A Center Policy Report **. . .**

New Directions for Student Support:
Current State of the Art

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http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/policyissues/Current%20State%20of%20the%20Art.pdf

Executive Summary*

New Directions for Student Support: Current State of the Art

A dominant emphasis in school improvement efforts is on enhancing instruction and school management. And, although issues arise about how these matters should be addressed, there is little to argue with about the overall necessity of ensuring good instruction and good school management. The problem is that improved instruction and school management alone *do not appropriately address significant barriers to learning and teaching.*

Most district plans for student support maintain policies and practices that have not been effective enough.

Most policy makers and administrators know that by itself good instruction delivered by highly qualified teachers cannot ensure that *all* students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. And, the straight forward psychometric reality is that in schools where a large proportion of students encounter major barriers to learning, the often reported initial increases in test score averages tend to plateau after a few years.

The compelling reality is that too many students and too many schools continue not to do well. Thus, in terms of both enhancing equity of opportunity for students and strengthening public education, one major imperative is to move in new directions that focus directly on effectively addressing barriers in ways that lead students to re-engage in classroom learning.

Over the years, we have explored and reported on the status of organized efforts to provide student supports. To pursue the matter in greater detail, in 2005 we did a policy and practice analysis of school improvement planning guides to determine how student supports were formally integrated into school improvement planning. We followed this, in 2006, with analyses of a sample of districts to clarify the organizational and operational infrastructure related to student/learning supports. Then, at the end of the 2006-2007 school year, we began a survey study to determine what efforts were being made to move toward developing comprehensive systemic approaches for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. This report summarizes previous findings and presents initial data from 300 respondents to our current survey.

It is clear that schools understand and are responding to barriers to learning and teaching. However, most district plans for student support are maintaining policies and practices that have not been effective enough. All districts focus to some degree on the need for safe and drug free schools, parent and community involvement, discipline problems, and compensatory and special education. Few are developing a system to comprehensively address the many factors interfering with students having an equal opportunity to succeed at school. It is noteworthy that the majority of recent survey respondents indicate they are not aware of any school improvement planning designed to develop a comprehensive systemic approach for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

In general, student supports continue to constitute a considerable amount of activity, with substantial resources expended. The enterprise encompasses many dedicated professionals who are struggling to make a difference, and there are pockets of excellence. However, as has been widely recognized, interventions and the infrastructure for organizing and

Few districts are developing a system to comprehensively address the many factors interfering with students having an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

operating them are highly fragmented and often redundant. Underlying all this is the continuing trend in school improvement policy and practice to marginalize student supports, and the unfortunate tendency for support staff to compete counter-productively with each other.

There are some places that are moving in new directions. Ultimately, efforts to do so must address four key problems. First and foremost, they must revisit school improvement *policies* to expand them in ways that will end the marginalization of student supports. Second, they must adopt a unifying *intervention framework* that encompasses a comprehensive and multifaceted continuum of interventions with the intent of guiding development of a cohesive enabling or learning supports component at every school. Third, they must consider how to reframe the *infrastructure* at school, complex, and district levels to ensure effective leadership, redefine roles and functions, and establish resource oriented mechanisms. Finally, they must learn how to plan and implement strategic approaches essential to enabling effective *systemic change and scale up.*

Recommendations

Specific recommendations stemming from our work to date are:

#1 Districts need to revisit school improvement planning guides to ensure they focus on development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and do so in ways that are fully integrated with plans for improving instruction at the school. This encompasses developing guidelines for (a) operationalizing comprehensiveness in terms of a framework that encompasses a full continuum of interventions and a well conceptualized set of content arenas and (b) delineating standards and accountability indicators for each content arena.

#2 Districts need to designate a dedicated position for leadership of efforts to develop and implement such a comprehensive system and redesign infrastructure to ensure interventions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching are attended to as a primary and essential component of school improvement and in ways that promote economies of scale.

#3 Guidelines for school improvement planning should include an emphasis on redefining and reframing roles and functions for school-site leadership related to development and implementation of such a system.

#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.

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 a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, with a long-range emphasis on demonstrating the long-term impact of such a system on academic achievement.

Preface

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

As one major diffusion strategy related to all this, we have facilitated the work of the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support.* The point of this national initiative is to enhance understanding and action related to developing a comprehensive system of learning supports at every school. (See the information about the New Directions Initiative online at:

> http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ndannouncement.htm)

The following report was developed to summarize findings about the current state of affairs and highlight matters related to moving in new directions.

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Current State of the Art

For good reasons, a dominant emphasis in school improvement efforts is on enhancing instruction and school management. And, although issues arise about how these matters should be addressed, there is little to argue with about the overall necessity of ensuring good instruction and good school management.

> The problem is that improved instruction and school management alone
> *do not appropriately address significant barriers to learning and teaching.*

And, as the Carnegie Task Force on Education has stated about such barriers:

> *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.*

Moving in New Directions is an Imperative

Most policy makers and administrators know that by itself good instruction delivered by highly qualified teachers cannot ensure that *all* students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. And, the straight forward psychometric reality is that in schools where a large proportion of students encounter major barriers to learning, the often reported initial increases in test score averages tend to plateau after a few years.

In general, improved instruction and school management have done little to

- reduce student dropout rates
- reduce teacher dropout rates
- re-engage students in classroom learning
- narrow the achievement gap
- eliminate the plateau effect related to efforts to improve achievement test performance
- reduce the list of schools designated as low performing
- minimize the degree to which high stakes testing is taking a toll on students and schools

The compelling reality is that too many students and too many schools continue not to do well. Thus, in terms of both enhancing equity of opportunity for students and strengthening public education, one major imperative is to move in new directions that focus directly on effectively addressing barriers in ways that lead students to re-engage in classroom learning.

Current Status of Student Supports as Reflected in School Improvement Plans

Over the years, we have explored and reported on the status of organized efforts to provide student supports.[1] To pursue the matter in greater detail, in 2005 we did a policy and practice analysis of school improvement planning guides to determine how student supports were formally integrated into school improvement planning. We followed this, in 2006, with analyses of a sample of districts to clarify the organizational and operational infrastructure related to student/learning supports. Then, at the end of the 2006-2007 school year, we began a survey study to determine what efforts were being made to move toward developing comprehensive systemic approaches for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

How Do School Improvement Planning Guides Address Student Supports

In our previous analyses of school improvement planning, we highlighted a fundamental and widely ignored deficiency.[2] That is, school improvement guides do not focus appropriately on addressing barriers to learning and teaching. As stated in the Center's 2005 report entitled *School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?*

> 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.

School improvement guides marginalize student supports.

> 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 also notes that among the many negative results of such marginalization are:

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

- 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.

- 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.

The problem of marginalization is not resolved by enhancing coordination of fragmented student supports.

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.

School improvement plans need to include a focus on developing a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Some Recent Survey Findings

Is the situation changing? Are significant efforts being made to move toward developing comprehensive systemic approaches for addressing barriers to learning and teaching?

With these questions in mind, it is worth noting some initial findings from the early stages of the Center's survey on all this. (See Appendix A for a description of the study.) The brief survey directly sought responses to the basic question:

- *Are you aware of any school improvement planning designed to develop a* comprehensive systemic approach *for addressing barriers to learning and teaching?* (A mapping tool was attached to clarify what constitutes a *comprehensive* approach.)

Respondents who replied affirmatively were asked to indicate how we could access information about the plan and also were asked to respond to two follow-up questions:

- *At this stage of its development how well does the learning support system focus on developing classroom and school wide interventions to* both *(a) enhance how students cope with barriers to learning and (b) re-engage them effectively in classroom instruction?*

- *Is someone designated as the administrative leader to ensure development and effective implementation of a* comprehensive systemic *approach for addressing barriers to learning and teaching?*

Analyses have been made of the first 300 responses. It is relevant to stress that 289 of these came from district level personnel (e.g., 72 superintendents, 44 deputy, associate, or assistant superintendents, and 104 directors of student support activity).

In response to the first question, 183 (61%) indicated they *were not* aware of such planning.

61% of the respondents indicated they were not aware of any school planning designed to develop a comprehensive systemic approach for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

The 117 who answered affirmatively gave the following ratings for how well the system focused on *both* (a) enhancing how students cope with barriers to learning and (b) re-engaging them effectively in classroom instruction:

14 (12%) rated the focus as extremely high
55 (47%) rated it as high
40 (34%) rated it fair
  8 (7%) rated the focus as extremely low

With respect to how we could access information about the plan, 63 of the 117 either did not respond or directed us to information not specifically relevant to the focus of the survey. Nineteen chose to send in relevant descriptions of their efforts; an additional 26 had websites with adequate information readily accessible online. Nine respondents indicated a comprehensive plan was just under development.

Exhibit 1 provides a synthesis of what respondents were referencing as comprehensive. Of the responses noted above, all but a few districts appear to be referring to the limited range of programs and services usually organized as a student services or instructional support unit (often including special education). That is, only nine respondents even suggested that significant efforts were underway to rework existing approaches into a more comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Exhibit 1

A Synthesis of the Available District Information Relevant
to Efforts to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching

Of those who sent descriptions or whose student support efforts were organized for access on the internet, the trend was for the district to present student support "services" as a department with a designated director. As we previously found in our analysis of district infrastructure, such departments are described in various ways. The gist is that they are overseers of the range of "student services" that the district establishes as system-wide and school-based interventions to meet students' academic and social needs with the intent of enabling every student to succeed at school and in the community.

The nature and scope of student services varies by district. The following list is a synthesis culled from several of the responding districts:

- Counseling and Guidance
- Psychological and Social Services (including diagnostic testing and other assessment)
- Health/Nursing Services
- Discipline Management
- Safe and Drug Free Schools (including individual services, violence/bullying reduction, and drug and alcohol education)
- Student Assistance Programs Special Accommodations under Section 504

- Truancy Response
- Teen Parenting
- Dropout Prevention
- Homeless Liaison
- Parent Education
- Student Transfers
- After School Programs
- School-Based Health Center
- Family Resource Center with linkages to community services
- Family Connections

Some districts include Alternative Schools, Special Education, English Language Learners, and Diversity and Equity Programs in the student service department, but most disperse these (and many of the other activities listed above) over several divisions or departments.

The third survey question asked whether someone was designated as the administrative leader to ensure development and effective implementation of a comprehensive systemic approach for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. If so, we asked for information on how to access that person's job description.

Of the 117 who responded affirmatively, 95 (81%) indicated they had an administrative leader. However, only 70 (74%) provided information about how to access the person's job description.

It is unfortunate that almost 25% did not provide information about how to access a job description. Still, a few things are evident with respect to leadership for development and effective implementation of a comprehensive systemic approach for

addressing barriers to learning and teaching. For one, the descriptions provided and other readily accessible information indicate that this leadership role usually is added on to someone's existing job description. Titles listed included superintendent, administrator for a student services or instructional support unit, director for curriculum, program coordinators, and principals. A few respondents indicated that the work was assigned to multiple people/positions. Finally, note that almost 20% indicated no designated leader. And, of these, it is worth observing that a greater proportion indicated the work was not proceeding very well.

About the Survey Findings

Given the limitations of the methodology, the above survey findings are offered and discussed here mainly in support of previous findings and to encourage further reflection on current policies and practices. With this in mind, we suggest that:

- The findings from this survey are consistent with those of previous analyses of school improvement efforts as reported by our Center. There is a clear tendency to assert that school improvement planning is focused on developing a *comprehensive systemic approach for addressing barriers to learning and teaching*. There is little evidence that this is the case.

  It is a matter of considerable concern that almost two-thirds of the respondents were not able to designate places where school improvement planning is focused on developing a comprehensive systemic approach for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. And, of those who state they are aware of such an approach, about 40% indicate that the system is not well focused.

- There is considerable variation in the use of the term *comprehensive*. At one extreme, it is used to denote an extensive and/or intensive approach focused on one specific arena of activity (e.g., *We have a comprehensive program for parent involvement*). At another extreme, it is used to denote a wide range of activity across multiple arenas, albeit not always a full spectrum of activity (e.g., *We have a comprehensive approach to providing student supports).* In general, available data suggest that, as applied to efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching, the term comprehensive is used liberally. As our previous analyses of school improvement plans indicate that, as applied to nonacademic barriers, comprehensive mainly is used to describe efforts to enhance school safety and a supportive learning environment and increase parent and community involvement as emphasized in the No Child Left Behind Act.

  Given the pressure for school improvement, the overuse of adjectives such as comprehensive is understandable. However, the variation in usage is troublesome.

Efforts to advance the field require accurate assessments of the state of policy and practice. The uncritical use of the term too often results in hyperbole, and such overstatements risk jeopardizing efforts to advance the field.

• As to leadership, it is commonplace for a district to divide its various functions into a set of major categories. The term *leader* is conferred automatically on staff who are assigned to administer major categories. The primary intent is to guarantee someone is in charge and accountable.

From the current and previous analysis, indications are that district leadership for efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching function within an organizational and operational infrastructure that tends to marginalize them and the arenas of activity they administer. The work is widely characterized as fragmented and inappropriately redundant and as creating counterproductive competition for sparse resources. The situation is not one that is well-positioned to evolve policies and practices.

On the positive side, current staffing ensures that districts do have administrative positions that could be reworked into the type of leadership necessary for developing a comprehensive system of learning supports. (Note: as part of the survey, we asked if respondents would like us to send them a prototype job description [see Appendix B] for such a leadership position, and almost all indicated they wanted us to do so.)

• Finally, we note that the difficulty related to public access to descriptions of school efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching is a significant problem. This state of affairs is somewhat surprising given that district and school websites increasingly are being used as a major communication medium. This may be another indication of the marginalized status of such efforts.

Conclusions About the Current Status of Student Supports

None of the above says that districts are ignoring learning, behavior, and emotional problems. Available evidence makes it clear that schools understand and are doing various things to address barriers to learning and teaching.

Most districts are continuing to plan in ways that maintain policies and practices for student support that have not been effective enough.

The concern is that most districts are continuing to plan in ways that maintain policies and practices for student support that have not been effective enough. All districts focus to some degree on the need for safe and drug free schools, parent and community involvement, discipline problems, and compensatory and special education. Few are developing a system to comprehensively address the many factors interfering with students having an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

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

Looked at as a whole, a considerable amount of activity is taking place and substantial resources are being expended. There are many dedicated professionals who are struggling to make a difference, and there are pockets of excellence. However, as has been widely recognized, interventions are highly fragmented.

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

An unproductive separation often is manifested between staff focused directly on instruction and those concerned with student support.

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

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Schools confronted with a large number of students experiencing barriers to learning pay dearly for this state of affairs. Moreover, it is common knowledge that such schools don't come close to having enough resources to meet their needs.

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

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

> *And, so, developing a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching remains a major challenge in districts across the country*

School improvement planners must rethink how schools can more effectively use all support programs, resources, and personnel.

Meeting the challenge is an absolute *imperative* given how many schools are designated as low performing, how difficult it has been to reduce dropout rates and close the achievement gap, and the continuing concerns about school safety and climate. 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.

School improvement planning does 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. Where school improvement planning fails to address such factors comprehensively and systemically, school improvement efforts are fundamentally flawed.

It cannot be overemphasized that the marginalized status and the associated fragmentation of efforts to address student problems are long-standing and ongoing. Overcoming the status quo will require restructuring student/learning supports and the work of those who provide such supports. A primary focus of school improvement planning must be on ensuring the development of comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approaches to address the many overlapping barriers interfering with learning at school.

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.

The reality across the country is that too many students are encountering too many barriers. A related reality is that the complexities in addressing such barriers require comprehensive and systemic solutions. A third reality is that, in too many districts, school improvement and capacity building efforts (including pre and in service staff development) have yet to deal effectively with these matters.

So, school policy makers and administrators must respond to the imperative for rebuilding supports for learning as an essential component in enabling *all* students to have an equal opportunity to learn at school. *Fundamental changes are needed; systemic transformation is essential.*

And, as John Maynard Keynes noted about making such changes:

> *The real difficulty in changing the course of any enterprise lies not in developing new ideas but in escaping old ones.*

Efforts to Move in New Directions

As formulated by the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*, new directions means rethinking *all* support programs, resources, and personnel. Besides traditional support staff, student/learning supports are provided by compensatory 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.

Overview

Both the need for and initial consideration of moving in new directions is seen in the increasing numbers of states and localities involved in the National Initiative. After a national and three regional summits, state initiatives have been organized. California, Connecticut, Hawai`i, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin already have held statewide summits. Over 30 organizations already have signed on as co-sponsors. Listservs have been established to facilitate communications. Special meetings/trainings are convened. Legislative action has been stimulated. In 2006, Corwin Press published two books that support the initiative, and these may be the beginning of a New Directions series.

Stakeholders in each state, of course, differ in how they relate to and support the National Initiative and pursue work in their own states and localities. What is common across venues is that increasing numbers of stakeholders are expressing interest in moving in new directions through making systemic changes to develop comprehensive approaches. And, what is becoming clearer is that opportunities to move forward occur every time school improvement is an agenda item.

Our Center tries to compile information about places across the country where beginnings have been made that have relevance for developing comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approaches. These trailblazing and pioneering efforts provide an intriguing glimpse into the future of student support and offer invaluable lessons learned. Some have taken their first implementation steps; some are in the planning stage. A few that have started have encountered difficulty generating the type of momentum necessary to produce full blown systemic change. All provide lessons learned.

Each month, we hear about places that are moving in new directions. As we learn about these, we reach out for information and to offer support. A small set of instructive

examples has been compiled in a draft report entitled: *Where's it Happening? Examples of New Directions for Student Support and Lessons Learned* online at – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/wheresithappening/overview.pdf and in accompanying compendium online at – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/wheresithappening.htm

One set of initiatives presented in the above report are those that represent the most ambitious and comprehensive "out-of-the-box thinking." Major examples include:

- *New American Schools Comprehensive School Improvement, Urban Learning Center Design* – a prototype model developed as part of the New American Schools initiative, included as part of the federal initiative supporting comprehensive school reform)
- *Hawai`i's Comprehensive Student Support System* – a statewide initiative, including state legislation
- *Iowa's System of Learning Supports* – a state department of education initiative
- *California's Proposed Comprehensive Pupil Learning Supports System* – proposed legislation
- *Berkeley (CA) School District* – a district-wide initiative in initial stages of implementation
- *Harrisburg (PA) School District* – a district-wide initiative in planning stage
- *Multnomah (OR) Education Service District* – School Board Policy for Learning Supports

Ultimately, such efforts must address four key problems. First and foremost, they must revisit school improvement *policies* to expand them in ways that will end the marginalization of student supports. Second, they must adopt unifying *intervention frameworks* that encompass a comprehensive and multifaceted continuum of interventions with the intent of guiding development of a cohesive enabling or learning supports component at every school. Third, they must consider how to reframe the *infrastructure* at school, complex, and district levels to ensure effective leadership, redefine roles and functions, and establish resource oriented mechanisms.

Finally, they must learn how to plan and implement strategic approaches essential to enabling effective *systemic change and scale up.*

See Exhibit 2 for a brief overview of Iowa's initiative; see Appendix C for references and resources to frameworks for moving forward; see Appendix D for recommendations for changes in the ESEA.

Exhibit 2

Iowa: A Major Statewide Commitment

Iowa leaders have come to recognize that meeting the challenge of enhancing achievement test scores requires not only improving teaching, but also necessitates developing better ways for schools, families, and communities to facilitate learning by alleviating *barriers*, both external and internal, that can interfere with learning and teaching.

In 2003, the Department of Education established a design team, engaged national consultants and a national advisory panel, and created a stakeholder group and several workgroups to develop guiding intervention and infrastructure frameworks for Iowa's *system* of learning supports. The charge was to design a system of learning supports that is fully integrated with efforts to improve instruction and that is fully embed into the Iowa school improvement process.

In the fall of 2004, the design for a *System of Learning Supports* was finalized. The design document is entitled: *Developing Our Youth: Fulfilling a Promise, Investing in Iowa's Future – Enhancing Iowa's Systems of Supports for Learning and Development.* It has been disseminated to policy makers and leaders at state, regional, and local levels within and outside the education system who have a compelling interest in the achievement of all students and are seeking effective ways to improve student learning. The document calls for rethinking the directions for student supports in order to reduce fragmentation in the system and increase the effectiveness and efficiency by which it operates. The intended results are for all children and youth to succeed in school, grow up healthy and socially competent, and be prepared for productive adulthood. To accomplish this, state policy emphasizes that schools and communities must work together and with their regional and state level partners and that schools and school districts need to address all aspects of students' learning, social-emotional, and physical development.

The prototype design addresses

- *Long term results and measures* based on available data serve as leading indicators of student success in school. Additional sets of system and student performance measures reflect the intermediate and direct impact of a system of learning supports.
- *Cohesive intervention frameworks,* grounded in the agreed upon results for all children and youth in Iowa, facilitate organization of school and community resources, programs, and services into a comprehensive continuum that supports student learning and healthy development and addresses
- *Infrastructure* organizes the functions and processes needed to implement a system of learning supports and connect the various system levels (local, regional, and state). The infrastructure focus is on mechanisms that permit schools and communities to make optimal use of their resources, reframe the roles of personnel, and integrate the instruction, management, and learning supports components of the educational system.
- *Supportive policies* at all levels are identified or developed to facilitate the implementation of a system of learning supports in ways that complement and are fully integrated into schoolcommunity efforts to improve teaching and learning and manage resources.
- *Capacity building* at all system levels (state, regional, and local) will (a) ensure use of definitions and guidelines that create a common language for improved communication within the educational system and with other child-serving systems and (b) enhance the knowledge, skills, and resources/tools needed to successfully implement a system of learning supports.

Recommendations

Specific recommendations stemming from our work to date are:

#1 Districts need to revisit school improvement planning guides to ensure they focus on development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and do so in ways that are fully integrated with plans for improving instruction at the school. This encompasses developing guidelines for (a) operationalizing comprehensiveness in terms of a framework that encompasses a full continuum of interventions and a well conceptualized set of content arenas and (b) delineating standards and accountability indicators for each content arena.

#2 Districts need to designate a dedicated position for leadership of efforts to develop and implement such a comprehensive system and redesign infrastructure to ensure interventions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching are attended to as a primary and essential component of school improvement and in ways that promote economies of scale.

#3 Guidelines for school improvement planning should include an emphasis on redefining and reframing roles and functions for school-site leadership related to development and implementation of such a system.

#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.

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 a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, with a long-range emphasis on demonstrating the long-term impact of such a system on academic achievement.

******   A final note: As we have indicated, work is ongoing to determine the degree to which efforts are being made to move toward developing comprehensive systemic approaches for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. For those who haven't already done so, we encourage you to respond to the survey included in Appendix A and send it to us.

Reference Notes

[1] The following is a sample of our journal publications on student supports:

Adelman, H.S. & Taylor, L. (1997). Addressing barriers to learning: Beyond school-linked services and full service schools. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 67,* 408-421.

Adelman, H.S. (1998). School counseling, psychological, and social services. In E. Marx & S.F. Wooley, with D. Northrop (Eds.), *Health is academic: A Guide to coordinated school health programs.* Teachers College Press.

Adelman, H.S. & Taylor, L. (1998). Reframing mental health in schools and expanding school reform. *Educational Psychologist*, *33,* 135-152.

Adelman, H.S., Taylor, L., & Schnieder, M. (1999). A school-wide component to address barriers to learning. *Reading and Writing Quarterly, 15,* 277-302.

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.

Taylor, L., & Adelman, H.S. (2000). Connecting schools, families, and communities. *Professional School Counseling, 3,* 298-307.

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2002). Building comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approaches to address barriers to student learning. *Childhood Education, 78,* 261-268.

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.

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2006). Mapping a school's resources to improve their use in preventing and ameliorating problems. In C. Franklin, M. B. Harris, & P. Allen-Mears (Eds.), *School social work and mental health workers training and resource manual.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2007). Reorganizing student supports to enhance equity. In E. Lopez, G. Esquivel, & S. Nahari (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural school psychology.*

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (in press). Best practices in the use of resource teams to enhance learning supports. In A. Thomas & J,. Grimes (Eds), *Best practices in school psychology – V.* National Association of School Psychologists.

For more extensive discussions of the above matters, see:

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.

Adelman, H.S. & Taylor, L. (2006).*The Implementation Guide to Student Learning Supports: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

[2] See the following Policy & Practice Analysis Reports from our Center:

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

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

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

>*Toward a School District Infrastructure that More Effectively Addresses Barriers to Learning and Teaching*
    http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs//briefs/toward a school district infrastructure.pdf

Appendices

A. Survey Study

B. Prototype Job Descriptions for Leadership Positions

C. Frameworks and Resources for Moving Forward

D. Recommendations for Changes in the ESEA to Move Forward

Appendix A

Survey Study

(1) Sample and Procedures

(2) Letter

(3) Survey

(4) Mapping Tool on What Constitutes a Comprehensive Approach

Sample and Procedures

Because, over the years, we have conducted extensive outreach to education leaders and others concerned with how schools address psychosocial and mental health concerns, we have established a broad-based address list. We find that when we ask for brief responses replies to our mail enquiries are productive. We do this with full realization that a great deal of all mail is treated as "spam" and that there is a generally low rate of response to surveys.

In June 2007, we mailing the survey to 10,000 district and state superintendents, directors of student support, special education, federal programs, and university centers. We followed up with an email to 10,000 on our electronic listserv. The lists overlap.

By mid September, we had received 277 responses from the hardcopy mailing, with 165 returned as undeliverable, and 23 responses from the email. Given that the lists overlap, it is noteworthy that, of the responses we received from the mailed survey, the majority (N=178) were from individuals who were not already on our email list.

Table of Who Responded

Level of work being reporting about:

School level	34
District level	255
Regional level	8
State level	26

Title of those responding:

District Level

Superintendents	72
Deputy/Assistant/Associate Superintendents	44
Directors of	
Student Support	49
Special Education/Support Services	23
Federal Programs	14
Instruction/Assessment/Evaluation	16
Health/Safety	2
School Board Member	1

State Level

Associate Commissioner	1
Division Directors/Coord.	15
Regional Offices	11
School Board	1

School Level

Principals/Assistant Principal	6
Support Services Staff	7

University, Pupil Services Association, National Center   15

Responses came from 48 states.

Department of Psychology
Box 951563
Los Angeles, California 90095-1563

June, 2007

Dear

As schools work to improve achievement, close the achievement gap, and reduce dropouts, there is increasing concern about the supports needed to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. At the same time, analyses of school improvement guidelines indicate that too little direct attention has been given to developing a comprehensive system of learning supports.

In general, efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching are developed and implemented in a piecemeal and ad hoc manner. This has increased the already widespread problems of fragmentation, wasteful redundancy, and counterproductive competition for resources at school, district, state, and federal levels.

As a result, too little attention has been paid to building the type of comprehensive system of learning supports that is essential to closing the achievement gap and reducing dropout rates (see the recent open letter to Congress at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/congress%20letter.pdf).

Rebuilding student supports is a central concern of the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support* (see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ndannouncement.htm). And, because an effective system of learning supports is so critical at this juncture in the history of public education, our federally funded national Center is trying to facilitate significant movement in new directions.

The purpose of our contacting you is simply to (1) identify places where comprehensive systems of learning supports are already being developed and (2) determine what support is needed to move things along at a faster pace. To these ends, we need 5 minutes of your time to respond to the attached 3 brief questions.

Also as an aid for those endeavoring to move forward, we have included a bit of information on Center resources relevant to rebuilding student supports. These resources can be accessed at no cost from our Center's website. Please share this information as appropriate. Anyone who desires additional information and resources should feel free to contact us.

We looking forward to hearing from you and to sharing the information you provide..

Respectfully,

Howard S. Adelman, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology &
Center Co-director

Linda Taylor, Ph.D.
Co-director

Current Stages in Developing a *Comprehensive Systemic Approach* for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

Just 3 brief questions to answer. Then, see the attached sheet for free online resources.
_____

Indicate the level(s) you are reporting about:

School ____   District _____   State _____   Federal _____

(1) Are you aware of any school improvement planning designed to develop a *comprehensive systemic approach* for addressing barriers to learning and teaching? (See attached mapping tool for clarification of what constitutes a *comprehensive* approach.)
___Yes   ___No

If you answered yes: Please indicate how we can access information about the plan:

Whether you answered yes or no, check here if you would like us to send you the information we amass on places that are developing comprehensive approaches.____

If you did indicate awareness of a comprehensive approach, please answer the last two items.

(2) At this stage of its development, how well does the learning support system focus on developing classroom and schoolwide interventions to *both* (a) enhance how students cope with barriers to learning *and* (b) re-engage them effectively in classroom instruction?

___Extremely   ___Well   ___Fair   ___Not Very
Well   Well

(3) Is someone designated as the administrative leader to ensure development and effective implementation of a *comprehensive systemic approach* for addressing barriers to learning and teaching?
___ Yes   ____ No

If you answered yes: Please indicate how we can access that person's job description:

Want us to send you a copy of an administrative leader job description? Check here ____.

Your Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____)_____ Fax (____)_____ E-Mail

Thanks for completing this form. **Return by FAX to (310) 206-8716 or by mail.**

A School Improvement Tool for
Moving toward a Comprehensive
System of Learning Supports

Mapping & Analyzing Learning Supports

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/tool%20mapping%20current%20status.pdf

The matrix on the following page provides a graphic organizer for reviewing school improvement plans and implementation to identify how well the efforts address barriers to learning and teaching – schoolwide and in the classroom. It can also be used to chart all current activities and resource use (e.g., involving school, community, district) as a basis for making status reports, doing a gap analysis, and setting priorities for moving forward.

Places that have plans to cover a considerable range of the interventions outlined by the matrix are considered to be developing a comprehensive a system of learning supports.
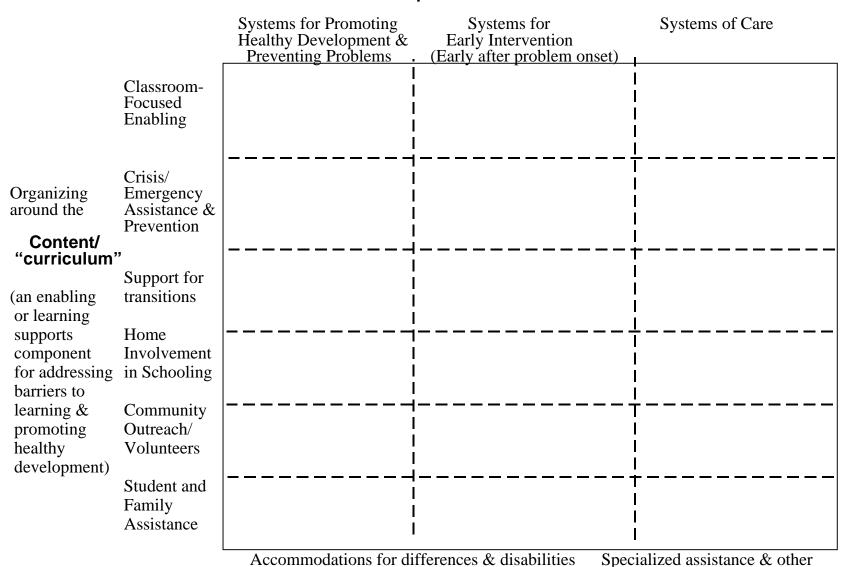

How the matrix has been used for initial mapping and priority setting:

Step 1. Reproduce an enlarged version of the attached matrix so there is room to enter all activity

Step 2. Enter all activity and resources (Note: some will go in more than one cell)

Step 3. Review the examples provided in the attached Exhibit and add anything that was forgotten.

Step 4. Identify which cells are well covered with *effective* interventions and which have only weak interventions or none at all

Step 5. Identify what needs to be done as the highest priorities to strengthen efforts to develop a comprehensive system of learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching – schoolwide and in the classroom

Step 6. Revise school improvement plans in keeping with the mapping and analysis

---

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

Scope of Intervention

	Systems for Promoting Healthy Development & Preventing Problems	Systems for Early Intervention (Early after problem onset)	Systems of Care
Classroom-Focused Enabling			
Crisis/ Emergency Assistance & Prevention			
Support for transitions			
Home Involvement in Schooling			
Community Outreach/ Volunteers			
Student and Family Assistance			

Organizing around the

Content/ "curriculum"

(an enabling or learning supports component for addressing barriers to learning & promoting healthy development)

Accommodations for differences & disabilities

Specialized assistance & other intensified interventions (e.g., Special Education & School-Based Behavioral Health)

*Specific school-wide and classroom-based activities related to positive behavior support, "prereferral" interventions, and the eight components of CDC's Coordinated School Health Program are embedded into the above six content ("curriculum") areas.

Exhibit

"Content" Areas for a Component to Address Barriers to Learning

(1) Classroom-Based Approaches encompass

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

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

(2) Crisis Assistance and Prevention encompasses

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

(3) Support for Transitions encompasses

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

Exhibit (cont.) "Content" Areas for a Component to Address Barriers to Learning

(4) Home Involvement in Schooling encompasses

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

(5) *Community Outreach for Involvement and Support* encompasses

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

(6) Student and Family Assistance encompasses

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

Appendix B

Prototype Job Descriptions for Leadership Positions

The job descriptions on the following pages were sent
to all who requested them.

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

Job Descriptions
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aidd.pdf

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

- **Administrative Lead** – may be an assistant principal, dean, or other leader who regularly sits at administrative and decision making "tables"

- **Staff Lead for Daily Operations** – may be a support service staff member (e.g., a school psychologist, social worker, counselor nurse), a program coordinator, a teacher with special interest in this area.

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

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

I. Enhancing interventions and related systems within the school

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

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

III. Capacity building (including stakeholder development)

Administrative Lead for an Enabling or Learning Supports Component

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

Examples of Specific Job Duties

- Represents the Enabling or Learning Supports Component at the decision making and administrative tables to address policy implementation, budget allocations, operational planning, infrastructure development and maintenance, interface with instruction and governance, information management, development of an effective communication system, development of an effective system for evaluation and accountability with an emphasis on positive accomplishments and quality improvement

- Provides support, guidance, visibility, public relations, and advocacy for the Component at the school and in the community (e.g., maintaining a high level of interest, support, and involvement with respect to the Component)

- Ensures effective communication, coordination, and integration among those involved with the Component and among the three components (i.e., the Enabling/Learning Supports Component, the Instructional Component, and the Management/Governance Component.

- Leads the Component Steering Committee which reviews, guides, and monitors progress and long range plans, problem solves, and acts as a catalyst to keep the Component linked to the Instruction and Management/Governance Components.

- Participates on the Learning Supports Resource Team to facilitate progress related to plans and priorities for the Component.

- Mentors and helps restructure the roles and functions of key Learning Supports staff (e.g., pupil services personnel and others whose roles and functions fall within the arenas of the Component); in particular, helps redefine traditional pupil serve roles and functions in ways that enables them to contribute to all six arenas of the Component.

- Anticipates and identifies problems and provides rapid problem solving (including a focus on morale).

- Identifies capacity building impact and future needs related to the Component (e.g., status of stakeholder development and particularly inservice staff development) and takes steps to ensure that plans are made to meet needs and that an appropriate amount of capacity building is devoted to the Component.

- Meets with the Staff Lead for daily Learning Supports operations on a regular basis to review progress related to the Components and to discuss and advocate for ways to enhance progress.

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

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

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

Examples of Specific job duties:

- Has daily responsibility to advance the agenda for the Component; carries out daily tasks involved in enhancing the Component; ensures that system and program activity is operating effectively; provides daily problem-solving related to systems and programs.

- Organizes and coaches the Learning Supports Resource Team and its various work groups.

- Monitors progress related to plans and priorities formulated by for the Component.

- Monitors current Component programs to ensure they are functioning well and takes steps to improve their functioning and ongoing development (e.g., ensuring program availability, access, and effectiveness).

- Participates in the Leadership Group to contribute to efforts for reviewing, guiding, and monitoring progress and long range plans, problem solving, and effectively linking with the Instructional and Management/Governance Components.

- Provides support, guidance, visibility, public relations, and advocacy for the Component at the school and in the community (e.g., maintaining a high level of interest, support, and involvement with respect to the component.

- Supports capacity building for all stakeholders (staff, family members, community members).

- Ensures all new students, families, and staff are provided with a welcome and orientation to the school and the activities related to addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development.

- Coordinates activity taking place in the Family Center (where one is in operation).

- Ensures effective communication, coordination, and integration among those involved with the Component and with the Instructional and Management/Governance Components

- Anticipates and identifies problems and provides rapid problem solving (including a focus on morale).

- Acts as the liaison between the school and other entities (e.g., community resources) who work with the site related to enabling activity.

- Ensures that the activities of other entities (e.g., community resources) who work with the site related to addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development operate under the umbrella of the Component and are well-coordinated and integrated with daily activities.

- Meets with the Administrative Lead for the Component on a regular basis to discuss and advocate for ways to enhance progress.

Examples of Generic Criteria for Evaluating Performance for this Position

I. Related to interventions to enhance systems within schools

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

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

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

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

III. Related to capacity building

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

Appendix C
Frameworks and Resources for Moving Forward

There is much work to be done in addressing barriers to learning and teaching as public schools across the country strive to leave no child behind. The next decade must mark a turning point in how schools and communities address the problems of children and youth. In particular, the focus must be on initiatives to reform and restructure how schools work to prevent and ameliorate the many learning, behavior, and emotional problems experienced by students.

Specifically, school improvement planners must:

- reframe current student support programs and services and redeploy the resources to develop a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component to enable learning

- develop both in-classroom and school-wide approaches – including interventions to support transitions, increase home and community connections, enhance teacher's ability to respond to common learning and behavior problems, and respond to and prevent crises

- revamp district, school, and school-community infrastructures to weave resources together to enhance and evolve the learning supports system

- pursue school improvement and systemic change from the perspective of learning supports and the need to engage and re-engage students in classroom learning

The resources identified on the following page provide frameworks to guide planners in working on each of the above.

Resources to Aid in Developing a *Comprehensive Systemic Approach* for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

Access the following at no cost from our national Center, and let us know if you think our federally funded national Center can help in some way.*

>Concept papers and Q & A material related to proposing and designing a comprehensive systemic approach to replace piecemeal and ad hoc activity.
   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/conceptpaper.htm

>Design example from the Iowa State Department of Education (2005).
   Fulfilling a Promise, Investing in Iowa's Future: Enhancing Iowa's Systems of Supports for Learning & Development.
      Summary: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/iowabriefsummaryofdesign.pdf
      Full document: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/iowasystemofsupport.pdf

>Tool Kit for Rebuilding a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports
      http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkit.htm
   Building a system of supports for learning requires blueprint guides, materials, tools and other resources for strategic planning, implementation, and capacity building. Such resources also help to deepen learning about the substance and processes of the work to be done. With this in mind, this online, evolving toolkit provides a wide range of detailed resource materials (e.g., exemplars, guides, aids, tools). The kit is divided into three sections.

   Section A offers *exemplars and guides* related to moving forward with a comprehensive system of learning supports.

   Section B includes a variety of brief guidance and blueprint notes, tools, and training materials developed by the Center at UCLA to aid capacity building (particularly staff and stakeholder development).

   Section C provides the menu of over 130 specific Quick Finds available in the online clearinghouse accessed through the Center at UCLA. Each *Quick Find* is a gateway to a host of resources.

Published Books:
   Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2006). *The School Leader's Guide to Student Learning Supports: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning.* Thousands Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
   Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2006). *The Implementation Guide to Student Learning Supports: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning.* Thousands Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Appendix D

Recommendations for Changes in the ESEA to Move Forward

To: Congressmembers Miller and McKeon

From: Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor, Co-Directers
Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA
(a national policy and practice analysis center)

Thank you for the opportunity to offer revisions for reauthorizing the ESEA.

Our national Center at UCLA has done several policy and practice analyses of the *No Child Left Behind Act* focusing specifically on deficiencies related to *school improvement efforts for addressing barriers to learning and teaching*.

In reporting findings, we have stressed that the upcoming reauthorization provides an opportunity to correct significant deficiencies related to this critical matter. Specifically, additions are needed to Title I that go to the core of enabling all students to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. These additions call for the promotion of a systematic focus on learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching. (In the current act, such barriers are referred to as "major factors that have significantly affected the academic achievement of students.")

The proposed additions emphasize promoting the development of a comprehensive and systemic learning supports component in all schools. This is to be accomplished through *reframing and redeploying* existing personnel and programmatic resources and through enhanced connections with community resources. (Thus, additional appropriations are not an issue.)

The immediate objective is to provide guidance to schools for strategically addressing barriers to learning and teaching and for ending the tendency to generate learning supports in an ad hoc, piecemeal and fragmented manner. The longer-term aim is to create a comprehensive and cohesive system of learning supports in all schools based on defined standards and with specific accountability indicators.

As per the Committee's invitation, below are examples of page and line numbers to which we suggest additions.

It is proposed that the following additions be made to Title I.

Note: For the most part, only sections affected are included below; the proposed added text is underlined.

While the draft version we received did not address the Statement of Purpose (SEC. 1001 in the NCLBA), we need to start there to be certain that the critical need for a System of Learning Supports to address barriers to learning and teaching is accounted for from the onset.

SEC. 1001. Statement of Purpose

New   (6) enabling all students to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school
through promoting development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and
cohesive system of learning supports at schools;

(7 8) providing greater decision-making authority and flexibility to schools, teachers, and learning supports staff in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance;

(9 10) promoting schoolwide reform and ensuring the access of children to effective, scientifically based instructional strategies, and challenging academic content, and learning supports;

(10 11) significantly elevating the quality of instruction and learning supports by providing staff in participating schools with substantial opportunities for professional development;

(11 12) coordinating and integrating programs and services under all parts of this title with each other, with other educational services, and, to the extent feasible, with other agencies providing services to serving youth, children, and families;

SEC. 1005 –
On page 6, line 23 "**SEC. 1005. STATE COORDINATION OF SERVICES.**

The terms "Coordination" and "services" are ambiguous and have limited the focus of what needs to be done. We suggest changing to
STATE COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF LEARNING SUPPORTS

O n page 8, lines 3-11, expand number (7) and include (8) and modify and renumber (9) as a new (8)

(7) to support collaborative partnerships among schools, families, and community resources to promote (a) coordination and integration of programs and services under all parts of this title with each other, with other educational services, and, to the extent feasible, with other agencies serving youth, children, and families and (b) development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system of learning supports at schools;

(8) to evaluate educational and learning supports programs and supplemental educational service providers funded under this Act.''.

SEC. 1006 p. 20, lines 3-14, revise as follows:

(C) developing a comprehensive system of learning supports to meet students' academic and nonacademic needs by addressing barriers to learning and teaching; such a system must encompass a wide range of supports for transitions, including the transition from elementary to middle and middle to secondary school;

(D) supporting collaborative partnerships among schools, families, and community resources to promote (a) coordination and integration of programs and services under all parts of this title with each other, with other educational services, and, to the extent feasible, with other agencies serving youth, children, and families and (b) development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system of learning supports at schools; and

(E) providing professional development to teachers, principals, and specialized instructional support personnel, and learning supports staff to support the activities described in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

SEC. 102 – *Subpart 1 – Basic Program Requirements*

SEC. 1111 STATE PLANS
On page 22, lines 13 and 14
    (b) ACADEMIC STANDARDS, ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS,
       <u>LEARNING SUPPORTS,</u> AND ACCOUNTABILITY

On page 88, lines 22-25 and on page 89, lines 1-9:

(12) FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT – Each State plan shall include an assessment non-academic factors interfering with student achievement <u>and an assurance that the State educational agency will</u>

    (A) promote development of a standards-based comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system of learning supports at schools through

        (i) developing a nonregulatory guidance document for the establishment of a school Learning Supports Component;
        (ii) providing ongoing technical assistance, leadership training, and other capacity building supports;
        (iii) developing aids for districts and schools to rethink the roles of pupil services personnel and other student support staff;

        (iv) developing aids for reframing infrastructure *mechanisms* at school and district levels and with public and private community resources to appropriately pursue development of a comprehensive learning support system. Such aids will clarify effective mechanisms for

            (I) assisting individuals and families with family decision-making and timely coordinated, and monitored referrals to school and community services when indicated;

            (II) an administrative leader, student support staff, and other stakeholders to work collaboratively at each school and at the district level with a focus on resources in order to minimize duplication and fragmentation of learning supports and strengthen the Learning Supports Component;

            (III) responding to, minimizing the psychosocial impact of, and, if feasible, preventing crises;

            (IV) capacity building and regular support for all stakeholders involved in addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development;

            (V) ensuring evaluation and accountability for a school's Learning Supports Component;

            (VI) minimizing duplication and fragmentation of learning supports when working with other schools and agencies.

        (v) ensuring that Learning Supports are integrated within the organization of the State education agency in a manner that reflects the organization at school and district levels;

        (vi) including an assessment of learning supports systems in all school review guidance documents and accountability reports. Such an assessment should focus on specific and directly relevant indicators of the impact of a school's Learning Supports Component, such as

            (I) increases in student attendance;
            (II) increases in academic engagement and performance;
            (III) increase in family involvement with student and school;
            (IV) reductions in tardies;

(V) reductions in misbehavior;
(VI) reductions in bullying and sexual harrassment;
(VII) fewer inappropriate referrals for specialized assistance and special education;
(VIII) fewer student pregnancies;
(IX) fewer suspensions and dropouts.

(B) coordinate and collaborate, to the extent feasible and necessary as determined by the State education agency, with agencies serving children, youth, and families within the State that are identified under section ____ and that request assistance with addressing major factors that have significantly affected the academic achievement of students in the local education agency or schools served by such agency.

SEC. 1112. LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PLANS.

(a) PLAN PROVISIONS -
  (1) IN GENERAL -

On page 121 starting on line 11 and following:

(E) a description of the strategy the local educational agency will use to coordinate programs under this part with programs under title II to provide professional development for teachers and principals and learning supports staff, and, if appropriate, specialized instructional support personnel, administrators, parents, and other staff, including local educational agency level staff in accordance with sections 1118 and 1119;

(F) a description of how the local educational agency will coordinate and integrate programs and services provided under this part with other educational services and learning supports at the local educational agency or individual school level, such as –

(i) Even Start, Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, and other preschool programs, including plans for the joint professional development in child development and learning of children below grade four for continuity of learning in such programs to local elementary school programs; and

(ii) services for English language learners including programs under title III, children with disabilities, including early intervening services as defined in section 613(f) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, migratory children, neglected or delinquent youth, Indian children served under part A of title VII, homeless children, and immigrant children in order to increase program effectiveness, eliminate duplication, and reduce fragmentation of the instructional program;

(iii) a cohesive Learning Supports Component the *scope* of which covers a school-community continuum of *interconnected intervention systems* for

(I) promoting healthy development and preventing problems;

(II) intervening early to address problems as soon after onset as is feasible;

(III) assisting those who have chronic and severe problems.

(iv) a cohesive Learning Supports Component the *content* of which at each system level encompasses

(I) enhancing the capacity of teachers to address learning, behavior, and emotional problems within the context of the classroom, engage and re-engage pupils in classroom learning, and foster social, emotional, intellectual,

and behavioral development. This would include an emphasis on inservice education. Examples of interventions include:

(aa) addressing a greater range of pupil problems within the classroom through an increased emphasis on strategies for positive social and emotional development, problem prevention, and accommodation of differences in the motivation and capabilities of pupils;

(bb) classroom management that emphasizes re-engagement of pupils in classroom learning and minimizes over-reliance on social control strategies;

(cc) collaboration with pupil support staff and family (or others involved in home care) in providing additional assistance to foster enhanced responsibility, problem solving, resilience, and effective engagement in classroom learning;

(dd) use of broadly conceived "Response to Intervention"strategies and "prereferral interventions to minimize unnecessary referrals for special services and special education;

(II) enhancing the capacity of schools to handle transition concerns confronting pupils and their families. The emphasis is on ensuring that systematic interventions are established to provide supports for the many transitions students, their families, and school staff encounter. Examples include:

(aa) welcoming and social support programs for newcomers;

(bb) before, during, and afterschool programs to enrich learning, promote healthy development, and provide safe recreation;

(cc) articulation programs to support grade transitions;

(dd) addressing transition concerns related to vulnerable populations, including, but not limited to, those in homeless education, migrant education, and special education programs;

(ee) vocational and college counseling and school-to-career programs;

(ff) support in moving to postschool living and work;

(gg) outreach programs to re-engage truants and dropouts in learning;

(III) responding to, minimizing the psychosocial impact of, and preventing crisis. The emphasis is on ensuring that systematic interventions are established for emergency, crisis, and follow-up responses and for preventing crises at a school and throughout a complex of schools. Examples include:

(aa) establishment of a crisis team to ensure immediate response when emergencies arise, and to provide aftermath assistance as necessary and appropriate so that pupils are not unduly delayed in re-engaging in learning;

(bb) schoolwide and school-linked prevention programs to enhance safety at school and to reduce violence, bullying, harassment, abuse, and other threats to safety in order to ensure a supportive and productive learning environment;

(cc) classroom curriculum approaches focused on preventing crisis events, including, but not limited to, violence, suicide, and physical or sexual abuse;

(IV) enhancing home/family system involvement. The emphasis is on ensuring there are systematic interventions and contexts at school that are designed to lead to greater involvement that supports student progress with respect to addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems and promotes healthy development.

Examples include:

(aa) interventions that address specific needs of the caretakers of a pupil, including, but not limited to, providing ways for them to enhance literacy and job skills and meet their basic obligations to the children in their care;

(bb) interventions for outreaching and re-engaging homes/family systems that have disengaged from school involvement;

(cc) improved systems for communication and connection between home and school;

(dd) improved systems for home/family involvement in decisions and problem solving affecting the student;

(ee) enhanced strategies for engaging the home/family systems in supporting the basic learning and development of their children to prevent or at least minimize learning, behavior, and emotional problems;

(V) outreaching to the community in order to build linkages. The emphasize is on ensuring that there are systematic interventions to provide outreach to and engage strategically with public and private community resources to support learning at school of students with learning, behavior, and emotional problems. Examples include:

(aa) training, screening, and maintaining volunteers and mentors to assist school staff in enhancing pupil motivation and capability for school learning;

(bb) job shadowing and service learning programs to enhance the expectations of pupils for postgraduation opportunities;

(cc) enhancing limited school resources through linkages with community resources, including, but not limited to, libraries, recreational facilities, and postsecondary education institutions;

(dd) Enhancing community and school connections to heighten a sense of community and develop and benefit from social capital;

(VI) providing special assistance for pupils and families as necessary. The emphasis is on ensuring that there are systems and programs established to provide or connect with direct services when necessary to address barriers to the learning of pupils at school. Examples include:

(aa) special assistance for teachers in addressing the problems of specific individuals;

(bb) processing requests and referrals for special assistance, including, but not limited to, counseling or special education;

(cc) ensuring effective case and resource management when pupils are receiving direct services;

(dd) connecting with community service providers to fill gaps in school services and enhance access for referrals.

(G) - (0)

On page 125, line 22

(P) a description of the actions the local educational agency will take to implement extended learning time, public school choice, and learning supports and supplemental services, consistent with the requirements of section 1116;

On page 155, lines 1-16 – align with the proposed changes for Sec. 1112.

On page 156, line 4,
     <u>learning supports staff,</u> and paraprofessionals

On page165, lines 23 & 24 and page 166, lines 1 & 2
          (C) use effective methods and <u>instructional</u> strategies that are based on scientifically valid
          research that strengthens the core academic <u>and learning supports</u> program of the school
          and that—
(then items i-iv need revision to align with the proposed changes for Sec. 1112)

On page 167, lines 9-10 ,
     principals, <u>learning supports staff,</u> and paraprofessionals

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SEC. 1116. SCHOOL AND LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY IM PROVEMENT AND ASSISTANCE.

As the above specific changes indicate, throughout this section there needs to be greater attention to helping schools attend to (a) development of a system of learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching and (b) the professional development of learning supports staff.

On pages 212 and following dealing with Supplemental Educational Services either need to make this LEARNING SUPPORTS AND SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES or add a separate section to ensure a strong focus on (a) development of a system of learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching and (b) the professional development of learning supports staff.
For example: (1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any school designated in subsection (d)(4)(B) or (D) as a High Priority School, the local educational agency shall arrange for the enhancement of its System of Learning Supports.

As the above specific changes indicate, throughout the following sections there needs to be greater attention to helping schools attend to (a) development of a system of learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching and (b) the professional development of learning supports staff.