

Establishing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports at a School: Seven Steps for Principals and Their Staff

Schools, districts, and state departments across the country are moving in new directions to address barriers to learning and teaching and to re-engage disconnected students. The intent is to design and develop a comprehensive system of student and learning supports and to fully integrate it into school improvement policy and practice.

Interested schools frequently ask us for an outline of first steps for developing such a system. The following seven steps are a response to that request.

This set of guidance notes starts with an overview of the steps and then offers detailed notes focusing on each. Included are easily accessed links to free resource aids and tools. In addition to these aids, the UCLA Center's website has a wealth of resources (including toolkits), and the Center staff provides no-fee technical assistance via email and phone.

Step 1: *Create Readiness and School Site Commitment.* Work with key stakeholders to build commitment to unifying student and learning supports into a Learning Supports Component (i.e., a component that systematically and comprehensively enables learning by addressing barriers to learning & teaching). Clarify why the component is essential and ensure that the commitment to its development is fully and realistically integrated into school improvement and other strategic operational planning. Keep in mind that building readiness and commitment is an ongoing process. If the LEA (and/or SEA) has developed a design document, use it as a prototype that can be adopted or adapted by the school.

Step 2: *Appoint a Lead for System Development.* Assign an administrative-level *Learning Supports Lead* to begin development of the component (e.g., an assistant principal, a student support staff member). Be sure the leader's job description is revised to reflect the new responsibilities and accountabilities; provide appropriate personnel development. Be sure this leader is at administrative planning and decision making tables and component development is a regular part of the agenda.

Step 3: *Establish a Development Team to Work with the Administrative Lead.* Assign key staff to a component development team (i.e., a *Learning Supports Leadership Team*) to work with the leader to prepare the school's version of a design document and a strategic plan for unifying and then developing the component. In the process, this team helps clarify, analyze, identify priorities, recommend resource redeployment, and establish and guide workgroups for developing each facet of the component over a period of several years. Be sure the strategic plan for the component is fully integrated into the school's overall strategic plan.

ABOUT THE CENTER at UCLA



The national Center for Mental Health in Schools is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Dept. of Psychology at UCLA.
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Step 4. *Conduct Indepth and Ongoing Analyses to Determine Gaps, Priorities, and Resource Deployment.* Build on initial listings of current personnel and activities by doing an indepth and structured mapping of all resources the school currently uses to address barriers to learning and teaching. Then, (a) do a gap analysis with respect to available needs assessments, (b) identify immediate priorities for moving forward with improvement and system development, and (c) recommend (re)deployment of resources to meet priorities in a cost-effective manner. Be certain the decisions are reflected in all school improvement plans.

Step 5. *Form and Facilitate Needed Workgroups.* Elicit volunteers for workgroups and provide them with relevant professional development and support for pursuing the work. While the component development team will guide and support movement forward in establishing a comprehensive system of learning supports, the work requires the efforts of smaller workgroups to carry out specific tasks.

Step 6: *Provide Ongoing Professional and Other Stakeholder Development.* Include a focus on a comprehensive system of learning supports in all planning for continuous learning at the school. Provide on-the-job opportunities and special times for such learning. Delineate what those assigned to develop the component need to learn over time; ensure all others (teachers, student support staff, other staff and volunteers, community stakeholders) are included in learning about how best to address barriers to learning and teaching. Use the free resources available through the UCLA Center's website and technical assistance support.

Step 7. *Use Formative Evaluation to Support Progress.* Ensure that a formative evaluation process is established. Such a process should encompass data on and analyses of all facets of planning and implementation related to developing a comprehensive system of learning supports. Moreover, the process should be designed to provide guidance and support to foster progress. This means monitoring all factors that facilitate and hinder progress and then ensuring actions are taken to deal with interfering factors and to enhance facilitation. As significant progress is made in developing the system, the monitoring can expand to evaluate the impact on student outcomes that are direct indicators of the effectiveness of learning supports (e.g., increased attendance, reduced misbehavior, improved learning).

Establishing a comprehensive system of learning supports at a school involves four overlapping phases: creating readiness, initial implementation, institutionalization, and ongoing evolution and creative renewal. *The seven steps we have delineated here focus mainly on the first three phases.*

If you have any questions, comments, or specific matters to share, contact Ltaylor@ucla.edu or adelman@psych.ucla.edu

***Want to Learn More About
a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports?***

(1) Introductory Power Point Presentations. Our Center developed adaptable power point presentations to introduce the work. Go to:

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/materials/trainingpresentation.htm#slide>

A good place to start is with the 15 minute introductory power point

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/powerpoint/briefintroslices.ppt>

(If you would like, you can contact Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and arrange to have a phone hook up with them to talk through the power point presentation with your team – contact Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

Also in collaboration with the Scholastic, we have developed a six session set of webinars as part of a online leadership institute – access the first session at

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/institute/session1.htm>

(2) Examples of What Others Already are Doing. Learn from the experiences of those who are designing Comprehensive Systems of Learning Supports and embedding them in school improvement plans. Take time to look at the examples in the Center's System Change Toolkit:

>***Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Trailblazing Initiatives!***

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/summer14.pdf>

>**Brochures from Districts and State Departments**

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkitala.htm>

>**Examples of state and District Design Documents**

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkitbla.htm>

>**2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports**

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

(3) System Change Toolkit. Includes many resources for Transforming Student and Learning Supports into a Comprehensive System for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THIS?

Contact Ltaylor@ucla.edu or adelman@psych.ucla.edu

Step 1 in Establishing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

***Creating Readiness and
School Site Commitment***

The first step in establishing a comprehensive system of learning supports at a school is to help the staff and other key stakeholders (at the school and in the community) understand the need for such an approach and the immediate and long term benefits for student, school, family, and community outcomes. It is this awareness that is essential in creating readiness for and commitment to major systemic changes.

Thus, any move toward substantive systemic change should begin with sufficient time devoted to developing understanding, readiness, and commitment among key stakeholders. Unfortunately, in the rush to implement innovations, the tendency often is to give short shrift to the tasks involved in accomplishing this step.

Tasks related to Step 1 include:

- (a) **Initial listing of resources used to address barriers to learning.** It is enlightening to list out all the personnel and interventions at the school focused on addressing barriers to learning and teaching. In most places, the picture that emerges is one of overlapping and fragmented interventions and considerable cost. Such findings are among the many indicators to share in clarifying why it is essential to move forward with the development of a comprehensive system of learning supports.

For an aid in doing this task, see the practice notes on the UCLA Center's website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/listingresources.pdf>

- (b) **Preparing a brief descriptive overview.** If the LEA (and/or SEA) has developed a design document, use it as a prototype that can be adopted or adapted by the school. A brief overview can be designed for key stakeholders as an introduction to the vision, need for, and the basic ideas related to a school-based comprehensive system of learning supports.

Brief documents and "brochures" that can be readily adapted for this purpose are available. See the UCLA Center's online toolkit (Section A) – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

- (c) **Mobilizing interest, consensus, and support among key stakeholders.** This task involves asking key stakeholders to read the descriptive overview and then meeting with them to answer questions. As a follow-up, they can be directed to works that go into greater depth.

For example, they might watch the introductory online webinar developed by our Center in collaboration with the American Association of School Administrators and Scholastic entitled: *Strengthening School Improvement: Developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching* <https://scholastic.webex.com/scholastic/lsr.php?AT=pb&SP=TC&rID=48915112&rKey=09f14db0881f5159&act=pb>

Another readily accessible resource is the online handbook by Adelman & Taylor (2008). *Rebuilding for learning: Addressing Barriers to learning and teaching, and re-engaging students*. NY: Scholastic, Inc.

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/rebuild/RebuidlingV11RD28.pdf>

- (d) **Identifying a group of champions and other individuals who are ready to help make the changes.** A new approach requires substantial advocacy. All individuals who indicate a strong interest can help with follow-up efforts to expand the base of interest and support. Some of these advocates can become the team that steers the process.

- (e) **Establishing school-site commitment/policy.** This happens when key policy shapers formally endorse the proposed changes and the commitment is fully integrated into the school improvement plan. All strategic operational planning needs to delineate how necessary changes will be accomplished over a realistic timeline, who will steer and lead the development of the work, what the new staff responsibilities are, and appropriate accountability indicators.

Examples can be found in the UCLA Center's online System Change Toolkit – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

**Key Examples of Benchmark Indicators Related to
*Creating Readiness and School Site Commitment***

Benchmark – A critical mass of key stakeholders understands and accepts as an imperative the necessity for unifying student and learning supports into a learning supports component (i.e., a component that systematically enables learning by comprehensively addressing barriers to learning and teaching).

Benchmark – A Steering Group is in place to advocate for, guide, and support efforts to develop a comprehensive system of learning supports.

Benchmark – The component is fully integrated into the school improvement plan and any other strategic operational plans (with a realistic developmental timeline).

Step 2 in Establishing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Appoint a Lead for System Development

This step establishes the administrative-level *Learning Supports Lead* for developing the school's comprehensive system of learning supports (e.g., an assistant principal, a student support staff member). Also, remember that efforts to enhance stakeholder readiness and commitment for the work are ongoing.

Tasks specifically related to Step 2 include:

- (a) ***Deciding who will be the administrative lead.*** Choose a person who sees this as an opportunity for the school to move from mainly reacting to student problems and who understands the aim is to develop a comprehensive system of learning supports. If a school has several administrators, one of these should assume this role. A smaller school may need to draw upon a talented student support staff member (e.g., counselor, school psychologist) or a Title I coordinator.
- (b) ***Delineating the job description.*** Rework the individual’s job description to reflect the new responsibilities and accountabilities.
An example that can be readily adapted is in the UCLA Center’s online toolkit – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/aidd.pdf>
- (c) ***Providing appropriate personnel development for getting started.*** This leader, along with all others involved in steering and planning, must take time both to learn the general nature and scope of a comprehensive system of learning supports and become familiar with resources for preparing others to understand what is involved. (See the *Guides for Leadership Development* on the next page.)
- (d) ***Ensuring the component is a regular part of the administrative agenda.*** The lead for the Learning Supports Component must have a seat at administrative planning and decision making tables, and efforts to develop a comprehensive system of learning supports must be a regular agenda item.

Key Examples of Benchmark Indicators Related to *Appointing a Lead to Guide Development of the School’s Comprehensive System of Learning Supports*

Benchmark – An administrative-level lead for component development is in place.

Benchmark – A job description for the position has been established.

Benchmark – The lead has developed a general understanding of a comprehensive system of learning supports and is familiar with resources for preparing others to understand what is involved.

Benchmark – The lead is a member of the school’s decision making and planning teams, and the work is on the agenda regularly.

Guides for Leadership Development

To meet the demand for leadership development, a set of resources that are free and easily accessible have been developed and put online.

(1) **Introductory Webinar:** We suggest starting with the the 15 minute introductory power point <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/powerpoint/briefintroslices.ppt>

(If you would like, you can contact Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and arrange to have a phone hook up with them to talk through the power point presentation with your team – contact Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

(2) **Book:** If the presentation whets your appetite, you and your colleagues can go into greater depth on the various topics by accessing

Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System –

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

(3) **Online Leadership Institute:** There is also a set of online Leadership Institute modules we developed in collaboration with Scholastic’s Rebuilding for Learning initiative as aids in planning and system building for better addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. These webinar sessions are online at –

<http://rebuildingforlearning.scholastic.com/>

The six module online institute currently includes discussion of:

- Why new directions for student and learning supports is *an imperative for school improvement*.
- Framing *a comprehensive intervention system* to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.
- Reworking school and district *operational infrastructure and policy* to effectively build such a system.
- Expanding professional development related to engagement and re-engagement to include an enhanced understanding of intrinsic motivation.
- School transformation in terms of *systemic change* phases and tasks.
- Planning and strategically pursuing *implementation* of a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports as an integrated part of school improvement.

(3) **Examples of New Directions Trailblazers.** Learn from the experiences of those who have moved in new directions. We are continuously updating examples and lessons learning from state department and districts who are designing Comprehensive Systems of Learning Supports and embedding them in school improvement plans. See

>*Where’s it Happening? Trailblazing and Pioneer Initiatives* –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm>

(4) **System Change Toolkit.** Includes many resources for making it happen.

>Toolkit – Transforming Student Supports into a Comprehensive System for Addressing Barriers to Learning/Teaching – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

For example in preparing for Step 3, in the toolkit see:

>a brief overview description of a Learning Supports Leadership Team –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resource%20coord%20team.pdf>

>the more extensive document entitled: *Key Leadership Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Student & Learning Supports* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf

(5) **Need More?** Feel free to contact us if you need more information. Contact Ltaylor@ucla.edu or adelman@psych.ucla.edu

Step 3 in Establishing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Establish a Development Team to Work with the Administrative Lead

The administrative-level *Learning Supports Lead* for developing the school's comprehensive system of learning supports is responsible for identifying and recruiting key staff to a component development team (e.g., a *Learning Supports Leadership Team*). This team works with the leader to prepare the school's version of a design document and a strategic plan for unifying and then developing the component. In the process, this team helps clarify, analyze, identify priorities, recommend resource redeployment, and establish and guide workgroups for developing each facet of the component over a period of several years. They make certain that the strategic plan for the component is fully integrated into the school's overall strategic plan.

Again, remember that efforts to enhance stakeholder readiness and commitment for the work are ongoing.

Tasks specifically related to Step 3 include:

- (a) ***Deciding and then recruiting who will be on the team.*** This is an opportunity for staff and other key stakeholders to play a fundamental role in designing a system at the school that equitably addresses barriers to learning and teaching and re-engages disconnected students.

A brief overview description of who might be on such a team and its various functions is available in the UCLA Center's online toolkit –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resource%20coord%20team.pdf>

- (b) ***Providing appropriate personnel development for the team to get started.*** The members must have time to learn

> the general nature and scope of a comprehensive system of learning supports (see the *Guides for Leadership Development* included as part of Step 2)

> specifics about the work of a Learning Supports Component development team (e.g., a Learning Supports Leadership team)

Besides the brief overview cited above, the Center's toolkit has a more extensive document entitled: *Key Leadership Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Student & Learning Supports* –

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

- (c) ***Reworking the operational infrastructure.*** The establishment of an administrative-level lead for a Learning Supports Component and a team to develop the component constitutes a significant redesign of the school's operational infrastructure. This change should be conveyed to and ratified by key school decision makers and planners.

For a prototype example diagram of what the change might look like, see page 11 in *Key Leadership Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Student & Learning Supports* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf

- (d) ***Initiating and facilitating the team's work.*** Some of the work will be done in team meetings; much will be done in smaller workgroups (see Step 5). Critical first steps involve adopting/adapting a design document and developing a strategic plan.

A discussion based on some lessons learned about facilitating the work of teams and workgroups is provided in *Key Leadership Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Student & Learning Supports* –

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

**Key Examples of Benchmark Indicators Related to
*Establishing a Development Team to Work with the Administrative Lead***

Benchmark – Team members have been identified for component development.

Benchmark – Team members have a broad understanding of a comprehensive system of learning supports and know the specific functions of the team.

Benchmark – Team has adopted/adapted a design document.

Benchmark – Team has prepared a strategic plan.

Benchmark – The school’s operational infrastructure has been reworked to include
(a) the administrative lead for the Learning Supports Component and
(b) a team to develop the component.

Benchmark – The administrative lead is meeting with and facilitating the work of the team; initial workgroups have been formed.

Step 4 in Establishing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Conduct Indepth, Ongoing Analyses to Determine Gaps, Priorities, & Resource Deployment

An essential facet in moving forward in developing a comprehensive system of learning supports involves mapping and analyzing school and community programs and services that already are being used to support students, families, and staff. Done properly, mapping and analyses of resources provide a foundation for making decisions about how to improve the Learning Supports Component at a school. The objectives are to (a) clarify gaps with respect to assessed needs, (b) identify immediate priorities for improvement and system development, and (c) recommend (re)deployment of resources to best meet priorities and to do so in a cost-effective manner. The tasks related to this step are fundamental functions assigned to the administrative lead and the Learning Supports Component development team and probably some small workgroups (see Step 5).

Eventually, a representative from the school's development team can meet with others in the geographic locale to form a family of schools (e.g., a high school and its feeders) to do cross-school analyses in order to coordinate and integrate interventions and capacity building and braid resources with a view to enhancing effectiveness and garnering economies of scale.

Tasks specifically related to Step 4 include:

- (a) **Mapping resources using a comprehensive intervention framework.** An immediate task for the administrative lead and the Learning Supports Component development team is to build on the initial listings of student and learning supports personnel and activities (see Step 1). The teams emphasis is to move beyond the “laundry list” to do an indepth and categorized mapping of all resources the school currently uses to address barriers to learning and teaching and includes whatever resources the community is adding to the mix.

The UCLA Center’s toolkit provides a tool outlining a six step process and a structured intervention framework for charting current activities and resource use –

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

- (b) **Analyzing how and how well resources are being used.** The analysis focuses on clarifying matters such as general system status, intervention effectiveness, efforts needing improvement, critical gaps, and redundancy and wasted resources (e.g., due to fragmentation, lack of coordination and integration).
- (c) **Identifying immediate priorities for system building.** Development of a comprehensive system is accomplished over a period of years. Each year, based on updated resource mapping and analyses with respect to critical needs, a set of realistic developmental priorities must be formulated. The priorities are essential guides for yearly planning and budgeting to improve how the school addresses barriers to learning and teaching.
- As an aid, see *Examples of Areas Schools Might Want to Designate as First Priorities in Developing an Enabling Component* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/infrastructure_tt/examplesofareas.pdf
- (d) **Recommending (re)deployment of resources.** Because there are never enough resources, pursuit of yearly system development priorities need to be accompanied by realistic recommendations for resource allocation. While some new funding may be feasible, a major emphasis is on how to use existing funds and resources to underwrite the priorities. Examples include eliminating and redeploying resources from ineffective or redundant activity, weaving together resources from different funding streams, achieving economies of scale by working with a family of schools, and braiding school and community resources (including volunteers, professionals-in-training) related to overlapping concerns.
- The UCLA Center’s toolkit provides an example from Louisiana of *Funding Stream Integration to Promote Development and Sustainability of a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fundingstream.pdf>
- (e) **Making the system visible.** The above tasks yield a good deal of information that needs to be shared in various ways with different stakeholder groups. Products can be developed to facilitate planning, to clarify available resources and how to access them, and to publicize the schools efforts to enable all students to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. Some schools simply reproduce their mapping products and post and distribute them to staff and other stakeholders. Others expand the process to ensure there is greater awareness and enhanced

appreciation of the work by including major, strategically placed public displays (e.g., in halls and staff rooms) and highlight the work in newsletters.

Examples of products used to enhance visibility are provided in the UCLA Center's online resource entitled: *Resource Mapping and Management to Address Barriers to Learning: an Intervention for Systemic Change* –

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

- (f) ***Updating the work on a regular basis.*** Clearly, the above tasks are ongoing. To facilitate a regular updating, the team should establish a computer file and eventually create a spreadsheet format.

Key Examples of Benchmark Indicators Related to *Conducting Indepth, Ongoing Analyses to Determine Gaps, Priorities, & Resource Deployment*

Benchmark – A listing of all student and learning support staff and what they do.

Benchmark – An indepth and structured map of all resources the school currently uses and that the community adds to address barriers to learning and teaching.

Benchmark – A document summarizing the analysis of general system status, intervention effectiveness, efforts needing improvement, critical gaps, and current redundant efforts and wasted resources.

Benchmark – A formulation of current priorities for improving the system.

Benchmark – A set of specific & feasible recommendations for resource allocation.

Benchmark – Several indicators of how the system is being made visible.

Benchmark – A plan (e.g., schedule, process) for updating the analyses.

Step 5 in Establishing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Form and Facilitate Needed Workgroups

Much of the development of a comprehensive system of learning supports requires the efforts of small ad hoc and standing workgroups. Initially, these may be various “teams” that already exist to address student and learning supports concerns (e.g., a crisis team, a student assistance team, an IEP team). Where redundancy exists, workgroups can be combined. Others workgroups can be formed as needed by the Learning Supports Component development team to address specific concerns. Workgroups are essential for accomplishing the many tasks associated with establishing a comprehensive system of learning supports. Usually, each workgroup will be facilitated by a member of the component’s development team.

Tasks specifically related to Step 5 include:

(a) **Recruiting workgroup members.** This is an opportunity for staff and other key stakeholders to play a fundamental role in establishing a system at the school that equitably addresses barriers to learning and teaching and re-engages disconnected students. To enhance the pool of resources, a general invitation should be announced to all stakeholders (staff, community members, volunteers, families), and specific invitations should be issued to key individuals. In some instances, a reluctant individual who is intricately involved in what is being worked on may have to be called to duty by the school administration.

(b) **Providing appropriate personnel development for workgroups.** The members must have time to learn

> the general nature and scope of a comprehensive system of learning supports
(see the *Guides for Leadership Development* included as part of Step 2)

> specifics about the Learning Supports Component development team and workgroup functions
(see the Center’s toolkit for the brief overview and also review the more extensive document entitled: *Key Leadership Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Student & Learning Supports* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf)

(c) **Initiating and facilitating the activity of work groups.** A member of the Learning Supports Component development team should be appointed as the facilitator for a workgroup.

A discussion based on some lessons learned about facilitating the work of teams and workgroups is provided in *Key Leadership Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Student & Learning Supports* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf

**Key Examples of Benchmark Indicators Related to
*Forming and Facilitating Needed Workgroups***

Benchmark – Workgroups are pursuing priority tasks related to component development.

Benchmark – Workgroups have a general understanding of a comprehensive system of learning supports and the functions of the component team and the workgroup in which they are involved.

Benchmark – Each workgroup has an effective facilitator.

Step 6 in Establishing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Provide Ongoing Professional and Other Stakeholder Development

Because of the newness and complexity of developing a comprehensive system of learning supports, special attention must be paid to planning and implementing continuous learning at the school related to a comprehensive system of learning supports. The need, over time, is for on-the-job opportunities to learn, as well as special times for continuous learning and processes that involve learning with others (e.g., as a learning community).

Clearly, ongoing professional development is essential for those assigned to establish the Learning Supports Component. At the same time, we stress that the success of a comprehensive system of learning supports is dependent on all others involved with the school (teachers, student support staff, other staff, volunteers, community stakeholders) learning much more than usually is the case about how best to address barriers to learning and teaching, promote healthy development, and enhance general well-being.

Aids for designing such continuous learning are readily available through the UCLA Center's website and the no fee technical assistance provided by the Center staff via email and phone.

Tasks specifically related to Step 6 include:

- (a) ***Bringing Other School Stakeholders Up-to-Date re. a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports.*** As soon as feasible, everyone needs to understand the nature and scope of (a) addressing barriers to learning and teaching and (b) the comprehensive system being developed to ensure that all students and teachers have the supports needed to ensure improved student outcomes.
- (b) ***Developing and Implementing Indepth Inservice Opportunities for All Involved with Students.*** Effectively addressing barriers to learning and teaching requires deepening the learning of teachers, student support staff, other staff, volunteers, and interested community stakeholders. This calls for multiyear plans that are fully integrated into the school's inservice agenda. Examples of topics include:
- > *Intrinsic Motivation, Engagement, & Re-engagement: Moving Away from Over-relying on Extrinsic Reinforcers*
 - > *Enhancing School Climate: The Critical Role of Learning Supports*
 - > *Learning Supports in the Classroom*
 - > *Supports for Key Student Transitions*
 - > *Supports for Home Involvement and Engagement*
 - > *Supports for Involving and Engaging Community Resources*
 - > *Enhancing Prevention of and Response to School Crises*
 - > *Enhancing Student and Family Assistance*

For online resources related to such topics, see the UCLA Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Finds – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm>

- (c) ***Providing Ongoing Capacity Building for Those Directly Involved in Developing the System.*** Most of those working on establishing a comprehensive system of learning supports will not have had sufficient training in the processes and problems of making major *systemic changes*. Learning related to these matters must be an early focus in their continuing learning agenda.

Over time, they will also need to learn about on matters such as:

- > *Training Student Support Staff to Work in Classrooms to Help Teachers Enhance the Ways Learning Supports are Provided for All Students*
- > *Connecting Schools in Ways that Strengthen Learning Supports*
- > *Connecting School, Home, and Community to Braid Together Resources for Dealing with Overlapping Concerns*

For online resources related to such topics, see the UCLA Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Finds – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm>

**Key Examples of Benchmark Indicators Related to
*Providing Ongoing Professional and Other Stakeholder Development***

Benchmark – Key stakeholders indicate an up-to-date awareness and appreciation of how and why the school is developing a comprehensive system of learning supports.

Benchmark – Inservice plans include a specific focus on deepening the learning of teachers, student support staff, other staff, volunteers, and interested community stakeholders with respect to effectively addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Benchmark – Based on those facets of inservice planning that have been implemented, determine whether what has been learned is reflected in classroom and schoolwide practices.

Benchmark – Plans are in place for ongoing capacity building for those directly involved in developing the comprehensive system of learning supports.

Benchmark – Based on those facets of capacity building that have been implemented, determine whether what has been learned is reflected in system changes.

Step 7 in Establishing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Use Formative Evaluation to Support Progress

Outcome accountability should arise from ongoing formative evaluation. And formative evaluation should encompass data on and analyses of all facets of planning and implementation related to developing a comprehensive system of learning supports. Moreover, appropriate formative evaluation is designed to provide guidance and support that fosters development of the system. This means monitoring all factors that facilitate and hinder progress and then ensuring actions are taken to deal with interfering factors and to enhance facilitation. As significant progress is made in developing the system, the monitoring can expand to evaluate the impact on student outcomes that are direct indicators of the effectiveness of learning supports (e.g., increased attendance, reduced misbehavior, improved learning, enhanced well-being).

With the movement toward Common Core Standards (for curriculum), it is clear that use of *common core standards for learning supports* will become increasingly important in all evaluation and accountability efforts related to directly addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

Tasks specifically related to Step 7 include:

- (a) ***Establishing and Implementing a monitoring process.*** During Step 1, the Principal monitors the impact of efforts to create readiness and commitment. Once Steering Group members are identified, that group becomes the next mechanism for monitoring process and progress. Then, when the administrative lead and the development team are operational, they become the mechanism for daily monitoring, reviewing benchmarks, and ensuring ongoing guidance and support. The Principal and the Steering Group remain the mechanism for monitoring how well the vision, standards, and overall objectives are being met.

With respect to *Common Core Standards for Learning Supports* and related indicators, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/commcore.pdf>

- (b) ***Using benchmark findings to improve system development.*** All the benchmarks for Steps 1-6 provide a basis for evaluating process and progress. The benchmarks for Step 7 provide feedback on how well formative evaluation efforts are working.

Once significant progress is made in developing the system, the monitoring can be expanded to evaluate direct student outcomes indicators of the effectiveness of learning supports.

For examples of short-term outcome indicators, see the Center brief document entitled *About Short-term Outcome Indicators for School Use . . .*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/outind.pdf>

- (c) ***Celebrating progress.*** While it seems obvious that progress should be publicized and celebrated, the demands of every school day make it all too easy to ignore this task. As the system develops, each new facet needs to be shared with all interested stakeholders in highly visible ways. Celebrations of progress with recognition of those who produced it should be a regular agenda and calendar item.

**Key Examples of Benchmark Indicators Related to
*Using Formative Evaluation to Support Progress***

Benchmark – Mechanisms are in place for conducting formative evaluation.

Benchmark – Data from all benchmarks are collated and analyzed.

Benchmark – Actions are taken to provide guidance and support in ways that counter interfering factors and enhance facilitation of progress.

Benchmark – Progress is publicized to interested stakeholders and celebrated in ways that commend those responsible.