

Phasing-in the Component

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/aidb.pdf>

This brief guide amplifies some of what is in the Center document entitled: *Steps and Tools to Guide Planning and Implementation of a Comprehensive System to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching* (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/stepsandtoolstoguideplanning.pdf>). Both documents and other tools in the Center Toolkit (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>) are meant to aid and deepen understanding about how to phase-in a Learning Supports Component throughout a district or in one school.

Examples of Underlying Points to Keep in Focus

Note: As schools move forward to develop a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, it is essential over time to revisit matters related to the “big picture” rationale, assumptions, and science underlying changes. As the work proceeds it is wise to ensure that all stakeholders are operating with a full understanding that it’s about:

All students – Ultimately, the intent is to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed at school. This requires not only personalized instruction, but developing the type of *comprehensive system* for addressing barriers to learning and teaching (a learning supports or enabling component) that can effectively

- reduce student dropout rates
- reduce teacher dropout rates
- re-engage students in classroom learning
- narrow the achievement gap
- eliminate the plateau effect related to efforts to improve achievement test performance
- reduce the growing list of schools designated as low performing
- minimize the degree to which high stakes testing is taking a toll on students

Engaging and re-engaging students – The need to engage and re-engage students in classroom instruction must be a central focus, and this requires increased emphasis on intrinsic motivation. Of particular importance are practices that (a) enhance students’ feelings of competence, self-determination, and connection with significant others and (b) minimize threats to such feelings.

Using resources appropriately – It is essential to use existing resources in ways that are most effective. It is recognized, however, that effectiveness is not just a matter of achieving specific outcomes for a few youngsters through specialized services and enhancing coordination to reduce service fragmentation. It involves deploying resources in ways that meet the needs of the many.

Evolving new directions – Meeting the needs of the many requires rethinking how resources should be used to provide learning supports and then deploying and (re)deploying resources in ways that evolve a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach that addresses barriers and supports student learning, development, and well-being. A comprehensive and cohesive approach consists of (a) a continuum of interventions to meet the needs of all children and youth and (b) a well-delineated set of content arenas. It is by effectively developing such a comprehensive approach that schools evolve not only a safe, but a nurturing environment.

Improving standards, evaluation processes, and accountability procedures – All efforts to develop a comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching should be standards-based and results-oriented.

Integrating learning supports fully with instruction – In developing a comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching, the intent is to fully integrate a learning supports component with the instructional component in all school improvement planning.

Pursuing resource-oriented functions – Developing a system to address barriers to learning and teaching involves the ability to carry out a variety of resource-oriented *functions* in a proactive way. These include providing leadership, capacity building, and oversight for mapping what exists, analyzing current resource use, establishing priorities for program development, making recommendations for resource (re)deployment and enhancement to improve programs and systems, participating in decision making, and more.

Improving the organizational and operational infrastructure – Developing a system to address barriers to learning and teaching requires rethinking current infrastructure. The organizational and operational infrastructure must facilitate stakeholders working together with a dedicated task focus in planning, implementing, and evaluating the new approach. For infrastructure to be efficient and effective, mechanisms must be well-designed and interconnected. And, of course, there must be effective, task-focused facilitation for each mechanism. With all this in mind, planners need to rethink:

>***School-site infrastructure*** – Planning, implementation, and evaluation of new directions requires effectively establishing, linking, and sustaining all organizational and operational mechanisms **at a school**.

>***Feeder pattern infrastructure*** – In order to maximize use of available resources and achieve economies of scale, new forms of connection can be made with other schools in a complex or feeder pattern (e.g., a family of schools)

>***Central office infrastructure*** – Infrastructure connections with a district’s central office must be reworked to ensure that site-based and school cluster efforts are effectively nurtured.

>***School-community collaboratives*** – Ultimately, the emphasis on enhancing school and community connections leads to considerations of how school infrastructure mechanisms braid with those in the community to establish effective, function-oriented school-community collaboration.

Building capacity with a strong emphasis on stakeholder development – Meeting the needs of all students and staff requires careful attention to capacity building and especially to enhancing on-the-job opportunities and inservice training for learning new roles and functions. Stakeholder mobility calls for particular attention to the needs of newcomers. And, throughout, special attention must be paid to the problem of the match between intervention processes and stakeholder motivation and capabilities.

Also see: *Developing a Comprehensive System to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching: Keeping the Big Picture in Focus*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/keepinginmind.pdf>

Efforts to restructure how schools operate require much more than implementing demonstrations at a few sites. Improved approaches are only as good as a school district's ability to develop and institutionalize them at every school. This process often is called diffusion, replication, roll out, or scale-up.

Much more is involved than implementing demonstration projects

For the most part, education researchers and reformers have paid little attention to the complexities of large-scale diffusion. Furthermore, leadership training has given short shrift to the topic of scale-up. Thus, it is not surprising that proposed systemic changes are not accompanied with the resources necessary to accomplish the prescribed changes throughout a school-district in an effective manner. Common deficiencies include inadequate strategies for creating motivational readiness among a critical mass of stakeholders, especially principals, teachers, and parents, assignment of change agents with relatively little specific training in facilitating large-scale systemic change, and scheduling unrealistically short time frames for building capacity to accomplish desired institutional changes.

In reading the following, think about restructuring student support in terms of establishing over time a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated component to address barriers to learning and teaching (e.g., an enabling or learning support component as described in the concept paper). The outlined framework and guidelines for such a component conveys a vision of the type of comprehensive, multifaceted approach needed at every school site. In organizing such a component, it is the content of each of the basic areas needed to address barriers to learning that guides program planning, implementation, evaluation, personnel development, and stakeholder involvement. The intent is to create a cohesive set of programs and services that is thoroughly integrated with the instructional and management components. Such a component evolves by building a *continuum of programs/services* – from primary prevention to treatment of chronic problems – using a *continuum of interveners, advocates, and sources of support* (e.g., peers, parents, volunteers, nonprofessional staff, professionals-in-training, professionals). Building such a component requires blending resources. Thus, the emphasis throughout is on *collaboration* – cooperation, coordination, and, where viable, integration – among all school and community.



Successful systemic change begins with a framework that addresses the complexities of scale-up

In pursuing major systemic restructuring, a complex set of interventions is required. These must be guided by a sophisticated scale-up model that addresses substantive organizational changes at multiple levels. A scale-up model is a tool for systemic change. It addresses the question "How do we get from here to there?" Such a model is used to implement a vision of organizational aims and is oriented toward results.

The vision for *getting from here to there* requires its own framework of steps, the essence of which involves establishing mechanisms to address key phases, tasks, and processes for systemic change. As Exhibit 1 on the following page highlights, these include creating an infrastructure and operational mechanisms for

- *orientation and creating readiness*: enhancing the climate/culture for change;
- *start-up and phase in – initial implementation*: adapting and phasing-in a prototype with well-designed guidance and support;
- *maintenance/institutionalization*: ensuring the infrastructure maintains and enhances productive changes;
- *ongoing evolution*: creative renewal.

In the following discussion, we take as given that key mechanisms for implementing systemic changes have been established. These mechanisms are essential when fundamental restructuring is to be carried out throughout a school district.

The real difficulty in changing the course of any enterprise lies not in developing new ideas but in escaping old ones

John Maynard Keynes

Making major systemic changes is not easy;
the alternative, however, is maintaining
a very unsatisfactory status quo.

Exhibit 1

Overview of Major Steps Related to Establishing a Comprehensive, Multifaceted, and Cohesive Component for Addressing Barriers to Learning at a School Site (A Learning Support or Enabling Component)

At any site, 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.

First Phase – *Orientation: Creating Readiness*

- Introduce basic ideas to relevant groups of stakeholders to build interest and consensus for enhancing efforts to develop a comprehensive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and to garner feedback and support
- Establish a policy framework and commitment – the leadership should make a commitment that adopts a comprehensive approach to enabling learning by addressing barriers 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
- Develop strategies for maintaining momentum and progress

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

Structure
Follows
Function

As more and more emphasis is placed on committees, teams, collaborative bodies, and other groups that come together, there has been increasing concern about just going to meetings and not making any progress. One problem is that a fundamental organizational principle often is neglected. That principle states simply: *structure follows function*.

We are unlikely to create an effective infrastructure if we are not clear about the functions we want to accomplish and the tasks encompassed in those functions.

Efforts to effectively provide learning supports at a school involve (a) intervention-oriented functions and tasks and (b) resource-oriented functions and tasks. Moving in new directions adds functions and tasks specifically related to (c) systemic change.

For example:

- in responding to the needs of individuals students and families, the emphasis is on such *case-oriented intervention tasks* as determining who needs what and how soon (triage), referrals to appropriate interventions, coordinating and managing interventions, monitoring progress and reassessing needs, and related activity;
- *resource-oriented tasks* include mapping and analyzing how resources are being used and establishing priorities for how to deploy and redeploy resources to improve school outcomes;
- *systemic change tasks* include how to create readiness for change, how to build stakeholder capacity for change, how to phase in changes, and how to sustain them.

For some tools related to reworking infrastructure, see Section B of the Center's Toolkit – at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

Restructuring Student Support from the School Outward

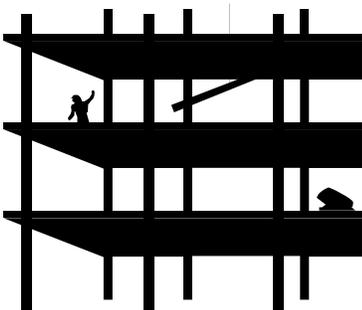
*The focus is first
on what is needed
at the school level . . .*

*. . . then on what
families of schools
and system-wide
resources can do
to support each
school's approach
for addressing
barriers to learning
and teaching*

To maintain the focus on evolving a comprehensive continuum of programs/services at *every school site*, it is a good idea to conceive the process of restructuring from the school outward. That is, first the focus is on school level mechanisms related to the component to address barriers to learning and teaching. Then, based on analyses of what is needed to facilitate and enhance school level efforts, mechanisms are conceived that enable groups or “families” of schools to work together where this increases efficiency and effectiveness and achieves economies of scale. Then, system-wide mechanisms can be (re)designed to support what each school and family of schools are trying to develop.

An infrastructure of organizational and operational mechanisms at school, multiple school sites, and system-wide are required for oversight, leadership, resource development, and ongoing support. Such mechanisms provide ways to (a) arrive at decisions about resource allocation, (b) maximize systematic and integrated planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of enabling activity, (c) outreach to create formal working relationships with community resources to bring some to a school and establish special linkages with others, and (d) upgrade and modernize the component to reflect the best intervention thinking and use of technology. At each system level, these tasks require that staff adopt some new roles and functions and that parents, students, and other representatives from the community enhance their involvement. They also call for redeployment of existing resources, as well as finding new ones.

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 large-scale restructuring described below is not a straight-forward sequential process. Rather, the changes emerge in overlapping and spiraling phases.



School Level
Mechanisms

A programmatic approach for addressing barriers to learning must coalesce at the local level. Thus, the school and its surrounding community are a reasonable focal point around which to build a multi-level organizational plan. Moreover, primary emphasis on this level meshes nicely with contemporary restructuring views that stress increased school-based and neighborhood control.

Policymakers and administrators must ensure the necessary infrastructure is put in place for

If the essential programs for addressing barriers to learning and teaching are to play out effectively at a school site, policy makers and administrators must ensure that the necessary infrastructure is put in place. In most settings, this can be done by restructuring support services and other activities currently used to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development. Through proper redeployment of such resources, every school can expect to enhance its educational results

- *weaving existing activity together*

From a school's perspective, there are three overlapping challenges in moving from piecemeal approaches to an integrated component for addressing barriers to learning. One involves weaving existing activity together, including curricula designed to foster positive social, emotional, and physical development. A second entails evolving programs so they are more effective. The third challenge is to reach out to other resources in ways that expand the component. Such outreach encompasses forming collaborations with other schools, establishing formal linkages with community resources, and attracting more volunteers, professionals-in-training, and community resources to work at the school site.

- *evolving programs*

- *reaching out to enhance resources*

Meeting the above challenges requires development of well-conceived mechanisms that are appropriately sanctioned and endowed by governance bodies. For example, with respect to the six programmatic areas outlined in the concept paper, specific school-based mechanisms must exist so that all are pursued optimally in daily practice and are maintained over time. One way to conceive the necessary mechanisms is in terms of *school-based work groups*. The functions of each group are to ensure programmatic activity is well-planned, implemented, evaluated, maintained, and evolved. In forming such groups, identifying and deploying enough committed and able personnel may be difficult. Initially, a couple of motivated and competent individuals can lead the way in a particular program area – with others recruited over time as necessary and/or interested. Some "groups" might even consist of one individual. In some instances, one group can

Mechanisms include:

school-based work groups

address more than one programmatic arena or may even serve more than one school. Many schools, of course, are unable to simultaneously establish work groups to cover all six areas. Such schools must establish priorities and plans for how they will phase in their restructuring efforts. The initial emphasis, of course, should be on weaving together existing resources and developing work groups designed to meet the school's most pressing needs, such as enhancing programs to provide student and family assistance, crisis assistance and prevention, and ways to enhance how classrooms handle garden variety learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

*School-based
Learning Supports
Resource Team*

In addition to work groups, a separate on-site organizational mechanism for resource coordination addresses overall cohesion among programmatic areas. This mechanism also can be a team. Such a school-based *Learning Supports Resource Team* can reduce fragmentation and enhance cost-efficacy of enabling activity by assisting program teams in ways that encourage them to function in a coordinated and increasingly integrated manner. Properly constituted, this group also provides on-site leadership for efforts to address barriers comprehensively and ensures the maintenance and improvement of a multifaceted and integrated approach.

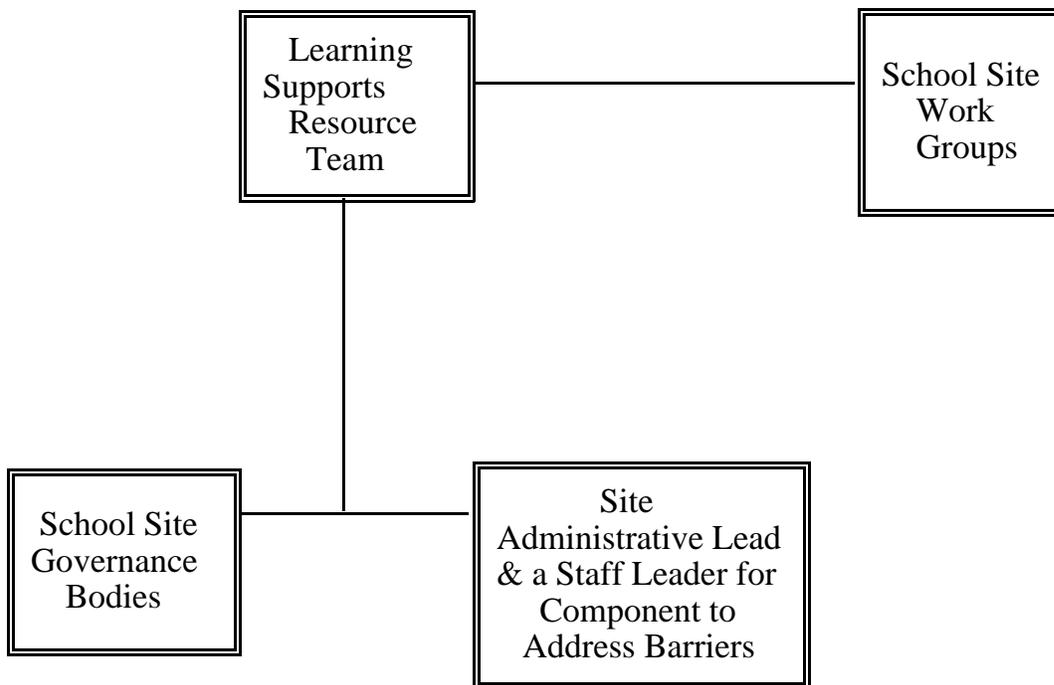
*Site
administrative
leader*

Most schools do not have an administrator whose job definition outlines the leadership role and functions necessary for developing a comprehensive approach for addressing barriers to learning. This is not a role for which most principals have time. Thus, it is imperative to establish a policy and restructure jobs to ensure there is a *site administrative leader* for this component. Such a role may be created by redefining a percentage (e.g., 50%) of a vice/assistant principal's day or, in schools that are too small to have such personnel, the principal might delegate some administrative responsibilities to a coordinator. This person must sit on the Resource Team and then represent and advocates the team's recommendations whenever the administrative team meets. This administrator also advocates for the team's recommendations at governance body meetings when decisions are made regarding programs and operations – especially decisions about use of space, time, budget, and personnel.

Staff lead

Finally, a *staff lead* can be identified from the cadre of line staff who have expertise with respect to addressing barriers to student learning. If a site has a Center facility (e.g., Family or Parent Resource Center or a Health Center), the Center coordinator might fill this role. This individual also must sit on the Learning Supports Resource Team and then advocate at key times for the team’s recommendations at the administrative and governance body tables.

Besides facilitating the development of a potent component to address barriers to learning, both the administrative and staff lead play key roles in daily implementation, monitoring, and problem solving.



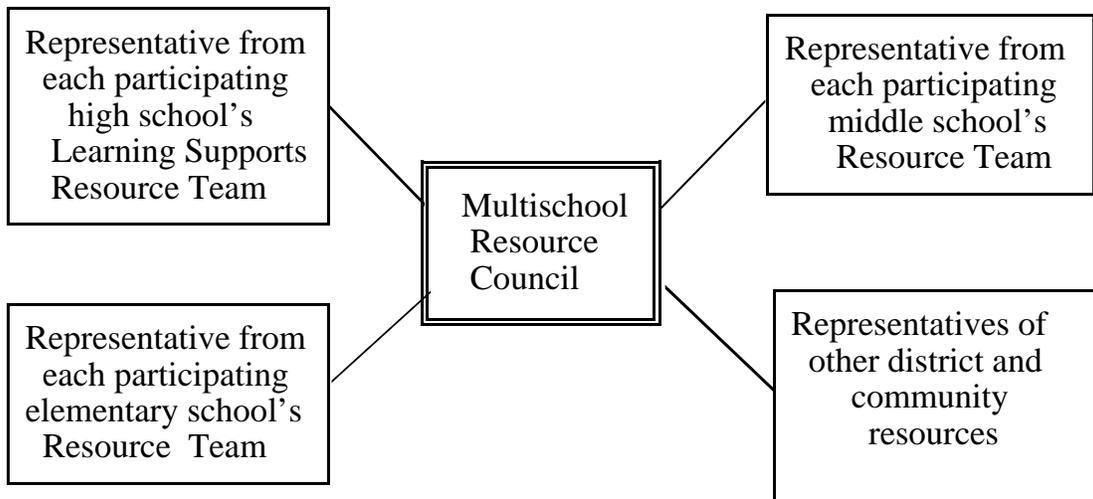
As will be evident on the following pages, conceptualization of the necessary school level infrastructure helps clarify what supportive mechanisms should be developed at school complex-cluster and system-wide levels.

Mechanisms for Clusters of Schools

Neighboring schools have common concerns and may have programmatic activity that can use the same resources. By sharing, they can eliminate redundancy and reduce costs. Some school districts already pull together clusters of schools to combine and integrate personnel and programs. These are sometimes called complexes or families.

A multi-school *Learning Supports Resource Council* for a cluster or “family” of schools provides a mechanism to help ensure cohesive and equitable deployment of resources and also can enhance the pooling of resources to reduce costs. Such councils can be particularly useful for integrating the efforts of high schools and their feeder middle and elementary schools. (This clearly is important in addressing barriers with those families who have youngsters attending more than one level of schooling in the same cluster.) With respect to linking with community resources, multi school teams are especially attractive to community agencies who often don't have the time or personnel to link with individual schools.

To these ends, 1 to 2 representatives from each school's Learning Supports Resource Team can be chosen to form a council and meet at least once a month and more frequently as necessary. Such a mechanism can help (a) coordinate and integrate programs serving multiple schools, (b) identify and meet common needs with respect to guidelines and staff development, and (c) create linkages and collaborations among schools and with community agencies. In this last regard, the group can play a special role in community outreach both to create formal working relationships and ensure that all participating schools have access to such resources. More generally, the council provides a useful mechanism for leadership, communication, maintenance, quality improvement, and ongoing development of a component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. Natural starting points for councils are the sharing of needs assessment, resource mapping, analyses, and recommendations for reform and restructuring. Specific areas of initial focus may be on such matters as addressing community-school violence and developing prevention programs and safe school plans.



System-wide
Mechanisms

School and multi-site mechanisms are not sufficient. System-wide policy guidance, leadership, and assistance are required. With respect to establishing a component for addressing barriers to learning, a district *policy* commitment represents a necessary foundation. Optimally, the policy should place development of a comprehensive, integrated approach for enabling learning on a par with instruction and management.

Mechanisms that seem essential are:

a system-wide leader for the component

Then, the district must adopt a prototype and create necessary system-wide mechanisms for operationalizing the component. Development of system-wide mechanisms should reflect a clear conception of how each supports school and cluster level activity. Three system-wide mechanisms seem essential in ensuring coherent oversight and leadership for developing, maintaining, and enhancing an enabling component. One is a *system-wide leader* with responsibility and accountability for the component (e.g., an associate superintendent). This leader's functions include (a) evolving the district-wide vision and strategic planning for an enabling component, (b) ensuring coordination and integration of enabling activity among groups of schools and system-wide, (c) establishing linkages and integrated collaboration among system-wide programs and with those operated by community, city, and county agencies, and (d) ensuring integration with instruction and management. The leader's functions also encompass evaluation, including determination of the equity in program delivery, quality improvement reviews of all mechanisms and procedures, and ascertaining results.

a system-wide leadership group

system-wide work groups

Two other recommended mechanisms at this level are a system-wide leadership cabinet and work groups. The former can provide expertise and leadership for the ongoing evolution of the component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching; the latter can provide guidance for operational coordination and integration across groups of schools. The composition for these will have some overlap. District-level groups should include (a) key district administrative and line staff with relevant expertise and vision, (b) district staff who can represent the perspectives of principals, union members, and various other stakeholders, and (c) nondistrict members whose job and expertise (e.g., public health, mental health, social services, recreation, juvenile justice, post secondary institutions) make them invaluable contributors to the tasks at hand.

Organization Facilitators

A cadre of *Organization Facilitators* provide a change agent mechanism that can assist in the development and maintenance of cluster councils and resource-oriented school teams (see Exhibit 2 on the following page). Such personnel also can help organize basic "interdisciplinary and cross training" to create the trust, knowledge, skills, and the attitudes essential for the kind of working relationships required if the mechanisms described above are to operate successfully. Through such training, each profession has the opportunity to clarify roles, activities, strengths, and accomplishments, and learn how to link with each other.

Board of Education Standing Committee for a Component to Address Barriers to Learning

Matters related to addressing barriers to learning and teaching appear regularly on every school board's agenda. The problem is that each item tends to be handled in an ad hoc manner, without sufficient attention to the "Big Picture." One result is that the administrative structure in most districts is not organized in ways that coalesce its various functions (programs, services) for addressing barriers. The piecemeal structure reflects the marginalized status of such functions and both creates and maintains the fragmented policies and practices that characterize efforts to address barriers. School boards should carefully analyze how their committee structure deals with these functions. Most boards will find (a) they don't have a big picture perspective of how all these functions relate to each other, (b) the current board structure and processes for reviewing these functions do not engender a thorough, cohesive approach to policy, and (c) functions related to addressing barriers to learning are distributed among administrative staff in ways that foster fragmentation. If this is the case, the board should consider establishing a standing committee that focuses indepth and consistently on the topic of how schools in the district can enhance their efforts to improve instruction by addressing barriers in more cohesive and effective ways.

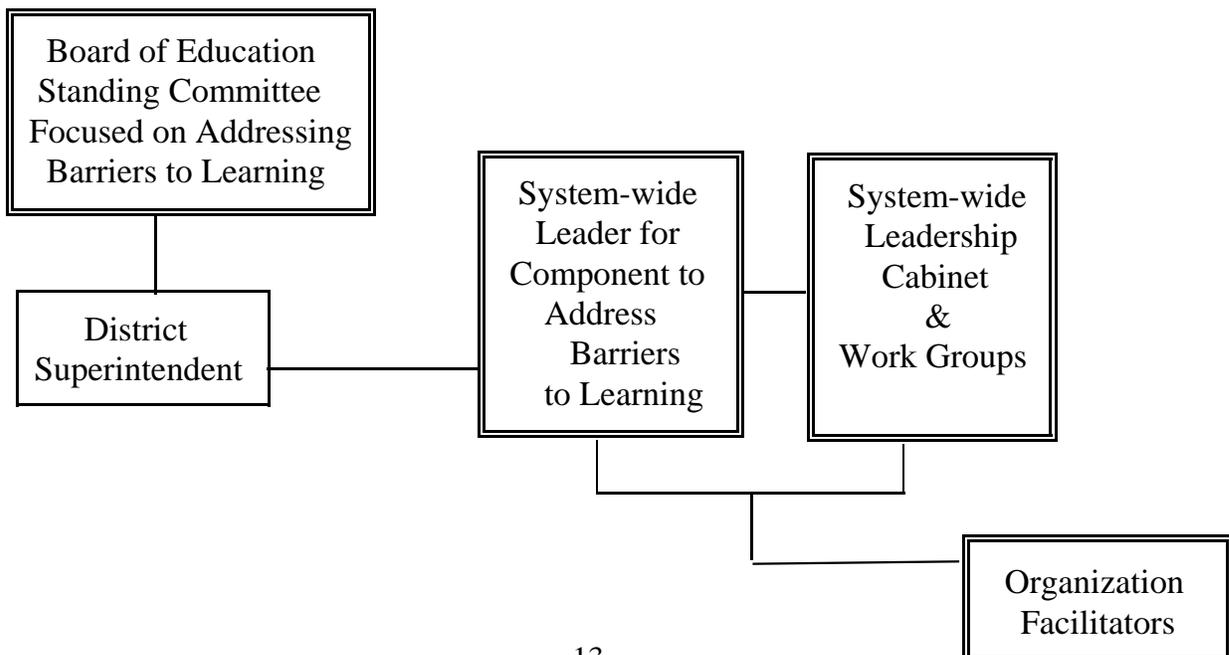


Exhibit 2 Establishing Resource-Oriented Mechanisms Using Organization Facilitators as Change Agents

Staff at all levels require assistance in establishing and maintaining an appropriate infrastructure for a component to address barriers to learning. Specially trained *Organization Facilitators* represent a mechanism that embodies the necessary expertise to help (a) develop essential school-based leadership, (b) establish program and coordinating teams and councils, and (c) clarify how to link up with community resources.

At the school level, one facilitator can rotate within a group of schools to phase-in an appropriate infrastructure over a period of a year. Then, that facilitator can move on to another group of schools. After moving on, the facilitator can return periodically to assist with maintenance, share new ideas for program development, help with such development, and contribute to related inservice. Work to date suggests that a relatively small cadre of Organization Facilitators can phase-in desired mechanisms throughout a relatively large district over a period of several years. Pupil service personnel who have been redeployed and trained for these positions adapt quite easily to the functions and report high levels of job satisfaction. Recent efforts related to developing an enabling component at a school help clarify some of these points.

The Organization Facilitator's first step was to help policy makers understand the need to restructure the school's support programs and services. This led to adoption of the enabling component concept by the site's governance body and to an agreement about the role the Organization Facilitator would play in helping staff implement reforms.

The process of restructuring began with assignment of an assistant principal to function as the component's administrative leader and establishment of a resource-oriented team consisting of the school's pupil service personnel, the administrative leader, the staff lead, and several teachers. As a focal point for restructuring, the Organization Facilitator helped the team map and analyze all school resources being used to address barriers to student learning. The six content arenas provided a template to organize mapping and analyses, as did the set of self-study surveys developed by the Center at UCLA.

By clustering existing activities into the six arenas, the team was able to analyze the school's efforts to address barriers to learning and enhance healthy development. From this perspective, the team identified essential activities, major programmatic gaps, redundant efforts, and several long-standing activities that were having little effect. Decisions were made to eliminate redundant and ineffective activity and redeploy the resources to strengthen essential programs and begin to fill gaps.

As one facet of the school's community outreach, the Organization Facilitator trained staff to bring community resources to the site in ways that do not displace essential school resources. This was accomplished by integrating the community as part of the enabling component – linked each available community resource to one or more of the six arenas either to fill a gap or enhance the school staffs' efforts by becoming part of an ongoing program. To ensure coordination and integration, all community agencies working at the site are asked to have a representative participate on the Learning Supports Resource Team.

Exhibit 3

Examples of Areas Schools Might Want to Designate as First Priorities in Developing an Enabling Component

(1) *Classroom-Focused Enabling*

Clearly the primary focus in addressing barriers to student learning is on ongoing inservice for teachers – as reflected in this set of continuing education modules.

With respect to the other five programmatic areas, the efforts of a classroom teacher can be greatly enhanced by setting as priorities development of the following:

(2) *Support for Transitions*

Many schools need to enhance their positive "climate" for everyone - students, staff, families, others in the community. In particular, they can significantly reduce learning, behavior, and emotional problems by ensuring the development of three types of transition programs:

> *Welcoming and Social Support Programs for Everyone*

The greater the rate of student and staff mobility, the greater the priority for pursuing strategies to enhance welcoming and social support. A positive welcome is desirable at the various initial encounters school staff have with a new student and family, a new staff member, and all visitors. Each point of contact represents an opportunity and a challenge to positively assimilate newcomers into the school -- welcoming them, linking them with appropriate social supports, assisting them to make successful transitions, and identifying and providing additional assistance for those who are having difficulty adjusting. It is risky business for a school not to have programs that fully orient newcomers (students, family, staff), connect them with specific peers (e.g., peer buddies), orchestrate their entrance into ongoing groups and activities, and so forth (see the Center's introductory packet entitled: "at Schools Can Do to Welcome and Meet the Needs of All Students and Families).

> *Articulation Programs*

Many students have difficulty making the transition from grade-to-grade and many more have difficulty in going from elementary to middle school or from middle to high school. Indeed, many "dropouts" occur during transitions to high school. Programs are needed that (a) provide all students with opportunities to prepare themselves psychologically for such changes and (b) identify and intervene on behalf of any student who is having difficulty during the actual period of transition. Comparable programs are useful for family members and new staff.

> *Before, During, and After School Recreation, Academic Support, & Enrichment, Programs*

Many schools have significant problems with tardies, bullying, substance abuse, and other forms of behavior that contribute to poor student performance. Well-designed and structured recreation and enrichment are basic to encouraging proactive behavior. Offered before school they lure students to school early and thus reduce tardies. Offered at lunch, they can reduce the incidence of harassment and other negative interactions. After school, they provide alternatives to antisocial interactions in the community, and paired with positive opportunities for enriched and personalized academic support, they offer renewed hope for those who have learning problems.

(cont.)

(3) Home Involvement in Schooling

Besides what the school already is doing to enhance home involvement, there should be an intensive, proactive, positive outreach program aimed at families housing students who are experiencing learning, behavior, and emotional problems. Such activity should be accompanied by a commitment to minimizing negative contacts with family members (blaming and fingerwaving).

>Programs to strengthen the family

It is rarely a mystery as to what family members need and would value from the school. In outreaching to attract family members to the school, the first priority should be development of programs and services related to the area of Student and Family Assistance (see below).

(4) Emergency/Crisis Response and Prevention

>Response Plan & Crisis Team

Every school probably has a written crisis response plan. For such a plan to be viable and in order to pursue an enhanced focus on preventing crises, a strong priority should be to establish and build the capability of a Crisis Team.

(5) Student and Family Assistance

While a wide range of assistance programs and services can be developed over the years, the first priorities in this area are:

>Establishing access to emergency assistance for basic life needs (e.g., food, clothes, shelter, safety, emergency health care and dentistry, legal aid)

This usually involves identifying appropriate referral agencies and establishing direct links to them to facilitate family access.

>Literary and extra academic support program (e.g., family literacy, tutors, GED preparation, ESL classes, related software for computers)

>Social and emotional counseling (support groups, individual and group counseling)

(6) Community Outreach

>Volunteer recruitment program (e.g., parents, college students, senior citizens, mentors from the business community)

About Phases
and Steps
in Restructuring
Student Support
to Establish a
Component to
Address Barriers
to Learning

As a guide for planning, implementation, and evaluation, the process is conceived in terms of four phases and a set of delineated major steps (review Exhibit 1).

At each level of restructuring, a critical mass of key stakeholders and their leadership must understand and commit to restructuring plans. The commitment must be reflected in policy statements and creation of an infrastructure that ensures necessary leadership and resources and on-going capacity building. To these ends, it behooves the Board of Education to establish a standing committee focused on the district's efforts to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development. Such a committee can play a major role in reviewing, analyzing, and redeploying the various funding sources that underwrite district efforts to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development.

Essential in all this is integrating the restructuring efforts into school improvement planning. Related to this see the exhibit on the following page.

Exhibit: A Calendar for Integrating a Comprehensive Learning Supports Component into School Improvement Planning

Spring – Getting Started and Looking Ahead to the Coming Year

***Establish and build the capacity for mapping and analysis of the resources currently allocated for all learning support activity and personnel at the school

One way to do this is to coalesce those at the school who are most concerned with addressing barriers to learning and teaching into a “Learning Supports Resource Team.”

See:

>*Developing Resource-Oriented Mechanisms to Enhance Learning Supports*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/developing_resource_oriented-mechanisms.pdf

***Map and analyze resources using a comprehensive intervention framework that provides an umbrella for all personnel and activity currently used to support learning at school

See:

>*Resource Mapping and Management to Address Barriers to Learning: An Intervention for Systemic Change*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resourcemapping/resourcemappingandmanagement.pdf>
>*Another Initiative? Where Does it Fit? A Unifying Framework and an Integrated Infrastructure for Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Promote Healthy Develop.*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf>

Summer/Fall – Becoming a Major Partner in School Improvement

***Plan a system of learning supports (e.g., an enabling/learning support component) and integrate it fully into the school improvement plan (include standards and quality indicators for accountability)

See:

>*Addressing What’s Missing in School Improvement Planning: Expanding Standards and Accountability to Encompass an Enabling or Learning Supports Component*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/enabling/standards.pdf>

***Formulate prioritized recommendations for strengthening learning supports

In doing this, review school data to determine which problems are affecting many students and are most in need of programmatic intervention to enable learning and teaching (e.g., attendance, newcomer transitions, excessive referrals for specialized services and special education). Then, identify what would be the best use of existing resources and personnel to address these problems.

***Request access to (and, better yet, participation at) planning & decision making tables

Winter – Making it Happen

***Interact formally with decision makers in planning for next year through offering specific recommendations based on plans for redeploying existing resources that ensure there is movement toward developing a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to addressing barriers to learning and teaching

***Help to ensure available funds, space, and other resources for programs, capacity building (including staff development) are allocated in ways that ensure learning supports are not marginalized and fragmented

See:

>*The School Leader’s Guide to Student Learning Supports: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/corwin/bookannouncement.htm>

A Couple of Tools for Monitoring Progress
in Developing a Comprehensive System to
Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching

- Topical Guide for Self-Evaluation

see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/selvevaltool.pdf>

- Benchmark Checklist for Monitoring
and Reviewing Progress

see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/benchmarktool.pdf>

The objective of these tools is to aid in planning, implementing, and evaluating (rather than waiting for a miracle to occur).

See other tools for Rebuilding Student Supports into
a Comprehensive System for
Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

in the Center Toolkit at

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>