Guide for Strategic Planning Team for
Louisiana's Comprehensive Learning Supports System

The work in Louisiana is supported through a collaboration between the Center at UCLA* and Scholastic Inc.s' *Rebuilding for Learning Initiative*. For information about the collaboration, see
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/rebuild/rebuilding.htm

For an overview of resources available at no cost from the Center, use the internet to scan the website:
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

Preface

As the Louisiana Department of Education's focus on school improvement moves toward playing a greater role in capacity building for districts and schools, the agency's leadership is rethinking student and learning supports. The work is driven by the reality that school improvement efforts need leadership and guidance related to enabling all students to have an equal opportunity to succeed at schools, thereby reducing dropout rates and the achievement gap. The aim is to provide schools with a design for braiding and developing all available resources in ways that better address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students. Development of such an approach requires shifts in prevailing school improvement policy and new frameworks for practice. In addition, for significant systemic change to occur, policy and program commitments must be demonstrated through effective redeployment of resources. This includes ensuring an effective structural foundation for systemic changes, sustainability, and ongoing capacity building. The implications for the department of education, regional units, districts, and schools are many (e.g., enhancing integration of programs, personnel, and resources focused on learning supports; redesigning school improvement support and guidance to districts and schools; expanding school accountability).

As you know, in August, 2009, a department design team prepared documents describing a vision for a comprehensive learning support system for Louisiana (see 2 page overview and Design Document). These were shared as part of presentations to the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and senior staff. There was strong support for moving forward to implement this new way of supporting students and schools. Specifically, the Superintendent indicated that it fit well with the innovations for supporting struggling schools, a priority in the U. S. Department of Education's *Race to the Top* grants for states. He anticipates a roll out to 150 schools.

In building the capacity to integrate a Comprehensive Learning Supports System into *Race to the Top* schools, there are multiple actions that need to take place over the next few months. First, a strategic planning team is being convened. The planning for developing a Comprehensive Learning Supports System as a major component of school improvement will be done within the context of the department's vision, mission, values, resources, etc. and is intended to be fully integrated into the department's overall approach to school improvement. The strategic planning team will pursue its work from the perspective of addressing major phases of systemic change – focusing first on (1) creating awareness, readiness, and engagement among key stakeholders for moving forward in developing *Louisiana's Comprehensive Learning Support System* and (2) initial implementation and phasing in the work at designated districts/schools. The team will delineate specific objectives/tasks/steps and the strategies/tactics related to how, who, and when intended results will be accomplished. The planning will spell out implications for the department, regional centers, districts, and schools.

At the same time the longer-range strategic planning is being done, consideration also is being given to immediate actions to ensure there are mechanisms in the department to:

(1) interface with the *Race to the Top* grant writing group about how best to integrate the LA Comprehensive Learning Supports System into the proposal;

(2) clarify how the Department redesign can be used to promote the integration of learning supports through realignment of divisions and sections (e.g., establish a cross department mechanism to function as a Learning Supports Team to promote information sharing across the range of programs in various units, explore ways to integrate the many learning supports as they are implemented at the districts/schools)

(3) explore ways to follow up quickly with suggestions from the Cabinet meeting (e.g., the suggestions to use the learning support framework for the state "at-risk" funds to local school districts; integrate into the Teacher Advancement Program training; increase awareness of the learning support system through the state department website and other communications).

As they did with the design team, Scholastic Inc. and the UCLA center will continue to assist with the strategic planning process. This working draft guide is one tangible effort to do so. The guide will be modified as necessary.

Clearly, the design team's work was challenging. So will be the work of the strategic planning team. The design team met its challenge and so will the strategic planning team because Louisiana's young people deserve schools that ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school and after graduation.

Introduction

Part of the problem of implementing education innovations is the tendency not to delineate the distinction between

- developing effective innovation prototypes
- introducing them effectively to key stakeholders and into an established organizational culture
- creating readiness and commitment for adoption/adaptation
- implementing them as pilot demonstrations
- replicating them to scale
- sustaining and evolving them over time.

Another facet of all this has been the failure to develop an effective *operational infrastructure for* accomplishing the major *systemic changes* involved in establishing sustainable large-scale replication of the innovations.

For significant prototype development and systemic change to occur, policy and program commitments must provide the essential resources. Such resources must not only facilitate development and related evaluation but also the establishment of operational mechanisms to facilitate systemic change, sustainability, and ongoing capacity building and renewal. That is, finances, personnel, time, space, equipment, and other essential resources must be made available, organized, and used in ways that adequately operationalize innovation.

Another mistake has been the tendency to focus on understanding what must be done mainly in terms of "implementation with fidelity" of rather limited innovations (e.g., a specific empirically supported practice). When it comes to innovations that aim to make major transformations in how public education is pursued (e.g., personalizing instruction, addressing barriers to learning and teaching), the "implementation" and sustainability problems need to be reframed as (1) prototype adoption/adaptation, (2) systemic change in an ongoing organizational context, and (3) replication to scale (which adds even more complexity to systemic change).

For more on all this, see *Systemic Change for School Improvement* which is included as an appendix to this guide and is online at –
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/systemicchange.pdf

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

At the same time, planners must not create a new mythology, one that suggests that every classroom and school are unique. There are fundamentals that permeate all efforts to improve schools and schooling, and these should continue to guide all efforts to transform public edcuation.

About Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is necessary to ensure that the vision and design for *Louisiana's Comprehensive Learning Supports System* are effectively and efficiently implemented. The plan spells out an answer to: *How do we get there from here?*

With the design document clearly in mind, the goals for strategic planning are to accomplish the major phases of systemic change.

These phases are:

- *Creating Readiness and Commitment:* enhancing the climate/culture/conditions for innovative systemic change;

- *Start-up and phase in – initial implementation:* adapting and phasing-in a prototype with well-designed infrastructure and capacity building;

- *Sustaining, evolving, and enhancing outcomes:* ensuring institutionalization, maintenance, momentum, and progress;

- *Ongoing evolution*: replication to scale and creative renewal.

Establishing the Strategic Planning Team

Agency executives should create the team by formal memo. The invitational memo specify the importance and urgency of the work, leadership and support for the team, and the deadline for submission of the draft for feedback.

Team Size and Composition

Team size varies, but too large a planning group usually is not a good idea. Five members is a reasonable guideline. Of these, the majority should have had some formal strategic planning training and/or experience. And, one of these members should be designated as the team facilitator. 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 department, regional, and local agencies operate.

While all team members need to become well-versed in the design for *Louisiana's Comprehensive Learning Supports System*, the group should also include at least one member from the design team.

The team can call upon others to be part of ad hoc workgroups when special expertise is needed related to a specific facet of the strategic plan.

Team Process

Strategic planning for developing *Louisiana's Comprehensive Learning Supports System* is to be done within the context of the department's vision, mission, values, resources, etc. and is intended to be fully integrated into the department's overall approach to school improvement.

The timeline for developing the strategic plan should be no more than 2-3 months. Meetings can be held as often as needed, but much of the work can be done through individual assignments and email exchanges. Schedules should be tight enough to avoid losing momentum.

The first team meeting should be a day-long session used for (1) reiterating the importance and urgency of the work, (2) increasing in-depth understanding of the design, (3) enhancing understanding of strategic planning as *systemic change*, (4) enumerating conditions that must be factored in to planning (e.g., the driving forces in the environment and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to system change), and (5) clarifying the outline, process, assignments, and timeline for developing the strategic planning document.

The focus then shifts to *action planning.* This involves specifying how the strategic goals will be accomplished. With specific respect to developing a comprehensive learning supports system, the process encompasses

>delineating the objectives, tasks, and steps related to each phase of systemic change,

>spelling out strategies/tactics for how the objectives, tasks, and steps will be accomplished

>specifying *responsibilities* and *timelines* (e.g., who will do what, when, and how, with what resources and supports),

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Objective/task/step ⟶ How? ⟶ Who? ⟶ When? ⟶ Result
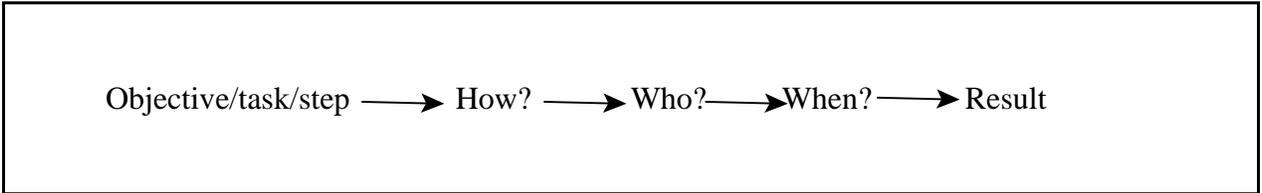
Exhibit 1 provides an overview of four phases and some key tasks related to establishing a Comprehensive Learning Supports System at various organizational levels.

Initial strategic planning should focus on clarifying the work plan and type of operational mechanisms that will be required to carry out the strategic plan *at each level* (e.g., the who, what, when, and how related to oversight monitoring and steering, capacity building, etc.). This includes

>leadership and staffing for implementing the strategic plan,

>establishing ways to monitor (e.g., benchmarks and processes for assessing progress toward task completion),

>formulating ways to evaluate that the Comprehensive Learning Supports System has been effectively implemented (e.g., indicators, standards, deliverables, and processes).

Then, the plan should focus on work for the department, regional centers, districts, and schools with respect to the first two phases:

(1) creating awareness, readiness, and engagement among key stakeholders for moving forward in developing *Louisiana's Comprehensive Learning Support System*

(2) initial implementation and phasing in the work at designated districts/schools.

Subsequent planning will address phases 3 and 4 (again see Exhibit 1).

Most of the initial work will constitute drafting sections, sharing them for feedback with team members via email, and integrating the feedback. Any member can call a team meeting if there is a need to work out problems with a section they are preparing. This process is continued until each section is seen by members as a good draft.

Then 1-2 members will compile and refine the sections into a draft document. This will be emailed for feedback. Feedback will be integrated and the draft sent back and forth until is in good shape. Again, the team can meet as necessary.

The finished draft will be reviewed by designated senior staff, specific concerns will be addressed by the team, and relevant changes will be made.

Representative stakeholder input should be sought (especially from those who can derail the work) and relevant feedback integrated.

Then, the plan will be submitted for approval.

The approved plan will be forwarded to person identified as the lead for establishing an operational mechanism in the department to initiate the plan.

Don't forget to celebrate the accomplishment of the work.

What is Strategy?

"Strategy is . . . well, strategy is *everything*. Strategy is *timing*, then, because, 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 (2008)

Exhibit 1

At all levels, key stakeholders and their leadership must understand and commit to systemic changes for the proposed innovation. Commitment must be reflected in policy statements and creation of an infrastructure that ensures essential leadership, resources, motivation, and capability for developing an effective system of learning supports. Developing such a system requires blending resources. Thus, the emphasis throughout is on *collaboration* – cooperation, coordination, and, where viable, integration – among school and community stakeholders. Planning and accountability related to the following four phases of systemic change use data from evaluation of major antecedents, transactions, and outcomes.

First Phase – *Creating Readiness and Commitment*

• Introduce basic ideas to relevant groups of stakeholders to build interest and consensus for the work and to garner feedback and support

• Establish a policy framework and obtain leadership commitment – the leadership should make a commitment to adopt a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching as a primary and essential component of school improvement

• Identify a leader (equivalent to the leader for the instructional component) to ensure policy commitments are carried out for establishing the new component

Second Phase – *Start-up and Phase-in: Building Infrastructure and Capacity*

• Establish temporary mechanisms to facilitate initial implementation/systemic change (e.g., a steering group, an organization change facilitator) and develop the capacity of these mechanisms to guide and manage change and provide essential leadership during phase-in

• Formulate specific start-up and phase-in actions

• Refine infrastructure so that the component is fully integrated with the instructional and management components
> Establish and train an administrative leader
> Ensure there is a resource-oriented mechanism (e.g., a Learning Supports Resource Team) and train those who staff it in how to perform major resource-oriented tasks (e.g., mapping, analysis, coordinating, planning, setting priorities for program development, enhancing intervention systems
> Help organize work groups for each major arena of component activity and facilitate their initial mapping and analysis of resources and formulation of recommendations
> Develop ad hoc work groups to enhance component visibility, communication, sharing, and problem solving

• Establish a system for quality improvement and evaluation of impact and integrate it into school improvement planning, evaluation, and accountability

• Attempt to fill program/service gaps and pursue economies of scale through outreach designed to establish formal collaborative linkages among families of schools (e.g., a feeder pattern) and among district-wide and community resources (e.g., through establishing a Learning Supports Resource *Council*)

Third Phase – *Sustaining, Evolving, and Enhancing Outcomes*

• Plan for maintenance and institutionalization

• Develop strategies for maintaining momentum and progress

Fourth Phase – *Replication to Scale and Generating Creative Renewal*

Example of the Focus for Planning

Operational Mechanisms – *Clarifying the type of operational mechanisms required to carry out the plan at all levels* (department, regional centers, districts, schools)

- Steering, oversight monitoring, problem solving, adapting, replanning, and accountability

- Capacity building (including professional development and technical assistance)

- Interface with School Improvement mechanisms

- Communicating and celebrating progress

- Other

Phase 1 – *Creating awareness, readiness, and engagement among key stakeholders for moving forward in developing Louisiana's Comprehensive Learning Support System*

Examples of key tasks are offered in Exhibit 1 (and reproduced below), but these are not exhaustive. They provide a guide for the team to adopt, adapt, or add to.

- Introduce basic ideas to relevant groups of stakeholders to build interest and consensus for the work and to garner feedback and support

- Establish a policy framework and obtain leadership commitment – the leadership should make a commitment to adopt a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching as a primary and essential component of school improvement

- Identify a leader (equivalent to the leader for the instructional component) to ensure policy commitments are carried out for establishing the new component

- Other

(1) For each task, state how and when it will be accomplished (e.g., who will do what, when, and how, with what resources and supports) at
>the department   >regional centers   >districts   >schools

(2) Specify who will formulate (a) benchmarks for assessing progress toward task completion and (b) indicators for evaluating that the Comprehensive Learning Supports System has been effectively implemented.

Phase 2 – *Initial implementation and phasing in the work at designated districts/schools.*

Examples of key tasks are offered in Exhibit 1 (and reproduced below), but these are not exhaustive. They provide a guide for the team to adopt, adapt, or add to.

- Establish temporary mechanisms to facilitate initial implementation/systemic change (e.g., a steering group, an organization change facilitator) and develop the capacity of these mechanisms to guide and manage change and provide essential leadership during phase-in

- Formulate specific start-up and phase-in actions

- Refine infrastructure so that the component is fully integrated with the instructional and management components

> Establish and train an administrative leader

> Ensure there is a resource-oriented mechanism (e.g., a Learning Supports Resource Team) and train those who staff it in how to perform major resource-oriented tasks (e.g., mapping, analysis, coordinating, planning, setting priorities for program development, enhancing intervention systems

> Help organize work groups for each major arena of component activity and facilitate their initial mapping and analysis of resources and formulation of recommendations

> Develop ad hoc work groups to enhance component visibility, communication, sharing, and problem solving

• Establish a system for quality improvement and evaluation of impact and integrate it into school improvement planning, evaluation, and accountability

• Attempt to fill program/service gaps and pursue economies of scale through outreach designed to establish formal collaborative linkages among families of schools (e.g., a feeder pattern) and among district-wide and community resources (e.g., through establishing a Learning Supports Resource *Council*)

• Other

(1) For each task, state how and when it will be accomplished (e.g., who will do what, when, and how, with what resources and supports) at
      >the department   >regional centers   >districts   >schools

(2) Specify who will formulate (a) benchmarks for assessing progress toward task completion and (b) indicators for evaluating that the Comprehensive Learning Supports System has been effectively implemented.

Outline for Design Document

The Strategic Planning Document might include the following:

1) Executive Summary

2) Page for Signatures Indicating Approval to Proceed with Implementation

3) Background

4) Goals and Major Strategies to be Pursued

5) Action Plan

Appendices
   A) Description of the Strategic Planning Process
   B) Any Key Information Documents Used During the Planning Process
   C) Other

Appendix A

School Improvement and Systemic Change

**Diffusion of Innovations and
Science-Based Practices to
Address Barriers to Learning
& Improve Schools:**

**A Series of Information
Resources on
Enabling System Change**

As calls for addressing barriers to student learning and improving schools increase, new directions are imperative. And, this involves more than tinkering with prevailing approaches. The need is for developing major innovations (e.g., comprehensive school-level prototypes) and taking them to scale throughout a school district.

The success of all this depends on stakeholders in public education becoming more knowledgeable about the complexities and strategies related to diffusion of innovations, enabling major systemic changes, and developing a *sophisticated* understanding of the role of empirically-based practices.

To these ends, the Center is producing a series of resources, such as this one, to provide informational aids for use as tools in policy and practice analyses, research, education, and school improvement planning.

Systemic Change for School Improvement

What follows are excerpts from an article by the Center co-directors published in the *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation* (2006).

The abstract states:

Despite the nationwide emphasis on school improvement, the complexities of accomplishing desired systemic changes have been given short shrift in policy, research, training, and practice. This article focuses on the problem of expanding school improvement planning to better address *how* schools and districts intend to accomplish designated changes. Specifically, we frame and outline some basic considerations related to systemic change, and to encourage a greater policy discussion of the complexities of implementing major school improvements on a large scale, we propose a set of policy actions.

Systemic Change for School Improvement

Based on analyses of school improvement planning guides, we find a widespread failure to address how desired improvements will be accomplished. That is, we find little evidence of sophisticated strategic planning for how schools and districts intend to move from where they are to where they want to go. Little attention has been paid to the complexities of large scale diffusion. Leadership training for policy makers and education administrators has given short shrift to the topic of scale-up processes and problems (Duffy, 2005; Elmore, 2003, 2004; Fullan, 2005; Glennan, Bodilly, Galegher, & Kerr, 2004; Hargreaves & Fink, 2000; Thomas, 2002).

School improvement obviously needs to begin with a clear framework and map for what changes are to be made. It should be equally obvious that there must be a clear framework and map for how to get from here to there, especially when the improvements require significant systemic change. And, in both cases, there is a need for a strong science-base, leadership, and adequate resources to facilitate capacity building. With all this in mind, this article focuses on expanding school improvement planning to better address *how* schools and districts intend to accomplish designated changes.

School Improvement, Projects, and Systemic Change

Well conceived, designed, and implemented prototype innovations are essential to school improvement. Prototypes for new initiatives usually are developed and initially implemented as a pilot demonstration at one or more schools. This is particularly the case for new initiatives that are specially funded projects.

For those involved in projects or piloting new school programs, a common tendency is to think about their work as a time limited demonstration. And, other school stakeholders also tend to perceive the work as temporary (e.g., "It will end when the grant runs out." or "I've seen so many reforms come and go; this too shall pass."). This mind set leads to the view that new activities will be fleeting, and it contributes to fragmented approaches and the marginalization of initiatives (Adelman, 1995; Adelman & Taylor, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 2003). It also works against the type of

systemic changes needed to sustain and expand major school improvements.

The history of schools is strewn with valuable innovations that were not sustained, never mind replicated. Naturally, financial considerations play a role in failures to sustain and replicate, but a widespread "project mentality" also is culpable.

Efforts to make substantial and substantive school improvements require much more than implementing a few demonstrations. Improved approaches are only as good as a school district's ability to develop and institutionalize them equitably in all its schools. This process often is called diffusion, replication, roll out, or scale-up. The frequent failure to sustain innovations and take them to scale in school districts has increased interest in understanding systemic change as a central concern in school improvement.

At this point, we should clarify use of the term *systemic change* in the context of this article. Our focus is on district and school organization and operations and the networks that shape decision making about fundamental changes and subsequent implementation. From this perspective, systemic change involves modifications that amount to a cultural shift in institutionalized values (i.e., reculturalization). For interventionists, the problem is that the greater the distance and dissonance between the current culture of schools and intended school improvements, the more difficult it is to successfully accomplish major systemic changes.

Our interest in systemic change has evolved over many years of implementing demonstrations and working to institutionalize and diffuse them on a large scale (Adelman & Taylor, 1997a, 2003, 2006a, 2006b; Taylor, Nelson, & Adelman, 1999). By now, we are fully convinced that advancing the field requires escaping "project mentality" (sometimes referred to as "projectitis") and becoming sophisticated about facilitating systemic change. Fullan (2005) stresses that what is needed is leadership that "motivates people to take on the complexities and anxieties of difficult change." We would add that such leadership also must develop a refined understanding of how to facilitate systemic change.

Linking Logic Models for School Improvement

Figure 1 suggests how major elements involved in designing school improvements are logically connected to considerations about systemic change. That is, the same elements can be used to frame key intervention concerns related to school improvement and systemic change, and each is intimately linked to the other. The elements are conceived as encompassing the

- vision, aims, and underlying rationale for what follows
- resources needed to do the work
- general functions, major tasks, activities, and phases that must be pursued
- infrastructure and strategies needed to carry out the functions, tasks, and activities
- positive and negative results that emerge.

Strategic planning for school improvement should account for each of these elements, first with respect to a school's prototype for ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed in school and then with respect to how the school will accomplish essential changes. At the district level, the need is for a strategic plan that clarifies how the district will facilitate replication and scale-up of prototype practices. [Each of the above elements as it relates to systemic change in the article from which this is excerpted.]

Figure 2 briefly highlights key facets related to the four phases of change involved in prototype implementation and eventual scale-up. [Here, too, each cell in the matrix warrants extensive discussion; see the original article.]

Figure 3 highlights a set of parallel and linked tasks related to each of the four phases. Again, the intended nature and scope of focus shapes the costs and the degree of importance assigned by policy makers with respect to ensuring that effective systemic changes are designed, implemented, sustained, and taken to scale.

Overlapping the efforts to create readiness are processes to develop an organizational structure for start-up and phase-in. This involves establishing mechanisms and procedures to guide reforms, such as a steering group and leadership training, formulation of specific start-up and phase-in plans, and so forth.

An understanding of concepts espoused by community psychologists such as empowering settings and enhancing a sense of community also is useful. There is a growing body of work suggesting that the success of a variety of initiatives depends on interventions that can empower stakeholders and enhance their sense of community (Beeker, Guenther-Grey, & Raj, 1998; Trickett, 2002). However, the proper design of such interventions requires understanding that empowerment is a multifaceted concept. In discussing power, theoreticians distinguish "power over" from "power to" and "power from." *Power over* involves explicit or implicit dominance over others and events; *power to* is seen as increased opportunities to act; *power from* implies ability to resist the power of others (Riger, 1993).

Enhancing a sense of community involves ongoing attention to daily experiences. With respect to sustaining initiatives, stakeholders must experience initiative in ways that make them feel they are valued members who are contributing to a collective identity, destiny, and vision. Their work together must be facilitated in ways that enhance feelings of competence, self-determination, and connectedness with and commitment to each other (Deci & Ryan, 1985). As Tom Vander Ark, executive director of education for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, wisely notes: "Effective practices typically evolve over a long period in high-functioning, fully engaged systems" (Vander Ark, 2002).

Systemic Change Infrastructure and Strategies

Implementation and scaling-up of major school improvement efforts require *administrative leadership* and the addition of *temporary infrastructure mechanisms* to facilitate changes.

Infrastructure. In general, existing infrastructure mechanisms must be modified in ways that guarantee new policy directions are translated into appropriate daily operations. Well-designed mechanisms ensure local ownership, a critical mass of committed stakeholders, processes that overcome barriers to stakeholders effectively working together, and strategies that mobilize and maintain proactive effort so that changes are implemented and there is renewal over time.

Figure 1. Linking Logic Models for Designing School Improvement and Systemic Change

Key considerations with respect to both (a) desired school improvements and (b) "getting from here to there" (e.g., systemic changes):

>What is the vision, long-term aims, and underlying rationale?
>What are the existing resources that might be (re)deployed and woven together to make good progress toward the vision?
>What general functions, major tasks, activities, and phases need to be implemented?
>What infrastructure and strategies are needed to carry out the functions, tasks, and activities?
>What short-term indicators will be used as process benchmarks, what intermediate outcomes will indicate progress toward long-range aims, and
    how will negative outcomes be identified?

Vision/Aims/Rationale	*Resources*	General *Functions,* Major *Tasks, Activities & Phases*	*Infrastructure & Strategies*	*Positive & Negative Outcomes*
for **school improvements** *to address problems and enhance the well-being* of students and schools	to be (re)deployed and woven together (e.g., dollars, real estate space, equipment, human and social capital, etc.) for pursuing desired school improvements	for pursuing desired school improvements in keeping with the stated vision	Interconnected mechanisms for implementing functions and accomplishing intended outcomes (e.g., mechanisms for governance, resource management, planning, etc.)	Formative/summative evaluation and accountability (e.g., data on students, schools, families, & neighborhood; data to "get credit" for all that is done and for social marketing) **School Improvement Outcome Indicators** *Short-term Intermediate Long-term* (benchmarks)
for **systemic changes** to accomplish the above (e.g., image of future system, understanding of how organizations change)	to be (re)deployed for pursuing necessary systemic changes	for pursuing necessary systemic changes	Interconnected temporary mechanisms to guide and facilitate systemic changes (e.g., leadership for change, steering group, organizational change facilitators)	**Systemic Change Outcome Indicators** *Short-term Intermediate Long-term* (benchmarks)

3

NATURE & SCOPE OF FOCUS

	Intervention/ Program Prototype Development	Adoption/Adaptation of the Prototype at a Particular Site	System-Wide Replication/ Scale-Up
Social Marketing			
Vision & Policy Commitment			
Partnership Negotiation & Leadership Designation			
Infrastructure Enhancement/Develop. (e.g., mechanisms for governance, steering, operation, coordination)			
Resources -- Redeployed & New (e.g., time, space, funds)			
Capacity Building (especially development of personnel & addressing personnel mobility)			
Standards, Evaluation, & Accountability			

SOME KEY FACETS

PHASES OF THE CHANGE PROCESS

Creating Readiness

Initial Implementation

Institutionalization

Ongoing Evolution/ Creative Renewal

4

Figure 3. Prototype Implementation and Scale-up: Phases and Parallel and Linked Tasks

Phase I
Creating Readiness:

Enhancing the Climate/Culture for Change

Phase II
Initial Implementation:

Adapting and Phasing-in the Prototype with Well-Designed Guidance and Support

Phase III
Institutionalization:

Ensuring the Infrastructure Maintains and Enhances Productive Changes

Phase IV
Ongoing Evolution

System Change Staff

Disseminates the prototype to create interest (promotion and marketing)

Evaluates indications of interest

Makes in-depth presentations to build stakeholder consensus

Negotiates a policy framework and conditions of engagement with sanctioned bodies

Elicits ratification and sponsorship by stakeholders

Implementation *Team* works at site with *Organization Leadership* to

Redesign the organizational and programmatic infrastructure

Clarify need to add temporary mechanisms for the implementation process

Restructure time (the school day, time allocation over the year)

Conduct stakeholder foundation-building activity

Establish temporary mechanisms to facilitate the implementation process

Design appropriate prototype adaptations

Develop site-specific plan to phase-in prototype

Team works at site with appropriate *Stakeholders*

Plans and implements ongoing stakeholder development/ empowerment programs

Facilitates day-by-day prototype implementation

Establishes formative evaluation procedures

Institutionalize ownership, guidance, and support

Plan and ensure commitment to ongoing leadership

Plan and ensure commitment to maintain mechanisms for planning, implementation, and coordination

Plan for continuing education and technical assistance to maintain and enhance productive changes and generate renewal (including programs for new arrivals)

System Change Staff continues contact with *Organization Leadership*

Facilitates expansion of the formative evaluation system (in keeping with summative evaluation needs)

Clarifies ways to improve the prototype
Compiles information on outcome efficacy

Organization Leadership works with *Stakeholders* in evolving the prototype

Updated from: H.S. Adelman & L. Taylor (1997). Toward a scale-up model for replicating new approaches to schooling. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 8,* 197-230.

It is rare to find situations where a well-designed systemic change infrastructure is in place. More characteristically, ad hoc mechanisms have been set in motion with personnel who have too little training and without adequate formative evaluation. It is common to find structures, such as teams and collaboratives operating without clear under-standing of functions and major tasks. This, of course, defies the basic organizational principle that structure should follow function.

Effective and linked administrative leadership *at every level* is key to the success of any systemic change initiative in schools. Everyone needs to be aware of who is leading and is accountable for the development of the planned changes. It is imperative that such leaders be specifically trained to guide systemic change. And, they must be sitting at key decision making tables when budget and other fundamental decisions are discussed.

As highlighted in Figures 1, 2, and 3, the general functions and major tasks related to sustainability and large-scale replication require dedicated change agent mechanisms that are fully integrated into the infrastructure for school improvement at each school site, for a "family of schools," and at the district level. Thus, a significant portion of the resources for systemic change must be used to design and implement the set of integrated mechanisms that constitute the temporary, but essential, infrastructure for steering, facilitating, and evaluating the change process itself.

Part of a systemic change infrastructure are teams of "champions" who agree to steer the process. Such a team provides a broad-based and potent mechanism for guiding change. At the school level, for example, such a steering group creates a special leadership body to own the linked visions for school improvement and systemic change and to guide and support the work. These advocates must be competent with respect to what is planned, and they should be highly motivated not just to help get things underway, but to ensure sustainability.

The first focus of these teams is on assuring that capacity is built to accomplish the desired systemic changes. This includes ensuring an adequate policy and leadership base for implementation. If essential policy and staffing are not already in place, this becomes the first focus for the group.

Organization Facilitators. Some years ago, as part of a federal dropout prevention initiative, we developed a change agent position called an Organization Facilitator to aid with major restructuring (Adelman & Taylor 1997a, b, c; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2000; 2001a, b; Taylor, Nelson, & Adelman, 1999). This form of specially trained change agent embodies the necessary expertise to help school sites and complexes substantively implement and institutionalize school improvements. Such an individual can be used as a change agent for one school or a group of schools. A cadre of such professionals can be used to facilitate change across an entire district. The focus can be on changes in a few key aspects or full-scale restructuring.

One of the first functions of an Organization Facilitator is to help form and train an on-site change *team* that includes a site administrator and encompasses work groups. With the change agent initially taking the lead, members of the school's change team learn to be catalysts and managers of change. After initial implementation, the change team focuses on ensuring maintenance and renewal. Clearly, substantive school improvements require site team members who are committed each day to ensuring effective systemic change and who have enough time and ability to attend to details.

Capacity building, of course, also includes special training for change agents. Over time, the main functions of a steering group are to ensure that staff assigned to facilitate changes (a) maintain a big picture perspective, (b) make appropriate movement toward long-term goals, and (c) have sufficient support and guidance.

Steering groups should not be too large. For example, at a school level, membership should include a few well-connected "champions" and the key change agents (e.g., the administrative leader and other system change staff) who have responsibility for implementing school improvements. To work against the perception that it is a closed, elite group, it can host "focus groups" to elicit input and feedback, provide information, and problem solve.

As indicated in Figure 3, one way for a district to conceive the daily operational infrastructure for systemic change is in terms of a *system change staff* (e.g., organization facilitators). As a group, such district staff has full-time responsibility for creating readiness, coalition building, implementing strategic plans, maintaining daily oversight, problem solving, resolving stakeholder conflicts, and so forth. They provide a necessary organizational base and skilled personnel for diffusing improvements into a school and across a district. Organization Facilitators can rotate among schools to guide the change process. In addition, special "coaches" or mentors can be brought in whenever a specialist is needed to assist in replicating a specific type of improvement.

Strategies in facilitating systemic change. Using the frameworks, drawing on available literature (see references), and based on our own efforts in the field, we have begun to operationalize strategies to facilitate systemic changes. For illustrative purposes, a few are discussed below.

As we have noted already, any move toward substantive systemic change should begin with activity designed to create readiness by enhancing a climate/culture for change. Steps include:

- articulation of a clear, shared vision for the changes (e.g., building interest and consensus; introducing basic concepts to relevant groups of stakeholders)
- mobilizing interest, consensus, and support among key stakeholders (e.g., identifying champions and other individuals who are committed to the changes; planning and implementing a "social marketing" strategy to mobilize a critical mass of stakeholder support; planning and implementing strategies to obtain the support of key policy makers, such as administrators and school boards)
- clarifying feasibility (e.g., how necessary changes can be accomplished; who will lead; what mechanisms can be used to steer and underwrite the change process)
- ensuring there is a major policy commitment from all participating stakeholders (e.g., establishing a policy framework that recognizes the importance of the work)
- negotiating agreements with decision makers and implementers (e.g., about role responsibilities; about how accountability for commitments will be assured).

This is followed by processes for

- enhancing/developing an infrastructure based on a clear articulation of essential functions (e.g., mechanisms for governance and priority setting, steering, operations, resource mapping and coordination).

Pursuing the work requires special attention to the problem of the match between intervention and those who are to change and

- ensuring there is strong facilitation related to all mechanisms
- redeploying resources and establishing new ones
- building capacity (especially personnel development and strategies for addressing personnel and other stakeholder mobility)
- establishing standards, evaluation processes, and accountability procedures.

Because substantive change requires stakeholder readiness and ongoing motivation and capability, it is essential to monitor these matters and to maintain an ongoing emphasis on social marketing and capacity building.

Clearly, the many steps and tasks described above call for a high degree of commitment and relentlessness of effort. Moreover, time frames for building capacity to accomplish desired institutional changes must be realistic. Major systemic changes are not easily accomplished Awareness of the myriad political and bureaucratic difficulties involved in making major institutional changes, especially with limited financial resources, leads to the caution that the type of approach described above is not a straight-forward sequential or linear process. Rather, the work proceeds and changes emerge in overlapping and spiraling ways. And those interested in generating systemic changes need to be opportunistic.

A few general comments about systemic change practices at schools. Although many of the above points about systemic change seem self-evident, their profound implications for school improvement are widely ignored. As a result, it is not surprising that so many efforts to improve schools fail.

From the perspective of systemic change, the importance of creating an atmosphere at a school and throughout a district that encourages mutual support, caring, and a sense of community takes on added importance. New collaborative arrangements

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must be established, and authority (power) redistributed. Key stakeholders and their leadership must understand and commit to the changes. And, the commitment must be reflected in policy statements and creation of an organizational and operational infrastructure at all levels that ensures effective leadership and resources. For significant systemic change to occur, policy and program commitments must be demonstrated through effective allocation and redeployment of resources. That is, finances, personnel, time, space, equipment, and other essential resources must be made available, organized, and used in ways that adequately operationalize and sustain policy and promising practices. As stressed above, this includes ensuring sufficient resources to develop an effective structural foundation, albeit a temporary one, for systemic changes and related capacity building.

Reforms and major school improvements obviously require ensuring that those who operate essential mechanisms have adequate training, resources, and support, initially and over time. Moreover, there must be appropriate incentives and safeguards for individuals as they become enmeshed in the complexities of systemic change.

Projects as Catalysts for Systemic Change

With a view to sustaining valued functions, most demonstration projects and initiatives can be a catalyst for systemic change. More to the point, it is frequently the case that such projects *must* produce systemic changes or much of what they have developed is unlikely to be sustained. Federally-funded projects, such as those established through the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative, illustrate both the need and opportunity for being a catalytic force. These projects are funded with the aim of coalescing school and community collaboration for violence prevention. As the first cohort of projects entered their third and final year of federal support, the scramble began to find another grant to sustain threatened functions. Much earlier, a few projects realized that sustainability should not be thought about in terms of hopefully finding more grant money. Rather, they understood the necessity of taking steps each year to move policy in ways that would sustain the valued functions established through the project's work. Moreover, they understood the importance of embedding such functions in a broader context to enhance their status in the eyes of policy makers.

Because the categorical agenda was to improve violence prevention, most Safe Schools/ Healthy Students' projects took the tack of adding on some services and programs. Although local policy makers were pleased that such projects brought in added resources, they also viewed the work in terms of the limited categorical emphasis and seldom integrated the project's services and programs into school improvement planning. This contributed to the fragmentation and marginalization that characterizes school and community efforts to address the many barriers to learning and teaching and usually worked against sustaining the innovations when the project ended.

To counter the tendency toward viewing project functions as having limited value, project staff must view their special funding as an opportunity to leverage systemic changes to ensure sustainability of valuable school improvements. To this end, they must strive to reframe the work into a broader context and find their way to key decision making tables. For example, the activity can be braided into other school improvement initiatives and presented as an integral part of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach that enhances the school's ability to meet its mission for many, not just a few, students and families. At the same time, it is important for staff to negotiate for inclusion into prevailing decision making, capacity building, and operational infrastructures. Being at decision making tables enables direct and ongoing discussion about sustainability and even about replicating the work on a large scale. By moving in these directions, project staff position themselves to be a catalytic force.

Concluding Comments

Those who set out to improve schools and schooling across a district are confronted with two enormous tasks. The first is to develop prototypes; the second involves large-scale replication. One without the other is insufficient. Yet considerably more attention is paid to developing and validating prototypes than to delineating and testing systemic change processes required for sustainability, replication, and scale-up. Clearly, it is time to correct this deficiency.

In doing so, however, it is essential not to lose sight of the simple truth: if improvements don't play out effectively at a school and in the classroom, they don't mean much. Schools and classrooms must be

the center and guiding force for all prototype and systemic change planning.

At the same time, it is essential not to create a new mythology suggesting that every classroom and school are unique. There are fundamentals that permeate all efforts to improve schools and schooling and that should continue to guide policy, practice, research, and training.

These include, for example:

(1) The curriculum in every classroom must include a major emphasis on acquisition of basic knowledge and skills. However, such basics must be understood to involve more than the old "three Rs" and cognitive development. There are many important areas of human development and functioning, and each contains "basics" that individuals may need help in acquiring. Moreover, any individual may require special accommodation in any of these areas.

(2) Every classroom must address student motivation as an antecedent, process, and outcome concern.

(3) Special assistance must be *added* to instructional programs for certain individuals, but only after the best nonspecialized procedures for facilitating learning have been tried. Moreover, such procedures must be designed to build on strengths and must not supplant continued emphasis on promoting healthy development.

(4) Beyond the classroom, schools must have policy, leadership, and mechanisms for developing school-wide programs to address barriers to learning. Some of the work will need to be in partnership with other schools, some will require weaving school and community resources together. The aim is to evolve a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of programs and services ranging from primary prevention through early intervention to treatment of serious problems. Our work suggests that at a school this will require evolving programs to (a) enhance the ability of the classroom to enable learning, (b) provide support

for the many transitions experienced by students and their families, (c) increase home involvement, (d) respond to and prevent crises, (e) offer special assistance to students and their families, and (f) expand community involvement (including volunteers).

(5) Relatedly, decision makers at all levels must revisit current policy using the lens of addressing barriers to learning with the intent of both realigning existing policy to foster cohesive practices and enacting new policies to fill critical gaps.

(6) Leaders for education reform at all levels are confronted with the need to foster effective scale-up of promising reforms. This encompasses a major thrust to develop efficacious demonstrations and effective models for replicating new approaches to schooling on a large scale.

For significant prototype development and systemic change to occur, policy and program commitments must be demonstrated through effective allocation and redeployment of resources to facilitate organizational and operational changes. That is, finances, personnel, time, space, equipment, and other essential resources must be made available, organized, and used in ways that adequately operationalize 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.

We do not mean to belabor all this. Our point simply is to make certain that there is a greater appreciation for and more attention paid to the problems of systemic change. To do less is to undermine substantive systemic change and perpetuate an unsatisfactory status quo. As Seymour Sarason (1971) stressed a long time ago:

> *Good ideas and missionary zeal are sometimes enough to change the thinking of individuals; they are rarely, if ever, effective in changing complicated organizations (like the school) with traditions, dynamics, and goals of their own.*

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Systemic Change for School Improvement: Designing, Implementing, and Sustaining Prototypes and Going to Scale. Online at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/systemicreport.pdf

Toward a Scale-Up Model for Replicating New Approaches to Schooling. Online at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/publications/06%20toward%20a%20scale%20up%20model%20for%20replicating%20new%20approaches.pdf

Scaling-Up Reforms Across A School District. Online at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/publications/21%20SCALING-UP%20REFORMS%20ACROSS%20A%20SCHOOL.pdf

Organization facilitators: A change agent for systemic school and community changes.
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/orgfacrep.pdf

On Sustainability of Project Innovations as Systemic Change. Online at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/publications/45%20on%20sustainability%20of%20project%20innovations%20as%20systemic%20change.pdf

Systemic change for school improvement. Online at:
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/publications/Systemic%20Change%20for%20school%20improvement.pdf

New Initiatives: Considerations Related to Planning, Implementing, Sustaining, and Going-to-Scale. Online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/sustainbrief.pdf

Sustaining School and Community Efforts to Enhance Outcomes for Children and Youth: A Guidebook and Tool Kit. Online at   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sustaining.pdf

Getting From Here to There: A Guide book for The Enabling Component. Online at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/enabling/gettingfromhere.pdf

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The Center's Series of Information Resources on Enabling System Change

*Diffusion of Innovations and Science-Based Practices to
Address Barriers to Learning & Improve Schools*

>Brief Overview of a Major Review by L.W. Green, et al. (2009) entitled: Diffusion Theory and Knowledge Dissemination, Utilization, and Integration in Public Health
>Brief Overview of Major Concepts from E.M. Rogers' Work on Diffusion of Innovations
>Brief Overview of Malcolm Gladwell's Concept of the Tipping Point
>Some Key Terms Related to Enabling System Change
>Systemic Change for School Improvement
>Change Agent Mechanisms for School Improvement: Infrastructure not Individuals
>System Change and Empirically-Supported Practices: The Implementation Problem
>Policy Implications for Advancing Systemic Change for School Improvement
>Some Key References Related to Enabling System Change
>Dissemination Focused on Diffusion: Some Guidelines
>Diffusion: In Pursuit of Action
>Excerpts from Child Trends' series of Research-to Results Briefs on Adopting, Implementing, Sustaining, and Replicating Evidence-Based Practices
>Making and Disseminating Recommendations is Not Sufficient
>Intro to Multi-Level Community Based Culturally Situated Interventions