

Appendix E

Facilitative Mechanism's Functions and Interrelationship

Once the design document is produced, the need is to establish and prepare a set of temporary systemic change mechanisms. These are illustrated and discussed in Chapter 12. Below are some key functions of each mechanism. Note these are working examples meant to clarify what each does and how it interacts with the others.

Superintendent and Governing Body

Functions

- appoints the transformation leader
- ensures policy is in place to facilitate unifying and developing a comprehensive system of learning supports and implementing the necessary systemic changes
- uses a variety of platforms and venues to indicate championship of the new system and to inform and engage key stakeholders
- reviews regular reports on progress and addresses barriers that interfere with moving forward
- institutionalizes the changes into policy, the organizational and operational infrastructures, strategic plans, budgets, and standards and accountability indicators
- uses external collaborators to obtain consultation, professional development, and technical assistance as necessary
- celebrates progress

Transformation Leader – In our work, this logically is the administrative leader for student and learning supports.

Functions

- provides leadership and oversight in maintaining the vision and supporting progress
- works with superintendent and governing body to facilitate the above functions
- establishes and works with all systemic change mechanisms
- ensures provisions are made for the capacity building of each mechanism to ensure each can carry out its functions effectively
- provides opportunities for interchange & additional in-depth presentations to build a critical mass of consensus for and engagement in systemic changes
- works with external collaborators to obtain consultation, professional development, and technical assistance as necessary
- monitors and evaluates progress and addresses barriers that interfere with moving forward
- provides regular reports on the work to superintendent and governing body
- celebrates progress

Steering Body – consists of "champions" who agree to steer the process. (Some members of the group may also be internal coaches and mentors.) The members must have an in-depth understanding of what is involved in unifying and developing a comprehensive system of learning supports and be highly motivated not just to help get things underway but to ensure sustainability.

Functions

- provides a broad-based and potent leadership and oversight mechanism for maintaining the vision and overseeing and supporting progress
- provides support for the Transformation Leader
- champions the new system and ensures that key stakeholders are informed and engaged
- arranges for and analyzes the mapping of resources and infrastructure and delineates implications for systemic change
- reviews and approves the action plan the Planning Team develops
- monitors and evaluates progress and addresses barriers that interfere with moving forward
- works with external collaborators to obtain consultation, professional development, and technical assistance as necessary
- recommends policy changes to facilitate unifying and developing a comprehensive system of learning supports and implementing the necessary systemic changes
- uses a variety of platforms and venues to indicate championship of the new system

- recommends ways to institutionalize and sustain the systemic changes (e.g., changes in organizational and operational infrastructure, strategic plans, and budgets; capacity building)
- celebrates progress

Composition. The Steering Group should not be too large. It needs a few high level, well-connected "champions" and the key change agents (e.g., the administrative leader and other system change staff) who have responsibility for implementation.

Process. Initially, the group meets formally once a week, with informal contacts among members as necessary. The external collaborators can help provide capacity building input for the group (and for the other systemic change mechanisms as they are established). Progress monitoring and process problem solving requires regular input from key change agents. Periodically, to work against the perception that it is a closed, elite group, it can host "focus groups" to elicit input and feedback, provide information, and problem solve.

Planning Team for Transformative Systemic Changes – This team develops action plans accounting for both direct implementation and systemic change considerations. The focus of initial action planning is on start-up and phase-in. These involve specific steps and can be broken down into specific tasks for action planning and monitoring of progress. The members must begin with an in-depth understanding of what is involved in unifying and developing a comprehensive system of learning supports and be highly motivated not just to help get things underway but to ensure sustainability.

Functions

- prepares draft action plan for start-up and phase-in
- establishes work groups as necessary to help with plan development
- submits plan for revision and eventual approval
- once approved, prepares a draft plan for sustainability
- submits sustainability plan revision and eventual approval
- ensures the Implementation Team develops the capacity to carry out the plan effectively
- develops a benchmark tool to monitor progress
- works with external collaborators to obtain consultation, professional development, and technical assistance as necessary
- adapts and reworks plans as needed

Composition. The Planning Team should not be too large. It needs members who are experienced in formulating action plans and who understand the limitations and gaps in the current system. Logical members are representatives from the Steering Group, the Design Team, and others leading school improvement and providing learning/student supports. Where special expertise is needed, work groups can be used.

Process. This should be a time-defined task requiring about 4 weekly meetings, with drafts prepared and shared between meetings. The focus in meetings is on clarifying feedback and guidance for improving sections of the plan that are under development. External collaborators can help provide capacity building input for the group. To ensure input from those who have been identified as key stakeholders, the team can share the working products of their efforts and encourage feedback. Such an interactive process helps to build consensus and create readiness for action.

Implementation Team – This team facilitates both direct implementation and systemic change as laid out in the action plan.

Functions. Focus is on implementing specific start-up and phase-in action plan with a view to sustainability. Examples of tasks include

- establishing operational infrastructure for unifying and developing a comprehensive system of learning supports (e.g., Administrative Lead, Learning Supports Leadership Team, Workgroups)
- ensuring infrastructure establishes processes for communication, visibility of the work, information management, problems solving, etc.

- working to increase stakeholder readiness for, commitment to, and engagement in planned changes
- ensuring capacity building for implementation
- ensuring progress is monitored and that plans are revised as needed
- working with external collaborators to obtain consultation, professional development, and technical assistance as necessary
- celebrating progress

Composition. At each level (state department, region, district, school), an Implementation Team consists of 2-3 personnel who are specifically designated and trained to facilitate the planned systemic changes at that level.

Process. At each level, an Implementation Team works with the leader who is responsible for the systemic changes. At department and regional levels, the transformation leader and the Steering Team can constitute an implementation team. At the district level, the team first facilitates central office changes and then establishes a pattern and schedule for working with each participating school and families of schools.

External collaborators/change agents focus on training leaders and can help provide capacity building input for all involved in implementation.

Examples of Benefits from Drawing on External Expertise

External Change Agents (including mentors, coaches). Such change agents add major value in deepening understanding and facilitating implementation of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports and do so in ways that enhance sustainability.

Functions. Facilitating the development and operation of all mechanisms and professional development of leaders (e.g., training of trainers). Focus includes mentoring and coaching to help leaders plan and implement

- capacity building with an emphasis on creating readiness and commitment both in terms of motivation and skills, team building, providing technical assistance, and organizing basic interdisciplinary and "cross-training"
- priority setting
- supports for carrying out specific tasks
- communication, liaison, interface among mechanisms
- formative evaluation, progress monitoring, rapid problem solving, and accountability
- ongoing supports for sustainability
- revisions in planning as needed
- celebrating progress

External Collaborators (e.g. UCLA)

Functions

- providing prototypes and expertise for both direct implementation and systemic change considerations
- providing professional development and ongoing technical assistance
- customizing and creating additional implementation and outreach tools as needed
- championing and sharing the work nationally and providing regional and state level platforms
- including the work as part of new directions for student and learning supports dissemination and diffusion efforts
- connecting leadership with other state and district leaders who are implementing the work in order to help problem solve and share best practice
- supporting overview documentation and progress/outcomes/impact
- celebrating progress

