What are Learning Supports?

(http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/whatlearningsupports.pdf)

Learning supports are the resources, strategies, and practices that provide physical, social, emotional, and intellectual supports intended to enable all pupils to have an equal opportunity for success at school by addressing barriers to and promoting engagement in learning and teaching. Just as efforts to enhance instruction emphasize well delineated and integrated curriculum content, so must efforts to address external and internal factors that interfere with students engaging effectively with that curriculum. At most schools currently, learning supports are not well designed.

To ensure equity of opportunity, schools must first coalesce existing learning supports and overtime develop them into comprehensive system (an enabling component) that is fully integrated with instructional efforts.

Framework for a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Based on research of what schools need in order to effectively address barriers to learning and teaching, learning supports can be coalesced into six categories of classroom and school-wide support, each of which is organized along an integrated intervention continuum. The six categories are:

- *enhancing regular classroom strategies to enable learning* (e.g., improving instruction and classroom management to enhance engagement and re-engage students who have become disengaged from learning at school and to pursue response to intervention strategies for those with mild-moderate learning and behavior problems)

- *supporting transitions* (i.e., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes and many other transitions)

- *increasing home and school connections*

- *responding to, and where feasible, preventing crises*

- *increasing community involvement and support* (outreaching to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers and linkages to community resources that can fill priority gaps in the system of supports)

- *facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed.*

The integrated continuum spans intervention designed to:

§ promote healthy development and prevent problems

§ respond as early after problem onset as is feasible

§ provide for those whose serious, pervasive, and chronic problems require more intensive assistance and accommodation

Designing and Implementing the System

Establish

- a policy commitment.

- an operational infrastructure that fully integrates learning supports into planning and decision making processes

- priorities for planning and implementing the first set of learning support interventions at the school.

For indepth material, go to the free online toolkit at:
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm