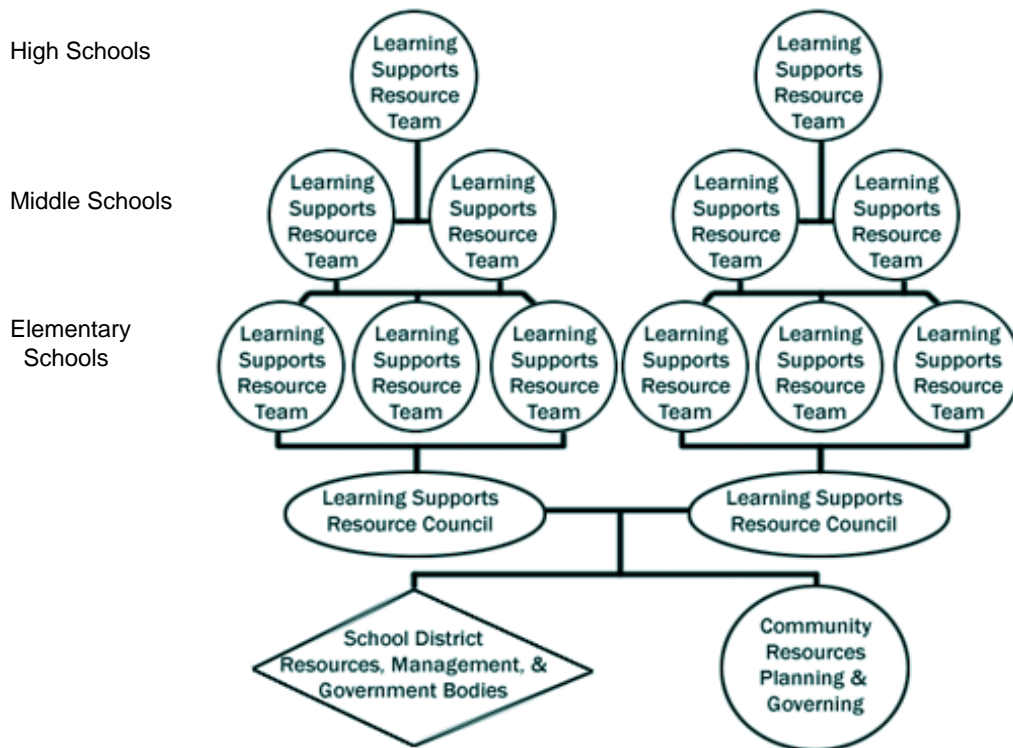*Management and governance*)

*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.

Exhibit 6. Resource-oriented mechanisms across a family of schools

High Schools

Middle Schools

Elementary
Schools

Learning Supports
Resource Team

Learning Supports
Resource Council

School District
Resources, Management, &
Government Bodies

Community
Resources
Planning &
Governing

Area: *Enhancing Resource Use*

Standard 3. **Appropriate Resource Use and Allocation for Developing, Maintaining, and Evolving the Component**.

Appropriate use of resources is based on up-to-date gap and outcome analyses and established priorities for improving the Component. Resource allocation involves (re)deployment of available funds to achieve priorities. Cost-efficiencies are achieved through collaborations that, in common purpose, integrate systems and weave together learning support resources within the school, among families of schools, from centralized district assets, and from various community entities.

Quality Indicators for Standard 3:

C   All resources used for student/learning supports are coalesced to create the budget for the Component.

C   The total school budget is allocated equitably in keeping with the timetable for achieving the Component's standards.

C   The resources allocated for learning supports are mapped and analyzed and the mapping and analysis are routinely updated and communicated to decision maker and other concerned stakeholders.

C   Priorities are established for improving the Component.

C   Each year, all school resources for learning supports are allocated and redeployed based on priorities and analyses of effectiveness and cost efficiencies.

C   Allocations are regularly audited to ensure cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

C   Collaborative arrangements for each family of schools are resulting in (a) braiding resources, (b) enhancing effective use of learning supports and (c) achieving economies of scale.

C   Collaborative arrangements are in place with all appropriate community entities to (a) fill gaps in the Component, (b) enhance effective and efficient use of learning supports, and (c) achieve economies of scale.

C   Centralized district assets are used to facilitate the school's and the family of schools' efforts to (a) braid resources, (b) enhance effective use of learning supports (c) achieve economies of scale, (d) fill gaps in the Component, and (e) develop appropriate collaborative arrangements with community entities.

About Resources

Efforts to coalesce all resources used for student/learning supports to create a cohesive Component draw on several sources. Included are traditional general fund allocations for student support services, a portion of the funds allocated for compensatory and special education, school-based and linked community resources, and funding for special projects. For more on this, see the following Center documents related to *Financial Strategies to Aid in Addressing Barriers to Learning*:

>Quick Training Aid at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/funding_qt/

> Introductory packet at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Financial/fund2000.pdf

>*Using Federal Education Legislation in Moving Toward a Comprehensive, Multifaceted, and Integrated Approach to Addressing Barriers to Learning* (e.g., Creating a Cohesive System of Learning Supports) at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/federallegislation.pdf

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Area: *Continuous Capacity Building*

Standard 4. **Capacity Building for Developing, Maintaining, and Evolving the Component**.

Capacity building involves enhancing ongoing system and stakeholder development and performance. The work requires allocation of resources to provide effective and efficient mechanisms and personnel to carry out a myriad of capacity building functions.

Quality Indicators for Standard 4:

C A comprehensive strategic plan has been developed for capacity building, based on gap analyses and designed to enhance a sense of community and shared ownership.

C Appropriate mechanisms are in place, with specified leadership and staffing for implementing the capacity building plan.

C All who are responsible for capacity building have an appropriate background of education and experience (or access such expertise), including a focus on systemic change, organizational development, and collaborative coaching; centralized district assets are used to provide them with ongoing professional development.

C Support is provided and procedures are implemented for connecting mechanisms into an integrated infrastructure.

C Support is provided and ongoing procedures are implemented for embedding all learning supports into the Component and developing integrated *systems* (not just coordinated/ integrated *services*).

C Support is provided and ongoing procedures are implemented for redefining and reframing Component leader and line staff roles and functions as appropriate and developing capability for new functions.

C Staff recruitment for the Component leads to hiring the most competent personnel available with respect to ensuring the Component is effectively developed, maintained, and evolved.

C The induction of new staff includes welcoming and providing orientation, transition supports, and job mentoring.

C Welcoming, orientation, transition supports, and "mentoring" are provided for all other newcomers (e.g., students, families, community connections) using technology-supported strategies and materials specifically developed for these purposes.

C Ongoing professional development is (a) provided for all personnel involved in any aspect of the Component and (b) is developed and implemented in ways that are consistent with the district's Professional Development Standards and the school's priorities for enhancing the Component's capabilities.

C A wide range of professional development strategies are used (e.g., mentoring, coaching, demonstrations, in situ modeling and support, special institutes, workshops, computerized programs, independent study, etc.).

C Time is scheduled for staff to do essential planning for enhancing the Component.

C Sufficient space, equipment, and supplies are allocated for the Component's work; these are regularly monitored and improvements are made as needed (e.g., facilities used by the component are clean and in good repair, conflicts in scheduling are minimal).

C The social environment is regularly monitored and improvements are made as needed (e.g., students and staff feel safe, respected, and positively connected to each other; conflicts are identified and resolved quickly through mechanisms designed to enhance positive connections; social control strategies are used with students only when other interventions have been ineffective; when social control is used, it is part of a sequence that includes interventions designed to re-engage students in classroom learning)

C Support staff are involved in capacity building for teacher's to improve classroom and school-wide approaches for dealing effectively with mild-to-moderate behavior, learning, and emotional problems.

C Support staff are involved in capacity building for paraprofessionals, aides, out of classroom school staff, and volunteers working in classrooms or with special school projects and services.

C Systematic outreach and social marketing are conducted to communicate and connect with a wide range of community resources (not just service providers).

C Systematic outreach and social marketing are conducted to communicate and connect with all families as stakeholders.

C Ongoing education and training is provided for key stakeholders from the community and from families involved with the Component.

C Centralized district assets are allocated in ways that directly aid capacity building and effective implementation of the Component at the school site and for the family of schools (e.g., feeder pattern).

C Extramural funds are being sought that can help with systemic Component development; special grants that might interfere with ongoing systemic development are not being pursued.

Area: *Continuous Evaluation and Appropriate Accountability*

Standard 5. Formative and Summative Evaluation and Accountability are Fully Integrated into All Planning and Implementation.

Formative evaluation provides essential data related to progress in improving processes and achieving benchmarks and outcomes. In the initial phase of Component development, formative evaluation focuses heavily on feedback and benchmarks related to specific developmental tasks, functioning of processes, and immediate outcomes. Formative evaluation is an ongoing process with an increasing focus on intermediate and then long-range outcomes. Summative data on intermediate outcomes are gathered as soon as the Component is operating as an integrated system. Summative data on long-range outcomes are gathered after the Component has operated as an integrated system for two years. Accountability indicators should fit the phase of Component development. This means the primary focus is on developmental benchmarks in the early phases. When the accountability focus is on student impact, the primary emphasis is on the direct enabling outcomes for students that each arena of the Component is designed to accomplish (as outlined below and discussed in the next section of this report). As these accountability indicators show solid impact, they can be correlated with academic progress to estimate their contribution to academic achievement.

Quality Indicators for Standard 5:

C Centralized district assets are allocated to support essential evaluative and accountability activity.

C Regular procedures are in place to review the progress with respect to the overall development of the Component and its specific arenas of intervention, as well as the assessing the fidelity of implementation and initial impact.

C Formative information is used to enhance progress in developing the Component.

C Procedures are in routine use for gathering and reviewing information on the need for specific types of learning supports and for establishing priorities for developing/implementing appropriate interventions. Special attention is paid to the effectiveness of interventions for (a) identifying and addressing classroom and school-wide learning and behavior problems that are preventable, (b) responding as soon as a problem is manifested for those that are not prevented, and (c) re-engaging students in classroom learning who have become disengaged (including dropouts).

C Procedures are in routine use for gathering and reviewing data on how well the Component is meeting its objectives and goals; such data are used to inform decisions about capacity building, including infrastructure changes and personnel development.

C Accountability indicators are appropriate for the current phase of Component development.

C Primary accountability for Component outcomes focuses on the progress of students with respect to the direct enabling outcomes the Component is designed to accomplish (measures of effectiveness in addressing barriers, such as increased attendance, reduced tardies, reduced misbehavior, less bullying and sexual harassment, increased family involvement with child and schooling, fewer inappropriate referrals for specialized assistance, fewer inappropriate referrals for special education, fewer pregnancies, fewer suspensions, and dropouts).

C When the Component is well-established, accountability expands to include a focus on how well the direct enabling outcomes correlate with enhanced academic achievement.

C All data are disaggregated to clarify impact as related to critical subgroup differences (e.g., pervasiveness, severity, and chronicity of identified problems).

C All data are reviewed for making decisions about enhancement and renewal.

An Expanded Framework for School Accountability

Systems are driven by what is measured for purposes of accountability. This is particularly so for systems pressed to make major improvements.

As everyone involved in school improvement planning knows, the pressure on schools is to improve achievement quickly, and the data most attended to are achievement test scores. These scores drive school accountability, and what such tests measure dominates most school improvement planning.

Current accountability pressures have led to evaluating a small range of basic skills and doing so in a narrow way. One consequence of this is that, too often, students with learning, behavior, or emotional problems find themselves cut off from participating in learning activities that might enhance their interest in overcoming their problems and that might open up opportunities and enrich their future lives.

The result of all this is a growing disconnect between the realities of what it takes to improve academic performance and where many policy makers and school reformers are leading the public. The disconnect is especially evident in schools serving "low wealth" families. Such families and those who work in schools serving them have a clear appreciation of many barriers to learning that must be addressed so students can benefit from the teacher's efforts to teach. These stakeholders stress that, in many schools, major academic improvements are unlikely until comprehensive and multifaceted approaches to address these barriers are developed and pursued effectively.
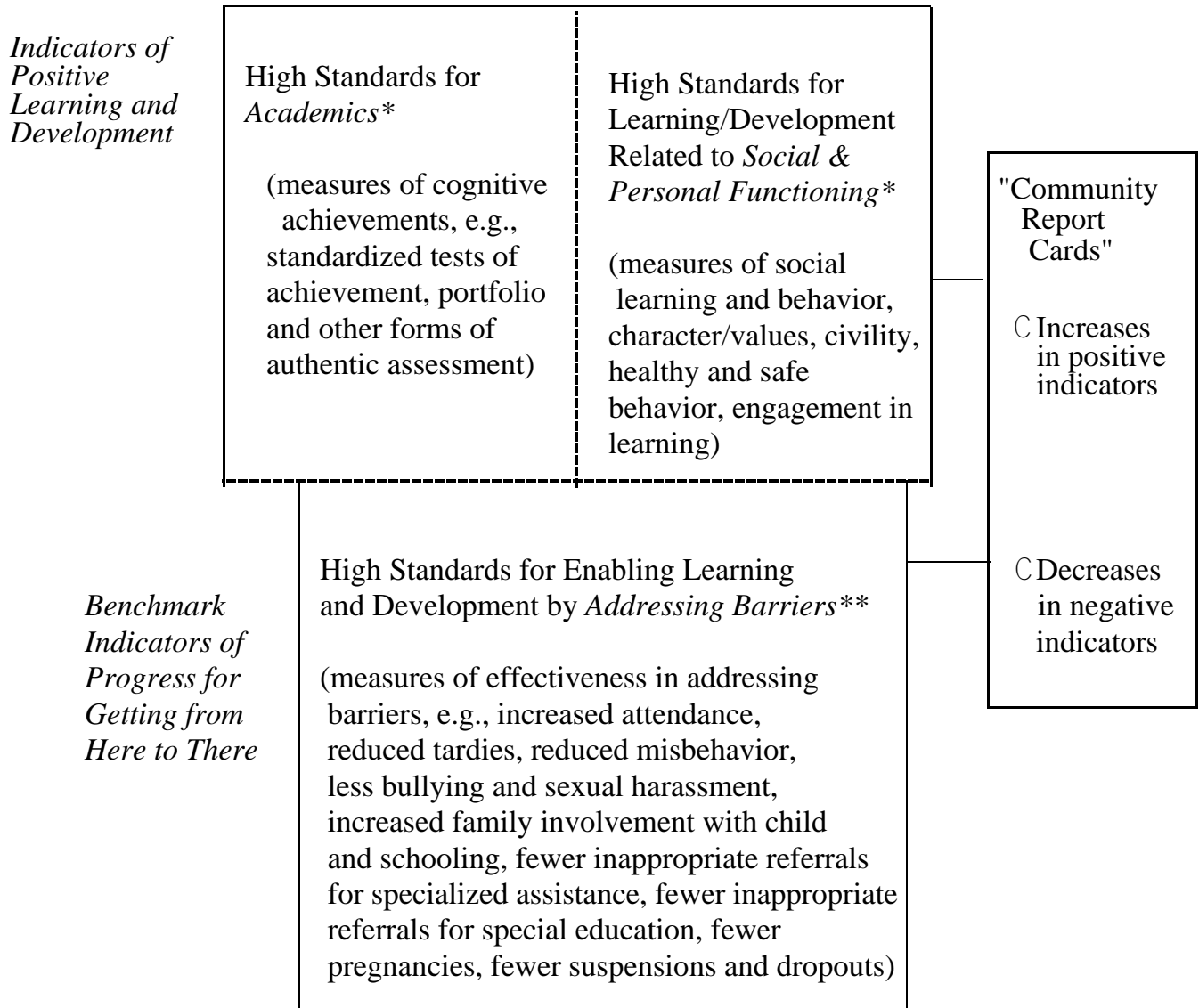
At the same time, it is evident to anyone who looks that there is no direct accountability for whether these barriers are addressed. To the contrary, efforts essential for addressing barriers to development and learning often are devalued and cut when achievement test scores do not reflect an immediate impact.

Thus, rather than building the type of system that can produce substantive improvements in academic performance, prevailing accountability measures pressure schools to pursue what superficially appears to be the most direct route to improving instruction. The implicit underlying assumption of this approach is that students are motivationally ready and able each day to benefit from teachers' instruction. The reality, of course, is that the *majority* of youngsters don't fit this picture in too many schools. Students confronted with a host of external interfering factors often are not in a position to benefit even from significant instructional improvements. The result is low test scores and an achievement gap.

As stressed throughout this report, well designed, systemic efforts are essential to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed in school. However, current accountability pressures override both the logic and the data that make the case for such efforts. This contributes to the marginalization of almost every initiative not seen as directly (and quickly) leading to academic gains. Ironically, not only does the restricted emphasis on achievement measures work against what needs to be done, it works against increasing the body of evidence for how essential and effective it is to address barriers to learning directly.

All this leads to an appreciation of the need for an expanded framework for school accountability – a framework that includes direct measures of achievement and much more. This is a move toward what Michael Fullan has called *intelligent accountability.* Exhibit 7 highlights such an expanded framework.

> There is a growing disconnect between what it takes to improve academic performance and where many policy makers and school reformers are leading the public.

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Exhibit 7: An expanded framework for school accountability that encompasses an *Enabling* or *Learning Supports Component*

Indicators of Positive Learning and Development

High Standards for *Academics** (measures of cognitive achievements, e.g., standardized tests of achievement, portfolio and other forms of authentic assessment)	High Standards for Learning/Development Related to *Social & Personal Functioning** (measures of social learning and behavior, character/values, civility, healthy and safe behavior, engagement in learning)

"Community Report Cards"

Ϲ Increases in positive indicators

Benchmark Indicators of Progress for Getting from Here to There

High Standards for Enabling Learning and Development by *Addressing Barriers***

(measures of effectiveness in addressing barriers, e.g., increased attendance, reduced tardies, reduced misbehavior, less bullying and sexual harassment, increased family involvement with child and schooling, fewer inappropriate referrals for specialized assistance, fewer inappropriate referrals for special education, fewer pregnancies, fewer suspensions and dropouts)

Ϲ Decreases in negative indicators

*Results of interventions for directly facilitating development and learning.

**Results of interventions for addressing barriers to learning and development.

As illustrated in Exhibit 7, there is no intent to deflect from the laser-like focus on accountability for meeting high standards related to academics. The debate will continue as to how best to measure academic outcomes, but clearly schools must demonstrate they effectively teach academics.

At the same time, it is time to acknowledge that schools also are expected to pursue high standards in promoting positive social and personal functioning, including promoting engagement, enhancing civility, teaching safe and healthy behavior, and some form of "character education." Schools we visit have specific goals related to this facet of student development and learning. At the same time, it is evident that these schools currently are not held accountable for goals in this arena. That is, there is no systematic evaluation or reporting of the work. As would be expected, then, schools direct few resources and too little attention to these unmeasured concerns. Yet, society wants schools to attend to these matters, and most professionals understand that personal and social functioning are integrally tied to academic performance. From this perspective, it seem self-defeating not to hold schools accountable for improving students' social and personal functioning.

For schools where many students are not doing well, it is also self-defeating not to attend to benchmark indicators of progress related to addressing barriers to learning. Teachers cannot teach children who are not in class. Increasing attendance, reducing tardiness, reducing problem behaviors, lessening suspension and dropout rates, and abating the large number of inappropriate referrals for special education are all essential indicators of school improvement and precursors of enhanced academic performance. Given this, the progress of school staff related to such matters should be measured and treated as a significant aspect of school accountability.

> For schools where many students are not doing well, it is self-defeating not to attend to indicators of progress related to addressing barriers to learning and promoting well-being.

School outcomes, of course, are influenced by the well-being of the families and the neighborhoods in which they operate. The performance of any school must be judged within the context of the current status of indicators of community well-being, such as economic, social, and health measures. If those indicators are not improving or are declining, it is patently unfair to ignore these contextual conditions in judging school performance.

Thus, in addition to adopting a set of standards for addressing barriers to learning, we conclude that current accountability must be expanded to ensure the standards are met. The quality indicators delineated for specific standards provide a basis for deciding what data to gather and analyze for accountability purposes, as well as for formative and summative evaluation. In addition, Exhibit 8 highlights examples of a range of specific outcome indicators that an expanded accountability framework could measure.

As the breadth of indicators in Exhibit 8 suggests, efforts to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school require strengthening students, their families, schools, and surrounding neighborhoods. We are reminded of Ulric Neisser's dictum: *Changing the individual while leaving the world alone is a dubious proposition.* A broader accountability framework is needed to encourage and support movement toward such an approach.

Exhibit 8. Examples of outcome indicators beyond academics

Students	*Families & Communities*	*Programs & Systems*
Increased knowledge, skills, & attitudes to enhance •acceptance of responsibility (including attending, following directions & agreed upon rules/laws) •self-respect & integrity •social & working relationships •self-evaluation & self-direction/regulation •physical functioning •health maintenance •safe behavior Reduced barriers to school attendance and functioning by addressing problems related to •health •lack of adequate clothing •families in distress •lack of home support for student improvement •physical/sexual abuse •substance abuse •gang involvement •pregnant/parenting minors •dropouts •need for compensatory learning strategies	Increased social and emotional support for families Increased family ability to reduce child risk factors that can be barriers to learning Increased bilingual ability and literacy of parents Increased family ability to support schooling Increased positive attitudes about schooling Increased home (family/parent) participation at school Enhance positive attitudes toward school and community Increased community participation in school activities Increased perception of the school as a hub of community activities Increased partnerships designed to enhance education & service availability in community Enhanced coordination & collaboration between community agencies and school programs & services Enhanced focus on agency outreach to meet family needs Increased psychological sense of community Increased family access to special assistance	Increased coordination among services and programs Increases in the degree to which staff work collaboratively and programmatically Increased services/ programs at school site Increased amounts of school, family, and community collaboration Increases in quality of services and programs because of improved systems for requesting, accessing, and managing assistance for students and families (including overcoming inappropriate barriers to confidentiality) Establishment of a long-term financial base Enhanced processes by which staff and families learn about available programs and services and how to access those they need

Concluding Comments

Teachers and student support staff know that students who have a learning problems are likely to have behavior problems. Moreover, students with learning and behavior problems tend to develop an overlay of emotional problems. And, of course, emotional problems can lead to and exacerbate behavior and/or learning problems. Schools find that a student who is abusing drugs often also has poor grades, is truant, at risk of dropping out, and more. All this underscores that the problems students bring to school tend to be multifaceted and complex.

In many schools, when students are not doing well, the trend is to refer them directly for assessment in hopes of referral for special assistance, perhaps even assignment to special education. In some schools and classrooms, the number of referrals is dramatic. Where special teams exist to review students for whom teachers request help, the list grows as the year proceeds. The longer the list, the longer the lag time for review – often to the point that, by the end of the school year, the team has reviewed just a small percentage of those referred. *And, no matter how many are reviewed, there are always more referrals than can be served.* In many schools, the numbers of students experiencing problems is staggering.

So how do schools respond? School interventions to address student problems usually are developed and function in relative isolation of each other. Organizationally, the tendency is for policy makers to mandate and planners and developers to focus on specific programs. Functionally, most practitioners spend their time working directly with specific interventions and targeted problems and give little thought or time to developing comprehensive and cohesive approaches. Furthermore, the need to label students in order to obtain special, categorical funding often skews practices toward narrow and unintegrated intervention approaches. One result is that a student identified as having multiple problems may be involved in programs with several professionals working independently of each other. Similarly, a youngster identified and helped in pre-school or elementary school who still requires special support may cease to receive appropriate help upon entering kindergarten or middle school. And so forth.

What should be clear is that the problems addressed are complex and multifaceted and the response is piecemeal and narrowly focused. The result is fragmented intervention that does not and cannot meet the needs of any school where large numbers of students are experiencing problems.

The solution is not found in efforts to convince policy makers to fund more special programs and services at schools. Even if the policy climate favored more special programs, such interventions alone are insufficient. More services to treat problems certainly are needed. But so are programs for prevention and early-after-problem onset that can reduce the numbers that teachers send to review teams.

It is time for school improvement decision makers to face the fact that *multifaceted problems usually require comprehensive, integrated solutions applied concurrently and over time.* The need is for enhanced supports and integrated systems that enable learning by addressing barriers to learning and teaching. To these ends, this report has delineated the need to reorganize school improvement planning guides, highlighted standards for a component that addresses barriers to learning, and proposed a framework for expanding school accountability. We suggest that to do less is to maintain an extremely unsatisfactory status quo.

Some References and Resources

For 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
>Full document online at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/iowasystemofsupport.pdf

Hawai`i Department of Education (2004). *Comprehensive Student Support System.*
>Overview online at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/hawaii.pdf

California's Proposed Legislation (2005). *Comprehensive Pupil Learning Support System.*
>Online at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ab171(1-20-05).pdf

Multnomah Education Service District (2005). *Policy for Learning Supports to Enhance Achievement*
>Online at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/multnomah.pdf

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

Adelman, H.S. & Taylor, L. (2000). Moving prevention from the fringes into the fabric of school improvement. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 11,* 7-36.

Adelman, H.S. & Taylor, L. (2000). Looking at school health and school reform policy through the lens of addressing barriers to learning. *Children Services: Social Policy, Research, and Practice*, *3,* 117-132.

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2002). So you want higher achievement test scores? It's time to rethink learning supports. *The State Education Standard, Autumn,* 52-56.

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2002). School counselors and school reform: New directions. *Professional School Counseling, 5,* 235-248.

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2003). Rethinking school psychology. *Journal of School Psychology, 41,* 83-90.

Taylor, L., & Adelman, H.S. (2003). School-community relations: Policy and practice. In Fishbaugh, et al., (Eds.), Ensuring safe school environments: Exploring issues– seeking solutions. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2006). *The implementation guide to student learning supports in the classroom and schoolwide: New directions for addressing barriers to learning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2006). *The school leader's guide to student learning supports: New directions for addressing barriers to learning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

On the following pages is a listing of related resource aids

New Directions for Student Supports: Some Resources*
(http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/NewDirectionsSomeResources.pdf)

In an era of scarce resources, new directions for student support are essential, but the work often must be done on a shoestring and in stages. Therefore, our Center has put together a great amount of free resources to aid those trying to enhance learning supports, and we have developed them with a view to how to proceed in stages and without an allocation of additional funds. Many of these resources are designed to enhance readiness and momentum for new directions for student support; others are aids for building capacity.

With respect to providing resources, we suggest that those concerned with learning more proceed in stages.

Stage I: Understanding Some Basics and
Tools for Enhancing Readiness and Momentum

Begin with the online material that has been developed specifically for the initiative. Go to the Center website http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu and click on the green button labeled: "New Directions Student Support Initiative. Scroll to the icon labeled: Concept Papers and Talking Points and click.

C The first document listed is *New Directions for Student Support* (Concept Paper); if you haven't seen it, it provides a good place to start in understanding basic frameworks.

C You might want to download, adapt, and share one of the brief concept papers. For example, see the brief concept paper *Assuring No Child is Left Behind: Enhancing Our Learning Support System by Building a Comprehensive Approach that Closes the Achievement Gap and Ensures Every Student has an Equal Opportunity to Succeed at School* –
online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/assuringnochild.pdf

C Also see *New Directions for School & Community Initiative to Address Barriers to Learning: Two Examples of White Papers to Inform and Guide Policy Makers.* Each of these brief papers offers a short overview along with talking points. (One paper is designed for urban districts and one for suburban districts.) You can download the whole document at -
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/newdirectionsofrschoolandcommunity.pdf

C To respond to common questions that arise, we have several documents developed for an Outreach Campaign (http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/outreachcampaign.htm)

>*New Directions for Student Support: A Comprehensive Student Support System - Q & A*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/q&a.pdf

>*Where's it Happening? New Directions for Student Support*
online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/overview.pdf

>*What Might a Fully Functioning Enabling or Learning Supports Component Look Like at a School?* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/whatmightafully.pdf

>*Addressing Barriers to Student Learning & Promoting Healthy Development: A Usable Research-Base*   at   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/BarriersBrief.pdf

Ϲ If you want documents designed for **school boards**, see

>"So you want higher achievement scores? Its time to rethink learning supports" (2002) by H.S. Adelman, & L. Taylor in *The State Education Standard*, (Autumn 2002) National Association of State Boards of Education, Alexandria, VA. on our website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/schoolboard.pdf

>the Executive Summary for *Restructuring Boards of Education to Enhance Schools Effectiveness in Addressing Barriers to Student Learning* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/boardexsumm.pdf

Ϲ Also for **school improvement** decision makers:

>*School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsmissing.htm

Ϲ With respect to **infrastructure** frameworks, see

>*Another Initiative? Where Does it Fit? A Unifying Framework and an Integrated Infrastructure for Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Promote Healthy Develop.* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf

>*About Infrastructure Mechanisms for a Comprehensive Learning Support Component* at http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/infra_mechanisms.pdf

Ϲ You may also find the various aids included in the continuously growing toolkit for the initiative helpful: see *Rethinking Student Support to Enable Students to Learn and Schools to Teach*   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/studentsupport.pdf

>For example, one tool is the *Guidelines for a Student Support Component* online separately at   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupportguidelines.pdf The guidelines have a supporting document outlining rationale and research online at   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/guidelinessupportdoc.pdf

>For those concerned about policy, there also are examples, including a piece of state Legislation for a Comprehensive Student Support Component online separately at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ab2569.pdf

Ϲ And, as another set of tools for sharing the ideas, handouts we use for presentation are online for developing "Power Point Presentations" on the topic of *Addressing Barriers to Learning and Closing the Achievement Gap: New Directions for Student Support* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/hottopic/hottopic(addressingbarriers).htm

Stage II: Initial Capacity Building

After receiving some form of initial support from policy makers, some of the first tasks in building capacity involve (1) leadership training, (2) developing a learning supports resource-oriented infrastructure, (3) mapping and analyzing existing resources to clarify gaps and priorities for action, and (4) formulating strategic and action plans.

(1) Leadership Guides

>*The School Leader's Guide to Student Learning Supports: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning* (2006). Corwin Press. http://www.corwinpress.com/book.aspx?pid=11343

>*Leadership Training: Moving in New Directions for Student Support*
at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/movinginnewdirections.pdf

>*The Implementation Guide to Student Learning Supports in the Classroom and Schoolwide: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning 92006) Corwin Press.*
http://www.corwinpress.com/book.aspx?pid=11371

(2) Infrastructure Development Resources

In addition to those listed above, see

>*Resource Oriented Teams: Key Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Education Supports*
        at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf

>*Developing Resource-Oriented Mechanisms to Enhance Learning Supports*
    at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/developing_resource_oriented-mechanisms.pdf

>*Creating the Infrastructure for and Enabling (Learning Support) Component to Address Barriers to Student Learning*   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/infrastructure_tt/infraindex.htm
        or at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/infrastructure_tt/infrastructurefull.pdf

(3) Mapping and Analyzing Resource

>*Addressing Barriers to Learning: A Set of Surveys to Map What a School Has and What It Needs*   at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Surveys/Set1.pdf

>*Resource Mapping and Management to Address Barriers to Learning: An Intervention for Systemic Change*
    at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resourcemapping/resourcemappingandmanagement.pdf

(4) Formulating Strategic and Action Plans

In addition to those listed above, see

>*New Directions for Student Support: Some Fundamentals* at
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newdirections/newdirections.pdf

>*Addressing What's Missing in School Improvement Planning: Expanding Standards and Accountability to Encompass an Enabling or Learning Supports Component*
        at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

>*New Directions in Enhancing Educational Results: Policymakers' Guide to Restructuring Student Support Resources to Address Barriers to Learning*
        at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/policymakers/restrucguide.pdf

Stage III: Development

C In addition to those listed above, see

>*School-Community Partnerships: A Guide*
  at   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/guides/schoolcomm.pdf

>*Sustaining School and Community Efforts to Enhance Outcomes for Children and Youth: A
  Guidebook and Tool Kit*   at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sustaining.pdf

>*Organization Facilitators: A Change Agent for Systemic School and Community Changes*
  at   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/orgfacrep.pdf

>*Framing New Directions for School Counselors, Psychologists, & Social Workers*
  at   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/framingnewdir.pdf

>*Working Collaboratively: From School-Based Teams to School-Community-Higher
  Education Connections* at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/worktogether/worktogether.pdf

>*Financial Strategies to Aid in Addressing Barriers to Learning*
 >>Quick Training Aid at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/funding_qt/
  >> Introductory packet at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Financial/fund2000.pdf
  >>*Using Federal Education Legislation in Moving Toward a Comprehensive, Multifaceted,
    and Integrated Approach to Addressing Barriers to Learning* (e.g., Creating a Cohesive
    System of Learning Supports) at
    http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/federallegislation.pdf

Should you need more, go to the Center's Quick Find Search Menu and click on the topics of
an Enabling Component or Learning Supports. There you will find a list of additional resource
aids and links, including links to resources developed by others that may be helpful.

Finally, if you need something more specific or want to explore any of this in greater depth,
contact ltayor@ucla.edu or use the Center's toll free phone number 866/846-4843.
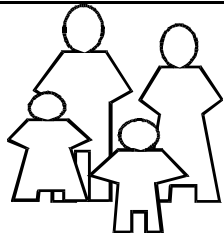
Keep up with the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*

For detailed information on the initiative, click on "New Directions: Student Support
initiative" on the homepage of the Center for Mental Health in Schools' website –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/. It provides an updated list of the co-sponsors, concept
papers, reports and recommendations from the summits, progress updates, guidelines
for a student support component at a school, resource aids for new directions,
descriptions of trailblazing efforts, and much more.

Interested in being involved in the New Directions for Student Support Initiative?
See http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ndannouncement.htm or email smhp@ucla.edu|
Ph. Toll free (866) 846-4843 | (310) 825-3634 | Fax: (310) 206-8716

Appendix

Guidelines for a Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Barriers to Learning*

1. Major Areas of Concern Related to Barriers to Student Learning

1.1 Addressing common educational and psychosocial problems (e.g., learning problems; language difficulties; attention problems; school adjustment and other life transition problems; attendance problems and dropouts; social, interpersonal, and familial problems; conduct and behavior problems; delinquency and gang-related problems; anxiety problems; affect and mood problems; sexual and/or physical abuse; neglect; substance abuse; psychological reactions to physical status and sexual activity; physical health problems)

1.2 Countering external stressors (e.g., reactions to objective or perceived stress/demands/ crises/deficits at home, school, and in the neighborhood; inadequate basic resources such as food, clothing, and a sense of security; inadequate support systems; hostile and violent conditions)

1.3 Teaching, serving, and accommodating disorders/disabilities (e.g., Learning Disabilities; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; School Phobia; Conduct Disorder; Depression; Suicidal or Homicidal Ideation and Behavior; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; Anorexia and Bulimia; special education designated disorders such as Emotional Disturbance and Developmental Disabilities)

2. Timing and Nature of Problem-Oriented Interventions

2.1 Primary prevention

2.2 Intervening early after the onset of problems

2.3 Interventions for severe, pervasive, and/or chronic problems

3. General Domains for Intervention in Addressing Students' Needs and Problems

3.1 Ensuring academic success and also promoting healthy cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development and resilience (including promoting opportunities to enhance school performance and protective factors; fostering development of assets and general wellness; enhancing responsibility and integrity, self-efficacy, social and working relationships, self-evaluation and self-direction, personal safety and safe behavior, health maintenance, effective physical functioning, careers and life roles, creativity)

3.2 Addressing external and internal barriers to student learning and performance

3.3 Providing social/emotional support for students, families, and staff

4. Specialized Student and Family Assistance (Individual and Group)

4.1 Assessment for initial (first level) screening of problems, as well as for diagnosis and intervention planning (including a focus on needs and assets)

4.2 Referral, triage, and monitoring/management of care

4.3 Direct services and instruction (e.g., primary prevention programs, including enhancement of wellness through instruction, skills development, guidance counseling, advocacy, school-wide programs to foster safe and caring climates, and liaison connections between school and home; crisis intervention and assistance, including psychological and physical first-aid; prereferral interventions; accommodations to allow for differences and disabilities; transition and follow-up programs; short- and longer- term treatment, remediation, and rehabilitation)

4.4   Coordination, development, and leadership related to school-owned programs, services, resources, and systems – toward evolving a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of programs and services

4.5   Consultation, supervision, and inservice instruction with a transdisciplinary focus

4.6   Enhancing connections with and involvement of home and community resources (including but not limited to community agencies)

5. *Assuring Quality of Intervention*

5.1   Systems and interventions are monitored and improved as necessary

5.2   Programs and services constitute a comprehensive, multifaceted continuum

5.3   Interveners have appropriate knowledge and skills for their roles and functions and provide guidance for continuing professional development

5.4   School-owned programs and services are coordinated and integrated

5.5   School-owned programs and services are connected to home & community resources

5.6   Programs and services are integrated with instructional and governance/management components at schools

5.7   Program/services are available, accessible, and attractive

5.8   Empirically-supported interventions are used when applicable

5.9   Differences among students/families are appropriately accounted for (e.g., diversity, disability, developmental levels, motivational levels, strengths, weaknesses)

5.10 Legal considerations are appropriately accounted for (e.g., mandated services; mandated reporting and its consequences)

5.11 Ethical issues are appropriately accounted for (e.g., privacy & confidentiality; coercion)

5.12 Contexts for intervention are appropriate (e.g., office; clinic; classroom; home)

6. *Outcome Evaluation and Accountability*

6.1   Short-term outcome data

6.2   Long-term outcome data

6.3   Reporting to key stakeholders and using outcome data to enhance intervention quality