

## **Leadership at a School Site for Developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports (e.g., a Learning Supports Component)**

### *Job Descriptions*

Given that a Learning Supports (or an Enabling) Component is one of three primary and essential components of comprehensive school improvement, it is imperative to have designated administrative and staff leadership. Minimally, the Component needs:

- **an administrative lead** – may be an assistant principal, dean, or other leader who regularly sits at administrative and decision making “tables”
- **a staff lead for daily operations** – may be a support service staff member (e.g., a school psychologist, social worker, counselor, nurse), a program coordinator, a teacher with special interest in this area.

These leaders embody the vision for the work and are key to developing a comprehensive system of learning supports. These jobs entail working with staff and community resources to develop, over time, a full array of learning supports to address barriers to student learning and re-engage students in classroom instruction. Moreover, the work involves doing all this in ways that ensure interventions are fully integrated with each other and with the Instructional and Management/Governance Components at the school.

Their job descriptions should delineate major areas of function related to key responsibilities and accountabilities. These areas are:

- I. Establishing and maintaining a set of planning and operational mechanisms that are fully integrated with school improvement efforts and are capable of developing and ensuring sustainability of a comprehensive system of learning supports at the school**
- II. Guiding systemic changes for enhancing interventions and related systems within the school and doing so in ways that ensure**
  - **coordination and integration of programs/services/systems**
  - **development over time of programs/services/systems into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system of learning supports**
- III. Guiding the enhancement of school-community linkages and partnerships to fill major gaps and ensure school-community resources are woven effectively into the Learning Supports Component**
- IV. Capacity building (including stakeholder development)**

#### **ABOUT THE CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS at UCLA**

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For more on this, contact us by email at [smhp@ucla.edu](mailto:smhp@ucla.edu) or call 310/825-3634 (toll free – 866/846-4843) or write Center for Mental Health in Schools, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA, Box 951563, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563.



## Administrative Lead for a Learning Supports Component

To address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage students in classroom instruction, a Learning Supports Component encompasses (a) systems related to a full continuum of interventions ranging from primary prevention, through intervention early after onset, to treatment of serious problems and (b) programs, services, and systems in designated content arenas. (Note: the content arenas include a focus on major concerns such as: 1) enhancing regular classroom strategies to enable learning, 2) providing support for the many transitions experienced by students and families, 3) increasing home and school connections, 4) responding to and preventing crises, 5) facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed, and 6) expanding community involvement and support.)

In daily practice, for a Learning Supports Component to be one of three primary and essential components in school improvement, it is imperative to have an administrative leader who spends at least 50% of each day pursuing major functions relevant to the Component. This leader must be a full partner on the school's governance, advisory, planning, and steering bodies to ensure that all major decisions and accountability processes facilitate the Component's current operations and ongoing development.

### *Examples of Specific Job Duties*

- Represents the Learning Supports Component at the decision making, administrative, and planning tables to address policy implementation, budget allocations, systemic changes and daily operations, infrastructure development, maintenance, and interface with instruction and governance, information management, development of an effective communication system, development of an effective system for evaluation and accountability with an emphasis on positive accomplishments and quality improvement
- Provides support, guidance, visibility, public relations, and advocacy for the Component at the school and in the community (e.g., maintaining a high level of interest, support, and involvement with respect to the Component)
- Ensures effective communication, coordination, and integration among those involved with the Component and among the three components (i.e., Learning Supports, Instruction, and Management/Governance).
- Leads the Component Steering Committee which reviews, guides, and monitors progress and long range plans, problem solves, and acts as a catalyst for the ongoing development of a comprehensive system of learning supports and its full integration into school improvement planning and implementation.
- Participates on a learning supports resource-oriented team to facilitate progress related to plans and priorities for the Component's ongoing operations and development.
- Mentors and helps restructure the roles and functions of key Learning Supports staff (e.g., pupil services personnel and others whose roles and functions fall within the major facets of the Component); in particular, helps redefine traditional pupil service roles and functions in ways that enables them to contribute to all six content arenas and the major levels of the intervention continuum encompassed by the Component.
- Anticipates and identifies problems and provides rapid problem solving.
- Identifies immediate and future capacity building needs related to the Component (e.g., status of stakeholder development and particularly inservice staff development), takes steps to ensure that plans are made to meet needs, and ensures that an appropriate amount of capacity building is devoted to the Component.
- Meets with the Staff Lead for Learning Supports on a regular basis to review progress and discuss and advocate for ways to enhance progress.

## **Staff Lead for Daily Operations of an Enabling or Learning Supports Component**

The staff lead works under the direct supervision of the school's Administrative Lead for the Component. The essence of the staff lead's day-by-day functions is to be responsible and accountable along with the administrative leader for ongoing progress in developing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging students in classroom instruction. This encompasses (a) systems related to a full continuum of interventions and (b) programs, services, and systems in all major content areas of a Learning Supports Component.

### *Examples of Specific job duties:*

- Has daily responsibility to advance the agenda for the Component; carries out daily tasks involved in enhancing the Component; ensures that system and program activity is operating effectively; provides daily problem-solving related to systems and programs.
- Organizes and coaches a learning supports resource team and its various work groups.
- Monitors progress related to plans and priorities formulated for the Component.
- Monitors current Component activities to ensure they are functioning well and takes steps to improve their functioning and ongoing development (e.g., ensuring program availability, access, and effectiveness).
- Participates in the Component Steering Committee to contribute to efforts for reviewing, guiding, and monitoring progress and long range plans, problem solving, and effectively linking with the Instructional and Management/Governance Components.
- Provides support, guidance, visibility, public relations, and advocacy for the Component at the school and in the community (e.g., maintaining a high level of interest, support, and involvement with respect to the component).
- Supports capacity building for all stakeholders (staff, family and community members).
- Ensures all new students, families, and staff are welcomed, oriented, and inducted into the school and introduced to activities related to the Component.
- Coordinates activity taking place in the Family Center (where one is in operation).
- Ensures effective communication, coordination, and integration among those involved with the Component and with the Instructional and Management/Governance Components
- Anticipates and identifies problems and provides rapid problem solving
- Acts as the liaison between the school and other entities (e.g., community resources) who work with the site related to Component.
- Ensures that the activities of other entities (e.g., community resources) who work with the site on matters related to the Component are operating under the umbrella of the Component and are well-coordinated and integrated with daily activities.
- Meets with the Administrative Lead for the Component on a regular basis to discuss and advocate for ways to enhance progress.

## **Examples of Generic Criteria for Evaluating Performance for these Positions**

### ***I. Related to establishing and maintaining a set of planning and operational mechanisms***

A. Works with the decision making, administrative, planning, and steering bodies to establish a sustainable set of planning and operational mechanisms that are fully integrated with school improvement efforts and are capable of developing and ensuring sustainability of a comprehensive system of learning supports at the school

B. Uses infrastructure mechanisms to ensure effective communication, coordination, integration, and problem solving among those involved with the Learning Supports Component and among the three components

C. Participates regularly and effectively on the Learning Supports Resource Team

### ***II. Related to enhancing interventions and related systems within schools***

A. Coordinates and integrates programs/services/systems

(e.g., demonstrates the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate mechanisms for collaborating with colleagues to ensure activities are carried out in the most equitable and cost-effective manner consistent with legal and ethical standards for practice – examples of mechanisms include case-oriented teams; resource-oriented teams; consultation, coaching and mentoring mechanisms; triage, referral, and care monitoring systems; crisis teams).

B. Facilitates development over time of programs/services/systems into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system of learning supports

(e.g., demonstrates the ability to enhance development of a comprehensive system of learning supports for equitably addressing barriers to learning and re-engaging students in classroom instruction; works effectively to bring others together to improve existing interventions and to fill gaps in the Component)

### ***III. Related to enhancing school-community linkages and partnerships***

Works to weave school-community resources effectively into the Component in ways that fill major gaps

(e.g., demonstrates the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate mechanisms for collaborating with community entities; facilitates braiding of school and community resources and systems to enhance current activity and ongoing development of a comprehensive system of learning supports; ensures that a diverse range of students and their families are accounted for)

### ***IV. Related to capacity building***

Supervises professionals-in-training; facilitates welcoming, orientation, and induction of new staff, families, and students; represents the Component in venues where budget, space, and other capacity building matters are decided

(e.g., demonstrates the ability to coach, mentor, train, and supervise professionals-in-training; provides orientation to the Learning Support Component for newly hired personnel; ensures effective support for transitions of all newcomers; participates in staff inservice planning and implementation)