Mental Health in Schools
UCLA
Center
Program and Policy Analysis +

Resource Aid

Standards for an Enabling or
Learning Supports Component

Standards for an Enabling or Learning Supports Component*

School improvement planning across the country is "standards-based" and accountability driven. Given these realities, efforts to reform student support in ways that move it from its current marginalized status must delineate a set of standards and integrate them into school improvement planning. Establishing standards is another facet of ensuring high levels of attention and support for development of comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to address barriers to learning in ways that enhance students' strengths.

After standards are formulated, they must be thoroughly incorporated in every school's improvement plan. This is a necessary step toward making the policy commitment visible at every school, and it establishes the framework for ensuring relevant accountability. And, relatedly, efforts must be made to expand the accountability framework so that accountability demands support the ongoing development of comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to addressing barriers and promoting healthy development.
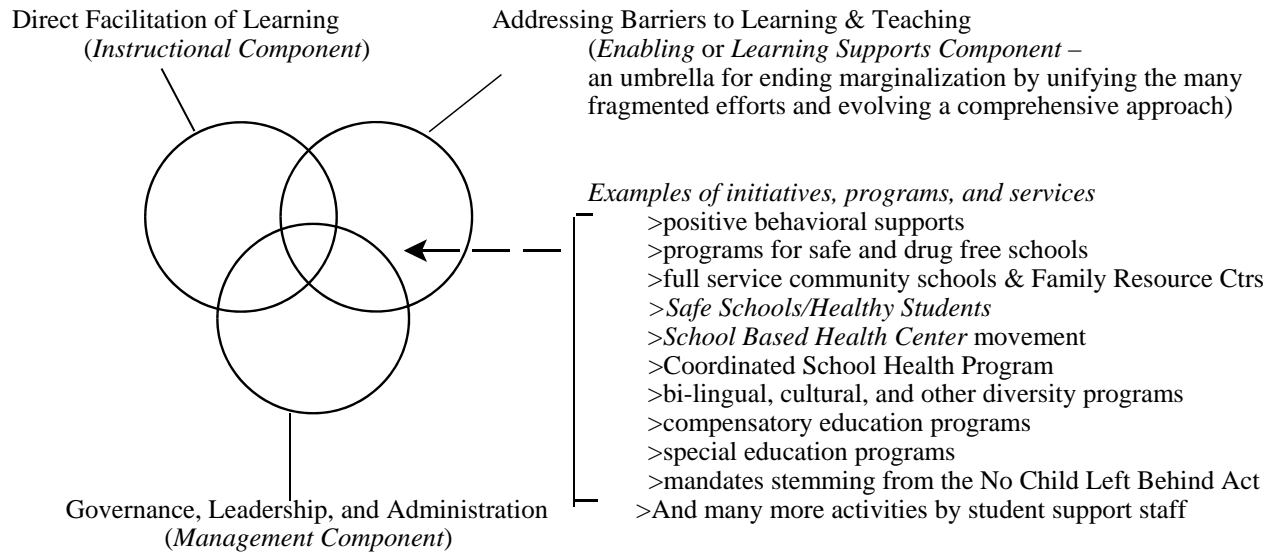
The starting point is policy

Policy needs to state that every school should develop a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. Policy commitments must indicate that such a component is essential to ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. Policy statements must indicate that the intent is to enable student learning through a full range of effective and efficient learning support interventions (thus, the label: *Enabling* or *Learning Supports Component*). For the school and community as a whole, the intent is to enhance policy and strategic collaboration to produce a safe, healthy, nurturing environment characterized by respect for differences, trust, caring, and support with the intent of strengthening the well-being of students, families, schools, and neighborhoods.

Policy guidelines should clarify that the component is designed to house all efforts to prevent and minimize the impact of the many problems interfering with learning and teaching and should do so in ways that maximize engagement in productive learning and positive development. This includes programs that promote and maintain safety and physical and mental health, school readiness and early school-adjustment services, social and academic supports, and interventions provided prior to referral for special services and those for meeting special needs. Encompassed are compensatory and special education mandates and a host of special initiatives and projects. With specific respect to the school's mission, all this requires policy, leadership, infrastructure, and accountability that fully integrates the Component into a school's efforts to improve instruction and management (see Exhibit 1 below).

Exhibit 1

Policy framework for establishing an umbrella for school improvement planning
Related to addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development

Direct Facilitation of Learning
(*Instructional Component*)

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

Examples of initiatives, programs, and services
>positive behavioral supports
>programs for safe and drug free schools
>full service community schools & Family Resource Ctrs
>*Safe Schools/Healthy Students*
>*School Based Health Center* movement
>Coordinated School Health Program
>bi-lingual, cultural, and other diversity programs
>compensatory education programs
>special education programs
>mandates stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act
>And many more activities by student support staff

Governance, Leadership, and Administration
(*Management Component*)

As a starting point in drafting a set of standards, we began with the *Guidelines for a Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Barriers to Learning* (see Appendix A). We also drew on the lessons learned from the analysis of current school improvement planning guides and from pioneering efforts to develop standards, guidelines, and related quality indicators for an Enabling Component by one school district and the quality student support criteria and rubrics developed by the Hawai`i Department of Education.

For purposes of organizing school improvement around broad, systemic concerns, it helps to cluster such concerns into a set of circumscribed key areas for action. Our analyses suggest five key areas: (1) framing and delineating intervention functions, (2) reworking infrastructure, (3) enhancing resource use, (4) continuous capacity building, and (5) continuous evaluation and appropriate accountability based on delineated standards and quality indicators.

Using these key areas for action, the following five major standards (along with related quality indicators) have been formulated to guide development of an Enabling or Learning Supports Component.

AREA: *FRAMING AND DELINEATING INTERVENTION FUNCTIONS*

> *Standard 1*. **Establishment of an overall *unifying intervention framework* for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.**

An *Enabling or Learning Supports Component* is a systemic approach that is fully integrated into the school's strategic improvement plan. The Component is operationalized into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive intervention framework. One facet of this framework is the *continuum* delineating the scope of desired intervention. The other facet is a conceptualization that organizes the *content arenas* for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, with due appreciation for the role played by efforts to promote assets and healthy development (see Exhibits 2 and 3). Because of the importance of each of the content arenas, specific standards for each are delineated.

Exhibit 2. Six content arenas for a component to address barriers to learning

Pioneering research has organized learning supports programs into the six content arenas:*

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

- *supporting transitions* (e.g., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes, daily transitions, etc.)

- *increasing home and school connections*

- *responding to, and where feasible, preventing school and personal crises*

- *increasing community involvement and support* (e.g., 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.*

A positive *school climate and culture* is an emergent quality that stems, in part, from effectively and efficiently addressing barriers to learning and teaching and promoting the well-being of students, their families, and staff.

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*Specific examples of the work in each arena are provided in a set of self-study surveys. These are available online at no cost from the website of the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. See: *Addressing Barriers to Learning: A Set of Surveys to Map What a School Has and What It Needs* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Surveys/Set1.pdf

In addition, two books written by the co-directors of the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA include an extensive discussion of the six arenas and new directions for addressing barriers to learning. The books are entitled:
>>The School Leader's Guide to Student Learning Supports (2006)
>>The Implementation Guide to Student Learning Supports (2006)
See: http://www.corwinpress.com/author.aspx?aid=530711

Exhibit 3. Matrix for reviewing scope and content of a component to address barriers to learning*

Scope of Intervention

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

Organizing around the

Content/ "curriculum"

for addressing barriers to learning & promoting healthy development

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

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

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

Standard 1 addendum: **Specific standards for the content arenas of an enabling or learning supports component**

While the number and labels for designated content arenas may differ, as Standard 1 states: Schools need to deal with a conceptualization that organizes the "content" arenas for addressing barriers to learning and teaching, with due appreciation for the role played by efforts to promote assets and healthy development. (As one of the quality performance indicators for Standard 1 indicates, rather than a fragmented, "laundry-list" of programs, services, and activities, the learning supports need to be organized into a concise content or "curriculum" framework that categorizes and captures the essence of the multifaceted ways schools need to address barriers to learning.)

To illustrate content standards here, content is formulated in this addendum as encompassing six arenas of intervention activity.

> *Standard 1a.* **Continuous enhancement of regular** *classroom strategies to enable learning* (e.g., personalizing learning for students with mild-moderate learning and behavior problems and to re-engage those who have become disengaged from learning at school)

> *Standard 1b.* **Continuous enhancement of programs and systems for a full range of** *transition supports* (e.g., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes, daily transitions, program transitions, etc.)

> *Standard 1c.* **Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to increase and strengthen** *home and school connections*

> *Standard 1d.* **Continuous enhancement of programs and systems for responding to, and where feasible, preventing** *school and personal crises* (including creating a caring and safe learning environment)

> *Standard 1e.* **Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to increase andstrengthen** *community involvement and support* (e.g., outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers)

> *Standard 1f.* **Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to facilitate** *student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed.*

About School Climate and Culture

As noted in Exhibit 2, a positive *school climate and culture* emerges, in part, from effectively and efficiently addressing barriers to learning and teaching and promoting the well-being of students, their families, and staff. Therefore, school climate is not treated as a separate arena, rather it is an anticipated emergent quality. From this perspective, it becomes an overall quality indicator for the entire school (i.e., for the impact of improvements related to all three components).

AREA: *REWORKING OPERATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE*

Standard 2. **Establishment of an *integrated operational infrastructure* for a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.**

Developing and institutionalizing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports requires mechanisms that are integrated with each other and are fully integrated into school improvement efforts. The need at all levels is to rework operational infrastructure to support efforts to address barriers to learning in a cohesive manner and to integrate the work with instruction and with the management/governance mechanisms (see example in Exhibit 4). This requires dedicated administrative and staff leadership (with such leadership fully involved in governance, planning and implementation) and work groups (focused on school improvement and intervention development functions such as mapping, analysis, and priority setting for resource allocation and integration, system and program development, communication and information management, capacity building, and quality improvement and accountability).

AREA: *ENHANCING RESOURCE USE*

Standard 3. **Appropriate resource use and allocation for developing, maintaining, and evolving the component**.

Use of resources is based on up-to-date gap and outcome analyses and established priorities for improving the Component. Resource allocation involves (re)deployment of available funds to achieve priorities. Cost-efficiencies are achieved through common purpose collaborations that integrate systems and weave together learning and student support resources within a school, among families of schools, from centralized district assets, and from various community entities (see Exhibit 5).

AREA: *CONTINUOUS CAPACITY BUILDING*

Standard 4. **Capacity building for developing, maintaining, and evolving the component**.

Capacity building involves enhancing ongoing Component and stakeholder development and performance. The work requires allocation of resources to provide effective and efficient mechanisms and personnel to carry out a myriad of capacity building functions.

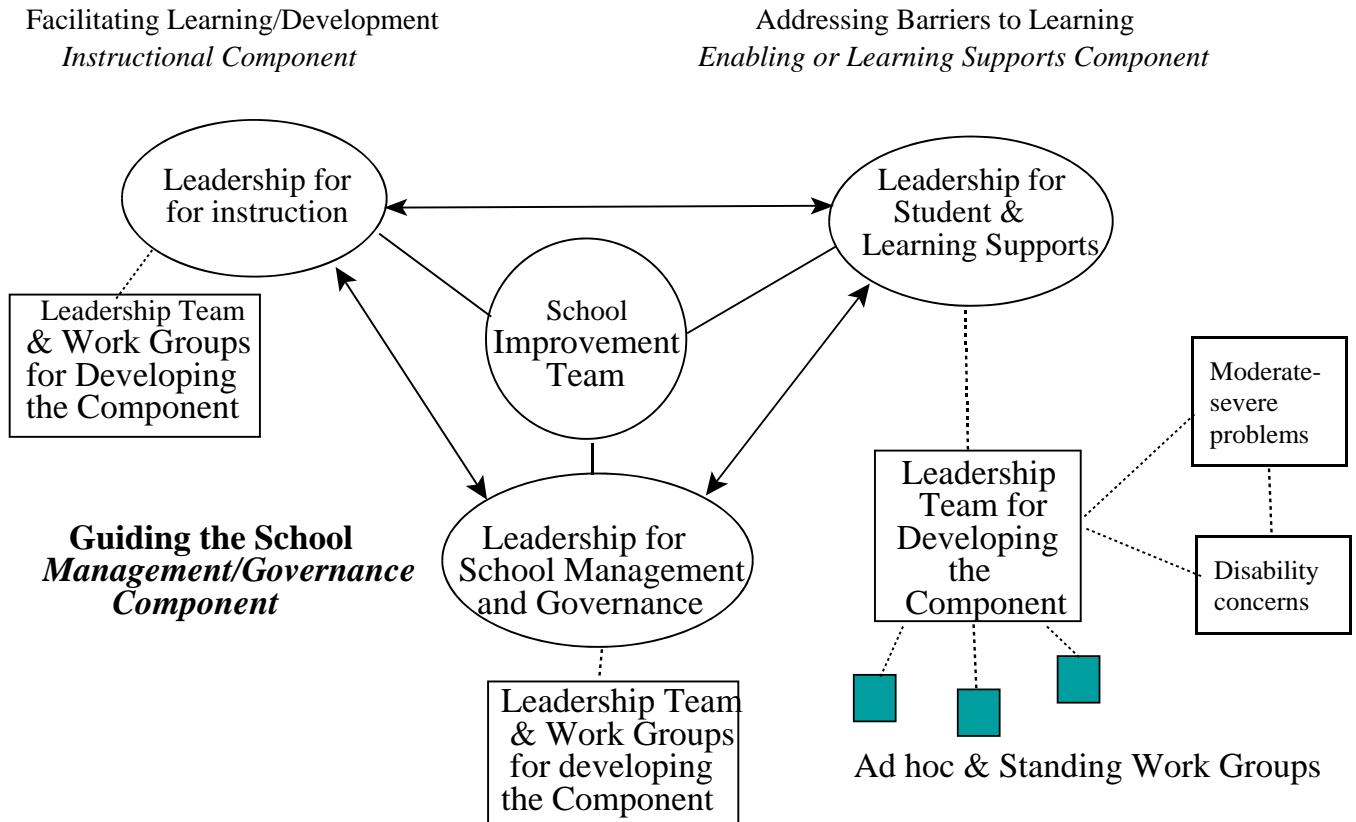### AREA: *CONTINUOUS EVALUATION AND APPROPRIATE ACCOUNTABILITY*

Standard 5. **Formative and summative evaluation and accountability are fully integrated into all planning and implementation of the component.**

Formative evaluation provides essential data related to progress in improving processes and achieving benchmarks and outcomes. In the initial phase of component development, formative evaluation focuses heavily on feedback and benchmarks related to specific developmental tasks, functioning of processes, and immediate outcomes. Formative evaluation is pursued as an ongoing process with an increasing focus on intermediate and then long-range outcomes. Summative data on intermediate outcomes are gathered as soon as the Component is operating as an integrated system. Summative data on long-range outcomes are gathered after the Component has operated as an integrated system for two years. Accountability indicators should fit each phase of component development. This

means the primary focus is on developmental benchmarks in the early phases. When the accountability focus is on student impact, the primary emphasis is on the direct enabling outcomes for students that each arena of the component is designed to accomplish. As these accountability indicators show solid impact, they can be correlated with academic progress to estimate their contribution to academic achievement.

Exhibit 4. Example of an integrated infrastructure at a school site.

The following example illustrates the type of infrastructure that needs to emerge at the school if it is to effectively develop a comprehensive component to address barriers to learning. Note especially the links among the three components, and the connection within the various groups involved in planning, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining learning supports.
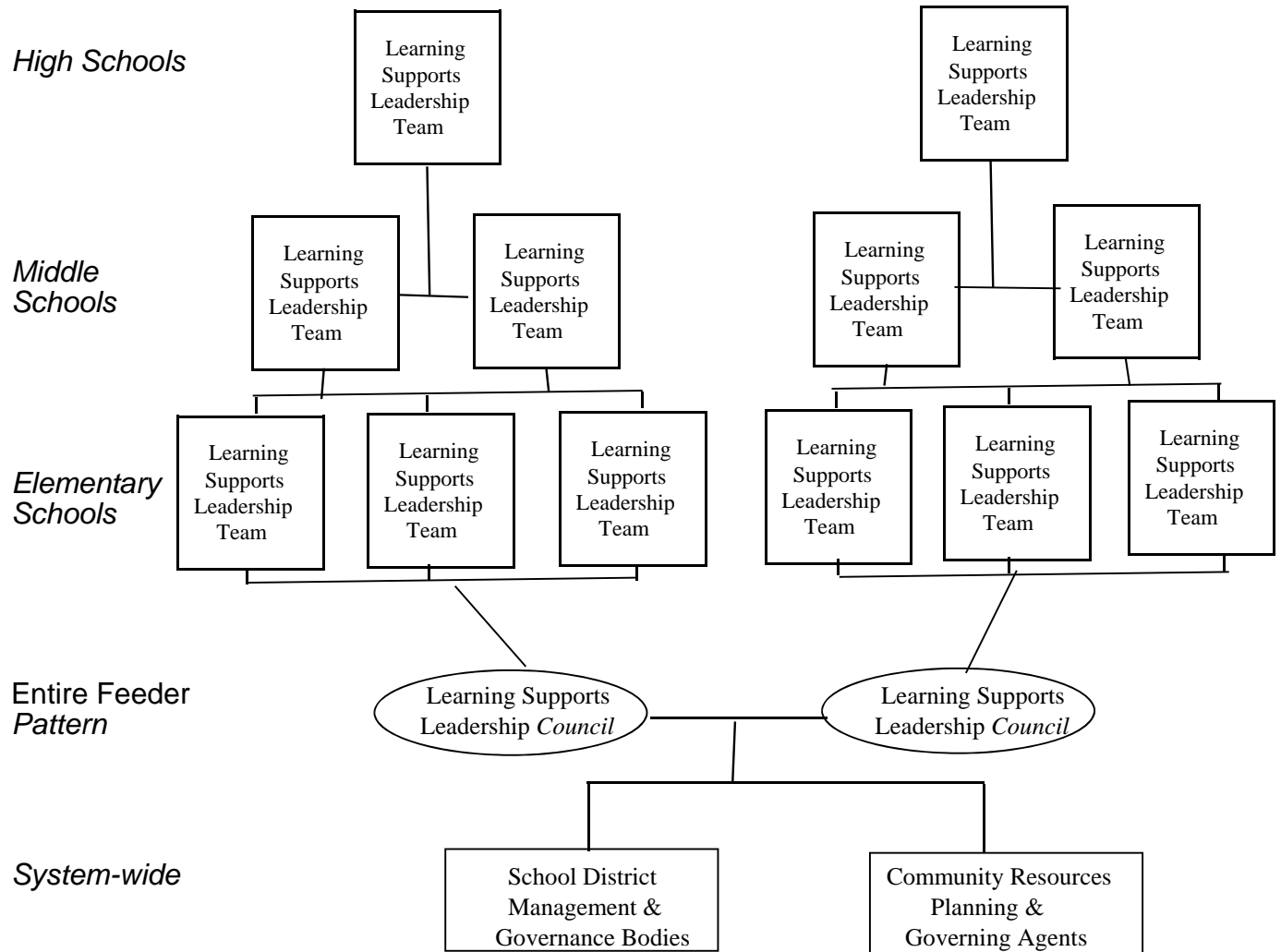
Facilitating Learning/Development
Instructional Component

Addressing Barriers to Learning
Enabling or Learning Supports Component

*Learning Supports or Enabling Component Leadership consists of an administrator and other advocates/ champions with responsibility and accountability for ensuring the vision or the component is not lost. The administrator meets with and provides regular input to the Learning Supports Leadership Team.

**A Learning Supports Leadership Team ensures component cohesion, integrated implementation, and ongoing development. It meets weekly to guide and monitor daily implementation and development of all programs, services, initiatives, and systems at a school that are concerned with providing learning supports and specialized assistance.

***Ad hoc and standing workgroups initially are the various "teams" that already exist related to various initiatives and programs (e.g., a crisis team) and for processing "cases" (e.g., a student assistance team, an IEP team). Where redundancy exists, workgroups can be combined. Others are formed as needed by the Learning Supports Leadership Team to address specific concerns. These groups are essential for accomplishing the many tasks associated with such a team's functions.

For more on this, see the Reworking Infrastructure (Section B) of the Center's Toolkit for Rebuilding Student Supports into a Comprehensive System for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching --
 http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkitb3.htm

Exhibit 5. Resource-oriented leadership mechanisms across a family of schools

High Schools

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

Middle Schools

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

Elementary Schools

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

> Learning Supports Leadership Team

Entire Feeder *Pattern*

> Learning Supports Leadership *Council*

> Learning Supports Leadership *Council*

System-wide

> School District Management & Governance Bodies

> Community Resources Planning & Governing Agents

A Sample of Related References to
Student and Learning Supports and School Climate Standards

ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (3rd ed)
http://ascamodel.timberlakepublishing.com/files/Executive%20Summary%203.0.pdf

American School Counselor Association National Standards for Students
http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/ASCA_National_Standards_for_Students.pdf

Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs (3rd ed)
http://nrckids.org/CFOC3/

National Association of School Psychologists 2010 Standards –
consists of four separate documents:
(a) Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists (formerly Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology),
(b) Standards for the Credentialing of School Psychologists,
(c) Principles for Professional Ethics, and the
(d) Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services (formerly Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services
http://www.nasponline.org/standards/2010standards.aspx

NASW Standards for School Social Work Services
http://www.naswdc.org/practice/standards/NASWSchoolSocialWorkStandards.pdf

School Climate Standards
http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/standards.php

A Sample of Relevant State Standards and Guidelines

California Standards of Quality and Effectiveness For Pupil Personnel Services Credentials: School Counseling, School Psychology, School Social Work, Child Welfare and Attendance
http://www.hhs.csus.edu/SWRK/document/PDF/PPSStand.pdf#search='Standards%20of%20
Quality%20and%20Effectiveness%20For%20Pupil%20Personnel%20Services%20Credentials:
%20School%20Counseling,%20School%20Psychology,%20School%20Social%20Work,%20Ch
ild%20Welfare%20and%20Attendance

Connecticut's Comprehensive School Counseling: A Guide to Comprehensive School Counseling Program Development
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/counseling.pdf

Hawaii's Standards Database
http://wetserver.net/hcpsv3_staging/cc/index.jsp

Illinois Learning Standards: Social/Emotional Learning
http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm

Illinois Standards for School Psychologists
http://www.isbe.state.il.us/profprep/CASCDvr/pdfs/23130_schoolpsy.pdf

Illinois Standards for the School Social Worker
   http://www.isbe.state.il.us/profprep/CASCDvr/pdfs/23140_schoolsocwork.pdf

Iowa Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program Development Guide
   http://www.schoolcounselor.org/files/iowa.pdf

Indiana Standards for School Social Work Professionals
   http://www.insswa.org/Standards-Indiana_School_Social_Work.pdf

North Carolina Professional School Social Work Standards
   http://www.ncpublicschools.org/studentsupport/socialwork/standards/

North Carolina Professional School Psychology Standards
   http://www.ncpublicschools.org/studentsupport/psychology/standards/

North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards
   http://www.ncpublicschools.org/studentsupport/counseling/standards/

Ohio State Department of Education: Comprehensive System of Learning Supports Guidelines
   http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&
   TopicRelationID=5&ContentID=29853&Content=119551

Pennsylvania School Counselors Association
   http://www.psca-web.org/PA%20Companion%20Guide.shtml

Texas's School Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools (4th ed)
   http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=4207

Washington State School Social Work Standards
   http://www.wassw.org/washington-state-school-social-work-standards.html

Additional relevant references on the Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Find on
Standards **– http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/guidframstand.htm**