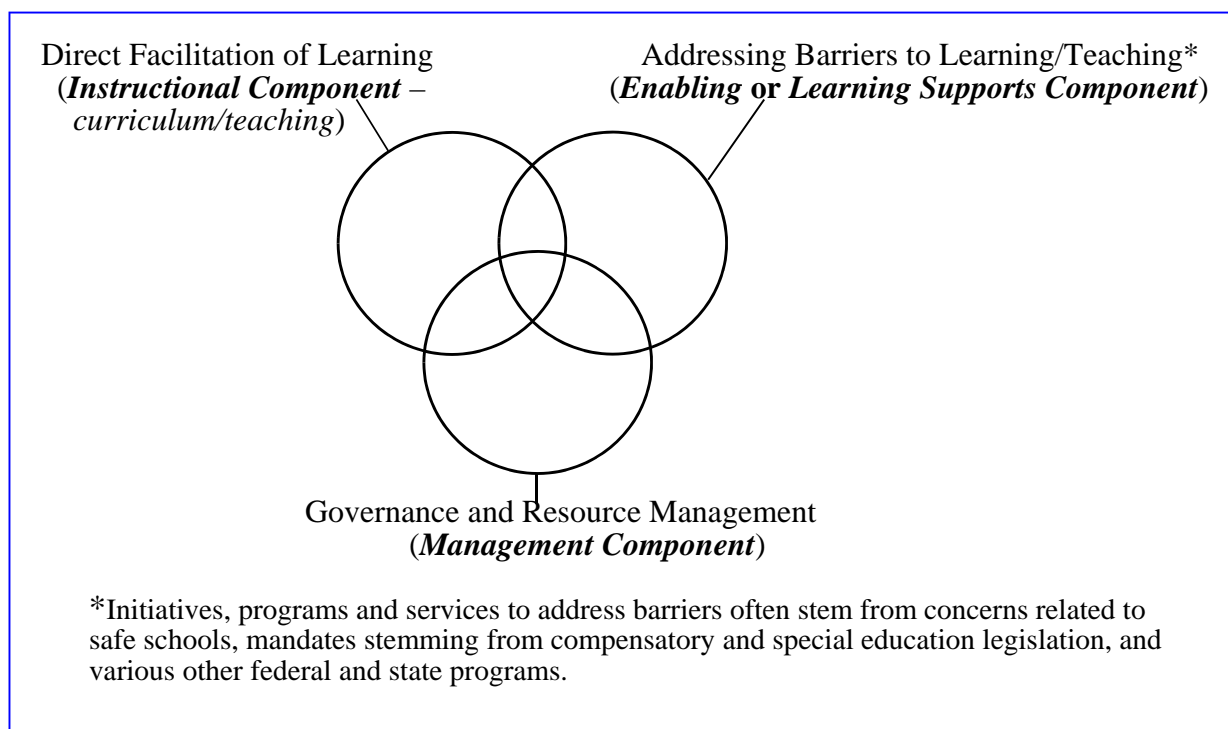# Standards for a Learning Supports Component

When policy makers introduce another initiative for education reform, the press to implement the new initiative often draws attention away from other essential facets involved in improving and transforming schools. Currently, this is happening with the *Common Core State Standards* movement.

Efforts to revamp schools cannot afford to marginalize any primary and essential facet of what must take place at schools everyday. Thus, policy must attend to all three of the major interrelated functional arenas that schools pursue day-in and day-out (see below).

Direct Facilitation of Learning
(***Instructional Component*** –
curriculum/teaching)

Addressing Barriers to Learning/Teaching*
(***Enabling*** or ***Learning Supports Component***)

Governance and Resource Management
(***Management Component***)

*Initiatives, programs and services to address barriers often stem from concerns related to safe schools, mandates stemming from compensatory and special education legislation, and various other federal and state programs.

From this three component perspective, it is evident that focusing on curriculum standards certainly is necessary. However, with respect to improving and transforming schools, this limited emphasis needs to expand to fully account for the other two components.

That is why some of those involved in the Common Core State Standards movement have updated existing model standards for *teaching* (InTASC Standards, CCSSO, 2011). And that is why now is the time to also move forward in developing common core standards for a unified and comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching (including re-engagement of disconnected students). Standards for a *learning supports* system are essential to enhancing equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school and, therefore, are essential to teacher and school success.

By developing *interrelated standards* for (1) curriculum and teaching, (2) a learning supports system to address factors that interfere with learning and teaching, and (3) school governance/management, the standards movement will provide a much-needed foundation upon which states, districts, schools, and classrooms can build and succeed.

Rationale for Learning Supports System Standards

School improvement discussions across the country are standards-based and accountability driven. Efforts to improve instruction (curriculum and teaching) are developing common core state standards. Efforts to address external and internal factors that interfere with learning and teaching need to do the same.

About Interfering Factors

At some time or another, every student brings problems with them that affect their learning and perhaps interfere with the teacher's efforts to teach. In some geographic areas, many youngsters bring a wide range of problems stemming from restricted opportunities associated with poverty and low income, difficult and diverse family circumstances, homeless and foster care status, high rates of mobility, lack of English language skills, violent neighborhoods, problems related to substance abuse, inadequate health care, and lack of enrichment opportunities. Such problems are exacerbated as youngsters internalize the frustrations of confronting barriers and the debilitating effects of performing poorly at school. In some locales, the reality often is that over 50% of students are not succeeding. And, in most schools in these locales, teachers are ill-prepared and poorly supported to address the problems in a potent manner.

Moreover, too many of these students are being inappropriately referred for special education. A unified comprehensive system designed to enable learning can play a major role in stemming the tide of inappropriate referrals. They do this by systemically and directly focusing on factors that *interfere* with successful teaching and through a unified and comprehensive approach for working with students manifesting moderate-to-severe learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

Examples of Risk-Producing Conditions that Can be Barriers to Learning

E n v i r o n m e n t a l   C o n d i t i o n s*   **Person Factors***

Neighborhood	*Family*	*School and Peers*	*Individual*
>extreme economic deprivation >community disorganization, including high levels of mobility and crime >violence, drugs, etc. >gangs >racial and ethnic conflicts	>chronic poverty >conflict/disruptions/violence >substance abuse >modeling of problem behavior >abusive/neglectful/over-involved caretaking >inadequate provision for quality child care >problems stemming from minority, immigrant, homeless, foster care, juvenile offender status	>enrollment and attendance hurdles >poor quality school that results in a poor match for the range of learners >negative encounters with teachers >negative encounters with peers &/or inappropriate peer models	>medical problems >low birth weight/ neurodevelopmental delay >psychophysiological problems >difficult temperament & adjustment problems >inadequate nutrition >English is a second language >learning and mental disorders >exceptionally bright

*A reciprocal determinist view of behavior recognizes the interplay of environment and person variables.

Acknowledging factors that can be barriers to learning and teaching in no way is meant as an excuse for poor school performance. It is simply underscoring common sense. While schools and districts are moving to high-quality, rigorous, grade-level instruction, their success depends on addressing barriers.

Current Efforts to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching Need Revamping

It is easy to say that schools must ensure that *all* students succeed. If all students came motivationally ready and able to profit from "high standards"curricula, then there would be little problem. But *all* encompasses those who are experiencing *external* and *internal* barriers that interfere with enrolling, attending, and benefitting from what teachers are offering. Thus, providing all students an equal opportunity to succeed requires *much more than* higher standards and expectations, greater accountability for instruction, and better teaching (and certainly more than increased discipline, reduced school violence, and an end to social promotion).

At present, to address interfering factors, schools have instituted support programs designed to tackle a range of learning, behavior, and emotional problems. Across a district, there are efforts to mitigate and alleviate school adjustment, attendance, and mobility problems, substance abuse, emotional problems, relationship difficulties, violence, physical and sexual abuse, delinquency, and dropouts.

Some of these programs are provided throughout a school district, others are carried out at – or linked to – targeted schools. Some of the programs are owned and operated by districts; some are managed by community agencies. The interventions may be for all students in a school, for those in specified grades, for those identified as "at risk," or for those in need of compensatory or special education.

School based and school linked support programs generally focus on responding to crises, early intervention and some forms of treatment. There also may be a focus on prevention and enhancement of healthy development (e.g., promotion of positive physical, social and emotional development) through use of health education, health services, guidance, and so forth.

As is widely recognized, student support programs are terribly fragmented and marginalized in school improvement policy and practice. At some schools, it is commonplace for support staff to function in relative isolation of each other and other stakeholders, with too much of the work oriented to addressing discrete problems and providing specialized services for relatively few students. In some schools, a student identified as at risk for grade retention, dropout, and substance abuse may be the focus of several professionals operating independently of each other. Moreover, the contexts, operational infrastructure, and in-service professional development for intervention planning and implementation often are limited and makeshift. Many programs and related efforts to prevent and correct problems are assigned space and personnel on an ad hoc basis. Support personnel often must rotate among schools as itinerant staff.

Research indicates that the current deficiencies related to student and learning supports are the result of how such supports have been conceptualized and how they are marginalized in school policy improvement policy and practice.

Standards for a Learning Supports Component:
Moving Beyond Marginalization and Fragmentation

For the curriculum standards to succeed, schools must have good teaching. And they also must have a unified and comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, including re-engaging disconnected students.

For purposes of developing the standards for a learning supports component, learning supports are defined as the resources, strategies, and practices that provide physical, social, emotional, and intellectual supports to enable all students to have an equal opportunity for success at school by directly addressing barriers to learning and teaching, including re-engaging disconnected students. Learning supports are designed to *enable* learning by addressing external and internal factors that interfere with students engaging effectively with instruction.

Establishing standards for a system of learning supports is essential to revamping and revitalizing such supports and making them an integral component of school improvement. The standards will help move learning supports from their current marginalized status by establishing them as a primary priority for school improvement policy and practice. Such standards will guide the development of student and learning supports into a unified and comprehensive component at every school.

Developing standards for a *system* of learning supports provides the foundation for improving standards related to specific subgroups of student and school support staff (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, special educators, office staff, school resource officers, bus drivers) and standards related to specific subgroups of students (e.g., those with special needs).

A learning supports system must play out effectively in classrooms and school-wide and must connect effectively with district programs (e.g., federally funded programs) and must outreach to the surrounding community to fill gaps and collaborate in addressing overlapping concerns. Once established at schools, families of schools can enhance effectiveness and achieve economies of scale through collaboration. All this is fundamental for strengthening safety net supports for children and adolescents.

Because it is critical that schools develop a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports, standards need to be conceived in terms of a school level component. School-based standards can readily be adapted for adoption by district, regional, and state educational agencies.

Development of learning supports standards in no way minimizes the importance of curriculum and teaching standards. Every teacher must have the ability and resources to bring a sound curriculum to life and apply strategies that make learning meaningful and carried out in a caring and mutually respectful climate. Appropriately conceived standards for curriculum and teaching can contribute to all this. At the same time, a standards-based learning supports component at a school provides essential supports for teachers with respect to students who are not benefitting appropriately from offers of good instruction.

The following proposed Standards for a Learning Supports Component and related quality indicators incorporate input from a variety of resources and professionals across the country and are intended to ensure that the nature and scope of such a system is understood with a view to adoption.

In reading the standards and quality indicators, remember that:

- While these standards and indicators focus at the school level, they provide a guide for establishing policy at state, regional, and district levels and can readily be adapted for adoption by state, regional, and district educational agencies.

- The standards and indicators focus on enabling learning by (1) framing and delineating intervention functions, (2) reworking operational infrastructure, (3) enhancing resource use, (4) continuous capacity building, and (5) continuous evaluation and appropriate accountability for system performance and those student outcomes that are directly related to addressing barriers.

- The standards and indicators are designed to establish a *system* that encompasses and benefits all students; thus no specific subgroups of students are identified or singled out (except in disaggregating student data).

- The standards embed all student and learning supports programs and services into a *unified component*; thus no specific approaches are identified/singled out.

- The standards stress that all staff have a role to play in addressing barriers to learning and teaching, including re-engaging disconnected students; thus the work of specific subgroups of professionals are not identified/singled out.

- As standards and related indicators for a learning supports *system*, the set provides a base upon which the needs of specific student subgroup, the contributions of various professional specialties and specific programs, and the unique considerations of localities can build.

Standards for a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

The following standards are formulated around five areas of concern that confront schools developing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports: (1) *Framing and Delineating Intervention Functions*, (2) *Reworking Operational Infrastructure*, (3) *Enhancing Resource Use*, (4) *Continuous Capacity Building*, and (5) *Continuous Evaluation and Appropriate Accountability*. (See Appendix for Quality Indicators.)

AREA: *FRAMING AND DELINEATING INTERVENTION FUNCTIONS*

Standard 1. Establishment of an overall *unifying intervention framework* for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, including re-engaging disconnected students.

A *Learning Supports Component* is a systemic approach that is committed to enabling the learning of all students and is fully integrated into the school's strategic improvement plan as a primary and essential component overlapping the instructional and management components. The supports are operationalized into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive intervention framework. One facet of this framework is a continuum of integrated, overlapping subsystems that embrace both school and community resources (e.g., subsystems to promote positive development, prevent problems, respond early after problem onset, and treat severe-chronic problems) . Note that this intervention continuum is not well operationalized simply as tiers or levels of school intervention. Rather, the standard is that each level is developed as a subsystem that weaves together school and community resources, and each subsystem covers a delineated set of "content" arenas.

A conceptualization that organizes a delineated set of content arenas for addressing barriers to learning and teaching is the other facet of the framework. To illustrate standards for content arenas, the following uses the six arenas designated in the intervention framework prototype being used by pioneering states and districts.

Standard 1 addendum: Specific standards for the content arenas of a learning supports component

While the number and labels for designated content arenas may differ, as Standard 1 states: Schools need to deal with a conceptualization that organizes the content arenas for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, with due appreciation for the role played by efforts to promote assets and healthy development. (As one of the quality performance indicators for Standard 1 indicates, rather than a fragmented, "laundry-list" of programs, services, and activities, the learning supports need to be organized into a concise content or "curriculum" framework that categorizes and captures the essence of the multifaceted ways schools need to address barriers to learning at school.)

>### *Standard 1a.* Continuous enhancement of regular *classroom strategies to enable learning* (e.g., to ensure learning is personalized for all students and especially those manifesting mild-moderate learning and behavior problems and to re-engage those who have become disengaged from learning at school; providing special individual learning accommodations and supports as necessary; addressing external barriers)

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

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

> *Standard 1d.* **Continuous enhancement of programs and systems for responding to, and where feasible, preventing school and personal crises and trauma** (including creating a caring and safe learning environment and countering the impact of out-of-school traumatic events)

> *Standard 1e.* **Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to increase and strengthen** *community involvement and support* (e.g., outreach to develop greater community involvement and support from a wide range of entities, including enhanced use of volunteers and agency collaborations)

> *Standard 1f.* **Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to facilitate** *student and family access to effective services and special assistance on campus and in the community as needed.*

AREA: *REWORKING OPERATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE*

Standard 2. **Establishment of an** *integrated operational infrastructure* **for the ongoing planning and development of the learning supports component.**

Developing and institutionalizing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports requires mechanisms within a school, among families of schools, at the district level, and between school and community. All mechanisms must be integrated with each other and fully integrated into school improvement efforts and school-community collaborations. The need at all levels is to rework operational infrastructure in ways that support efforts to address barriers to learning in a cohesive manner and to integrate the work with instruction and with the management/ governance mechanisms. This requires dedicated administrative and staff leadership (with such leadership fully involved in governance, planning and implementation). Ongoing development and implementation requires work groups focused on school improvement and intervention development functions such as mapping, analysis, and priority setting for resource allocation and integration, system and program development, communication and information management, capacity building (with special emphasis on staff development), and quality improvement and accountability.

AREA: *ENHANCING RESOURCE USE*

Standard 3. **Appropriate resource use and allocation for developing, maintaining, and evolving the component.**

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

AREA: *CONTINUOUS CAPACITY BUILDING*

Standard 4. Capacity building for developing, maintaining, and evolving the component.

Capacity building involves enhancing ongoing component and stakeholder development and performance. The work requires allocation of resources to provide effective and efficient mechanisms and personnel to carry out a myriad of capacity building functions. Professional development requires a personalized and differentiated approach designed to address role responsibilities and related accountability and differences in motivation and level of professional development at all levels.

AREA: *CONTINUOUS EVALUATION AND APPROPRIATE ACCOUNTABILITY*

Standard 5. Formative and summative evaluation and accountability are fully integrated into all planning and implementation of the component.

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

A Note About School Climate and Culture

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

A Sample of References

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Sample Related to Student-Learning Supports & School Climate Standards

ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (3rd ed) http://ascamodel.timberlakepublishing.com/files/Executive%20Summary%203.0.pdf

American School Counselor Association National Standards for Students http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/ASCA_National_Standards_for_Students.pdf

Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs (3rd ed) http://nrckids.org/CFOC3/

National Association of School Psychologists 2010 Standards –
consists of four separate documents:
(a) Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists (formerly Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology),
(b) Standards for the Credentialing of School Psychologists,
(c) Principles for Professional Ethics, and the
(d) Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services (formerly Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services
http://www.nasponline.org/standards/2010standards.aspx

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Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education (2012). www.ed.gov/policy/restraintseclusion

School Climate Standards
http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/standards.php

School Climate Implementation Road Map. National School Climate Center (2012).
http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/roadmap.php

Sample of Relevant State Standards and Guidelines

California Standards of Quality and Effectiveness For Pupil Personnel Services Credentials: School Counseling, School Psychology, School Social Work, Child Welfare and Attendance
http://www.hhs.csus.edu/SWRK/document/PDF/PPSStand.pdf#search='Standards%20of%20Quality%20and%20Effectiveness%20For%20Pupil%20Personnel%20Services%20Credentials:%20School%20Counseling,%20School%20Psychology,%20School%20Social%20Work,%20Child%20Welfare%20and%20Attendance

Connecticut's Comprehensive School Counseling: A Guide to Comprehensive School Counseling Program Development
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/counseling.pdf

Hawaii's Standards Database
http://wetserver.net/hcpsv3_staging/cc/index.jsp

Illinois Learning Standards: Social/Emotional Learning
http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm

Illinois Standards for School Psychologists
http://www.isbe.state.il.us/profprep/CASCDvr/pdfs/23130_schoolpsy.pdf

Illinois Standards for the School Social Worker
http://www.isbe.state.il.us/profprep/CASCDvr/pdfs/23140_schoolsocwork.pdf

Iowa Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program Development Guide
http://www.schoolcounselor.org/files/iowa.pdf

Indiana Standards for School Social Work Professionals
http://www.insswa.org/Standards-Indiana_School_Social_Work.pdf

New York's Educating the Whole Child, Engaging the Whole School: Guidelines and Resources for Social and Emotional Development and Learning (SEDL)
http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/sedl/

North Carolina Professional School Social Work Standards
http://www.ncpublicschools.org/studentsupport/socialwork/standards/

North Carolina Professional School Psychology Standards
http://www.ncpublicschools.org/studentsupport/psychology/standards/

North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards
http://www.ncpublicschools.org/studentsupport/counseling/standards/

Ohio State Department of Education: Comprehensive System of Learning Supports Guidelines
http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=5&ContentID=29853&Content=119551

Pennsylvania School Counselors Association
http://www.psca-web.org/PA%20Companion%20Guide.shtml

Texas Collaborative for Emotional Development in Schools www.txceds.org

Texas's School Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools (4th ed)
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=4207

Washington State School Social Work Standards
http://www.wassw.org/washington-state-school-social-work-standards.html

For some additional relevant references, see the Center for Mental Health in School's Online Clearinghouse Quick Find on *Standards* **–**
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/guidframstand.htm

Appendix

Quality Indicators for Each Standard

The following indicators reflect standards at the school level. They can be readily adapted for district, regional, state, and federal levels.

Area: *Framing and Delineating Intervention Functions*

Standard 1. **Establishment of an overall *unifying intervention framework* for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, including re-engaging disconnected students.**

A *Learning Supports Component* is a systemic approach that is committed to enabling the learning of all students and is fully integrated into the school's strategic improvement plan. It is conceived as a primary and essential component for every school, overlapping the instructional and management components. The Learning Supports Component is operationalized into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive intervention framework. One facet of this framework is the *continuum* delineating the scope of desired intervention (i.e., promoting healthy development and preventing problems, early-after-onset intervention, and treatment of severe and chronic problems). The other facet is a conceptualization that organizes the *content arenas* for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, with due appreciation for the role played by efforts to promote assets and healthy development.

Quality Indicators for Standard 1:

(a) The school leadership team has established a policy that commits to development of a unified and comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students, *and* the policy has been translated into an intervention framework designed to guide development of an Learning Supports Component.

  (1) All learning supports are embedded within the intervention continuum and content framework (including all prevention programs, compensatory and special education mandates, and all special initiatives and projects designed to address barriers to learning and teaching).

  (2) The continuum of programs and services are organized into a set of *integrated subsystems*. The subsystems range from promoting assets and healthy development, and preventing problems – through responding to problems soon after onset – to providing special assistance for severe and chronic problems. Such a continuum encompasses efforts to enable academic, social, emotional, and physical development and address learning, behavior, and emotional problems at every school and through connections with home and community resources.

(3) Rather than a fragmented, "laundry-list" of programs, services, and activities, the learning supports are organized into a concise content framework that categorizes and captures the essence of the multifaceted ways schools need to address barriers to learning. For purposes of these standards, content is formulated as encompassing six arenas of intervention activity (see addendum to Standard 1).

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

(b) The intervention framework has been operationalized and incorporated into the school's strategic plan for improvement in ways that fully integrate it with the instructional and governance/management components.

(c) The school plan for the Component is being implemented in keeping with established priorities by building on what exists *and* then moving toward full development in phases.

(d) All interventions (including assessment activity) are based on state of the art best practices for establishing a unified and comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and promote positive development.

(1) Learning supports are applied in all instances where there is need. They are systematically implemented using practices that ensure needs are assessed and addressed in ways that match a student's motivation as well as capabilities and with as little disruption as feasible of a student's normal involvement at school.
(2) Library, multimedia, and advanced technology resources are used as appropriate to facilitate intervention efforts. This includes the school's computerized information management system, which should incorporate a broad range of formative and summative data related to the Component's work with students and families.

(e) School stakeholders express understanding and support for the importance of fully developing the Component.

Because of the importance of each content arena, specific standards for each are delineated below:

Standard 1 addendum: **Specific standards for the content arenas of a learning supports component**

While the number and labels for designated content arenas may differ, as Standard 1 states: Schools need to deal with a conceptualization that organizes the "content" arenas for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, with due appreciation for the role played by efforts to promote assets and healthy development. (As one of the quality performance indicators for Standard 1 indicates, rather than a fragmented, "laundry-list" of programs, services, and activities, the learning supports need to be organized into a concise content or "curriculum" framework that categorizes and captures the essence of the multifaceted ways schools need to address barriers to learning at school.) To illustrate content standards here, content is formulated below as encompassing six arenas of intervention activity.

>*Standard 1a.* **Continuous enhancement of regular** *classroom strategies to enable learning* (e.g., to ensure learning is personalized for all students and especially those manifesting mild-moderate learning and behavior problems and to re-engage those who have become disengaged from learning at school; providing special individual learning accommodations and supports as necessary; addressing external barriers)

Quality Indicators for Standard 1a:

(a) Regular support is provided teachers for redesigning classroom practices in ways that enhance teacher capability to prevent and handle problems and reduce need for out of class referrals.

(1) Classroom teachers invite available supports into the classroom to enhance assistance for students (e.g., peer tutors, volunteers, aids trained to work with students-in-need; resource teachers and student support staff frequently work in the classroom as part of the team to enhance classroom practices for enabling learning).

(2) Student support staff jobs have been redesigned and other hurdles are addressed to enable them to work more regularly with teachers in classrooms.

(3) Teachers are provided with personalized professional development to enhance their capability to meet the needs of a wider range of individual differences (e.g., creating a Learning Community for teachers; ensuring opportunities to learn through co-teaching, team teaching, collaboration, and mentoring; inservice focused on learning intrinsic motivation concepts and their application to schooling, about response to intervention strategies and accommodations for diversity, about specialized interventions for use as needed, about accessing and referring for special resources and services).

(b) Classroom approaches focus on creating and maintaining a caring, supportive, and nonstigmatizing climate through a consistent emphasis on enhancing feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to others at school and reducing threats to such feelings.

    (1) Strengths and assets are highlighted, appreciated, and celebrated; natural and curricular opportunities are used to enhance social and emotional development.

    (2) Appropriate accommodations are made for students with learning, behavior, and emotional problems and strategies are introduced to connect these students with peers and adults with whom they can develop positive connections.

    (3) Among the many practices used to enable learning and enhance positive attitudes toward teachers and school, the classroom provides personalized instruction with small group and independent learning options; expands the range of curricular, instructional, and enrichment options and choices; responds as soon as a problem arises using Response to Intervention strategies that include accommodations, special assistance and learning and student supports as necessary; avoids tying enrichment activities to reinforcement schedules; reduces negative interactions and over-reliance on social control; facilitates access to appropriate referrals and support for follow-through when necessary.

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

Quality Indicators for Standard 1b:

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

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

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

(d) As needed, there are summer or intersession programs (e.g., programs for catching-up, maintaining, and moving ahead; recreation and enrichment programs).

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

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

(g) Capacity building is provided for all stakeholders involved in enhancing transition programs and activities, with an emphasis on personalized and differentiated professional development.

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

Quality Indicators for Standard 1c:

(a) Interventions and an appropriate referral system are available to help address specific support and learning needs of family (e.g., support services for those in the home to assist in addressing basic survival needs and obligations to the children; adult education classes to enhance literacy, job skills, English as a second language, citizenship preparation).

(b) Mechanisms for communication and connecting school and home are regularly used, reach most homes, and are designed to enhance interchange, collaboration, and networking with primary caretakers (e.g., opportunities at school for family networking and mutual support, learning, recreation, enrichment, and for family members to receive special assistance and to volunteer to help; phone calls and/or e-mail from teacher and other staff with good news; frequent and balanced conferences – student-led when feasible; outreach to attract hard-to-reach families – including student dropouts).

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

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

(e) Families are recruited regularly to play a role in strengthening school and community (e.g., volunteers to welcome and support new families and help in various capacities; families representing diverse student subgroups are involved in school governance and school improvement planning).

(f) Capacity building is focused on enhancing home involvement, with an emphasis on personalized and differentiated professional, family, and other stakeholder development.

>*Standard 1d.* **Continuous enhancement of programs and systems for responding to, and where feasible, preventing school and personal crises and trauma** (including creating a caring and safe learning environment and countering the impact of out-of-school traumatic events)

Quality Indicators for Standard 1d:

(a) School staff work with community members and agency representatives to prepare and integrate plans for response and prevention.

(b) Staff, students, and families have been instructed with respect to response plans and recovery efforts.

(c) All staff are prepared to play a role in crisis response and follow-up.

(d) Immediate assistance is provided in emergencies so students can resume learning.

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

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

(g) If there are high priority gaps in crisis prevention efforts, efforts are underway to develop interventions to fill the gaps.

(h) Prevention programs are integrated into systems to promote healthy development and prevent problems.

(i) Capacity building is provided for all stakeholders involved in enhancing crisis and trauma response and prevention, with an emphasis on personalized and differentiated professional development keyed to stakeholder diversity and special needs.

>Standard 1e. **Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to increase and strengthen** *community involvement and support* (e.g., outreach to develop greater community involvement and support from a wide range of entities, including enhanced use of volunteers and agency collaborations)

Quality Indicators for Standard 1e:

(a) Outreach programs are operating on a regular basis to recruit a wide range of community resources (e.g., public and private agencies; colleges and universities; local residents; artists and cultural institutions, businesses and professional organizations; service, volunteer, and faith-based organizations; retirees, community policy and decision makers).

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

(c) Interventions are implemented on a daily basis by the school and in collaboration with community resources to reach out to students and families who don't come to school regularly – including truants and dropouts and those encountering barriers.

(d) School staff work with community members and agency representatives to connect and integrate school and community efforts to promote student, family, school, and community development, well being, and a sense of community.

(e) Capacity building is provided for all stakeholders involved in enhancing community involvement and support (e.g., policies and mechanisms to enhance and sustain school-community involvement, staff/stakeholder development on the value of community involvement, "social marketing", personalized and differentiated professional development to increase understanding of community programs and resources – including human and social capital).

>*Standard 1f.* **Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to facilitate** *student and family access to effective services and special assistance on campus and in the community as needed.*

Quality Indicators for Standard 1f:

(a) Prior to referral, extra support is provided in the classroom as soon as a need is recognized and is provided in the least disruptive and stigmatizing way (e.g., using a comprehensive approach to Response to Intervention strategies that encompasses accommodations and expanded specialized assistance in the classroom; pursuing problem solving conferences with parents; enhancing open access to school, district, and community support programs).

(b) When in-classroom remedies are insufficient, referral and support for developing individual intervention and follow-through plans with students and their families are provided in a timely manner and are based on the carefully amassed data (e.g., using response to intervention data; using special identification/screening processes as necessary; using monitoring data to assess need for further referral access support).

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

(d) Systems have been developed and are in operation for checking whether referrals and services are adequate and effective (e.g., monitoring/managing/coordinating individual interventions, sharing information, follow-up assessments).

(e) Mechanisms have been developed and are in operation for *resource* coordination and integration to avoid duplication, fill gaps, garner economies of scale, and enhance effectiveness (e.g., braiding resources from school-based and linked interveners, feeder pattern/family of schools, community-based programs; linking with community providers to fill gaps).

(f) Mechanisms have been developed and are in operation to enhance stakeholder awareness of programs and services.

(g) Capacity building is provided for all stakeholders involved in enhancing student and family assistance systems, programs, and services, with an emphasis on personalized and differentiated professional development keyed to stakeholder diversity and special needs and mandates.

Standard 2. **Establishment of an *integrated operational infrastructure* for the ongoing planning and development of the learning supports component.**

Developing and institutionalizing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports requires mechanisms within a school, among families of schools, at the   district level, and between school and community. All mechanisms must be integrated with each other and fully integrated into school improvement efforts and school-community collaborations. The need at all levels is to rework operational infrastructure in ways that support efforts to address barriers to learning in a cohesive manner and to integrate the work with instruction and with the management/ governance mechanisms. This requires dedicated administrative and staff leadership (with such leadership fully involved in governance, planning and implementation). Ongoing development and implementation requires work groups focused on school improvement and intervention development functions such as mapping, analysis, and priority setting for resource allocation and integration, system and program development, communication and information management, capacity building (with special emphasis on staff development), and quality improvement and accountability.

Quality Indicators for Standard 2:

(a) The school leadership has an *operational infrastructure* design that fully integrates administrative and staff leadership for a Learning Supports Component into its operational infrastructure and has delineated a plan for the component's systemic implementation and ongoing development.

(b) There is a designated *administrative leader* for a Learning Supports Component, and this individual meets regularly with the school's governance and advisory bodies and staff to represent the component's concerns in all planning and decision making and interfaces with the learning supports leadership at other local schools and at the district level.

   (1) This leader's job description delineates specific roles, functions, and accountabilities related to systemic planning, capacity building, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability of the component.

   (2) This administrative leader is expected to allocate a significant percent of time each day to pursuing functions relevant to the component..

(c) In addition to an administrative leader, a *resource-oriented leadership team* (e.g., a *Learning Supports Leadership Team*) for the component is functioning effectively as part of the school's infrastructure.

   (1) This team is responsible for ensuring the vision for the component is not lost and guides the component's (a) capacity building agenda, (b) development,

implementation, and evaluation, and (c) full integration with the instructional and governance/management components.

(2) The team consists the administrative leader and staff leaders of major initiatives, projects, programs, and services addressing barriers to learning. In addition to school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and special educators, team participation extends to regular teachers, office staff, school resource officers, bus drivers. It also includes representatives of community resources involved at the school and family members.

(3) The team is a mechanism to ensure appropriate *overall* use of existing resources (including braiding together available school and community resources). It also works to enhance the pool of resources. To these ends, the team focuses on how all *resources* for learning and student supports are used at the school with particular emphasis on increasing cohesive and systemic intervention efforts.

(4) The team establishes and monitors standing and ad hoc work groups as needed to ensure appropriate development and implementation of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports.

(d) Work groups are formed as needed to address specific concerns (e.g., mapping resources, planning for capacity building and social marketing, addressing problems related to case-oriented systems), develop new programs (e.g., welcoming and social support strategies for newcomers to the school), implement special initiatives (e.g., positive behavior support), and so forth.

(1) Work groups usually are facilitated by a member of a Learning Supports Leadership Team who recruits a small group of others from the school and community who are willing and able to help.

(2) *Ad hoc* work groups take on tasks that can be done over a relatively short time period, and the group disbands once the work is accomplished (e.g., periodic mapping and analysis of resources). *Standing* work groups focus on defined program areas, pursue current priorities for enhancing intervention in a given arena, and carry out case-oriented functions. For example, standing work groups might be established for the six content arenas of the component and for processing referrals for student study and special education and individual education program planning.

(3) The group facilitator provides regular updates to the resource team on work group progress and brings back feedback from the team.

(e) The component and its various operational mechanisms are fully integrated into the school infrastructure.

(1) There are organizational and operational links within the various groups involved in planning, implementing, capacity building, evaluating, enhancing quality, and sustaining learning supports.

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(2) There are links connecting the component with the instructional and governance/management components and with general mechanisms at the school for communication, information management, and problem solving with students, staff, families, and the community.

(3) Routine procedures are in place to ensure all activities are implemented in a manner that coordinates and integrates them with each other.

(f) The school's computerized information management system, email, website, voicemail and other advanced technology are used to facilitate effective and efficient communication and social marketing of the component and to enhance the general functioning and integration of all infrastructure mechanisms.

(g) A multi-site learning supports resource-oriented leadership mechanism for a "family" of schools (e.g., a *Learning Supports Leadership Council*) brings together representatives from each participating school's leadership *team* for learning supports. (A family of schools are those in the same geographic or catchment area that have shared concerns and among whom some programs and personnel already are or can be shared in strategic ways. An especially important group of schools are those in an elementary, middle, and high school feeder pattern where it is common for a school at each level to interact with students from the same families.)

(1) The multi-site mechanism is effectively ensuring cohesive and equitable deployment of resources, improving connections with neighborhood resources, and enhancing the pooling of resources.

(2) The multi-site mechanism is reducing individual school costs by minimizing redundancy and pursuing strategies to achieve economies of scale.

(h) The multi-site learning supports leadership mechanism is connected to local school-community collaborative mechanisms.

(i) Capacity building is provided for all involved in this facet of the work, with an emphasis on personalized and differentiated professional development keyed to stakeholder diversity and special needs and mandates.

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Standard 3. **Appropriate resource use and allocation for developing, maintaining, and evolving the component**.

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

Quality Indicators for Standard 3:

(a) All resources used for learning and student supports are coalesced. The budget for the component weaves together separate school and community funding streams as much as feasible.

(b) The total school budget is allocated equitably in keeping with the timetable for achieving the component's standards.

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

(d) Priorities are established for improving the Component.

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

(f) Allocations are regularly audited to ensure cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

(g) Centralized district assets are used to facilitate the school's and the family of schools' efforts to develop appropriate collaborative arrangements among schools and with community entities to improve braiding and use of resources to fill gaps, enhance effective use of learning supports, and achieve economies of scale.

  (1) Collaborative arrangements are in place for each family of schools.

  (2) Collaborative arrangements are in place with all appropriate community entities.

(h) Collaborative arrangements are enhancing efforts to weave and use resources to fill gaps, enhanced effectiveness of learning supports, and economies of scale.

Standard 4. **Capacity building for developing, maintaining, and evolving the component**.

Capacity building involves enhancing ongoing component and stakeholder development and performance. The work requires allocation of resources to provide effective and efficient mechanisms and personnel to carry out a myriad of capacity building functions. Professional development requires a personalized and differentiated approach designed to address role responsibilities and related accountability and differences in motivation and level of professional development at all levels.

Quality Indicators for Standard 4:

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

(b) Appropriate mechanisms are in place, with specified leadership and sufficient staffing to implement the component's capacity building plan.

(c) All who are responsible for component capacity building have an appropriate background of education and experience and relevant expertise (or access to such expertise), including a focus not only on understanding the nature and scope of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports, but also capability to plan and implement systemic change, organizational development and collaboration. Centralized district assets are used to provide them with ongoing personalized and differentiated professional development.

(d) Sufficient support is provided and procedures are implemented for all facets of capacity building (e.g., infrastructure development and integration; embedding all learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, systemic component; redefining and reframing component leader and line staff roles and functions; developing capability for carrying out new functions; development of diverse stakeholders).

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

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

(3) Time is scheduled for staff to do essential planning for enhancing the component.

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

(5) Aggregated and disaggregated data are used in planning capacity building.

(e) Staff recruitment and hiring for the component is designed to employ the most competent personnel available with respect to ensuring the component is effectively developed, maintained, and evolved.

(f) The induction of new learning supports staff includes welcoming and providing orientation, transition supports, and job mentoring.

(g) Component staff are involved in capacity building for teacher's to improve classroom and school-wide approaches for all students and especially those experiencing enrollment and attendance hurdles and those manifesting mild-to-moderate behavior, learning, and emotional problems. They also are involved in capacity building for paraprofessionals, aides, out of classroom school staff, and volunteers working in classrooms or with special school projects and services.

(h) Systematic outreach and social marketing are conducted to communicate and connect with all families as Component stakeholders and a wide range of other community stakeholders (not just service providers).

(i) Extramural funds are sought that can help with systemic component development, and special grants that might pull attention away from ongoing systemic development are not pursued.

Standard 5. **Formative and summative evaluation and accountability are fully integrated into all planning and implementation of the component.**

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

Quality Indicators for Standard 5:

(a) Centralized district assets are allocated to support essential component evaluative and accountability activity.

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

(c) Formative information is used to enhance progress in developing the component.

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

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

(f) Accountability indicators are appropriate defined for the current phase of component development.

(g) Primary accountability for component outcomes is focused on the progress of students with respect to the direct enabling outcomes. These are outcomes the component is specifically designed to accomplish. This involves multiple measures of effectiveness in addressing hurdles and barriers (e.g., indicators of: increased attendance; reduced tardies; reduced misbehavior; less bullying and sexual harassment; fewer school adjustment problems after transitions; increased family involvement with child and schooling; fewer inappropriate referrals for specialized assistance; fewer inappropriate referrals for special education; fewer pregnancies; fewer suspensions; fewer dropouts; enhanced access to school and community supports; enhanced effectiveness related to response and prevention of crises and trauma; reduced student and staff mobility).

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

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

(j) All data are reviewed for making decisions about enhancement and renewal.