



*Improving Schools,
Engaging Students*

Guide for Practice . . .

Prototype Strategic Plan for Guiding SEAs and LEAs in Developing a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

October, 2013

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 email: 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

Prototype Strategic Plan for Guiding SEAs and LEAs in Developing a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

The following is a prototype strategic system change plan we use as external mentors/coaches in guiding SEAs and LEAs. Facets of this plan can be adopted/adapted by SEAs/LEAs in formulating their strategic plan for transforming student and learning supports into a *Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports*.

Aim: To develop a *Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* in order to enhance equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school and beyond by addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students

Process Goals:

- To guide the reworking of existing student and learning supports into a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports
- To prepare internal leaders to accomplish the transformation

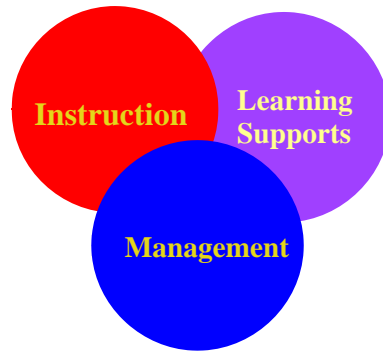
Major Process Steps:

- I. Introductory presentation to and decision making discussion with SEA/LEA leadership**
- II. Action Planning and implementation related to the delineated next steps**
- III. Preparing the Design Document and Having it Accepted**
- IV. Development a Strategic Plan overview and a detailed plan for the first two stages of systemic change with a particular emphasis on capacity building**
- V. Initial Implementation**
- VI. Formative Evaluation (designed to lead to Summative Evaluation)**
- VII. Detailed Strategic Planning for Sustainability and Renewal**

What Is a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports?*

To enable all students to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school, schools need to be able to directly address barriers to learning and teaching. This requires elevating such efforts so that they are a third primary and essential component for school improvement.

As indicated below, the third component is called a learning supports component.



Learning supports are the resources, strategies, and practices that provide the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual supports that directly address barriers to learning and teaching, and that re-engage disconnected students.

To be most effective, learning supports are unified and then developed into a comprehensive system that provides supportive interventions in classrooms and school-wide and is fully integrated with efforts to improve instruction and management at a school.

The learning supports intervention framework combines both an integrated and systemic continuum of school and community interventions and a multifaceted and cohesive set of six content areas. The continuum is designed to

- promote positive development and prevent problems
- intervene as early after the onset of problems as is feasible
- provide special assistance for severe and chronic problems.

The continuum is embedded into the following six content areas:

- *Classroom-based approaches to enable learning* (e.g., ensuring classrooms have necessary supports and create and maintain a positive climate)
- *Support for transitions* (e.g., assisting students and families as they negotiate hurdles to enrollment, adjust to school, grade, and program changes, make daily transitions before, during, and after school, access and effectively use supports and extended learning opportunities, and so forth)
- *Home involvement and engagement in schooling* (e.g., increasing and strengthening the home and its connections with school)
- *Community engagement with schools* (e.g., outreach to develop a greater community support from a wide range of entities. This includes agency collaborations and use of volunteers to extend learning opportunities and help students-in-need.)

- *Crises assistance and prevention* (including ensuring immediate assistance in emergencies, providing follow-up care as necessary, developing prevention programs, creating a caring and safe learning environment and countering the impact of out-of-school traumatic events)
- *Student and family assistance* (facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance on campus and in the community as needed).

Combining the continuum with the six areas provides a matrix framework to represent a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports (see below).

**Combined Continuum and Content Arenas:
Framework for a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports**

		Levels of Intervention		
		Systems for Promoting Healthy Development & Preventing Problems	Systems for Early Intervention (Early after problem onset)	Systems of Care
Learning Supports Content Areas	Classroom-based approaches to enable learning			
	Crisis assistance & prevention			
	Support for transitions			
	Home Involvement & Engagement in Schooling			
	Community Engagement with Schools			
	Student and Family Assistance			

*For a more details, see – *Brief Overviews* in Section A of the Center’s System Change Toolkit online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkit1.htm>.

About Strategic Planning

The art of progress is to preserve order amid
change and to preserve change amid order.

Alfred Lord Whitehead

Strategic planning is key to effective implementation, sustainability, and replication to scale of major education innovations. In pursuing such planning, it is essential to approach the task from the perspective of systemic change/transformation.

And, it is also essential not to lose sight of a simple truth:

If innovations do not end up playing effective roles at a school and in the classroom, they aren't worth the time and effort. Schools and classrooms must be the center and guiding force for all strategic education planning.

Strategic planning is a systematic process that translates a desired future into a design, a broad set of goals or objectives, and a sequence of steps to achieve the vision. With specific respect to developing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports, strategic planning is meant to ensure that the vision and design are effectively and efficiently implemented. The plan spells out an answer to:

How do we get there from here?

Strategic and Action Planning Operationalizes the Design: To this end, the specific goals for strategic planning are to accomplish the major phases and tasks of systemic change.

First Phase – Introduction and Creating Readiness, Commitment, & Engagement

Second Phase – Start-up and Phase-in: Building Infrastructure, Capacity, and Pursuing Initial Implementation

Third Phase – Sustaining and Evolving to Enhance Outcomes

Fourth Phase – Generating Creative Renewal and Replication to Scale

The multi-year plan stresses objectives, steps, tasks, to be accomplished during each phase and general strategies for accomplishing them. Our focus here is on the first year which covers the first two phases and does so in ways that lay a foundation for the third. See examples in Appendix B of major steps during the first and second phases. For purposes of this strategic plan we have divided the process steps into seven sections and have included cautions based on lessons learned from work in states, districts, and schools. The strategies in each section provide the basis for action planning and developing MOUs and work plans.

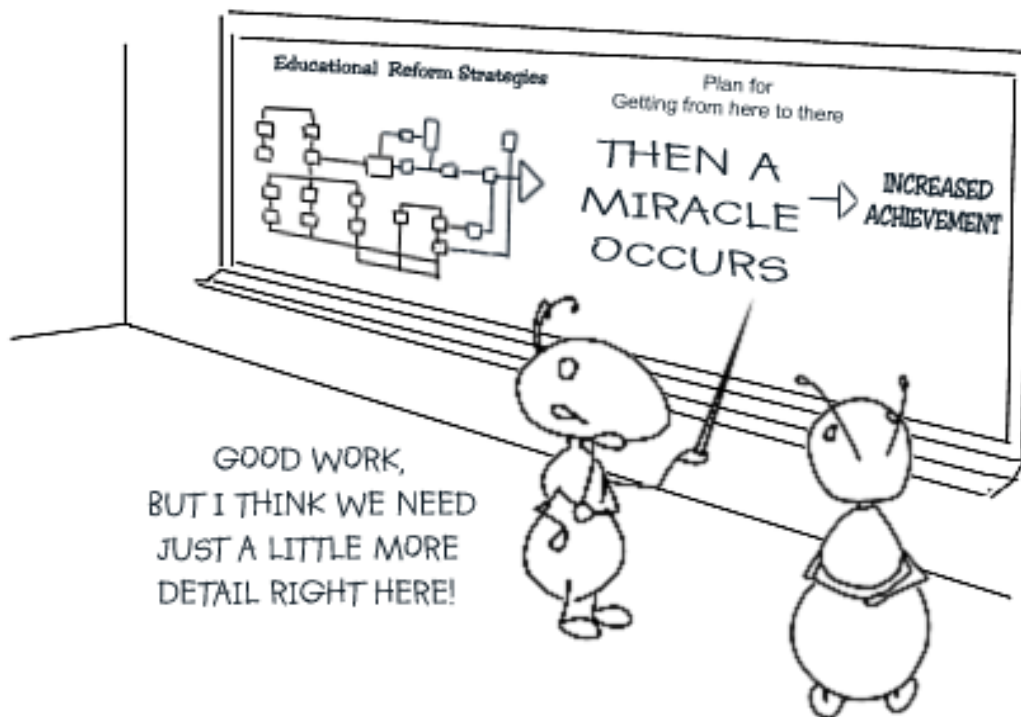
Strategic Planning Needs to Reflect Organizational Context: Strategic planning for developing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports is done within the organizational context and is intended to be fully integrated into the overall approach to school improvement.

What is strategy?

“Strategy is . . . well, strategy is everything. Strategy is timing . . . as the comedians tell us, timing is everything. When the time is right, we use the word "opportune" and thus imply the existence of opportunity. This is how intention reconciles itself with reality and how tactics shape strategy. As Tom Peters once said, 'Execution is strategy.' Algebraically speaking, that means strategy is execution. In much simpler terms, we adapt to changing circumstances.

So does strategy.”

Fred Nickols



Getting From Here to There

I. Introductory presentation to and decision making discussion with SEA/LEA leadership

Objectives:

- (1) To provide an introductory overview about
 - A. The bases and frameworks for understanding the nature, scope, and implications of a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports
 - B. What is involved in the systemic transformation (Getting from here to there)
- (2) To enhance readiness and commitment to moving forward
- (3) To delineate and reach agreement on the following as next steps
 - A. Immediate need to designate a dedicated administrative leader position for the transformation and ongoing work
 - B. Need to establish a temporary set of task-dedicated mechanisms for the transformation (e.g., steering group, planning team and related work groups, implementation team)
 - C. Set a date for a full day leadership institute for all who will be staffing the mechanisms
 - D. Need to develop an immediate action plan for the above next steps and for
 - >establishing a *critical mass of stakeholder support*
 - >preparing a *Design Document*
 - >developing a *Strategic Plan*
 - E. Immediate need to identify who will do the action planning
 - F. To prepare and send back a MOU detailing what has been decided (assuming a decision is made to move forward)

Strategic Approach for Accomplishing Objectives

The process begins when a SEA or LEA initiates exploratory e-mail and phone discussions with us.

Introduction and Interchange

If the SEA or LEA expresses serious interest in moving toward a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports, an introductory presentation and related interchange are arranged. This introductory work consists of some basic readings supplied by the Center for the top leadership/decision makers to preview and an on-site session with them. The presenters are the framework developers from the Center at UCLA and at times

other colleagues. (No fees are charged, but the Center does ask for reimbursement of expenses related to the trips.) Other potential external collaborators are invited to attend.

- >The onsite session begins with a power point overview introduction that takes about 1 hour; it covers the bases and frameworks for understanding the nature, scope, and implications of a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports. This is followed by a 20-30 minute Q & A exchange. Next there is a ½ hour power point introductory overview presentation on what is involved in getting from here to there.

Decision Making

Immediately following the interchange, the leadership privately engages in a ½ hour decision making session to determine whether they want to move forward to transform existing approaches to providing student and learning supports.

If they do, a ½ hour is devoted to presentation and discussion focused on:

- >Previewing next steps
- >Identifying who will do the related action planning
- >Explaining how the Center will function as an external collaborator (mentor/coach) to help guide the transformation process (e.g., providing mentoring/coaching and written resources to explain and guide them through the multi-year process). Note that the Center provides this guidance without fees and much of it is accomplished through email and phone exchanges focused around specific guidance documents. However 1-2 face-to-face visits are usually indicated. (The Center does ask for reimbursement of expenses related to such visits.)
- >Explaining that some specific external mentoring/coaching is needed to carry out major tasks related to developing (1) a design document and (2) a strategic systemic change plan. The Center at UCLA will play a role in helping with these tasks, again primarily using e-mentoring/coaching and phone conferences with no fees attached and with cost-reimbursed periodic visits. In addition, if there is interest, Scholastic is gearing up to play these roles, providing fee-based mentors/coaches and related professional development materials. Note that the aim of all such external mentoring and coaching is to prepare internal leaders to become effective mentors and coaches in the development of a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports.

Moving Forward

If the leadership decides to move forward:

- >The session ends with clarification of channels for subsequent communication;
- >Immediately after the visit, a MOU (detailing agreements and procedures) is prepared and sent.

Strategic Cautions Based on Lessons Learned

While it is always important to customize the above approach to account for situational opportunities, strengths, and limitations, it is essential not to do so in ways that undermine accomplishing basic aims, goals, and objectives.

While external collaborators/mentors/coaches are always concerned about relationship building, the need not only is for a few good personal relationships, the process needs to develop effective *working* relationships among all who are involved. This requires a strategic and potent initial and ongoing focus on enhancing readiness, commitment, and engagement.

Also, frequent leadership changes (e.g., superintendents, principals, other key stakeholders) can undermine agreements. This requires early attention to reworking policy and procedures in ways that can be sustained in spite of such changes. It also requires procedures for effectively bringing new leaders and other key stakeholders up to speed.

Those who are reluctant or resistant to making the transformation often raise points meant to block change. Most fundamentally they suggest that there is no money for the work. For most SEAs and LEAs, it appears that about 25% of the budget is being expended to address barriers to learning and teaching. Strategic planning focuses on redeploying such resources and using them in ways that benefit from economies of scale. And good planning calls for not allowing “special initiatives” (even those supported by extra-mural funding) to redirect resources away from the transformation.

Once the work is underway, understanding of what is involved deepens, and this often requires a review and revision of initial agreements and procedures.

The nonplanner’s creed:

I don’t just believe in miracles, I rely on them!



II. Action Planning and implementation related to the delineated next steps

Objective:

Establish and build the capacity of an action planning team to formulate how each of the delineated next steps will be accomplished. In doing so, clarify the functions and sources for external mentors, coaches, and technical assistance.

Strategic Approach for Accomplishing Objective

Throughout the action planning and implementation of next steps, external assistance is promptly provided by email or phone. The focus of the coaching is to further clarify

- the immediate next steps (see Objective 3 in Section I)
- what is involved in pursuing the steps (a resource is sent prior to the call)
- the process of action planning to carry them out (a resource is sent)
- the availability of external mentors, coaches, and technical assistance to assist.

Mobilizing Leadership Mechanisms

A conference call coaching session is scheduled as soon as feasible with those designated to do the immediate action planning.

- >Prior to the call, resource material and a draft agenda is sent. Additions to the agenda and specific questions and concerns are invited.

Following the call, the action planning work group clarifies who the superintendent has designated as the administrative leader for the work and who will staff the Steering Group. The group then works with the administrative leader to formulate an action plan for the following:

- >The administrative leader and Steering Group need to establish the temporary set of task-dedicated mechanisms for the transformation (e.g., planning team and related work groups, implementation team)
- >The administrative leader needs to establish a *Learning Supports Leadership Team*
- >As soon as the membership on the various mechanisms is established, the leader sets an early date for the *full day leadership institute*

Mobilizing Work Groups

After the full day institute, the leader establishes workgroups to

- develop and implement procedures for building a *critical mass of stakeholder support* (see Guide to Practice on *Enhancing Readiness ...*)
- prepare a *Design Document* (see Section III of this plan)
- develop a *Strategic Plan* (see Sections IV and VII of this plan)
- enhance component visibility, communication, sharing, and problem solving within the department/districts/schools and beyond

When drafted, the action plan for implementing next steps is presented to the Steering Group for feedback.

If aspects of implementing the plan call for it, a work plan also is developed.

Strategic Cautions Based on Lessons Learned

The administrative position of transformation leader and ongoing leader for the learning supports component needs to be well delineated by an official job description and specific accountabilities (see Center' system change toolkit for a job description). The nature and scope of the systemic changes involved requires that the work not just be tacked on to someone who is already overly committed. It also requires immediate attention to capacity building for the functions of this role and special professional preparation for the designated leader.

While establishment of a transformation leader and Steering Group is readily appreciated, the importance of creating a broad-based systemic change infrastructure mechanisms is less understood. Therefore, it is essential to clarify the need for and elicit commitment to establishing and building the capacity of a full set of transformation mechanisms as quickly as feasible.

While the Steering Group is meant to champion the work, a cadre of other *high level* decision makers need to be cultivated as influential champions who can remove barriers to moving forward.

To the degree feasible, continuous efforts should be made to reach out and include in work groups those who are resistant to unifying fragmented (“siloed”) student and learning supports and reluctant to give up protecting their turf.

As understanding of what is involved deepens, review and revise initial agreements and procedures if necessary.

There's never time to plan things right.



True, but there's always time to do things wrong!



III. Preparing the Design Document and Having it Accepted

Objectives:

- A. To deepen understanding of the work.
- B. To prepare a draft design document.
- C. To circulate the draft document to elicit feedback from Steering Group and other key stakeholders
- D. To finalize the document and submit it to the Superintendent for approval (also to the Board if it is appropriate to do so at the time)

Strategic Approach for Accomplishing Objectives

The administrative leader establishes a work group to draft a Design Document (see suggested process illustrated in Exhibit I).

In building capacity, e-coaching, and networking with others pursuing similar new directions (e.g., conference call, email, teleconference) are used to answer questions and work through concerns.

External coaching is used to build the capacity of the group starting with guidance for mapping and analyzing current resource use (see tool for mapping – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/tool%20mapping%20current%20status.pdf>)

Building Capacity

Sources

- e-coaching, technical assistance, and networking with others pursuing similar new directions (e.g., via conference calls, emails, teleconferences) are used to clarify processes, answer questions, and work through concerns.
- personalized in-service professional development by internal and external coaches

Examples of Resources to deepen understanding

- Unifying and developing a comprehensive system of learning supports (e.g., See *Toward Next Steps in School Improvement: Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/towardnextstep.pdf>)
- Making systemic changes (e.g., *Sustaining and Scale-up: It's About Systemic Change* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/Fall04.pdf>)
- Preparing a design document (e.g., see SEA designs from AL, LA, IA; LEA design from Gainesville; see design aids in Center System Change Toolkit – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>)

Drafting the Design

- >As the work group prepares the design document, e-coaching is provided. This includes sending early drafts for feedback from the external mentor/coach guiding the process.
- >When the group has a complete draft, it is circulated to the Steering Group and other key stakeholders to elicit feedback/comments. (Note: Circulating the first draft to as many other stakeholders as feasible provides an opportunity to deepen their understanding and appreciation for the importance of the work.)
- >Feedback/comments are reviewed and the document is finalized and submitted to the Superintendent for approval (also to the Board if it is appropriate to do so at the time).
- >The document is then placed on the website, an announcement is crafted about reviewing and ratifying the design. (Note: This too provides an opportunity to enhance stakeholder understanding, readiness, commitment, and engagement.)

Strategic Cautions Based on Lessons Learned

In adopting/adapting the design to account for situational opportunities, strengths, and limitations, care must be taken to ensure essential facets of the prototype are not lost. Feedback from the external mentor guiding the process is essential in this respect.

Don't assume because someone is using the language of the design that it is well understood or accepted. Many times new terms are adopted, but the substance of the transformation is not. When this happens, only cosmetic changes are made.

As understanding deepens, remember to review and revise initial agreements and procedures as necessary.

**What are the basic steps
in strategic planning?**



**One is to prepare the plan.
Two is to shelve it!**



Exhibit I

Aids for the Design Team's Work

The intent is for the team to draft a design document that articulates

- *the imperative* for a comprehensive system of learning supports
- **an *intervention framework for the system***
- an *organizational and operational infrastructure* that ensures schools can begin and sustain development of the system
- *policy recommendations* to end the marginalization of learning supports and enable development and sustainability of the system by ensuring existing resources are coalesced and (re)deployed cost-effectively.

There are many ways for a design team to work. Online is a working draft guide (in continuous development) that reflects the process some others have used – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/designteamguide.pdf>

Also online is a generic outline for a design document and a set of templates developed to aid the team in writing a design document. See

- Outline – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/Genericoutline.pdf>
- Templates – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/sectiontemplates.pdf>

For examples of design documents, see SEA designs from AL, LA, IA, and the LEA design from Gainesville in the Center's System Change Toolkit – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm> .

Note about Team Membership. The design team needs personnel who understand the basic nature and scope of a comprehensive system of learning supports and who want such a system developed.

The composition should include

- the administrative leader
- a cross section of school improvement leaders representing concerns related to student and learning supports, instruction, and management/governance.

Note about Team Process: Much of the work is done outside of meetings. Each team member pursues (alone or as part of a work group) a set of delineated tasks between meetings focused on developing specific facets of the design document.

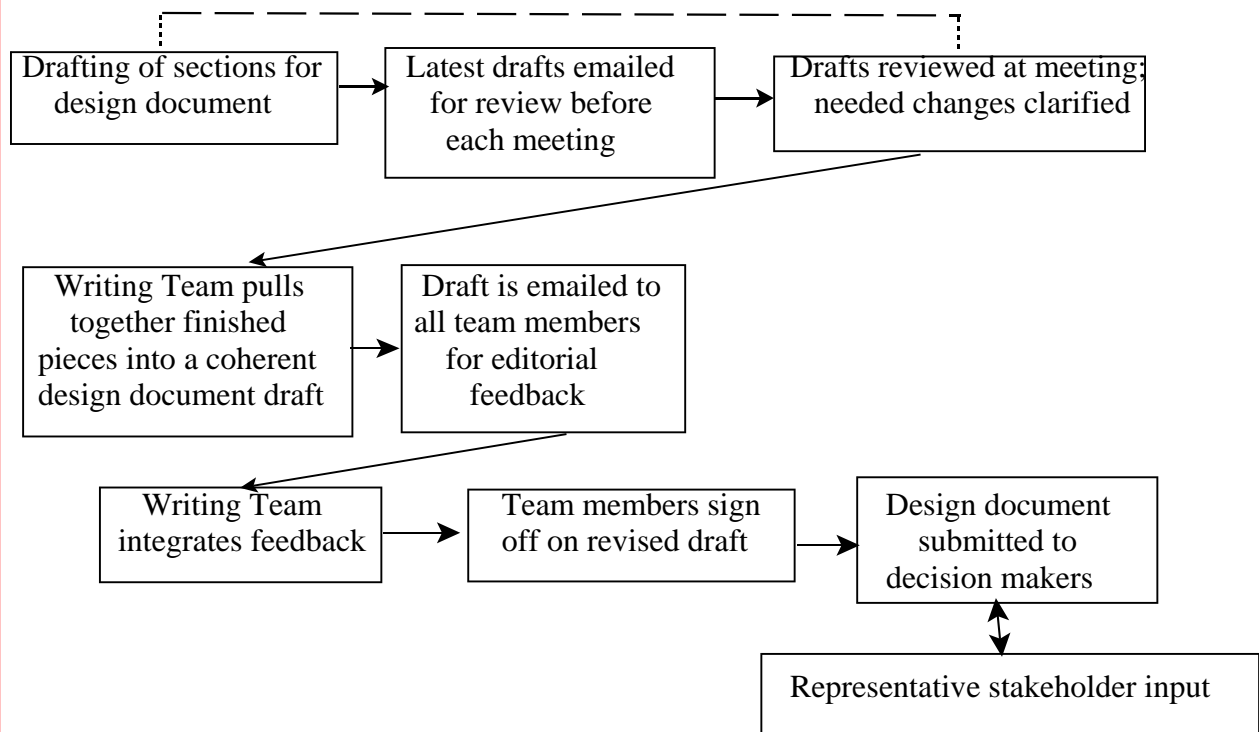
Draft sections are emailed to all team members for review before meetings.

The general format for any meeting involves:

- discussion of strengths and weakness of draft sections and ideas for revision
- clarification of what will be accomplished before the next meeting

(cont.)

Sketch illustration of Process



As illustrated, once the various sections are drafted:

- (1) one or two team members (with the best writing skills) pull the pieces together into a working draft of the design document
- (2) then the design document draft is emailed to all members of the team for review and editorial feedback.

If feasible, it helps to share information along the way with key stakeholders so that they are aware and providing input before being presented with the completed design draft. In some places this takes the form of periodic progress presentations that outline key ideas for feedback.

Throughout the process the team can access e-coaching and feedback from the external mentor/coach guiding the process.

When the document is in good shape, the members sign off and the design is submitted to decision makers for adoption.

At this stage, additional *representative stakeholder input* should be sought (especially from those who can derail the work) and relevant feedback integrated.

Once the design is adopted, the focus turns first to strategic planning and then to action planning.

IV. Development a strategic plan overview and a detailed plan for the first two stages of systemic change with a particular emphasis on capacity building*

Objectives:

- A. To prepare a strategic systemic change plan *overview*
- B. To prepare a detailed plan for the first two stages of systemic change
- C. To give special attention to a strategic approach to capacity building*
- D. To circulate the draft plan to elicit feedback from Steering Group and other key stakeholders
- E. To finalize the plan and submit it to Superintendent for approval

***Capacity building involves:**

- ensuring sufficient resources for the transformation
(e.g., staffing; budget; guidance materials; external mentoring, coaching, professional development, and technical assistance processes that are designed to develop comparable internal mechanisms/processes for deepening understanding, commitment, and skills)
- development of effective mechanisms/processes** for the transformation
(e.g., mechanisms/processes for
 - >steering and enabling systemic change
 - >everyday leadership to guide and support the work (e.g., administrative lead, learning supports leadership team, internal mentors/coaches)
 - >collaboration with external mentors and coaches
 - >internal mentoring, coaching, professional development, & technical assistance
 - >providing information to all stakeholders
 - >preparing a design document
 - >planning a strategic approach to the work, conducting analyses needed for planning, (e.g., resource mapping and gap analyses, ways resources can be redeployed), and clarifying priorities
 - >implementation (initial and long-term, replication to scale)
 - >monitoring, problem solving, and enhancing progress

**Re. mechanisms see Appendix A.

Strategic Approach for Accomplishing Objectives

The administrative leader establishes a work group to draft an overview and detailed strategic system change plan (see suggested process illustrated in Exhibit II).

At the same time, to plan for changes needed to enable implementation of the design, the leader establishes a work group(s) to review and recommend changes with respect to

- current policies (bulletins, guidelines, etc.)
- current operational infrastructure
- current programs and initiatives
- possible ways to redeploy resources

External coaching, technical assistance, and networking with others pursuing similar new directions is used to build the capacity of the group. Capacity building includes careful reading and discussion of the design document and of this document and other presentations on the processes of system change.

- >As the work group prepares the strategic plan, e-coaching and related resources are provided. This includes sending early drafts of the plan for feedback to the external mentor/coach guiding the process.
- >When the group has a complete draft, it is circulated to the Steering Group and other key stakeholders to elicit feedback/comments. (Note: Circulating the first draft to as many other stakeholders as feasible provides an opportunity to deepen their understanding and appreciation for the importance of the work).
- >Feedback/comments are reviewed and the document is finalized and submitted to the Superintendent for approval (also to the Board if it is appropriate to do so at the time).
- >The document is then placed on the website, an announcement is crafted about to indicate the work is proceeding on schedule and what's next. (Note: This too provides an opportunity to enhance stakeholder understanding, readiness, commitment, and engagement.)

Strategic Cautions Based on Lessons Learned

In preparing the plan to account for situational opportunities, strengths, and limitations, care must be taken to ensure essential steps are not lost. Feedback from the external mentor guiding the process is essential in this respect.

Transforming organizations is challenging, frustrating, and tiring. There must be a continuous focus on keeping stakeholders engaged and re-engaging those ready to give up.

As understanding deepens, it is increasingly likely that revisions will be needed with respect to initial agreements and planned procedures.

Exhibit II

About the Strategic Planning Work Group

About Team Size and Composition

Team size varies. Five members is a reasonable guideline. One should be designated as the team facilitator.

Too large a planning group usually is not a good idea. The majority should have had some formal strategic planning training and/or experience.

All members need to have a good understanding of the current organizational environment (vision, mission, values; political, social, economic, and technical considerations) in which the district and schools operate.

The team can call upon others to form ad hoc workgroups when special expertise is needed.

About Team Process

As with the design process, much of the work can be done through individual assignments and email exchanges – with meetings as needed.

- Most of the initial work constitutes drafting sections, sharing them for feedback with team members via email and at meetings, and integrating the feedback.
- This process is continued until each section is seen by members as a good draft.
- Then 1-2 members compile and refine the sections into a draft document which is emailed to all members for feedback.
- Feedback is integrated and the draft is sent back and forth until it is in good shape.
- Workgroup members sign off on the revised draft and it is submitted to decision makers who may ask for revisions before final approval is given.

Schedules should be tight enough to avoid losing momentum.

Throughout the process the team can access e-coaching and feedback from the external mentor/coach guiding the process.

The finished draft is reviewed by designated decision makers, specific concerns are addressed by the team, and relevant changes are made until a final plan is approved.

Again, *representative stakeholder input* should be sought (if feasible as the plan is developed and especially from those who can derail the work); relevant feedback is integrated.

And, remember: *Systemic change requires policy and resource support.*

For significant prototype development and systemic change to occur, policy commitments must be made and backed up with effective allocation and redeployment of resources to facilitate organizational and operational changes.

And, don't forget to celebrate the accomplishment of the work.

V. Initial Implementation

Objectives:

- A. To develop an action plan based on the strategic plan
- B. To build strategically planned capacity for initial implementation
- C. To ensure strategic, continuous support and guidance for implementation (e.g., leadership, guidance materials, mentoring, coaching, professional development, technical assistance, networking)

Strategic Approach for Accomplishing Objectives

A parallel strategic approach is used to roll out from from the SEA to LEAs and from LEAs to schools. See Exhibits III and IV for a sense of the phase-in and start-up activity that the implementation plan needs to address at the LEA and school levels.

Establishing an Implementation Mechanism

- >The administrative leader for the learning supports component at the SEA and LEA, respectively, establishes an *Implementation Team* to translate this section of the strategic plan into an implementation action plan. Particular attention is paid to establishing the necessary operational infrastructure mechanisms and building capacity for rolling-out the work (see Appendix A).
- >SEA coaching is used to build the capacity of the Implementation Team working with LEAs. LEA coaching is used to build the capacity of the implementation team working with schools. Capacity building includes careful reading and discussion of the design document and of this document and other presentations on the processes of system change.

Implementation Action Plan

- >E-coaching is provided to guide the team in preparing the implementation action plan. This includes sending early drafts for feedback from the external mentor/coach guiding the process.
- >When the group has a complete draft of the implementation action plan, the plan is sent to the Steering Group and other key stakeholders to elicit feedback/comments. (As previously noted, circulating the first draft to as many other stakeholders as feasible provides an opportunity to deepen their understanding and appreciation for the importance of the work.)
- >Feedback/comments are reviewed and the implementation action plan is finalized and submitted to the Superintendent for approval.

Implementation

As highlighted in Section I, the implementation process begins by

- arranging an introductory presentation and related interchange
- using the SEA design document to clarify the bases and frameworks for understanding the nature, scope, and implications of a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports
- clarifying what is involved in getting from here to there
- preparing a MOU (detailing agreements and procedures)
- establishing the leadership and operational infrastructure for planning and implementation
- developing and implementing procedures for building a critical mass of stakeholder support
- preparing a *Design Document*
- developing a *Strategic Plan*
- enhancing component visibility, communication, sharing, & problem solving

As the work is implemented at enough schools, the Learning Supports Leadership Teams in a feeder pattern or family of schools should reach out to establish a formal collaborative mechanism (e.g., a Learning Supports Leadership Council) for purposes of filling program or service gaps and achieving economies of scale. (Note: This provides a mechanism for linking clusters of schools and connecting school and community resources.)

Strategic Cautions Based on Lessons Learned

Finances, personnel, time, space, equipment, and other essential resources must be made available, organized, and used in ways that adequately implement policy and promising practices. This includes ensuring sufficient resources to develop an effective structural foundation for prototype development, systemic changes, sustainability, and ongoing capacity building.

Because they are called upon to do many things that may be unpopular with some stakeholders, appropriate protections should be guaranteed for those on the front line of change.

It is easy to get so caught up in the work that the value of continuously celebrating and publicizing accomplishments is ignored. Make the work and its impact visible on websites, social media, and in the press. Public relations is social marketing.

Exhibit III

Start-up and Phase-in with LEAs

To implement the work with DISTRICTS, the SEA Needs to

(1) Establish and build the capacity of the Department's Implementation Team.

The Implementation Team needs to provide a district with

- > guidance
- > facilitation of organizational change and personnel capacity building (including PD designed for spiral learning to deepen understanding)
- > facilitation of systemic change and inclusion of the work into the school improvement and related strategic plans
- > continuous problem-solving
- > constant support for getting from here to there.

See Appendices B and C for examples of tasks.

(2) The Department's Implementation Team will need to have a plan of action for carrying out the following introductory tasks:

- > initial presentations to key district leadership
- > a follow-up personal session with each superintendent and key district leaders to enhance readiness, commitment, and engagement
- > review of plan delineating how the department will work with the District leaders to *facilitate (help them)* start-up and phase-in a unified and comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.

(3) The Implementation Team will need to have a guide for establishing a District Steering Team and for providing capacity building and ongoing technical assistance for this team.

(4) The Implementation Team will need to provide district leadership with information resources and supports that enable the district to clarify the following for stakeholders:

- > the imperative for change
- > the state's design prototype and the rationale for adopting (and adapting) it
- > the current and future plans for roll-out to districts
- > the systemic changes that will be involved at district and school levels and the process to be used in bringing the changes about

Exhibit IV

Start-up and Phase-in with Schools

To implement the work with SCHOOLS, the LEA Needs to

(1) Establish and build the capacity of the District Implementation Team.

The Implementation Team needs to provide a school with

- > guidance
- > facilitation of organizational change and personnel capacity building (including PD designed for spiral learning to deepen understanding)
- > facilitation of systemic change and inclusion of the work into the school improvement and related strategic plans
- > continuous problem-solving
- > constant support for getting from here to there.

See Appendices B and C for examples of tasks.

(2) The District's Implementation Team will need to have a plan of action for carrying out the following introductory tasks:

- > initial presentations to key school leadership
- > a follow-up personal session with each principal and key school leaders to enhance readiness, commitment, and engagement
- > review of plan delineating how the district will work with the school leaders to *facilitate (help them)* start-up and phase-in a unified and comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.

(3) The Implementation Team will need to have a guide for establishing a school Steering Team and for providing capacity building and ongoing technical assistance for this team.

(4) The Implementation Team will need to provide school leadership with information resources and supports that enable the school to clarify the following for school stakeholders:

- > the imperative for change
- > the state's design prototype and the rationale for adopting (and adapting) it
- > the current and future plans for roll-out to districts and schools
- > the systemic changes that will be involved at district and school levels and the process to be used in bringing the changes about

VI. Formative Evaluation (designed to lead to Summative Evaluation)

Objectives:

- A. To establish standards and related benchmark indicators for the work
- B. To implement strategically planned monitoring and problem solving to enhance progress

Strategic Approach for Accomplishing Objectives

The respective administrative leaders at the SEA, LEAs, and schools establish work groups to adopt/adapt

- benchmarks and mechanisms for monitoring progress (see *Benchmark Checklist for Monitoring and Reviewing Progress in Developing a Comprehensive System to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/benchmarktool.pdf>)
- standards (e.g., see *Common Core Standards for a Learning Supports Component* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/commcore.pdf>)
- a system for continuous quality improvement and evaluation of impact and integrate it into regular planning
- indicators that can eventually be used for summative evaluation and accountability

At each level, the system for continuous quality improvement is implemented by the *Learning Supports Leadership Team*.

The administrative leader and the *Learning Supports Leadership Team* use the formative evaluation information to enhance capacity including providing personalized professional development.

Strategic Cautions Based on Lessons Learned

Benchmarks should only be used as an indicator that specific tasks have or have not been accomplished. Particular care must be taken to ensure that

- >a list of benchmarks is not used in place of a strategic plan
- >progress monitoring is not experienced as supervisory evaluation
- >formative evaluations are not used prematurely as a summative evaluation
- >formative evaluations are not used prematurely for policy accountability

VII. Detailed Strategic Planning for Sustainability and Renewal

Objectives:

- A. To institutionalize the transformed approach to student and learning supports through ensuring intervention and infrastructure changes are fully integrated into education policy and ongoing capacity building.
- B. To review data on the system to ensure it is functioning well and making changes to improve it.

Strategic Approach for Accomplishing Objectives

Planning for the above objective can be left until initial implementation is satisfactorily proceeding.

Strategic Caution Based on Lessons Learned

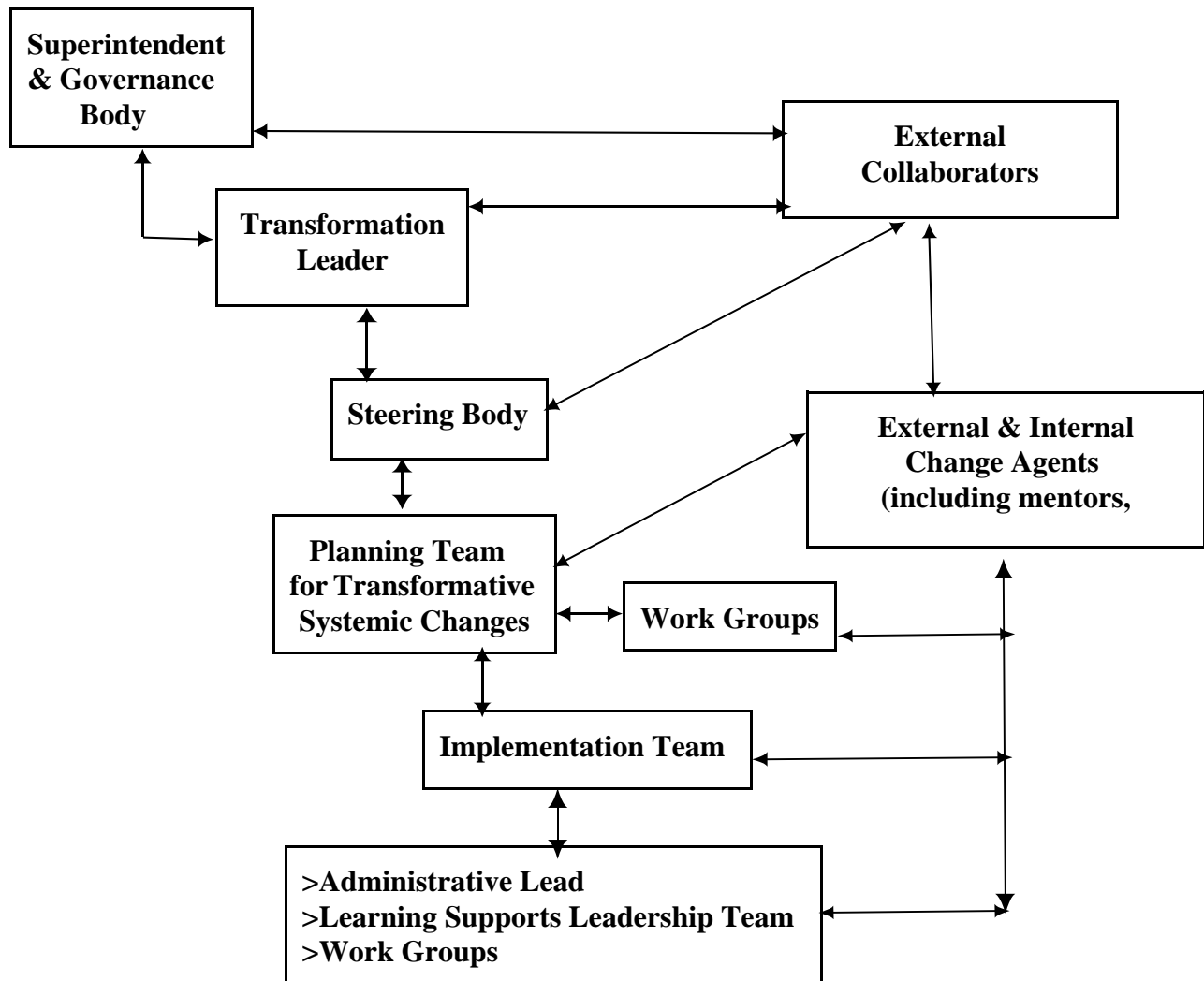
Planning to address Phase 3 (Sustaining and Evolving to Enhance Outcomes) and Phase 4 (Generating Creative Renewal and Replication to Scale) raises additional strategic planning considerations. While not included here, awareness of the processes involved is important to avoid working in ways that will be counterproductive to these phases.

**The trouble with doing something right the first time
is that nobody appreciates how difficult it was.**



Appendix A

Unifying and Developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: Systemic Change Mechanisms*



*These mechanisms are needed at the SEA and at LEAs. At the SEA, the focus is on changes in the department and planning and facilitating roll-out and roll-on at LEAs.

At each level, any given staff member may be part of several of the above mechanisms.

For the functions related to each of the above mechanisms, see *Guide for Planning Coaching for SEAs/LEAs to Establish a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/coaching.pdf>

Appendices A and B provides examples of specific tasks.

Appendix B

Illustrative Examples of Major Steps During the First Phases of Establishing a Learning Supports Component

First Phase: Introduction and Creating Readiness, Commitment, and Engagement

- Frameworks for a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports are introduced to relevant groups of decision makers
- Readiness, commitment, and engagement of key stakeholders are enhanced
- A MOU detailing agreements and procedures is established
- An administrative leader (equivalent to the leader for the instructional component) is appointed to lead the transformation and guide the work of the new component.

Second Phase: Start-up and Phase-in: Building Infrastructure, Capacity, and Pursuing Initial Implementation

- External Mentors provide professional preparation for the administrative leader
- Temporary mechanisms are established to facilitate initial implementation and systemic change (e.g., groups to steer, plan, implement); capacity building is provided for each of these mechanisms with respect to delineated functions.
- Strategic and action plans are formulated and implemented for the initial phases
- Operational infrastructure is reworked so that the component is unified, continuously developed, and fully integrated with the instructional and management components:
 - Ongoing responsibilities and accountabilities are formalized for administrative leader related to unifying and then developing, over time, a comprehensive system of learning supports
 - Administrative leader becomes part of key decision making bodies (e.g., administrative cabinet, school improvement team)
 - Resource-oriented mechanisms (e.g., a Learning Supports Leadership Team and work groups) are established to work with administrative leaders; capacity building is provided for each of these mechanisms with respect to delineated functions.
- A system for quality improvement and evaluation of impact is established and integrated into school improvement planning, evaluation, and accountability.
- Program or service gaps are filled and economies of scale are achieved through outreach designed to establish formal collaborative linkages among groups of schools (e.g., a feeder pattern) and among districtwide and community resources (e.g., through establishing a Learning Supports Resource Council).

Appendix C

Some Major Tasks for Coaches/Mentors to Help Address as a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports is Established

Coaches and Mentors can prepare leaders to

- Deepen the understanding of and enhance committed readiness for what is involved in
 - >unifying & developing a comprehensive learning supports system
 - >making systemic changes
- Establish and build the capacity of the administrative leader for the learning supports component and of a Learning Supports Leadership Team
- Engage a critical mass of key stakeholder groups (building interest and consensus for the work and garnering feedback and support)
- Guide development of a design document and strategic system change plan
- Establish and build the capacity of a set of system change mechanisms
- Build the capacity of work group(s) to
 - >map prevailing status of student and learning supports within the district (e.g., current activity, gaps, redundancies, priority needs, etc.) using the intervention framework in the design document
 - >analyze the resource map and priority needs and recommend
 - >>how to unify the work into a system
 - >>yearly priorities for developing the system into a comprehensive approach
 - >analyze and recommend changes that fit with the design for a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports with respect to
 - >>current policies (bulletins, guidelines, etc.)
 - >>current operational infrastructure
 - >>current programs and initiatives
 - >>possible ways to redeploy resources
 - >>adapt benchmarks & mechanisms to monitor progress at district/school levels
- Provide a set of recommendations for change that will be submitted to the agency head (e.g., changes in policy and operational infrastructure)
- Fully integrate the system as a primary and essential component of school improvement
- Enhance component visibility, communication, sharing, and problem solving (e.g., within the district and beyond)
- Establish a system for continuous quality improvement and evaluation of impact and integrate it into regular planning, evaluation, and accountability
- Connect resources to enhance effectiveness and achieve economies of scale (e.g., weaving resources at SEA and LEA levels; connect a "Family" of schools/a feeder pattern)
- Enhance outreach to establish formal collaborative linkages with community resources
- Update and deepen resource mapping and analyses
- Plan and implement continuous capacity building and technical assistance
- Celebrate progress