Turning around, transforming, and continuously improving schools:

Policy proposals are still based on a two- rather than a three-component blueprint

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Clearly, low performing, and especially failing schools, are a high priority concern for policy makers. And it is evident that fundamental systemic changes are necessary. There is, however, inadequate research and no consensus about a policy and practice blueprint and roadmap to guide such changes.

Given all the uncertainties associated with turning around, transforming, and continuously improving schools, it is essential to keep analyzing deficiencies in proposed blueprints and roadmaps. Such analyses are especially important with respect to improving low performing schools.

We begin our analysis with a discussion of the lenses through which systemic problems are viewed by policy makers in the USA and use the school turnaround models the Obama administration has adopted to illustrate the dilemma confronting efforts to enable equity of opportunity. Then, we broaden the analysis to include current priorities for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as outlined in the US Department of Education's *A Blueprint for Reform*. Our findings highlight the ongoing marginalization of practices for directly addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. The findings also raise the question of whether this marginalization characterizes reform efforts in other countries.

About Low Performing Schools

Analysis of data from 2006B07 on 98,905 schools throughout the USA designated 10,676 schools in need of improvement and 2,302 schools as needing improvement restructuring (US Department of Education, 2008). Currently, the bottom 5 per cent of low performing schools are viewed as failing schools and in need of turnaround strategies (Calkins, Guenther, and Belfiore, 2007).

Measures and criteria used to operationally define low-performing schools vary. Under the *No Child Left Behind Act* these are schools that are classified as in need of improvement or corrective action or that do not meet the standards established and monitored by the state board or other authority external to the

school (Herman, Dawson, Dee, Greene, Maynard, Redding, and Darwin, 2008).

While the correlation between neighborhood poverty and low performing schools is widely acknowledged, the specific factors that cause low performance have been more a matter of speculation than rigorous research. The same is true of the various characteristics attributed to the relatively few settings described as High Performing, High Poverty schools; and as with low performing schools, the measures and criteria used to operationally define these settings vary.

Any school succeeds or fails as a result of the challenges it faces and its capability for meeting those challenges. Some of this capability is contained within the school, and some comes from the school district and community. Most schools serving high poverty students have not been able to build and muster the level of school and community capacity required for success. That is, they have not established ways to ensure the population attending the school comes each day motivationally ready and able to learn what is on the teaching agenda. Schools that consistently succeed are able to effectively weave together school and community resources and use them in a highly functional manner that matches the motivation and capabilities of their students. Schools that consistently fail often find demands overwhelm their sparse resources, and over time such schools usually become increasingly dysfunctional.

The Blueprint and Roadmap for Turning Schools Around in the USA

While many concerns have been raised about policies and practices for turning around, transforming, and continuously improving schools, those raising such concerns do not want to maintain what clearly is an unsatisfactory status quo. And a shared aim of most critical analyses is to enhance efforts to ensure equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at every school.

The current focus of many critics in the USA is on improving the federal blueprint and roadmap. Given the shortcomings of available research, criticisms and disagreements are mostly guided by differences in beliefs and assumptions and are shaped by the lenses through which the systemic problems are viewed.

As evidenced by the prevailing discussion in Washington, DC, the lenses through which policy makers view systemic problems are beliefs and assumptions about *how best to*

- *turn around low performing schools*
- *ensure **standards** and **assessments** related to instruction are globally competitive*
- *develop and enhance data systems for accountability, personalizing instruction, and monitor progress to graduation*
- *enhance **human capital** (eg., remove, recruit, and develop leaders and teachers).*

These clearly are the core topics found in a variety of school turnaround documents that are influencing policy makers. (See, for example, Aladjem, Birman, Harr-Robins, and Parrish, 2010; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton, 2010; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2009; Center on Innovation and Improvement, 2007, 2010; Herman, Dawson, Dee, Greene, Maynard, and Darwin, 2008; Kowal, Hassel, and Hassel, 2009; Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, 2007; Mazzeo and Berman, 2003; Murphy and Meyers, 2007; Redding, 2010; Steiner, 2009; Steiner, Hassel, and Hassel, 2008; US Department of Education, 2010a; WestEd, 2010).

School Turnaround Models Illustrate the Dilemma Confronting Policy Makers

'The truth is that we don't know exactly how to turn around schools. The truth is also that excuses and inaction don't help students who are trapped in these schools. It's a real dilemma, not a fake one. But at the department, our feeling is that we have some models of success on which to build and we need to step up to the plate and start working on it.' Joanne Weiss, US Department of Education

A fundamental problem with the Obama administration's blueprint and roadmap for school reform is seen in the policy for turning around low performing schools. In the 2010 document *A Blueprint for Reform* and the grant application processes for *Race to the Top* and *School Improvement,* the US Department of Education lays out four models for turning around the lowest performing schools. The latest wording (US Department of Education, 2010b) describes the models as follows:

■ TRANSFORMATION MODEL: Replace the principal, strengthen staffing, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance and flexibility.

■ TURNAROUND MODEL: Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the school staff, implement a research-based instructional program, and implement new governance structure.

■ RESTART MODEL: Convert or close and re-open the school under the management of an effective charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.

■ SCHOOL CLOSURE MODEL: Close the school and enroll students who attended it in other higher-performing schools in the district.

Examples of Concerns about the Models

Many analyses have pointed out that the turnaround models are based on ideas derived primarily from the business sector, especially the literature on Total Quality Management (TQM) and Business Process Reengineering (BPR). Unfortunately, available research suggests that both these approaches have been largely ineffective in about two-thirds of the cases studied (Hess and Gift, 2009; Staw and Epstein, 2000).

As Loveless (2009) stresses in the Brown Center Report on how well American students are doing:

> People who say we know how to make failing schools into successful ones but merely lack the will to do so are selling snake oil. In fact, successful turnaround stories are marked by idiosyncratic circumstances. The science of turnarounds is weak and devoid of practical, effective strategies for educators to employ. Examples of large-scale, system-wide turnarounds are nonexistent. A lot of work needs to be done before the odds of turning around failing schools begin to tip in a favorable direction.

Teachers' and principals' unions and guilds across the USA also are vocal critics. Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, responds that the federal turnaround approach places 100 percent of the responsibility on teachers and gives them zero percent of the authority. Dennis Van Roekel, president of the National Education Association, emphasizes: We were expecting school turn-around efforts to be research-based and fully collaborative. Instead, we see too much top-down scapegoating of teachers and not enough collaboration. It's just not a solution to say,

'Let's get rid of half the staff.' If there's a high-crime neighborhood, you don't fire the police officers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010).

And, in an open letter to the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Gail Connelly, Executive Director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) stresses: ANAESP supports the Secretary's initiative to identify the lowest performing schools, establish rigorous interventions, provide them sufficient resources over multiple years to implement those interventions, and hold them accountable for improving student performance. However, we fundamentally disagree with the approach to enact this wide-ranging and transformational reform initiative with the simplistic and reactionary step of replacing principals as the first step in turning around low-performing schools. NAESP strongly supports reform models that provide the essential resources existing principals of low-performing schools must have to succeed. These resources include the necessary time, talent and tools (Letter dated September 25, 2009 cited in Wikipedia).

Moving to mobilize critical reaction, the National Association of Secondary School Principals has encouraged its members to write to Congress. The message is: Research on turnaround schools and sustained middle level and high school reform does not support the models put forth by ED. Low-performing schools can improve with a sustained effort to build the capacity of school leaders and their teams. ... The Breaking Ranks framework [promoted by NASSP] has been repeatedly validated by ... a set of diverse, high-poverty schools that ... have seen growth over time in ... graduation rates, state assessment scores, and literacy and numeracy achievement. And each school that implements the Breaking Ranks framework reminds us all that turning around a school is three-to-five years of time-consuming, resource-intensive, hard work (http://www.principals.org/plac).

On a pragmatic level, the concern is that many communities simply don't have the pool of talent to recruit new and better principals and teachers. As noted by Dennis Van Roekel: One thing is certain: Firing the entire faculty of a school that is on the path to improvement is no recipe for turning around a struggling high school. And relying on a magical pool of excellent teachers' to spring forth and replace them is naive at best and desperately misguided (NEA, 2010).

Concerns aside, states are moving forward with implementing the four turnaround models. At the same time, it is obvious that adopting one of these is no more than an awkward beginning in enabling equity of opportunity.

School Turnaround Policy and *Enabling* Equity of Opportunity: Tinkering Toward a Three-Component Approach

It is not enough to say that all children can learn or that no child will be left behind; the work involves achieving the vision of an American education system that enables all children to succeed in school, work, and life. (From the 2002 mission statement of CCSSO B the Council for Chief State School Officers B italics added)

In *A Blueprint for Reform*, the US Department of Education (2010b) indicates that enabling equity of opportunity requires moving toward comparability in resources between high- and low-poverty schools, rigorous and fair accountability for all levels, and meeting the needs of diverse learners ... by providing appropriate instruction and access to a challenging curriculum along with additional supports and attention where needed.

The sparse attention to additional supports and attention where needed reflects another fundamental problem with the current blueprint and roadmap for turning around, transforming, and continuously improving schools. It is a long-standing policy trend to view student and learning supports in terms of *auxiliary services* and usually as an afterthought. For our policy analysis of the problem with this trend, see *School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?* (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2005). And in reviewing the first analyses of the *Race to the Top* applications, we find that this continues to be a fundamental systemic deficit in school improvement policy and practice (CCSSO and Learning Point Associates, 2010).

Because student and learning supports are given short shrift in federal, state, and local policy, efforts are *marginalized* when it comes to identifying and correcting fundamental systemic deficits in how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and intervene to re-engage disconnected students. The marginalization results in the ongoing relative neglect of this essential facet of any blueprint for enabling all students to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Current Policy: Tinkering Rather than Transforming

In the Obama administration's blueprint for reform, the commitment to equity and opportunity for all students is stated as the third of five priorities. The closest the document come to delineating supports to meet this priority are the sections on

1 Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners and Other Diverse Learners (i.e., students eligible for compensatory and special education)

2 Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students.

In the former, the stated intent is to strengthen the commitment to all students and improve each program to ensure that funds are used more effectively. The problem here is the continuing emphasis on categorical problems and funding formulas and too little emphasis on the overlapping nature of the many factors that interfere with learning and teaching.

With respect to the focus on *Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students*, the blueprint indicates a new approach focused on

– Providing a cradle through college and career continuum in high-poverty communities that provides effective schools, comprehensive services, and family supports.

– Supporting programs that redesign and expand the school schedule, provide high-quality after school programs, and provide comprehensive supports to students.

– Using data to improve students' safety, health, and well-being, and increasing the capacity of states, districts, and schools to create safe, healthy, and drug-free environments.

The road to all this is described as providing

competitive grants to support states, school districts, and their partners in providing learning environments that ensure that students are successful, safe, and healthy. To better measure school climate and identify local needs, grantees will be required to develop and implement a state- or district-wide school climate needs assessment to evaluate school engagement, school safety (addressing drug, alcohol, and violence issues), and school environment, and publicly report this

information. This assessment must include surveys of student, school staff, and family experiences with respect to individual schools, and additional data such as suspensions and disciplinary actions. States will use this data to identify local needs and provide competitive subgrants to school districts and their partners to address the needs of students, schools, and communities.

Grantees will use funds under the Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students program to carry out strategies designed to improve school safety and to promote students' physical and mental health and well-being, nutrition education, healthy eating, and physical fitness. Grantees may support activities to prevent and reduce substance use, school violence (including teen dating violence), harassment, and bullying, as well as to strengthen family and community engagement in order to ensure a healthy and supportive school environment.

The limitations of this new approach and the continuing neglect of extensive systemic deficits related to interventions targeting student diversity, disability, and differences are seen readily when viewed through two lenses: (1) how schools try to directly *address barriers* to learning and teaching and (2) how they try to *re-engage students* who have become disconnected from classroom instruction. These two lenses bring into focus the considerable resources currently expended on student and learning supports (e.g., underwritten by general funds, compensatory and special education, special intra and extramural projects, community contributions). Together, these lenses allow for the type of analyses that illuminates fundamental flaws in how these resources are used. And, they help expand understanding of the full range of systemic changes needed to prevent and reduce the problems cited in *A Blueprint for Reform*, reduce student (and teacher)

Exhibit 1. **Current Two Component Framework Shaping School Reform Policy**

Primary Focus

Direct Facilitation of Learning
(Instructional Component)

Governance and Resource Management
(Management Component)

Marginalized Focus

Addressing Barriers to Learning & Teaching*
(not treated as a primary component so
initiatives, programs, services are *marginalized*)

Examples of Initiatives, Programs, and Services
>positive behavioral supports
>programs for safe and drug free schools
>response to trauma
>full service community schools and Family
  Resource Centers
>Safe Schools/Healthy Students
>*School Based Health Center* movement
>*Coordinated School Health Program*
>bi-lingual, cultural, and other diversity programs
>compensatory education programs
>special education programs
>mandates stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act
>And many more

*While not treated as a primary and essential component, schools generally offer some amount of school-owned student "support services" – some of which links with community-owned resources. Many types of student support personnel staff the interventions (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, etc.). Schools have been reaching out to community agencies to add a few more services. All of this, however, remains marginalized and fragmented in policy and practice.

dropout rates, narrow the achievement gap, counter the plateau effect related to student population achievement scores, and in general, alleviate inequities.

Prevailing Policy is Shaped by a Two-Component Framework for School Improvement

Because the two lenses noted above are not prominently used, policy and plans for turning around, transforming, and continuously improving schools are primarily shaped by a two component framework which marginalizes efforts related to providing additional supports and attention where needed. This is graphically illustrated in Exhibit 1.

Obviously, the problem is not with the two components, per se. Effective instruction is, of course, fundamental to a school's mission; no one wants to send children to a school where teachers lack high standards, expectations, and competence; and sound governance and management of resources are essential. As Exhibit 1 highlights, the problem is that the many interventions designed to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students are introduced through ad hoc and piecemeal policy and operate in a fragmented manner. The process amounts to tinkering with little focus on systemic transformation.

The reality is that many overlapping factors can interfere with learning and teaching. Teachers in low performing schools point to how few students appear motivationally ready and able to learn what the daily lesson plan prescribes. Teachers in the upper grades report that a significant percentage of their students have become actively disengaged and alienated from classroom learning. And, acting out behavior, especially bullying and disrespect for others, is rampant. (So is passivity, but this attracts less attention.) One result of all this is seen in the increasing number of students misdiagnosed as having learning disabilities (LD) and attention deficit-hyperactivity disorders (ADHD). Another result is too many dropouts and pushouts.

Teachers need and want considerable help in addressing barriers to student and school success. Unfortunately, the help they currently receive is poorly conceived and designed in ways that meet the needs of relatively few students. This inadequate response to their needs is the product of two-component thinking. Such a framework ignores ways to transform student

and learning supports by moving toward a *comprehensive system* that enables all students to learn and all teachers to teach effectively. While the lowest performing schools probably are most in need of developing such a system, it is evident that all high poverty, low performing schools and most other schools are expending significant resources on addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students with too little payoff and accountability.

Ensuring Equity of Opportunity: What's still Missing in Policy and Practice?

As Judy Jeffrey, then chief state school officer for Iowa, stresses in introducing Iowa's design for a comprehensive system of supports for development and learning (Iowa Department of Education, 2004).

> Through our collective efforts, we must meet the learning needs of all students. Not every student comes to school motivationally ready and able to learn. Some experience barriers that interfere with their ability to profit from classroom instruction. Supports are needed to remove, or at least to alleviate, the effects of these barriers. Each student is entitled to receive the supports needed to ensure that he or she has an equal opportunity to learn and to succeed in school. This [design] provides guidance for a new direction for student support that brings together the efforts of schools, families, and communities.

> If every student in every school and community in Iowa is to achieve at high levels, we must rethink how student supports are organized and delivered to address barriers to learning. This will require that schools and school districts, in collaboration with their community partners, develop a comprehensive, cohesive approach to delivery of learning supports that is an integral part of their school improvement efforts.

Our previous analyses of school improvement policies, planning, and practices have documented the systemic deficits in dealing with factors leading to and maintaining students' problems, especially in schools where large proportions of students are not doing well (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2005). The picture that emerges is one of ad hoc and fragmented policies and practices. The tangential solution seen in federal policy (eg., the *Race to the Top* and *School Improvement* grant applications) continues to be to

call for improving coordination and coherence and flexibility in use of resources. This amounts to tinkering with systemic deficiencies rather than recognizing the need to develop a comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.

Comprehensiveness ' More than Coordination

Because the Obama administration's blueprint for reform's new approach to successful, safe, and healthy students does propose providing *comprehensive supports to students*, it is relevant here to briefly discuss the notion of a comprehensive system. As noted, the widely recognized fragmentation of interventions designed to support students often leads to efforts to enhance coordination. Improving communication, coordination, cohesion, and flexibility in use of resources are important attributes of a comprehensive system. However, these stop short of establishing the type of expanded policy and practice that is needed as a basis for integrating and fully developing student and learning supports.

Too often, what is being identified as *comprehensive* is not comprehensive enough, and generally the approach described is not about *developing a system* of supports but a proposal to enhance coordination of fragmented efforts. Many times the emphasis mainly is on health and social services, usually with the notion of *connecting* more community services to schools. In some instances, the focus expands to include a variety of piecemeal programs for safe and drug free schools, family assistance, after-school and summer programs, and so forth. All these programs and services are relevant. But, most proposals to improve supports still fail to escape old ways of thinking about what schools need both in terms of content and process for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Comprehensive means more than coordination. The need is for *system building* within and across a continuum of intervention. This encompasses integrated *systems* for

a promoting healthy development and preventing problems,

b responding as early after problem onset as is feasible, and

c providing for those whose serious, pervasive, and chronic problems require more intensive assistance and accommodation.

Comprehensive approaches to student and learning supports involve much more than enhancing availability and access to health and social services or limiting the focus to any other piecemeal and ad hoc initiatives for addressing barriers to learning, development, 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 schools, the *content* (or curriculum) for addressing a full range of interfering factors can be coalesced into six classroom and school-wide arenas. These focus on:

1 *enhancing regular classroom strategies to enable learning* (e.g, improving instruction for students who have become disengaged from learning at school and for those with mild-moderate learning and behavior problems)

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

3 *increasing home and school connections*

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

5 *increasing community involvement and support* (outreaching to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers)

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

Moving to a Three Component Framework for School Improvement

As illustrated in Exhibit 1 and in the related discussion, analyses of current policy indicate school improvement initiatives are dominated by a two-component framework. The main thrust is on improving instruction and how schools manage resources. While there are a variety of student support programs and services, they are marginalized in policy and practice, and they are pursued in piecemeal and fragmented ways. Throughout many years of school reform, little or no attention has been paid to rethinking these learning supports. As we stressed above, this state of affairs works against ensuring *all* students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Exhibit 2 illustrates the notion that policy for improving schools needs to shift from a two- to a three-component framework. The third component becomes the unifying concept and umbrella under which all resources currently expended for student and learning supports are woven together. As with the other two components, such an enabling or learning supports component must be treated in policy and practice as primary and essential in order to combat the marginalization and fragmentation of the work. Furthermore, to be effective it must be fully integrated with the other two components. Properly conceived, the component provides a blueprint and roadmap for transforming the many pieces into a comprehensive and cohesive system at all levels.

An Enabling Component: A Transformational Concept
The move to a three-component framework is meant to be a paradigm shift. As indicated, the shift is from a *marginalized and fragmented* set of student support

services to development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive *system*. The intent of the system is to ensure that schools are well-positioned to enable students to get around barriers to learning and re-engage them in classroom instruction (see Exhibit 3). The emphasis on re-engagement recognizes that efforts to address interfering factors, provide positive behavior support, and prevent disengagement and dropouts are unlikely to be effective over time if they are not designed in ways that ensure students re-engage in classroom instruction (Adelman and Taylor, 2006a, 2006b, 2008a).

In operationalizing an enabling or learning supports component, the emphasis is on

> *a continuum* of interconnected systems of interventions (see Exhibit 4) and

> a multifaceted set of *content arenas* that are cohesively integrated into classrooms and school-wide interventions (see six arenas listed above and in Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 2. A Three Component Framework for Improving Schools

Direct Facilitation of Learning
(*Instructional Component*)

Addressing Barriers to Learning & Teaching
(*Enabling or Learning Supports Component –*
an umbrella for ending marginalization by
unifying the many fragmented efforts and evolving
a comprehensive approach)
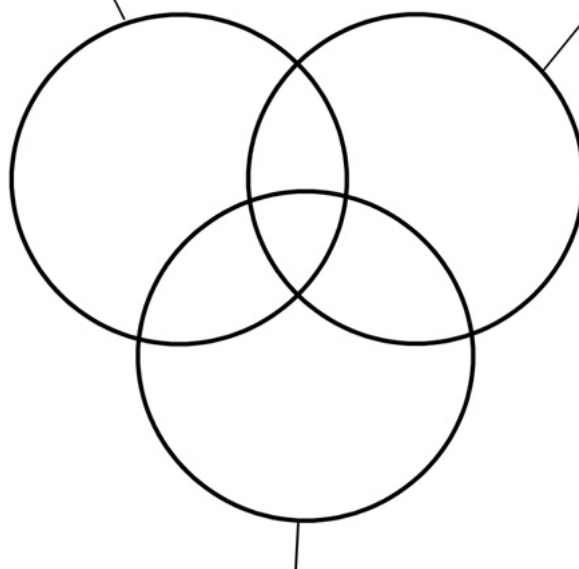
Governance and Resource Management
(*Management Component*)

Exhibit 3. An Enabling or Learning Supports Component to Address Barriers and Re-engage Students in Classroom Instruction*

Range of Learners
(categorized in terms of their response to academic instruction at any given point in time)

I = Motivationally ready & able

Not very motivated/ lacking prerequisite knowledge

II = & skills/ different learning rates & styles/ minor vulnerabilities

III = Avoidant/ very deficient in current capabilities/ has a disability/ major health problems
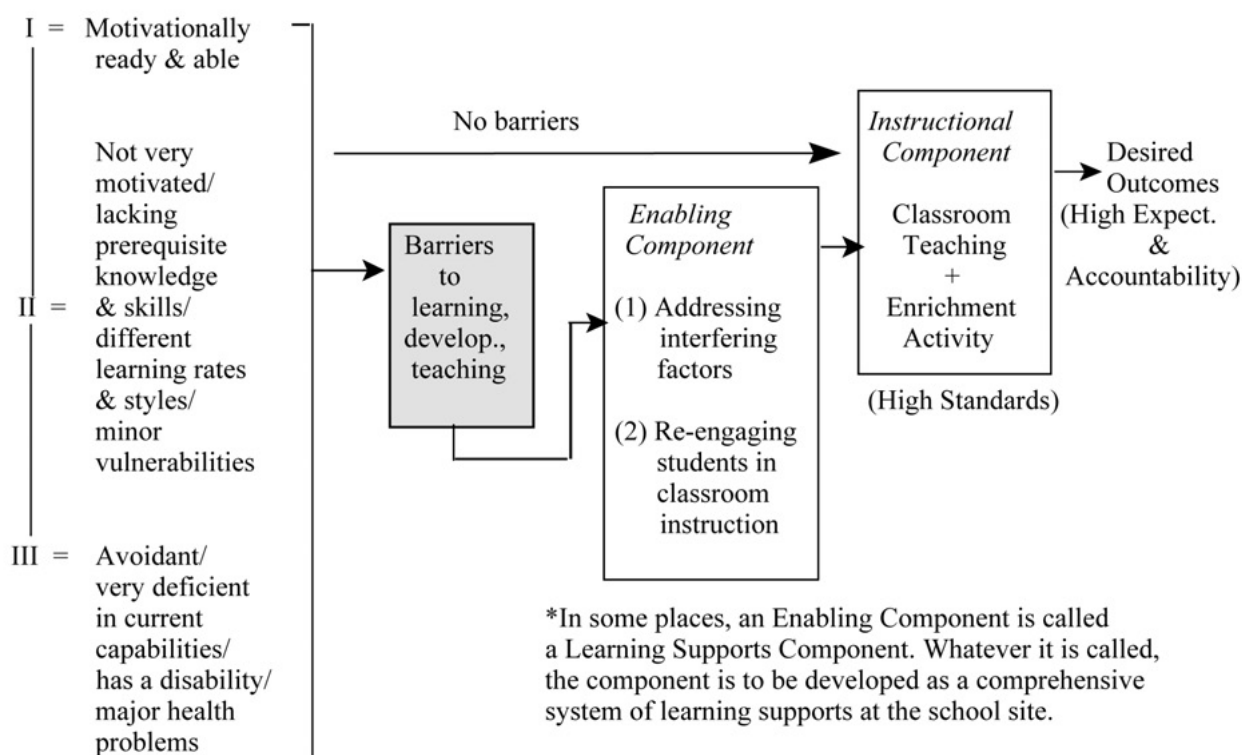
No barriers →

Barriers to learning, develop., teaching

Enabling Component

(1) Addressing interfering factors

(2) Re-engaging students in classroom instruction

Instructional Component

Classroom Teaching
+
Enrichment Activity

(High Standards)

Desired Outcomes (High Expect. & Accountability)

*In some places, an Enabling Component is called a Learning Supports Component. Whatever it is called, the component is to be developed as a comprehensive system of learning supports at the school site.

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*Examples of Risk-Producing Conditions that Can be Barriers to Learning

E n v i r o n m e n t a l   C o n d i t i o n s**

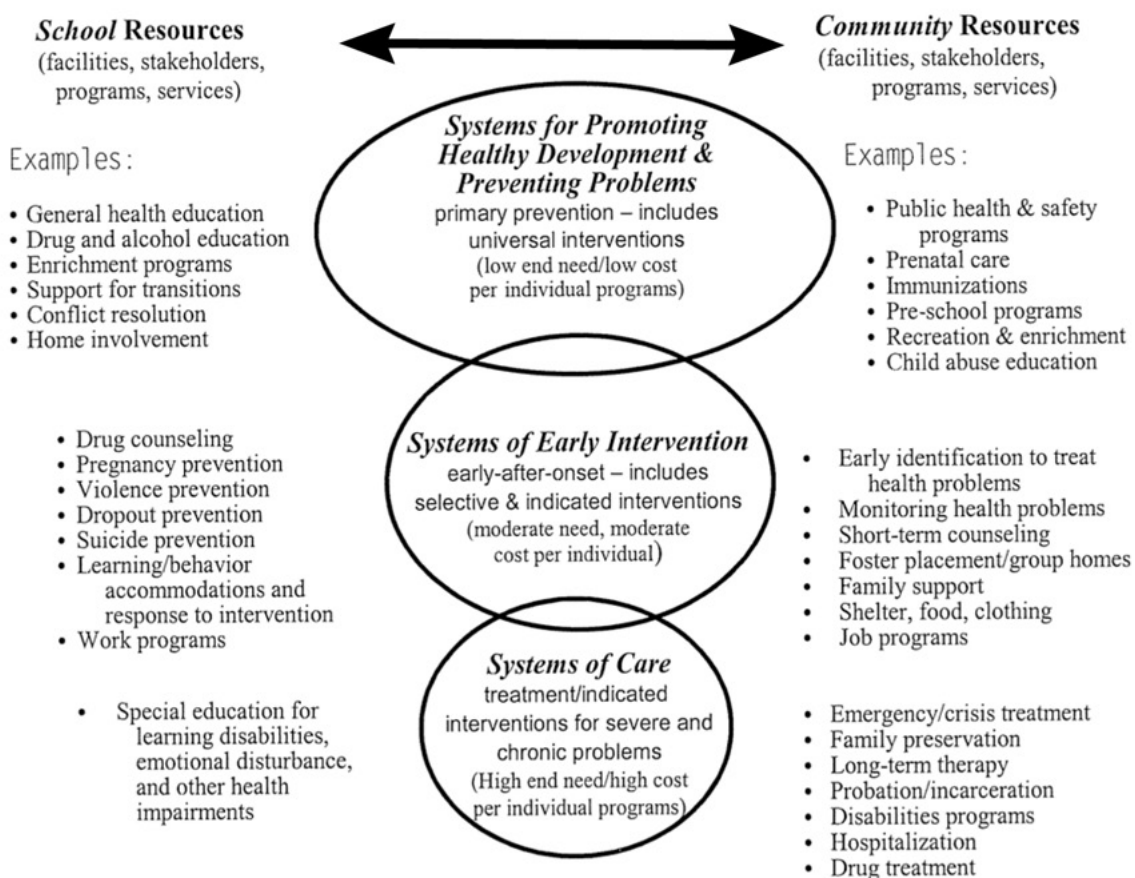| *Neighborhood*	*Family*	*School and Peers*	*Individual*
>extreme economic deprivation	>chronic poverty	>poor quality school	>medical problems
>community disorganization, including high levels of mobility	>conflict/disruptions/violence	>negative encounters with teachers	>low birth weight/ neurodevelopmental delay
>violence, drugs, etc.	>substance abuse	>negative encounters with peers &/or inappropriate peer models	>psychophysiological problems
>minority and/or immigrant status	>models problem behavior		>difficult temperament & adjustment problems
	>abusive caretaking		>inadequate nutrition
	>inadequate provision for quality child care		

Person Factors

**A reciprocal determinist view of behavior recognizes the interplay of environment and person variables.

Developing the component involves weaving together what schools already are doing and enhancing the effort by inviting in home and community resources to help fill high priority systemic gaps. The matrix illustrated in Exhibit 5 coalesces the continuum with the content to provide a planning tool that can guide school improvement by indicating where current and proposed activity fits and what's missing (Adelman and Taylor, 2006a, 2006b, 2008b; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2008).

Various states and localities in the USA are moving in the direction of a three component approach for school improvement. In doing so, they are adopting

Exhibit 4. Interconnected *Systems* to Provide a *Continuum* of School-Community Interventions.

School Resources
(facilities, stakeholders, programs, services)

Examples:

- General health education
- Drug and alcohol education
- Enrichment programs
- Support for transitions
- Conflict resolution
- Home involvement

- Drug counseling
- Pregnancy prevention
- Violence prevention
- Dropout prevention
- Suicide prevention
- Learning/behavior accommodations and response to intervention
- Work programs

- Special education for learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, and other health impairments

Systems for Promoting Healthy Development & Preventing Problems
primary prevention – includes universal interventions
(low end need/low cost per individual programs)

Systems of Early Intervention
early-after-onset – includes selective & indicated interventions
(moderate need, moderate cost per individual)

Systems of Care
treatment/indicated interventions for severe and chronic problems
(High end need/high cost per individual programs)

Community Resources
(facilities, stakeholders, programs, services)

Examples:

- Public health & safety programs
- Prenatal care
- Immunizations
- Pre-school programs
- Recreation & enrichment
- Child abuse education

- Early identification to treat health problems
- Monitoring health problems
- Short-term counseling
- Foster placement/group homes
- Family support
- Shelter, food, clothing
- Job programs

- Emergency/crisis treatment
- Family preservation
- Long-term therapy
- Probation/incarceration
- Disabilities programs
- Hospitalization
- Drug treatment

Systemic collaboration* is essential to establish interprogram connections on a daily basis and over time to ensure seamless intervention within each system and among *systems* of *prevention, systems* of *early intervention,* and *systems of care.*

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*Such collaboration involves horizontal and vertical restructuring of programs and services
(a) within jurisdictions, school districts, and community agencies (e.g., among departments, divisions, units, schools, clusters of schools)
(b) between jurisdictions, school and community agencies, public and private sectors; among schools; among community agencies

Exhibit 5. **Matrix for reviewing scope and content of a component to address barriers to learning.***

Scope of Intervention

	Systems for Promoting Healthy Development & Preventing Problems	Systems for Early Intervention** (Early after problem onset)	Systems of Care***
Classroom-Focused Enabling			
Crisis/ Emergency Assistance & Prevention			
Support for transitions			
Home Involvement in Schooling			
Community Outreach/ Volunteers			
Student and Family Assistance			

Organizing around the **Content/ "curriculum"** for addressing barriers to learning & promoting healthy development

**Accommodations for diversity (e.g., differences & disabilities)

***Specialized assistance & other intensified interventions (e.g., Special Education & School-Based Behavioral Health)

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*General initiatives and specific school-wide and classroom-based programs and services can be embedded into the matrix. Think about those related to positive behavioral supports, programs for safe and drug free schools, full service community schools and Family Resource Centers, special project initiatives such as the *School Based Health Center* movement, the *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* projects, and the *Coordinated School Health Program*, efforts to address bi-lingual, cultural, and other diversity concerns, compensatory and special education programs, and the mandates stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act.

different labels for their enabling component. For example, Iowa refers to theirs as a System of Supports for Learning and Development. On the next page see an excerpt from Louisiana's state initiative for a Comprehensive Learning Supports System. For a discussion of other pioneering initiatives and lessons learned to date, see *Where's it Happening?* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/wheresithappening.htm).

In general, we find that many are referring to their third component as *learning supports*. And increasingly, learning supports are being defined as 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.

At this point, it is relevant to stress that the three component framework does nothing to detract from the fact that a strong academic program is the foundation from which all other school-based interventions must flow. Rather, an enabling or learning supports component provides an *essential* systemic way to address factors that interfere with students benefiting from improvements in academic instruction.

Concluding Comments

As the Carnegie Task Force on Education has stressed:

> *School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students.*
>
> *But when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.*

In this time of need and change, it is essential that policy makers move to a *three-component framework* for turning around, transforming, and continuously improving schools. The third component will provide a unifying concept and an umbrella under which districts and schools can weave together all interventions specifically intended to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.

Only by unifying student and learning supports will it be feasible to develop a *comprehensive system* to directly address many of the complex factors interfering with schools accomplishing their mission. And only by developing such a system will it be feasible to facilitate the *emergence* of a school

environment that fosters successful, safe, and healthy students and staff. (It is important to remember that *school climate is an emergent quality* that stems from how schools provide and coalesce on a daily basis the components dedicated to instruction, learning supports, and management/governance.)

Pioneering work to enhance student and learning supports heralds movement toward a comprehensive system for addressing factors interfering with learning and teaching. Thus, whether or not the impending reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the USA incorporates a three-component blueprint, we anticipate more and more movement in this direction at state, regional, district, and school levels. The call for ensuring equity and opportunity for all students demands no less.

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