



Excerpt From

A Center Report

Resource-Oriented Teams: Key Infrastructure Mechanisms For Enhancing Education Supports

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Preface

In the late 1980s, we began pilot testing a new infrastructure mechanism designed to ensure that schools paid more systematic attention to how they used resources for addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development. Because we operationalized the mechanism as a team and focused it first on resource coordination, we dubbed it a Resource Coordinating Team. Although the term doesn't fully capture, the aims and functions of the mechanism, the term is being used in many places. In this report, we stress the fact that what we mean to focus on is resource-oriented mechanisms that are a permanent part of the infrastructure at all levels. For such mechanisms to become part of the infrastructure, school reformers must understand their importance and ensure they are included as schools and districts restructure.

And, from a decentralized perspective, it is a good idea to conceive the process of restructuring from the school outward. 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 groups or "families" of schools to work together where this increases efficiency and effectiveness and achieves economies of scale. Then, system-wide mechanisms can be (re)designed to support what each school and family of schools are trying to develop.

A resource-oriented mechanism at a school, multiple school sites, and system-wide are required for oversight, leadership, resource development, and ongoing support. Such mechanisms provide ways to (a) arrive at decisions about resource allocation, (b) maximize systematic and integrated planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of education support (enabling) activity, (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 component to 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.

This report pulls together our work on resource-oriented mechanisms. For more systematic changes related to schools and their interface with communities, search the Center's resources through the internet – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> or request that a resource list be sent to you.

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Resource-Oriented Teams:

Key Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Education Supports

Policy makers are calling for higher standards and greater accountability for instruction, improved curricula, better teaching, increased discipline, reduced school violence, an end to social promotion, and more. At the same time, it is evident that current strategies to accomplish all this are inadequate to the task. This is likely to remain the case as long as so little attention is paid to reforming and restructuring the ways schools address many well-known factors interfering with the performance and learning of so many young people.

The notion of barriers to learning encompasses external and internal factors. It is clear that too many youngsters are growing up and going to school in situations that not only fail to promote healthy development, but are antithetical to the process. Some also bring with them intrinsic conditions that make learning and performing difficult. As a result, youngsters at every grade level come to school unready to meet the setting's demands effectively.

Pioneer initiatives around the country are demonstrating the need to rethink how schools and communities can meet the challenge of addressing persistent barriers to student learning (see Appendix A). As a whole, their work underscores a reality that too few school reformers have acted upon. Namely:

If our society truly means to provide the opportunity for all students to succeed at school, fundamental changes are needed so that schools and communities can effectively address barriers to development and learning.

Addressing barriers is not at odds with the "paradigm shift" that emphasizes strengths, resilience, assets, and protective factors. Efforts to enhance positive development and improve instruction clearly can improve readiness to learn. However, it is frequently the case that preventing problems also requires direct action to remove or at least minimize the impact of barriers, such as hostile environments and intrinsic problems. Without effective, direct interventions, such barriers can continue to get in the way of development and learning.

What are Schools Doing Now?

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, one finds in many school districts an extensive range of activity oriented to students' needs and problems. Some programs are provided throughout a school district, others are carried out at or 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 ecological, curricular, and clinically oriented activities.

While schools can use a wide-range of persons to help students, most school-owned and operated services are offered as part of pupil personnel services. Federal and state mandates tend to determine how many pupil services professionals are employed, and states regulate compliance with mandates. Governance of daily practice usually is centralized at the school district level. In large districts, counselors, psychologists, social workers, and other specialists may be organized into separate units. Such units straddle regular, special, and compensatory education. Analyses of the situation find that the result is 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 overreliance on specialized services for individuals and small groups. In some schools, 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. Such fragmentation not only is costly, it works against developing cohesiveness and maximizing results.

Similar concerns about fragmented community health and social services has led to increasing interest in school-community collaborations (e.g., school-linked services). A reasonable inference from available data is that such collaborations can be successful and cost effective over the long-run. By placing staff at schools, community agencies make access easier for students and families – especially those who usually are underserved and hard to reach. Such efforts not only provide services, they seem to encourage schools to open their doors in ways that enhance recreational, enrichment, and remedial opportunities and greater family involvement. At the same time, the emphasis on primarily co-locating community services at school sites is producing another form of fragmentation.

Toward Ending Fragmentation

Policymakers have come to appreciate the relationship between limited intervention efficacy and the widespread tendency for complementary programs to operate in isolation. Limited efficacy does seem inevitable as long as interventions are carried out in a piecemeal and often competitive fashion and with little follow through. From this perspective, reformers have directed initiatives toward reducing service fragmentation and increasing access.

The call for "integrated services" clearly is motivated by a desire to reduce redundancy, waste, and ineffectiveness resulting from fragmentation (Adler & Gardner, 1994). Special attention is given to the many piecemeal, categorically funded approaches, such as those created to reduce learning and behavior problems, substance abuse, violence, school dropouts, delinquency, and teen pregnancy.

New directions are emerging that reflect fundamental shifts in thinking about current education support programs and services. Three major themes have emerged so far: (1) the move *from* fragmentation *to* cohesive intervention, (2) the move *from* narrowly focused, problem specific, and specialist-oriented services *to* comprehensive general programmatic approaches, and (3) the move toward research-based interventions, with higher standards and ongoing accountability emphasized.

To ensure development of essential programs for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, greater attention must be given to developing policy, leadership, and infrastructure and to building capacity (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 1999a; 1999b). The focus in this report is on one facet of the necessary infrastructure – *resource-oriented mechanisms*.

Resource-Oriented Mechanisms

Resource-oriented organizational mechanisms focus specifically on ensuring the appropriate use of existing resources and enhancing efforts to address barriers to student learning. Such mechanisms can reduce marginalization and fragmentation and enhance cost-efficacy of learner support activity by ensuring all such activity is planned, implemented, and evaluated in a coordinated and increasingly integrated manner.

Creation of resource-oriented mechanisms is essential for starting to weave together existing school and community resources and encouraging services and programs to function in an increasingly cohesive way. When such mechanisms are created in the form of

"teams," they also are vehicles for building working relationships and can play a role in solving turf and operational problems, developing plans to ensure availability of a coordinated set of efforts, and generally improving the attention paid to developing a comprehensive, integrated approach for addressing barriers to student learning.

One of the primary and essential tasks a resource-oriented mechanism undertakes is that of enumerating school and community programs and services that are in place to support students, families, and staff. A comprehensive "gap" assessment is generated as resource mapping is compared with surveys of 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 strategies to link with additional resources at other schools, district sites, and in the community and enhance use of existing resources. Such analyses also can guide efforts to improve cost-effectiveness. In a similar fashion, a resource-oriented team for a complex or family of schools (e.g., a high school and its feeders) and at the district level provides mechanisms for analyses that can lead to strategies for cross-school, community-wide, and district-wide cooperation and integration to enhance intervention effectiveness and garner economies of scale. For those concerned with school reform, establishment of such mechanisms are a key facet of efforts designed to restructure school support services.

This report first explores such mechanisms at the school level, then in terms of a feeder pattern, and finally at the district level.

Focusing on Resources at the School Level

Creation of a school-site resource-oriented mechanism provides a good starting place in efforts to enhance coordination and integration of services and programs and for reaching out to District and community resources to enhance learner supports. And, over time, such a mechanism can be evolved to do much more – eventually transforming current approaches to addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development.

As discussed here, the school level resource-oriented mechanism is dubbed a *Resource Coordinating Team*. We initially piloted such teams in the Los Angeles Unified School District and now they are being introduced in many schools across the country (see Appendix B). Properly constituted, such a team provides on-site leadership for efforts to address barriers comprehensively and ensures the maintenance and improvement of a multifaceted and integrated approach.

When we mention a Resource Coordinating Team, some school staff quickly respond:

We already have one!

When we explore this with them, we usually find what they have is a *case-oriented team* -- that is, a team that focuses on individual students who are having problems. (Such a team may be called a student study team, student success team, student assistance team, teacher assistance team, and so forth.)

To help clarify the difference, we have developed the following exhibit:

<i>A Case-Oriented Team</i>	<i>A Resource-Oriented Team</i>
Focuses on specific <i>individuals</i> and discrete <i>services</i> to address barriers to learning	Focuses on <i>all</i> students and the <i>resources, programs, and systems</i> to address barriers to learning & promote healthy development
Sometimes called:	Possibly called:
C Child Study Team C Student Study Team C Student Success Team C Student Assistance Team C Teacher Assistance Team C IEP Team	C Resource Coordinating Team C Resource Coordinating Council C School Support Team
EXAMPLES OF FUNCTIONS:	EXAMPLES OF FUNCTIONS:
>triage >referral >case monitoring/management >case progress review >case reassessment	>mapping resources >analyzing resources >enhancing resources >program and system planning/develop. >redeploying resources >coordinating and integrating resources >social "marketing"

In contrasting the two teams, the intent is to highlight the difference in functions and the need for both teams (not to suggest one set of functions should take precedence over the other).

Another way to help differentiate the two types of mechanisms is by use of two familiar metaphors. A *case-orientation* fits the *starfish* metaphor.

The day after a great storm had washed up all sorts of sea life far up onto the beach, a youngster set 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 him 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, tossed it back, and then replied:

It made a difference to that one!

And, of course, that is the metaphor that reflects all the important clinical efforts undertaken by staff alone and when they meet together to work on specific cases.

The *resource-oriented* focus is captured by what can be called the *bridge* metaphor.

In a small town, 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, then another, and then many more children were coming down the river and drowning. Soon every one in the group was diving in and dragging children to the shore, resuscitating them, and then jumping back in to save as many as they could. But, there were too many. For every one they saved, several others floated by and drowned. All of a sudden, in the midst of all this frenzy, one of the group stopped jumping in and was seen walking away. Her colleagues were amazed and irate. How could she leave when there were so many children to save? About an hour later, to everyone's relief, the flow of drowning children stopped, and the group could finally catch their breathe. 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 wooden bridge had several planks missing, and when some children tried to jump over the gap, they couldn't make it and fell through into the river. So I got someone to fix the bridge.

Fixing and building better bridges is a good way to think about prevention work, and it is the way to understand the importance of taking time to focus on improving and enhancing resources, programs, and systems.

As indicated, a resource oriented team's focus is not on specific individuals, but on how resources are used. In doing so, it provides what often is a missing link for managing and enhancing *systems* in ways that integrate and strengthen interventions. For example, such a team can (a) map and analyze *activity and resources* to improve their use in preventing and ameliorating problems, (b) build effective referral, case management, and quality assurance *systems*, (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 and suggesting better uses for resources, as well as reaching out to connect with additional resources in the school district and community. Indeed, such a school-site team provides a key mechanism for weaving together existing school and community resources and increasing cohesive functioning of services and programs.

A Resource Coordinating Team exemplifies the type of mechanism needed for overall cohesion and coordination of school support programs and systems for students and families. Minimally, such a team can reduce fragmentation and enhance cost-efficacy by assisting in ways that encourage programs to function in a coordinated and increasingly integrated way. For example, the team can develop communication among school staff and to the home about available assistance and referral processes, coordinate resources, and monitor programs to be certain they are functioning effectively and efficiently. More generally, this group can provide leadership in guiding school personnel and clientele in evolving the school's vision for its support program (e.g., as not only preventing and correcting learning, behavior, emotional, and health problems but as contributing to classroom efforts to foster academic, social, emotional, and physical functioning). The group also can help to identify ways to improve existing resources and acquire additional ones.

Major examples of the group's activity are

- C preparing and circulating a list profiling available resources (programs, personnel, special projects, services, agencies) at the school, in the district, and in the community
- C clarifying how school staff and families can access them
- C refining and clarifying referral, triage, and case management processes to ensure resources are used appropriately (e.g. where needed most, in keeping with the principle of adopting the least intervention needed, with support for referral follow-through)
- C mediating problems related to resource allocation and scheduling,
- C ensuring sharing, coordination, and maintenance of needed resources
- C assisting in creation of area program teams
- C exploring ways to improve and augment existing resources to ensure a wider range are available (including encouraging preventive approaches, developing linkages with other district and community programs, and facilitating relevant staff development)
- C evolving a site's infrastructure for developing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach to addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development (possibly including health and family centers as hubs)

*recruit a
broad range of
stakeholders*

Where creation of "another team" is seen as a burden, existing teams, such as student or teacher assistance teams and school crisis teams, have demonstrated the ability to focus on enhancing resources and programs by augmenting their membership and agendas. Of course, in doing so, they must take great care to structure the agenda so that sufficient time is devoted to the additional tasks. In small schools where there are so few staff that a large team is not feasible, there still is a need for some form of a resource-oriented mechanism. Thus, in some instances, the "team" may be as small as two persons.

Although a resource-oriented mechanism might be created solely around psychosocial programs, it is meant to focus on resources related to all major programs and services supporting the instructional component. Thus, it tries to bring together representatives of all these programs and services. This might include, for example, guidance counselors, school psychologists, nurses, social workers, attendance and dropout counselors, health educators, special education staff, after school program staff, bilingual and Title I program coordinators, health educators, safe and drug free school staff, and union reps. It also should include representatives of any community agency that is significantly involved with schools. Beyond these "service" providers, such a team is well-advised to add the energies and expertise of administrators, regular classroom teachers, non-certificated staff, parents, and older students.

The larger the group, of course, the harder it is to find a meeting time and the longer each meeting tends to run. Nevertheless, the value of broad stakeholder representation far outweighs these matters. And, good meeting facilitation that maintains a task-focus and an action orientation can make meetings a invaluable opportunity to enhance systems (see Appendix C).

*ensure
motivational
readiness &
capability*

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 should be a major focus of school management policies and programs. Because various teams at a school require the expertise of the same personnel, some individuals will necessarily be on more than one team.) The team must have a dedicated leader/facilitator who is able to keep the group task-focused and productive. It also needs someone who records decisions and plans and reminds members of planned activity and products. Where advanced technology is available (management systems, electronic bulletin boards and E-mail, clearinghouses), it can be used to facilitate communication, net-working, program planning and implementation, linking activity, and a variety of budgeting, scheduling, and other management concerns.

*ensure
representation
on governance
& planning
bodies*

The team meets as needed. Frequency of meetings depends on the group's functions, time availability, and ambitions. 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 subgroups. Because some participants are 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.

Properly constituted, trained, and supported, a resource oriented team complements the work of the site's governance body through providing on-site overview, leadership, and advocacy for all activity aimed at addressing barriers to learning and enhancing healthy development. Having at least one representative from the resource team on the school's governing and planning bodies ensures the type of infrastructure connections that are essential if programs and services are to be maintained, improved, and increasingly integrated with classroom instruction. And, of course, having an administrator on the team provides the necessary link with the school's administrative "table."

**Focusing on
Resources for a
Complex or
"Family" of
Schools**

For many support service personnel, their past experiences of working in isolation – and sometimes in competition with others – make this collaborative opportunity unusual and one which requires that they learn new ways of relating and functioning. See Appendix C for some resource aids that can help in establishing a Resource Coordinating Team and ensuring it is structured to operate effectively.

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. A multi-site 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 who 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, multi school teams are especially attractive to community agencies who often don't have the time or personnel to link with individual schools. In general, then, a group of sites can benefit from having an ongoing, multi-site, resource-oriented mechanism that provides leadership, facilities communication, coordination, integration, and quality improvement of all activity the sites have for addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development.

Thus, a multi-site team or Resource Coordinating *Council* for a complex of schools (e.g., a high school and its feeder middle and elementary schools) brings together one to two representatives of each school's resource *team* (see figure below). Such a mechanism can 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, the group 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 component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. Natural starting points for councils are the sharing of needs assessment, resource mapping, analyses, and recommendations for reform and restructuring. Specific areas of initial focus may be on such matters as addressing community-school violence and developing prevention programs and safe school plans.

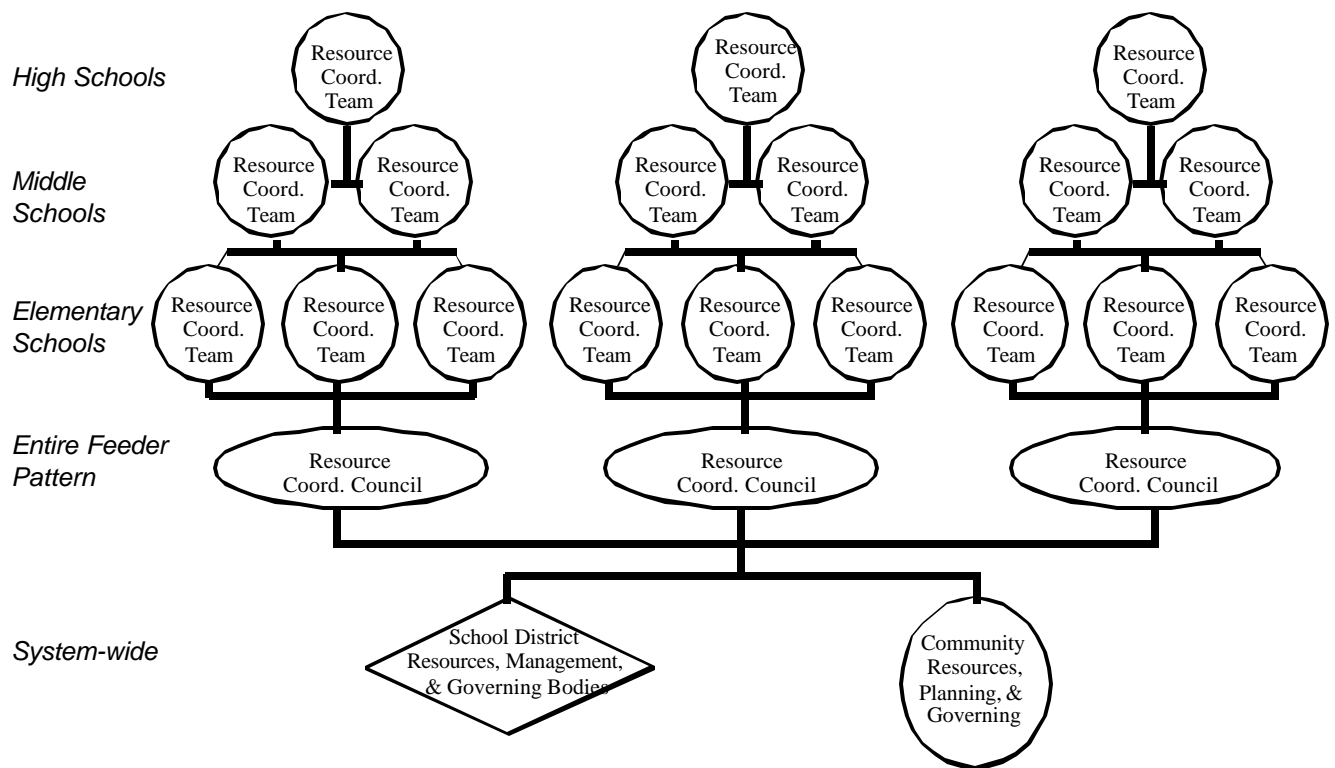


Figure 1. Developing and connecting mechanisms at schools sites, among families of schools, and district and community-wide

Some specific functions for a Council are:

*Council
functions*

- C to share information about resource availability (at participating schools and in the immediate community and in geographically related schools and district-wide) with a view to enhancing coordination and integration.
- C to identify specific needs and problems and explore ways to address them (e.g., Can some needs be met by pooling certain resources? Can improved linkages and collaborations be created with community agencies? Can additional resources be acquired? Can some staff and other stakeholder development activity be combined?)
- C to discuss and formulate longer-term plans and advocate for appropriate resource allocation related to enabling activities.

*Council
membership*

Each school might be represented on the *Council* by two members of its *Resource Team*. To assure a broad perspective, one of the two might be the site administrator responsible for enabling activity; the other would represent line staff. To ensure a broad spectrum of stakeholder input, the council also should include representatives of classroom teachers, non-certificated staff, parents, and students, as well as a range of community resources that should be involved in schools.

Council facilitation involves responsibility for convening regular monthly (and other ad hoc) meetings, building the agenda, assuring that meetings stay task focused and that between meeting assignments will be carried out, and ensuring meeting summaries are circulated. With a view to shared leadership and effective advocacy, an administrative leader and a council member elected by the group can co-facilitate meetings. Meetings can be rotated among schools to enhance understanding of each site in the council.

**System-wide
Mechanism**

School and multi-site mechanisms are not sufficient. A system-wide mechanism must be in place to support school and cluster level activity. A *system-wide resource coordinating body* can provide guidance for operational coordination and integration across groups of schools. Functions might encompass (a) ensuring there is a district-wide vision and strategic planning for addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development, (b) ensuring coordination and integration among groups of schools and system-wide, (c) establishing linkages and integrated collaboration among system-wide programs and with those operated by community, city, and county agencies, (d) ensuring complete and comprehensive integration with the district's education reforms, and (e) ensuring evaluation, including determination of equity in program delivery, quality improvement reviews of all mechanisms and procedures, and ascertaining results for accountability purposes.

The system-wide group should include (a) representatives of multi-school councils, (b) key district administrative and line staff with relevant expertise and vision (including unit heads, coordinators, union reps), and (c) various other stakeholders such as nondistrict members whose job and expertise (e.g., public health, mental health, social services, recreation, juvenile justice, post secondary institutions) make them invaluable contributors to the tasks at hand.

As the above discussion stresses, well-redesigned organizational and operational mechanisms that enable schools to (a) arrive at wise decisions about resource allocation, (b) maximize systematic and integrated planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of enabling activity, (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 interventions to reflect the best models and use of technology. Implied in all this are new roles and functions for some staff and greater involvement of parents, students, and other representatives from the community. Also implied is redeployment of existing resources as well as finding new ones.

Phasing-in Resource Teams and Councils

Building on what is known about organizational change, our Center staff for many years has been working on a change model for use in establishing, sustaining, and scaling-up school and community reforms. In this context, we have developed a position called an *Organization Facilitator* to aid with major restructuring (Adelman, 1993; Adelman & Taylor 1997; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 1999a, 1999b, 2001; Taylor & Adelman 1999). This specially trained change agent embodies the necessary expertise to help school sites and complexes implement and institutionalize substantively new approaches, such as the establishment of Resource Coordinating Teams and Councils.

The exhibit on the following pages offers an outline of phases for establishing such mechanisms and summarizes some key facets of what has been discussed above.

Exhibit

Phasing in Resource Coordinating Teams and Councils

Phase 1. *Organizing Resource Coordinating Teams at a School Site*

Creation of a School-site *Resource Coordinating Team* provides a starting point in efforts to reform and restructure education support programs. Such a team not only can begin the process of transforming what already is available, it can help reach out to District and community resources to enhance education support activity. Such a resource-oriented team differs from case-oriented teams (e.g., Student Assistance/Guidance Teams). The focus of this team is not on individual students. Rather, it is oriented to clarifying resources and how they are best used.

Such a team can help

- improve coordination and efficacy by ensuring
 - >basic systems (for referral, triage, case management) are in place and effective
 - >programs/services are profiled, written up, and circulated
 - >resources are shared equitably
- enhance resources through staff development and by facilitating creation of new resources via redeployment and outreach
- evolve a site's education support activity infrastructure by assisting in the creation of program teams and Family/Parent Centers as hubs for such activities.

Among its first functions, the Resource Coordinating Team can help clarify

- (a) the resources available to the school (who? what? when?) – For example, the team can map out and then circulate to staff, students, and parents a handout describing "Available Special Services, Programs, and Other Resources" (see Appendix D).
- (b) how someone gains access to available resources – The team can clarify processes for referral, triage, follow-through, and case management, and circulate a description of procedures to the school staff and parents.
- (c) how resources are coordinated – To ensure systems are in place and to enhance effectiveness, the team can help weave together resources, make analyses, coordinate activity, and so forth.
- (d) what other resources the school needs and what steps should be taken to acquire them – The team can identify additional resources that might be acquired from the District or by establishing community linkages.

Toward the end of Phase 1, a *Complex Resource Coordinating Council* (a multi-locality council) can be organized. This group is designed to ensure sharing and enhancement of resources across schools in a given neighborhood. Of particular interest are ways to address common concerns related to crisis response and prevention, as well as dealing with the reality that community resources that might be linked to schools are extremely limited in many geographic areas and thus must be shared.

More info on the functions of a Resource Coordinating Team and the complex Council are provided in the body of this report.

Phase II. *Organizing a Programmatic Focus and Infrastructure for Education Support Activity*

All sites that indicate readiness for moving toward reconceptualizing education support (enabling) activity into a delimited set of program areas are assisted in organizing program teams and restructuring the site's Resource Coordinating Team.

This involves facilitating

- C development of program teams
- C analyses of education support activity (programs/services) by program area teams to determine
 - >how well the various activities are coordinated/integrated (with a special emphasis on minimizing redundancy)
 - >whether any activities need to be improved (or eliminated)
 - >what is missing -- especially any activity that seems as important or even more important than those in operation.
- efforts by program area teams related to
 - >profiling, writing up, circulating, and publicizing program/service information
 - >setting priorities to improve activity in a programmatic area
 - >setting steps into motion to accomplish their first priority for improvement
 - >moving on to their next priorities.

Phase III. *Facilitating the Maintenance and Evolution of Appropriate Changes*

In general, this involves evaluating how well the infrastructure and related changes are working, including whether the changes are highly visible and understood. If there are problems, the focus is on clarifying what is structurally and systemically wrong and taking remedial steps. (It is important to avoid the trap of dealing with a symptom and ignoring ongoing factors that are producing problems; that is, the focus should be on addressing systemic flaws in ways that can prevent future problems.)

Examples of activity:

Checking on maintenance of Program Teams (keeping membership broad based and with a working core through processes for identifying, recruiting, and training new members when teams need bolstering).

Holding individual meetings with school site leadership responsible for restructuring in this area and with team leaders to identify whether everyone is receiving adequate assistance and staff development.

Determining if teams periodically make a new listing (mapping) of the current activity at the site and whether they update their analyses of the activity.

Checking on efficacy of referral, triage, and case management systems.

Checking on the effectiveness of mechanisms for daily coordination, communication, and problem solving.

Evaluating progress in refining and enhancing program activity.

Phase IV. *Facilitating the Institutionalization/Sustainability of Appropriate Changes*

A critical aspect of institutionalization involves ensuring that school staff responsible for restructuring education support activity formulate a proposal for the next fiscal year. Such a proposal encompasses resource requests (budget, personnel, space, staff development time). It must be submitted and approved by the site's governance authority. Institutionalization requires a plan that is appropriately endorsed and empowered through appropriation of adequate resources.

Institutionalization is further supported by evaluating functioning and outcomes related to new infrastructure mechanisms and fundamental activities. With a view to improving quality and efficacy, the findings from such evaluations are used to revise activities and mechanisms as necessary.

About Mapping, Analyzing, & Deploying Resources

It has been speculated that when the various sources of support are totaled in certain schools, as much as 30% of the resources may be going to addressing barriers to learning. Whatever the actual percentage, the fact is that in too many locales the resources are being expended in rather ad hoc, piecemeal, and fragmented ways. This is why mapping, analyzing, and (re)deploying resources are such important functions for resource-oriented mechanisms to pursue.

Mapping can be carried out in various ways. For example, in mapping a school's resources for addressing barriers to learning, some teams begin simply by developing a list of names and brief descriptions of the work performed by staff and those from the community who are at the school at various times (see Appendix D). This probably is a good starting point since so few schools seem to have done even this simple form of mapping, and everyone at or otherwise connected to a school should have easy access to such basic information. Eventually, all resources should be mapped (e.g., all programs, services, personnel, space, material resources and equipment, cooperative ventures, budgetary allocations). Moreover, to facilitate subsequent analyses, efforts should be made to differentiate among (a) regular, long-term programs and short-term projects and activities, (b) those that have potential to produce major results and those likely to produce superficial outcomes, and (c) those designed to benefit many students and those designed to serve a few.

Because of the fragmented way policies and practices have been established, there tends to be inefficiency and redundancy, as well as major gaps in efforts to address barriers to learning. Thus, a logical focus for *analyses* is how to reduce fragmentation and fill gaps in ways that increase effectiveness and efficiency. Another aspect of the analyses involves identifying activities that have little or no effects; these represent resources that can be redeployed to help underwrite the costs of filling major gaps.

Below we describe how all this can be done using the framework developed for operationalizing an enabling component (see Appendix A). Use of a well-conceived framework avoids the tendency to create laundry-lists of the various programs and services offered at a school. Such lists communicate a fragmented picture rather than a comprehensive, multifaceted, cohesive approach and provide insufficient information for analyzing how well resources are being used.

Step 1: School-Focused Mapping

The matrix below provides a framework for the school-based resource mechanism (e.g., a Resource Coordinating Team) to begin mapping.

AREAS OF CONCERN FOR MAPPING

	Classroom-Focused Enabling Activity	Crisis Response & Prevention	Support for Transitions	Home Involvement in Schooling	Community Outreach (including volunteers)	Student & Family Assistance	System Change Activity
Systems of Prevention							
Systems to Respond Early-After-Onset							
Systems of Care							

As aids for mapping, our Center has developed a set of tools that outlines the types of activities schools might have in these various areas. (See Appendix D for a description and for information on accessing these tools by downloading them from our website or requesting a copy from the Center.)

The mapping should include all district-level and community resources that have had some direct connection with the work of the school. As noted above, the mapping should also include efforts to differentiate (a) regular, long-term programs and short-term projects and activities, (b) those that have potential to produce major results and those likely to produce superficial outcomes, and (c) those designed to benefit many students and those designed to serve a few.

After mapping each area, the products can be used immediately to communicate in an organized manner what the school is currently doing to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development. With relatively little effort, the products can be an important step forward in "social marketing" the school's efforts to meet the needs of all students. Appendix D provides examples of summaries related to such mapping. After developing such summaries, they can be copied as a set and circulated to all stakeholders, and can even be condensed into a brochure, newsletter, and other formats that will be useful to stakeholders. They also can be mounted as a set on poster board and displayed prominently in the staff lounge, the main hallway, and anywhere else in the school where the presentation will be widely seen. The point is to make certain that everyone begins to understand what already exists and that work is underway to develop a comprehensive, multifaceted, cohesive approach.

Step 1:
Mapping the
"Family" of
Schools

Once individual schools have done their initial mapping, the schools in a feeder pattern (or an other-wise designated "family" of schools) can meet together to pool the information. At this juncture, efforts should also be made to identify other district-level and community resources that could be brought to the family of schools.

Here, again, the products of the expanded mapping engender a significant opportunity for social marketing.

In anticipating the analyses of resources, it is important at the family of schools level to designate whether the resources currently are deployed at elementary, middle, high school, or at all levels.

Step 2:
Analyses

With the initial mapping done, the focus turns to analyzing how resources are currently used. The aim is to develop specific recommendations for improving the work at each school through enhancing use of the resources currently at a school and enhancing resources through collaboration among the family of schools and with neighborhood resources.

Essentially, the process involves conducting a gap analysis. That is, existing resources are laid out in the context of the vision schools have for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach to addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development (e.g., see Appendix A). From that perspective, the analysis focuses on (1) what parts are in place, (2) what's still missing, and (3) what needs to be done to improve matters.

(1) *What's 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, the analyses should differentiate between activities that might be effective if they were better supported 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.

(2) *What's still missing?* Every school has a wish list of programs and services it needs. The analyses put these into perspective of the school's vision for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach to addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. By doing this, the analyses provide an appreciation of major gaps. Thus, rather than making ad hoc choices from a laundry-list of wishes, recommendations can be based on a systematic analysis of current efforts that require enhancement and gaps that need to be filled.

(3) *How can resources be used better?* Analyses of how resources might be used better first focus on identifying wasteful uses (i.e., redundancies, ineffective activity, programs where costs far out-weigh benefits, lack of coordination). Then, the emphasis is on promising programs that are under-supported. Finally, discussion turns to exploring which gaps should be filled first (e.g., new activity that is as or even more important than existing efforts).

Step 3:
**Recommendations
for Deploying &
Enhancing
Resources**

No school or family of schools can do everything at once -- especially when there is a great deal to do. Based on the analyses, recommendations first must stress combining some efforts to reduce redundancy at each school and for the family of schools and discontinuing ineffective activity. A second set of recommendations focus on redeploying freed-up resources to strengthen promising efforts. Finally, recommendations are made about priorities for filling gaps and for strategies to expand the pool of resources.

With respect to expanding the pool of resources, the first strategy can involve braiding together the resources of the family of schools to achieve economies of scale and to accomplish overlapping activity. Then, the focus is on enhancing connections with community resources in order to enhance existing programs and services and fill specific gaps. Recommendations should clarify how the limited community resources can be added in integrated and equitable ways across the family of schools. Finally, recommendations can be made about seeking additional funds. (See Center Brief and Fact Sheet on *Financing Mental Health for Children & Adolescents.*)

A Caveat

In building a comprehensive, multifaceted continuum of interventions, the team will be confronted by the complementary challenges surrounding the needs for *evidence-based strategies* and *demonstrating results*. These matters must be addressed in ways that enhance rather than hinder system-wide effectiveness. The dilemma arises because of the limited nature and scope of interventions that currently have strong research support. The best (not always to be equated with good) evidence-based strategies for identifying and working with student's problems are for a small number of non-comorbid disorders. And, the data show efficacy -- not effectiveness. Clearly, before these strategies are seen as the answer, they must be widely implemented in community and school settings, and they must generate data that demonstrate enhanced cost-effectiveness.

But it should be stressed that there is a bigger problem related to addressing barriers to student learning. This involves investing in the development and evaluation of interventions that go beyond one-to-one and small group approaches and that incorporate public health and primary prevention initiatives. Such approaches must be comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated and must encompass a full intervention continuum in the form of systems of prevention, systems of early intervention (early after the onset of problems), and systems of care. Development of such a continuum of overlapping systems requires major school-based programs and school-community collaborations

In sampling the literature, it is evident that there is not a strong evidence base for addressing many psychosocial problems (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2001). Unfortunately, the field is not moving in the direction of developing such an evidence base because (1) there is not support for the type of research that must be carried out to determine the impact of comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approaches, and (2) many in the field are falling into the trap of thinking large-scale problems can be solved by reifying a few evidence-based interventions. It is striking that there never has been a formal study of the impact on a catchment area (e.g., a neighborhood) of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach that encompasses a full intervention continuum in the form of systems of prevention, early intervention, and care.

Concluding Comments

Most of us know how hard it is to work effectively with a group. Many staff members at a school site have jobs that allow them to carry out their duties each day in relative isolation of other staff. And despite various frustrations they encounter in doing so, they can see little to be gained through joining up with others. In fact, they often can point to many committees and teams that drained their time and energy to little avail.

Despite all this, the fact remains that no organization can be truly effective if everyone works in isolation. And it is a simple truth that there is no way for schools to play their role in addressing barriers to student learning and enhancing healthy development if a critical mass of stakeholders do not work together towards a shared vision. There are policies to advocate for, decisions to make, problems to solve, and interventions to plan, implement, and evaluate.

Obviously, true collaboration involves more than meeting and talking. The point is to work together in ways that produce the type of actions that result in effective programs.

The danger in creating new mechanisms is that they can become just another task, another meeting -- busy work. Infrastructure must be designed in keeping with the major functions to be carried out, and all functions must be carried out in the service of a vital vision. Resource-oriented mechanisms are valuable only if they are driven by and help advance an important vision. Leaders and facilitators must be able to instill that vision in team members and help them hold on to it even when the initial excitement of "newness" wanes.

In outlining the ongoing functions of mapping, analyzing, and deploying resources, we have also stressed that, in our work, resource-oriented functions are done in the service of building, sustaining, and evolving a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach to addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. It is that vision that sustains us and our colleagues.

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