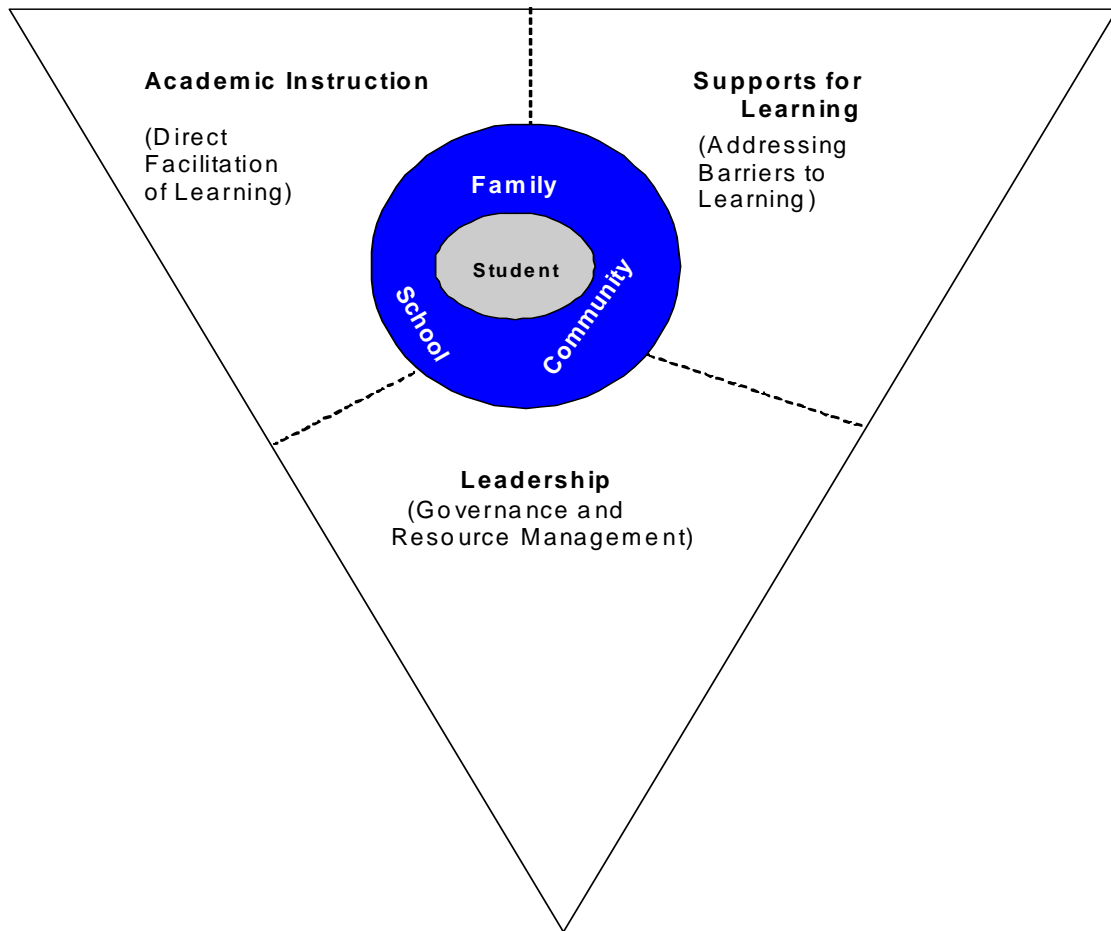


## Harrisburg Comprehensive Model for Student Achievement



**All three components are viewed as necessary, complementary and overlapping.**

# **HARRISBURG COMPREHENSIVE MODEL FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: SUPPORTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

## **INTRODUCTION**

During the 2005-2006 school year, the Harrisburg School District began a study to determine what could be done to more effectively enable Harrisburg students to learn and how could Harrisburg schools address barriers to learning and teaching? These two critical questions were posed by Dr Howard Adelman and Dr. Linda Taylor at a state level conference in November, 2005 and again at a similar conference for Harrisburg School District personnel in January 2006. At the conclusion of the second meeting, the administration committed the District to a multi -year initiative to develop a full continuum of learning supports. To do so would involve efforts of the District and the community. The continuum would be comprehensive and would include prevention of problems, early intervention to address barriers as soon as feasible and targeted treatment or care services for children with chronic and severe problems.

This new direction for learning supports commits the District to play a greater role in developing and providing programs and services essential for students to benefit from improved instruction and higher expectations. An illustration of this continuum of programs and services in Harrisburg includes a new wellness policy to promote the healthy development of all children, preschool support to enhance health and social and emotional development and intensive/targeted mental health treatment provided by two community-based agencies in all school buildings.

A second administrative decision was to adopt the Adelman Taylor philosophy and model which addresses the importance of support for learning as a central component of a comprehensive model of school improvement and student achievement. A steering committee of District Cabinet members and six sub committees composed of staff members who attended the January conference reviewed the planning and implementation guidance of Drs. Adelman and Taylor.

The Steering Committee drafted a Board policy (Attachment A) to serve as a foundation for planning and implementation efforts and served as the facilitators for the six sub committees.

Each sub-committee was charged to review the barriers to student learning for Harrisburg students in one of six areas:

- Classroom-Focused In Observations/Culture enhancing classroom-based efforts to enable learning
- Crisis Assistance and Prevention
- Support for transitions

- Home Involvement in Schooling
- Community Outreach for Involvement and Support (including a focus on volunteers)
- Student and Family Assistance

The second charge for each sub-committee was to prepare an inventory of what we currently do and what we should be doing to address barriers to learning. The third step each group took was to suggest which priority activities the District should undertake in 2006-2007 school year. The priorities of each sub-committee are included later in this paper, along with a description of the specific area of support for learning they studied.

During the 2006-2007 school year, further study will occur under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent, Student Support Services.

## **PRIORITIES FOR INITIATING SUPPORTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING IN 2006-2007**

### **I. Classroom-Focused in Observations/Culture-Enhancing Classroom-Based Efforts To Enable Learning**

When a teacher has difficulty working with a youngster, the first step is to address the problem within the regular classroom and perhaps with added home involvement. The emphasis is on enhancing classroom-based efforts that enable learning by increasing teacher effectiveness for preventing and handling problems. Personalized help is provided to increase a teacher's array of strategies for working with a wider range of individual differences. For example, teachers learn to use volunteers and peer tutoring to enhance social and academic support and to increase their range of accommodative strategies and their ability to teach student compensatory strategies. As appropriate, support in the classroom is provided by resource and itinerant teachers and counselors. Work in this area requires (a) programs for personalized professional development, (b) systems to expand resources, (c) programs for temporary out of class help, and (4) programs to develop aides, volunteers, and any other who help in classrooms or who work with teachers to enable learning. Through classroom-focused enabling programs, teachers are better prepared to address similar problems when they arise in the future. (The classroom curriculum already should encompass a focus on fostering socio-emotional and physical development; such a focus is seen as an essential element in preventing learning, behavior, emotional, and health problems.) Besides enabling learning, two aims of all this work are to increase mainstreaming efficacy and reduce the need for special services by linking with instructional reform to increase student achievement.

## **Classroom-Focused in Observations/Culture Recommended Priorities for 2006-2007**

1. Capacity building/Professional Development for staff on strategies that affect the classroom environment:
  - Pre-referral interventions
  - Collaboration with Learning Support teachers to maximize instruction/behavioral strategies
  - Differentiated instruction designed to match the individual students' motivation, academic capabilities and social/emotional needs
  - Behavior strategies that prevent and de-escalate interruptions to Instruction
2. Development of co-teaching and team-teaching as a district-wide strategy
3. Developing a true "learning community", where everyone can risk in order to learn
4. Technology education to maximize record-keeping and integration with curriculum
  - CASST record keeping
  - Technology integration
  - Paperless communication for efficiency

### **II. Crisis Assistance and Prevention**

Schools must respond to, minimize the impact of, and prevent crises. This requires (a) systems and programs for emergency/crisis response at a site, throughout a school complex, and community-wide (including a program to ensure follow-up care) and (b) prevention programs for school and community to address school safety and violence reduction, suicide prevention, child abuse prevention and so forth. Desired outcomes of crisis assistance include ensuring immediate emergency and follow-up care is provided so students are able to resume learning without undue delay. Prevention activity outcomes are provided to students are able to resume learning without delay. Prevention activity outcomes are reflected in indices showing there is a safe and productive environment and that students and their families have the type of attitudes and capacities needed to deal with violence and other threats to safety.

## **Crisis Assistance and Prevention Recommend Priorities for 2006/2007**

1. Evacuation Plans
  - Training for all staff. Be sure to include in new staff training.
  - Practice evacuation plan – bring the busses
  - Parent information
2. Identify and implement a program regarding student suicide ideation and related mental health issues.
3. Continue Prevention Programs K-8 and give more attention to bullying/harassment and school violence (fighting) and safety.
4. Summer training for Crisis Response Teams.
5. Advocate for staff position for Drug and Alcohol education for students, staff and parents.
6. Identify more prevention programs and strategies and give specific attention to the needs of high school students.
7. Training for staff on Child Abuse Policy. (I.U. has resources to do this. Parents Anonymous is a good source.) At the beginning of each school year, principals should review critical protocols with staff.

### **III. Support for Transitions**

A variety of transitions concerns confront student and their families. A comprehensive focus on transitions requires planning, developing, and maintaining (a) programs to establish a welcoming and socially supportive school community, especially for new arrivals, (b) counseling and articulation programs to support grade-to-grade and school-to-school transitions, moving to and from special education, going to college, moving to post school living and work, and (c) programs for before and after-school and intersession to enrich learning and provide recreation in a safe environment. Anticipated outcomes are reduced alienation and increased positive attitudes and involvement related to school and various learning activities.

#### **Support for Transitions Recommended Priorities 2006-2007**

1. Pre-school/Kindergarten program – (strengthen program)
2. Welcoming Committee at every school for new students, parents and teachers
3. Transitioning at the middle school level (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students)
4. Transition from alternative school to regular school

#### **IV. Home Involvement in Schooling**

Work in this area includes (a) programs to address specific learning and support needs of adults in the home, such as ESL classes and mutual support groups, (b) programs to help those in the home meet their basic obligations to the student, such as providing them with instruction for parenting and for help with school-work. (c) systems to improve communication about matters essential to the student and family, (d) programs to enhance the home-school connection and sense of community, (e) interventions to enhance participation in making decisions that are essential to the student's well-being, (f) programs to enhance home support related to the student's basic learning and development, (g) interventions to mobilize those at home to problem solve related to student needs, and (h) intervention to elicit help (support, collaborations, and partnerships) from those at home with respect to meeting classroom, school, and community needs. The context for some of this activity may be a parent center (which may be part of a Family Service Center facility if one has been established at the site). Outcomes include indices of parent learning, student programs, and community enhancement specifically related to home involvement.

##### **Home Involvement in Schooling Recommended Priorities for 2006-2007**

1. Addressing specific support and learning needs of family
  - Provide Homework Club hotline and/or drop-in each weekday, Monday through Friday; 5:00 – 8:00 PM; teachers take turns manning the central location or conferencing in; teachers get comp time
  - All teachers of preschool through grade eight send a personalized welcoming back to school letter to their incoming students before opening day
2. Improving mechanisms for communication and connecting school and home
  - Implementing a district-wide telephone system that follows up with phone call to parent/guardian when a child is absent; this is a feedback loop of communication to assure parent/guardian and school is knowledgeable about the child's absence
  - Coordinate technology systems so that truancy, guidance counselors, teachers, and parent/guardians receive timely information about each student – no one

role group holds student information unknown to other role group

3. Involving homes in student decision making
  - Include parent representatives on every school improvement team
  - Implement a student council that meets regularly in every school
  - Prepare students, grades 3-12, to lead at least one parent/teacher conference per year
4. Enhancing home support for learning and development
  - Provide workshops for parents to learn about each curricular program; offer suggestions for activities parents can do at home with their children
  - Distribute monthly building level calendar to families that provides information about upcoming community events that can provide family experiences.
5. Recruiting families to strengthen school and community
  - Offer one night annually as family/community talent/interest night; interested volunteers receive stipend for providing mini-workshops
  - Provide information sessions (day and night opportunity) before regular elections so voters learn about the current political issues
6. Staff development to broaden awareness of and plan programs to enhance opportunities for home involvement
  - Provide minimum of one hour training annually for all staff members (FASCME, HEA and ACT 93) that challenges belief systems about how to treat others
  - One faculty meeting per year is focused on collegial dialogue with purposes of enhancing opportunities for home involvement at the building level

**V. Community Outreach for Involvement and Support (including a focus on volunteers)**

Outreach to the community is to build linkages and collaborations, develop greater involvement in schooling, and enhance support for efforts to enable learning. Outreach is made to (1) public and private community agencies,

universities, colleges, organizations, and facilities, (2) business and professional organizations and groups, and (3) volunteer service programs, organizations, and clubs. Activity includes (a) programs to recruit community involvement and support (e.g., linkages and integration with expertise and resources; local businesses to adopt-a-school and provide resources, awards, incentives, and jobs; formal partnership arrangements), (b) systems and programs specifically designed to train, and counselors, and professionals-in-training to provide direct help for staff and students – especially targeted students), (c) programs outreaching to hard to involve students and families (those who don't come to school regularly – including truants and dropouts), and (d) programs to enhance community-school connections and sense of community (e.g., orientations, open houses, performances and cultural and sports events, festivals and celebrations, workshop and fairs). Outcomes include indices of community participation, student progress, and community enhancement.

### **Community Outreach Recommended Priorities for 2006-2007**

1. Provide a welcoming orientation program for students and families new to the District and those who change schools, for staff who begin employment mid-year, and for substitutes
  - Identify other urban school districts that have successful parent and community outreach program, study what they do, and adopt/adapt to Harrisburg
2. Provide more access to District facilities, such as the libraries and gyms, after school hours and on weekends in order to establish “community schools.”
3. Implement a phone system such as “Connect Ed,” to communicate effectively and efficiently with parents.
4. Develop and implement a well-structured recruitment program for business/school partnerships and volunteers in the District and assign a staff member to oversee the program
5. Design a training program for staff that helps them understand the Harrisburg community and our students’ family culture, structure and home situations so that staff are more sensitive and better equipped to interact and assist students and their families.
6. Develop and implement a more extensive program for home visits by District staff

## **VI. Student and Family Assistance**

### **Student and Family Assistance Recommended Priorities for 2006-2007 (pending)**

Student and family assistance should be reserved for the relatively few problems that cannot be handled without adding special interventions. The emphasis is on providing special services in a personalized way to assist with a broad-range of needs. To begin with, available social, physical and mental health programs in the school community are used. As community outreach brings in other resources, they are linked to existing activity in an integrated manner. Special attention is paid to enhancing systems for triage, case and resource management, direct services to meet immediate needs, and referral for special services and special education resources and placements as appropriate. Ongoing efforts are made to expand and enhance resources. Work in this area requires (a) programs designed to support classroom focused enabling – with specific emphasis on reducing the need for teachers to seek special programs and services, (b) a stakeholder information program to clarify available assistance and how to access help, (c) systems to facilitate requests for assistance and strategies to evaluate the requests (including use of strategies designed to reduce the need for special intervention), (d) a programmatic approach for handling referrals, (3) programs providing direct service, (f) programmatic approaches for effective case and resource management, and (g) interface with community outreach to assimilate additional resources into current service delivery. As major outcomes, the intent is to ensure special assistance is provided when necessary and appropriate and that such assistance is effective.

# HARRISBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: PROGRAMS

TITLE: SUPPORTS FOR LEARNING

ADOPTED:

REVISED:

102.1 Supports for Learning	
<p>1. Purpose</p> <p>Title 22 Section 12.1-12.42</p>	<p>The Board recognizes that a comprehensive model for student achievement includes supports for learning which address barriers to learning and enhance healthy development.</p>
<p>2. Authority</p> <p>Title 22 Section 12.1-12.42</p>	<p>The Board shall adopt a model for student achievement as part of its school improvement initiative. Such a model shall illustrate the three major components: academic instruction, supports for learning and leadership. All these components are necessary, complementary and overlapping. The student, family, school and community are essential elements. The model will guide coordination and integration of new and existing programs and activities related to school, home and community.</p>
<p>3. Delegation of Responsibility</p>	<p>Implementation of the comprehensive model will be guided by the Cabinet members with specific responsibilities assumed by the Assistant Superintendent responsible for curriculum and instruction (Academic Instruction) and the Assistant Superintendent responsible for student support services (Supports for Learning).</p> <p>The Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent will guide and incorporate the renewal of student support services into the District's strategic plan. They shall also direct those responsible for professional development throughout the District to incorporate a substantial focus on the supports for learning.</p> <p>At the District and school site levels, administrators shall identify, assign and analyze resources to ensure their most effective use. This shall include appropriate school-community collaborations to effectively improve classroom instruction and student learning.</p>
<p>4. Outcomes</p>	<p>A focus on supports for learning will result in the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safe and orderly learning environment in which all students succeed</li> <li>• High expectations for student performance</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removal of barriers to learning and the promotion of social and emotional learning, good health practices and safety</li><li>• Fewer students referred for special services and special education</li><li>• Strategies to weave together District and community efforts</li><li>• Greater number of students who attend school on a regular basis</li><li>• Greater number of students who graduate from high school and find success in post-secondary education and the world of work</li></ul> |
|--|---|