



POLICY NOTE

Moving From a Two- to a Three-Component Policy Framework for Improving Schools with a Fully Integrated Mental Health Focus

(<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/policyframework.pdf>)

Although most educators are aware of the value of health (mental and physical) and psychosocial interventions in enabling students to become full participants in their own academic achievement and healthy development, efforts to create a comprehensive approach are not assigned a high priority. One way to understand this is to recognize that the primary and essential nature of relevant programs and services has not been thrust before policy makers and education reformers in an effective manner. Emerging trends demonstrating comprehensive and integrated approaches are attracting some attention. However, they do not convey the perspective that interventions addressing barriers to teaching and learning are *essential* to the success of school improvement. The next step in moving toward a comprehensive approach is to bring the following message home to policy makers at all levels. *For school reform to produce desired student outcomes, school and community reformers must expand their vision beyond restructuring instructional and management functions and recognize that there is a third primary and essential set of functions involved in enabling teaching and learning to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.*

In place of the fragmented interventions generated by current school policy (see Exhibit 1A), an effective third component of school improvement is needed to facilitate the development and full integration of a comprehensive and cohesive system of student and learning supports, including a fully embedded focus on mental health (see Exhibit 1B). As illustrated in Exhibit 1B, this third facet of school and community restructuring has been dubbed an enabling or learning supports component. Emergence of a cohesive third component requires policy reform that facilitates weaving together what is available at a school, expanding and linking this component through integrating school, community, and home resources. This involves extensive restructuring of school-owned enabling activity, such as pupil services and special and compensatory education programs.

By calling for reforms that enhance the focus on a wide range of psychosocial factors interfering with school learning and performance, the concept of an Enabling Component encompasses the type of models described as full-service schools and wrap around services -- and goes beyond them

By offering a moderate generalist perspective for restructuring school-owned enabling activity and blending school and community resources, the concept provides a much needed unifying focus around which to formulate new policy. Adoption of an inclusive unifying concept is pivotal in convincing policy makers to move to a position that recognizes the essential nature of enabling interventions.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS at UCLA

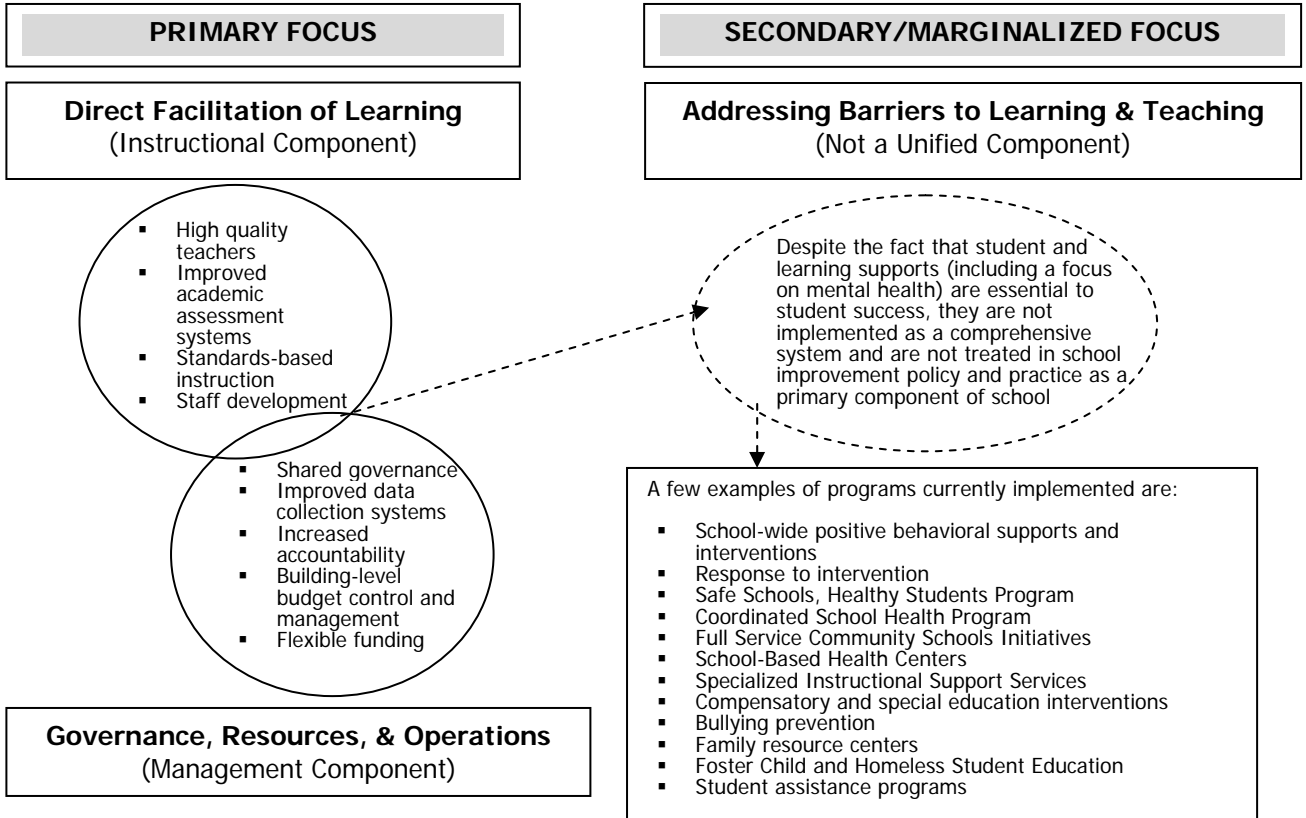
The Center, co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor, operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project.

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Exhibit **Moving From a Two- to a Three-Component Framework for Improving Schools with a Fully Integrated Mental Health Focus**

A. Current School Improvement Framework



B. Needed Policy Framework

