
Best Practices in the Use of Resource Teams to Enhance Learning Supports

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INTRODUCTION

Case-oriented work has long dominated school psychology. As a result, many school psychologists and their student support colleagues are not yet engaged in resource-oriented teams. In fact, some may say, "What's that got to do with my job?" Others may say, "What's that got to do with helping kids?"

Pursuit of best practices for carrying out resource-oriented functions is essential to end the marginalization that continues to seriously impede the contribution of student support staff and that leads to reductions in force. Teams focused on student support resources represent changes in school infrastructure that engage support staff in the type of analyses essential if school improvement planning and decision making are to create comprehensive systems of learning supports.

It is widely conceded that student supports tend to be fragmented and narrowly focused and reach only a small proportion of those in need. Moreover, sparse budgets lead school psychologists, counselors, social workers, nurses, and other support staff into counterproductive competition with each other and with community professionals working with schools. Clearly, changes are needed. Resource-oriented teams can play a major role in altering this unacceptable status quo.

As school psychologists know, what happens for students depend first and foremost on who makes decisions about resources and who plans the details for school improvements. As they also know, the reality is that prevailing infrastructure mechanisms marginalize the influence of those most directly concerned about

addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems. So, pursuit of best practices makes it essential to rethink school and district infrastructure to correct this deficiency. We have addressed this and related systemic change matters in detail elsewhere (Adelman & Taylor, 2006a; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2005a, 2005b). The focus here is on resource-oriented mechanisms that are a permanent part of a school and district infrastructure. Such mechanisms are essential to school improvement, and they provide a vehicle for school psychologists and other student support staff to expand their focus to encompass the full continuum of interconnected systems of intervention. This is the key to moving from being seen as concerned only with providing services to a few of the many students who are not doing well to playing an essential role in ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Pioneering work across the country conceives resource-oriented mechanisms from the school outward (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2004a, 2005c). That is, first the focus is on school-level resource-oriented mechanisms. Then, based on analyses of what is needed to facilitate and enhance school-level efforts, mechanisms are conceived that enable clusters or families of schools to work together. The objectives in doing so are to increase efficiency and effectiveness and achieve the financial benefits that can be garnered from combining resources in pursuit of shared and overlapping functions. From this perspective, system-wide mechanisms are (re)designed to support the work at each school and among clusters of schools (e.g., those in feeder patterns).

A resource-oriented mechanism at a school, for multiple school sites, and system-wide can provide oversight, leadership, resource development, and ongoing support for development of a comprehensive system of learning supports. Such mechanisms provide ways to (a) arrive at decisions about resource allocation; (b) maximize systematic and integrated planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of student and learning supports; (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 approach to providing student and learning supports in ways that 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.

OVERVIEW

All schools have some activity focused on specific concerns, such as learning problems, substance abuse, violence, teen pregnancy, school dropouts, and delinquency. Looked at as a whole, an extensive range of activity oriented to students' needs and problems are found in many school districts. Some programs are provided throughout a school district, and others are carried out at or are linked to targeted schools. The interventions may be designed to benefit all students in a school, those in specified grades, and/or those identified as having special needs. The activities may be implemented in regular or special education classrooms and may be geared to an entire class, groups, or individuals, or they may be designed as pull-out programs for designated students. They encompass efforts to improve classroom and school-wide climate and a range of curricular and clinically oriented activities.

While schools can use a wide range of persons to help students, most school-owned and school-operated services are offered as part of pupil personnel services. In large districts, school psychologists, counselors, social workers, and other specialists may be organized into separate units that straddle regular, special, and compensatory education that may result in programs and services that are planned, implemented, and evaluated in a fragmented and piecemeal manner.

Service staff at schools tend to function in relative isolation of each other and other stakeholders, with a great deal of the work oriented to discrete problems and

with an over-reliance on specialized services for individuals and small groups. In some places, a student identified as at risk for grade retention, dropout, and substance abuse may be assigned to three counseling programs operating independently of each other.

Even in settings with relatively few services, such fragmentation not only is costly, it breeds counterproductive competition and works against developing cohesiveness and maximizing results. The problems inherent in all this have long been of concern to support staff and their professional organizations, as well as policy makers at state and federal levels (e.g., Fagan & Wise, 2000; Marx & Wooley, 1998).

Given the desire to deal with these matters, schools across the country that want to improve how they provide student support activity are pioneering the use of a mechanism that focuses specifically on how resources are used and enhanced (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2004a). This mechanism differs in its functions from the case-oriented teams most schools have for reviewing individual student/family problems (e.g., a student support team, an Individualized Educational Plan team). The functions of such case-oriented teams include referral, triage, and care monitoring or management. In contrast, a student or learning supports resource-oriented team at a school takes responsibility for enhancing use of all available resources associated with addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development.

Two metaphors help differentiate the two types of mechanisms and the importance of both. A *case-orientation* mechanism fits the starfish metaphor:

The day after a great storm had washed up all sorts of sea life far up onto the beach, a boy sets out to throw back as many of the still living starfish as he could. After watching him toss one after the other into the ocean, an old man approached the boy and said, "It's no use your doing that, there are too many. You're not going to make any difference." The boy looked at him in surprise, then bent over, picked up another starfish, threw it in, and then replied, "It made a difference to that one!"

This metaphor, of course, reflects all the important efforts to assist specific students.

The *resource-oriented* focus is captured by a different metaphor:

One weekend a group of school staff went fishing together down at the river. Not long after they got

there, a child came floating down the rapids calling for help. One of the group on the shore quickly dived in and pulled the child out. Minutes later another, and then another, and then many more children were coming down the river. Soon everyone was diving in and dragging children to the shore and then jumping back in to save as many as they could. In the midst of all this frenzy, one of the group was seen walking away. Her colleagues were irate. How could she leave when there were so many children to save? After long hours, to everyone's relief, the flow of children stopped, and the group could finally catch their breath. At that moment, their colleague came back. They turned on her and angrily shouted, "How could you walk off when we needed everyone here to save the children?" She replied, "It occurred to me that someone ought to go upstream and find out why so many kids were falling into the river. What I found is that the old bridge had several planks missing, and when children tried to jump over the gap, they couldn't make it and fell through into the river. So I got some folks to help fix the bridge."

Fixing and building better bridges is a good way to think about prevention, and it helps underscore the importance of taking time to improve and enhance resources, programs, and systems.

Clearly, as the emphasis on Tier 1, 2, and 3 service levels suggests, schools need to pursue case-oriented and resource-oriented functions. Since case-oriented teams are widely implemented, it seems essential to increase understanding of the importance of ensuring there also is the type of resource orientation that leads to an increased emphasis on prevention and responding as early after problem onset as feasible. Such an emphasis is critical in reducing the number of students who end up needing to be responded to as cases. It also can help school psychologists as they strive to play a greater role in school improvement planning and decision making.

Resource-oriented mechanisms have been designated by a variety of names including Resource Coordinating Team, Resource Management Team, and Learning Supports Resource Team. For purposes of this discussion, we will use Learning Supports Resource Team. We initially demonstrated the feasibility of such teams in the Los Angeles Unified School District (Lim & Adelman, 1997; Rosenblum, DiCecco, Taylor, & Adelman, 1995). Currently, the teams are being introduced in many

schools across the country (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2004a, 2005c).

Creation of resource-oriented mechanisms focused on learning supports at schools, for families of schools, and at the district level provides an often missing facet of the infrastructure (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2005b). Where this facet is missing, certain functions may be given short shrift. Examples include analyses of how existing resources are deployed and clarification of how the various human and financial resources from public and private sectors can be woven together. When too little attention is paid to such functions, it hampers efforts to (a) weave together existing school and community resources; (b) enable programs and services to function in an increasingly cohesive and cost-efficient way; and (c) develop, implement, and evaluate over time a comprehensive system of learning supports.

Available evidence suggests that, by transforming current approaches for addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development, resource-oriented mechanisms are vital in reducing marginalization and fragmentation of student and learner supports (Adelman, 1993; Adelman & Taylor, 1997a 2006a; Gardner, 2005; Iowa Department of Education, 2004; Kretzmam, 1998; Kretzmann, McKnight, & Sheehan, 1997; Lim & Adelman, 1997; Rosenblum et al., 1995; U.S. Department of Education, 1996). Moreover, when such mechanisms are created in the form of teams, they also can be vehicles for building working relationships and can help solve turf and operational problems.

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

Improving and enhancing resources, programs, and systems involve carrying out a variety of functions in a proactive way. These include providing leadership, capacity building, oversight for mapping and analyzing current resource use, establishing priorities for program development, making recommendations for resource (re)deployment and enhancement to improve programs and systems, and participating in decision making.

When resource-oriented mechanisms for learning supports are created, the intent is to maintain a focus on:

- *All students:* Using resources to address the diverse needs of the many as well as the few and doing so in ways that level the playing field and enable every student to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school

- *Building a school-site infrastructure:* Establishing and sustaining organizational and operational mechanisms that are linked into an effective and efficient infrastructure at the school site
- *Building infrastructure for a family of schools:* Connecting schools in a complex or feeder pattern to maximize use of available resources and achieve economies of scale
- *Connecting with the district central office infrastructure:* Ensuring that site-based and school cluster efforts are effectively linked to and nurtured by the central office
- *Connecting schools across districts:* Both appropriate and necessary, for example, in small rural school districts and where schools are organized into high school and elementary districts
- *Building school–community collaboratives:* Connecting school and community infrastructures and braiding school–community resources
- *Evolving a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system of learning supports:* Rethinking and deploying resource use in ways that evolve student support services into a comprehensive learning supports component that is treated as a primary and essential facet of school improvement

Team Composition

It is conceivable that one person could perform many of the basic resource-oriented functions. However, given the nature and scope of the work, it is preferable to have several stakeholders put their heads together and function as a formal Learning Supports Resource Team.

Some schools find the idea of establishing another team unappealing. In such cases, an existing team (e.g., student or teacher assistance teams, school crisis teams, healthy school teams, or school improvement teams) can perform resource-oriented functions. In adding the resource-oriented functions to another team's work, however, great care must be taken to structure the agenda so sufficient time is devoted to the additional tasks. For small schools, a large team often is not feasible, but a two-person team can still do much of the work. The point is to get started and build over time into the type of team that fits the setting. The key is not to lose sight of the functions the team needs to pursue and what needs to be accomplished.

The team meets as necessary. Frequency of meetings depends on how ambitious the group's agenda is and time availability. Initially, this may mean once a week. Later, when meetings are scheduled for every 2–3

weeks, continuity and momentum are maintained through interim tasks performed by individuals or workgroups. Because some participants may be at a school on a part-time basis, one of the problems that must be addressed is that of rescheduling personnel so that there is an overlapping time for meeting together. Of course, the reality is that not all team members will be able to attend every meeting, but a good approximation can be made at each meeting, with steps taken to keep others informed as to what was done. Well-planned and-trained teams can accomplish a great deal through informal communication and short meetings.

Where a new team is established, it might begin with only a few people. Then, as feasible, it can expand into an inclusive group of informed, able, and willing stakeholders. Although a resource-oriented team might be created solely around psychosocial programs, the intent is to focus on resources related to *all* major learning supports programs and services. Thus, the team tries to bring together representatives of all these programs and services. Because various teams at a school require the expertise of the same personnel, some people will necessarily be on more than one team. The following are the types of stakeholders who are candidates for such a team:

- Principal or assistant principal
- School psychologist
- Counselor
- School nurse
- School social worker
- Attendance and dropout counselors
- Safe and drug-free school staff
- Behavioral specialist
- Special education staff
- After school program staff
- Bilingual and Title I program coordinators
- Health educators
- Representatives of community agencies involved regularly with the school (e.g., community entities involved with physical and mental health, welfare and protective services, juvenile justice)
- Student and family representation (when appropriate and feasible)
- Others who have a particular interest and ability to help with the functions, including regular classroom teachers, noncertificated staff (e.g., front office, food service, custodian, bus driver, school resource officer).

For the team to function well, there must be a core of members who have or will acquire the ability to carry

out identified functions and make the mechanism work (others are auxiliary members). They must be committed to the team's mission. Building team commitment and competence is an ongoing task. The team must have a dedicated leader/facilitator who is able to keep the group focused on the task and productive. It also needs someone who records decisions and plans and reminds members of planned activity and products. Whenever feasible, advanced technology (management systems, electronic bulletin boards and e-mail, clearinghouses) are used to facilitate communication, networking, program planning and implementation, linking activity, and a variety of budgeting, scheduling, and other management concerns.

A team forms small workgroups as needed to address specific concerns (e.g., mapping resources, planning for capacity building, addressing problems related to case-oriented systems), develop new programs (e.g., welcoming and social support strategies for newcomers to the school), implement special initiatives (e.g., positive behavior support), and so forth. Such groups usually are facilitated by a member of the resource team who recruits a small group of other stakeholders from the school and community who are willing and able to help. The group facilitator provides regular updates to the resource team on workgroup progress and brings back feedback from the team. Ad hoc workgroups take on tasks that can be done over a relatively short time period, and the group disbands once the work is accomplished. Standing workgroups focus on defined program areas and pursue current priorities for enhancing intervention in a given arena (e.g., helping to design cohesive approaches to provide supports for various student transitions, enhancing home and school connections).

Not an Isolated Mechanism, Part of an Integrated Infrastructure

Resource-oriented mechanisms at all levels cannot be isolated entities. The intent is for them to connect to each other and be part of an integrated infrastructure. We focus here on the school level. Extrapolations can be made from there.

A Learning Supports Resources Team must be a formal unit of a school's infrastructure. It must be fully connected with the other infrastructure mechanisms at the school (e.g., those associated with instruction and management/governance). Figure 1 illustrates relationships of such a team to other major infrastructure units.

Having at least one representative from the resource team on the school's governing and planning bodies (e.g., the principal's decision-making team, school improvement planning team) ensures the type of infrastructure connections that are essential if student and learning supports are to be maintained, improved, and increasingly integrated with classroom instruction. Of course, having an administrator on the team provides the necessary link with the school's administrative decision making related to allocation of budget, space, staff development time, and other resources. Moreover, as discussed below, where clusters or families of schools are working together, representatives from each of the schools meet together periodically (Adelman & Taylor, 2002; Taylor, Nelson, & Adelman, 1999).

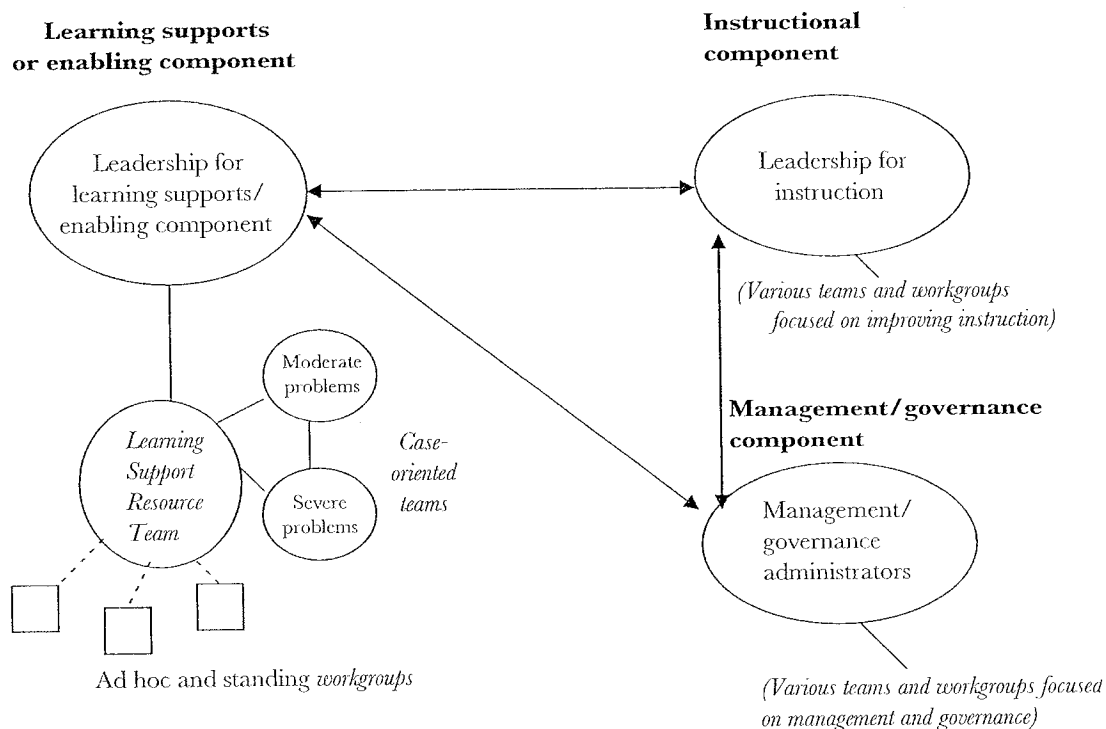
A well-designed resource-oriented team complements the work of a site's governance body by focusing on providing on-site overview, leadership, and advocacy for all activity specifically used to address barriers to learning and teaching. However, for this to be the case, the team must be properly constituted, trained, and supported.

Establishing and building the capacity of resource-oriented mechanisms, of course, are not simple tasks. As a result, it is essential to think in terms of a phase-in process (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2005a). Because establishing such a team involves significant organizational change, staff assigned to accomplish the tasks must have the skills of a systemic change agent. We designate this type of change agent as an *organization facilitator* (Adelman & Taylor, 2006a; Lim & Adelman, 1997; Rosenblum et al., 1995).

Anyone chosen to create organizational change must be assured the full administrative support and be specially trained as a change agent. The training must include developing expertise to help school sites, complexes, and districts implement and institutionalize substantively new approaches.

The work of an organization facilitator in establishing a Learning Supports Resource Team is highlighted in Appendix A. In brief, organization facilitators are catalysts and managers of change. As such, they strive to ensure that changes are true to the design for improvement and adapted to fit the local culture. Such a facilitator also must be an effective problem solver, responding quickly as problems arise and designing proactive strategies to counter anticipated barriers to change, such as negative reactions and dynamics, common factors interfering with working relationships, and system deficiencies. All this must be accomplished in ways that increase readiness and commitment to change while enhancing empowerment and a sense of community.

Figure 1. Learning supports resource team as part of an integrated infrastructure at a school site.



Note. Learning supports of enabling component leadership: Consists of an administrator and other advocates/champions with responsibility and accountability for ensuring the vision of the component is not lost. The administrator meets with and provides regular input to the Learning Supports Resource Team. *Learning Supports Resource Team:* Ensures component cohesion, integrated implementation, and ongoing development. It meets weekly to guide and monitor daily implementation and development of all programs, services, initiatives, and systems at a school that are concerned with providing learning supports and specialized assistance. *Ad hoc and standing workgroups:* Initially, these are the various teams that already exist related to various initiatives and programs (e.g., a crisis team) and for processing “cases” (e.g., a student assistance team, an Individualized Educational Plan team). Where redundancy exists, workgroups can be combined. Others are formed as needed by the Learning Supports Resource Team to address specific concerns. These groups are essential for accomplishing the many tasks associated with such a team’s functions. For more on this, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf> and <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aidk.pdf>.

Organization facilitators also can help organize basic interdisciplinary and cross training to create the trust, knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for the kind of working relationships required if the resource-oriented mechanism is to operate successfully. Because the work of resource-oriented teams involves promoting systemic changes at a school, an organization facilitator helps team members understand how to be effective agents of change as they work with a site’s stakeholders to restructure programs and infrastructure mechanisms. This includes matters such as planning, implementing, and formatively evaluating stakeholder development (coaching, with an emphasis on creating readiness both

in terms of motivation and skills; team building; providing technical assistance) and ongoing capacity building and support.

We have focused here on an organization facilitator as a change agent for one school. Such an individual, however, might rotate among a group of schools. In large school districts, a cadre of such professionals might be used to facilitate change across an entire district.

BEST PRACTICES

In keeping with the fundamental organizational principle emphasizing that structure (e.g., a resource-

oriented mechanism) follows function, we discuss best practices for a Learning Supports Resource Team in terms of its major functions. After providing an overview, we explore in greater depth the core function of mapping and analyzing resources. Then, we highlight the role such a team can play in helping establish a comprehensive learning supports component. We conclude with a brief note about the type of data needed to guide and evaluate the work of a Learning Supports Resource Team.

Functions

When we describe a Learning Support Resource Team, some school staff quickly respond that they already have one. When we explore this with them, we usually find what they have is a *case-oriented team* (e.g., a student study team, student success team, student assistance team, teacher assistance team). To further clarify the difference between resource- and case-oriented teams, we will contrast the functions of each. In doing so, the intent is to highlight the differences in agenda, and the need for mechanisms to carry out both sets of functions listed in Table 1.

As noted already, the resource-oriented functions are pursued not just to enhance coordination but to make progress toward the overall aim of developing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system of learning supports (i.e., a learning supports component). In pursuing its functions, the team provides what often is a missing link for managing and enhancing programs and systems in ways that integrate, strengthen, or stimulate new and improved interventions.

For example, such a mechanism can be used to (a) map and analyze activities and resources to improve their use in preventing and ameliorating problems; (b) build effective systems for referral, case management, and quality assurance; (c) enhance procedures for management of programs and information and for communication among school staff and with the home; and (d) explore ways to redeploy and enhance resources, such as clarifying which activities are nonproductive, suggesting better uses for resources, and establishing priorities for developing new interventions, as well as reaching out to connect with additional resources in the school district and community.

About Mapping and Analyzing Resources

Schools have a variety of programs and services to address barriers to learning and teaching, and these consume a significant amount of resources. The interventions range from Title I programs, through extra help for low-performing students, to accommodations for special education students. From what school administrators tell us, when the various sources of support are totaled at schools with substantial amounts of federal and special project funding, learning supports account for about 30% of the resources. However, because school leaders are mainly focused on enhancing instruction in direct ways, essential efforts to provide a well-designed learning supports system continue to be marginalized, and resources are deployed in a fragmented and often wasteful and ineffective manner. One result of marginalizing learning supports is that school improvement efforts continue to pay little attention to

Table 1. Differences Between Case-Oriented Team Functions and Resource-Oriented Team Functions

Case-Oriented Team Functions	Resource-Oriented Team Functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triage • Referral • Case monitoring/management • Case progress review • Case reassessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggregating data across students and from teachers to analyze school needs • Mapping resources in school and community • Analyzing resources • Identifying the most pressing program development needs at the school • Coordinating and integrating school resources and connecting with community resources • Establishing priorities for strengthening programs and developing new ones • Planning and facilitating ways to strengthen and develop new programs and systems • Recommending how resources should be deployed and redeployed • Identifying where additional resources exist and developing strategies for accessing them • Social marketing

the need for and potential impact of rethinking how these resources can be used to enable student learning by doing more to address barriers (Adelman & Taylor, 2006b; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2004b; McKnight, 1995; Taylor & Adelman, 2004).

Whatever the actual percentage of resources used for learning supports, the fact is that in too many locales these resources are expended in ad hoc, piecemeal ways (Marx & Wooley, 1998). A Learning Supports Resource Team can reverse this trend. The key to doing so involves mapping, analyzing, and managing resources with a clear emphasis on what needs to be done to help all students have an equitable opportunity to succeed at school (see Appendix B).

To determine high-frequency needs of a school, the team uses aggregated data about student learning and behavior. For example, a team at an elementary school may find that 30% of the third graders have problems reading or a high school team might find that 40% of the students are not graduating. Awareness of such needs raises the question of what resources already are being expended to address the problems (Academy for Educational Development, 2002; Bruner, Bell, Brindis, Chang, & Scarbrough, 1993; Dedrick, Mitchell, Miyagawa, & Roberts, 1997; Dewar, 1997; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

Following initial mapping, the focus turns to analyzing how resources are currently used and considering how they might be redeployed to improve efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching. The goal is to develop specific recommendations for improving the work at each school through enhancing use of the school's resources and enhancing resources through collaboration among the family of schools and with neighborhood entities (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1990). The tasks are to clarify what parts are in place, what is still missing, and how to braid and enhance resources to improve matters.

What Parts Are in Place

Discussion focuses on how effective and efficient current efforts are. Special attention is given to identifying redundant efforts, inefficient use of resources, and ineffective activities. With respect to what is seen as ineffective, analyses differentiate between activities that might be effective if they were better supported and more effectively implemented and those that are not worth continuing because they have not made a significant impact or because they are not well conceived. This facilitates generating recommendations

about what should be discontinued so that resources can be redeployed to enhance current efforts and fill gaps.

What Is Still Missing

Every school has a wish list of programs and services it needs. Analyses of mapping products provide an appreciation of major gaps and help put proposed programs, services, and initiatives into perspective of the vision for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach to addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Thus, rather than making ad hoc choices from a long list of wishes, recommendations can be based on systematic analyses of what current efforts require enhancement and what gaps need to be filled.

How to Braid and Enhance Resources to Improve Matters

Analyses focus first on how resources are being used at a school. (Which are being used with the greatest impact and which are not? Is there redundancy? Ineffective activity? Programs where costs far outweigh benefits? Inefficiencies owing to lack of coordination? Are there promising programs that are under supported? Are there serious gaps in addressing high priority needs that have been identified by the school's governance body?) Based on the analyses, immediate priorities are set and recommendations are formulated with respect to how best to deploy and redeploy resources to have the greatest impact.

Essentially, the work involves conducting a gap analysis. That is, existing resources are laid out in the context of the adopted vision for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach to addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. This provides a basis for a discussion of matters such as: (a) what is working and whether certain activities should no longer be pursued (because they are not effective or not as high a priority as some others that are needed); (b) what are current priorities with respect to important areas of need and what resources might be redeployed and braided to meet the priorities, including enhancing existing promising practices and filling gaps; (c) what are strategies and time lines for improving the system of learning supports.

Having accomplished all this, the focus turns to how a family of schools (neighboring schools, especially those in a feeder pattern) might braid resources to address

common concerns. At this juncture, the family of schools explores how community resources might be woven into the effort (Dedrick, Mitchell, & Roberts, 1994; Fisher & Kling, 1993; Kingsley, Coulton, Barndt, Sawicki, & Tatian, 1997). Schools in the same geographic (catchment) area have a number of shared concerns, and feeder schools often are interacting with students from the same family. Furthermore, some programs and personnel are (or can be) shared by several neighboring schools thus minimizing redundancy and reducing costs (see Appendix C).

Moving to the next level, recommendations are made for how to better use resources that the district and community agencies offer at central locations or to a few select schools. And, finally, the work turns to whatever extramural grants are available to schools, districts, and community entities to help turn the vision of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system of learning supports into reality.

Tools to Aid in Mapping and Analyzing Resources

Mapping and analyzing resources is a major systemic intervention. There are many tools that can aid the process. Such tools are highlighted in the resource aids described at the end of this chapter.

One set of tools specifically designed to enhance school improvement planning for addressing barriers to learning and teaching are the self-study surveys developed by the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. These surveys focus on what currently is being done, whether it is being done well, and what else is desired. The set includes an overview Survey of System Status, which covers the leadership and coordination systems needed in developing an effective learning support component and surveys for each of the following six arenas for enhancing learning supports: (a) classroom-based efforts to enhance learning, engagement, and reengagement of those with mild-moderate learning, behavior, and emotional problems; (b) support for transitions; (c) prescribed student and family assistance; (d) crisis assistance and prevention; (e) home involvement in schooling; and (f) outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including recruitment of volunteers. The set also includes a special survey focusing on school–community partnerships.

Self-study surveys can be used by any mechanism concerned with mapping and analyzing resources. For example, members of a Learning Supports Resource

Team initially might work separately in responding to survey items, but the major benefit comes from the shared understanding that arises during group discussions. The discussion and subsequent analyses also can provide a form of quality review.

As another tool in effectively mapping and analyzing resources and their deployment, it is helpful to have a broad framework of the scope and content of learning supports. An example of such a framework is illustrated in Figure 2. This matrix integrates a conceptualization of primary areas of focus for intervention and traditional levels (e.g., promotion and prevention, early intervention, and treatment; Tier 1, 2, and 3 service levels) but conceives of them as integrated systems of intervention.

Role of the Team in Helping to Establish a Comprehensive Learning Supports Component

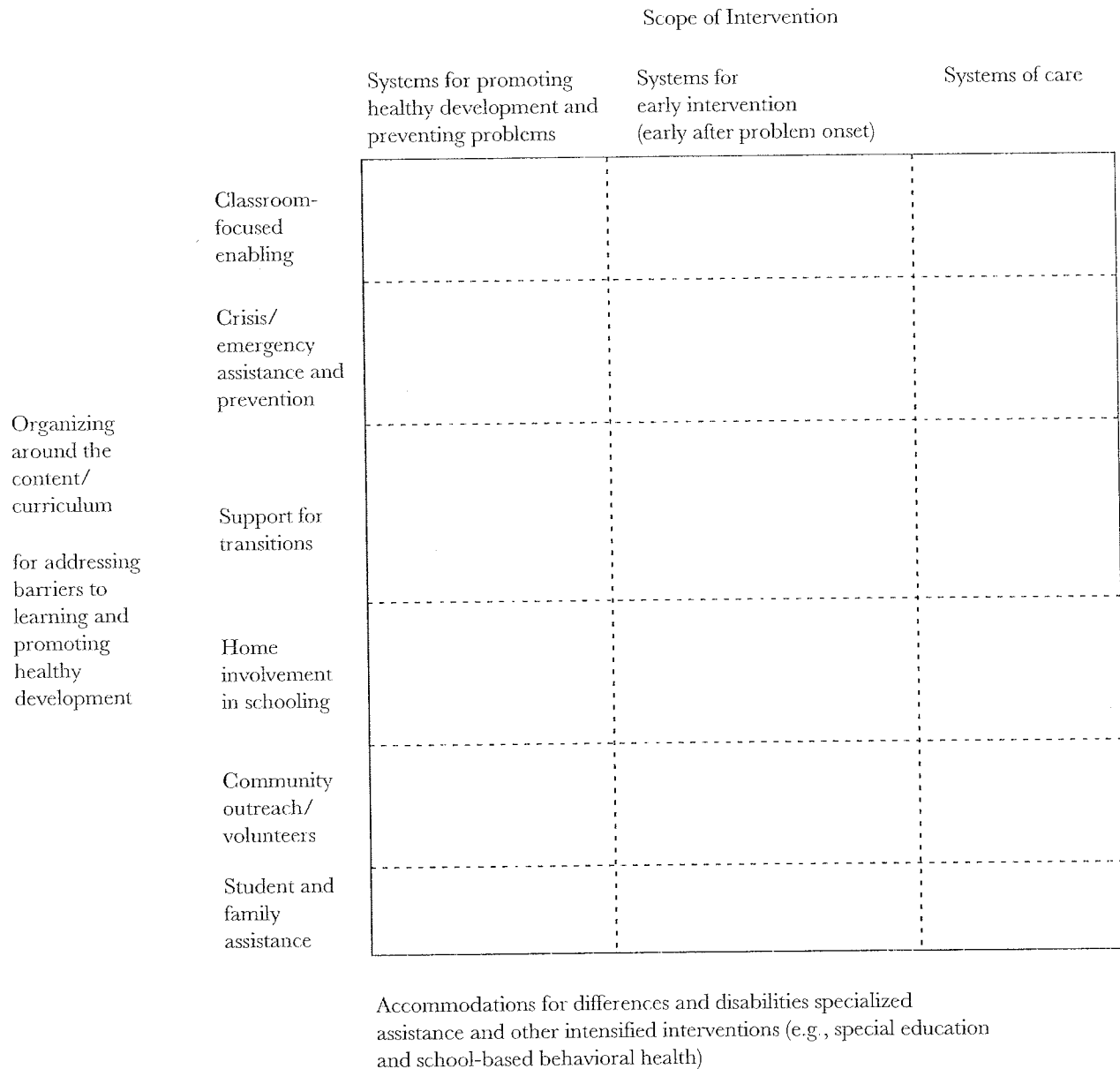
Again, we stress that the ultimate aim of pursuing resource-oriented functions is not only to end the fragmentation of student and learning supports but also to end the marginalization of the whole enterprise (Adelman & Taylor, 1997a, 2006a). Toward these ends, Learning Supports Resource Teams can play a key role by rethinking and deploying resource use in ways that transform student support services into a comprehensive *enabling or learning supports component* that is treated as a primary and essential facet of school improvement (see Appendix D).

Major school improvement, of course, requires creating readiness, building consensus, and influencing action by key stakeholders for such a major systemic change (Adelman & Taylor, 1997b; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2005a). The information arising from mapping and analyses of resources provides an important database that can be communicated to key stakeholders to help them understand the benefits of change (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996; Mizrahi & Morrison, 1993). Also important to making effective change is the inclusion of the evidence base for moving in new directions (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2004a, 2004b).

Data to Guide the Work and Evaluate Progress

All resource-oriented teams need data to enhance the quality of their efforts and to monitor their outcomes in

Figure 2. A unifying umbrella framework to guide rethinking of learning supports.



Note. Specific school-wide and classroom-based activities related to positive behavior support, prereferral interventions, and the eight components of the Center for Prevention and Disease Control’s Coordinated School Health Program are embedded into the six content areas.

ways that promote appropriate accountability. While new teams often do not have the resources for extensive data gathering, sound planning and implementation require that formative evaluation data be amassed and analyzed. In the process, data can be collected that provide a base for a subsequent evaluation of impact. All

decisions about which data are needed should reflect clarity about how the data will be used.

The data for formative evaluation and team impact may already have been gathered from existing documents and records (e.g., base rate needs assessments, resource directories, budget information, census data,

and reports from school, police, hospital, and other organizations). Where additional data are needed, they may be gathered using procedures such as checklists, surveys, semistructured interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. Of course, all data indicating that the team is having a positive impact should be widely shared as soon as it is available.

SUMMARY

Resource-oriented mechanisms are a key facet of school improvement efforts to transform and restructure daily operations for student and learning support. In some schools as much as 30% of the budget may be going to problem prevention and correction. Every school is expending resources to enable learning; few have a mechanism to ensure appropriate use of existing resources. Such a mechanism contributes to cost efficacy of learning supports activity by ensuring all such activity is planned, implemented, and evaluated in a coordinated and increasingly integrated manner. Creating resource-oriented mechanisms also is essential for braiding together school and community resources and encouraging intervention activity to function in an increasingly cohesive way. Furthermore, when such mechanisms are created in the form of a team, they also are a vehicle for building working relationships and can play a role in solving turf and operational problems.

One of the primary and essential tasks a learning supports resource-oriented mechanism undertakes is that of taking stock of school and community programs and services that are in place to support students, families, and staff. A comprehensive gap assessment is generated as resources are mapped and compared with data on the unmet needs of and desired outcomes for students, their families, and school staff. Analyses of what is available, effective, and needed provide a sound basis for formulating priorities and developing strategies to link with additional resources at other schools, district sites, and in the community and enhance resource use. Such analyses also can guide efforts to improve cost effectiveness.

In a similar fashion, a learning supports resource-oriented mechanism for a complex or family of schools (e.g., a high school and its feeder schools) and one at the district level provide mechanisms for analyses on a larger scale. This can lead to strategies for cross-school, community-wide, and district-wide cooperation and integration to enhance intervention effectiveness and garner economies of scale.

Minimally, a resource-oriented team can reduce fragmentation and enhance cost efficacy. On another

level, this mechanism can provide leadership in guiding school stakeholders in evolving the school's vision, priorities, and practices for learning supports and working to enhance resources in an integrative way. That is, with appropriate leadership from student support staff, such a mechanism can play a key role in ending the marginalization of student and learning supports by transforming fragmented activity into a system of learning supports. In doing so, the focus needs to be on *all* school resources (including compensatory and special education, support services, adult education, recreation and enrichment programs, and facility use) and *all* community resources (including public and private agencies, families, businesses, services, programs, facilities, institutions of higher education, professionals in training, and volunteers including professional making pro-bono contributions).

The long-range aim is to weave all resources together into the fabric of every school and evolve a comprehensive component that effectively addresses barriers to development, learning, and teaching. As leaders and policy makers recognize the essential nature of such a component, it will be easier to braid resources to address barriers. In turn, this will enhance efforts to foster healthy development. When resources are combined properly, the end product can be cohesive and potent school–community partnerships. These partnerships are essential to fulfilling society's aims of closing the achievement gap and leaving fewer children behind.

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Emphasizes that to function well every system must fully understand and manage resources. Mapping is a first and essential step toward these ends and, done properly, it is a major intervention in efforts to enhance systemic effectiveness and change for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Center for Mental Health in Schools. (2005). *About infrastructure mechanisms for a comprehensive learning support component*. Los Angeles: Author. Retrieved August 26, 2006, from http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/infrastructure/infra_mechanisms.pdf

Explores one aspect of necessary infrastructure changes, namely, resource-oriented mechanisms that allow a learning support component to function and work effectively, efficiently, and with full integration with the other major components of school improvement.

Center for Mental Health in Schools. (2005). *Another initiative? Where does it fit? A unifying framework and an integrated infrastructure for schools to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development*. Los Angeles: Author. Retrieved September 11, 2006, from <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf>

Highlights the fragmentation and illustrates the value of a unifying framework and integrated infrastructure for the many initiatives, projects, programs, and services schools pursue in addressing barriers to learning. Specifically highlighted are how initiatives can be embedded into a comprehensive framework and how existing infrastructure mechanisms can be integrated. Several tools are included.

Center for Mental Health in Schools. (2005). *Developing resource-oriented mechanisms to enhance learning supports: A continuing education packet*. Los Angeles: Author. Retrieved August 22, 2006, from http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/contedu/developing_resource_oriented-mechanisms.pdf

This set of training modules is designed as an aid for training leaders and staff about the importance of and how to establish effective resource-oriented mechanisms to advance development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated learning supports (or enabling) component at every school.

Center for Mental Health in Schools. (2005). *Resource mapping and management to address barriers to learning: An intervention for systemic change*. Los Angeles: Author. Retrieved on August 29, 2006, <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/resourcemapping/resourcemappingandmanagement.pdf>

Provides processes and tools for schools to use in taking stock of its resources related to addressing barriers to learning and rethinking how the resources can be used to greatest effect.

WEB RESOURCES

Resource-Oriented Mechanisms

Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>

Has a great variety of relevant resources, including:

- *Resource oriented teams: Key infrastructure mechanisms for enhancing education supports*. http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/Report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf
- *Developing resource-oriented mechanisms to enhance learning supports*. http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/contedu/developing_resource_oriented-mechanisms.pdf
- *Creating the infrastructure for and enabling (learning support) component to address barriers to student learning*. http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/infrastructure_tt/infraindex.htm or http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/infrastructure_tt/infrastructurefull.pdf
- *Working collaboratively: From school-based teams to school-community-higher education connections*. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/worktogether/worktogether.pdf>
- *School-community partnerships: A guide*. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/guides/schoolcomm.pdf>
- *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/pdffdocs/enabling/standards.pdf>

New Directions for Student Support and Systemic Change

- *New directions for student support: Some fundamentals*: Center for Mental Health in Schools. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/newdirections/newdirections.pdf>
- *Framing new directions for school counselors, psychologists, and social workers*: Center for Mental Health in Schools. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/Report/framingnewdir.pdf>
- *Organization facilitators: A change agent for systemic school and community changes*: Center for Mental Health in Schools. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/Report/orgfacrep.pdf>
- *Education systemic change tools*: National School Boards Association. <http://www.nsba.org/sbot/toolkit/edscts.html>
- *Sustaining school and community efforts to enhance outcomes for children and youth: A guidebook and tool kit*: Center for Mental Health in Schools. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/sustaining.pdf>
- *Links to systemic perspectives*: The Network for Creative Change. <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/CommunitySupport/NCC/WWWPAGE.html>

Mapping Resources

- *Addressing barriers to learning: A set of surveys to map what a school has and what it needs*: Center for Mental Health in Schools. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/Surveys/Set1.pdf>
- *Resource mapping and management to address barriers to learning: An intervention for systemic change*: Center for Mental Health in Schools. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdffdocs/resourcemapping/resourcemappingandmanagement.pdf>
- *Mapping your school's resources*: Michigan Department of Education. http://www.michigan.gov/documents/4_5_107261_7.pdf

- *Community tool box*: University of Kansas Work Group on Health Promotion and Community Development, Lawrence, KS, and AHEC/Community Partners, Amherst, MA. <http://ctb.ku.edu/>
- *Building communities from the inside out*: Asset-Based Community Development Institute. <http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/community/buildingblurb.html>
- *Mapping community assets workbook*: Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. http://www.nwrel.org/ruraled/publications/com_mapping.pdf
- *Mapping community resources*: Community Technology Center's Network. <http://www.ctcnet.org/index.htm>
- *Resource mapping*: Learning Work Connection. <http://www.ohiolearningwork.org/resourcemapping.asp>

APPENDIX A. EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITY FOR AN ORGANIZATION FACILITATOR

Infrastructure Tasks

- Works with school governing bodies to further clarify and negotiate agreements about:
 - Policy changes
 - Participating personnel (including administrators authorized to take the lead for the systemic changes)
 - Time, space, and budget commitments
- Helps leaders identify and prepare members for a group to steer the process.
- Helps leaders identify members for the resource-oriented team.

Stakeholder Development

- Provides general orientations for governing and planning bodies.
- Provides basic capacity building for resource-oriented team.
- Ongoing coaching of team members (about purposes, processes).

Example: At a team's first meeting, the organization facilitator offers to provide a brief orientation presentation (including handouts) and helps teams establish processes for daily interaction and periodic meetings. During the next few meetings, coaching might help with mapping and analyzing resources.

- Works with leaders to ensure presentations and written information about changes are provided to the entire staff and other stakeholders.

Communication (Visibility), Coordination, and Integration

- Determines if information on new directions (including leadership and team functions and membership) and about resources has been written and circulated; if not, the facilitator determines why and helps address systemic breakdowns; if necessary, effective processes are modeled.
- Determines if leaders and team members are effectively handling priority tasks; if not, the facilitator determines why and helps address systemic breakdowns; if necessary, effective processes are modeled.
- Determines if the following have been accomplished (and if not, takes appropriate steps):
 - Mapping of current activity and resources related to learning supports
 - Analyses of activity and resources to determine (a) how well they are meeting needs and how well coordinated/integrated they are (with special emphasis on maximizing cost effectiveness and minimizing redundancy); (b) what learning supports need to be improved (or eliminated); and (c) what is missing, its level of priority, and how and when to develop it
 - Information has been written and circulated about all resources and plans for change
- Determines the adequacy of efforts made to enhance communication to and among stakeholders and, if more is needed, facilitates improvements.
- Determines if systems are in place to identify problems related to functioning of the infrastructure and communication systems. If there are problems, determines why and helps address any systemic breakdowns.
- Checks on visibility of reforms and if the efforts are not visible, determines why and helps rectify.

Formative Evaluation and Rapid Problem Solving

- Works with leaders and team members to develop procedures for formative evaluation and processes that ensure rapid problem solving.
- Checks regularly to be certain that learning supports are enabling student learning and that there is rapid problem solving; if the data are not promising, helps school leaders to make appropriate modifications.

Ongoing Support

- Offers ongoing coaching on an on-call basis.

Example: Informs team members about ideas developed by others or provides expertise related to a specific topic they plan to discuss.

- At appropriate points in time, asks for part of a meeting to see how things are going and (if necessary) to explore ways to improve the process.
- At appropriate times, asks whether participants have dealt with longer range planning, and if they have not, determines what help they need.
- Helps participants identify sources for continuing development/education.

APPENDIX B. ABOUT RESOURCE MAPPING AND MANAGEMENT

Why mapping resources is so important: To function well, every system has to fully understand and manage its resources. Mapping is a first step toward enhancing essential understanding and, done properly, is a major intervention in the process of moving forward with enhancing systemic effectiveness.

Why mapping both school and community resources is so important: Schools and communities share (a) goals and problems with respect to children, youth, and families; (b) the need to develop cost-effective systems, programs, and services to meet the goals and address the problems; (c) accountability pressures related to improving outcomes; and (d) the opportunity to improve effectiveness by coordinating and eventually integrating resources to develop a full continuum of systemic interventions.

What are resources: Programs, services, real estate, equipment, money, social capital, leadership, infrastructure mechanisms, and so on.

What do we mean by mapping and who does it: A representative group of informed stakeholder is asked to undertake the process of identifying what currently is available to achieve goals and address problems and what else is needed to achieve goals and address problems.

What does this process lead to: (a) Analyses to clarify gaps and recommend priorities for filling gaps related to programs and services and deploying, redeploying, and enhancing resources; (b) identifying needs for making infrastructure and systemic improvements and changes; (c) clarifying opportunities for achieving important

functions by forming and enhancing collaborative arrangements; and (d) social marketing.

How to do resource mapping: First, do it in stages (start simple and build over time). Clarify people/agencies who carry out relevant roles/functions. Next, clarify specific programs, activities, and services (including information on how many students/families can be accommodated). Then, identify the dollars and other related resources (e.g., facilities, equipment) that are being expended from various sources. Finally, collate the various policies that are relevant to the endeavor. At each stage establish a computer file and in the later stages create spreadsheet formats.

Use benchmarks to guide progress related to resource mapping.

APPENDIX C. DEVELOPING AND CONNECTING MECHANISMS AT SCHOOLS SITES, AMONG FAMILIES OF SCHOOLS, AND DISTRICT-WIDE AND COMMUNITY-WIDE

A multisite team can provide a mechanism to help ensure cohesive and equitable deployment of resources and also can enhance the pooling of resources to reduce costs. Such a mechanism 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 that have youngsters attending more than one level of schooling in the same cluster. It is neither cost effective nor good intervention for each school to contact a family separately in instances where several children from a family are in need of special attention. With respect to linking with community resources, multisite teams are especially attractive to community agencies that often do not have the time or personnel to make independent arrangements with every school.

In general, a group of schools can benefit from a multisite resource mechanism designed to provide leadership, facilitate communication and connection, and ensure quality improvement across sites. For example, a multisite body, or what we call a Learning Supports Resource Council, might consist of a high school and its feeder middle and elementary schools. It brings together one or two representatives from each school's resource team (see figure below).

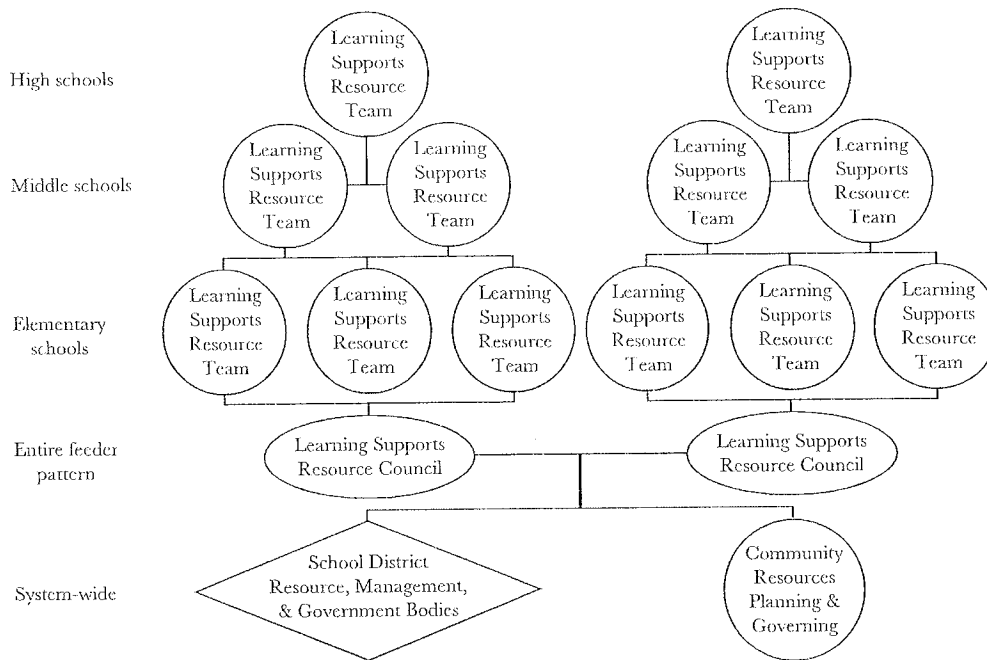
The council meets about once a month to help (a) coordinate and integrate programs serving multiple schools, (b) identify and meet common needs with

respect to guidelines and staff development, and (c) create linkages and collaborations among schools and with community agencies. In this last regard, it 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 comprehensive continuum of programs and services. Natural starting points for councils are the sharing of needs assessments, resource maps, analyses,

and recommendations for reform and restructuring. Specific areas of initial focus would be on local, high-priority concerns, such as addressing violence and developing prevention programs and safe school and neighborhood plans.

Representatives from Learning Supports Resource Councils would be invaluable members of planning groups (e.g., Service Planning Area Councils, Local Management Boards). They bring information about specific schools, clusters of schools, and local neighborhoods and do so in ways that reflect the importance of school-community partnerships.



APPENDIX D. STEPS IN ESTABLISHING AN ENABLING OR LEARNING SUPPORT COMPONENT AT A SCHOOL

At any site, key stakeholders and their leadership must understand and commit to restructuring. Commitment must be reflected in policy statements and creation of an infrastructure that ensures the necessary leadership and resources.

Orientation and Creating Readiness

- Build interest and consensus for developing the enabling or learning support component.
- Introduce basic ideas to relevant groups of stakeholders.
- Establish a policy framework; that is, the leadership group at a school should make a policy commitment that adopts a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach to enabling learning by addressing barriers to learning as a primary and essential component of school improvement.
- Identify a site leader (equivalent to the leader for the instructional component) to ensure policy commitments are carried out.

Start Up and Phase In: Building an Infrastructure and Putting It to Work

- Establish and provide leadership training for a steering group and other change agents to guide component development.

- Formulate specific start-up and phase-in plans.
- Build learning supports resource-oriented mechanisms into the infrastructure at all levels and train those who staff it.
- Organize learning support activity into a delineated set of intervention arenas and develop standing workgroups for each area to begin mapping and analyzing resources and formulating initial recommendations for enhancing intervention systems.
- Refine school infrastructure so that learning supports (enabling) component is fully integrated with the instructional and management components.
- Develop ad hoc workgroups to enhance component visibility, communication, sharing, and problem solving.
- Attempt to fill program/service gaps and pursue economies of scale through outreach designed to establish formal collaborative linkages with other schools in the feeder pattern and with district-wide and community resources.
- Establish a system for quality improvement and evaluation of impact.

Maintenance and Evolution: Toward Refinement, Increased Outcome Efficacy, and Creative Renewal

- Plan for maintenance.
- Develop strategies for maintaining momentum and progress.
- Generate creative renewal.