

 SCHOLASTIC

# Rebuilding for **LEARNING**<sup>TM</sup>

Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching,  
and Re-engaging Students



**Howard S. Adelman and Linda Taylor**

Adelman & Taylor



Rebuilding  
for  
**LEARNING**



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New York • Toronto • London • Auckland • Sydney  
Mexico City • New Delhi • Hong Kong • Buenos Aires

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## A Note from Scholastic

Initially, Rebuilding for Learning™ was conceived as a way to provide support for Gulf Coast schools following the catastrophic 2005 hurricane season. However, during our initial research for the initiative, it became obvious that Gulf Coast districts were not the only ones facing serious “learning infrastructure” issues that were impeding teaching and learning. We felt that districts across the country could benefit from this work. The initiative was then reconceived acknowledging that public education in the United States is at a crossroads hence the numerous reform efforts targeting concerns about student achievement and overall academic attainment. While Rebuilding for Learning is still going to intentionally serve educators from the Gulf Coast region, Scholastic is excited about expanding the scope of the work to a national scale, as it is our intent to make strategic investments that enable all children to receive high quality education.

Scholastic sincerely thanks the Rebuilding for Learning National Advisory Committee for providing direction and invaluable advice during the development of the initiative.

Suzanne Bullock, Michael DiMaggio, David Grubb, Michael Haggren, Richard Hayes, Larry Holland, Judy Jeffrey, Angela Rodgers, Rosa Smith, Betsy Thompson, Rhonda Waltman, and Aretha Williams

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

*– Carnegie Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents (1989)*

# Welcome to Rebuilding for Learning™

How do we ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed in school and have a strong start toward being productive contributors to our society? That is the core question for school improvement policy makers and planners.

Nationally, there is great concern and debate about how to raise student achievement, reduce drop out rates, address disparities among children from different socioeconomic backgrounds, close racial and ethnic achievement gaps, and increase the level of expectations of—and support for—all children. There are deep concerns about how best to serve transient students, the growing numbers of children with limited English proficiency, immigrant populations, and students with disabilities. And then, there is the need to attend to the short and long-term effects on student learning caused by natural and man-made disasters, from hurricanes to school shootings and other forms of violence.

We approach all this from an intervention perspective. As interventionists, we deal with such concerns in the context of school improvement policies and practices looking specifically at how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and how they promote protective buffers for students and families. We have devoted many years of study, research and action to helping states and districts generate systemic changes that move toward ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school and in life.

Our work has led us to understand that there are four fundamental and interrelated concerns decision makers and planners must confront if true school transformation is to take place:

- 1) Policy for school improvement must be expanded to end the marginalization of interventions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching;
- 2) Current student learning supports must be reframed into a comprehensive system of intervention;
- 3) The organizational and operational infrastructure for schools, feeder patterns, districts, and for school-community collaboration must be reworked to facilitate the development of the system;
- 4) New approaches must be adopted for planning essential system changes and for sustaining and replicating them to scale.

Ultimately, our aim is to engage and re-engage students in classroom learning. This encompasses enhancing greater family and community involvement in education. And, it requires a fundamental shift in thinking about what motivates students and staff.

We are pleased to collaborate with Scholastic on the Rebuilding for Learning initiative and for the opportunity to expand the reach of our work.

This handbook has been designed as an introductory resource for learning more about the imperative for enhancing student learning supports, the full continuum of essential school-community interventions, and the core principles and tenets of comprehensive learning support systems. As you add notes stemming from your insights and ideas, this handbook becomes a personal resource guide and an emerging blueprint for advancing district/state school improvement efforts.

We look forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

**Howard and Linda**



# What is the Rebuilding for Learning™ initiative and why is it needed?

## Key Topics Explored...

- ⚙️ What is the aim of the initiative?
- ⚙️ Why is the initiative needed?
- ⚙️ What basic underlying research, beliefs and assumptions guide the work?
- ⚙️ How will its goals be accomplished?
- ⚙️ What will be covered during the Institute?

## What is the aim of the initiative?

The overarching goal of the Rebuilding for Learning initiative is to help school leaders “rebuild” school and district interventions and infrastructure to better support learning for all children. The initiative is especially sensitive to the pressures on those from states or districts experiencing chronic underperformance and who are struggling to break through the achievement plateau, as well as to the dilemmas confronting those dealing with the aftermath of natural or man-made disasters.

The initiative reflects pioneering work being implemented across the country—work that is revolutionizing student learning supports. It is designed to advance the understanding of key leaders and provide resources to help them guide development and implementation of comprehensive systems of learning supports that effectively reduce barriers to learning and teaching.

## Why is the initiative needed?

The *good* news is that there are schools in districts across the country where a majority of students are performing well; academically and socially youngsters are succeeding. The bad news is that in all schools there are youngsters who are failing for a host of complex reasons. There are too many schools, particularly those serving lower income families, where large numbers of students and their teachers are in trouble. Most schools tend to be ill-prepared to address the challenges faced by their students, faculty and families—challenges that often seriously interfere with students’ abilities to fully benefit from instruction. Schools that have suffered through major crises and natural disasters have special challenges that are not covered in emergency preparedness plans. Here are some poignant statistics that underscore these points.

- The dropout rate for our nation remains unacceptably high. Education Trust reports that nearly 25 percent of the ninth grade population will not end up graduating from high school. (Hall, 2006)
- Students are not the only ones dropping out of school. We are losing teachers at a rate of almost 1,000 a day. Many are not retiring; they are leaving the profession to find “better working conditions.” (Alliance for Excellence in Education, 2005)
- Student achievement in core academic subjects for far too many students ranges from mediocre to abysmal. Take reading levels as an example. Despite recent gains highlighted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), most American students, across grade levels, are reading at the most basic levels and “only

about 30 percent of high school students read proficiently and more than a quarter read below grade level.” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007)

- The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports, “students who speak a language other than English at home and speak English with difficulty may be in need of special services.” There are almost 11 million children whose primary home language is not English. (NCES, 2007)
- School leaders acknowledge that the amount of student suspensions and retention underscore the degree to which behavior problems are placing students at greater risk for dropping out. The latest data show that almost “10 percent of public school students in kindergarten through grade 12 had been retained (i.e., repeated a grade since starting school), while 11 percent had been suspended and 2 percent had been expelled (i.e., permanently removed from school with no services).” (NCES, 2007)
- Schools deal daily with the effects that poverty has on learning. NCES states “research has suggested that growing up in poverty can negatively impact children’s mental and behavioral development as well as their overall health, making it more difficult for them to learn.” (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, and Klebanov 1994; Pollitt 1994, NCES)
- While it is a widely held belief that education should be a great equalizer, the sad fact is that in large portion, children living in poverty attend schools that at best, have marginal performance records. (U.S. Department of Education, Ed Week)
- According to the 2007 report, *Education After Katrina*, issued by the Southern Education Foundation, two years after the storms and the resulting aftermath of the hurricanes, children in many Gulf Coast communities are still struggling in less than adequate learning environments. (Southern Education Foundation, 2007)

None of this comes as news to educational leaders. The data, however, highlight the imperative for the initiative’s work. In aggregate—on a national scale—education leaders know that without significant systemic changes, districts struggle to

- reduce student dropout rates
- reduce teacher dropout rates
- re-engage students in classroom learning
- narrow the achievement gap
- eliminate the plateau effect related to student achievement
- reduce the growing list of schools designated as low performing, or
- support schools in crisis

Most districts and schools have resources that can be used to develop a system of learning supports for all students experiencing barriers to learning and teaching. Currently though, the majority of these resources are expended on interventions that address discrete, categorical problems, often with specialized services for a relatively small number of students.

Furthermore, student supports are so highly fragmented and marginalized in policy and practice that many districts have chronic difficulty stemming the tides of low achievement, delinquency, student and teacher dropouts, and a host of other serious issues.

Schools and districts need to redeploy existing funds allocated for addressing barriers to learning and must weave these together with the invaluable resources that can be gained by collaboration with students, family members, and community stakeholders. It is time for schools to move forward in establishing *comprehensive systems* for addressing barriers to learning and teaching that can enable them to be more effective in ensuring that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed at school and in life.

## What basic underlying research, beliefs and assumptions guide the work?

The following tenets guide the efforts of the Rebuilding for Learning initiative and are infused throughout the work:

- Every school has a wide range of learners and must ensure equity of opportunity for all students and not just a few.
- External and internal barriers to learning and factors that disrupt teaching widely interfere with schools achieving their mission.
- To meet the challenges for the many students in need, school districts must design and implement learning support systems that are comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive, and institutionalize them at every school.
- Learning support systems must address barriers to learning and teaching and ensure that students are engaged and reengaged in classroom learning. Such systems must reflect the best available science, with a special emphasis on intrinsic motivation theory and practices.
- Schools need strong leadership for systemic change and an infrastructure that facilitates schools and communities working together in pursuit of a shared vision and common set of goals around learning supports and student achievement.

## How will the initiative's goals be accomplished?

The Rebuilding for Learning initiative is designed to provide education leaders with learning opportunities around planning and implementing improved systems for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. The initiative aids district capacity building by offering information, guidance and support through the auspices of Scholastic and the UCLA Center.

This includes:

- In person professional input and interchange (e.g., Rebuilding for Learning Institute and on-site technical assistance)
- Online professional development and guidance (e.g., continuing education and online technical assistance)
- Print and online supplemental resources (e.g., capacity-building tools)

**Rebuilding for Learning Leadership Institute**—The Institute orients school leaders to the need for student learning supports, the full continuum of essential school-community interventions, and the core principles and tenets of comprehensive learning support systems. Leadership teams leave the Institute with an emerging “blueprint” that enables them to more deeply investigate student learning supports and the feasibility for instituting change in their districts.

**The Rebuilding for Learning Online Institute**—Online resources allow users to probe deeper with theory and practice content. They are especially designed as aids for moving forward.

**Technical Assistance**—Institute participants pursuing implementation of comprehensive learning support systems have access to the initiative's team of specialists who are available to provide strategic guidance as districts move from planning to implementation.

## The Institute

During the Institute, participants explore new directions for addressing student learning supports and gain a better understanding of how policy and infrastructure work to facilitate learning supports systems. Frameworks, strategies and tools for assessing districts' needs, mapping resources, and developing systems to enhance student learning supports will be introduced.

The Institute consists of five modules. Here are the key questions and topics covered by each module, including the one we are currently in.

<b>MODULE 1: What is the Rebuilding for Learning™ initiative and why is it needed?</b>
<b>Key topics explored:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the aim of the initiative?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is the initiative needed?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What basic underlying research, beliefs and assumptions guide the work?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will its goals be accomplished?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will be covered during the Institute?</li> </ul>
<b>MODULE 2: Why do schools need a comprehensive system of learning supports?</b>
<b>Key topics explored:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is a system of learning supports imperative for schools to succeed?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is currently being done and why isn't it working?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What lenses need to be used to see what's missing in school improvement planning?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>All</b>—a continuum of learners</li> <li>– <b>Barriers to learning and teaching</b>—extrinsic as well as intrinsic factors</li> <li>– <b>Engagement and disengagement</b>—maximizing intrinsic motivation, minimizing behavior control strategies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The three lenses and school improvement planning</li> </ul>

<b>MODULE 3: What is a comprehensive system of learning supports?</b>
<b>Key topics explored:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are learning supports?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What must school improvement planners focus on to ensure schools develop comprehensive systems of learning supports?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Blueprints for reframing intervention</li> <li>– Blueprints for redesigning operational and organizational infrastructure</li> <li>– What are the policy implications?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>MODULE 4: What are the implications for planning the necessary systemic changes?</b>
<b>Key topics explored:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The challenge of system change</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the phases and steps in developing a comprehensive system of learning supports?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the capacity building implications?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of an expanded accountability framework</li> </ul>
<b>MODULE 5: Why is an emphasis on intrinsic motivation essential in engaging and re-engaging students in classroom instruction?</b>
<b>Key topics explored:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation: beyond reinforcement theory</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the motivational bases for disengagement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-engaging students             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Maximizing intrinsic motivation</li> <li>– Minimizing threats to intrinsic motivation</li> <li>– Re-engagement through rebuilding working relationships</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
After Module 5, we issue a call for action.

By attending the Institute, school leaders will have a better understanding of the barriers to learning and teaching and what is needed for establishing and sustaining a comprehensive system of student learning supports. Participants will also walk away with an outline, or what we call a “blueprint,” consisting of key considerations and steps that are needed to reach their goals for student success.

**The ultimate goal of a quality education system is to ensure that students, staff, families and community stakeholders all are able to fulfill and be successful in their respective educational roles. This work focuses on addressing the issues and problems that interfere with the ability of children to effectively learn and fully benefit from instruction.**

### BRIEF ACTIVITY

## ABOUT THE BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND TEACHING EXPERIENCED BY YOUR STUDENTS

**Jot down your thoughts about the following:**

- What are the key factors that result in students experiencing learning and related behavior problems?
- How are your schools affected by barriers to learning?



# Why do schools need comprehensive systems of learning supports?

## Key Topics Explored...

- ⚙️ Why is a system of learning supports imperative for school success?
- ⚙️ What is currently being done and why isn't it working?
- ⚙️ What lenses need to be used to see what's missing in school improvement planning?
  - *All students*—a continuum of learners
  - *Barriers to learning and teaching*—extrinsic as well as intrinsic factors
  - *Engagement and disengagement*—maximizing intrinsic motivation, minimizing behavior control strategies
- ⚙️ The three lenses and school improvement planning

## Why is a system of learning supports imperative for schools to succeed?

Let's begin this module by revisiting the reasons why the *Rebuilding for Learning*<sup>™</sup> initiative is an imperative. Most policy makers and administrators know that *by itself* good instruction delivered by highly qualified teachers is not enough to ensure that *all* students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. It is widely recognized that schools continue to suffer from high dropout rates of students and staff, an achievement gap that has resisted closure, and a high incidence of schools being designated as low performing (see **Exhibit 1**).

Many districts across the country experience gains in student achievement after establishing and implementing student improvement initiatives. What an increasing number of school leaders are finding out, however, is that initial gains in test score averages tend to plateau after a few years. We will explain this psychometric reality further as we discuss what's missing in current school improvement policy and practice.

Simply stated, prevailing policy and practice have not effectively dealt with these matters. In particular, as we will highlight, current learning supports are not designed to provide all students with *the opportunity* to succeed at school. This becomes particularly evident when we use the three lenses discussed in this module to view what is missing in school improvement planning.

### Exhibit 1

#### WHY IS A SYSTEM OF LEARNING SUPPORTS IMPERATIVE FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS?

##### Redressing Key Problems Confronting Schools

- High student dropout rates
- High teacher dropout rates
- Continuing achievement gap
- So many schools designated as low performing
- Plateau effect

##### Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

## What is currently being done and why isn't it working?

Over the years, most schools have instituted support programs designed to tackle a range of learning, behavior, and emotional problems. Across a district, there are efforts to mitigate and alleviate school adjustment and attendance problems, substance abuse, emotional problems, relationship difficulties, violence, physical and sexual abuse, delinquency, and dropouts.

Some of these programs are provided throughout a school district, others are carried out at—or linked to—targeted schools. Some of the programs are owned and operated by schools; some are managed by community agencies. The interventions may be for all students in a school, for those in specified grades, for those identified as “at risk,” or for those in need of compensatory or special education.

School-based and school-linked support programs generally focus on responding to crises, early intervention and some forms of treatment. There also may be a focus on prevention and enhancement of healthy development (e.g., promotion of positive physical, social and emotional development) through use of health education, health services, guidance, and so forth.

Over the years, we have explored and reported on the status of organized efforts to provide student supports. All across the nation we have seen essentially the same thing (see **Exhibit 2**).

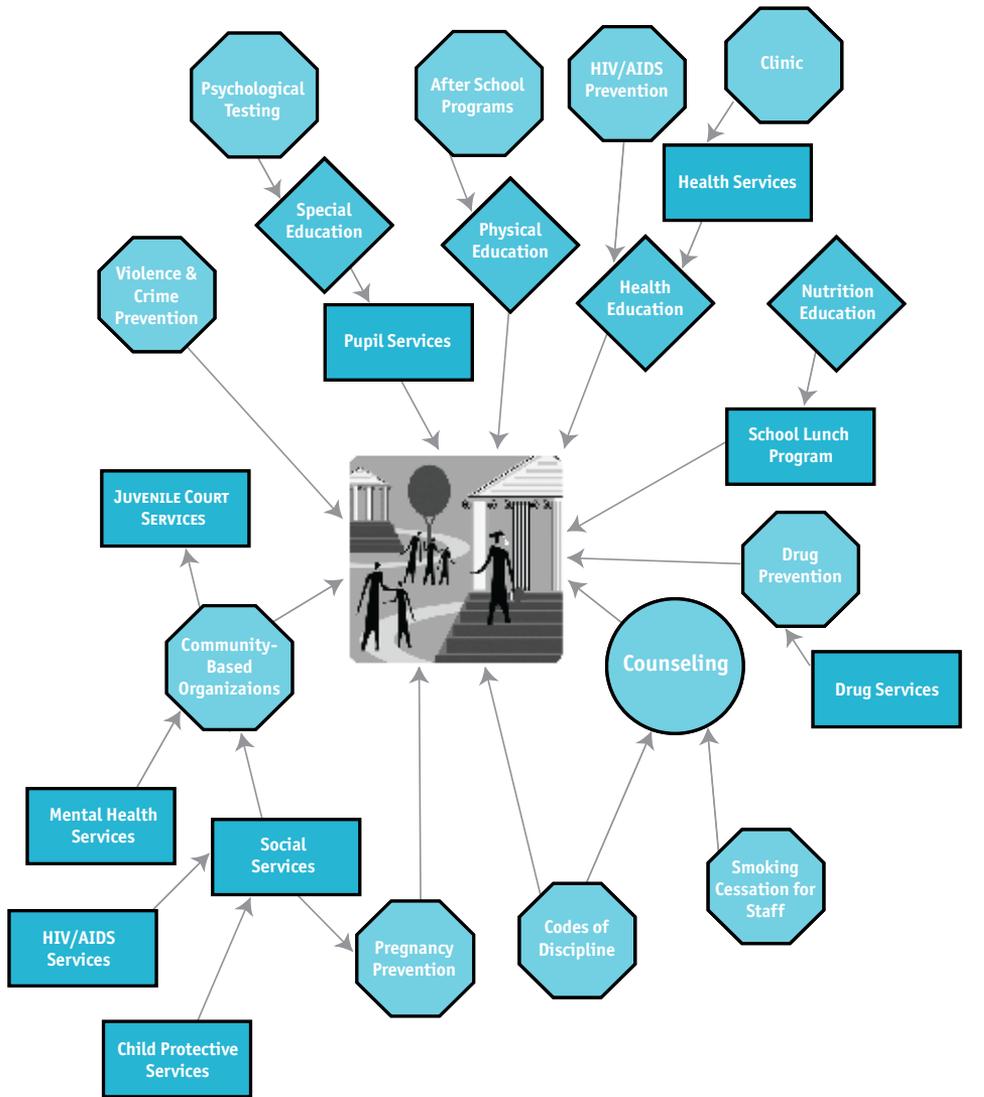
Student support programs are terribly fragmented. And, such fragmentation is widespread. At the school level, it is commonplace for support staff to function in relative isolation of each other and other stakeholders, with too much of the work oriented to addressing discrete problems and providing specialized services for relatively few students. 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.

Moreover, the contexts for intervention often are limited and makeshift. Many programs and related efforts to prevent and correct problems are assigned space on an ad hoc basis. Support personnel often must rotate among schools as itinerant staff.

**Fragmentation not only is costly in terms of redundancy and counterproductive competition, it works against developing cohesive approaches and maximizing results.**

Exhibit 2

**HOW IS THE DISTRICT/SCHOOL ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO LEARNING?**  
**FRAGMENTED POLICY** ↔ **FRAGMENTED PRACTICES**



Adapted from: Health is Academic: A Guide to Coordinated School Health Programs (1998).  
 Edited by E. Marx & S.F. Wooley with D. Northrop. New York: Teachers College Press.

## How do districts organize learning supports?

Governance of the work usually is centralized at the district level. The activity tends to be organized into several units or divisions, each with a specialized focus such as curriculum and instruction, student support services, compensatory education, special education, English language learners, parent involvement, intergroup relations and adult and career education.

Mostly, the units operate as relatively independent entities. For example, many school-owned and operated services are offered as part of what are called pupil or student support services. In addition to employing specialists such as psychologists, counselors, social workers, and nurses, these units may include resource teachers, special education staff, behavior and discipline specialists, security staff, and paraprofessionals. In large districts, counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses and other specialists may be organized into separate units, overlapping regular, special and compensatory education.

Federal and state mandates and special funding play a significant role in determining available resources for student support efforts, and naturally, resources vary with economic conditions. How effectively available resources can be used is a function of how many students are in need of learning supports. In large urban districts and poor rural ones, estimates indicate that more than half the students are encountering major barriers that interfere with their functioning and—as studies over the years have consistently found—student supports as currently operated are not able to meet the demand. At the same time, it must be recognized that substantial resources are being invested.

The most recent *School Health Policies and Program Study* conducted by a unit of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) collected data from 51 state departments of education, 538 school districts, and 1,103 schools. Findings indicate that 56% of states and 73% of districts had a policy stating that student assistance programs would be offered to all students, but only 57% of schools offered such programs. Findings for specialist support staff indicate that 78% of schools had a part- or full-time counselor, 61% had a part- or full-time school psychologist, 42% had a part- or full-time social worker, 36% had a full-time school nurse, and an additional 51% had a part-time nurse. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007)

## MAJOR DELIVERY MECHANISMS

**Prevailing delivery mechanisms and related formats for providing student supports can be grouped into four categories:**

### **School-financed Student Support Services**

Most school districts employ pupil services professionals to perform services related to psychosocial and mental and physical health problems, including services designated for special education students. The format for this delivery mechanism tends to be a combination of central-based and school-based programs and services. Direct intervention approaches encompass responding to crises, identifying the needs of targeted individuals, prescribing one or more interventions, offering brief consultation, and providing referrals assessment, corrective services, triage, diagnosis, and various gatekeeping functions. In some situations, however, resources are so limited that specialists can do little more than assess for special education eligibility, offer brief consultations, and make referrals to special education and/or community resources.

### **Classroom-Based Curriculum and Special Pull-Out Interventions**

Most schools include in some facet of their curriculum a focus on enhancing personal and social functioning. Specific instructional activities may be designed to promote healthy physical, social, and emotional development or prevent learning and psychosocial problems such as behavior and emotional problems, school violence, and drug abuse. And, of course, special education classrooms always are supposed to have a constant focus on such concerns. Three formats have emerged:

- 1) Integrated instruction as part of the regular classroom content and processes**
- 2) Specific curriculum or special intervention implemented by personnel especially trained to carry out the processes**
- 3) Curricula integrated into a multifaceted set of interventions designed to enhance positive development and prevent problems**

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## MAJOR DELIVERY MECHANISMS (cont'd)

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### **School-district Specialized Units**

Some districts operate units that focus on specific problems, such as safe and drug-free school programs, child abuse, suicide, mental and physical health (sometimes including clinic facilities, as well as providing outreach services and consultation to schools), newcomer centers and so forth.

### **Formal Connections with Community Services**

Increasingly, schools have developed connections with community agencies, often as the result of school-linked service initiatives (e.g., full service schools, family resource centers), the school-based health center movement, and efforts to develop systems of care (wraparound services for those in special education). It should be noted that the resources of most community agencies tend to be stretched to the limit after they are linked to a few schools in a district. Thus, policies that emphasize adding (co-locating, linking, contracting) community health and social services to schools cannot effectively meet the needs of schools in addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Moreover, an overemphasis on co-location of community services on school campuses often exacerbates tensions between school district student support staff and their counterparts from community-based organizations. As outside professionals offer services at schools, school specialists often view this trend as discounting their skills and threatening their jobs. At the same time, the outsiders often feel unappreciated and may be rather naïve about the culture of the schools. Conflicts arise over space, confidentiality and liability. Rather than a substantive commitment to collaboration, counterproductive competition and fragmented leadership exist.

## What are the implications of the current state of affairs?

In general, student supports continue to constitute a considerable amount of activity, with substantial resources expended. The enterprise encompasses many dedicated professionals who are struggling to make a difference, and there are pockets of excellence. However, as has been widely recognized, interventions and the infrastructure for organizing and operating them are highly fragmented and often redundant.

Clearly, fragmentation is a problem; but fragmentation is a symptom of a more fundamental school improvement policy problem. The need to address barriers to learning and teaching is not assigned a high priority in schools (see **Exhibit 3**). Indeed, the whole enterprise is *marginalized* in policy and practice.

Student support concerns gain temporary stature whenever a high visibility problem arises: a natural disaster, a shooting on campus, a student suicide, an increase in bullying. However, in the case of most school improvement efforts, such interventions continue to be developed in an ad hoc, piecemeal way, with the unfortunate tendency for support staff to compete, counterproductively, with each other.

In reaction to all this, reformers of student supports have tended to focus mainly on fragmentation. As a result, the main prescription for improving such supports has been to enhance coordination. Better coordination is a good idea. But it doesn't really address the problem of marginalization. (see **Exhibit 4**).

Support programs and services as they currently operate simply can't meet the needs of the majority of students who require help. In terms of both enhancing equity of opportunity for students and strengthening public education, one major imperative is to move in new directions that focus on developing a comprehensive system of learning supports for all students in all schools. And, as we clarify in Module 3, this can be done by redeploying use of already allocated district resources and then appropriately inviting and weaving in available community resources to help fill critical gaps.

Exhibit 3

### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT—WHAT’S MISSING?

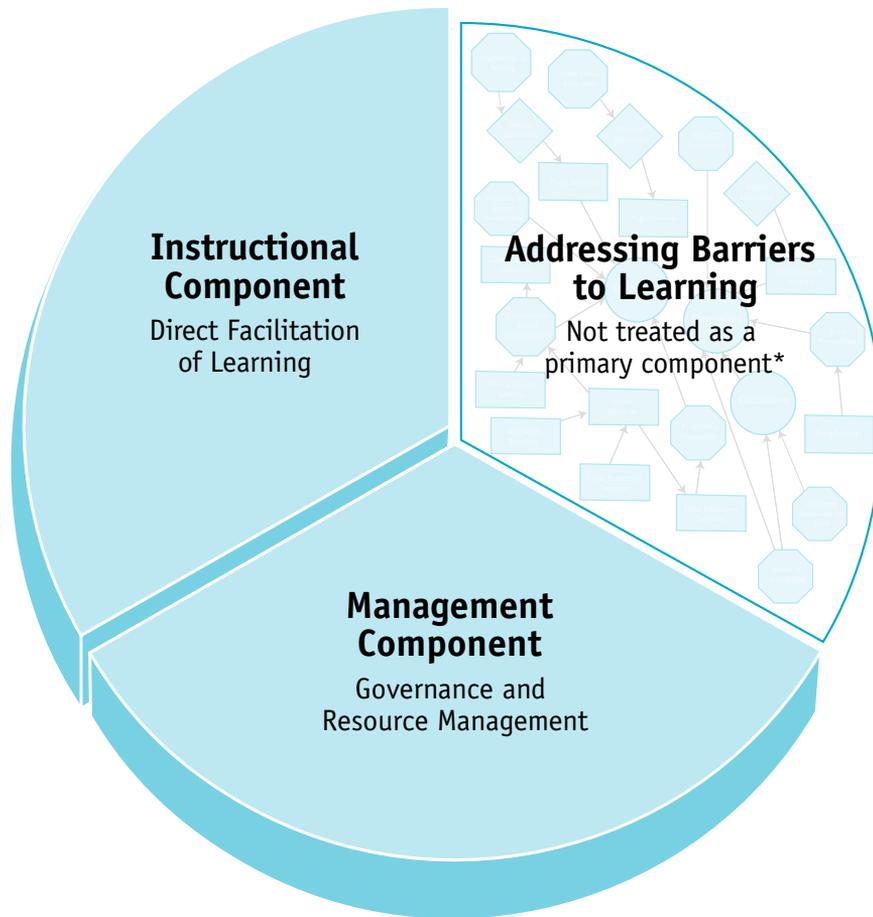
**Everyone needs to ask:**

*How does school improvement planning address barriers to learning and teaching?*



Exhibit 4

**IT'S NOT REALLY MISSING; IT'S *MARGINALIZED*  
AND NOT EFFECTIVELY FRAMED.**



\* While not treated as a primary and essential component, every school and community offers a relatively small amount of school-owned student "support" services and community-owned resources – some of which are linked together. Schools, in particular, have been reaching out to community agencies to add a few more services. All of this remains marginalized and fragmented. (see **Exhibit 2**)

## CASE STUDY/ LESSONS FROM THE GULF COAST

Following the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes, there was an outpouring of support from talented people who expressed a desire to help affected children, families and schools. Financial and in-kind resources from various sectors and sources were directed to the region. From different accounts, a significant proportion of those ready to volunteer did actually attempt to help initially. In many cases, the mechanisms for linking people and resources to where they were needed were not often in place. Here are a few lessons learned:

- 1) The focus seems to have been mainly on using sparse resources to provide clinical services (e.g., triage and counseling) to individual students, but the numbers in need far outweighed the available clinical services.**
- 2) In some (but not enough) situations, school districts and specific schools did move quickly to develop systemic plans and implement broadly based programs to meet the basic needs of many of the displaced students and families. These districts seemed to have leadership and line staff with a breadth of understanding about how to go beyond immediate crisis responses to attend to the multifaceted and ongoing needs of students, families, and staff.**
- 3) Those schools where crisis response training had been implemented effectively in recent years apparently were able to respond better than those without such training. A few districts and schools did the type of systemic planning and responding necessary to effectively a) address the transition needs of many students, families, and staff who had to move into new schools (often in new states) and b) deal with the longer-term psychological and social aftermath effects that continue to interfere with students learning and teachers teaching.**
- 4) In all cases, a major burden fell on a relatively few people, and they continued over the longer term to bear the responsibility and often overwhelming stress. Their plight underscores the need for systemic changes that enhance how school and community resources are woven together to broaden the base of support and provide assistance to those bearing the brunt of helping others.**
- 5) In some places the response was particularly bad. One volunteer reported feeling that: "The bottom line [was] ... NO ONE was prepared!" Another emphasized there was no effective coordination. The situation was described in the feedback as the "disaster within the disaster."**

## What lenses need to be used to see what's missing in school improvement planning?

Not surprisingly, analyses of guides for school improvement planning indicate the primary focus is on what is mandated and measured. Specifically, such guides stress meeting the demand for standards-based and results-oriented school improvement mainly by elaborating on prevalent thinking about school practices, rather than considering fundamental systemic change. In doing so, they reflect adherence to the failed assumption that intensifying and narrowing the focus of school improvement to matters directly related to instruction and behavioral discipline are sufficient to the task of continuously raising test scores *over the long run*. This current emphasis ignores the need for fundamentally restructuring school and community resources in ways that enable learning.

To understand what is essentially missing in current school improvement policy and practice, education leaders need to revisit current plans using three critical lenses (see **Exhibit 5**). These lenses focus on:

- **All students**—conceived along a continuum emphasizing differences in current motivation and abilities.
- **Barriers to learning and teaching**—emphasizing extrinsic as well as intrinsic factors.
- **Engaging and re-engaging students**—stressing the importance of maximizing intrinsic motivation and minimizing behavior control strategies.

### Exhibit 5

#### THREE LENSES FOR SEEING WHAT'S MISSING IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

- All Students
- Barriers to Learning and Teaching
- Engaging and Re-engaging Students in Classroom Learning
  - Maximizing Intrinsic Motivation
  - Minimizing Behavior Control Strategies

## All students

Every teacher would like a classroom full of students who appear each day motivationally ready and able to learn what the teacher has planned to teach. What they find is a continuum of students who differ in motivation and abilities (see **Exhibit 6**). At one end of the continuum are those who are motivationally ready and able to work with the teacher on what has been planned. Around the middle of the continuum are students who come to school not very motivated and/or able to work with the teacher; these students may lack the prerequisite knowledge and skills for pursuing what is being taught, and/or have different learning rates and styles and possibly some minor vulnerabilities. At the other end of the continuum are students who have become very avoidant and completely disengaged from classroom instruction, students who are very deficient in their current capabilities, and students with major disabilities and health problems.

It needs to be stressed that few youngsters start out with internal problems that interfere with learning. That is why it is essential to view the continuum through the lens of barriers to learning and teaching with an appropriate appreciation of the full range of external factors that contribute to the majority of learning, behavior, and emotional problems encountered at school.

In our work, we have asked teachers from across the country, **“Most days, how many of your students come to class motivationally ready and able to learn what you have planned to teach them?”** The consistency of response is surprising and disturbing. In urban and rural schools serving economically disadvantaged families, teachers tell us that about 10 to 15% of their students fall into this group. In suburbia, teachers usually say 75% fit that profile.

## Exhibit 6

**RANGE OF LEARNERS**

*(categorized in terms of their response to academic instruction)*



- **Motivationally ready and able**



- **Not very motivated**
- **Lacking prerequisite knowledge and skills**
- **Different learning rates and styles**
- **Minor vulnerabilities**



- **Avoidant**
- **Very deficient in current capabilities**
- **Has a disability**
- **Major health problems**

## Barriers to learning and teaching

The notion of *barriers to learning* encompasses both external and internal factors that affect children’s abilities to receive educational instruction. Some children bring with them a wide range of problems stemming from restricted opportunities associated with poverty, difficult and diverse family conditions, high rates of mobility, lack of English language skills, violent neighborhoods, problems related to substance abuse, inadequate health care, and lack of enrichment opportunities. (see **Exhibit 7**) Some youngsters also bring with them intrinsic conditions that make learning and performing difficult.

Student surveys consistently indicate that alienation, bullying, harassment, and academic failure at school are widespread problems. Discussions with groups of students and support staff across the country suggest that many students who drop out are really “pushed out.” Ironically, many young teachers who “burn out” quickly also could be described as push outs.

As a result, at every grade level there are students who come to school each day not quite ready to perform and learn in the most effective manner. Students’ problems are exacerbated as they internalize frustrations related to the barriers and the debilitating effects of poor academic or social performance.

**Exhibit 7**

### WHAT ARE BARRIERS TO LEARNING?

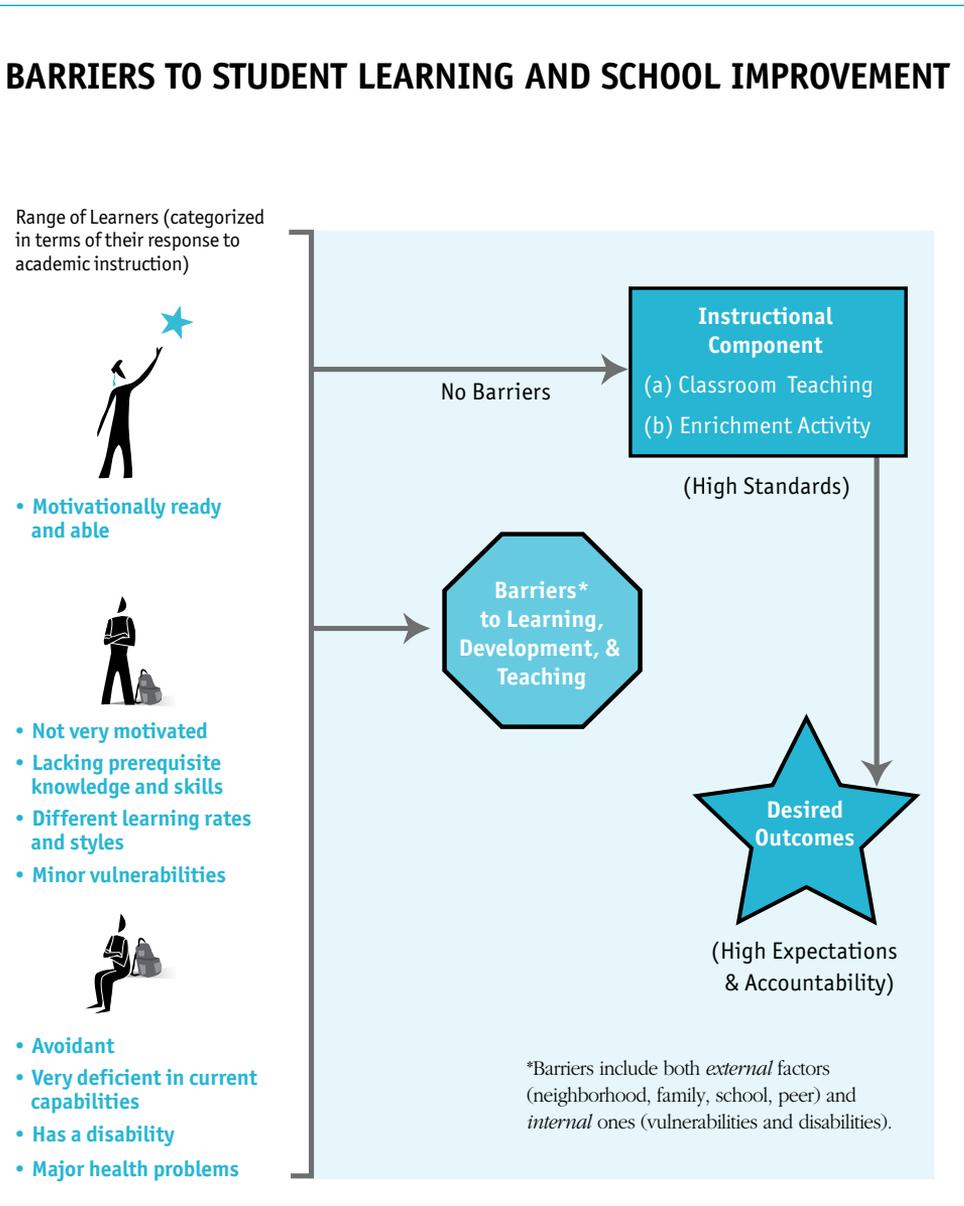
*Examples of Risk-Producing Conditions that Can be Barriers to Development and Learning*

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS*			PERSON FACTORS*
Neighborhood	Family	School and Peers	Individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extreme economic deprivation</li> <li>• community disorganization, including high levels of mobility</li> <li>• violence, drugs, etc.</li> <li>• minority and/or immigrant status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chronic poverty</li> <li>• conflict/disruptions /violence</li> <li>• substance abuse</li> <li>• models problem behavior</li> <li>• abusive caretaking</li> <li>• inadequate provision for quality child care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor quality school</li> <li>• negative encounters with teachers</li> <li>• negative encounters with peers &amp;/or inappropriate peer models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• medical problems</li> <li>• low birth weight/ neurodevelopmental delay</li> <li>• psychophysiological problems</li> <li>• difficult temperament and adjustment problems</li> <li>• inadequate nutrition</li> </ul>

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

School staff must have a basic appreciation of what causes problems. Good teaching and all efforts to enhance positive development must be complemented with direct actions to remove or at least minimize the impact of barriers (see **Exhibit 8**). Without effective intervention, problems persist, inhibiting student development and learning, and fostering disengagement.

**Exhibit 8**



## Engaging and re-engaging students in classroom learning: maximizing intrinsic motivation and minimizing behavior control strategies

In general, teaching involves being able to apply strategies focused on content to be taught and knowledge and skills to be acquired—with some degree of attention given to the process of engaging students. Learning is a function of how good a fit there is in the transactions between the learner, the teacher and the learning environment. Teaching works fine in schools where most students come each day ready and able to learn what is being taught. As already noted, that is not the situation in many schools.

Student engagement involves not only engaging and maintaining engagement, but also *re-engaging* those who have disengaged. Given the fact that teachers have to provide instruction to the full continuum of learners, schools must provide the range of supports essential to enhancing student engagement and re-engagement.

It is especially noteworthy that strategies for re-engaging students in learning rarely are a prominent part of pre or in-service preparation and too seldom are the focus of interventions pursued by professionals whose role is to support teachers and students. Of particular concern is what teachers do when they encounter a student who has disengaged and is misbehaving. In most cases, the foremost emphasis shouldn't be on implementing social control techniques.

It is commonplace to find that, when students are not engaged in the schoolwork at hand, they tend to pursue other activity. As teachers and other staff try to cope with those who are disruptive, the main concern usually is classroom management. At one time, a heavy dose of punishment was the dominant approach. Currently, the stress is on more positive practices designed to provide behavior support in and out-of-the-classroom. For the most part, however, the strategies are applied as a form of *social control* aimed directly at stopping disruptive behavior.

An often-stated assumption is that stopping the behavior will make the student amenable to teaching. In a few cases, this may be so. However, the assumption ignores all the work that has led to understanding *psychological reactance* and the motivational need for individuals to restore their sense of self-determination.

The argument is sometimes made that the reason students continue to misbehave is because the wrong socialization practices have been used or have been implemented incorrectly. In particular, schools have been criticized for overemphasizing punishment. To move schools beyond overreliance on punishment, there is ongoing advocacy for social skills training, asset development, character education, and positive behavior support initiatives. The move from punishment to positive approaches is a welcome one, but most of the new initiatives have not focused enough on providing systemic ways to help teachers deal with student engagement issues.

What many of us have been taught about dealing with student misbehavior and learning problems runs counter to what we intuitively understand about human motivation. Teachers and parents, in particular, often learn to overdepend on reinforcement theory,

despite the appreciation they may have of the importance of intrinsic motivation (see **Exhibit 9**).

Those who argue we must focus on basics are right; but too ignored in school improvement planning have been the basics related to student intrinsic motivation.

Student engagement and re-engagement must be less about reacting to behavior problems and more about enhancing motivation to learn at school—with a strong emphasis on intrinsic motivation. As this is such a fundamental matter for school improvement, we devote Module 5 to this topic.

## The Three Lenses and School Improvement Planning

The *Rebuilding for Learning*<sup>TM</sup> initiative's vision fits well with the mission statement of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The Council sagely stresses that:

*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.*

Ensuring that all children have an equal opportunity to succeed at school involves building on what is working well at schools, enhancing capacity for promoting promising practices, escaping old ideas that limit school improvement and establishing new approaches that are effective, sustained, and replicated.

*Rebuilding for Learning*<sup>TM</sup> uses the three lenses previously highlighted to zero-in on ways to redress key problems confronting schools by focusing school improvement planning on the development of a comprehensive system of learning supports that enables students to:

- get around the barriers
- re-engage in classroom instruction (see **Exhibit 10**).

Exhibit 9

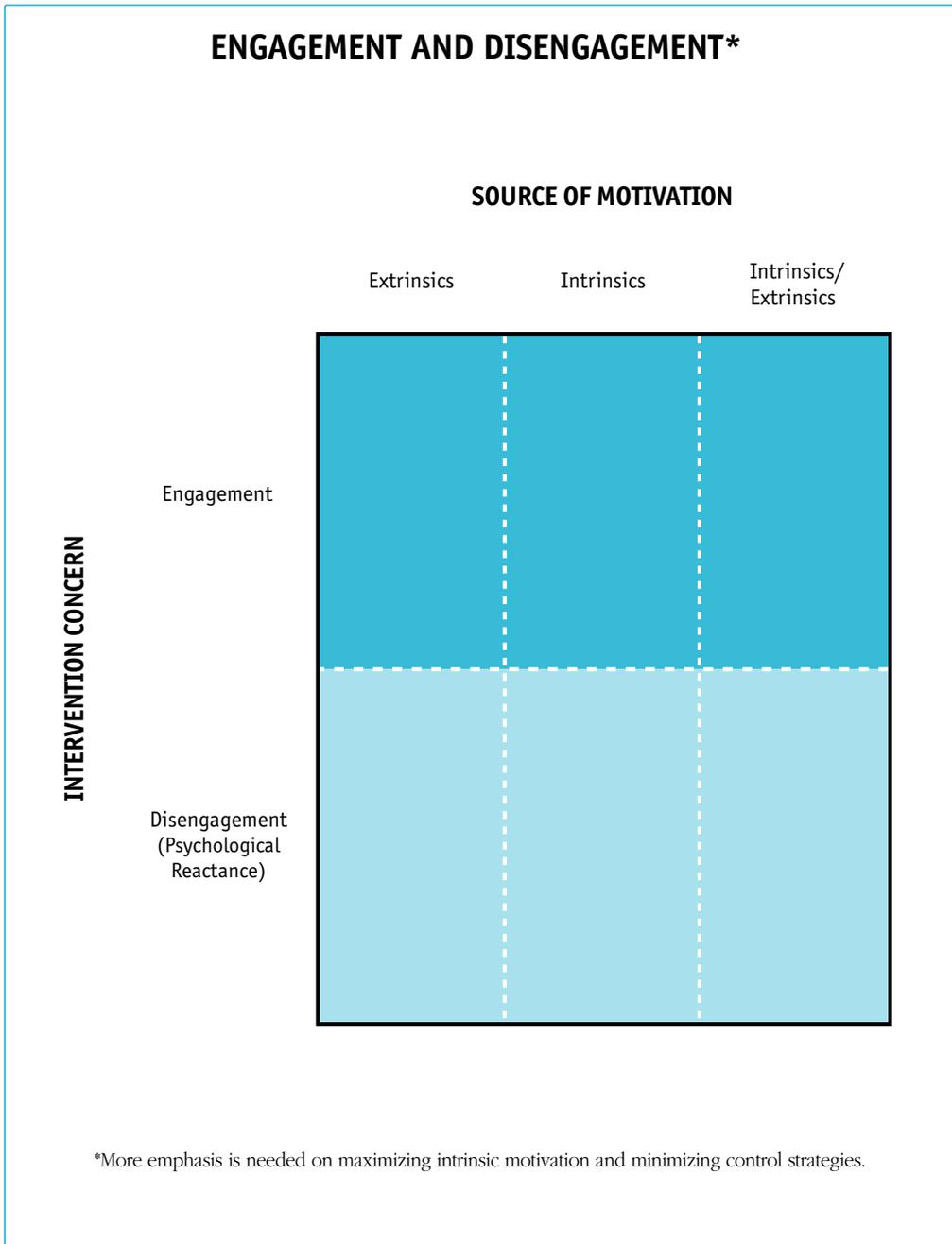
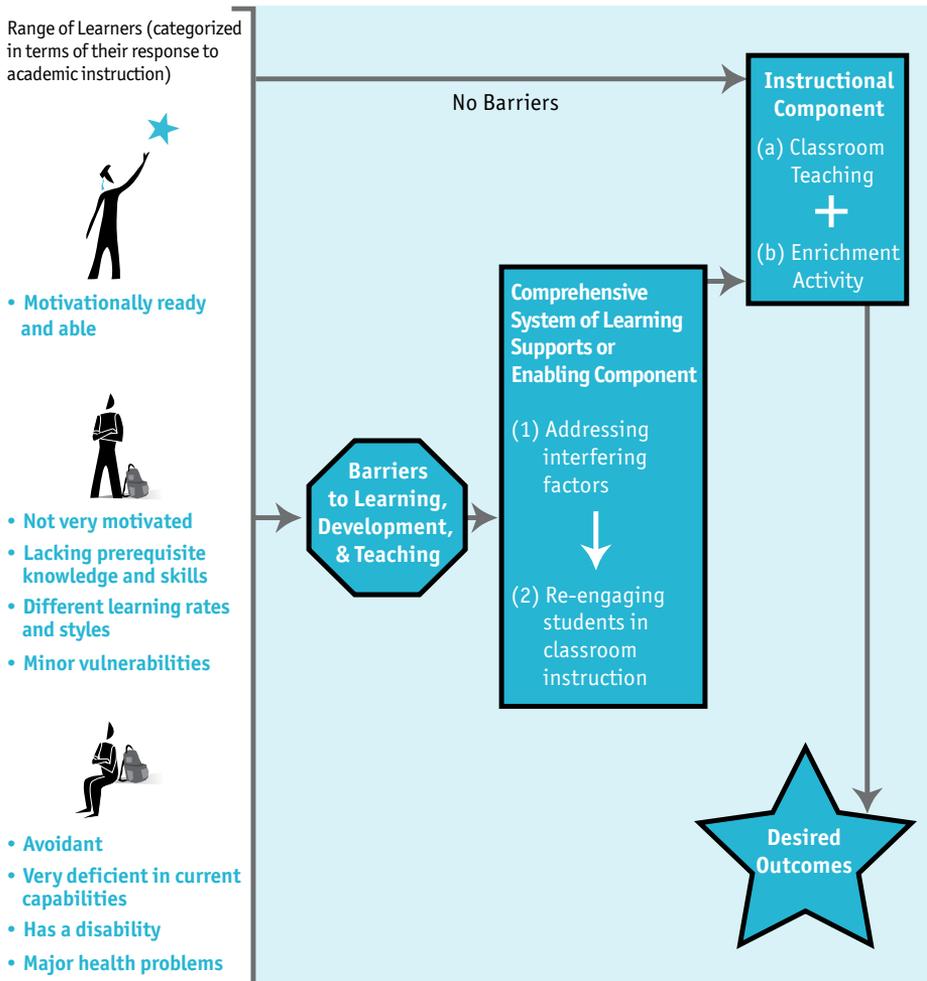


Exhibit 10

## DOES SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING ENCOMPASS A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF LEARNING SUPPORTS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS AND RE-ENGAGE STUDENTS?





# What is a comprehensive system of learning supports?

## Key Topics Explored...

- .....
- ⚙️ What are learning supports?
- .....
- ⚙️ What must school improvement planners focus on to ensure schools develop comprehensive systems of learning supports?
  - A) Blueprints for reframing intervention
  - B) Blueprints for redesigning operational and organizational infrastructure
  - C) Policy implications
- .....

Breakthroughs in the battles against learning, behavior, and emotional problems can be achieved only when school improvement policy, planning, implementation, and accountability fully address factors interfering with learning and teaching. As we have previously noted, this requires more than coordinating school-owned services, more than coordinating school services with community services, and more than creating family resource centers, full service schools, and community schools. None of these alone constitutes a comprehensive system of learning supports.

To clarify what such a system is, we begin with a working definition of the term *learning supports*. Then, we sketch out two sets of blueprints to a) reframe student support *interventions* into a comprehensive system of learning supports and b) provide prototypes for redesigning *organizational and operational infrastructure* at the school, feeder pattern, and district levels. We end with a brief look at c) some fundamental policy implications.

## What are learning supports?

Every district is likely to define learning supports in its own way. In doing so, it is essential to keep in mind that, if schools are to achieve their mission, they must effectively address the problems of the *many* students who are not benefiting from instructional reforms. With that in mind, learning supports are intended to encompass what *all* schools in a district need to do to enable *all* students to learn and *all* teachers to teach effectively. This is especially important in settings where large numbers of students are manifesting learning, behavior, and emotional problems and at any school that is not paying adequate attention to matters of equity and diversity.

From this perspective, learning supports involve 1) addressing barriers to learning and teaching and 2) re-engaging students in classroom instruction. Here is a working definition that has been incorporated into one state's proposed legislation.

*Learning supports are the resources, strategies, and practices that provide physical, social, emotional, and intellectual assistance intended to enable all pupils to have an equal opportunity for success at school.*

To accomplish this, a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive learning support system should be integrated with instructional efforts and interventions provided in classrooms and schoolwide to address barriers to learning and teaching. From: *proposed legislation in California to establish a comprehensive pupil learning support system*

## What must school improvement planners focus on to ensure schools develop a comprehensive system of learning supports?

Developing a comprehensive learning supports component in all schools requires phasing in significant systemic changes over a period of years. Initially, the emphasis is on weaving together what schools already have (e.g., pupil services, special and compensatory education and other categorical programs). Then, the focus expands to development of an integrated set of systems. Over time, this includes an increasing effort to link school resources with those in homes and communities (e.g., formally connecting school programs with assets at home, in the business and faith communities, and neighborhood enrichment, recreation, and service resources).

**Learning supports must be developed for the classroom and schoolwide.**

Accomplishing all this involves:

- **Reframing intervention**
- **Redesigning *organizational* and *operational infrastructure***

This also encompasses rethinking the roles and functions of those personnel at schools and central offices who are responsible for learning supports, establishing new collaborative arrangements, and redistributing authority. Given the degree of systemic changes involved, it is important for policy and decision makers to ensure that those responsible for making the changes have appropriate incentives and safeguards, as well as adequate resources and support.

**We do recognize all this is easy to say and rather more difficult to implement.**

## Part A: Blueprints for reframing intervention

We assume that any district's instructional agenda encompasses more than the 3 Rs. That is, there also is a focus on promoting healthy physical, social, and emotional development. In order to accomplish this, every school needs to anticipate and proactively plan to address barriers to learning. This adds three essential functions as illustrated in **Exhibit 11**:

- Preventing problems
- Intervening as early after the onset of problems as is feasible
- Providing specialized assistance for those with severe, pervasive, or chronic problems

Schools currently have some interventions related to each of these functions. However, the efforts are not organized into a cohesive framework.

School improvement efforts require a comprehensive and unifying intervention framework to guide development of a system of learning supports. To this end, we offer blueprints for:

- 1) an integrated and systemic continuum of interventions and
- 2) a multifaceted and cohesive set of intervention content arenas. Then, we meld the two together to create the framework for
- 3) a comprehensive learning supports component.

### A continuum of integrated school-community intervention systems

Over time, schools can transform their fragmented learning support activities into a fully integrated continuum containing systems for:

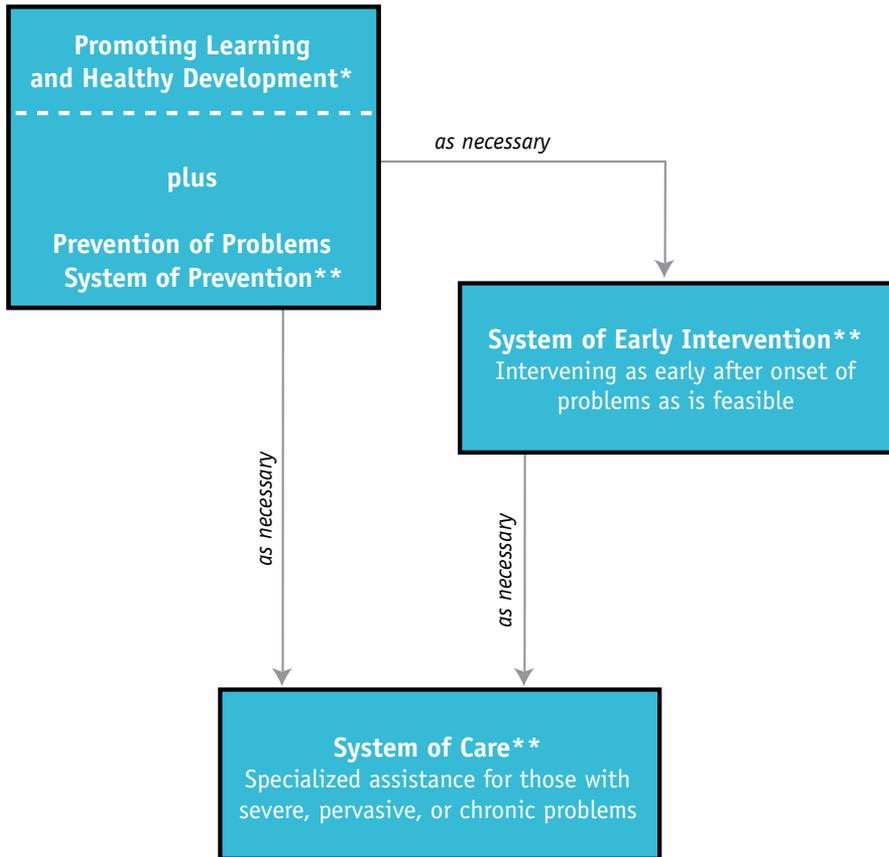
- Promoting healthy development and preventing problems
- Intervening early to address problems as soon after onset as is feasible
- Assisting with chronic and severe problems

In keeping with public education and public health perspectives, such a continuum encompasses efforts to enable academic, social, emotional, and physical development and address behavior, learning, and emotional problems at every school.

As illustrated in **Exhibit 12**, the continuum spans the full spectrum of prevention efforts and incorporates a holistic and developmental emphasis that envelops individuals, families, and the contexts in which they live, work, and play. The continuum also provides a framework for adhering to the principle of using the least restrictive and most non-intrusive forms of intervention required to appropriately respond to problems and to accommodate diversity.

Exhibit 11

**MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS REQUIRES PROMOTION OF ASSETS, PREVENTION OF PROBLEMS, AND PROVIDING APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE.**

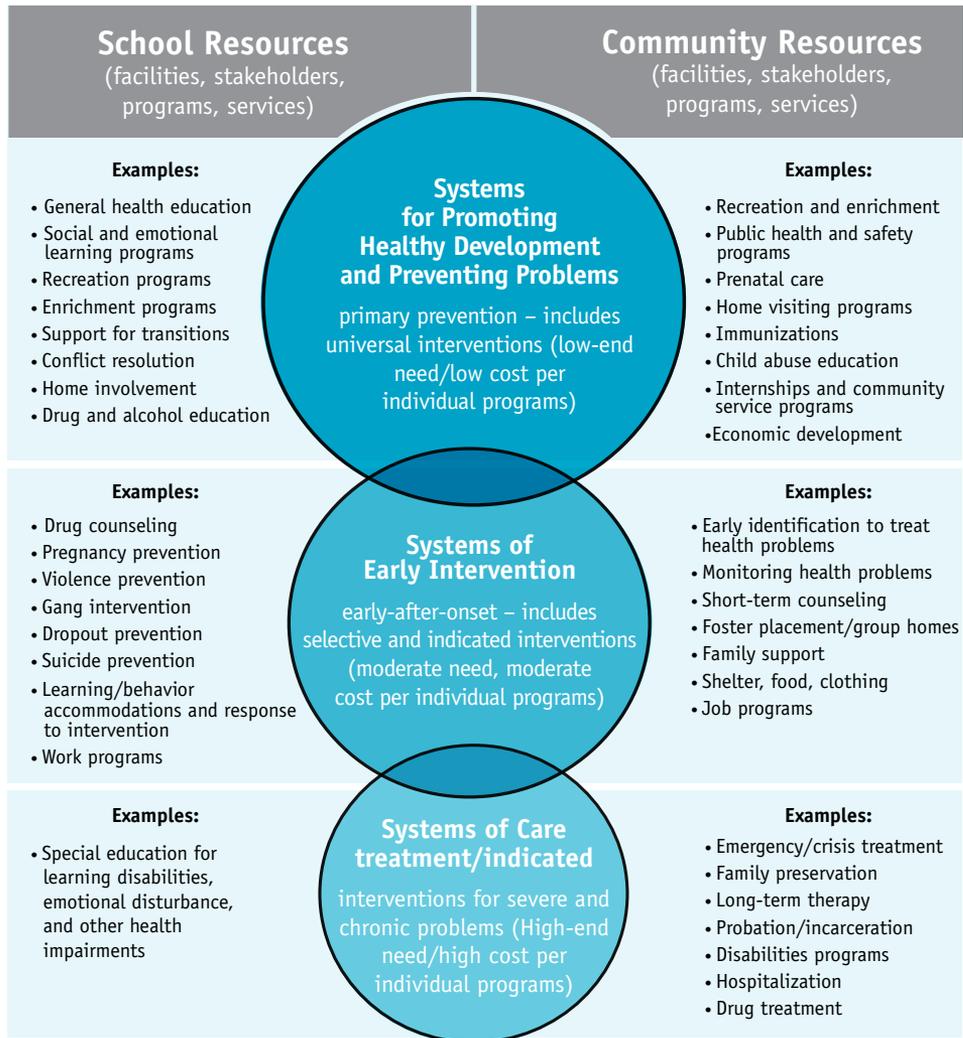


\*Interventions to directly facilitate development and learning

\*\*Interventions that combine to establish a full continuum for addressing barriers to learning and development

Exhibit 12

## LEVELS OF INTERVENTION: CONNECTED SYSTEMS FOR MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS\*



\*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 for promoting healthy development and preventing problems, systems of early intervention, and systems of care.

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.

Moreover, given the likelihood that many problems are not discrete, the continuum can be designed to address root causes, thereby minimizing tendencies to develop separate programs for each observed problem. In turn, this enables better coordination and integration of resources, and this can increase impact and cost effectiveness.

As graphically illustrated by the tapering of the three levels of intervention in the exhibit, development of a fully integrated set of systems is meant to reduce the number of individuals who require specialized supports. That is, the aim in developing such an approach is to prevent the majority of problems; deal with another significant segment as soon after problem onset as is feasible, and end up with relatively few students needing specialized assistance and other intensive and costly interventions.

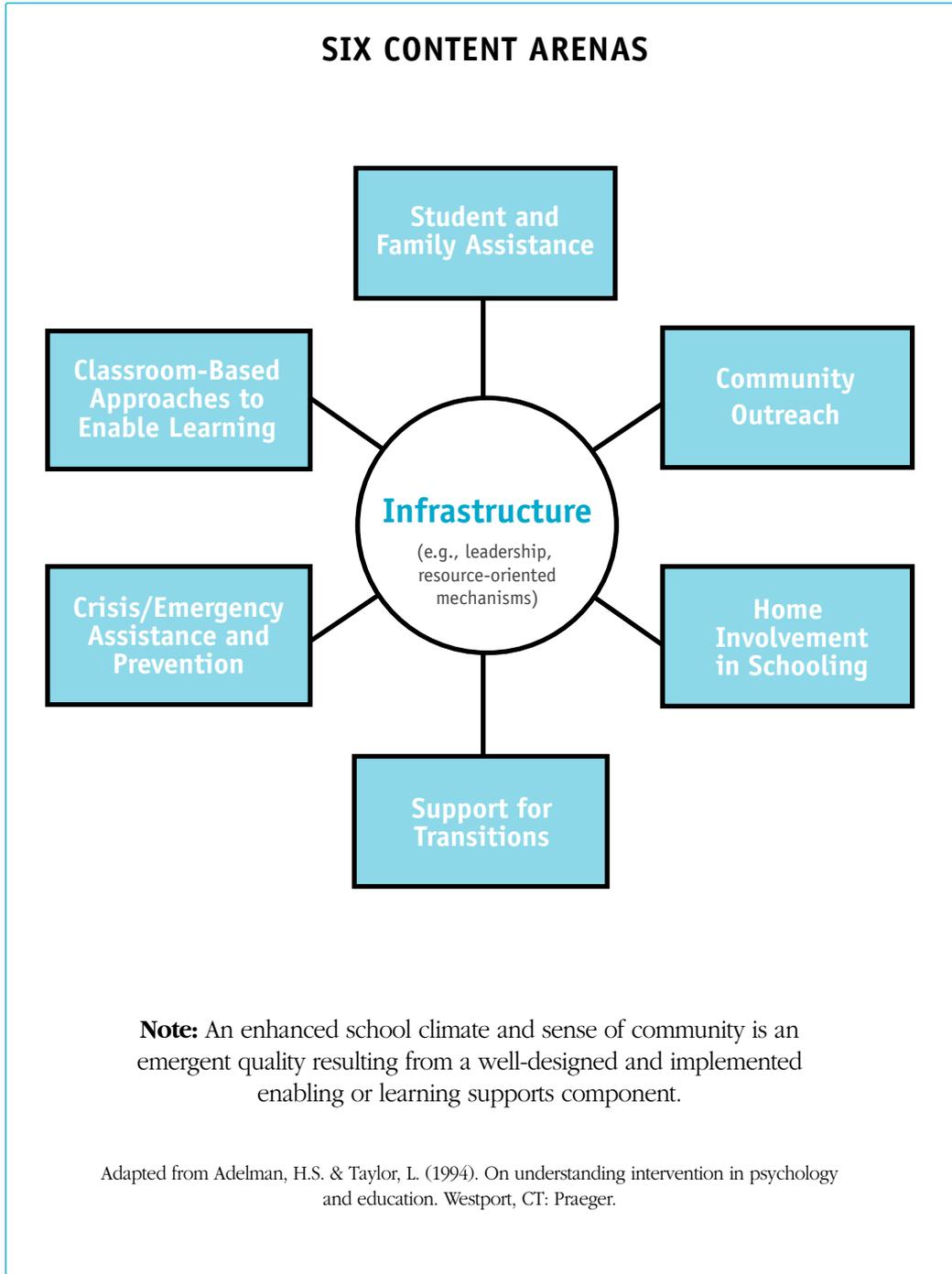
### **A multifaceted and cohesive set of content arenas**

A second facet of a comprehensive learning supports component is the set of content arenas that have emerged from pioneering intervention efforts. Various interventions at each level of the continuum have been grouped into six programmatic arenas that serve as a defined content or “curriculum” blueprint. The six arenas capture the essence of the multifaceted ways schools must address barriers to learning.

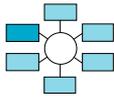
As illustrated in **Exhibit 13** and highlighted by the examples in **Exhibits 14A-F**, the six arenas encompass interventions for:

- **Enhancing regular classroom strategies to enable learning (e.g., improving and personalizing instruction for students shown to have become disengaged from learning at school and for those with mild to moderate learning and behavior problems, establishing a welcoming and supportive classroom environment)**
- **Responding to, and where feasible, preventing crises**
- **Supporting transitions (e.g., welcoming and providing social support for newcomers, assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes, and other transitions)**
- **Increasing home connections to the school**
- **Increasing community involvement and support (outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers)**
- **Facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed**

Exhibit 13



## Exhibit 14A



## CLASSROOM-BASED APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND RE-ENGAGING STUDENTS IN CLASSROOM LEARNING

### Classroom-based efforts to enable learning

- Prevent problems; intervene as soon as problems are noted
- Enhance intrinsic motivation for learning
- Re-engage students who have become disengaged from classroom learning

### Opening the classroom door to bring available supports in

- Peer tutors, volunteers, aids (trained to work with students-in-need)
- Resource teachers and student support staff

### Redesigning classroom approaches to enhance teacher capability to prevent and handle problems and reduce need for out of class referrals

- Personalized instruction; special assistance as necessary
- Developing small group and independent learning options
- Reducing negative interactions and overreliance on social control
- Expanding the range of curricular and instructional options and choices
- Systematic use of peripheral interventions

### Enhancing and personalizing professional development

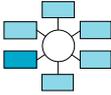
- Creating a learning community for teachers
- Ensuring opportunities to learn through co-teaching, team teaching, mentoring
- Teaching intrinsic motivation concepts and their application to schooling

### Curricular enrichment and adjunct programs

- Varied enrichment activities that are not tied to reinforcement schedules
- Visiting scholars from the community

### Classroom and school-wide approaches used to create and maintain a caring and supportive climate

- Emphasis is on enhancing feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to others at school and reducing threats to such feelings

**Exhibit 14B**

## CRISIS ASSISTANCE AND PREVENTION

### **School-wide and classroom-based efforts for**

- Responding to crises
- Minimizing the impact of crises
- Preventing crises

### **Ensuring immediate assistance in emergencies so students can resume learning**

#### **Providing follow-up care as necessary**

- Brief and longer-term monitoring

### **Forming a school-focused Crisis Team to formulate a response plan and take leadership for developing prevention programs**

### **Mobilizing staff, students, and families to anticipate response plans and recovery efforts**

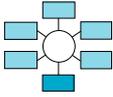
#### **Creating a caring and safe learning environment**

- Developing systems to promote healthy development and prevent problems
- Bullying and harassment abatement programs

### **Working with neighborhood schools and community to integrate planning for response and prevention**

### **Staff/stakeholder development focusing on the role and responsibility of all in promoting a caring and safe environment**

## Exhibit 14C



## SUPPORT FOR TRANSITIONS

### School-wide and classroom-based efforts to

- Enhance acceptance and successful transitions
- Prevent transition problems
- Use transition periods to reduce alienation
- Use transition periods to increase positive attitudes/motivation toward school and learning

### Welcoming and social support programs for newcomers

- Welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions
- Peer buddy programs for students, families, staff, volunteers

### Daily transition programs for

- Before school, breaks, lunch, afterschool

### Articulation programs

- Grade to grade (new classrooms, new teachers)
- Elementary to middle school; middle to high school
- In and out of special education programs

### Summer or intersession programs

- Catch-up, recreation, and enrichment programs

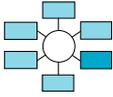
### School-to-career/higher education

- Counseling, pathway, and mentor programs

### Broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions

- Students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education

### Staff/stakeholder development for planning transition programs/activities

**Exhibit 14D**

## HOME INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLING

### **School-wide and classroom-based efforts to engage the home in**

- Strengthening the home situation
- Enhancing problem-solving capabilities
- Supporting student development and learning
- Strengthening school and community

### **Addressing specific support and learning needs of family**

- Support services for those in the home to assist in addressing basic survival needs and obligations to the children
- Adult education classes to enhance literacy, job skills, English as a second language, citizenship preparation

### **Improving mechanisms for communication and connecting school and home**

- Opportunities at school for family networking and mutual support, learning, recreation, enrichment, and for family members to receive special assistance and to volunteer to help
- Phone calls from teacher and other staff with good news
- Frequent and balanced conferences (student-led when feasible)
- Outreach to attract hard-to-reach families (including student dropouts)

### **Involving homes in student decision making**

- Families prepared for involvement in program planning and problem solving

### **Enhancing home support for learning and development**

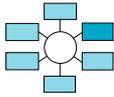
- Family literacy, family homework projects, family field trips

### **Recruiting families to strengthen school and community**

- Volunteers to welcome and support new families and help in various capacities
- Families prepared for involvement in school governance

### **Staff/stakeholder development to broaden awareness of and plan programs to enhance opportunities for home involvement**

## Exhibit 14E



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT (INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS)

**Building linkages and collaborations to strengthen students, schools, families, and neighborhoods**

**Planning and implementing outreach to recruit a wide range of community resources**

- Community resources such as public and private agencies; colleges and universities; local residents; artists and cultural institutions, businesses and professional organizations.; service, volunteer, and faith-based organizations
- Community policy and decision makers

**Systems to recruit, screen, prepare, and maintain community resource involvement**

- Mechanisms to orient and welcome
- Mechanisms to enhance the volunteer pool
- Mechanisms to maintain current involvements; enhance sense of community

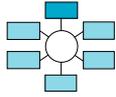
**Reaching out to students and families who don't come to school regularly – including truants and dropouts**

**Connecting school and community efforts to promote child and youth development and a sense of community**

**Capacity building to enhance community involvement and support**

- Policies/mechanisms to enhance and sustain school-community involvement
- Staff/stakeholder development on the value of community involvement
- “Social marketing”

## Exhibit 14F



## STUDENT AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE

**Specialized assistance provided through personalized health and social service programs**

**Providing support as soon as a need is recognized and doing so in the least disruptive ways**

- Peripheral interventions in classrooms
- Problem-solving conferences with parents
- Open access to school, district, and community support programs

**Referral interventions for students and families with problems**

- Screening, referrals, and follow-up – school-based, school-linked

**Enhancing access to direct interventions for health, mental health, and economic assistance**

- School-based, school-linked, and community-based programs

**Follow-up assessment to check whether referrals and services are adequate and effective**

**Mechanisms for resource coordination to avoid duplication of and fill gaps in services and enhance effectiveness**

- School-based and linked, feeder family of schools, community-based programs

**Enhancing stakeholder awareness of programs and services**

**Involving community providers to fill gaps and augment school resources**

**Staff/stakeholder development to enhance effectiveness of student and family assistance systems, programs, and services**

## Framework for a comprehensive enabling or learning supports component

Combining the six content arenas with the continuum of interventions provides a unifying intervention framework. This component is referred to as an enabling or a learning supports component. The resultant matrix is shown in **Exhibit 15**.

The framework is designed to guide and unify school improvement planning. To accomplish this, existing support programs must be reframed and efforts must be made over time to braid school, community, and home resources. Toward these ends, the framework facilitates mapping and analyzing the current scope and content of how a school, a group of schools (e.g., a feeder pattern of schools) a district, and the community at each level addresses barriers to learning and teaching and how the framework intervenes to re-engage students in classroom instruction.

In applying the framework, planners need to focus on classroom-based and school-wide approaches. This requires:

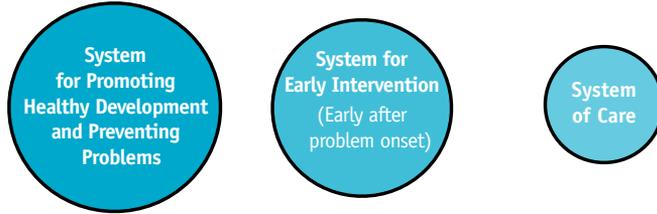
- Addressing barriers and re-engagement through a broader view of “basics” and through effective accommodation of individual differences and disabilities
- Enhancing the focus on motivational considerations with a special emphasis on intrinsic motivation (as it relates to individual readiness and ongoing involvement with the intent of fostering intrinsic motivation as a basic outcome—see Module 5)
- Adding remediation, treatment, and rehabilitation as necessary—but only as necessary

The *Rebuilding for Learning*<sup>TM</sup> kit designed for the Institute provides access to a set of tools for mapping and analyzing the scope and content of efforts to address barriers. One such tool is included for use as an activity at the end of Part A.

As **Exhibit 16** illustrates, a major goal is to reduce the number of students who require costly, specialized interventions. For individual youngsters, this means preventing and minimizing as many problems as feasible and doing so in ways that maximize engagement in productive learning. For the school and community as a whole, the intent is to produce a safe, healthy, nurturing environment/culture characterized by respect for differences, trust, caring, support, and high expectations.

Exhibit 15

## COMBINED CONTINUUM AND CONTENT ARENAS PROVIDE THE FRAMEWORK FOR A COMPREHENSIVE ENABLING OR LEARNING SUPPORTS COMPONENT\*

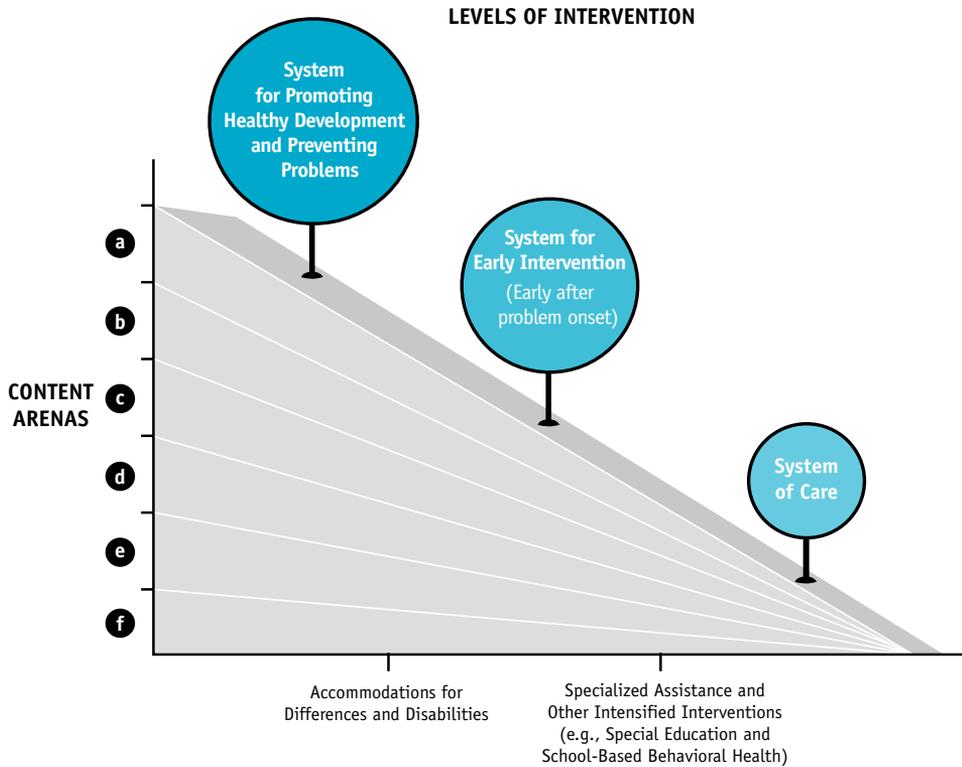


		LEVELS OF INTERVENTION	
<b>CONTENT ARENAS</b>	<b>Classroom-Based Approaches to Enable Learning</b>		
	<b>Crisis/Emergency Assistance and Prevention</b>		
	<b>Support for Transitions</b>		
	<b>Home Involvement in Schooling</b>		
	<b>Community Outreach/Volunteers</b>		
	<b>Student and Family Assistance</b>		
		Accommodations for Differences and Disabilities	Specialized Assistance and Other Intensified Interventions (e.g., Special Education and School-Based Behavioral Health)

\*Note: Various venues, concepts, and initiatives will fit into several cells of the matrix. Examples include venues such as day care centers, preschools, family centers, and school-based health centers, concepts such as social and emotional learning and development, and initiatives such as positive behavior support, response to interventions, and the coordinated school health program. Most of the work of the considerable variety of personnel who provide student supports also fits into one or more cells.

Exhibit 16

## A COMPREHENSIVE ENABLING OR LEARNING SUPPORTS COMPONENT IS DESIGNED TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS REQUIRING SPECIAL ASSISTANCE



KEY	
a	Classroom-Based Approaches to Enable Learning
b	Crisis/Emergency Assistance and Prevention
c	Support for Transitions
d	Home Involvement in Schooling
e	Community Outreach/Volunteers
f	Student and Family Assistance

## CASE STUDY

### What might a fully functioning learning supports component look like at the school level?

Hawaii has legislated what it calls a Comprehensive Student Support System (CSSS). CSSS is intended to ensure that every school develops a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated component to address barriers to learning and to promote healthy development. The following outline of what a fully functioning enabling or learning supports component might look like at a school is adapted from a description developed for use by CSSS.

A school with a learning supports component integrates the component as a primary and essential facet of school improvement. Given limited resources, such a component is established by deploying, redeploying, and weaving all existing learning support resources together.

The school has redesigned its infrastructure to establish an administrative leader who guides the component's development and is accountable for daily implementation, monitoring, and problem solving. There is a team (e.g., a Learning Supports Resource Team) focused on ensuring that all relevant resources are connected together to install an integrated continuum of interventions over a period of years. The team maps and analyzes available resources, sets priorities, and organizes work groups to plan program development. As illustrated in **Exhibit 12** the goal is to establish effective systems for:

- Promoting healthy development and preventing problems
- Responding to problems as soon after onset as is feasible
- Providing specialized assistance and care

The work involves creating the continuum in keeping with the content or “curriculum” framework the school has adopted for its enabling or learning supports component (e.g., see the six arenas illustrated in **Exhibit 13**).

While the focus of the team is on resource use and program development, it also ensures that effective mechanisms are in operation for responding rapidly when specific students are identified as having mild to moderate learning, behavior, and emotional problems. For most students, the problems can be addressed through relatively straightforward situational and program changes and problem-solving strategies.

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## CASE STUDY (cont'd)

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Based on analyses of their response to such interventions, additional assistance in the classroom is provided to those for whom these first methods are insufficient. Those whose problems persist are referred for additional and sometimes specialized assistance.

Before such interventions are set in motion, in-depth analyses are made of the causes of student problems in order to ensure appropriate assistance is planned. All special interventions are carefully monitored and coordinated. Through a sequential strategy that begins with the least intervention needed and that gauges students' responses at every stage, there is a significant reduction in the number requiring intensive help and referral for specialized assistance.

Because there is an emphasis on programs and activities that create a school-wide culture of caring and nurturing, students, families, staff, and the community perceive school as a welcoming and supportive place. When problems arise, they are responded to positively, quickly, and effectively. Morale is high among faculty and students alike.

The following should be understood as examples of the types of interventions that might be used with any student who experiences barriers to learning. Remember the point is to ensure a full continuum is available at schools so that the least number of intervention strategies are implemented and students' responses to intervention can be used to gauge whether more intensive help and referrals for specialized assistance are required. When such a sequential approach is followed, schools can expect a significant reduction in the flow of referrals for specialized assistance.

### **EXAMPLE/Focusing on helping the teacher with student re-engagement, rather than overemphasizing discipline and referral for services**

The Grade 3 teacher has several students who had not been doing well at school. They often were in trouble on the playground before school and during lunch. Before the learning supports component was established, the teacher constantly had to discipline and send them to the principal's office. They had been referred to the "student success team" but were just put on a long list waiting to be reviewed. Now, the focus is on how to enhance what goes on in the classroom and on school-wide changes that minimize negative encounters.

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## CASE STUDY (cont'd)

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This approach minimizes the need for classroom management, discipline, and outside referral for expensive special services.

The focus on enhancing teacher capacity to re-engage students in daily learning activities is helping the teacher learn more about matching individual interests and skills and how to design the instructional day to provide additional supports from peers and community volunteers. Rather than seeing the solution in terms of discipline, she learns how to understand what is fostering problems and is able to provide a more personalized approach to instruction and extra in-classroom support that will re-engage the students. Over time, all student support staff (all professional staff who are not involved in classroom instruction) are trained to go into the classroom to help the teacher learn and implement new engagement approaches.

At the same time, the focus on enhancing support for transition times (such as before school and lunch) increases the recreational and enrichment opportunities available for all students so that they have positive options for interaction. Staff involved in playground supervision are specifically asked to help engage the students in an activity that interests them (e.g., a sports tournament or an extramural club activity). They monitor involvement to ensure the students are truly engaged, and along with one of the student support staff (e.g., school psychologist, counselor, social worker, nurse), the playground staff use the opportunity to help these and other students learn any interpersonal skills needed to interact well with peers.

### **Newcomers: One example of support for transitions and home involvement**

To increase family involvement in schooling, special attention is placed on enhancing welcoming and social support strategies for new students and families. Student support staff work with office staff to develop welcoming programs and establish social support networks (e.g., peer buddy systems for students; parent-parent connections). As a result, newcomers (and all others) are greeted promptly and with an inviting attitude when they come into the school. Those without correct enrollment records are helped to access what they need. Parents are connected with another parent who helps them learn about school and neighborhood resources. Upon entering the new classroom, teachers connect the newcomer with a trained peer buddy who sticks with the newcomer for a few weeks while he or she learns the ropes.

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## CASE STUDY (cont'd)

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Support staff work with each teacher to identify any student who hasn't made a good transition. Together they determine why and work with the family to turn things around.

### **Crisis prevention**

To reduce the number of crises, student support staff analyze what is preventable (usually related to human relations problems) and then design a range of school-wide prevention approaches. Among these are strategies for involving all school personnel (credentialed and classified) in activities that promote positive interactions and natural opportunities for learning pro-social behavior and mutual respect.

### **Fewer referrals, better response**

As the in-classroom and school-wide approaches emerge, the need for out-of-classroom referrals declines. This allows for rapid and early response when a student is having problems, and it enables student support staff to work more effectively in linking students with community services when necessary.

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### ACTIVITY

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#### Looking at the schools you know...

How close are schools to having a comprehensive system of learning supports? To answer this, see the tool for mapping and analyzing learning supports provided during the Institute.

## Part B: Blueprints for redesigning organizational and operational infrastructure

The fundamental principle in developing an organizational and operational infrastructure is that *structure follows function*. That is, the focus should be on establishing an infrastructure that enables accomplishment of major functions and related tasks in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

A well-designed organizational and operational infrastructure ensures that fundamental functions and processes are properly guided and carried out on a regular basis. Such an infrastructure enables leaders to steer together and work productively with staff on major tasks. These include, for example, designing and directing activity, planning and implementing specific organizational and program objectives, allocating and monitoring resources with a clear content and outcome focus, facilitating coordination and integration to ensure cohesive implementation, managing communication and information, providing support for capacity building and quality improvement, ensuring accountability, and promoting self-renewal.

Because the current infrastructure mainly supports efforts to improve instruction, the intent to develop a system of learning supports calls for a redesign of current organizational and operational infrastructure. The need is for an infrastructure that supports and fully integrates efforts to 1) improve instruction, 2) address barriers to learning and teaching, and 3) improve governance and management.

In recent years, we have worked with a representative sample of districts in urban, suburban, and rural localities across the country. Given our concern, we particularly focused on the ways in which districts and schools were organized to carry out tasks dealing with barriers to learning and teaching. From that work, we garnered an appreciation of the many tasks that must be carried out district-wide and by schools. At the same time, we found little consensus about what constitute best practice infrastructures.

In outlining blueprints for organizational and operational infrastructure redesign, we suggest a good strategy is to plan from the school outward to establish compatible and interconnected infrastructures at schools, for school complexes, and at the district level. From this perspective, we first offer a prototype for the school level, then we highlight the importance of connecting groups of schools (e.g., feeder patterns), and finally we outline changes at the district level to enhance support of the work at school and school complex levels.

**Not another reorganization!** Most school and district leaders have been through reorganization after reorganization.

*Why another one?*

Because by reorganizing, it is possible to free up the time and talents of student support personnel in ways that can have great payoffs. These include making better use of the resources allocated for student support programs, services, and personnel, enhancing cost-effective connections with community resources, and moving from reacting to problems to preventing many of them.

And, all this makes it more likely that schools will achieve desired outcomes for students.

So, the school improvement planning time spent on reorganizing to build a comprehensive system of learning supports will prove to be time well-invested.

## At school and school complex levels

As previously noted, every school spends resources on student learning supports. In some schools, as much as 30 percent of the budget may be going to problem prevention and correction.

**Exhibit 17** portrays what the student support infrastructure tends to look like at most schools. As illustrated, these schools have infrastructure mechanisms that consist of designated administrative and staff leadership and work groups for their instructional and management or governance components. It is the personnel involved with these mechanisms who generally do school improvement planning.

In contrast, the only organized infrastructure mechanisms around student supports at a school are two *case-oriented* teams that usually have overlapping members. One team, sometimes called a student study, assistance, or intervention team, processes referrals of students with moderate problems. The other team, an IEP team, does individual education planning for students diagnosed with a disability. These mechanisms have no formal linkages with each other or with the other operational and planning mechanisms.

*A blueprint for school-level infrastructure.* **Exhibit 18** illustrates a redesigned school infrastructure prototype. As can be seen, a learning supports component is established that encompasses the two case-oriented teams within an organizational framework that designates leadership, a resource-oriented mechanism, and work groups to carry out delineated tasks.

Exhibit 17

## WHAT THE STUDENT SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE LOOKS LIKE AT MOST SCHOOLS

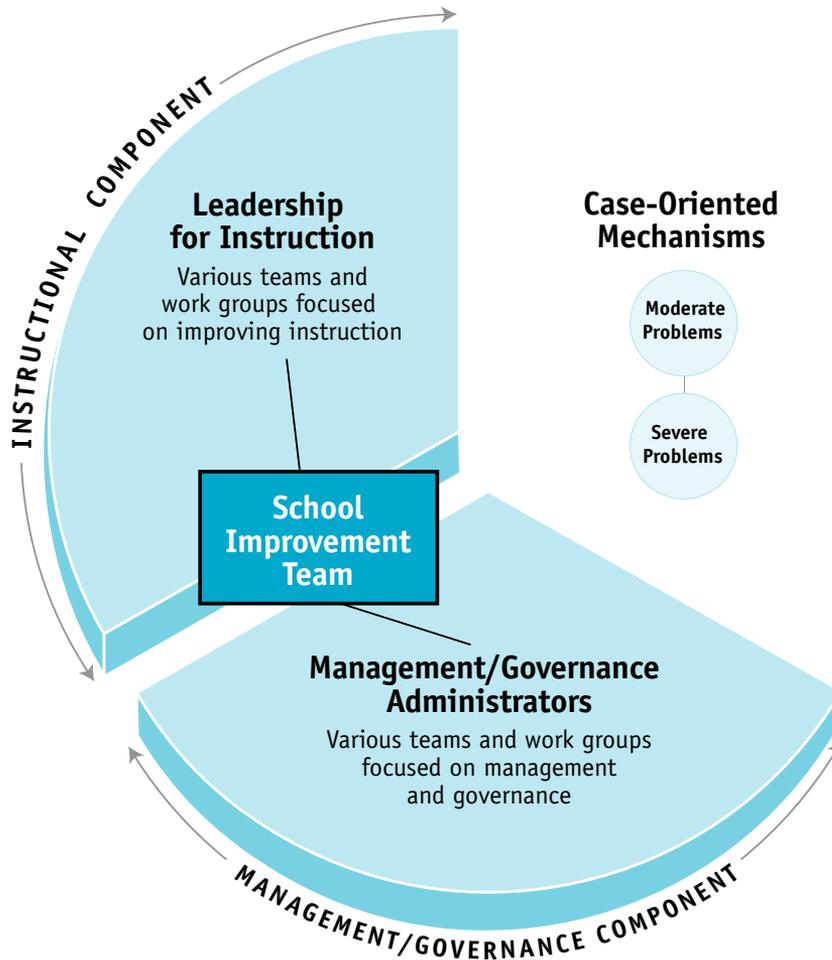
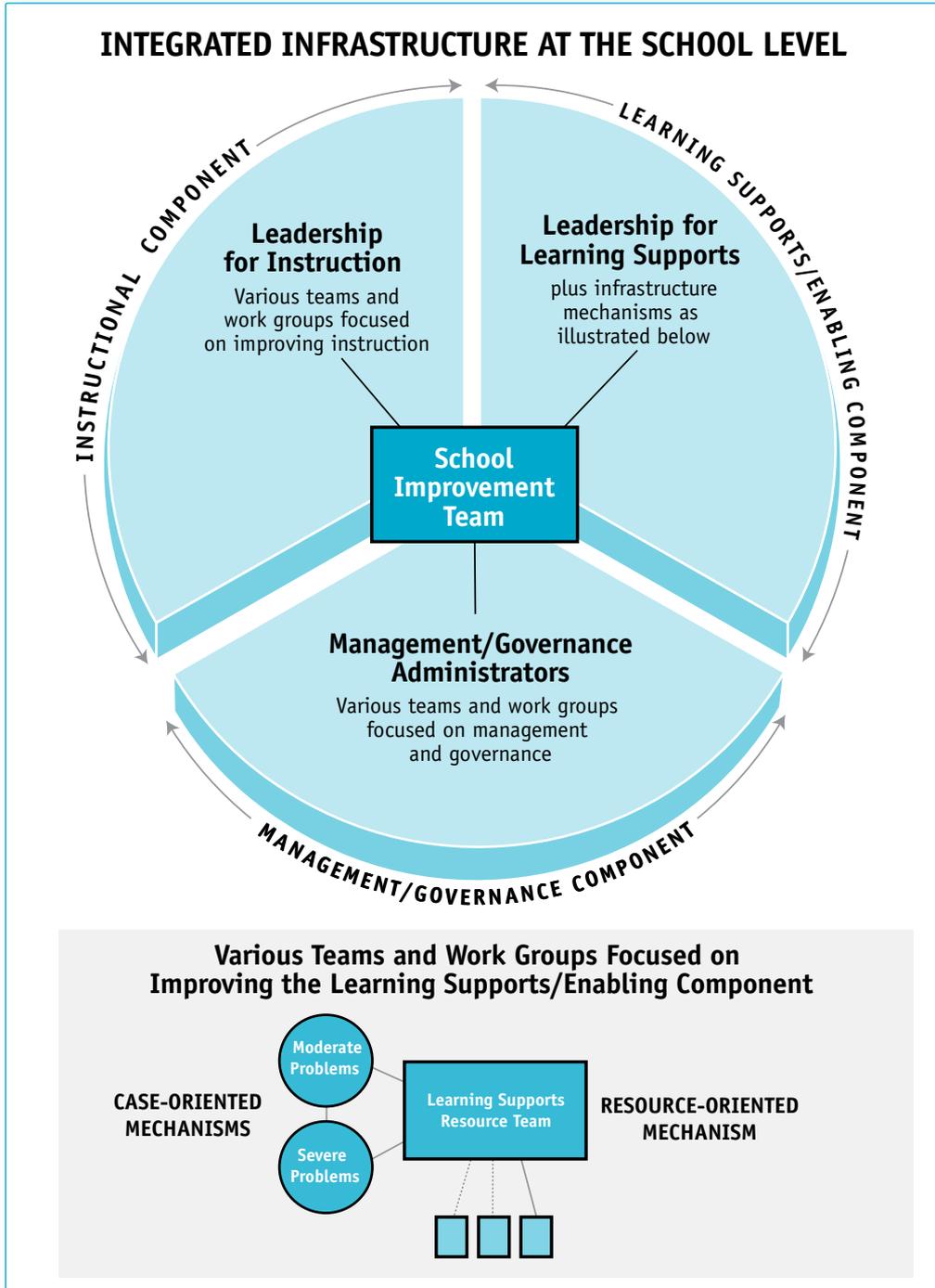


Exhibit 18



## To elaborate on the infrastructure for a learning supports or enabling component:

*Leadership* for addressing barriers to learning and teaching requires an administrator and other advocates/champions with responsibility and accountability for promoting the vision for the component and ensuring that continuous progress is made. Such leadership parallels that which is assigned to the instructional and management components.

A *key resource-oriented mechanism* (e.g., a *Learning Supports Resource Team*) focuses on how resources are used, rather than on processing specific individuals. A school-based, resource-oriented team ensures cohesion, integrated implementation, and ongoing development of the learning supports system. Ideally, it meets weekly to guide and monitor daily implementation and development of all school programs, services, initiatives, and systems. The administrative leader meets with the team and provides regular input.

*Work group mechanisms* usually are ad hoc and standing work groups. Initially, these may be “teams” that already exist for various initiatives and programs (e.g., a crisis team) and for processing “cases” (e.g., a student assistance team, an IEP team). Where redundancy exists, work groups can be combined. Others are formed as needed by the Learning Supports Resource Team to address specific concerns. These groups are essential for accomplishing the many tasks associated with developing a system of learning supports.

*Small schools*, obviously, have less staff and other resources than larger schools. Thus, the added challenge in a small school is how to do it with so few personnel. The key is to use and modestly expand the roles and staffing of existing infrastructure mechanisms. This means that, rather than thinking in terms of different mechanisms for each function, the added functions and tasks for addressing barriers are assumed by existing and, as feasible, expanded infrastructure mechanisms (e.g., the School Leadership Team). Usually, the principal and whoever else is part of a school leadership team will lead the way in improving instruction and management/governance. As presently constituted, however, such a team may not be prepared to advance development of a learning supports system. Thus, someone already on the leadership team will need to be assigned this role and trained to carry it out effectively.

Alternatively, someone in the school who is involved with student supports (e.g., a pupil services professional, a Title I coordinator, a special education resource specialist) can be invited to join the leadership team, assigned responsibility and accountability for ensuring the vision for the component is not lost, and provided additional training for the tasks involved in being a learning supports component lead. The lead, however chosen, will benefit from eliciting the help of other advocates/champions at the school and in the community.

Those providing student and learning supports at a school are the primary resources for staffing infrastructure mechanisms for a learning supports component. Ironically, because such staff often are itinerant circuit riders, schools rarely have a formal catalogue listing such personnel and their roles and functions. **Exhibit 19** illustrates a simple format for doing this.

**Exhibit 19**

**LEARNING SUPPORTS STAFF AT A SCHOOL\***

*In a sense, each staff member is a special resource for each other. A few individuals are highlighted here to underscore some special functions.*

**Administrative Leader for Learning Supports**

\_\_\_\_\_

**School Psychologist** \_\_\_\_\_  
times at the school \_\_\_\_\_

- Provides assessment and testing of students for special services. Counseling for students and parents. Support services for teachers. Prevention, crisis, conflict resolution, program modification for special learning and/or behavioral needs.

**School Nurse** \_\_\_\_\_  
times at the school \_\_\_\_\_

- Provides immunizations, follow-up, communicable disease control, vision and hearing screening and follow-up, health assessments and referrals, health counseling and information for students and families.

**Pupil Services and Attendance Counselor**

\_\_\_\_\_

times at the school \_\_\_\_\_

- Provides a liaison between school and home to maximize school attendance, transition counseling for returnees, enhancing attendance improvement activities.

**Social Worker**

\_\_\_\_\_

times at the school \_\_\_\_\_

- Assists in identifying at-risk students and provides follow-up counseling for students and parents. Refers families for additional services if needed.

**Counselors**

\_\_\_\_\_

times at the school \_\_\_\_\_

- General and special counseling/guidance services. Consultation with parents and school staff.

**Dropout Prevention Program Coordinator**

\_\_\_\_\_

times at the school \_\_\_\_\_

- Coordinates activity designed to promote dropout prevention.

**Title I and Bilingual Coordinators**

\_\_\_\_\_

- Coordinate categorical programs, provide services to identified Title I students, implement Bilingual Master Plan (supervising the curriculum, testing, and so forth).

**Resource and Special Education Teachers**

\_\_\_\_\_

times at the school \_\_\_\_\_

- Provide information on program modifications for students in regular classrooms as well as providing services for special education.

Other important resources:

**School-Based Crisis Team (list by name/title)**

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**School Improvement Program Planners**

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**Community Resources**

- Providing school-linked or school-based interventions and resources.

Who	What they do	When
_____/_____	_____/_____	_____/_____
_____/_____	_____/_____	_____/_____
_____/_____	_____/_____	_____/_____
_____/_____	_____/_____	_____/_____

\*Examples of job descriptions for a learning support component's leadership at a school site are online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aidd.pdf>

## More about about resource-oriented mechanisms

Resource-oriented mechanisms focus specifically on how learning support resources are used. At schools, for groups of schools, and at the district level they are essential for *weaving together* existing school and community resources and developing a full continuum of interventions over time. (see **Exhibit 20**) Such mechanisms enable programs and services to function in an increasingly cohesive, cost-efficient, and equitable way.

Although content and resource-oriented mechanisms might be created solely around psychosocial programs, they are meant to focus on all major student support activity. When the infrastructure includes a resource-oriented “team,” a new means is created for enhancing working relationships and solving turf and operational problems.

One of the essential tasks resource-oriented mechanisms undertake is that of delineating school and community resources (e.g., programs, services, personnel, facilities) that are in place to assist students, families, and staff. A comprehensive “gap” assessment is generated as resource mapping is aligned with unmet needs and desired outcomes. Analyses of what is available, effective, and needed provide a sound basis for formulating priorities, redeploying resources, and developing strategies to link with additional resources at other schools, district sites, and in the community (see list of resources and references). Such analyses guide efforts to improve cost-effectiveness and enhance resources.

### No time!

Student support staff often say:

*Don't you realize I have a full caseload and have to respond to some student crisis almost every day? Where do I find the time to build a system of learning supports?*

We recognize the challenge. But, what also must be recognized is that full caseloads and small numbers of support staff mean that relatively few of the many students in need can be served. Redeploying time and talents to build a system of learning supports will eventually enable staff to efficiently meet the needs of many students.

So, we call for a reduction in current caseload to free up about 20 percent of support staff time for working together to develop a system of learning supports. Their first emphasis in designing and implementing programs should be on addressing common, preventable problems (e.g., school adjustment problems resulting from inadequate supports for school and grade transitions, negative peer interactions in the schoolyard resulting from the lack of well-planned and supervised recreation programs). Given that effective programs are put in place to reduce the frequency of such problems and thus the number of students referred for services, the caseload reduction will be more than justified.

## Exhibit 20

## **NEEDED: A SCHOOL-BASED RESOURCE-ORIENTED MECHANISM**

*(e.g., a Learning Support Resource Team)*

### **What are its functions?**

- Aggregating data across students and from teachers to analyze school needs
- Mapping resources
- Analyzing resources
- Enhancing resources
- Program and system planning/development
- Redeploying resources
- Coordinating and integrating resources
- “Social marketing”

### **If it is a team, how many are on it?**

From two – to as many as are willing and able

### **Another team?**

Not necessarily – but definitely a different agenda and time to do it

### **Who’s on it? (depends on what’s feasible)**

- The administrative leader for a learning supports component
- School staff *(e.g., counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, attendance and dropout counselors, special education staff, health educators, bilingual program coordinators, teachers)*
- 1-2 parents
- 1-2 older students
- Representatives of any community resources/agencies who are working closely with the school

### **Infrastructure connections:**

- The administrator on the team represents the team at administrator meetings
- One member must be an official representative on the school’s governance body
- One member represents the team on the complex’s Learning Support Resource Council

See one-page handout on *What is a Learning Supports Resource Team?* online at  
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resource\\_coord\\_team.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resource_coord_team.pdf)

*School-based* resource-oriented teams do not focus on specific individuals, but on how resources are used (see **Exhibit 21**). Such a team can be designated by a variety of names including “Resource Coordinating Team,” “Resource Management Team,” and “Learning Supports Resource Team.” For purposes of this discussion, we will use the last of these.

We initially demonstrated the feasibility of such teams in the Los Angeles Unified School District, and now they are being introduced in many schools across the country. Properly constituted at the school level, such a team provides on-site leadership for efforts to address barriers comprehensively, and ensures development, maintenance, and improvement of a multifaceted and integrated approach.

A resource-oriented team exemplifies the type of mechanism needed to pursue overall cohesion and ongoing development of school support programs and systems. At the very least, it can reduce fragmentation and enhance cost-efficiency by guiding programs to perform in a coordinated and increasingly integrated way. More generally, the group can provide leadership in guiding school personnel and clientele in evolving the school’s vision, priorities, and practices for student learning supports.

In pursuing its work, the team provides what often is a missing link for managing and enhancing programs and systems in ways that strengthen and stimulate new and improved interventions. For example, such a link can be used to 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, suggesting better uses for resources, and establishing priorities for developing new interventions, as well as reaching out to connect with additional resources in the school district and community.

To these ends, efforts are made to bring together representatives of all relevant programs and services. At a school, this might include, for example, school counselors, psychologists, nurses, social workers, attendance and dropout counselors, health educators, special education staff, after school program staff, bilingual and Title I program coordinators, safe and drug-free school staff, and union reps. Such a team also should include representatives of any community agency that is significantly involved with a school. Beyond these stakeholders, it is advisable to add the energies and expertise of classroom teachers, non-certificated staff, parents, and older students.

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 perform resource-oriented tasks. In adding the resource-oriented tasks to another team’s work, great care must be taken to structure the agenda so sufficient time is devoted to the additional tasks. For small schools, a large team often is not feasible, but a two-person team can still perform effectively.

## Exhibit 21

**CONTRASTING TEAM TASKS****A CASE-ORIENTED TEAM**

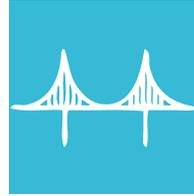
Focuses on specific *individuals* and discrete *services* to address barriers to learning

**Sometimes called:**

- Child Study Team
- Student Study Team
- Student Success Team
- Student Assistance Team
- Teacher Assistance Team
- IEP Team

**EXAMPLES OF MAJOR TASKS:**

- Triage
- Referral
- Case monitoring/management
- Case progress review
- Case reassessment

**A RESOURCE-ORIENTED TEAM**

Focuses on *all* students and the *resources, programs, and systems* to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development

**Possibly called:**

- Resource Coordinating Team
- Resource Coordinating Council
- School Support Team
- Learning Supports Resource Team

**EXAMPLES OF MAJOR TASKS:**

- Aggregating data across students and from teachers to analyze school needs
- Mapping resources
- Analyzing resources
- Enhancing resources
- Program and system planning/development including emphasis on establishing a full continuum of intervention
- Redeploying resources
- Coordinating and integrating resources
- “Social marketing”

## Connecting a group of schools with each other, with the district, and with the community

It can be invaluable to link a group of schools together to maximize use of limited resources and achieve economies of scale. Schools in the same geographic or catchment area have a number of shared concerns. Furthermore, some programs and personnel already are shared or can be shared by several neighboring schools, thereby minimizing redundancy, reducing costs, and enhancing equity. **Exhibit 22** outlines a multi-site mechanism connecting schools in a feeder pattern with each other as well as with the district and the community.

As illustrated, a multi-site team (e.g., a *Learning Supports Resource Council*) 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 that often don't have the time or personnel to make independent arrangements with every school.

In general, a group of schools can benefit from a multi-site resource mechanism designed to provide leadership, facilitate communication and connection, and ensure quality improvement across sites. For example, the Learning Supports Resource Council, might consist of a high school and its feeder middle and elementary schools. It brings together one or two representatives from each school's resource team.

The council meets about once a month to help a) coordinate and integrate programs serving multiple schools, b) identify and meet common needs with respect to guidelines and staff development, and c) create linkages and collaborations among schools and with community agencies. In this last regard, it can play a special role in community outreach both to create formal working relationships and make sure that all participating schools have access to such resources.

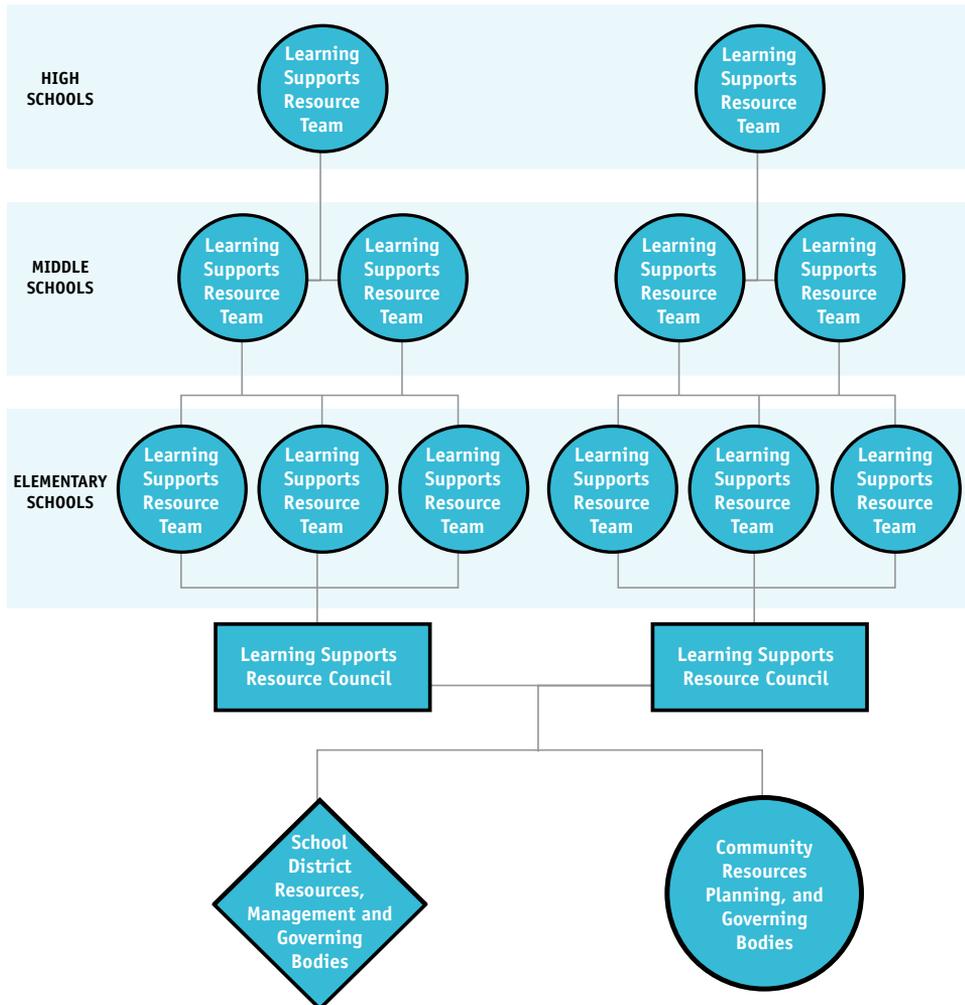
More generally, the council provides a useful mechanism for leadership, communication, maintenance, quality improvement, and ongoing development of a continuum of programs and services. Natural starting points for councils are the sharing of needs assessments, resource maps, analyses, and recommendations for reform and restructuring. Specific areas of initial focus would be on local, high priority concerns, such as addressing violence and developing prevention programs and safe school and neighborhood plans.

Representatives from Learning Supports Resource Councils would be invaluable members of planning groups (e.g., Service Planning Area Councils, Local Management

Exhibit 22

## ENHANCING A SYSTEM OF LEARNING SUPPORTS BY CONNECTING RESOURCES ACROSS

- a family of schools
- a district
- the community



Boards). They bring information about specific schools, clusters of schools, and local neighborhoods and do so in ways that reflect the importance of school-community partnerships. They can readily be transformed into an effective school-community collaborative.

### **Blueprint for redesigning district infrastructure**

We have stressed that the infrastructure for a comprehensive system of learning supports should be designed from the school outward. That is, conceptually, the emphasis is first on what an integrated infrastructure should look like at the school level. Then, the focus expands to include the mechanisms needed to connect a group or complex (e.g., feeder pattern) of schools and establish collaborations with surrounding community resources. Ultimately, central district units need to be redesigned in ways that best support the work at the school and school complex levels. It is imperative to establish infrastructure mechanisms that are integrated tautological—at each level and among levels and that are fully integrated into school improvement efforts.

Along with unifying various initiatives, projects, programs, and services, the need *at a school* is to rework infrastructure to support efforts to address barriers to learning in a cohesive manner and to integrate this work with efforts to facilitate instruction and promote healthy development. *At the district level*, the need is for administrative leadership and capacity building support that helps maximize development of a learning supports system at each school. And, it is crucial to establish the district's leadership for this work at a high enough level to ensure the administrator is always an active participant at key planning and decision-making tables.

### **How do districts organize to address barriers to learning and teaching?**

*What is currently done?* As is the case at the school level, prevailing district organizational and operational infrastructure tends to downplay and fragment learning support efforts. Here is a common example from one major urban school district.

The district has separate departments focusing on student support services, special education, attendance, child study, alternative schools, bilingual education, character education, after school programs, community services, and community and parent engagement. The department designated as the *Student Support Services Department* has responsibility for increasing the child's capacity to benefit from education by providing high quality health, counseling, psychological, social work, and prevention services that support student achievement, improve the relationship between teacher and child, promote parent involvement and engage the community with the schools. Student support services are

available to all district students including regular and special education students, LEP and early childhood students.

This department is divided into four units: 1) Counseling and Guidance (including elementary and secondary counseling and social work services), 2) Psychological Services, 3) Health and Medical Services (nurses), and 4) Student Engagement (focusing specifically on dropout prevention and attendance).

In addition to the data amassed from districts with which we have had direct contact, additional samples were gathered through the Internet and direct requests. Among those sampled were major urban districts (e.g., New York, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, Portland, St. Paul, Sacramento) as well as several rural districts.

We reviewed district hierarchy charts, descriptions of unit organization, and—where available—detailed descriptions of infrastructure, organizational, and operational mechanisms. Prevailing trends were then analyzed to clarify how districts organize to provide interventions. We analyzed the likelihood of infrastructure designs leading to the development of comprehensive systems of learning supports. The analysis suggests that the tendency is for districts to organize around:

- A) Levels of schooling** (e.g., elementary, secondary, early education),
- B) Traditional arenas of activity, discipline, affiliations, funding streams, and categorical programs** (e.g., curriculum and instruction; assessment; student supports including counseling and guidance, attendance, psychological and social services, health; specific types of support personnel such as counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses; professional development; special education; specific types of compensatory education such as Title I and English language learners; gifted and talented; safe and drug free schools; athletics, youth development, and after school programs; homeless education; alternative schools; dropout prevention; adult education),
- C) Operational concerns** (e.g., finances and budget, payroll and business services, facilities, human resources, labor relations, enrollment services, information technology, security, transportation, food, emergency preparedness and response, grants and special programs, legal considerations).

All the school districts we sampled have administrators, managers, and staff who have roles related to the districts' various efforts to address barriers. However, the programs, services, and initiatives often are divided among several associate or assistant superintendents, their middle managers (e.g., directors or coordinators for specific programs), and a variety of line staff.

The result is that activities related to the function of addressing barriers to learning and teaching are dispersed, often in counterproductive ways, over several divisions or departments. These include units designated as Student Services, Teaching and Learning, Title I, Parent/Community Partnerships, Grant and Special Projects, Youth Development, and so forth. Special Education may be embedded in a Student Support unit, in a Teaching and Learning unit, or organized as a separate unit.

In one district, they have an Office of Student Services that includes a student placement center, wellness program, guidance counseling, and related services and an Office of Instructional Services which houses special education, Title I, ESL, and a major demonstration pilot program that features learning supports.

Another district has a Division of Education Services that encompasses three departments: Academic Advancement, Learning Supports, and Special Assignments. Special Education, however, is a separate division.

Still another district reports having one assistant superintendent for Student Support Services (which includes guidance, social work, teen parenting, dropouts, community involvement, homeless education), and an assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction who has responsibility for special education, after school programs, and social emotional learning. At the same time, this district's deputy superintendent (who oversees the assistant superintendents) has direct responsibility for all special grant and federal programs, health services, and safe schools.

Regardless of the units involved, we find that the work being carried out primarily tends to center around allocating and monitoring resources, assuring compliance and accountability, providing some support for school improvement, generating some ongoing staff development, offering a few districtwide programs and services for students, and minimal outreach to community agencies.

## Moving forward

**Exhibit 23** offers a prototype to consider in reworking district infrastructure. As indicated, it is essential to have a cabinet level administrative leader (e.g., an associate superintendent, a chief officer) who is responsible and accountable for all resources used to address barriers to learning and teaching. The resources of concern come from the general fund, compensatory education, special education, and special projects (e.g., student support personnel such as school psychologists, counselors, social workers, nurses; compensatory and special education staff; special initiatives, grants, and programs for after school, wellness, dropout prevention, attendance, drug abuse prevention, violence prevention, pregnancy prevention, parent/family/health centers, volunteer assistance, community resource linkages to schools).

At the school and school complex levels, it is important to coalesce all this activity into a component that can develop into a comprehensive system of learning supports.

## Cabinet level leadership for the learning supports component

As the expanded illustration (**Exhibit 24**) outlines, once a learning supports administrator is appointed, that leader should establish mechanisms—comparable to content and process mechanisms for the instructional component—for accomplishing the unit’s work. Specifically, we suggest establishing a “cabinet” for learning supports consisting of leaders for major content arenas. The intent is for personnel to have accountability for advancing a specific arena and for ensuring a systemic and integrated approach to all learning supports. This, of course, requires cross-content and cross-disciplinary training.

A formal infrastructure link also is needed to make sure the learning supports system is fully integrated with overall school improvement efforts (e.g., in the classroom and schoolwide). This means the leader and members of the learning supports cabinet must be included at district planning and decision making tables with their instructional and management/governance counterparts. (in **Exhibits 23 and 24**, we designate the district mechanism for this as the Schools’ Improvement Planning Team.)

### ACTIVITY

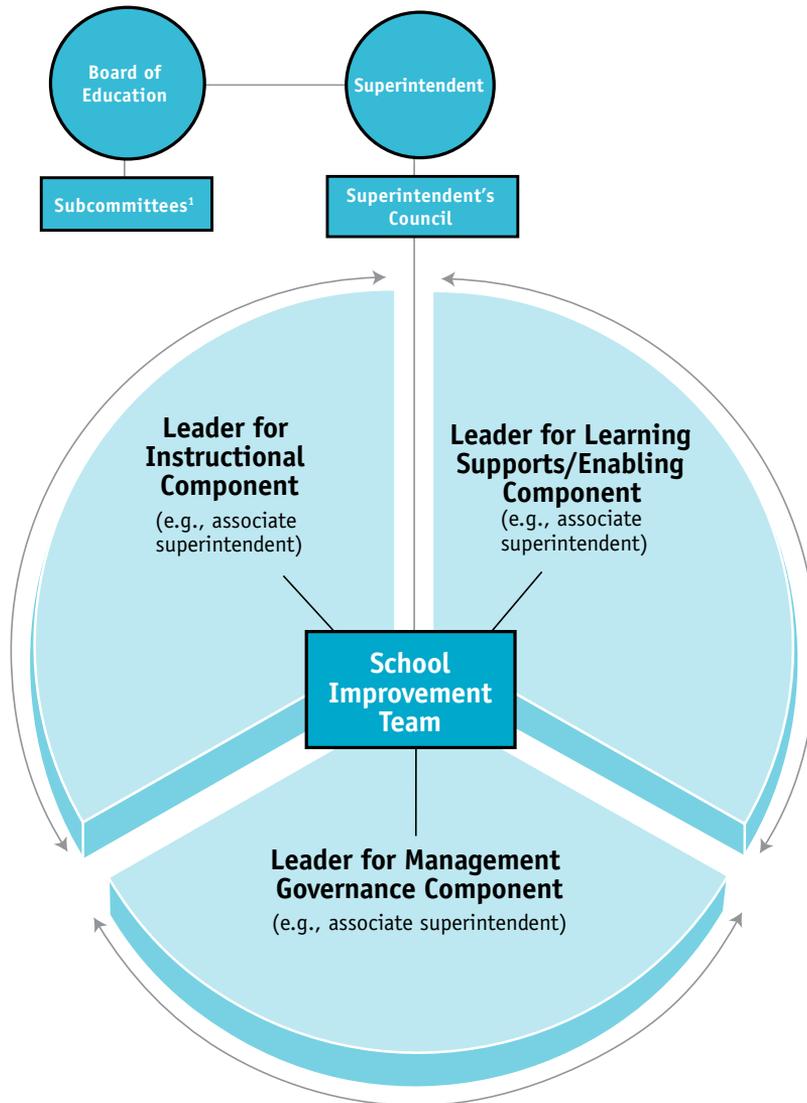
*Infrastructure: What do you have and is it what you need?*

**Looking at the schools you know... What does the operational infrastructure for developing a comprehensive system of learning supports look like at the school level? at the district level?**

**Use Exhibit 23 and Exhibit 24 on pages 72 and 73 as aids in doing this.**

Exhibit 23

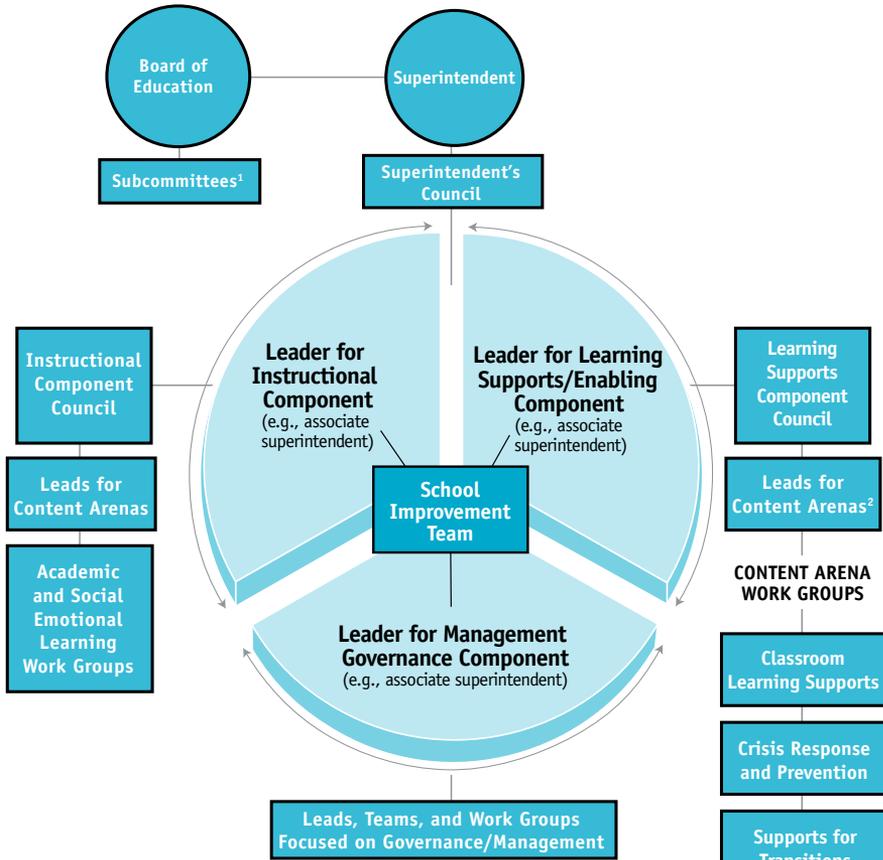
**PROTOTYPE FOR AN INTEGRATED INFRASTRUCTURE  
AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL: SUPERINTENDENT’S CABINET  
AND INTERFACE WITH BOARD OF EDUCATION**



**Notes:** 1. If there isn't one, a board subcommittee for learning supports should be created to ensure policy and supports for developing a comprehensive system of learning supports at every school (see Center documents Restructuring Boards of Education to Enhance Schools' Effectiveness in Addressing Barriers to Student Learning <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/boardrep.pdf> and Example of a Formal Proposal for Moving in New Directions for Student Support <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newdirections/exampleproposal.pdf>).

Exhibit 24

## PROTOTYPE FOR AN INTEGRATED INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL WITH MECHANISMS FOR LEARNING SUPPORTS THAT ARE COMPARABLE TO THOSE FOR INSTRUCTION



- Notes:**
1. If there isn't one, a board subcommittee for learning supports should be created to ensure policy and supports for developing a comprehensive system of learning supports at every school (see Center documents Restructuring Boards of Education to Enhance Schools' Effectiveness in Addressing Barriers to Student Learning <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/boardrep.pdf> and Example of a Formal Proposal for Moving in New Directions for Student Support <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newdirections/exampleproposal.pdf>).
  2. All resources related to addressing barriers to learning and teaching (e.g., student support personnel, compensatory and special education staff and interventions, special initiatives, grants, and programs) are integrated into a refined set of major content arenas such as those indicated here. Leads are assigned for each arena and work groups are established.

## Part C: Policy implications

School improvement policy is currently dominated by a two-component model. That is, the primary thrust is on improving instruction and school management (see **Exhibits 25**). While continuous improvement in these two facets obviously is essential, this emphasis is insufficient for too many students. A third component designed to effectively address student learning, behavior, and emotional problems must be established as primary, essential, complementary, and overlapping.

This will require expanding current policy to enable development of a comprehensive system of learning supports. Such a focus must go well beyond school safety, classroom management, coordinated services, and so forth. There must be a classroom and school-wide emphasis on helping students around barriers and re-engaging them in classroom instruction. Policies that address barriers without also providing ways for students to re-engage in classroom learning lead to practices that are insufficient for sustaining student involvement, good behavior, and effective learning.

Reworking policy necessitates addressing barriers to learning as the third fundamental facet of education reform and school improvement. States and localities have adopted this third component as a basis for policy designed to develop learning supports systems. These policies recognize that schools must do much more to enable *all* students to learn and *all* teachers to teach effectively.

The intent, over time, is for schools to play a major role in establishing a comprehensive system of learning supports by enhancing how school resources are used and by weaving in community resources to fill critical gaps.

Exhibit 25A

### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IS CURRENTLY DOMINATED BY A TWO-COMPONENT FRAMEWORK

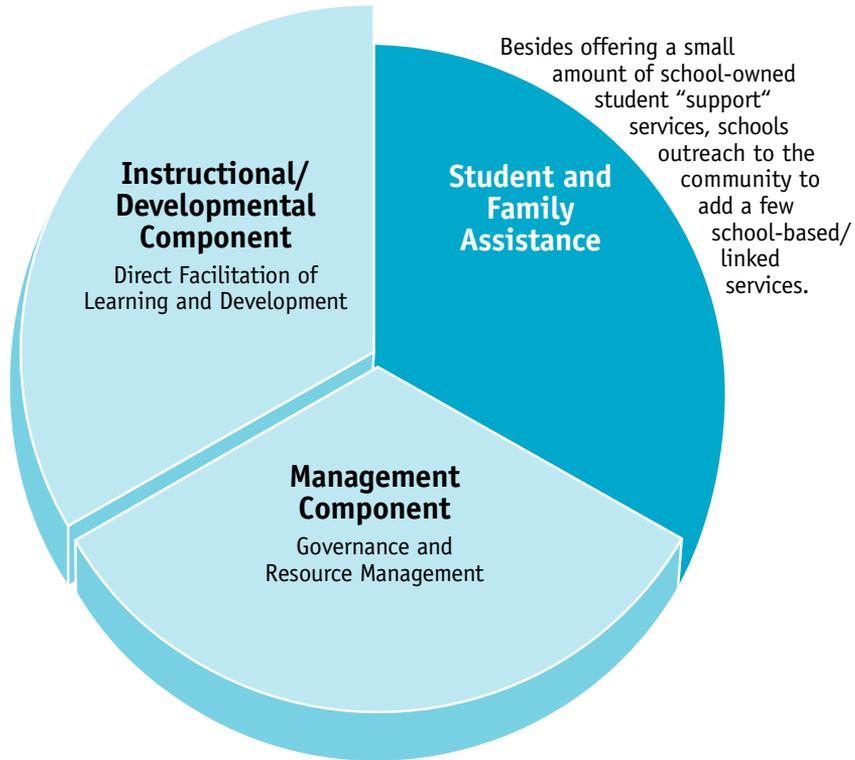
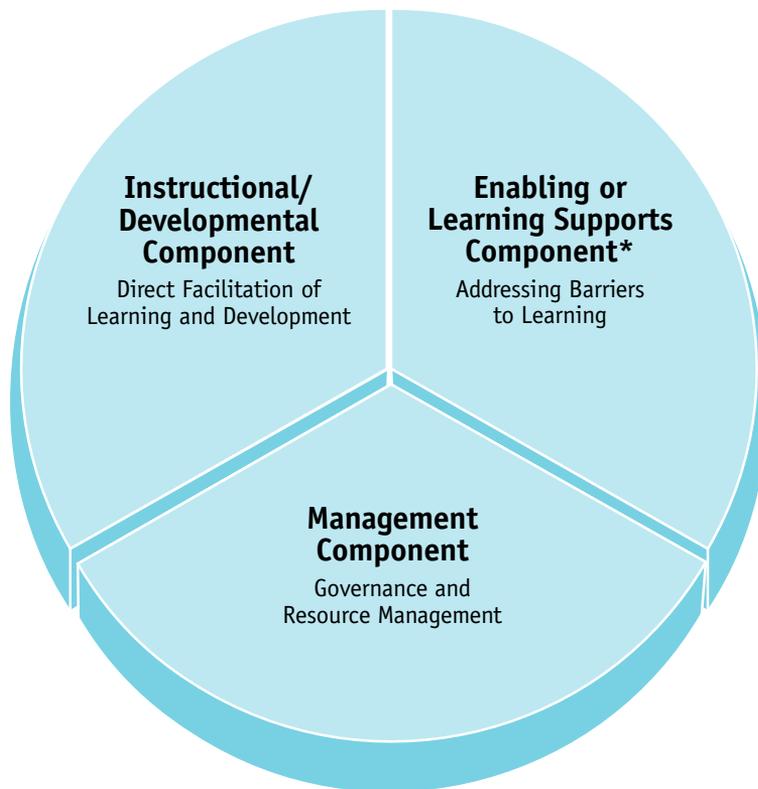


Exhibit 25B

**A THREE-COMPONENT FRAMEWORK IS NEEDED TO MOVE TOWARD  
A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF LEARNING SUPPORTS**



\*The Learning Supports Component is designed to enable learning by addressing factors that interfere with learning and teaching. It is established in policy and practice as primary and essential and is developed into a comprehensive approach by weaving together school and community resources.



## What are the implications for planning the necessary system changes?

### Key Topics Explored...

- ⚙️ The challenge of system change
- ⚙️ What are the phases and steps in developing a comprehensive system of learning supports?
- ⚙️ What are the capacity building implications?
- ⚙️ The importance of an expanded accountability framework

*Rebuilding for Learning*<sup>™</sup> calls for major systemic changes in schools and districts to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging students in classroom learning. We know that initiating such changes is not easy.

In discussing school change, Michael Fullan stresses the need for leadership that “motivates people to take on the complexities and anxieties of difficult change.” We would add that such leadership also must be ready to escape old ideas about student supports and refine their understanding of how to plan, facilitate, and sustain systemic changes.

In our ongoing analyses of school improvement efforts, we find little evidence of sophisticated strategic planning for how schools and districts intend to move from where they are to where they want to go when complex systemic change is indicated. Despite the fact that administrators increasingly are expected to effect fundamental changes, little attention is being paid to the intricacies of accomplishing such changes at school or district levels. This probably reflects the tendency in education for leadership training to give short shrift to the topics of planning and facilitating systemic changes at a school and replicating new approaches on a large scale.

Given this state of affairs, it is essential to turn now to a brief discussion of systemic change to develop a comprehensive system of learning supports. While we can't go into great detail here, it is worth highlighting the following:

- The challenge of effecting and sustaining substantive systemic changes
- Phases and steps in developing a comprehensive system of learning supports
- Systemic change infrastructure
- Some strategies for facilitating systemic changes
- The importance of expanding the accountability framework to reflect a three-component policy for school improvement

(For more detail, see references at the end of this document.)

## The challenge of pursuing sustainable systemic changes

Those who set out to improve schools and schooling across a district are confronted with two enormous tasks. The first is to develop a prototype; the second involves implementing systemic changes. The latter often begins at a few specific schools, but from an equity perspective, the task is to replicate the prototype throughout the district. In both cases, the work requires a clear vision, strong leadership, and adequate resources to build capacity for systemic change; and it draws on the available science-base.

With specific reference to the type of fundamental changes we have discussed, the first challenges are to formulate:

- **A *prototype design*** focusing on coalescing all learning supports into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated component for helping students around barriers and reconnecting and re-engaging them in classroom learning.
- **A *strategic plan*** for implementing such a new design—how to get from here to there. (Such a plan deals with concerns about capacity building to facilitate effective implementation at every school, redeployment and integration of existing resources, professional development of staff at all levels encompassing leadership/change agent training, developing understanding and motivational readiness for implementation of systemic changes, cross-content and cross-disciplinary training, etc.)

With these matters fully incorporated in school improvement policy and planning, the challenges of implementing change arise. The frequent failure to sustain innovations and take them to scale in school districts has increased interest in understanding systemic change implementation as a central concern in school improvement.

The difficulty in successfully implementing systemic change increases when planned school improvements are quite dissonant with the current culture in a district and at its schools. It should be evident by now that the systemic changes we have described in the preceding modules involve modifications that amount to a substantial shift in institutional organization and operation. Therefore, the first implementation challenges involve making sure that school improvement policy makers and planners understand and commit to the essential changes. This commitment needs to be reflected in policy statements and creation of infrastructure that provides essential leadership, resources, motivation, and capability for developing a learning supports system.

Additional implementation challenges will be evident as we now proceed to outline phases, steps, and strategies, infrastructure concerns, and the need for an expanded accountability framework.

### **Project Mentality is an Implementation Challenge**

The history of schools is strewn with valuable innovations that were not sustained or replicated. Naturally, financial considerations play a role in failures to sustain and replicate, but a widespread “project mentality” also is culpable.

Our interest in systemic change has evolved over many years of implementing demonstrations and working to institutionalize and diffuse new approaches in schools and throughout districts. By now, we are fully convinced that advancing the field requires escaping project mentality (sometimes referred to as “projectitis”) and becoming sophisticated about planning and facilitating sustainable systemic changes.

New initiatives usually are developed and initially implemented as a pilot demonstration at one or more schools. This is particularly the case for new initiatives that are specially funded projects. For those involved in projects or piloting new school programs, a common tendency is to think about their work as a time limited demonstration. And, other school stakeholders also tend to perceive the work as temporary (e.g., “It will end when the grant runs out” or “I’ve seen so many reforms come and go; this too shall pass.”). This mindset leads to the view that new activities will be fleeting. It also works against the type of systemic changes needed to sustain and expand major school improvements.

Efforts to make substantial and substantive school improvements require much more than implementing a few demonstrations. Improved approaches are only as good as a school district’s ability to develop and institutionalize them equitably in all its schools. This process often is called diffusion, replication, roll out, or scale-up.

To overcome the short-term mindset that “this too shall pass,” planning for development of a comprehensive system of learning supports needs to avoid terms such as pilots and demonstrations. Instead, a district’s strategic plan should delineate the process in terms of phases, with the end goal of replicating to scale.

## Phases and steps in developing a comprehensive system of learning supports

There are four overlapping phases of systemic change involved in prototype implementation and eventual scale-up. These are:

- 1) **Creating readiness**—increasing a climate and culture for change through enhancing both the motivation and the capability of a critical mass of stakeholders.
- 2) **Initial implementation**—change is phased in using a well-designed infrastructure for providing guidance and support and building capacity.
- 3) **Institutionalization**—accomplished by ensuring there is an infrastructure to maintain and enhance productive changes.
- 4) **Ongoing evolution and creative renewal**—through use of mechanisms to improve quality and provide continuing support in ways that enable stakeholders to become a community of learners who creatively pursue renewal.

At any time, a district may be involved in introducing innovations at one or more sites; it may also be involved in replicating one or more prototypes on a large scale. Whether the focus is on establishing a prototype at one site or replicating it at many, the systemic changes involve all four phases.

For purposes of planning implementation and outlining benchmarks for monitoring progress, each of the phases can be delineated in terms of key steps and tasks. For example, **Exhibit 26** highlights a set of steps and tasks related to establishing a system of learning supports at a school site.

It should be emphasized that the process is not as linear as **Exhibit 26** implies. For instance, overlapping the efforts to create readiness are processes to develop an organizational structure for start-up and phase-in. This involves establishing mechanisms and procedures to guide reforms, such as a steering group and leadership training, formulation of specific start-up and phase-in plans, and so forth.

## Exhibit 26

## OVERVIEW OF MAJOR STEPS TO ESTABLISHING A LEARNING SUPPORTS COMPONENT

### First Phase: *Creating Readiness and Commitment*

- Introduce basic ideas to relevant groups of stakeholders to build interest and consensus for the work, and to garner feedback and support.
- Establish a policy framework and get leadership commitment—the leadership should make a commitment to adopt comprehensive learning supports as a primary and essential component of school improvement.
- Identify a leader (equivalent to the leader for the instructional component) to ensure policy commitments are carried out for establishing the new component.

### Second Phase: *Start-up and Phase-in: Building Infrastructure and Capacity*

- Establish temporary mechanisms to facilitate initial implementation and systemic change (e.g., a steering group, an organization change facilitator) and develop the capacity of these mechanisms to guide and manage change and provide essential leadership during phase-in.
- Formulate specific start-up and phase-in actions.
- Refine infrastructure so that the component is fully integrated with the instructional and management components:
  - Establish and train an administrative leader;
  - Ensure there is a resource-oriented mechanism (e.g., a Learning Supports Resource Team) and train those who staff it in performing major resource-oriented tasks (e.g., mapping, analysis, coordinating, planning, setting priorities for program development, enhancing intervention systems);
  - Help organize work groups for each major arena of component activity and facilitate their initial mapping and analysis of resources along with formulation of recommendations;
  - Develop ad hoc work groups to enhance component visibility, communication, sharing, and problem solving.

## Exhibit 26 (cont'd)

## OVERVIEW OF MAJOR STEPS TO ESTABLISHING A LEARNING SUPPORTS COMPONENT (cont'd)

- Establish a system for quality improvement and evaluation of impact and integrate it into school improvement planning, evaluation, and accountability.
- Attempt to fill program or service gaps and pursue economies of scale through outreach designed to establish formal collaborative linkages among groups of schools (e.g., a feeder pattern) and among districtwide and community resources (e.g., through establishing a Learning Supports Resource Council).

### **Third Phase: *Sustaining and Evolving: Increasing Outcomes***

- Plan for maintenance
- Develop strategies for maintaining momentum and progress

### **Fourth Phase: *Generating Creative Renewal and Replication to Scale***

## Systemic change infrastructure

Implementation and scaling-up of major school improvement efforts require *administrative leadership* and the addition of *temporary infrastructure mechanisms* to facilitate changes. In general, existing infrastructure mechanisms must be modified in ways that guarantee new policy directions are translated into appropriate daily operations. Well-designed mechanisms ensure local ownership, a critical mass of committed stakeholders, processes that overcome barriers to stakeholders effectively working together, and strategies that mobilize and maintain proactive effort so that changes are implemented and there is renewal over time.

One way for a district to conceive the daily operational infrastructure for systemic change is in terms of a *system change staff*. As a group, such district staff has full-time responsibility for creating readiness, coalition building, implementing strategic plans, maintaining daily oversight, problem solving, resolving stakeholder conflicts, and so forth. They provide a necessary organizational base and skilled personnel for diffusing improvements into a school and across a district. Designated change agents can rotate among schools to guide the change process. In addition, special coaches or mentors can be brought in whenever a specialist is needed to assist in replicating a specific type of improvement.

It is rare to find situations where a well-designed systemic change infrastructure is in place. More characteristically, ad hoc mechanisms have been set in motion with personnel who have too little training and inadequate formative evaluation. It is common to find structures, such as teams and collaboratives operating without clear understanding of functions and major tasks. This, of course, defies the basic organizational principle that structure should follow function.

Effective and linked administrative leadership *at every level* is key to the success of any systemic change initiative in schools. Everyone needs to be aware of who is leading and is accountable for the development of the planned changes. It is imperative that such leaders be specifically trained to guide systemic change. In addition, they must be sitting at key decision making tables when budget and other fundamental decisions are discussed.

General functions and major tasks related to sustainability and large-scale replication require dedicated change agent mechanisms that are fully integrated into the infrastructure for school improvement at each school site, for a group of schools, and at the district level. Thus, a significant portion of the resources for systemic change must be used to design and implement the set of integrated mechanisms that constitute the temporary, but essential, infrastructure for steering, facilitating, and evaluating the change process itself.

Another facet of a systemic change infrastructure is a team of champions who agree to steer the process. Such a team provides a broad-based and potent mechanism for guiding change. At the school level, for example, such a steering group creates a special leadership body to own the linked visions for school improvement and systemic change and to guide and support the work. These advocates must be competent planners, and they should be highly motivated not just to help get things underway, but to ensure sustainability. Over time, the main functions of a steering group are to ensure that staff assigned to facilitate changes a) maintain a big picture perspective, b) make appropriate movement toward long-term goals, and c) have sufficient training, support, and guidance.

The first focus of these teams is on assuring that capacity is built to accomplish the desired systemic changes. This includes ensuring an adequate policy and leadership base for

implementation. If essential policy and staffing are not already in place, this becomes the first focus for the group. Capacity building, of course, also includes special training for change agents.

Steering groups should not be too large. For example, at a school level, membership should include a few well-connected champions and the key change agents (e.g., the administrative leader and other system change staff) who have responsibility for implementing school improvements. To work against the perception that it is a closed, elite group, it can host “focus groups” to elicit input and feedback, provide information, and problem solve.

### **Organization Facilitators**

Some years ago, as part of a federal dropout prevention initiative, we developed a change agent position called an organization facilitator to aid with major restructuring. This form of specially trained change agent has the necessary expertise to help school sites and complexes substantively implement and institutionalize school improvements. Such an individual can be used as a change agent for one school or a group of schools. A cadre of such professionals can be used to facilitate change across an entire district. The focus can be on changes in a few key aspects or on full-scale restructuring (see **Exhibits 27**).

One of the first functions of an organization facilitator is to help form and train an onsite change team that includes a site administrator and encompasses work groups. With the change agent initially taking the lead, members of the school’s change team learn to be catalysts and managers of change. After initial implementation, the change team focuses on ensuring maintenance and renewal. Clearly, substantive school improvements require site team members who are committed each day to ensuring effective systemic change and who have enough time and ability to attend to details.

## Exhibit 27

## ORGANIZATION FACILITATOR A TEMPORARY CHANGE AGENT MECHANISM

(See tool kit: Change Agent Mechanisms for School Improvement: Infrastructure not Individuals [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/change\\_agents.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/change_agents.pdf))

### At the School Level

- Facilitates establishment of resource-oriented mechanism (e.g., School-Based Resource Team)
- Facilitates initial capacity building (especially leadership training)
- Provides support in implementing initial tasks
  - mapping
  - analyzing resources

### At the Complex Level

- Facilitates establishment of resource-oriented mechanism (e.g., Complex Resource Council)
- Facilitates initial capacity building
- Provides support in implementing initial tasks
  - mapping
  - analyses
  - interface with neighborhood resources

### Sequence

- Focus first on establishing school infrastructure, then complex infrastructure
- Focus first on complex, then each school
- Focus simultaneously on establishing infrastructure at schools and complex

## What are some strategies for facilitating systemic changes?

Drawing on available literature and based on our own efforts in the field, we have been formulating strategies to facilitate systemic changes. For illustrative purposes, a few are outlined below.

As previously noted, substantive systemic change begins with creating readiness (i.e., enhancing a climate and culture for change). This involves:

- Articulation of a clear, shared vision for the changes (e.g., building interest and consensus; introducing basic concepts to relevant groups of stakeholders)
- Mobilizing interest, consensus, and support among key stakeholders (e.g., identifying champions and other individuals who are committed to the changes; planning and implementing a social marketing strategy to mobilize a critical mass of stakeholder support; planning and implementing strategies to obtain the support of key policy makers, such as administrators and school boards)
- Clarifying feasibility (e.g., how necessary changes can be accomplished; who will lead; what mechanisms can be used to steer and underwrite the change process)
- Ensuring there is a major policy commitment from all participating stakeholders (e.g., establishing a policy framework that recognizes the importance of the work)
- Negotiating agreements with decision makers and implementers (e.g., about role responsibilities; about how accountability for commitments will be assured).

This is followed by processes for:

- Enhancing or developing an infrastructure based on a clear articulation of essential functions (e.g., mechanisms for governance and priority setting, steering, operations, resource mapping and coordination).

Pursuing implementation requires special attention to the match between systemic change interventions and those who are to change. This includes planning and implementing interventions to:

- Account for individual differences in motivation and capability
- Enhance motivation and capability (especially among those responsible for making systemic changes)
- Redeploy resources and establish new resources
- Ensure there is strong facilitation related to all infrastructure mechanisms
- Provide transition supports and capacity building to address challenges arising from stakeholder mobility
- Establish appropriate standards, evaluation processes, and accountability procedures

Because substantive change requires stakeholder readiness and ongoing motivation and capability, it is essential to monitor these matters and to maintain an ongoing emphasis on social marketing and capacity building.

Moving forward in how schools address barriers to learning and teaching is critical to the future of public education. The need is to proactively develop a comprehensive system of learning supports that is fully integrated with other school improvement plans and is not simply designed as another demonstration pilot project. Given that such a system takes time to build, systemic changes must be planned and implemented step-by-step and priority-by-priority. And, it is essential to remember that underlying substantive and sustainable systemic change are processes that reflect a sophisticated appreciation of human motivation (see **Module 5**).

## The importance of expanding the accountability framework to reflect a three component policy for school improvement

As stressed throughout the handbook, well-designed, systemic efforts are essential to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed in school. However, systems, and therefore systemic changes, are driven by what is measured for purposes of accountability. This is particularly so for systems pressed to make major improvements. As everyone involved in school improvement planning knows, the pressure on schools is to improve achievement quickly, and the data most attended to are achievement test scores. These scores drive school accountability and dominate most school improvement planning.

Current accountability pressures have led to evaluating a small range of basic skills and doing so in a narrow way. One consequence of this is that, too often, students with learning, behavior, or emotional problems find themselves cut off from participating in learning activities that might enhance their interest in overcoming their problems and that might open up future opportunities to enrich their lives.

The result of all this is a growing disconnect between what schools are held accountable for and the realities of what it takes to improve academic performance. The disconnect is especially evident in schools serving low-wealth families. Such families and those who work in schools serving them have a clear appreciation of the many obstacles to learning that must be overcome so students can benefit from instruction. These stakeholders stress that, in many schools, major academic improvements are unlikely until approaches to address barriers are developed and pursued effectively.

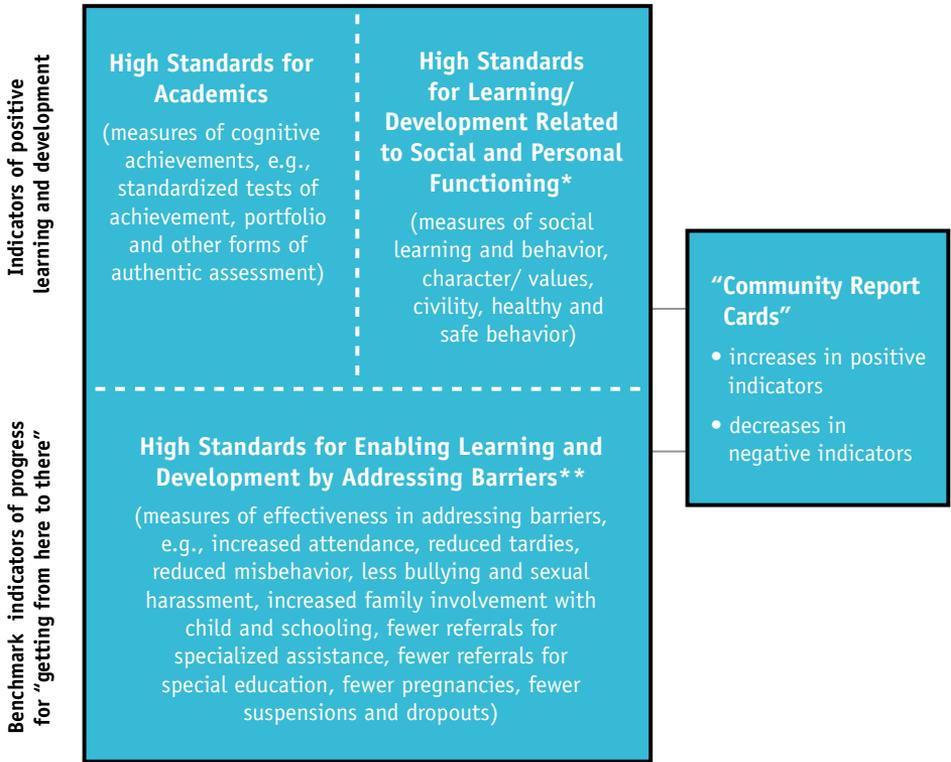
At the same time, it is evident that there is no direct accountability for whether these barriers are addressed. On the contrary, learning support efforts often are devalued and cut when achievement test scores do not reflect an immediate impact. So, rather than building the type of system that can produce substantive improvements in academic performance, prevailing accountability measures pressure schools to pursue what superficially appears to be the most direct route to improving instruction.

Ironically, not only does the restricted emphasis on achievement measures work against what needs to be done, it works against increasing the body of evidence for how essential and effective it is to address barriers to learning directly.

All this leads to an appreciation of the need for an expanded framework for school accountability, a framework that includes direct measures of achievement and much more. This is a move toward what Michael Fullan has called *intelligent accountability*. **EXHIBIT 28** highlights such an expanded framework.

Exhibit 28

## EXPANDING THE FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY



\*Results of interventions for directly facilitating development and learning.  
 \*\*Results of interventions for addressing barriers to learning and development.

## Academics

As illustrated in **Exhibit 28**, there is no intent to deflect from the laser-like focus on accountability for meeting high standards related to academics. The debate will continue as to how best to measure academic outcomes, but clearly schools must demonstrate that they effectively teach academic skills and knowledge.

## Social and personal functioning

At the same time, we must acknowledge that schools also are expected to pursue high standards in promoting positive social and personal functioning, including promoting engagement, enhancing civility, teaching safe and healthy behavior, and some form of character education. Schools we visit have specific goals related to this facet of student development and learning. It is evident that these schools currently are not held accountable for goals in this arena. That is, there is no systematic evaluation or reporting of the work.

As would be expected, schools direct few resources and too little attention to these unmeasured concerns. Yet, society wants schools to attend to these matters, and most professionals understand that personal and social functioning are integrally tied to academic performance. From this perspective, it seems self-defeating not to hold schools accountable for improving students' social and personal functioning.

## Addressing barriers

For schools where many students are not doing well, it is also self-defeating not to attend to benchmark indicators of progress that address barriers to learning. Teachers cannot teach children who are not in class. Increasing attendance, reducing tardiness, reducing problem behaviors, lessening suspension and dropout rates, and abating the large number of inappropriate referrals for special education are all essential indicators of school improvement and precursors of enhanced academic performance. Therefore, the progress of school staff on such matters should be measured and treated as a significant aspect of school accountability.

## Community indicators

School outcomes, of course, are influenced by the well-being of the families and the neighborhoods in which they operate. The performance of any school must be judged within the context of the current indicators of community well-being, such as economic, social, and health measures. If those indicators are not improving or are declining, it is patently unfair to ignore these contextual conditions in judging school performance.

Given all this, it seems evident that the current accountability framework must be expanded, and planning for school improvement and systemic change must reflect the expanded framework.

## Concluding comments about getting from here to there

Awareness of the myriad political and bureaucratic difficulties involved in making major institutional changes, especially with limited financial resources, leads us to reiterate that systemic change is not a straightforward sequential or linear process. Rather, the work proceeds, and changes emerge in overlapping and spiraling ways. Thus, the time frames for accomplishing desired changes must be realistic.

From the perspective of systemic change, the importance of creating an atmosphere at a school and throughout a district that encourages mutual support, caring, and a sense of community takes on added importance. New collaborative arrangements must be established, and authority (power) redistributed. Key stakeholders and their leadership must understand and commit to the changes. Furthermore, the commitment must be reflected in policy statements and creation of an organizational and operational infrastructure at all levels that ensures effective leadership and resources.

For significant systemic change to occur, policy and program commitments must be demonstrated through effective allocation and redeployment of resources. That is, finances, personnel, time, space, equipment, and other essential resources must be made available, organized, and used in ways that adequately implement and sustain policy and promising practices. As stressed above, this includes ensuring sufficient resources to develop an effective structural foundation, albeit a temporary one, for systemic changes and related capacity building.

Reforms and major school improvements obviously require ensuring that those who operate essential mechanisms have adequate training, resources, and support—initially and over time. Moreover, there must be appropriate incentives and safeguards for individuals as they become enmeshed in the complexities of systemic change.

Although many of the above points about systemic change seem self-evident, their profound implications for school improvement are widely ignored. As a result, it is not surprising that so many efforts to improve schools fail. Too often changes are cosmetic, rather than substantive.

There is no need to belabor all this. Our point is to encourage greater appreciation for, and more attention to, the processes and challenges of systemic change. Too little attention currently is being paid to these matters, and as a result, substantive systemic changes are undermined and an unsatisfactory status quo is perpetuated. As Seymour Sarason stressed a long time ago:

*“Good ideas and missionary zeal are sometimes enough to change the thinking of individuals; they are rarely, if ever, effective in changing complicated organizations (like the school) with traditions, dynamics, and goals of their own.”*



# Why is an emphasis on intrinsic motivation essential in engaging and re-engaging students in classroom instruction?

## Key Topics Explored...

- ⚙️ Motivation: Beyond reinforcement theory
- ⚙️ Understanding the motivational bases for disengagement
- ⚙️ Re-engaging students
  - Maximizing intrinsic motivation
  - Minimizing threats to intrinsic motivation
  - Re-engagement through rebuilding working relationships

*“Engagement is associated with positive academic outcomes, including achievement and persistence in school; and it is higher in classrooms with supportive teachers and peers, challenging and authentic tasks, opportunities for choice, and sufficient structure.”*

– Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004)

As emphasized throughout, a prominent concern of school improvement efforts is how to motivate the many students who are hard to engage and those who have totally disengaged from classroom learning. Ironically, strategies for re-engaging students rarely are a prominent part of pre or in-service preparation and seldom are the focus of interventions pursued by professionals whose role is to support teachers and students. Re-engagement depends on use of interventions that help minimize conditions that negatively affect intrinsic motivation and maximize conditions that have a positive motivational effect.

In this module, we briefly highlight the following matters because they are fundamental to the challenge of student (and staff) disengagement and re-engagement:

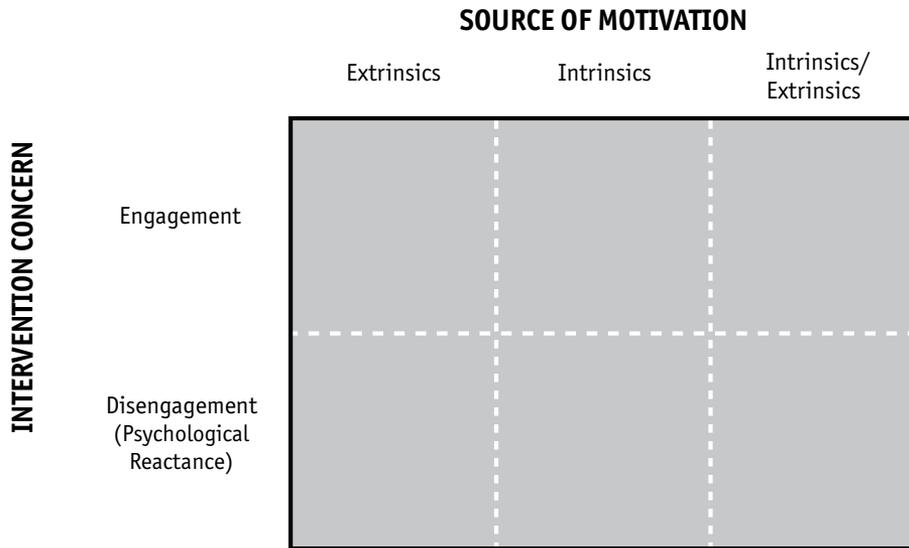
- Motivation: beyond reinforcement theory
- Understanding the motivational bases for disengagement
- The challenge of re-engaging students in school learning
- Focusing on intrinsic motivation to re-engage students

**Exhibit 29** embeds these concerns into the range of matters that warrant attention by all who are involved in planning the pre and in-service education of those planning school improvements.

While our focus here is on students, any discussion of motivation has applications to family members and school personnel. Think about the challenge of home involvement in schooling, and think about teacher burnout and dropout; think about systemic change.

Exhibit 29

## ENGAGEMENT AND DISENGAGEMENT, MAXIMIZING INTRINSIC MOTIVATION, MINIMIZING BEHAVIOR CONTROL STRATEGIES



As applied to schools, Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris stress that **engagement** is defined in three ways in the research literature:

- **Behavioral engagement** draws on the idea of participation; it includes involvement in academic and social or extracurricular activities and is considered crucial for achieving positive academic outcomes and preventing dropping out.
- **Emotional engagement** encompasses positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school and is presumed to create ties to an institution and influences willingness to do the work.
- **Cognitive engagement** draws on the idea of investment; it incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills.

From a psychological perspective, **disengagement** from proactive classroom learning is associated with situational threats to feelings of competence, self-determination, and/or relatedness to valued others. The demands may be from school staff, peers, instructional content and processes. Psychological disengagement can be expected to result in internalized behavior (e.g., boredom, emotional distress) and/or externalized behavior (misbehavior, dropping out).

## Motivation: beyond reinforcement theory

As the National Academy of Science’s Research Council has stressed:

*“Learning and succeeding in school requires active engagement. ... The core principles that underlie engagement are applicable to all schools—whether they are in urban, suburban, or rural communities. ... Engaging adolescents, including those who have become disengaged and alienated from school, is not an easy task. Academic motivation decreases steadily from the early grades of elementary school into high school. Furthermore, adolescents are too old and too independent to follow teachers’ demands out of obedience, and many are too young, inexperienced, or uninformed to fully appreciate the value of succeeding in school.”*

Intrinsic motivation is a fundamental consideration in designing learning supports. A broadened understanding of motivation clarifies how essential it is to avoid processes that limit options, make students feel controlled and coerced, and narrowly focus on remedying problems. From a motivational perspective, such processes are seen as likely to produce avoidance reactions in the classroom and to school and, thus, reduce opportunities for positive learning and for development of positive attitudes.

Of course, teachers, parents, and support staff cannot control all factors affecting motivation. Indeed, when any of us address learning and behavior concerns, we only have direct control over a relatively small slice of the physical and social environment. Using what is accessible, we try to maximize the likelihood that opportunities to learn are a good fit with the current *capabilities* of a given youngster. So, with student engagement in mind, we try to match individual differences in motivation which means attending to the following concerns.

*Motivation as a readiness concern.* Optimal performance and learning require motivational readiness. The absence of such readiness can cause or maintain problems. If a learner does not have enough motivational readiness, strategies must be implemented to develop it (including ways to reduce avoidance motivation). Readiness should not be viewed in the old sense of waiting until an individual is interested. Rather, it should be understood in the contemporary sense of establishing environments that are perceived by students as caring, supportive places and as offering stimulating activities that are valued and challenging, and doable.

*Motivation as a key ongoing process concern.* Many learners are caught up in the novelty of a new subject, but after a few lessons, interest often wanes. Some students are motivated by the idea of obtaining a given outcome but may not be motivated to pursue certain processes and thus may not pay attention or may try to avoid them. For example, some are motivated to start work on overcoming their problems but may not maintain that motivation. Strategies must be designed to elicit, enhance, and maintain motivation so that a youngster stays mobilized.

*Minimizing negative motivation and avoidance reactions as process and outcome concerns.* Teachers and others at a school and at home not only must try to increase motivation especially intrinsic motivation but also take care to avoid or at least minimize conditions that decrease motivation or produce negative motivation. For example, care must be taken not to exclusively depend on extrinsics to entice and reward because to do so may decrease intrinsic motivation. At times, school is seen as unchallenging, uninteresting, overdemanding, overwhelming, overcontrolling, nonsupportive, or even hostile. When this happens, a student may develop negative attitudes and avoidance related to a given situation, and over time, related to school and all it represents.

*Enhancing intrinsic motivation as a basic outcome concern.* It is essential to enhance motivation as an outcome so the desire to pursue a given area (e.g., reading, good behavior) increasingly is a positive intrinsic attitude that mobilizes learning and behaving outside the teaching situation. Achieving such an outcome involves use of strategies that do not overuse extrinsic rewards and that do enable youngsters to play a meaningful role in making decisions related to valued options. In effect, enhancing intrinsic motivation is a fundamental protective factor and is the key to developing *resiliency*.

Students who are intrinsically motivated to learn at school seek out opportunities and challenges and go beyond requirements. In doing so, they learn more and learn more deeply than do classmates who are extrinsically motivated. Facilitating the learning of such students is a fairly straightforward matter and fits well with school improvements that primarily emphasize enhancing instructional practices. The focus is on helping establish ways for students who are motivationally ready and able to achieve and, of course, to maintain and enhance their motivation. The process involves knowing when, how, and what to teach and also knowing when and how to structure the situation so they can learn on their own.

In contrast, students who manifest learning, behavior, and/or emotional problems may have developed extremely negative perceptions of teachers and programs. In such cases, they are not likely to be open to people and activities that look like “the same old thing.” Major changes in approach are required if the youngster is even to perceive that something has changed in the situation. Minimally, exceptional efforts must be made to have them 1) view the teacher and other interveners as supportive (rather than controlling and indifferent) and 2) perceive content, outcomes, and activity options as personally valuable and obtainable. Thus, any effort to re-engage disengaged students must begin by addressing negative perceptions. School support staff and teachers must work together to reverse conditions that led to such perceptions.

Increasing intrinsic motivation involves affecting a student’s thoughts, feelings, and decisions. In general, the intent is to use procedures that can potentially reduce negative and increase positive feelings, thoughts, and coping strategies with respect to learning. For learning and behavior problems, in particular, this means identifying and minimizing experiences that maintain or may increase avoidance motivation.

## What are the motivational bases for disengagement?

Two common reasons people give for not engaging are “It’s not worth it” and “I know I won’t be able to do it.” These reflect two key concepts that help us understand motivation: *valuing and expectations*. In general, the amount of time and energy spent on an activity seems dependent on how much the activity is valued by the person and on the person’s expectation that what is valued will be attained without too great a cost. Conversely, non-proactive psychological disengagement from an activity seems dependent on how much the activity is devalued by the person and/or on the person’s expectation that something that is valued can only be attained at too great a cost. Such psychological disengagement can be expected to result in internalized behavior (e.g., boredom, emotional distress) and/or externalized behavior (e.g., misbehavior, dropping out).

## About valuing

What makes something worth doing? Prizes? Money? Merit awards? Praise? Certainly! We all do a great many things, some of which we don't even like to do, because the activity leads to a desired reward. Similarly, we often do things to escape punishment or other negative consequences that we prefer to avoid.

Rewards and punishments may be material or social. For those with learning, behavior, and emotional problems, there has been widespread use of such “incentives” (e.g., systematically giving points or tokens that can be exchanged for candy, prizes, praise, free time, or social interactions). Punishments have included loss of free time and other privileges, added work, fines, isolation, censure, and suspension. Grades have been used both as rewards and punishments. Because people will do things to obtain rewards or avoid punishment, rewards and punishment often are called *reinforcers*. Because they generally come from sources outside the person, they often are called *extrinsics*.

Extrinsic reinforcers are easy to use and can immediately affect behavior. Therefore, they have been widely adopted in the fields of special education and psychology. Unfortunately, the immediate effects are usually limited to very specific behaviors and often are short-term. Moreover, extensive use of extrinsics can have some undesired effects. And, sometimes the available extrinsics simply aren't powerful enough to get the desired results.

It is important to remember that what makes an extrinsic factor rewarding is the fact that it is experienced by the recipient as a reward. What makes it a highly valued reward is that the recipient highly values it. If someone doesn't like candy, there is not much point in offering it as a reward. Furthermore, because the use of extrinsics has limits, it is fortunate that people often do things even without apparent extrinsic reason. In fact, a lot of what people learn and spend time doing is done for intrinsic reasons. Curiosity is a good example. Curiosity seems to be an innate quality that leads us to seek stimulation, avoid boredom, and learn a great deal.

People also pursue some things because of what has been described as an innate striving for competence. Most of us value *feeling competent*. We try to conquer some challenges, and if none are around, we usually seek one out. Of course, if the challenges confronting us seem unconquerable or make us too uncomfortable (e.g., too anxious or exhausted), we try to put them aside and move on to something more promising.

Another important intrinsic motivator appears to be an internal push toward things that make a person *feel self-determining*. People seem to value feeling and thinking that they have some degree of choice and freedom in deciding what to do. And, human beings also seem intrinsically moved toward establishing and maintaining relationships. That is, we value *feeling connected interpersonally*.

The immediate effects of extrinsic reinforcement are usually limited to very specific behaviors and often are short term, and their extensive use can have some undesired effects.

## About expectations

Our expectations of outcome are shaped by our perceptions of how easy or hard it will be to obtain the outcome. Such expectations about these matters are influenced by past experiences. Sometimes we know we can easily do something, but it is not something that we value. At other times, we may value something a great deal but don't believe we can do it or can only obtain it by paying too great a personal price. Under such circumstances, we are likely to look for other valued activities and outcomes to pursue.

Previously unsuccessful arenas usually are seen as unlikely paths to valued extrinsic rewards or intrinsic satisfactions. We may perceive past failure as the result of our lack of ability; or we may believe that more effort was required than we were willing to give. We may also feel that the help we needed to succeed was not available. If our perception is that very little has changed with regard to these factors, our expectation of succeeding now will be rather low. In general, then, what we value interacts with our expectations, and motivation is one product of this interaction. (see **Exhibit 30**)

## About over-reliance on extrinsics

Throughout this discussion of valuing and expectations, the emphasis has been on the fact that motivation is not something that can be determined solely by forces outside the individual. Others can plan activities and outcomes to influence motivation and learning; however, how the activities and outcomes are experienced determines whether they are pursued (or avoided) with a little or a lot of effort and ability. Understanding that an individual's perceptions can affect motivation has led researchers to important findings about some undesired effects resulting from over-reliance on extrinsics.

Because of the prominent role they play in school programs, grading, testing, and other performance evaluations are a special concern in any discussion of the over-reliance on extrinsics as a way to reinforce positive learning. Although grades often are discussed as simply providing information about how well a student is doing, many, if not most, students perceive each grade as a reward or a punishment. Certainly, many teachers use grades to try to control behavior to reward those who do assignments well and to punish those who don't. Sometimes parents add to a student's perception of grades as extrinsic reinforcers by giving a reward for good report cards.

The point is that extrinsic rewards can undermine intrinsic reasons for doing things. Although this is not always the case and may not always be a bad thing, it is an important consideration in deciding to rely on extrinsic reinforcers in addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems. The first preference in designing intervention should be an emphasis on intrinsic motivation.

## Exhibit 30

## A BIT OF THEORY

Motivation theory has many facets. At the risk of oversimplifying things, the following discussion is designed to make a few crucial points.

$$E \times V$$

Can you decipher this? (Don't go on until you've tried.)

Hint: the "x" is a multiplication sign.

In case the equation stumped you, don't be surprised. The main introduction to motivational thinking that many people have been given in the past involves some form of reinforcement theory (which essentially deals with extrinsic motivation). Thus, all this may be new to you—even though motivational theorists have been wrestling with it for a long time, and intuitively, you probably understand much of what they are talking about.

**E** represents an individual's *expectations* about outcome (in school this often means expectations of success or failure). **V** represents *valuing*, with valuing influenced by both what is valued intrinsically and extrinsically. Thus, in a general sense, motivation can be thought of in terms of expectancy times valuing. *Such theory recognizes that human beings are thinking and feeling organisms and that intrinsic factors can be powerful motivators. This understanding of human motivation has major implications for learning, teaching, parenting, and mental health interventions.*

Within some limits (which we need not discuss here), high expectations and high valuing produce high motivation, while low expectations (**E**) and high valuing (**V**) produce relatively weak motivation.

Youngsters may greatly value the idea of improving their reading. They usually are not happy with limited skills and know they would feel a lot better about themselves if they could read. But, often they experience everything the teacher asks them to do as a waste of time. They have done it all before, and they *still* have a reading problem. Sometimes they will do the exercises, but just to earn points to go on a field trip or to avoid the consequences of not cooperating. Often, however, they try to get out of doing the work by distracting the teacher. After all, why should they do things they are certain won't help them read any better?

$$\text{(Expectancy} \times \text{Valuing} = \text{Motivation} \quad 0 \times 1.0 = 0)$$

High expectations paired with low valuing also yield low approach motivation. Thus, the oft-cited remedial strategy of guaranteeing success by designing tasks to be very easy is not as simple a recipe as it sounds. Indeed, the approach is likely to fail if the outcome (e.g., improved reading, learning math fundamentals, applying social skills) is not valued or if the tasks are experienced as too boring or if doing them is seen as too embarrassing. In such cases, a strong negative value is attached to the activities, and this contributes to avoidance motivation.

$$\text{(Expectancy} \times \text{Valuing} = \text{Motivation} \quad 1.0 \times 0 = 0)$$

Appropriate appreciation of all this is necessary in designing a match for optimal learning and performance.

Many individuals with learning problems also are described as hyperactive, distractible, impulsive, behavior disordered, and so forth. Their behavior patterns are seen as interfering with efforts to remedy their learning problems. Although motivation has always been a concern to those who work with learning and behavior problems, the emphasis in handling these interfering behaviors usually is on using extrinsics as part of efforts to directly control, and/or in conjunction with, direct skill instruction. For example, interventions are designed to improve impulse control, perseverance, selective attention, frustration tolerance, sustained attention and follow-through, and social awareness and skills. In all cases, the emphasis is on reducing or eliminating interfering behaviors, usually with the presumption that the student will then re-engage in learning. However, there is little evidence that these strategies enhance a student's motivation toward classroom learning.

Ironically, the reliance on extrinsics to control behavior may exacerbate student problems. Motivational research suggests that when people perceive their freedom (e.g., of choice) is threatened, they have a psychological reaction that motivates them to restore their sense of freedom. (For instance, when those in control say: *You can't do that... you must do this...*, the covert and sometimes overt psychological reaction of students often is: *Oh, you think so!*) This line of research also suggests that with prolonged denial of freedom, people's reactivity diminishes, they become amotivated and usually feel helpless and ineffective.

## Focusing on intrinsic motivation to re-engage students

Psychological scholarship over the last fifty years has brought renewed attention to intrinsic motivation as a central concept in understanding learning and attention problems. This work is just beginning to find its way into applied fields and programs. One line of work has emphasized the relationship of learning and behavior problems to deficiencies in intrinsic motivation. This work clarifies the value of interventions designed to increase the following:

- Feelings of self-determination
- Feelings of competence and expectations of attaining valued outcomes
- Feelings of interpersonal relatedness
- The range of interests and satisfactions related to learning

The research also stresses the importance of minimizing interventions that threaten these basic psychological needs.

Activities to correct deficiencies in intrinsic motivation are directed at improving awareness of personal motives and true capabilities, learning to set valued and appropriate goals, learning to value and to make appropriate and satisfying choices, and learning to value and accept responsibility for choice.

Examples of practices for maximizing intrinsic motivation are:

- Personalized (as opposed to individualized) instruction
- Building relationships and planning instruction with an understanding of student perceptions and including a range of real life needs, as well as personal and cooperative experiences
- Providing real, valued, and attainable options and choices ensuring shared decision making
- Enhancing feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to valued others

Examples of minimizing threats to intrinsic motivation are:

- Welcoming, caring, safe, and just environment
- Countering perceptions of social control and indifference including not relying too much on extrinsics
- Motivated application as opposed to rote practice and deadening homework
- Ensuring extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities
- Providing regular feedback in ways that minimize use of evaluative processes that threaten feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to valued others

With an emphasis on all this, listed in **Exhibit 31** and highlighted below are four personalized intervention strategies for working with disengaged students.

### **Clarifying student perceptions of the problem**

It is desirable to create a situation where it is feasible to talk openly with students about why they have become disengaged. This provides an invaluable basis for formulating a personalized plan to alter their negative perceptions and to prevent others from developing such perceptions.

## Reframing school learning

As noted above, in the case of those who have disengaged, major reframing in teaching approaches is required so that these students a) view the teacher as supportive (rather than controlling and indifferent) and b) perceive content, outcomes, and activity options as personally valuable and obtainable. It is important, for example, to eliminate threatening evaluative measures; reframe content and processes to clarify purpose in terms of real life needs and experiences and underscore how it all builds on previous learning; and clarify why the procedures are expected to be effective especially those designed to help correct specific problems.

## Renegotiating involvement in school learning

New and mutual agreements must be developed over time through conferences with the student and including parents, where appropriate. The intent is to affect perceptions of choice, value, and probable outcome. The focus throughout is on clarifying awareness of valued options, enhancing expectations of positive outcomes, and engaging the student in meaningful, ongoing decision making. For the process to be most effective, students should be assisted in sampling new processes and content, options should include valued enrichment opportunities, and there must be provision for reevaluating and modifying decisions as perceptions shift.

### Exhibit 31

#### WORKING WITH DISENGAGED STUDENTS GENERAL STRATEGIES

- *Clarifying student perceptions of the problem*
- *Reframing school learning*
- *Renegotiating involvement in school learning*
- *Reestablishing and maintaining an appropriate working relationship*

## Reestablishing and maintaining an appropriate working relationship

This requires the type of ongoing interactions that create a sense of trust, open communication, and provide personalized support and direction. To maintain re-engagement and prevent disengagement, the above strategies must be pursued using processes and content that:

- Minimize threats to feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to valued others
- Maximize such feelings (included here is an emphasis on a school taking steps to enhance public perception that it is a welcoming, caring, safe, and just institution)
- Guide motivated practice (e.g., providing opportunities for meaningful applications and clarifying ways to organize practice)
- Provide continuous information on learning and performance in ways that highlight accomplishments
- Provide opportunities for continued application and generalization (e.g., ways in which students can pursue additional, self-directed learning or can arrange for additional support and direction)

Obviously, it is no easy task to decrease well-assimilated negative attitudes and behaviors. And, the task is likely to become even harder with the escalation toward high-stakes testing policies (no matter how well-intentioned). It also seems obvious that, *for many schools, enhanced achievement test scores will only be feasible when the large number of disengaged students are re-engaged in learning at school.*

All this argues for 1) minimizing student disengagement and maximizing re-engagement by moving school culture toward a greater focus on intrinsic motivation and 2) minimizing psychological resistance and enhancing perceptions that lead to re-engagement in learning at school by rethinking social control practices. The above considerations are summarized in **Exhibit 32** and **33**. With respect to the matter of enhancing student options and decision making, see **Exhibit 34**.

Exhibit 32

## INTRINSIC MOTIVATION: SOME BASIC INTERVENTION CONSIDERATIONS

Think in terms of

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Enhancing</i> feelings of             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Self-determination</li> <li>– Competency</li> <li>– Connectedness to others</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Minimizing threats</i> to feelings of             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Self-determination</li> <li>– Competency</li> <li>– Connectedness to others</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|---|---|

Minimize strategies designed only for social control and increase

- Options
- Choice
- Involvement in decision making

Exhibit 33

## INTRINSIC MOTIVATION: SOME GUIDELINES FOR STRATEGIES THAT CAPTURE AN UNDERSTANDING OF INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

- Minimize coercive interactions
- Facilitate students' desires and abilities to share their perceptions readily (to enter into dialogues with the adults at school)
- Emphasize real life interests and needs
- Stress *real* options and choices and a meaningful role in decision making
- Provide enrichment opportunities (and be sure not to withhold them as punishment)
- Provide a *continuum* of structure

**Exhibit 34****OPTIONS AND STUDENT DECISION  
MAKING AS KEY FACTORS**

A greater proportion of individuals with avoidance or low motivation for learning at school are found among those with learning, behavior, and/or emotional problems. For these individuals, few currently available options may be appealing. How much greater the range of options needs to be depends primarily on how strong avoidance tendencies are. In general, however, the initial strategies for working with such students involve:

- Further expansion of the range of options for learning (if necessary, this includes avoiding established curriculum content and processes)
- Primarily emphasizing areas in which the student has made personal and active decisions
- Accommodation of a wider range of behavior than usually is tolerated (e.g., a widening of limits on the amount and types of “differences” tolerated)

From a motivational perspective, one of the most basic concerns is the way in which students are involved in making decisions about options. Critically, decision making processes can lead to perceptions of coercion and control or to perceptions of real choice (e.g., being in control of one’s decisions, being self-determining). Such differences in perception can affect whether a student is mobilized to pursue or avoid planned learning activities and outcomes.

People who have the opportunity to make decisions among valued and feasible options tend to be committed to following through. In contrast, people who are not involved in decisions often have little commitment to what is decided. And, if individuals disagree with a decision that affects them—besides not following through—they may react with hostility.

**Exhibit 34 (cont'd)****OPTIONS AND STUDENT DECISION  
MAKING AS KEY FACTORS (cont'd)**

Thus, essential to programs focusing on motivation are decision making processes that affect perceptions of choice, value, and probable outcome. Three special points should be noted about decision-making:

- Decisions are based on current perceptions. As perceptions shift, it is necessary to reevaluate decisions and modify them in ways that maintain a learner's motivation.
- Effective and efficient decision making is a basic skill, and one that is as fundamental as the three Rs. Thus, if an individual does not do it well initially, this is not a reason to move away from learner involvement in decision making. Rather, it is an indication of a need and a reason to use the process not only for motivational purposes, but to improve this basic skill.
- Among students manifesting learning, behavior, and/or emotional problems, it is well to remember that the most fundamental decision some of these individuals have to make is whether they want to participate or not. That is why it may be necessary in specific cases to put aside (temporarily) established options and standards.

As we have stressed, before some students will decide to participate in a proactive way, they have to perceive the learning environment as positively different—and quite a bit so—from the one in which they had so much failure.

Reviews of the literature on human motivation suggest that providing students with options and involving them in decision making are key facets of addressing the problem of engagement in the classroom and at school. For example, numerous studies have shown that opportunities to express preferences and make choices lead to greater motivation, academic gains, increases in productivity and on-task behavior, and decreases in aggressive behavior. Similarly, researchers report that student participation in goal setting leads to more positive outcomes (e.g., higher commitment to a goal and increased performance).

## Concluding comments about a renewed and enhanced focus on motivation

Whatever the initial cause of someone's learning and behavior problems, the longer the individual has lived with such problems, the more likely he or she will have negative feelings and thoughts about instruction, teachers, and schools. The feelings may include anxiety, fear, frustration, and anger. The thoughts may include strong expectations of failure and vulnerability and low valuing of many learning opportunities. Such thoughts and feelings can result in avoidance motivation or low motivation for learning and performing in many areas of schooling.

Low motivation leads to half-hearted effort. Avoidance motivation leads to avoidance behaviors. Individuals with avoidance and low motivation often also are attracted to socially disapproved activity. Poor effort, avoidance behavior, and active pursuit of disapproved behavior on the part of students are sure-fire recipes for failure.

It remains tempting to focus directly on student misbehavior. It also is tempting to think that behavior problems at least can be minimized by laying down the law. We have seen many administrators pursue this line of thinking. For every student who shapes up, ten others may be pushed out of school through a progression of suspensions, opportunity transfers, and expulsions.

Official dropout figures don't tell the tale. The reality seen in most high schools in cities such as Los Angeles, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Miami, and Detroit is that only about half those who were enrolled in Grade 9 are still around to graduate from Grade 12.

Most of these students entered kindergarten with a healthy curiosity and a desire to learn to read and write. By the end of Grade 2, we start seeing the first referrals by classroom teachers because of learning and behavior problems. From that point on, increasing numbers of students become disengaged from classroom learning, and most of these manifest some form of behavioral and emotional problems.

It is not surprising, then, that many are heartened to see the shift from punishment to positive behavior support in addressing unwanted behavior. However, as long as factors that lead to disengagement are left unaffected, we risk perpetuating the phenomenon that William Ryan identified as blaming the victim.

From an intervention perspective, the key point is that engaging and re-engaging students in classroom learning involves matching motivation. Matching motivation requires factoring in students' perceptions in determining the right mix of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. It also requires understanding the key role played by expectations related to outcome. Without a good match, social control strategies can temporarily suppress negative attitudes and behaviors, but re-engagement in classroom learning is unlikely. Unfortunately, without re-engagement in classroom learning, there will be no gains in achievement test scores, unwanted behavior is very likely to reappear, and many will be left behind.

*“I suspect that many children would learn arithmetic, and learn it better, if it were illegal.”*

–John Holt

To read more about intrinsic motivation, see some of the introductory references highlighted in **Exhibit 35**.

### Exhibit 35

## INTRINSIC MOTIVATION: A FEW INTRODUCTORY REFERENCES

### Online from the UCLA Center (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>):

- *Revisiting Learning and Behavior Problems: Moving Schools Forward* (book-length)
- *Enhancing Classroom Approaches for Addressing Barriers to Learning: Classroom-Focused Enabling* (a guidebook)
- *Accompanying Readings and Tools for Enhancing Classroom Approaches for Addressing Barriers to Learning: Classroom-Focused Enabling*
- *Classroom Changes to Enhance and Re-engage Students in Learning* (a training tutorial)
- *Re-engaging Students in Learning* (a very brief Quick Training Aid)

### A few other general resources:

- *Why we do what we do*. By E. L. Deci with R. Flaste (1995). New York: Penguin Books.
- *Motivating students to learn* (2nd ed.). By J. Brophy (2004). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- *Engaging schools: Fostering high school students' motivation to learn*. By National Research Council (2004). D.C.: National Academies Press.
- *Motivation to learn: From theory to practice* (3rd ed.) By D.J. Stipek (1998). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- *The Perils and Promises of Praise*. By C.S. Dweck (2007). *Educational Leadership*, 65, 34–39.
- *School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence*. By J. Fredericks, P. Blumenfeld, & A. Paris (2004). *Review of Educational Research*, 74, 59–109

For both a theoretical foundation and applications to education, psychotherapy, and the workplace, see *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. By Ed Deci & Richard Ryan (1985). New York: Plenum.

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## CALL TO ACTION

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As we move forward in developing a comprehensive system of learning supports, it is essential not to lose sight of the simple truth: if improvements don't play out effectively at school and in the classroom, they don't mean much. Schools and classrooms must be the center and guiding force for all school improvement.

At the same time, it is essential not to create a new mythology suggesting that every classroom and school are unique. There are fundamentals that permeate all efforts to improve schools and schooling and that should continue to guide policy, practice, research, and training. These include the following guidelines:

- 1) The curriculum in every classroom must include a major emphasis on acquisition of basic knowledge and skills. However, such basics must be understood to involve more than the 3 Rs and cognitive development. There are many important areas of human development and functioning, and each contains “basics” that individuals may need help in acquiring. Moreover, any individual may require special accommodation in any of these areas.**
- 2) Every classroom must address student motivation as an antecedent, process, and outcome concern.**
- 3) Special assistance must be *added* to instructional programs for certain individuals, but only after the best non-specialized procedures for facilitating learning have been tried. Moreover, such procedures must be designed to build on strengths and must not supplant continued emphasis on promoting healthy development.**
- 4) Beyond the classroom, schools must have policy, leadership, and mechanisms for developing schoolwide programs to address barriers to learning. Some of the work will need to be in partnership with other schools, some will require weaving school and community resources together. The aim is to evolve a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of programs and services ranging from primary prevention through early intervention to treatment of serious problems. Our work suggests that at the school level this will require evolving programs to a) enhance the ability of the classroom to enable learning, b) provide support for the many transitions experienced by students and their families, c) increase home involvement, d) respond to and prevent crises, e) offer special assistance to students and their families, and f) expand community involvement (including volunteers).**
- 5) Relatedly, decision makers at all levels must revisit current policy—using the lens of addressing barriers to learning—with the intent of both realigning existing policy to foster cohesive practices and enacting new policies to fill critical gaps.**

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## CALL TO ACTION (cont'd)

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**6) Leaders for education reform at all levels are confronted with the need to foster effective scale-up of promising reforms. This encompasses a major thrust to develop demonstrations and models for replicating new approaches to schooling on a large scale.**

For significant prototype development and systemic change to occur, policy and program commitments must be demonstrated through effective allocation and redeployment of resources to facilitate organizational and operational changes. That is, finances, personnel, time, space, equipment, and other essential resources must be made available, organized, and used in ways that adequately implement policy and promising practices. This includes ensuring sufficient resources to develop an effective structural foundation for prototype development, systemic changes, sustainability, and ongoing capacity building.

The next decade must mark a turning point for how schools and communities address the problems of children and youth. In particular, the focus must be on initiatives to develop a comprehensive system of learning supports to prevent and ameliorate the many learning, behavior, and emotional problems experienced by students. This means reshaping the functions of all school personnel who have a role to play in addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development.

Given the current state of school resources, developing a comprehensive system of learning supports must be accomplished by rethinking and redeploying how existing resources are used and by taking advantage of the natural opportunities at schools for countering psychosocial and mental health problems and promoting personal and social growth. Staff and students need to feel good about themselves if they are to cope with challenges proactively and effectively. Every school needs to commit to fostering staff and student resilience and creating an atmosphere that encourages mutual support, caring, and sense of community. For example, a welcoming induction and ongoing support are critical elements both in creating a positive sense of community and in facilitating staff and student school adjustment and performance. School-wide strategies for welcoming and supporting staff, students, and families at school *every day* are part of creating a mentally healthy school, one where staff, students, and families interact positively and identify with the school and its goals.

A major shift in policy and practice is long overdue. We must transform how schools, families, and communities meet the challenge of addressing persistent barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage students in classroom instruction.

All this, of course, involves major systemic changes. Such changes require weaving school-owned resources and community-owned resources together over time at every school in a district as well as addressing the complications stemming from the scale of public education in the U.S.A.

There is much work to be done.

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**B**

**PROGRESS BENCHMARKS/ACTIVITY**

This outline is intended to provide a focus for informal self-evaluation of progress in developing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach to address barriers to student learning.

Think in terms of four levels: school, group of schools, district, and state.

<b>POLICY STATUS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what degree have effective policies been enacted/implemented to facilitate the work?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What policy matters still must be dealt with?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the plans for doing so? (Who, when, how)</li> </ul>
<b>STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CREATING READINESS AND PHASE-IN</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a written plan?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If so, does it need revision?</li> <li>- If not, is one in the works? (Who, how, when)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>CREATING READINESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is on-board in a well-informed and committed way?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is on-board but still needs to enhance understanding?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who still must be brought on-board for good progress to be made?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What plans have been made to address concerns about readiness? (Who, how, when)</li> </ul>

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### INFRASTRUCTURE FOR NEEDED SYSTEMIC CHANGES

- Are there steering bodies at all levels and are the right people on them?
- Who are the designated change agents (organization facilitators for specific systemic change)?
- What ongoing training, supervision, and support are the advisory/steering bodies and change agents receiving so that they can be effective?
- What steps ensure that change agents are not diverted into other roles and functions?
- What steps are taken to address weaknesses in the performance of steering bodies and change agents? (Included here are steps for orienting and bringing newcomers up to speed.)

### LEADERSHIP DESIGNATION, TRAINING, AND SUPPORT

- Who have been designated as leaders for a learning support component at each level?
- What ongoing training and support are leadership personnel receiving so that they can be effective? (Included here are steps for orienting and bringing new personnel up to speed.)

### MAPPING AND ANALYSES OF RESOURCES

- Is there a process for mapping and analyzing resources for addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development?
- To what degree have existing activities and initiatives (programs and services) been charted with respect to delineated areas of intervention (e.g., six arenas of a learning support/enabling component) and displayed publicly?
- What priorities have been set for next steps in using resources more effectively to develop a comprehensive, multifaceted approach?

## REBUILDING KIT: FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF LEARNING SUPPORTS

Rebuilding a system of supports for learning requires blueprint guides, materials, tools and other resources for strategic planning, implementation, and capacity building. Such resources also help to deepen learning about the substance and processes of the work to be done.

With this in mind, a “Rebuilding Kit” has been developed and will continue to evolve. It provides a wide range of detailed resource materials (e.g., exemplars, guides, aids, tools) ranging from guides for responding to frequently asked questions, tools for mapping and analyzing existing practices, and prototypes for expanding school improvement policy, framing intervention comprehensively, and rethinking infrastructure at all levels. Direct website addresses are provided for ready access.

This kit is divided into four sections.

**Section 1** provides brief documents clarifying the imperative for rebuilding and providing a big picture (including exemplars and guides) for policy makers, administrators, and other stakeholders to adapt in moving forward with a comprehensive system of learning supports. For example, it contains:

- **Brief overviews of rationale and responses to frequently asked questions about rebuilding student and learning supports**
- **Examples of policy formulations at school, district, county, and state levels**
- **Prototypes of guidelines and standards**
- **Prototype for a school district proposal**

**Section 2** offers a variety of tools for initial and ongoing planning of the rebuilding process. For example, it contains resources related to:

- **Reframing intervention**
- **Reworking infrastructure**
- **Capacity building**

**Section 3** offers brief guidance and blueprint notes, specific tools, and training material related to phasing in the new system and providing ongoing capacity building.

**Section 4** provides some introductory resources for planning and implementing essential systemic changes.

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## REBUILDING KIT: SECTION 1

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### Rationale and Responses to Frequently Asked Questions about Rebuilding Student Supports

- *School Improvement? Fully addressing barriers to learning and teaching is the next step!* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schoolimprovement.pdf>
- *Assuring No Child is Left Behind; Enhancing Our Learning Support System by Building a Comprehensive Approach that Closes the Achievement Gap and Ensures Every Student has an Equal Opportunity to Succeed at School* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/assuringnochild.pdf>
- *Two related “White Papers” with a set of talking points that can be used for brief presentations to administrators, school boards, etc.* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Reportnewdirectionsforschoolandcommunity.pdf>
- *So You Want Higher Achievement Scores? It's Time to Rethink Learning Supports.* From the Journal of the National Association of State Boards of Education. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/schoolboard.pdf>
- *Developing a Comprehensive System to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching: Keeping the Big Picture in Focus* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/keepinginmind.pdf>

### Notes for Q & A

These brief sets of notes address five frequently asked questions that arise in discussing efforts to ensure schools have a Comprehensive Learning Supports System in place.

- **Why is a Comprehensive Learning Supports System an imperative?**
- **What needs to be done to make such a component a reality?**
- **What does such a component need to look like at a school?**
- **What's the research-base for such a component?**
- **What will it cost?**

All five questions are addressed in two overlapping sets of notes:

- *Why a Comprehensive Learning Supports System?* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/q&a.pdf>

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- *Why Address What's Missing in School Improvement Planning?*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/Q&ASchoolImprove.pdf>

Four other brief documents embellish the answers:

- *What will it Cost? No New Dollars!*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/whatwillitcost.pdf>
- *What's the Research-base for Moving Toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports?* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/WhatstheEvidenceBase.pdf>
- *Data Related to the Need for New Directions for School Improvement*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/data.pdf>
- *Data on the Plateau or Leveling Off Effect of Achievement Test Scores*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/plateau.pdf>

### Examples of Policy Formulations at School, District, County, and State Levels

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aida.pdf>

### Prototypes of Guidelines and Standards

- *Prototype Guidelines for a Learning Supports Component*—In considering policy, this concise outline of guidelines covering the nature and scope of a learning supports component can be helpful.  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupportguidelines.pdf>
- There is a supporting document outlining the rationale and research behind each of the guidelines. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/guidelinessupportdoc.pdf>
- *Overview of Standards and Accountability to Encompass a Learning Supports Component*—Establishing standards is another facet of ensuring high levels of attention and support for development of comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to address barriers to learning and teaching. To illustrate a starting point in developing such a set of standards, included in this resource are:
  - The prototype guidelines for a student support component
  - A set of standards with quality indicators
  - The Quality Student Support Criteria and Rubrics from the Hawaii Department of Education's document entitled: Standards Implementation Design System.

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Also included is an expanded framework for school accountability to account for a learning supports component.

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aide.pdf>

### A Prototype for a School District Proposal

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aidej.pdf>

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## REBUILDING KIT: SECTION 2

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### Reframing Intervention

- *Moving Toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: Mapping and Analyzing Learning Supports*—A tool outlining a six step process that can be used by school improvement planners and decision makers to chart all current activities and resource use (e.g., school, district, community) as a basis for evaluating the current state of development, doing a gap analysis, and setting priorities for moving forward.  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/tool%20mapping%20current%20status.pdf>
- *Response to Intervention*—Feature article in Center Newsletter/Journal  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Newsletter/fall06.pdf>
- *Natural Opportunities to Promote Social-Emotional Learning and Mental Health*—Featured article in Center Newsletter/Journal  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Newsletter/fall03.pdf>

### Reworking Infrastructure

- *Infrastructure: Is What We Have What We Need?*—A tool outlining a four step process that can be used by planners and decision makers to map and analyze current infrastructure.  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/tool%20infrastructure.pdf>
- *Notes on Infrastructure at a Small School*—Obviously, a small school has less staff and other resources than most larger schools. Nevertheless, the three major functions necessary for school improvement remain the same in all schools, namely (1) improving instruction, (2) providing learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching, and (3) enhancing management and governance.

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These notes highlight the needed roles and functions that call for a change in current operational and organizational infrastructure at the school site.  
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infra\\_small\\_school\\_notes.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infra_small_school_notes.pdf)

- *Notes on Infrastructure for Learning Supports at District, Regional, and State Offices*—Highlights roles and functions related to developing a comprehensive learning supports system that call for a change in current operational and organizational infrastructure at these levels.  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aidk.pdf>
- *Resource Oriented Teams: Key Infrastructure Mechanisms for Enhancing Education Supports*—Pulls together the Center’s work on resource-oriented mechanisms designed to ensure schools pay systematic attention to how they use resources for addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development.  
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/resource\\_oriented\\_teams.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf)
- *One Page Handout on What is a Learning Supports Resource Team?*—Basic description of the purpose, composition, and functions of a school site resource-oriented team mechanism.  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resource%20coord%20team.pdf>
- *Guide to enhancing school-community infrastructure and weaving resources together*—Discusses school-community collaboratives as key mechanisms for braiding school and community resources and stresses ways to optimize the functioning of such groups.  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aidg.pdf>

### Capacity Building

- *Job descriptions for learning support component leadership at a school site*—Examples of job descriptions are provided for both an administrative and staff lead for a learning supports component.  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aidd.pdf>
- *Notes about Reframing the Roles and Functions of Student Support Staff in Terms of Levels of Competence and Professional Development*—Presents a framework of areas of function, levels of professional development, and the nature and scope of competencies.  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aide.pdf>

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- *Benchmark Checklist for Monitoring and Reviewing Progress in Developing a Comprehensive System to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching*—The checklist is designed to aid those involved in the process of restructuring education support programs and developing a Learning Supports (Enabling) Component. This tool was developed as a formative evaluation instrument for use by Steering Groups, Organization Facilitators, and other change agents. It aids in focusing problem solving discussions and planning next steps. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/benchmarktool.pdf>
- *Monitoring Progress in Developing a Comprehensive System to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching—Topical Guide for Self-Evaluation*—This outline is intended to provide a focus for informal self-evaluation of progress in developing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach to address barriers to student learning. Think in terms of four levels: school, complex of schools, district, and state. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/selfevaltool.pdf>
- *Using Federal Education Legislation in Moving Toward a Comprehensive Multifaceted, and Integrated Approach to Addressing Barriers to Learning*—Discusses those facets of the “No Child Left Behind Act” and the “Individuals with Disabilities Education Act” that cover coalescing student/learning supports. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/federallegislation.pdf>
- Presentation Handouts/Slides on: *Enhancing School Improvement: Addressing Barriers to Learning and Reducing the Achievement Gap*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/presentations.htm>

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### REBUILDING KIT: SECTION 3

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#### Planning Phase-in

- *Guide on how to phase in a learning supports component*—Discusses phasing-in throughout a district or in one school – includes an outline of steps, a calendar for integrating the work into school improvement planning, and a monitoring outline and set of benchmarks. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aidb.pdf>

- *Draft of a five year plan for phasing in a learning supports component*—This example is one school's draft of a five-year plan for developing a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to address barriers to learning (an enabling or Learning Supports component). The sketch is a bit rough, but it provides a sense of one site's thinking and could readily be adapted. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/draft5year.pdf>
- *Action Planning Guide: Making it Happen*—Contains an overview of key facets and steps related to action planning, worksheets, and a group guide. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/overviewofkeyfacets.pdf>

### Ongoing Capacity Building

- *Guide to resource mapping and management to address barriers to learning: An intervention for systemic change*—Discusses the purposes, processes, and products of mapping resources and provide a set of self study surveys for a learning supports component. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resourcemapping/resourcemappingandmanagement.pdf>
- *Self-study surveys*—Includes a discussion of comprehensive, integrated approaches for addressing barriers to learning followed by a set of surveys covering six program arenas and the leadership and coordination systems every school must evolve to enable learning effectively. Areas covered are (1) classroom-focused enabling, (2) crisis assistance and prevention, (3) support for transitions, (4) home involvement in schooling, (5) student and family assistance programs and services, and (6) community outreach for involvement and support (including volunteers). In addition, there is a survey of mechanisms for leadership and coordination of enabling activity, and a survey of School-Community Partnerships. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Surveys/Set1.pdf>
- *Notes on capacity building in stages for rebuilding supports for learning*—Key aids for capacity building are organized with respect to three stages: Stage I: Understanding Some Basics and Tools for Enhancing Readiness and Momentum; Stage II: Initial Capacity Building; and Stage III: Development <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/NewDirectionsSomeResources.pdf>

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### REBUILDING KIT: SECTION 4

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- *Tool for Assessing Readiness for Systemic Change*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/assessingreadiness.pdf>
- *Systemic Change for School Improvement* (Excerpts from a 2006 article by the Center co-directors published in the *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*)—Focuses on the problem of expanding school improvement planning to better address how schools and districts intend to accomplish designated changes. Specifically, some basic considerations related to systemic change are framed and outlined, along a set of proposed policy actions.  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/systemicchange.pdf>
- *Change Agent Mechanisms for School Improvement: Infrastructure not Individuals*—Provides some basic information about systemic change roles and functions related to promoting, facilitating, sustaining, and replicating innovations throughout a school district. The emphasis is on developing and staffing a set of change agent mechanisms that are interconnected to form an infrastructure for systemic change. [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/change\\_agents.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/change_agents.pdf)
- *Sustaining and Scale-up: It's About Systemic Change*—Featured article in Center Newsletter/Journal. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Newsletter/Fall04.pdf>
- *Guide to rethinking a school board's committee structure to focus on rebuilding supports for learning*—The document is meant to encourage school boards to take another critical step in improving schools, specifically by focusing on how the district and each school addresses barriers to learning and teaching. The discussion explores (a) why school boards need to increase their focus on addressing barriers to learning and teaching, (b) the benefits accrued from doing so, (c) ways to build an enhanced focus on addressing barriers into a school board's committee structure, (d) lessons learned from a major district where the board created a committee dedicated to improving how current resources are expended to address barriers to learning and teaching.  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentsupport/toolkit/aidh.pdf>

