

INFORMATION RESOURCE

WHAT IS A LEARNING SUPPORTS LEADERSHIP TEAM?

Every school that wants to improve student and learning supports needs a mechanism specifically working on system *development* to enhance how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. The goal is to rework existing resources by establishing a unified and comprehensive approach. A *Learning Supports Leadership Team* is a vital mechanism for transforming current marginalized and fragmented interventions into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive *system* that enhances equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school.

Most schools have teams that focus on individual student/family problems (e.g., a student support team, an IEP team). These teams pursue such functions as referral, triage, and care monitoring or management. In contrast to this case-by-case focus, a school's *Learning Supports Leadership Team*, along with an administrative leader, can take responsibility for developing a unified and comprehensive enabling or learning supports component at a school. In doing so, it ensures that the component is (1) fully integrated as a primary and essential facet of school improvement and (2) outreaches to the community to fill critical system gaps by weaving in human and financial resources from public and private sectors.

What Are the Functions of this Leadership Team?

A Learning Supports Leadership Team performs essential functions and tasks related to the implementation and ongoing development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system for addressing barriers to student learning and teaching.

Examples are:

- ◆ Aggregating data across students and from teachers to analyze school needs
- ◆ Mapping resources at school and in the community
- ◆ Analyzing resources & formulating priorities for system development (in keeping with the most pressing needs of the school)
- ◆ Recommending how resources should be deployed and redeployed
- ◆ Coordinating and integrating school resources & connecting with community resources
- ◆ Planning and facilitating ways to strengthen and develop new programs and systems
- ◆ Developing strategies for enhancing resources
- ◆ Establishing work groups as needed
- ◆ "Social marketing"

Related to the concept of an enabling/learning supports component, these functions and tasks are pursued within frameworks that outline six curriculum content arenas and the full continuum of interventions needed to develop a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to student and learning supports that is integrated fully into the fabric of school improvement policy and practice. (See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/frameworksforsystemictransformation.pdf>)

Who's on Such a Team?

A Learning Supports Leadership Team might begin with only a few people. Where feasible, it should expand into an inclusive group of informed, willing, and able stakeholders. This might include the following:

- Administrative Lead for the component
- 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 needs to represent the team at administrative and governance meetings. A member also will need to represent the team when a Learning Supports Leadership *Council* is established for a family of schools (e.g., the feeder pattern).

For Related Center Resources, see the toolkit for *Rebuilding Student Supports into a Comprehensive System for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching* – especially Section B on Reworking Infrastructure – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

The center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor; it operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA, L.A. CA 90095-1563 Ph: (310) 825-3634. email: smhp@ucla.edu
Web: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>