



Read More About it . . .



Continuing Education Brief Reading

About Infrastructure Mechanisms for a Comprehensive Learning Supports Component

*The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA.

Write: Center for Mental Health in Schools, Box 951563, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563.

Ph: (310) 825-3634 Toll free: (866) 846-4843 Fax: (310) 206-5895

E-mail: smhp@ucla.edu Website: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>.

Permission to reproduce this document is granted. Please cite source as the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA.

Please reference this document as follows: Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. (2008 Update). *About Infrastructure Mechanisms for a Comprehensive Learning Supports Component*. Los Angeles, CA: Author.

Copies may be downloaded from: http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/infra_mechanisms.pdf

If needed, copies may be ordered from:

Center for Mental Health in Schools

UCLA Dept. of Psychology

P.O. Box 951563

Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

The Center encourages widespread sharing of all resources.

Preface

As a major aspect of its work, our Center develops resources to facilitate the efforts of those interested in enhancing the way schools address barriers to learning and promote healthy development. One set of resources focuses specifically on the need to develop a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component that deals with these concerns systematically every day at every school. Those developing such a learning support component must work to

- (1) enhance policy
- (2) broaden the intervention framework for learning support
- (3) restructure the infrastructure
- (4) facilitate related systemic changes.

The following discussion explores one aspect of necessary infrastructure changes, i.e., resource-oriented *mechanisms* that allow a learning support component to function and work effectively and efficiently, and with full integration with the other major components of school improvement. For those moving forward with the development of such mechanisms, the Center has a variety of other resource aids available, which can be downloaded at no cost from the internet at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor

About Infrastructure Mechanisms for a Comprehensive Learning Support Component

CONTENTS

• Defining Collaboration and its Purposes	1
• Building and Maintaining Infrastructure Mechanisms	2
>Building the mechanisms from localities outward	2
>Building capacity	2
Figure 1. About infrastructure mechanisms	3
• About Resource-Oriented Mechanisms	4
• A School-Site Learning Supports Resource Team	5
>Contrasting resource-oriented and case-oriented teams	6
>How many stakeholder are needed?	9
>Who should be included?	9
Recapping: What a Resource-oriented Mechanism Does	10
Exhibit 1. What is a Learning Supports Resource Team?	11
• Refining the School Infrastructure	12
>School steering body for a Learning Support (Enabling) Component	12
>Developing work groups for a resource team	13
• Integrating the Component into the School Infrastructure	14
Figure 2. An example of an integrated infrastructure at a school site	14
• Making it Happen	15
• Integrating Learning Supports into the Infrastructure of a Small School	19
• Infrastructure for Learning Supports at District, Regional, and State Offices	21
• About Leadership and Infrastructure	23
Exhibit 2. Site Administrative Lead for a Component to Address Barriers to Learning	24
Exhibit 3. Example of One School’s Infrastructure for a Learning Supports Component	25
• Infrastructure for a Family of Schools	26
>A resource-oriented mechanism for a family of schools	26
Figure 3. Infrastructure Linking a Family of Schools Together and with the District and Community	26
>Council functions	27
>Council membership	28
Note: System-wide Mechanisms and School-Community Collaboratives	28
Exhibit 4. Phasing in Teams and Councils	29
• Ultimately, There Must be a Focus on Systemic Change	31
• About Surveying How a School is Addressing Barriers to Student Learning	32
Exhibit 5. About Resource Mapping and Management	35
Appendix – The Role of Standards and Accountability Indicators	36

About Infrastructure Mechanisms for a Comprehensive Learning Support Component

Schools increasingly recognize that “leaving no student behind” requires a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated component of student supports. A key facet involves establishing and sustaining potent infrastructure mechanisms that focus on how learning support resources are used most effectively. This encompasses connecting and mobilizing all resources (including social and human capital) and ensuring these resources are used in planful and beneficial ways so all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

As used here, the term *infrastructure* refers to the foundation on which a student support component is established, sustained, and evolved. The specific focus is on framing the set of organizational and operational *mechanisms* that allow the component to function and work in an effective, efficient, and fully integrated way with the other components of school improvement. The mechanisms that are part of the infrastructure of a student support component are designated leaders and various collaborating bodies (e.g., teams, work groups, collaboratives, partnerships).

Defining Collaboration and its Purposes

Some wag defined collaboration as *an unnatural act between nonconsenting adults*.

Establishing a “collaborative” body is a snap compared to the task of turning the group into an effective, ongoing mechanism. Collaboration involves more than simply working together. It is more than a process to enhance communication, cooperation, and coordination. An effective collaborative mechanism requires clarity of purpose, potent leadership, well-defined working relationships, and intensive capacity building.

Operationally, a collaborative mechanism is defined by the *functions* that are to be accomplished. The functions may include enhancing how existing resources are used, generating new resources, improving communication, coordination, planning, and much more. Such functions encompass a host of specific tasks (e.g., mapping and analyzing resources, exploring ways to share resources, making recommendations about priorities for use of resources, and advocating for appropriate decision making).

In organizing a collaborative mechanism, it is essential to remember the principle: *Structure follows function*. We are unlikely to create an effective infrastructure if we are not clear about the functions we want to accomplish.

A collaborative mechanism often must form small work groups that enable accomplishment of its functions. And, since the functions being pursued almost always overlap with work being carried out by others, a collaborative mechanism needs to establish connections with other bodies.

Building and Maintaining Infrastructure Mechanisms

It is commonly said that collaboration is about building relationships. It is important to understand that the aim is to build potent, synergistic, *working* relationships, not simply to establish positive personal connections. Collaborative mechanisms built mainly on personal connections are vulnerable to the mobility that characterizes many such groups. The point is to establish an institutionalized infrastructure with well-designed mechanisms for performing tasks, solving problems, and mediating conflict. This requires stable and sustainable working relationships with clear roles and responsibilities for those in the group. Evidence of appropriate policy support for any infrastructure mechanism is seen in the adequacy of funding for building its capacity to perform its work.

Building the mechanisms from localities outward

In developing a comprehensive component for student support, an infrastructure of organizational and operational mechanisms at all relevant levels are required for oversight, leadership, capacity building, and ongoing support (e.g., see Figure 1). Such mechanisms are used to

- (a) make decisions about priorities and resource allocation
- (b) maximize systematic planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation
- (c) enhance and redeploy existing resources and pursue new ones
- (d) nurture the collaborative.

At each level, such tasks require pursuing a proactive agenda.

To maintain the focus on evolving a comprehensive continuum of effective learning support programs/services, it is a good idea to conceive the process from the local level outward. That is, an effective set of infrastructure mechanisms must be built at the local level. For school systems, this means at each school. After a school infrastructure is functioning, it needs to be connected to other schools in a complex or feeder pattern (e.g., a family of schools) in order to maximize use of available resources and achieve economies of scale. At this level, the infrastructure must also connect with the community surrounding the set of schools. Then, infrastructure connections with a district's central office can be reworked to ensure that school efforts are effectively nurtured. Ultimately, the emphasis on enhancing school and community connections leads to considerations of how school mechanisms braid with community infrastructure mechanisms to establish effective, function-oriented school-community collaborations that work for increased efficiency, effectiveness, and economies of scale.

Building capacity

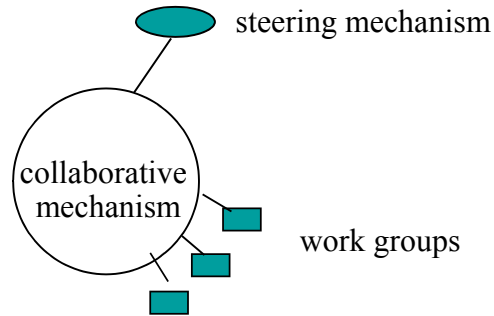
An infrastructure of mechanisms at all levels are required for oversight, leadership, resource development, and ongoing support. With each of these functions in mind, specific mechanisms and their relationship with each other and with other planning groups are explored. Key mechanisms include change agents, administrative and staff leads, resource-oriented teams and councils, board of education subcommittees, and so forth. The

Figure 1. About infrastructure mechanisms

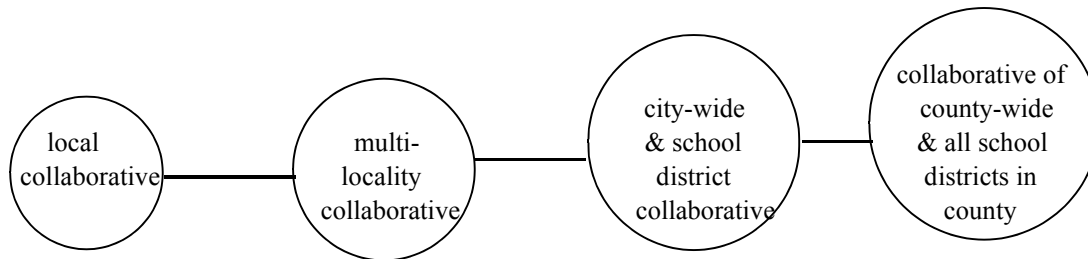
Basic Mechanisms*

Who should be at the table?

- >school personnel¹
- >family representatives²
- >representatives of community resources³



Connecting Infrastructure Mechanisms at All Levels*



*Comparable and connecting infrastructure mechanisms are needed at each level. At the multi-locality level, efficiencies and economies of scale are achieved by connecting a complex (or “family”) of schools, such as a high school and its feeder schools. In a small community, such a complex often is the school district. Conceptually, it is best to think in terms of building from the local outward, but in practice, the process of establishing the initial collaboration may begin at any level.

¹*School.* This encompasses all institutionalized entities that are responsible for formal education (e.g., pre-K, elementary, secondary, higher education). The aim is to draw on the resources of these institutions.

²*Family.* It is important to ensure that all who live in an area are represented – including, but not limited to, representatives of organized family advocacy groups. The aim is to mobilize all the human and social capital represented by family members and other home caretakers of the young.

³*Community.* This encompasses all the other resources (public and private money, facilities, human and social capital) that can be brought to the table at each level, such as health and social service agencies, businesses and unions, recreation, cultural, and youth development groups, libraries, juvenile justice and law enforcement, faith-based community institutions, service clubs, media. As the collaborative develops, additional steps must be taken to outreach to disenfranchised groups.

proposed infrastructure provides ways to

- (a) arrive at decisions about resource allocation
- (b) maximize systematic and integrated planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of enabling activity
- (c) outreach to create formal working relationships with community resources to bring some to a school and establish special linkages with others
- (d) upgrade and modernize the component to reflect the best intervention thinking and use of technology.

At each level, these tasks require that staff adopt some new roles and functions and that parents, students, and other community representatives enhance their involvement. The task also calls for redeploying existing resources, as well as finding new ones.

About Resource-Oriented Mechanisms

At schools, obviously administrative leadership is key to ending the marginalization of efforts to address learning, behavior, and emotional problems. The other key is establishment of a mechanism that focuses on how resources are used at the school to address barriers to learning. Our focus here is on a key resource-oriented mechanism for school sites. By starting with a group that is responsible for resources, a school can develop a flexible and fluid infrastructure with the capacity to carry out functions and that can be sustained over time

For those concerned with school reform, resource-oriented mechanisms are a key facet of efforts to transform and restructure school support programs and services to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

In some schools as much as 30 percent of the budget may be going to problem prevention and correction. Every school is expending resources to enable learning; few have a mechanism to ensure appropriate use of existing resources. Such a mechanism contributes to cost-efficacy of learning support activity by ensuring all such activity is planned, implemented, and evaluated in a coordinated and increasingly integrated manner. It also provides another means for reducing marginalization.

Creating resource-oriented mechanisms is essential for braiding together school and community resources and encouraging intervention activity to function in a cohesive way. When such mechanisms are created in the form of a "team," they also are a vehicle for building working relationships and can play a role in solving turf and operational problems.

One primary and essential function undertaken by a resource-oriented mechanism is identifying existing school and community resources that provide supports for students, families, and staff. This early stage of resource mapping provides a basis for a "gap" assessment. (Given surveys of the unmet needs of and desired outcomes for students, their families, and school staff, what's missing?). Analyses of what is available, effective, and needed provide an essential basis for formulating priorities. Clear priorities allow for strategic development of ways to fill critical gaps and enhance cost-effectiveness (e.g., by better use of existing resources through linkages with other schools and district sites and with the community).

In a similar fashion, a resource-oriented team for a cluster or family of schools (e.g., a high school and its feeder schools) and a team at the district level provide mechanisms for analyses on a larger scale. This can lead to strategies for cross-school, community-wide, and district-wide cooperation and integration to enhance intervention effectiveness and economies of scale.

A School-Site Learning Supports Resource Team

We first dubbed the school level resource-oriented mechanism a *Resource Coordinating Team*; currently, we are using the term *Learning Supports Resource Team*.

Properly constituted, such a team provides on-site leadership for efforts to address barriers comprehensively and ensures the maintenance and improvement of a multifaceted and integrated approach.

Creation of a school-site *Resource Team* provides a starting point in efforts to reform and restructure education support programs. Such a team not only begins the process of transforming what already is available, it can help reach out to District and community resources to enhance education support activity. As discussed below, such a resource-oriented team differs from case-oriented teams. The focus of this team is not on individual students. Rather, it is oriented (a) to analyzing the data trends that identify common problems interfering with learning and teaching and then (b) to clarifying resources and how they are best used school-wide and for the many, not just the few.

Resource-oriented teams are to help

- improve coordination and efficacy by ensuring
 - >basic systems are in place and effective (not only for referral, triage, case management, but for ensuring learning support is enhanced in classrooms and for addressing school-wide problems)
 - >programs are profiled, written up, and circulated to enhance visibility and access
 - >resources are shared equitably for expanded impact
- enhance resources through staff development and by facilitating creation of new resources via redeployment and outreach
- evolve a site's education support activity infrastructure by assisting in the creation of program work groups consisting of school staff and family and community representatives.

Among its first functions, the Resource Team can help clarify

- (a) the resources available (who? what? when?) – For example, the team can map out and then circulate to staff, students, and parents a handout describing "Available Programs and Resources" (see example on next page).
- (b) how someone gains access to available resources – The team can circulate a description of procedures to the school staff and parents.
- (c) how resources are coordinated – To ensure systems are in place and to enhance effectiveness, the team can help weave together resources, coordinate activity, analyze gaps.
- (d) what other resources the school needs and what steps should be taken to acquire them – The team can identify additional resources that might be acquired from the District or by establishing community linkages.

*Contrasting
resource-oriented
and case-oriented
teams*

When we mention a Resource Team, some school staff quickly respond: *We already have one!* When we explore this with them, we usually find what they have is a *case-oriented team* – that is, a team that focuses on individual students who are having problems. Such a team may be called a student study team, student success team, student assistance team, teacher assistance team, and so forth.

To help clarify the difference between resource and case-oriented teams, we contrast the functions of each as follows:

<i>A Case-Oriented Team</i>	<i>A Resource-Oriented Team</i>
<p>Focuses on specific <i>individuals</i> and discrete <i>services</i> to address barriers to learning</p> <p>Sometimes called:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Study Team • Student Study Team • Student Success Team • Student Assistance Team • Teacher Assistance Team • IEP Team <p>EXAMPLES OF FUNCTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > triage > referral > case monitoring/management > case progress review > case reassessment 	<p>Focuses on <i>all</i> students and the <i>resources, programs, and systems</i> to address barriers to learning & promote healthy development</p> <p>Possibly called:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Supports Resource Team • Resource Coordinating Team • Resource Coordinating Council • School Support Team <p>EXAMPLES OF FUNCTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > aggregating data across students and from teachers to analyze school needs > mapping resources in school and community > analyzing resources > identifying the most pressing program development needs at the school > coordinating and integrating school resources & connecting with community resources > establishing priorities for strengthening programs and developing new ones > planning and facilitating ways to strengthen and develop new programs and systems > recommending how resources should be deployed and redeployed > developing strategies for enhancing resources > social "marketing"

Mapping Example
Some of the Special Resources Connected to _____ School

Administrative Leader for Learning Supports

School Psychologist _____
 times at the school _____

- Provides assessment and testing of students for special services. Counseling for students and parents. Support services for teachers. Prevention, crisis, conflict resolution, program modification for special learning and/or behavioral needs.

School Nurse _____
 times at the school _____

- Provides immunizations, follow-up, communicable disease control, vision and hearing screening and follow-up, health assessments and referrals, health counseling and information for students and families.

Pupil Services & Attendance Counselor _____
 times at the school _____

- Provides a liaison between school and home to maximize school attendance, transition counseling for returnees, enhancing attendance improvement activities.

Social Worker _____
 times at the school _____

- Assists in identifying at-risk students and provides follow-up counseling for students and parents. Refers families for additional services if needed.

Counselors _____ times at the school _____

- General and special counseling/guidance services. Consultation with parents and school staff.

Dropout Prevention Program Coordination _____
 times at the school _____

- Coordinates activity designed to promote dropout prevention.

Title I and Bilingual Coordinators

- Coordinates categorical programs, provides services to identified Title I students, implements Bilingual Master Plan (supervising the curriculum, testing, and so forth)

Resource and Special Education Teachers

_____ times at the school _____

- Provides information on program modifications for students in regular classrooms as well as providing services for special education.

Other important resources:

School-based Crisis Team
 (list by name/title)

_____/_____
 _____/_____
 _____/_____
 _____/_____

School Improvement Program Planners

_____/_____
 _____/_____
 _____/_____

Community Resources

- Providing school-linked or school-based interventions and resources

Who	What they do	When
_____/_____	_____/_____	_____/_____
_____/_____	_____/_____	_____/_____
_____/_____	_____/_____	_____/_____
_____/_____	_____/_____	_____/_____

Two parables help differentiate the two types of mechanisms and the importance of both sets of functions.

A case-orientation fits the starfish parable.

The day after a great storm had washed up all sorts of sea life far up onto the beach, a youngster set out to throw back as many of the still-living starfish as he could. After watching him toss one after the other into the ocean, an old man approached him and said: *It's no use your doing that, there are too many, You're not going to make any difference.*

The boy looked at him in surprise, then bent over, picked up another starfish, threw it in, and then replied: *It made a difference to that one!*

This metaphor, of course, reflects all the important efforts to assist specific students.

The resource-oriented focus is captured by a different parable.

In a small town, one weekend a group of school staff went fishing together down at the river. Not long after they got there, a child came floating down the rapids calling for help. One of the group on the shore quickly dived in and pulled the child out. Minutes later another, then another, and then many more children were coming down the river. Soon every one was diving in and dragging children to the shore and then jumping back in to save as many as they could. In the midst of all this frenzy, one of the group was seen walking away. Her colleagues were irate. How could she leave when there were so many children to save? After long hours, to everyone's relief, the flow of children stopped, and the group could finally catch their breath.

At that moment, their colleague came back. They turned on her and angrily shouted: *How could you walk off when we needed everyone here to save the children?*

She replied: *It occurred to me that someone ought to go upstream and find out why so many kids were falling into the river. What I found is that the old bridge had several planks missing, and when children tried to jump over the gap, they couldn't make it and fell through into the river. So I got some folks to help fix the bridge.*

Fixing and building better bridges is a good way to think about prevention, and it helps underscore the importance of taking time to improve and enhance resources, programs, and systems.

Where creation of "another team" is seen as a burden, existing teams, such as student or teacher assistance teams and school crisis teams, have demonstrated the ability to do resource-oriented functions. In adding the resource-oriented functions to another team's work, great care must be taken to structure the agenda so sufficient time is devoted to the new tasks. For small schools, a large team often is not feasible, but a two person team can still do the job.

How many stakeholders are needed?

It is conceivable that one person could start the process of understanding the fundamental resource-oriented functions and delineating an infrastructure to carry them out. It is better, however, if several stakeholders put their heads together.

Who should be included?

A resource-oriented mechanism is meant to focus on resources related to all major learning support programs. It brings together representatives of all these programs. This might include school counselors, psychologists, nurses, social workers, attendance and dropout counselors, health educators, special education staff, after school program staff, bilingual and Title I program coordinators, health educators, safe and drug free school staff, and union reps. It also should include representatives of any community agency that is significantly involved with schools. Beyond these "service" providers, such a team is well-advised to add the energies and expertise of administrators, regular classroom teachers, non-certificated staff, parents, and older students.

Links to decision-making

Properly constituted, trained, and supported, a resource-oriented team complements the work of the site's governance body through providing on-site overview, leadership, and advocacy for all activity aimed at addressing barriers to learning and teaching. Having at least one representative from the resource team on the school's governing and planning bodies ensures the type of infrastructure connections that are essential if programs and services are to be maintained, improved, and increasingly integrated with classroom instruction. And, of course, having an administrator on the team provides the necessary link with the school's administrative decision making related to allocation of budget, space, staff development time, and other resources.

Recapping: What a Resource-oriented Mechanism Does

A resource-oriented team is needed for overall cohesion of school support programs and systems. Its focus is not on specific individuals, but on how resources are used best to help all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

The team provides a missing link for managing and enhancing programs and systems in ways that integrate and strengthen interventions. Such a mechanism can be used to

- (a) map and analyze activity and resources to improve their use in preventing and address problems
- (b) build effective referral, case management, and quality assurance systems
- (c) enhance procedures for management of programs and information and for communication among school staff and with the home
- (d) explore ways to redeploy and enhance resources – such as clarifying which activities are nonproductive and suggesting better uses for resources, as well as reaching out to connect with additional resources in the school district and community.

A resource-oriented team can reduce fragmentation and enhance cost-efficacy by assisting in ways that encourage programs to function in a coordinated and increasingly integrated way. For example, the team can coordinate resources, enhance communication among school staff and with the home about available assistance and referral processes, and monitor programs to be certain they are functioning effectively and efficiently. More generally, this group can provide leadership in guiding school personnel in evolving the school's vision for learning support.

See Exhibit 1 on the following page for a one-page fact sheet describing a Resource Team.



INFORMATION RESOURCE

WHAT IS A LEARNING SUPPORTS RESOURCE TEAM?

Every school that wants to improve its systems for providing student support needs a mechanism that focuses specifically on improving resource use and enhancement. A *Learning Support Resource Team* (previously called a Resource Coordinating Team) is a vital form of such a mechanism.

Most schools have teams that focus on individual student/family problems (e.g., a student support team, an IEP team). These teams focus on such functions as referral, triage, and care monitoring or management. In contrast to this case-by-case focus, a school's *Learning Support Resource Team* can take responsibility for enhancing use of all resources available to the school for addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development. This includes analyzing how existing resources are deployed and clarifying how they can be used to build a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach. It also integrally involves the community with a view to integrating human and financial resources from public and private sectors to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

What are its functions?

A Resource Coordinating Team performs essential functions related to the implementation and ongoing development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach for addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development.

Examples of key functions are:

- ◆ Aggregating data across students and from teachers to analyze school needs
- ◆ Mapping resources at school and in the community
- ◆ Analyzing resources
- ◆ Identifying the most pressing program development needs at the school
- ◆ Coordinating and integrating school resources & connecting with community resources
- ◆ Establishing priorities for strengthening programs and developing new ones
- ◆ Planning and facilitating ways to strengthen and develop new programs and systems
- ◆ Recommending how resources should be deployed and redeployed
- ◆ Developing strategies for enhancing resources
- ◆ "Social marketing"

Related to the concept of an Enabling (Learning Support) Component, these functions are pursued within frameworks that outline six curriculum content areas and

the comprehensive continuum of interventions needed to develop a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to student support that is integrated fully into the fabric of the school.

Who's on Such a Team?

A Learning Support Resource Team might begin with only two people. Where feasible, it should expand into an inclusive group of informed stakeholders who are able and willing. This would include the following:

- Principal or assistant principal
- School Psychologist
- Counselor
- School Nurse
- School Social Worker
- Behavioral Specialist
- Special education teacher
- Representatives of community agencies involved regularly with the school
- Student representation (when appropriate and feasible)
- Others who have a particular interest and ability to help with the functions

It is important to integrate this team with the infrastructure mechanisms at the school focused on instruction and management/governance. For example, the school administrator on the team must represent the team at administrative meetings; there also should be a representative at governance meetings; and another should represent the team at a Learning Support Resource Council formed for a family of schools (e.g., the feeder pattern).

References:

- Adelman, H.S. (1993). School-linked mental health interventions: Toward mechanisms for service coordination and integration. *Journal of Community Psychology, 21*, 309-319.
- Center for Mental Health in Schools (2001). *Resource-Oriented Teams: Key Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Education Supports*. Los Angeles: Author at UCLA.
- Center for Mental Health in Schools (2002). *Creating the Infrastructure for an Enabling (Learning Support) Component to Address Barriers to Student Learning*. Los Angeles: Author at UCLA.
- Rosenblum, L., DiCecco, M.B., Taylor, L., & Adelman, H.S. (1995). Upgrading school support programs through collaboration: Resource Coordinating Teams. *Social Work in Education, 17*, 117-124.

The center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563 Phone: (310) 825-3634. Support comes in part from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Adolescent Health.

Refining the School Infrastructure

Just as change at the District level cannot be effective without a strong supportive structure, substantial support is necessary for systemic change at every level.

School steering body for a Learning Support (Enabling) Component

At the school level, it is important not only to have a Resource-oriented team but also to establish a school steering body for the overall development of the component to address barriers to learning and to guide and monitor the resource team. All initiatives need a team of “champions” who agree to steer the process. These advocates must also be competent with respect to the work to be done and highly motivated not just to help get things underway but to ensure they are sustained over time.

The steering group should be fully connected with teams guiding the instructional and management components at the school. And, it should be formally linked to the district steering mechanism.

Over time, this is the group that must ensure that all staff facilitating change

- maintain a big picture perspective and appropriate movement toward long-term goals
- have sufficient support and guidance
- are interfacing with those whose ongoing buy-in is essential

The steering group should not be too large. Membership includes key change agents, 1-2 other key school leaders, perhaps someone from local institution of higher education, perhaps a key agency person, and people who can connect to other institutions.

Such a group can meet monthly (more often if major problems arise) to review progress, problem solve, decide on mid-course corrections.

The group's first focus is on ensuring that capacity is built to accomplish the desired system changes. This includes ensuring an adequate policy and leadership base; if one is not already in place, they need to work on putting one in place. Capacity building, of course, also includes special training for change agents.

The group can work against the perception that it is a closed, elite group by keeping others informed and eliciting input and feedback.

Work groups are formed as needed by the Resource Team to

Developing work groups for a resource team

- >address specific concerns (e.g., mapping resources, planning for capacity building and social marketing, addressing problems related to the referral systems)
- >develop new programs (e.g., welcoming and social support strategies for newcomers to the school)
- >implement special initiatives (e.g., positive behavior support).

Such groups usually are facilitated by a member of the Resource Team who recruits a small group of others from the school and community who are willing and able to help. The group facilitator provides regular updates to the Resource Team on the group's progress and provides the group with feedback from the Team.

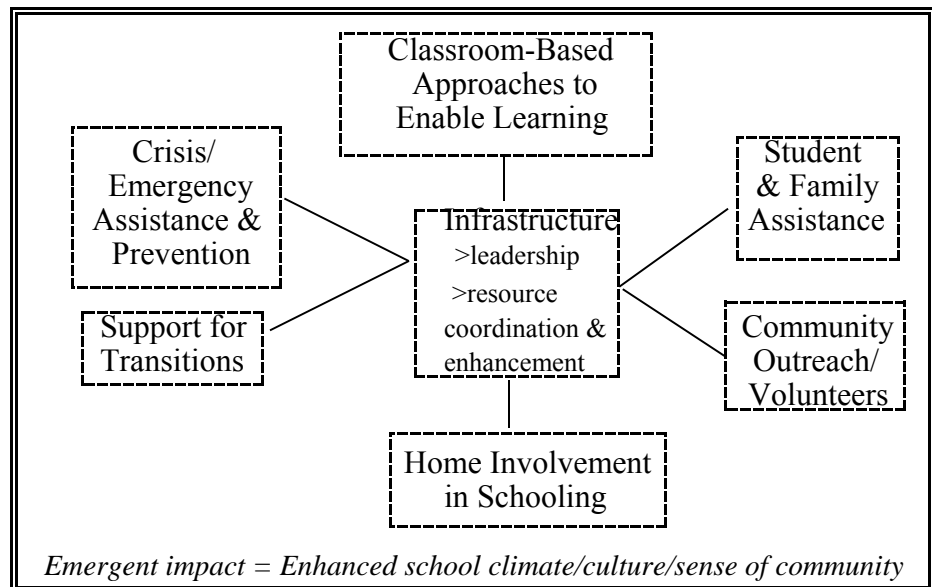
Ad hoc work groups take on tasks that can be done over a relatively short time period, and the group disbands once the work is accomplished.

Standing work groups focus on defined programs areas and pursue current priorities for enhancing intervention in the area. For example, in pursuing intervention development related to the six arenas of intervention, we use to define the programmatic focus of an Enabling Component, we recommend establishing standing work groups for each area (see figure below).

Component to Enable Learning: A Comprehensive, Multifaceted Approach for Addressing Barriers to Learning

Such an approach weaves six clusters of enabling activity (i.e., an enabling component curriculum) into the fabric of the school to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development for *all* students.

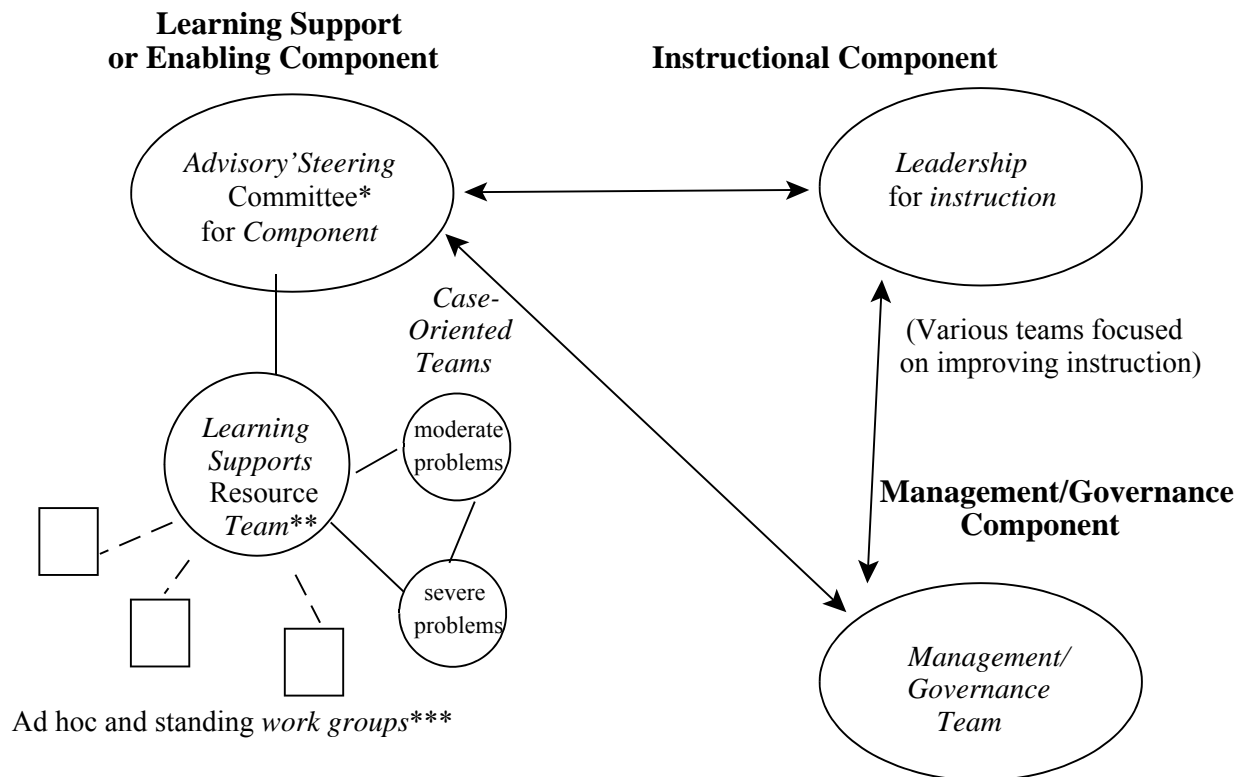
Adapted from:
H.S. Adelman & L. Taylor
(1994).



Integrating the Component into the School Infrastructure

Figure 2 illustrates the type of infrastructure that needs to emerge at the school if it is to effectively develop a comprehensive component to address barriers to learning.

Figure 2. An example of an integrated infrastructure at a school site.



*A Learning Support or Enabling Component Advisory/Steering Committee at a school site consists of a leadership group whose responsibility is to ensure the vision for the component is not lost. It meets as needed to monitor and provide input to the Resource Team.

**A Resource Team is the key to ensuring component cohesion and integrated implementation. It meets weekly to guide and monitor daily implementation and development of all programs, services, initiatives, and systems at a school that are concerned with providing student support and specialized assistance.

***Ad hoc and standing work groups are formed as needed by the Resource Team to address specific concerns. These groups are essential for accomplishing the many tasks associated with the Resource Team's functions.

Making it Happen

Infrastructure

In designing and rethinking infrastructure, the fundamental principle remains: *structure follows function*. So, the key to a well-designed infrastructure is first to delineate functions (and related tasks and processes) in ways that are consistent with “big picture” visionary goals for a district and each school. Then, the focus is on establishing an integrated set of mechanisms that enable accomplishment of such major functions in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

With the aim of comprehensively addressing barriers to learning and teaching, essential functions and tasks are those that ensure *development*, over time, of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component.

Essential mechanisms include:

- Administrative leadership
- Staff leadership
- Resource-oriented team and related work groups
- case-oriented teams

These mechanisms must work effectively together and be fully integrated into school improvement planning and decision making.

The infrastructure focus is on mechanisms that enable optimal use of existing resources in order to more effectively address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage students in classroom instruction. This includes mechanisms for ensuring effective, ongoing

- >governance and administration
- >leadership and staffing
- >planning and implementation of specific organizational and program objectives
- >coordination and integration for cohesion
- >communication and information management
- >capacity building
- >problem solving, quality improvement, and accountability.

A Note About Administrative Leadership

Administrative leadership is key to ending marginalization of efforts to address behavior, learning, and emotional problems. For example, at the school level, usually, the principal and whoever else is part of a school leadership team currently leads the way in improving instruction and management/governance. As presently constituted, however, such a team may not be prepared to advance development of a comprehensive and systemic component for preventing and ameliorating problems. Thus, someone already on the leadership team may need to be assigned this role and provided training to carry it out effectively. Alternatively, someone in the school who is involved with student supports (e.g. a pupil services professional, a Title I coordinator, a special education resource specialist) can be invited to join the leadership team, assigned responsibility and accountability for ensuring the vision for the component is not lost, and provided additional training for the tasks involved.

On the following pages is a tool that can be used to map and analyze current school and district infrastructure; it includes examples of the type of integrated infrastructure that is needed.



Making it Happen

A Tool for Mapping & Analyzing Current Infrastructure

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/tool%20infrastructure.pdf>

>>Review the prototypes of an integrated infrastructure at school and district levels.
The aim is to clarify strengths, weaknesses, and needed changes.

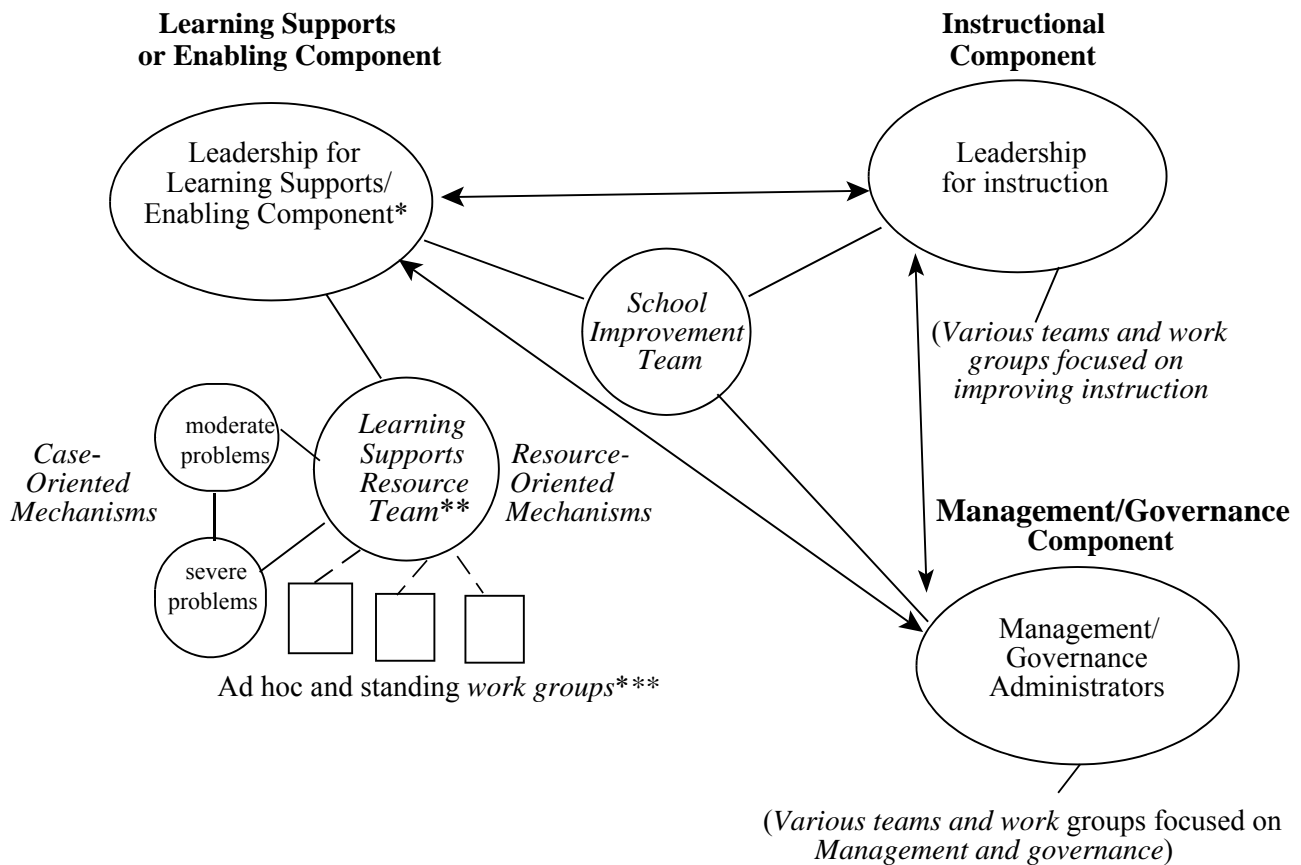
Step 1. Put a check mark on the mechanisms that you currently have.

Step 2. Add others you have that are not in the diagram.

Step 3. Put a double check mark on those you don't have, but think would be important to develop.

Step 4. X-out any you have that you think should be dropped.

Example of an Integrated Infrastructure at a School Site



*Learning Supports or Enabling Component Leadership consists of an administrator and other advocates/champions with responsibility and accountability for ensuring the vision for the component is not lost. The administrator meets with and provides regular input to the Learning Supports Resource Team.

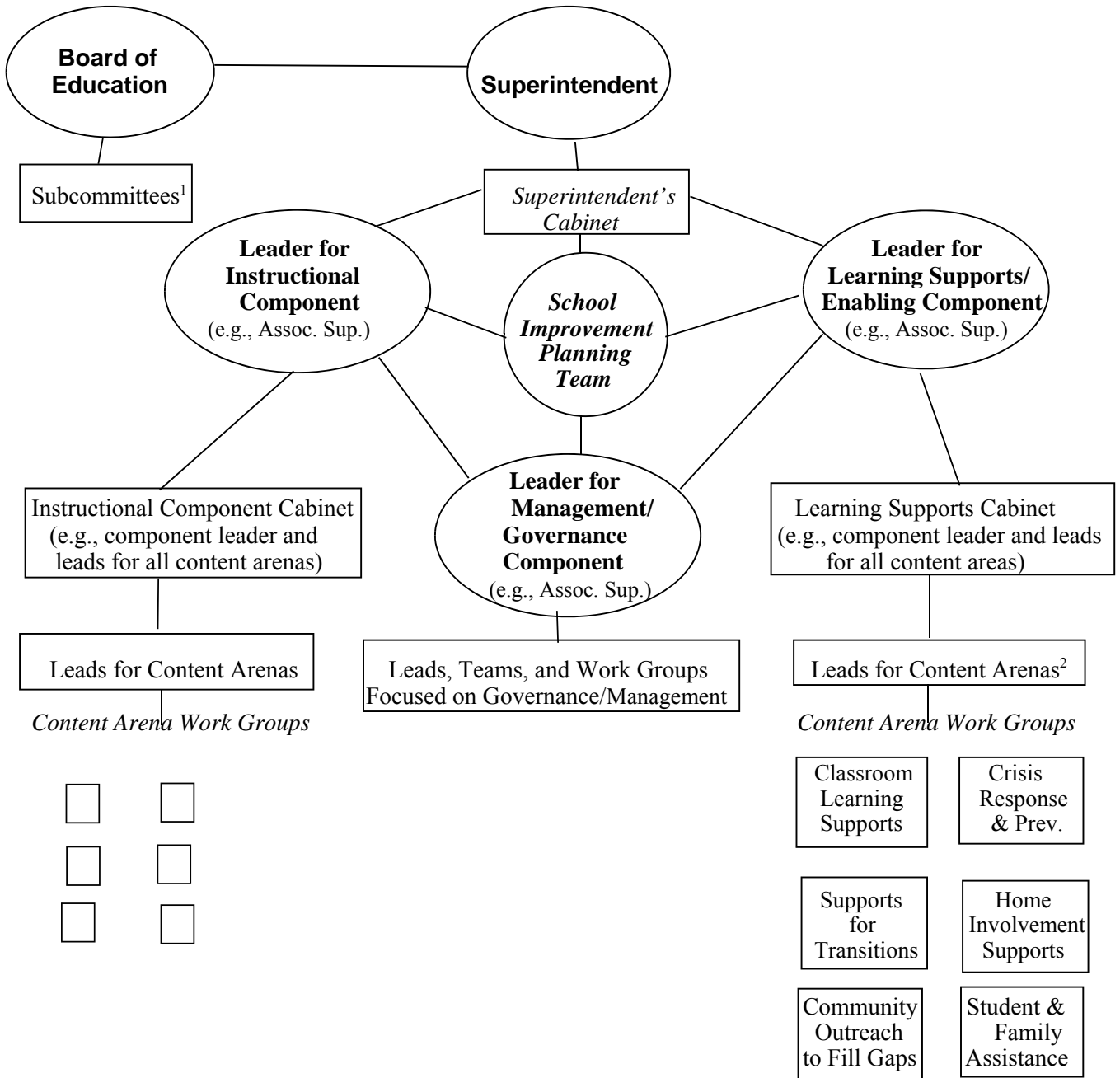
**A Learning Supports Resource Team ensures component cohesion, integrated implementation, and ongoing development. It meets weekly to guide and monitor daily implementation and development of all programs, services, initiatives, and systems at a school that are concerned with providing learning supports and specialized assistance.

***Ad hoc and standing work groups – Initially, these are the various “teams” that already exist related to various initiatives and programs (e.g., a crisis team) and for processing “cases” (e.g., a student assistance team, an IEP team). Where redundancy exists, work groups can be combined. Others are formed as needed by the Learning Supports Resource Team to address specific concerns. These groups are essential for accomplishing the many tasks associated with such a team’s functions.

For more on this, see

- ><http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf>
- ><http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/aidk.pdf>
- ><http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/toward a school district infrastructure.pdf>

Prototype for an Integrated Infrastructure at the District Level with Mechanisms for Learning Supports That Are Comparable to Those for Instruction



1. If there isn't a board subcommittee for learning supports, one should be created to ensure policy and supports for developing a comprehensive system of learning supports at every school (see *Restructuring Boards of Education to Enhance Schools' Effectiveness in Addressing Barriers to Student Learning* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/boardrep.pdf>).

2. All resources related to addressing barriers to learning and teaching (e.g., student support personnel, compensatory and special education staff and interventions, special initiatives, grants, and programs) are integrated into a refined set of major content arenas such as those indicated here. Leads are assigned for each arena and work groups are established.

Integrating Learning Supports into the Infrastructure of a Small School

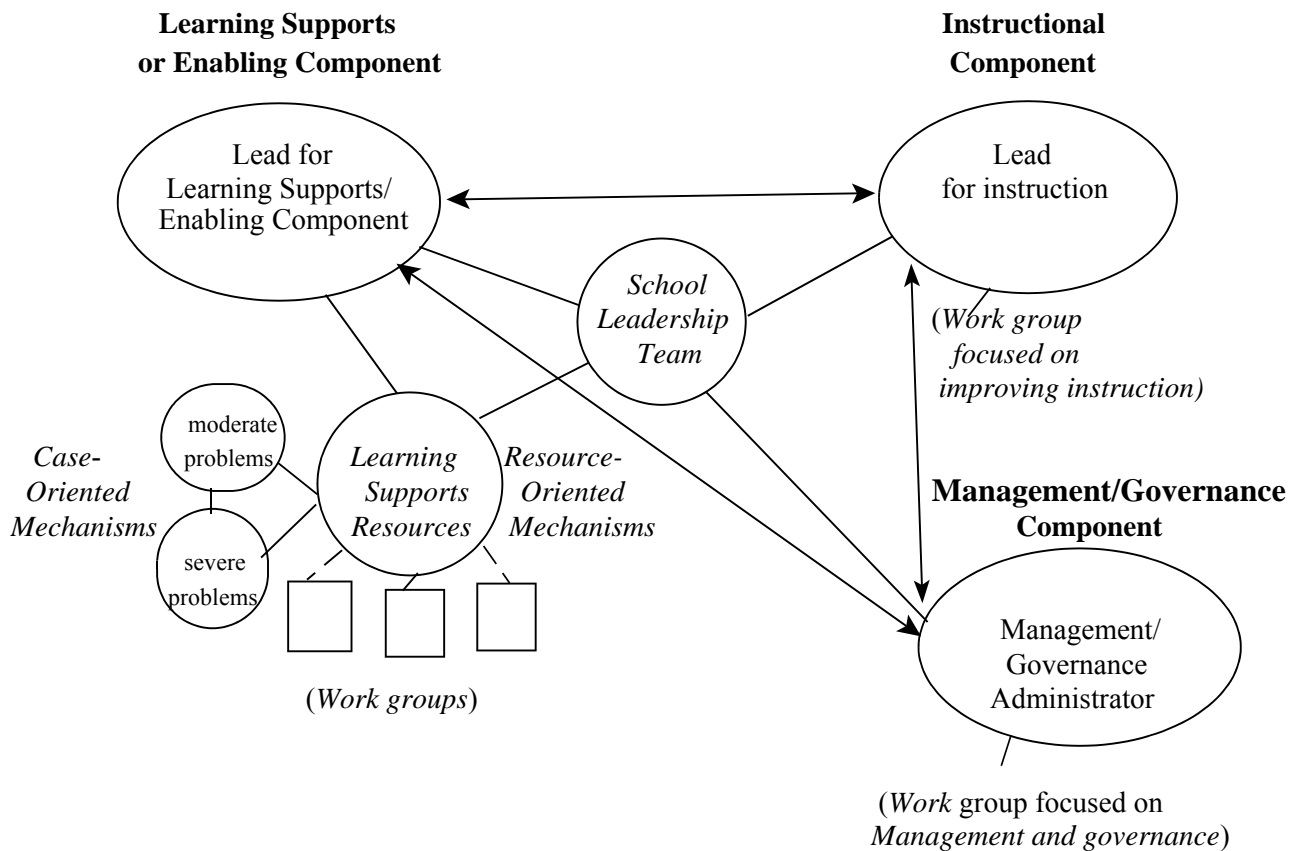
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infra_small_school_notes.pdf

Obviously, a small school has less staff and other resources than most larger schools. Nevertheless, the three major functions necessary for school improvement remain the same in all schools, namely (1) improving instruction, (2) providing learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching, and (3) enhancing management and governance.

The challenge in any school is to pursue all three functions in an integrated and effective manner. The added challenge in a small school is how to do it with so few personnel. The key

is to use and, to the degree feasible, modestly expand existing infrastructure mechanisms.

The figure below is a modification for small schools of the school level infrastructure prototype we have proposed (see references). The illustration maintains the focus on all three major functions. However, rather than stressing the involvement of several administrative leaders and numerous staff members, the emphasis is on the role a *School Leadership Team* can play in establishing essential infrastructure mechanisms.



The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA.

Write: Center for Mental Health in Schools, Box 951563, Los Angeles, CA 90095- 1563
 Phone: (310) 825-3634 | Fax: (310) 206-5895 | E-mail: smhp@ucla.edu |
 Website: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

Permission to reproduce this document is granted. Please cite source as the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA.

With less personnel, a principal must use who and what is available to pursue all three functions. Usually, the principal and whoever else is part of a school leadership team will lead the way in improving instruction and management/governance. As presently constituted, however, such a team may not be prepared to advance development of a comprehensive system of learning supports. Thus, someone already on the leadership team will need to be assigned this role and provided training to carry it out effectively.

Alternatively, someone in the school who is involved with student supports (e.g. a pupil services professional, a Title I coordinator, a special education resource specialist) can be invited to join the leadership team, assigned responsibility and accountability for ensuring the vision for the component is not lost, and provided additional training for the tasks involved in being a Learning Supports or Enabling Component Lead.

The lead, however chosen, will benefit from eliciting the help of other advocates/champions

at the school and from the community. These all can help ensure development, over time, of a comprehensive system of learning supports.

A resources-oriented mechanism focused specifically on learning supports is needed to ensure component cohesion, integrated implementation, and ongoing development. If there are several staff at the school who are especially concerned with enhancing learning supports (e.g. pupil services professionals, Title I coordinator, a special education staff, regular classroom teachers, outside agency staff working with the school), they can form a Learning Supports Resource Team. If there is no way to form a separate team, the agenda can become a periodic focus for a case-oriented team. If neither of these approaches is workable, the School Leadership Team needs to take on the essential set of resource-oriented tasks.

Finally, small work groups provide an opportunity to mobilize and utilize the talents of any and all school and community stakeholders. Because most schools have a great deal to do in developing a comprehensive system of learning supports, several such groups are desirable.

A Few References

For more on all this, see:

Toward a School District Infrastructure that More Effectively Addresses Barriers to Learning and Teaching.
Online: [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/toward a school district infrastructure.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/toward_a_school_district_infrastructure.pdf)

Infrastructure for Learning Support at District, Regional, and State Offices.
Online: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/student-support/toolkit/aidk.pdf>

Resource oriented teams: Key infrastructure mechanisms for enhancing education supports.
Online: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf

Developing resource-oriented mechanisms to enhance learning supports - a continuing education packet.
Online: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/developing_resource_oriented_mechanisms.pdf

About infrastructure mechanisms for a comprehensive learning support component.
Online: http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/infra_mechanisms.pdf

Another initiative? Where does it fit? A unifying framework and an integrated infrastructure for schools to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development.
Online: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf>

Infrastructure for Learning Supports at District, Regional, and State Offices

Online at: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/aidk.pdf>

Ending the marginalization of efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching in school improvement planning requires significant changes in the organizational and operational infrastructure at a school. It also requires substantial changes at district, regional, and state offices.

Currently, most units (e.g., divisions, offices, special initiatives and projects) that deal with various facets of student/learning supports are marginalized, fragmented, and often counter productively competitive.

Because so many programs have evolved in a piecemeal manner, it is not unusual for staff to be involved in "parallel play." This contributes to widespread counterproductive competition and wasteful redundancy. Effectiveness is compromised. So are efforts to take projects, pilots, and demonstration programs to scale. The problem often is blamed on "silo" funding. While this is a concern, the negatives can be minimized through bringing all the work together under an umbrella intervention concept and rethinking infrastructure.

Minimally, it is important to clarify how all the units, middle managers, and coordinators who focus on student/learning supports integrate their efforts.

- Do they report to one or several top managers?
- With respect to top management, is there leadership for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach to addressing barriers to learning or is the emphasis mainly on administrative matters?

- At the Superintendent's leadership/cabinet table, is there potent leadership for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach to addressing barriers to learning?

Optimally, it would be well to integrate all efforts focusing on student/learning supports into one unit (e.g., a Division for a System of Learning Supports – note a "system" of supports, not support "services") headed by an Associate Superintendent.

Such a Division needs to play five key roles:

- (1) A leadership role in designing, implementing, sustaining, and going to scale with respect to a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach to addressing barriers to learning
- (2) A role in gathering and providing information for schools to use in school improvement planning and implementation to effectively address barriers to learning (e.g., ways to end the marginalization, fragmentation, and counterproductive competition and use best practices)
- (3) A role in the regular analyses of aggregated and disaggregated data to update and refine information for purposes of identifying priorities; making recommendations for deploying and redeploying resources for system change, school-by-school development, formative and summative evaluation, sustainability, district scale up, and accountability. This includes data on
 - (a) needs
 - (b) resource availability and use (strengths, weaknesses, gaps)
 - (c) system development progress
 - (d) short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes

The center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563 Phone: (310) 825-3634. Support comes in part from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Adolescent Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For more information, see the website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>

- (4) A role in establishing effective, integrated connections between school and community resources
- (5) A role in ensuring all mandates for student support are met in the most effective and integrated way.
- These roles encompass a variety of tasks and processes such as
- >enhancing understanding and readiness for necessary systemic changes
 - >being a catalyst and advocate for systemic change
 - >designing and strategically planning systemic changes
 - >being a coach and facilitator for the systemic changes
 - >working to enhance an integrated infrastructure for a learning supports component to address barriers to learning and teaching
 - >mapping and analyzing resource use
 - >identifying priorities
 - >planning and helping to implement ways to build capacity for the work
 - >social marketing of learning supports
 - >and so forth

For a more detailed discussion on this, see *Toward a School District Infrastructure that More Effectively Addresses Barriers to Learning and Teaching*

Online: [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/toward a school district infrastructure.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/toward_a_school_district_infrastructure.pdf)

A Few Other Related References

Resource-Oriented Teams: Key Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Education Supports

Online: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf

About Infrastructure Mechanisms for a Comprehensive Learning Support Component

Online: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/infra_mechanisms.pdf

Addressing What's Missing in School Improvement Planning: Expanding Standards and Accountability to Encompass an Enabling or Learning Supports Component

Online: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/enabling/standards.pdf>

Another Initiative? Where Does it Fit? A Unifying Framework and an Integrated Infrastructure for Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Promote Healthy Development.

Online: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf>

Change Agent Mechanisms for School Improvement: Infrastructure not Individuals

Online: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/change%20agents.pdf>

Creating the Infrastructure for an Enabling (Learning Support) Component to Address Barriers to Student Learning

Online: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/infrastructure_tt/infrastructurefull.pdf

About Leadership and Infrastructure

It is clear that building a learning supports (enabling) component requires strong leadership and new positions to help steer systemic changes and construct the necessary infrastructure. Establishment and maintenance of the component requires continuous, proactive, effective teaming, organization, and accountability.

Administrative leadership

Administrative leadership at every level is key to the success of any initiative in schools that involves systemic change (see Exhibit 2).

District

Everyone at the school site should be aware of who in the District provides leadership, promotes, and is accountable for the development of the component. It is imperative that such leadership be at a high enough level to be at key decision making tables when budget and other fundamental decisions are discussed.

School

Given that a learning supports component is one of the primary and essential components of school improvement, it is imperative to have a designated administrative and staff leadership. An administrative school leader for the component may be created by redefining a percentage (e.g., 50% of an assistant principal's day). Or, in schools that only have one administrator, the principal might delegate some administrative responsibilities to a coordinator (e.g., Title I coordinator or a Center coordinator at schools with a Family or Parent Center). The designated administrative leader must sit on the resource team (discussed in the next module) and represent and advocate team recommendations at administrative and governance body meetings.

Besides facilitating initial development of a potent component to address barriers to learning, the administrative lead must guide and be accountable for daily implementation, monitoring, and problem solving. Such administrative leadership is vital.

There is also the need for a staff lead to address daily operational matters. This may be one of the student support staff (e.g., a school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse) or a Title I coordinator, or a teacher with special interest in learning supports.

In general, these leaders, along with other key staff, embody the vision for the component. Their job descriptions should delineate specific functions related to their roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

The exhibit on the following page outlines the type of functions that have been found useful in clarifying the importance of the site administrative role. Following that is an example of one school's Learning Supports infrastructure.

Exhibit 2

Site Administrative Lead for a Component to Address Barriers to Learning

The person assuming this role must be able to devote at least 50% time to the Component. For a site administrator who already has a job description that requires 100% time involvement in other duties, the first task is to transfer enough of these other duties to free up the needed time.

In essence, the job involves providing on a daily basis leadership and facilitation related to

1. Component administration and governance concerns (e.g., policy, budget, organizational and operational planning, interface with instruction)

Represents the Component as a member of the site's administrative team and interfaces with the governance body, budget committee, etc. as necessary and appropriate.

2. Development, operation, maintenance, and evolution of the infrastructure and programmatic activity

A day-in and day-out focus on enhancing program availability, access, and efficacy by maintaining a high level of interest, involvement, and collaboration among staff and other stakeholders (including community resources).

3. Staff and other stakeholder development

Ensures that Component personnel receive appropriate development and that an appropriate share of the development time is devoted to Enabling concerns.

4. Communication (including public relations) and information management

Ensures there is an effective communication system (e.g., memos, bulletins, newsletter, suggestion box, meetings) and an information system that contributes to case management and program evaluation.

5. Coordination and integration of all enabling activity and personnel (on and off-site)

6. Rapid problem solving

7. Ongoing support (including a focus on morale)

Ensuring that those involved in planning and implementing enabling activity have appropriate support and appreciation.

8. Evaluation

Ensuring there is data about accomplishments and for quality improvement.

9. Some direct involvement in program activity and in providing specific services

This can help enhance understanding and maintain skills and allows for a sense of immediate contribution.

Exhibit 3

Example of One School's Infrastructure for a Learning Supports Component

To ensure all the functions related to learning supports were properly addressed, the school improvement design called for development of the following organizational, administrative, and operational structures. This particular school funded both an administrative and staff lead position.

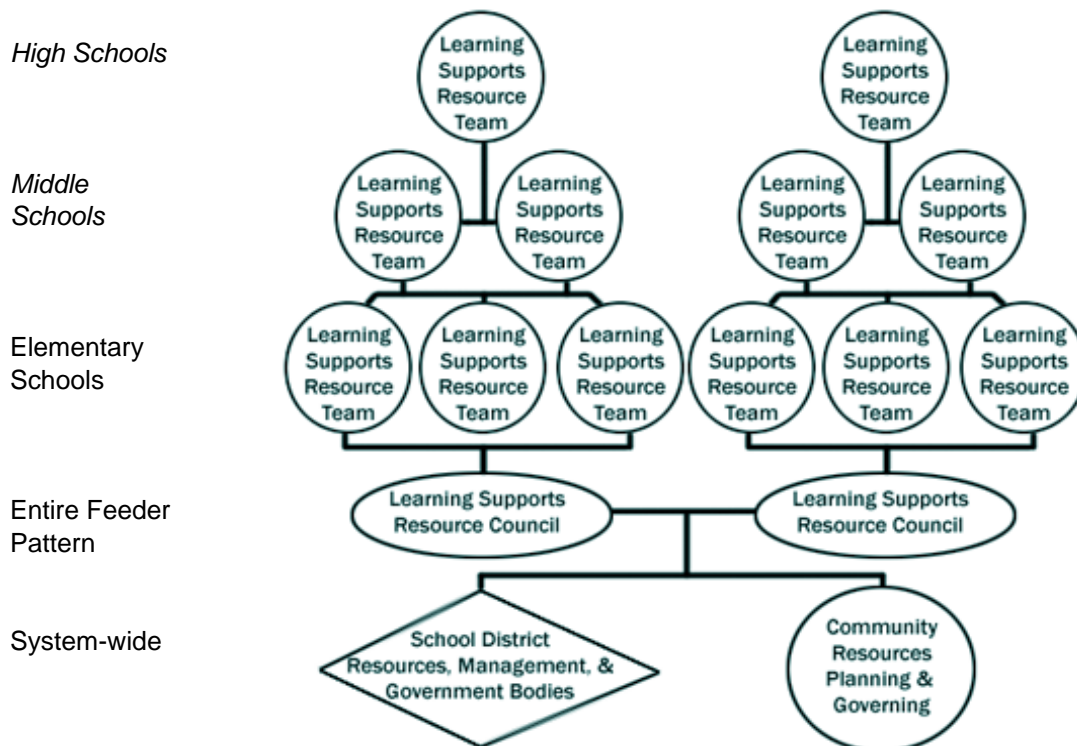
<i>Organization/Administrative Structures</i>	<i>Operational Structures</i>
<p>Learning Supports School-Wide Committee Recommends policy and priorities related to this Component. Participants are representatives from all stakeholder groups who, by role or interest, want to help evolve a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach for addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development.</p>	<p>Learning Supports Resource Team Maps, analyzes, and recommends resource allocation & redeployment in the six areas that make up the component's curriculum; clarifies priorities for program development; monitors, guides, and enhances systems to coordinate, integrate, and strengthen the Component programs and services; and more. Participants are leaders of each of the components' six areas, a administrative and staff leads for the Component, reps. of community agencies that are significantly involved at the site.</p>
<p>Learning Supports Administrative Leads Asst. Principal role as delineated in daily job description</p>	<p>Work groups for the six areas</p>
<p>Learning Supports Staff Lead Has daily responsibilities to advance the agenda for the component as delineated in job description (and also has had responsibilities as Family Center Director).</p>	<p>Classroom Focused Enabling (e.g., enhancing classroom ability to address student problems)</p>
<p>Learning Supports Steering Committee Meets periodically to review, guide, and monitor progress and long-range plans, problem-solve, and act as a catalyst to keep the component linked to the total design (other components, committees). Participants are component site leaders and key staff, reps. from the community and families, and several leaders from off-site who are highly committed and knowledgeable about the component.</p>	<p>Crisis Response and Prevention (e.g., School Crisis Team; bullying prevention)</p>
	<p>Transitions (e.g., welcoming and social support for newcomers; programs to reduce tardies, improve attendance, facilitate grade to grade changes, college counseling, school to work programs)</p>
	<p>Home Involvement in Schooling (e.g., Adult Ed, Family Center, Comm. reps, and parent volunteers)</p>
	<p>Student and Family Assistance using the Consultation and Case Review Panel (e.g., health and social support services, psychological counseling, Health Center)</p>
	<p>Community Outreach/Volunteers (e.g., volunteers, business connections, etc.)</p>
	<p>Administrative leads Provide daily leadership and problem solving, support and accountability, advocacy at administrative table and at shared decision making tables.</p>
	<p>Staff Lead Carries out daily tasks involved in enhancing the component; ensures that system and program activity is operating effectively; provides daily problem-solving related to systems and programs.</p>

Infrastructure for a Family of Schools

Schools in the same geographic or catchment area have a number of shared concerns, and schools in the feeder pattern often interact with the same family because each level has a youngster from that family who is having difficulties. Furthermore, some programs and personnel already are or can be shared by several neighboring schools, thereby minimizing redundancy and reducing costs. A multi-site team can provide a mechanism to help ensure cohesive and equitable deployment of resources and also can enhance the pooling of resources to reduce costs. Such a mechanism can be particularly useful for integrating the efforts of high schools and their feeder middle and elementary schools. This clearly is important in addressing barriers with those families who have youngsters attending more than one level of schooling in the same cluster. It is neither cost-effective nor good intervention for each school to contact a family separately in instances where several children from a family are in need of special attention.

A resource-oriented mechanism for a family of schools In general, a group of schools can benefit from a multi-site resource-oriented mechanism designed to provide leadership, facilitate communication and connection, and ensure quality improvement across sites. For example, a multi-site team, or what we call a Complex Resource Council, might consist of a high school and its feeder middle and elementary schools. It brings together one to two representatives from each school's resource team (see figure below).

Figure 3. Infrastructure Linking a Family of Schools Together and with the District and Community



A mechanism such as a Resource *Council* helps (a) coordinate and integrate programs serving multiple schools, (b) identify and meet common needs with respect to guidelines and staff development, and (c) create linkages and collaborations among schools and with community agencies. In this last regard, it can play a special role in community outreach both to create formal working relationships and ensure that all participating schools have access to such resources.

*Council
functions*

Natural starting points for councils are the sharing of need assessments, resource mapping, analyses, and recommendations for reform and restructuring. An initial focus may be on local, high priority concerns such as developing prevention programs and safe school plans to address community-school violence.

With respect to linking with community resources, multi-school teams are especially attractive to community agencies who often don't have the time or personnel to link with individual schools. In general, then, a group of sites can benefit from having an ongoing, multi-site, resource-oriented mechanism that provides leadership, facilitates communication, coordination, integration, and quality improvement of all activity the sites have for addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development.

Some specific functions for a Council are:

- to share info about resource availability (at participating schools and in the immediate community and in geographically related schools and district-wide) with a view to enhancing coordination and integration.
- to identify specific needs and problems and explore ways to address them (e.g., Can some needs be met by pooling certain resources? Can improved linkages and collaborations be created with community agencies? Can additional resources be acquired? Can some staff and other stakeholder development activity be combined?)
- to discuss and formulate longer-term plans and advocate for appropriate resource allocation related to enabling activities.

Council membership

Each school might be represented on the *Council* by two members of its Resource *Team*. To assure a broad perspective, one of the two might be the site administrator responsible for enabling activity; the other would represent line staff. To ensure a broad spectrum of stakeholder input, the council also should include representatives of classroom teachers, non-certificated staff, parents, and students, as well as a range of community resources that should be involved in schools.

Council facilitation involves responsibility for convening regular monthly (and other ad hoc) meetings, building the agenda, assuring that meetings stay task focused and that between meeting assignments will be carried out, and ensuring meeting summaries are circulated. With a view to shared leadership and effective advocacy, an administrative leader and a council member elected by the group can co-facilitate meetings. Meetings can be rotated among schools to enhance understanding of each site in the council.

For examples of Resource Coordination Council's Initial and Ongoing Tasks, general meeting format, and a checklist for establishing councils, see the accompanying reading and adapt the material in the relevant exhibits.

#####

Note: System-wide Mechanisms and School-Community Collaboratives

School and multi-site mechanisms are not sufficient. A system-wide mechanism must be in place to support school and cluster level activity. A *system-wide resource coordinating body* can provide guidance for operational coordination and integration across groups of schools. Functions might encompass (a) ensuring there is a district-wide vision and strategic planning for addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development, (b) ensuring coordination and integration among groups of schools and system-wide, (c) establishing linkages and integrated collaboration among system-wide programs and with those operated by community, city, and county agencies, (d) ensuring complete and comprehensive integration with the district's education reforms, and (e) ensuring evaluation, including determination of equity in program delivery, quality improvement reviews of all mechanisms and procedures, and ascertaining results for accountability purposes.

The system-wide group should include (a) representatives of multi-school councils, (b) key district administrative and line staff with relevant expertise and vision (including unit heads, coordinators, union reps), and (c) various other stakeholders such as nondistrict members whose job and expertise (e.g., public health, mental health, social services, recreation, juvenile justice, post secondary institutions) make them invaluable contributors to the tasks at hand.

Also note that the Center for Mental Health in Schools has developed a major guide for those who are ready to move on to developing full scale school-community partnerships (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2003).

#####

See Exhibit 4 for a review of key points covered above.

Exhibit 4 Phasing in Teams and Councils

This Exhibit provides a review of points covered about Resource Teams and Councils and how to phase them in their efforts to organize a learning support component.

Phase 1. Organizing Resource Teams at a School Site

Creation of a school-site *Resource Team* provides a starting point in efforts to reform and restructure education support programs. Such a team not only can begin the process of transforming what already is available, it can help reach out to District and community resources to enhance education support activity. Such a resource-oriented team differs from case-oriented teams (e.g., Student Assistance/Guidance Teams). The focus of this team is not on individual students. Rather, it is oriented to clarifying resources and how they are best used.

Such a team can help

- improve coordination and efficacy by ensuring
 - >basic systems (for referral, triage, case management) are in place and effective
 - >programs/services are profiled, written up, and circulated
 - >resources are shared equitably
- enhance resources through staff development and by facilitating creation of new resources via redeployment and outreach
- evolve a site's education support activity infrastructure by assisting in the creation of program teams and Family/Parent Centers as hubs for such activities.

Among its first functions, the Resource Team can help clarify

- (a) the resources available to the school (who? what? when?) – For example, the team can map out and then circulate to staff, students, and parents a handout describing *Available Special Services, Programs, and Other Resources*.
- (b) how someone gains access to available resources – The team can clarify processes for referral, triage, follow-through, and case management, and circulate a description of procedures to the school staff and parents.
- (c) how resources are coordinated – To ensure systems are in place and to enhance effectiveness, the team can help weave together resources, make analyses, coordinate activity, and so forth.
- (d) what other resources the school needs and what steps should be taken to acquire them – The team can identify additional resources that might be acquired from the District or by establishing community linkages.

Toward the end of Phase 1, a *Complex Resource Council* (a multi-locality council) can be organized. This group is designed to ensure sharing and enhancement of resources across schools in a given neighborhood. Of particular interest are ways to address common concerns related to crisis response and prevention, as well as dealing with the reality that community resources that might be linked to schools are extremely limited in many geographic areas and thus must be shared.

(cont.)

Phase II. *Organizing a Programmatic Focus and Infrastructure for Learning Supports*

All sites that indicate readiness for moving toward reconceptualizing education support (enabling) activity into a delimited set of program areas are assisted in organizing program teams and restructuring the site's Resource Team.

This involves facilitating

- development of program teams
- analyses of education support activity (programs/services) by program area teams to determine
 - >how well the various activities are coordinated/integrated (with a special emphasis on minimizing redundancy)
 - >whether any activities need to be improved (or eliminated)
 - >what is missing -- especially any activity that seems as important or even more important than those in operation.
- efforts by program area teams related to
 - >profiling, writing up, circulating, and publicizing program/service information
 - >setting priorities to improve activity in a programmatic area
 - >setting steps into motion to accomplish their first priority for improvement
 - >moving on to their next priorities.

Phase III. *Facilitating the Maintenance and Evolution of Appropriate Changes*

In general, this involves evaluating how well the infrastructure and related changes are working, including whether the changes are highly visible and understood. If there are problems, the focus is on clarifying what is structurally and systemically wrong and taking remedial steps. (It is important to avoid the trap of dealing with a symptom and ignoring ongoing factors that are producing problems; that is, the focus should be on addressing systemic flaws in ways that can prevent future problems.)

Examples of activity:

Checking on maintenance of Program Teams (keeping membership broad based and with a working core through processes for identifying, recruiting, and training new members when teams need bolstering).

Holding individual meetings with school site leadership responsible for restructuring in this area and with team leaders to identify whether everyone is receiving adequate assistance and staff development.

Determining if teams periodically make a new listing (mapping) of the current activity at the site and whether they update their analyses of the activity.

Checking on efficacy of referral, triage, and case management systems.

Checking on the effectiveness of mechanisms for daily coordination, communication, and problem solving.

Evaluating progress in refining and enhancing program activity.

Phase IV. *Facilitating the Institutionalization/Sustainability of Appropriate Changes*

A critical aspect of institutionalization involves ensuring that school staff responsible for restructuring education support activity formulate a proposal for the next fiscal year. Such a proposal encompasses resource requests (budget, personnel, space, staff development time). It must be submitted and approved by the site's governance authority. Institutionalization requires a plan that is appropriately endorsed and empowered through appropriation of adequate resources.

Institutionalization is further supported by evaluating functioning and outcomes of new mechanisms and fundamental activities. With a view to improving quality and efficacy, the findings from such evaluations are used to revise activities and mechanisms as necessary.

A key concern throughout is on gathering and using relevant data (see Appendix). Data are needed

- >To “make the case” (e.g., related to how to use resources better)
- >To monitor and be responsive to trends (e.g., high frequency problems and their causes)
- >To establish progress related to the work at hand (e.g., progress in addressing barriers to learning and teaching)

Ultimately, There Must Be a Focus on Systemic Change

Establishing effective infrastructure mechanisms for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated component of student supports involves major systemic restructuring. Moving beyond initial demonstrations requires policies and processes that ensure what often is called diffusion, replication, roll out, or scale-up.

Too often, proposed systemic changes are not accompanied with the resources necessary to accomplish essential changes throughout a school-district. Common deficiencies include inadequate strategies for creating motivational readiness among a critical mass of stakeholders, assignment of change agents with relatively little specific training in facilitating large-scale systemic change, and scheduling unrealistically short time frames for building capacity to accomplish desired institutional changes. The process of scale-up requires its own framework of steps, the essence of which involves establishing mechanisms to address key phases, tasks, and processes for systemic change. These matters are covered in other resources available from the Center for Mental Health in Schools and are accessible online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

About Surveying How a School is Addressing Barriers to Student Learning

Addressing barriers to student learning and moving in new directions involves careful analyses of resource use in the context of needs and priorities. The process begins with mapping all existing learning supports activity. The Center has a set of surveys and other resource aids that provide tools and also highlight some strategies for mapping what a school is doing to address barriers to learning. The findings can provide a “data-driven” basis for analyzing resource use and identifying gaps related to needs and priorities for enhancing learning supports.

Schools already have a variety of programs and services to address barriers and promote development. These range from Title I programs, through extra help for low performing students, to accommodations for special education students. In some places, the personnel and programs to support learning may account for as much as 25-30% of the resources expended by a school. However, because school leaders have been so focused on instruction, too little attention is paid to the need for and potential impact of rethinking how these resources can be used to enable student learning.

Critical steps in enhancing learning supports involve (a) taking stock of the resources already being expended and (b) considering how these valuable resources can be used to the greatest effect. These matters involve a variety of functions and tasks we encompass under the theme of mapping, analyzing, and enhancing resources.

Mapping, Analyzing, and Enhancing Resources

In most schools and community agencies, there is redundancy stemming from ill-conceived policies and lack of coordination. These facts do not translate into evidence that there are pools of unneeded personnel and programs; they simply suggest there are resources that can be used in different ways to address unmet needs. Given that additional funding always is hard to come by, redeployment of resources is the primary answer to the ubiquitous question: *Where will we find the funds?* A primary and essential task in improving the current state of affairs, therefore, is to enumerate (map) existing school and community programs and services aimed at supporting students, families, and staff. Such mapping is followed by analyses of what is available, effective, and needed. The analysis provides a sound basis for formulating strategies to link with additional resources at other schools, district sites, and in the community and to enhance use of existing resources. Such analyses also can guide efforts to improve cost-effectiveness. In a similar fashion, mapping and analyses of a complex or family of schools provide information to guide strategies to enhance intervention effectiveness and garner economies of scale.

Carrying out the functions and tasks related to mapping, analyzing, and managing resources is, in effect, an intervention for systemic change. For example:

- A focus on these matters highlights the reality that the school’s current infrastructure probably requires some revamping to ensure there is a mechanism focusing on resources and ongoing development of a comprehensive approach to addressing barriers to learning.

- By identifying and analyzing existing resources (e.g., personnel, programs, services, facilities, budgeted dollars, social capital), awareness is heightened of their value and potential for playing a major role in helping students engage and re-engage in learning at school.
- Analyses also lead to sophisticated recommendations for deploying and redeploying resources to improve programs, enhance cost-effectiveness, and fill programmatic gaps in keeping with well-conceived priorities.
- The products from mapping can be invaluable for “social marketing” efforts designed to show teachers, parents, and other community stakeholders all that the school is doing to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development.

Enhanced appreciation of the importance of resource mapping, analysis, and management may lead to a desire to move too quickly in doing the tasks in order to get on with the “real business.” This is unwise. Resource mapping and management is real business and the tasks are ongoing.

Generally speaking, mapping usually is best done in stages, and the information requires constant updating and analysis. Most schools find it convenient to do the easiest forms of mapping first and, then, build the capacity to do in-depth mapping over a period of months. Similarly, initial analyses and management of resources focus mostly on enhancing understanding of what exists and coordinating resource use. Over time, the focus is on spread-sheet type analyses, priority recommendations, and braiding resources to enhance cost-effectiveness, and fill programmatic gaps. See the box on the next page for an outline of matters related to mapping and managing resources. More on this topic is available in *Resource Mapping and Management to Address Barriers to Learning: An Intervention for Systemic Change* (a technical assistance packet developed by the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA).¹

Some Tools to Aid Mapping

A gap analysis is generated when surveys of unmet needs of students, their families, and school staff are paired with resource mapping. The Center’s set of self-study surveys were developed to aid school staff in mapping and analyzing current programs, services, and systems.² These surveys provide a “starter” tool kit to aid in mapping.

- The first survey provides an overview of System Status
- This is followed by a set surveys related to each of the six content areas of an enabling or learning supports component:
 - (1) classroom-based approaches to enable and re-engage students in classroom learning
 - (2) crisis assistance and prevention

¹This document can be downloaded at no cost from the Center’s website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resourcemapping/resourcemappingandmanagement.pdf>

²The surveys can be downloaded at no cost from the Center’s website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Surveys/Set1.pdf>

- (3) support for transitions
 - (4) home involvement in schooling
 - (5) outreach to develop greater community involvement and support— including recruitment of volunteers
 - (6) prescribed student and family assistance
- Finally, included is a survey focusing specifically on School-Community Collaboration.

The items on any of the surveys can help clarify

- what is currently being done and whether it is being done well
- what else is desired.

At schools, this type of self-study is best done by teams. However, it is *not* about having another meeting and/or getting through a task. It is about moving on to better outcomes for students through (a) working together to understand what is and what might be and (b) clarifying gaps, priorities, and next steps. For example, a group of school staff (teachers, support staff, administrators) could use the items to discuss how the school currently addresses any or all of the areas. Members of a team initially might work separately in responding to survey items, but the real payoff comes from group work.

The purposes of the group's work are to

- analyze whether certain activities should no longer be pursued (because they are not effective or not as high a priority as some others that are needed).
- decide about what resources can be redeployed to enhance current efforts that need embellishment
- identify gaps with respect to important areas of need.
- establish priorities, strategies, and timelines for filling gaps.

Done right mapping and analysis of resources can

- counter fragmentation and redundancy
- mobilize support and direction
- enhance linkages with other resources
- facilitate effective systemic change
- integrate all facets of systemic change and counter marginalization of the component to address barriers to student learning.

Ongoing attention to all this provides a form of quality review.

Exhibit 5 About Resource Mapping and Management

A. Why mapping resources is so important.

- To function well, every system has to fully understand and manage its resources. Mapping is a first step toward enhancing essential understanding, and done properly, it is a major intervention in the process of moving forward with enhancing systemic effectiveness.

B. Why mapping both school *and* community resources is so important.

- Schools and communities share
 - > goals and problems with respect to children, youth, and families
 - > the need to develop cost-effective systems, programs, and services to meet the goals and address the problems.
 - > accountability pressures related to improving outcomes
 - > the opportunity to improve effectiveness by coordinating and eventually integrating resources to develop a full continuum of systemic interventions

C. What are resources?

- Programs, services, real estate, equipment, money, social capital, leadership, infrastructure mechanisms, and more

D. What do we mean by mapping and who does it?

- A representative group of informed stakeholder is asked to undertake the process of identifying
 - > what currently is available to achieve goals and address problems
 - > what else is needed to achieve goals and address problems

E. What does this process lead to?

- Analyses to clarify gaps and recommend priorities for filling gaps related to programs and services and deploying, redeploying, and enhancing resources
- Identifying needs for making infrastructure and systemic improvements and changes
- Clarifying opportunities for achieving important functions by forming and enhancing collaborative arrangements
- Social Marketing

F. How to do resource mapping

- Do it in stages (start simple and build over time)
 - > a first step is to clarify people/agencies who carry out relevant roles/functions
 - > next clarify specific programs, activities, services (including info on how many students/families can be accommodated)
 - > identify the dollars and other related resources (e.g., facilities, equipment) that are being expended from various sources
 - > collate the various policies that are relevant to the endeavor
- At each stage, establish a computer file and in the later stages create spreadsheet formats
- Use available tools (see following examples)

G. Use benchmarks to guide progress related to resource mapping

Appendix

The Role of Standards and Accountability Indicators

School-reform across the country is " standards-based" and accountability driven (with the dominant emphasis on improving academic performance as measured by achievement test scores). Given these realities, efforts to reform student support in ways that move it from its current marginalized status must delineate a set of standards and integrate them with instructional standards. And, to whatever degree is feasible, efforts must be made to expand the accountability framework so that it supports the ongoing development of comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to addressing barriers and promoting healthy development.

Standards

Establishing *standards* is another facet of ensuring high levels of attention and support for development of comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to address barriers to learning. While the move toward establishing standards for a learning support component is new, examples of relevant standards are available. For instance, the department of education in the state of Hawai'i has incorporated a set of standards for "Quality Student Support." They have made this an integral part of their total *Standards Implementation Design (SID) System*. The initial effort to delineate criteria and rubrics is available online at: <http://doe.k12.hi.us/standards/sid.pdf>.

Another attempt is seen in work done a few years ago by the Memphis City Schools in their effort to provide standards, guidelines, and related quality indicators for their reforms related to student supports. (This is available in documents from the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA.)

Also, the *Guidelines for a Student Support Component* included in this module provide a basis upon which any district or school can develop standards and related quality indicators.

Once standards are formulated, they must be thoroughly incorporated into every school's improvement plan. This is a necessary step toward making the policy commitment visible at every school, and it establishes the framework for ensuring relevant accountability.

Of course, for all this to happen, it will be essential to expand the current framework for school accountability. Such an expanded framework is outlined in the next section.

Expanding the Accountability Framework for Schools

Systems are driven by what is measured for purposes of accountability. This is particularly so when systems are the focus of major reform. Under reform conditions, policy makers often want a quick and easy recipe to use. Thus, most of the discussion around accountability stresses making certain that program administrators and staff are held accountable to specific, short-term results. Little discussion wrestles with how to maximize the benefits (and minimize the negative effects) of accountability in improving complex, long-term outcomes. As a result, in too many instances, the tail wags the dog, the dog gets dizzy, and the citizenry doesn't get what it needs and wants.

School accountability is a good example of the problem. Accountability has extraordinary power to reshape schools – for good and for bad. The influence can be seen in classrooms everyday. With the increasing demands for accountability, teachers quickly learn what is to be tested and what will not be evaluated, and slowly but surely greater emphasis is placed on teaching what will be on the tests. Over time what is on the tests comes to be viewed as what is most important. Because only so much time is available to the teacher, other things not only are deemphasized, they also are dropped from the curriculum. If allowed to do so, accountability procedures have the power to reshape the entire curriculum.

What's wrong with that? Nothing – if what is being evaluated reflects all the important things we want students to learn in school. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

Current accountability pressures reflect values and biases that have led to evaluating a small range of basic skills and doing so in a narrow way. For students with learning, behavior, or emotional problems, this is of even greater concern when their school programs are restricted to improving skills they lack. When this occurs, they are cut off from participating in learning activities that might increase their interest in overcoming their problems and that might open up opportunities and enrich their future lives.

Policy makers want schools, teachers, and administrators (and students and their families) held accountable for higher academic achievement. And, as everyone involved in school reform knows, the only measure that really counts is achievement test scores. These tests drive school accountability, and what such tests measure has become the be-all and end-all of what school reformers attend to. This produces a growing disconnect between the realities of what it takes to improve academic performance and where many policy makers and school reformers are leading the public.

This disconnect is especially evident in schools serving what are now being referred to as “low wealth” families. Such families and those who work in schools serving them have a clear appreciation of many barriers to learning that must be addressed so that the students can benefit from the teacher's efforts to teach. They stress that, in many schools, major academic improvements are unlikely until

comprehensive and multifaceted approaches to address these barriers are developed and pursued effectively.

At the same time, it is evident to anyone who looks that there is no direct accountability for whether these barriers are addressed. To the contrary, when achievement test scores do not reflect an immediate impact for the investment, efforts essential for addressing barriers to development and learning often are devalued and cut.

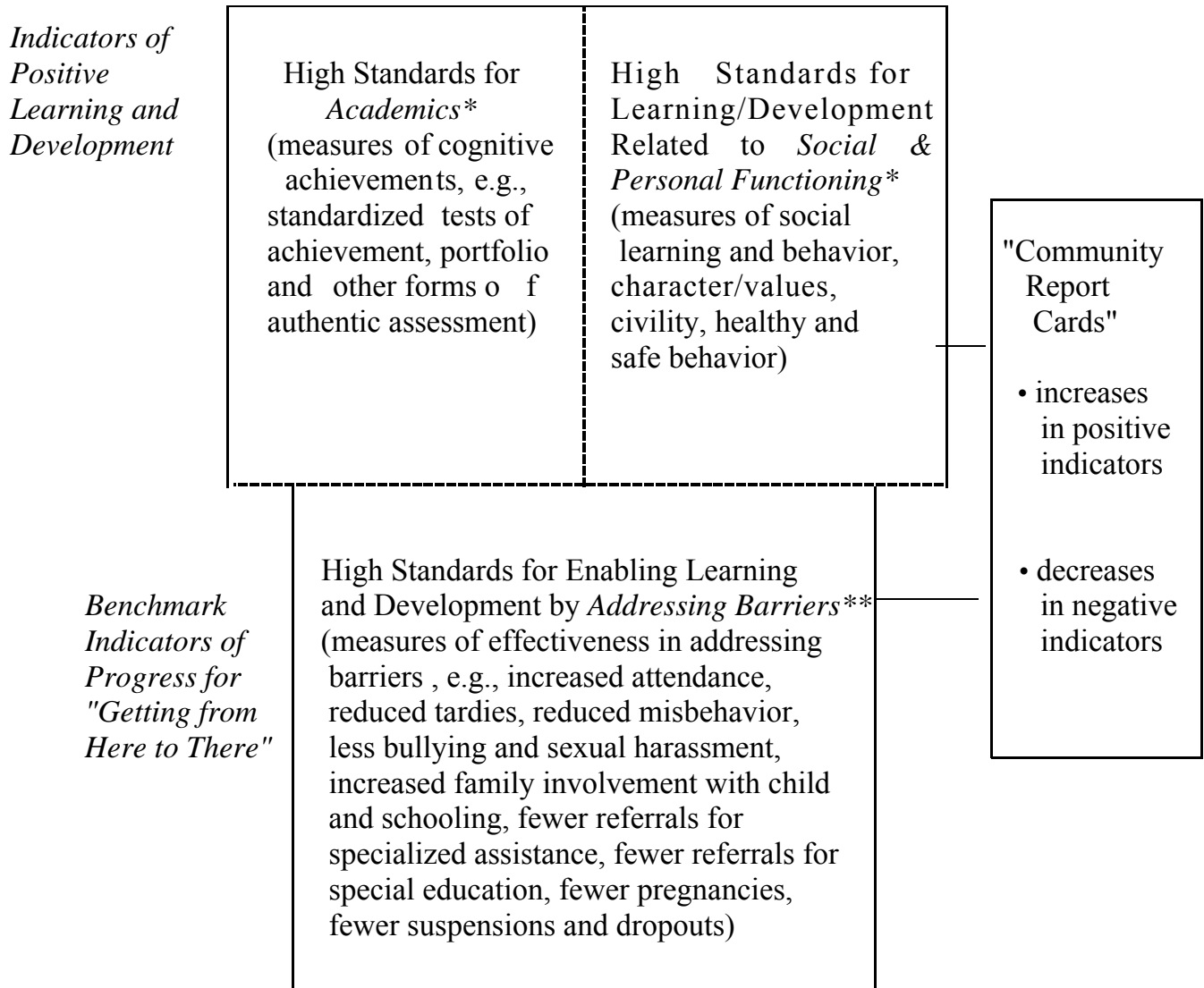
Thus, rather than building the type of comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach that can produce improved academic performance, prevailing accountability measures are pressuring schools to maintain a narrow focus on strategies whose face validity suggests a direct route to improving instruction. The implicit underlying assumption of most of these teaching strategies is that students are motivationally ready and able each day to benefit from the teacher's instruction. The reality, of course, is that in too many schools the *majority* of youngsters are not motivationally ready and able and thus are not benefitting from the instructional improvements. For many students, the fact remains that there are a host of external interfering factors.

Logically, well designed, systematic efforts should be directed at addressing interfering factors. However, current accountability pressures override the logic and result in the marginalization of almost every initiative that is not seen as directly (and quickly) leading to academic gains. Ironically, not only does the restricted emphasis on achievement measures work against the logic of what needs to be done, it works against gathering evidence on how essential and effective it is to address barriers to learning in a direct manner.

All this leads to an appreciation of the need for an expanded framework for school accountability. A framework that includes direct measures of achievement and much more. Figure 12 highlights such an expanded framework.

As illustrated, there is no intent to deflect from the laser-like focus on accountability for meeting high standards related to academics. The debate will continue as to how best to measure outcomes in this arena, but clearly schools must demonstrate they are effective institutions for teaching academics.

Figure 12. Expanding the Framework for School Accountability



*Results of interventions for directly facilitating development and learning.

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

At the same time, it is time to acknowledge that schools also are expected to pursue high standards for promoting social and personal functioning, including enhancing civility, teaching safe and healthy behavior, and some form of “character education.” Every school we visit has specific goals related to this arena of student development and learning. At the same time, it is evident that schools currently are not held accountable for this facet of their work. That is, there is no systematic evaluation or reporting of the work. Thus, as would be expected, schools direct their resources and attention mainly to what is measured. Given that society wants schools to attend to these matters and most professionals understand that personal and social functioning is integrally tied to academic performance, it is self-defeating not to hold schools accountable in this arena.

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

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

More broadly, it is unlikely that students in many economically depressed areas will perform up to high standards if the schools do not pursue a holistic, systemic, and collaborative approach to strengthening their students, families, the feeder pattern of schools, and the surrounding neighborhood. In this context, we are reminded of Ulric Neisser’s (1976) dictum: *Changing the individual while leaving the world alone is a dubious proposition.*