

In the August 2011 issue of *The School Administrator*, Gainesville's Superintendent Marianne Dyer stresses that her district has moved from a culture of compliance to one of innovation and have opened up nontraditional avenues informed by research. She states:

A prime example is the redesign of our district strategic plan and organization using the Comprehensive System of Learning Supports framework. This framework is derived from the work of Linda Taylor and Howard Adelman of the UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools. We were led to their work by exploring ways to help the 18 percent of students in our district who were not successful on state assessments or were not completing high school with their cohort group.

Through a grant from AASA and Scholastic, we are participating in a LEAD collaborative, a group of four school districts implementing the support framework designed by Taylor and Adelman. This incorporates the traditional school improvement into a three-component framework that addresses the root causes of failure and the pervasive barriers to student learning.

Developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: The Experience of Gainesville City Schools, GA

In 2009, the UCLA-Scholastic collaboration reached out to AASA to establish a leadership initiative. One product of that initiative is development of Lead districts to demonstrate a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports. Researchers from the Education Development Center (EDC) were invited to do a case study. The following is our brief summary of the December, 2011 Case Study draft submitted by Daniel Light, Camille Ferguson, and Terri Meade on the work in the Gainesville City Public Schools (GA).

“Over the last two years, Gainesville created new policies and modified or expanded on existing strategies, policies and practices to develop a system of student supports that enables learning.

... Gainesville is a high poverty district with a diverse student population and there are pockets of students who are underperforming. In 2010, of 6,296 students enrolled in the school district, 78% were eligible for free or reduced price lunch. Three of its eight schools have more than 90% of their students living in poverty. Gainesville's student population is divided between white (20%), black (19%) and Hispanic (55%) students. In particular, Gainesville has been dealing with the challenges of the growing Hispanic community.

The Superintendent of Gainesville City Schools reported that another challenge was to build the capacity of the whole district system, so that the departure of any individual staff person would not deeply impact any one practice, program or policy in the district. Developing a comprehensive system of learning supports has allowed Gainesville to build the collective capacity of the whole district as well as sustain reform efforts.

The district also wanted to further develop the cohesiveness of their school programs to reduce costs and increase efficiency so that the district would be able to sustain funding for their school programs. Considering sustainability, the Gainesville team sought to address costly inefficiencies in services, especially during unstable budget periods that schools and districts experience as a result of their dependence on public financing. The Superintendent commented, "We can see the power in the coherence. It's like putting a machine together and getting it to work more effectively." The leadership found value, especially as a high poverty district, in having consultancy partners, who would help the district address issues of positive mental health in schools.

Gainesville's Path to Creating a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Through the Lead District Collaborative, Gainesville had access to resources like the book, *Rebuilding for Learning: Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching and Re-Engaging Students* (Adelman and Taylor 2008), the resources available at the Rebuilding for Learning Online Leadership Institute and the Rebuilding Toolkit on the website of the UCLA Center for Mental Health in

Schools. In addition, Gainesville received technical assistance in the form of site visits led by Drs. Adelman and Taylor and other experts from Scholastic and AASA. During the technical assistance site visits, the experts provided strategic facilitation and feedback regarding the district's team based approach to developing a comprehensive system [and] also engaged and informed community leaders and stakeholders about potential outcomes that could be supported by a system of learning supports. ... Gainesville [also] had access to advice and support from a former district administrator who led her school through the process of building a comprehensive system of learning supports after hurricane Katrina devastated her Alabama community. The learning supports consultant made multiple visits to the district working with different groups. For example, she worked closely with the high school team offering them the practical experience and strategies that came her own practical experience.

What is a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports?

Most of the common approaches to school improvement and reform focus on two major policy components: enhancing instruction and curriculum and restructuring school governance. Adelman and Taylor [2006] argue for the importance of a third key component of the school system that targets removing the many barriers to learning and creating a supportive context for teaching and learning. As the third policy and practice pillar, a learning supports component enables schools to develop a unified and comprehensive system of student and learning supports for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

Unifying student and learning supports into a third component is seen as empowering efforts to counter the continuing marginalization in schools of student and learning supports and provides leverage for full integration into school improvement policy and practice. The component is designed to enable academic, social, emotional, and physical development and address learning, behavior, and emotional problems in ways that yield safe and caring schools.

In operationalizing the third component, the intervention framework encompasses both (1) a continuum and (2) a set of content arenas that are designed to play out cohesively in classrooms and schoolwide. The continuum ranges from promotion of healthy development and prevention of problems through responding as soon as problems emerge to playing a role in the treatment of chronic and severe problems. The emphasis on re-engagement recognizes that efforts to address interfering factors, provide positive behavior support, and prevent disengagement and dropouts must include a focus on re-engaging students in classroom instruction, or they are unlikely to be effective over time. Furthermore, the overlapping nature of the three-component framework provides major opportunities for student support staff to play a significant role in enhancing classroom and schoolwide programs to promote student, family, and community healthy development, well-being, and engagement with schools. ...

The primacy and value placed on developing a supportive environment to facilitate learning was a key attraction for Gainesville. During a professional development session, the Gainesville Superintendent told her staff that she became interested in a comprehensive learning support system because the approach helps schools target and improve a fundamental aspect of schooling that gets scant attention from other reform models

A Comprehensive Learning Supports System also stresses developing intrinsic motivation for learning. Engagement in the learning process is a prerequisite for student achievement. Adelman and Taylor emphasize that school improvement is "not about

controlling behavior;" it's about engaging and re-engaging students in school through enhancing their intrinsic motivation. but enabling students to be motivated to learn.

As presented ..., developing a comprehensive system of student and learning supports involves working on four fundamental aspects of school improvement: (1) revising policy, (2) reconceiving student and learning supports interventions, (3) reworking operational infrastructure, and (4) facilitating major systemic changes at district and school levels.

Policy revision focuses on establishing a three component framework so that a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching is fully integrated into school improvement policy and practice as primary and essential and is no longer marginalized. Moreover, the emphasis is on unifying policies, strategies, and practices that promote healthy development for all students and prevent negative outcomes such as chronic attendance, behavior, or achievement challenges.

With specific respect to reconceiving student and learning supports interventions, as noted above, the framework encompasses both (1) a continuum and (2) a set of content arenas that are designed to play out cohesively in classrooms and schoolwide. The continuum is conceived as integrated subsystems for

- promoting healthy development and preventing problems
- intervening early to address problems as soon after onset as is feasible
- assisting those with chronic and severe problems

Note that the intent is to weave together school resources and strategically braid in a wide range of available community resources in order to meet the needs of the many and the few and significantly reduce the number of students requiring individual assistance.

Operationalizing the continuum calls for organizing programs and services coherently at every level. To enhance efforts across the continuum, programs and services are coalesced into a multifaceted and cohesive set of content arenas.

Doing this transforms a laundry list of initiatives into a set of defined, organized, and fundamentally essential intervention domains. The prototype provided to Gainesville defines the six content arenas as follows:

- Classroom-Based Approaches to Enable Learning
- Crisis/Emergency Assistance and Prevention
- Support for Transitions
- Home Involvement in Schooling
- Community Outreach
- Student/Family Assistance.

It is both the continuum and six content arenas that constitute the intervention framework for a comprehensive system of learning supports. It is represented as a matrix. Such a framework can guide and unify school improvement planning for developing the system. The matrix provides a tool for mapping what is in place and analyzing gaps with respect to high priority needs. Overtime, this type of mapping and analyses can be done at the school level, for a family of schools (e.g., a feeder pattern), at the district level, and community-wide.

Conclusion

The district tracks its own progress developing a system of learning supports through a number of measures including parent and teacher feedback. For example, the district gathers feedback from parents about policy changes through three yearly parent surveys that are administered districtwide. For example, at the end of year survey for 2010-2011 the district asked about perceptions of the new grading policy.

But the district has primarily been focused on discipline data, such as numbers of referrals, detentions, suspensions, etc. to track the early progress of their comprehensive learning supports approach. First, referrals for disciplinary action for the middle and high schools have dropped from 91 disciplinary tribunals in 2008-09 to 47 in 2010-11, and the elementary schools saw a 75% decrease. Second, graduation rates have increased from 73.3% in 2009 to 81.3% in 2010 and 84.9% in 2011. The district is looking carefully at the numbers because they do not want the numbers to decrease simply because schools have stopped reporting incidents. So the district looks for patterns in what the suspensions are for, or which students receive them, etc.

Another change they have noticed was a decrease in referrals for tribunal (the initiation of placing in an alternative school), by approximately 50% over the last three years. The district considers this a positive result of their learning supports because they developed the Woods Mill Non-Traditional High Schools as a learning support for those students who needed flexible scheduling and diverse options because their life-situations made a traditional school day impractical (i.e. teen mothers). Previously, these students had gone to the alternative school, which was actually designed for students with behavioral and cognitive challenges.

The Superintendent was initially interested in looking at learning supports and the Rebuilding for Learning initiative as a possible answer to the district's needs because a learning supports approach "is not a program, it is a framework for how we do things." She believed that comprehensive learning supports were different from other reform models because it actually brought something new to the table - learning supports for all children. Most other reform models target the two things that school already do - management and instruction, but comprehensive learning supports gets districts thinking about something new and how these supports relate to (and can improve) the job schools are already doing.

Now, two years down the road Gainesville was well on its way to creating a system that enables all children to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school and in life."

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GAINESVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

**IN COLLABORATION WITH THE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
UCLA CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH
SCHOLASTIC, INC**

**COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF LEARNING
SUPPORTS**

THE DESIGN DOCUMENT

Process and Acknowledgements

In August of 2009, Gainesville City Schools was designated as one of four districts in the nation to participate in a collaborative between Scholastic, UCLA, and the American Association of School Administrators. The purpose of the work was to guide states and districts to transform education systems to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed in school. The initiative offers framework for designing, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining a *comprehensive system of student and learning supports* at schools to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. The unifying concept of a learning supports component guides leaders at all levels in moving from a two- to a three-component framework for school improvement policy and planning. Such a component strategically and systematically braids together school and community resources and practices to enable development of the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical capabilities that students need to succeed in and out of school in the 21st century.

A Core Team from Gainesville City Schools began the work in October 2009 under the direction of Dr. Linda Taylor and Dr. Howard Adelman from UCLA with support and consultative assistance from Scholastic, Inc. and AASA.

The work builds on our foundational belief in and commitment to ensuring that all children have an equal opportunity to succeed in school, thereby enhancing their opportunities for future success and well-being.

Appreciation is expressed to those who contribute each day to ensuring that the children of Gainesville grow up physically, socially, emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally healthy and that the schools, homes, and communities where they live, work, and play are safe and supportive.

Special Thanks

Our team could not have done this alone. We express our thanks and sincere gratitude to Dr. Linda Taylor and Dr. Howard Adelman for sharing the wisdom of their work and guiding us in our process. Dr. Mary Ann Jobe and Sharon Adams-Taylor from AASA have supported us in our professional learning journey as we collaborated on a new process of work. The support of Karen Proctor, Windy Lopez, and Rhonda Waltman from Scholastic, Inc. provided us with tools to accomplish the task. We also thank our friends and partners in this work:

- * Jefferson County Public Schools Kentucky
- * Sabine Parrish Schools Louisiana
- * Indian River Public Schools Florida

Our great appreciation also to Carol Williams from United Way of Hall County and Mary Parks for working in partnership with us. Our community, business, and parents continue to serve as supporting partners, and for that we are most grateful.

Last, but hardly least, our most sincere thanks to the employees of Gainesville City School System who strive each and every day to enable our children to succeed now and in the future.

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RATIONALE

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

Carnegie Council on Education Task Force

*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.*

Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) 2002 mission statement

Gainesville City Schools have a history of striving for excellence in education, with strong parent and community-wide support. At the same time, no school and community can be satisfied until all its young people are healthy and socially competent, successful in school, and have an equal opportunity to grow into productive and contributing citizens. As the above quotes stress, in order to position our children for the greatest degree of future success, our schools must not only continue to provide the best instruction, but must also play a significant role in addressing factors that interfere with students having an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Our ongoing analyses indicate some continuing fragmentation and gaps in our efforts to assure no child is left behind. Fortunately, we have the opportunity and are at a place where we can take the next steps in strengthening our student and learning supports systems to better address barriers to learning and teaching. We are moving to do so by reframing our current approach, including doing more to weave together existing school and community resources.

The rationale for policy and systemic changes to enhance student and learning supports stems from the following basic premises:

Schools Must Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching in Order to Accomplish their Instructional Mission

- The mission of education includes a fundamental commitment to and accountability for academic achievement.
- Children/youth must be healthy, safe, and supported if they are to achieve academically and succeed in school.
- Some students experience significant barriers to learning.
- Student achievement is improved and barriers to learning are alleviated through a system of student and learning supports that incorporates a full continuum of evidence-based programs and services which ensure safe, health promoting, supportive, and inclusive learning environments.

School-Community-Family Collaboration is Essential

- A full continuum of programs and services transcends what any one system can provide.
- Children thrive and overcome barriers to learning when families are strengthened and assisted to find pathways to support their children's education and to pursue their own learning.
- Schools are strengthened when the efforts of community organizations and institutions are results-oriented and include policies, programs, practices, and resources that are aligned with those of schools to improve student achievement.
- Efforts to address barriers to learning are enhanced when interveners are willing to coordinate and integrate their efforts to support academic achievement.

Cohesive Leadership and Aligned Policy are Needed at Every Level

- Systems of learning supports require quality leaders at all levels to utilize effective systems of communication and data management, efficient and effective organization of resources, and well articulated planning.
- Cohesive, aligned policies and practices within a district and among its community partners are

- essential to effect system changes at schools.
- Critical functions for leadership at all levels include aligning, assisting, and supporting school level changes.

In addition to the above premises, available data show both a clear need and a science-base for learning supports. The need is reflected in achievement gaps and high dropout rates for subpopulations of students, such as African Americans and Hispanics, students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch, English language learners, and students with disabilities. The science-base for learning supports is gleaned from a growing volume of research on the value of schools, families, and communities working together to provide supportive programs and services that enable students to learn and teachers to teach. Findings include improved school attendance, fewer behavior problems, improved inter-personal skills, enhanced student engagement and re-engagement in classroom learning, enhanced achievement, and increased bonding at school and at home.

Building on Our History: Using What We've Learned

Everyday a wide range of learning, behavioral, physical, and emotional problems interfere with the ability of students to participate effectively and fully benefit from the instruction teachers provide. Even the best schools find that *too many* youngsters are growing up in situations where significant barriers regularly interfere with their reaching full potential.

The notion of *barriers to learning* encompasses both external and internal factors. 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. Some youngsters also bring with them intrinsic conditions that make learning and performing difficult. 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. And, students' problems are exacerbated as they internalize the frustrations of confronting barriers to learning and the debilitating effects of performing poorly at school. All this interferes with effective teaching (see Exhibit 1).

Gainesville City Schools have implemented an on-going process of identifying barriers to learning and teaching affecting our students. Many problems are not discrete and must be addressed holistically and developmentally and with attention to root causes. An appreciation of these matters points to the importance of minimizing tendencies to develop separate programs for each observed problem. In turn, this enables coordination and integration of resources which can increase impact and cost-effectiveness. Thus, our emphasis is not just on identifying individuals but on clarifying and addressing common factors that contribute to learning, behavior, and emotional problems of significant numbers of young people.

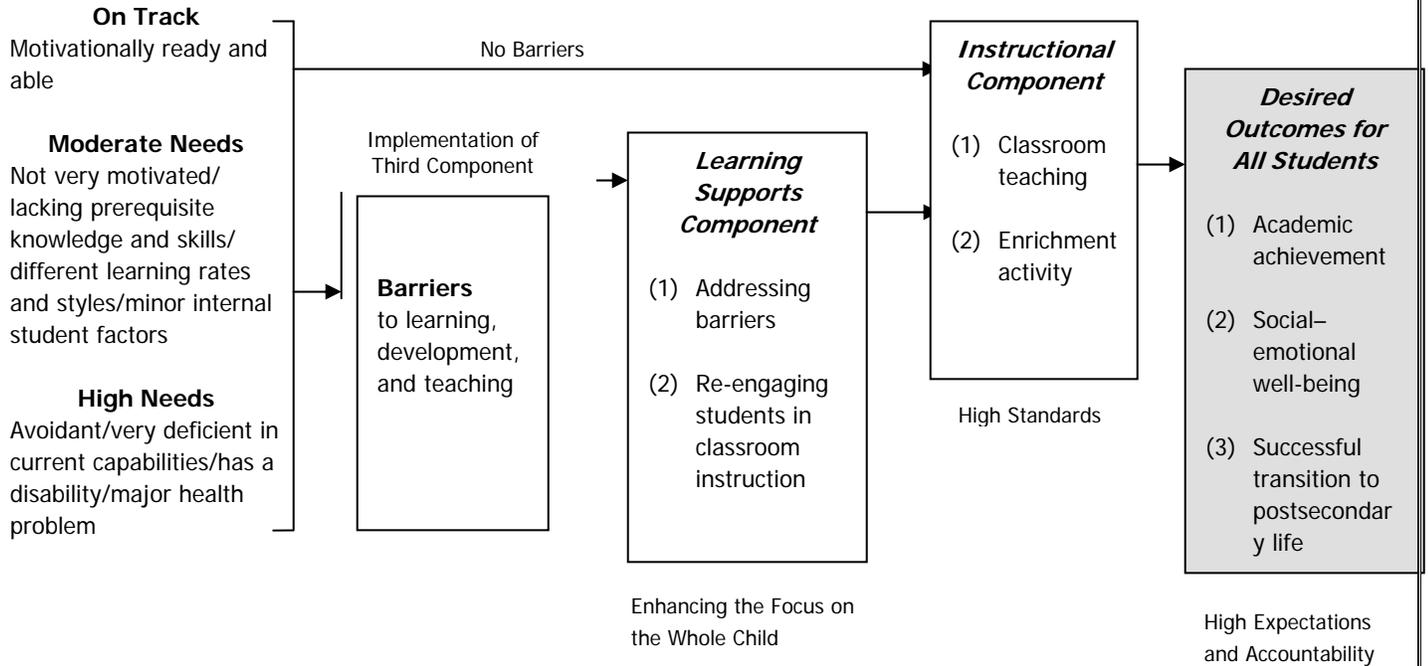
Clearly, addressing barriers is not at odds with the emphasis on strengths, resilience, assets, and protective factors. Efforts to enhance positive development and improve instruction clearly can improve readiness to learn. However, it is frequently the case that preventing problems also requires direct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

Our schools have a long-history of assisting teachers in dealing with problems that interfere with school learning. Prominent examples are seen in the range of counseling, psychological, and social service programs, in the implementation of positive behavioral supports and response to intervention strategies, and in initiatives for enhancing students' assets and resiliency. A great deal is done, but efforts have been fragmented and often marginalized. As a result, they have been less effective than they can be. So we have established as a priority the development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approach for (a) addressing barriers to learning and teaching and (b) re-engaging disconnected students. Our schools are moving toward implementing a fully integrated system of learning supports into school improvement planning and practice.

Exhibit 1. A Learning Supports Component to Address Barriers* and Re-Engage Students in Classroom Instruction

Range of Learners

(based on their response to academic instruction at any given point in time)



*Examples of Conditions That Can Increase Barriers to Learning

Environmental Conditions		Person Conditions	
Neighborhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High poverty High rates of crime, drug use, violence, gang activity High unemployment, abandoned/floundering businesses Disorganized community High mobility Lack of positive youth development opportunities 	Family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic conflicts, abuse, distress, grief, loss Unemployment, poverty, and homelessness Immigrant and/or minority status Family physical or mental health illness Poor medical or dental care Inadequate child care Substance abuse 	School and Peers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor quality schools, high teacher turnover High rates of bullying and harassment Minimal offerings and low involvement in extracurricular activities Frequent student-teacher conflicts Poor school climate, negative peer models Many disengaged students and families 	Internal Student Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neurodevelopmental delay Physical illness Mental disorders Disabilities Inadequate nutrition and healthcare Learning, behavior, and emotional problems that arise from negative environmental conditions exacerbate existing internal factors

Fortunately, the science-based and innovative initiatives in our schools and around the country provide evidence about what needs to be changed and what new directions hold promise. All this provides a foundation upon which we build as we strive to close the achievement gap and ensure all students have equal educational opportunities. We anticipate that when a comprehensive system of learning supports is provided in a timely and effective manner, fewer students will require specialized, intensive, and expensive services. And, as a result, the learning, achievement, and performance of all children and youth can improve. Thus, greater numbers will be prepared to pursue postsecondary education and enabled to become self-sufficient, successful members of their community and productive members of society.

DEFINING AND FRAMING THE WORK

Learning supports are the resources, strategies, and practices that provide physical, social, emotional, and intellectual supports to enable all students to have an equal opportunity for success at school. By directly addressing barriers to learning and teaching, disconnected students can be re-engaged in the learning process and benefit from the school experience.

A comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive learning support system provides essential interventions in classrooms and school-wide. To ensure effectiveness, it is fully integrated in school improvement policies and practices to enhance instruction and school management.

Moving from a Two- to a Three-Component School Improvement Framework

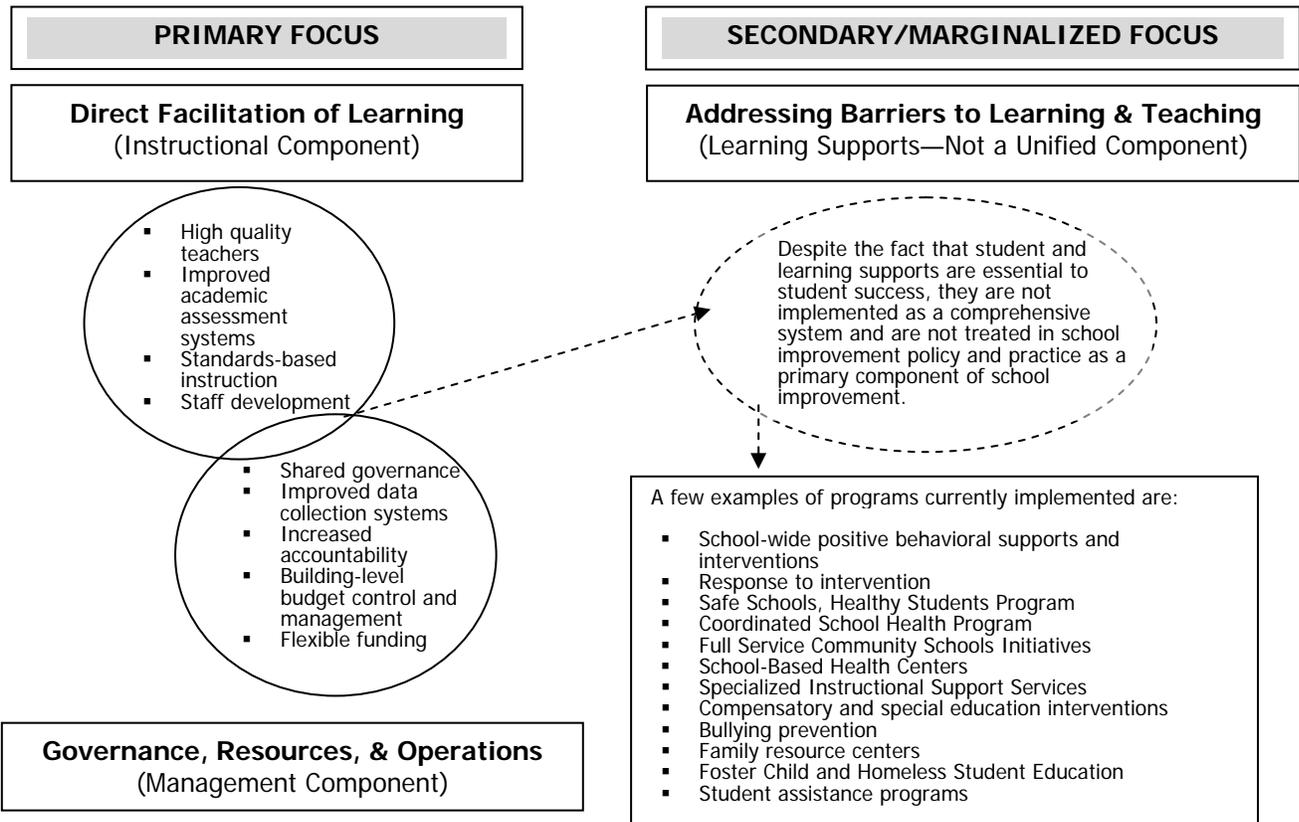
Gainesville City Schools recognizes that a three component framework is necessary for a comprehensive approach to school improvement. Innovative moves in this direction are underway in a variety of states and school districts. Drawing on these pioneering initiatives, the District Strategic Plan for working toward our goals has been expanded to ensure that all three components are pursued as primary, essential, and fully integrated (see Exhibit 2A-B). The three components are:

- (1) ***Instructional Component*** -- encompasses all efforts to ensure that best practices for effective instruction are in place, monitored, and measured for results
- (2) ***Learning Supports Component*** – encompasses best practices efforts to develop, implement, evaluate, and sustain a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system for (a) addressing barriers to learning, development, and teaching and (b) re-engaging disconnected students
- (3) ***Management Component*** -- encompasses all efforts to ensure that best practices for district and school site governance, resource allocation, management and operation are in place, monitored, and measured for results.

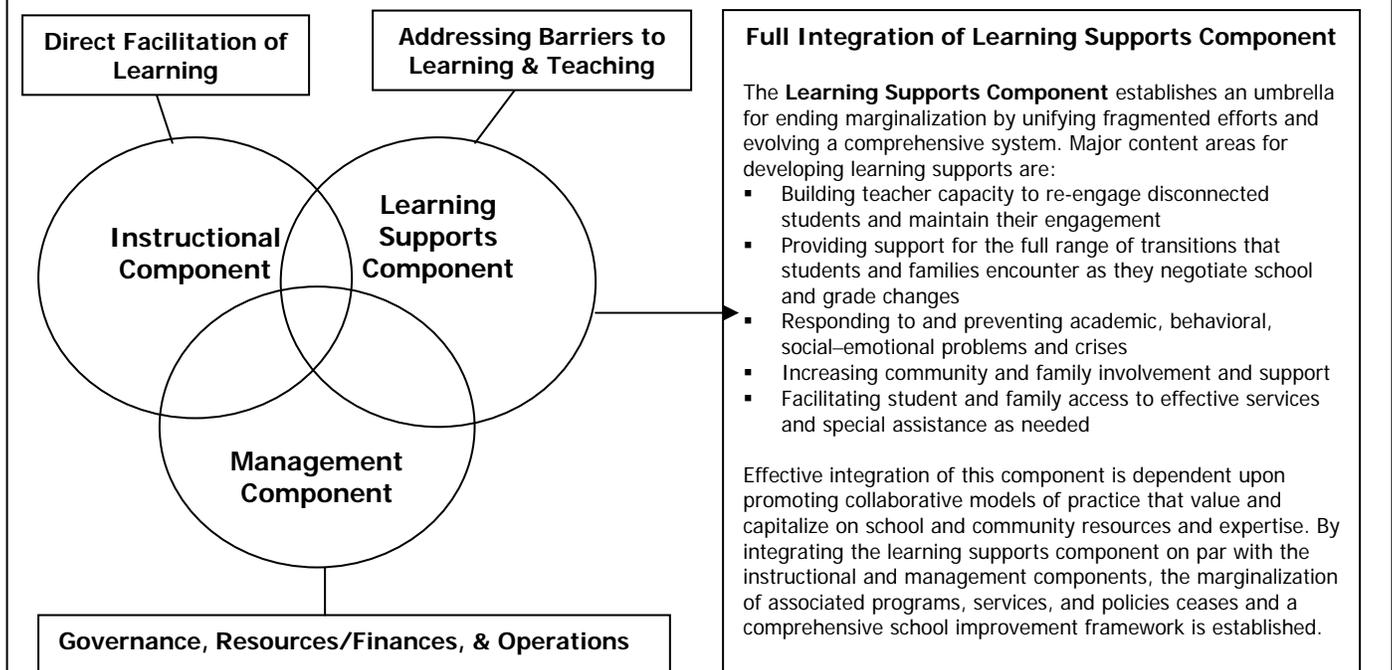
As illustrated in Exhibit 2, in place of the marginalized and fragmented way interventions are generated by prevailing approaches to school improvement (Exhibit 2A), we have adopted the unifying concept of a learning supports component to guide and facilitate the development of a comprehensive and cohesive system of learning supports that is fully integrated with management and instruction (Exhibit 2B) in all our school improvement efforts.

Exhibit 2. Moving From a Two- to a Three-Component Framework for Improving Schools

A. Current School Improvement Framework



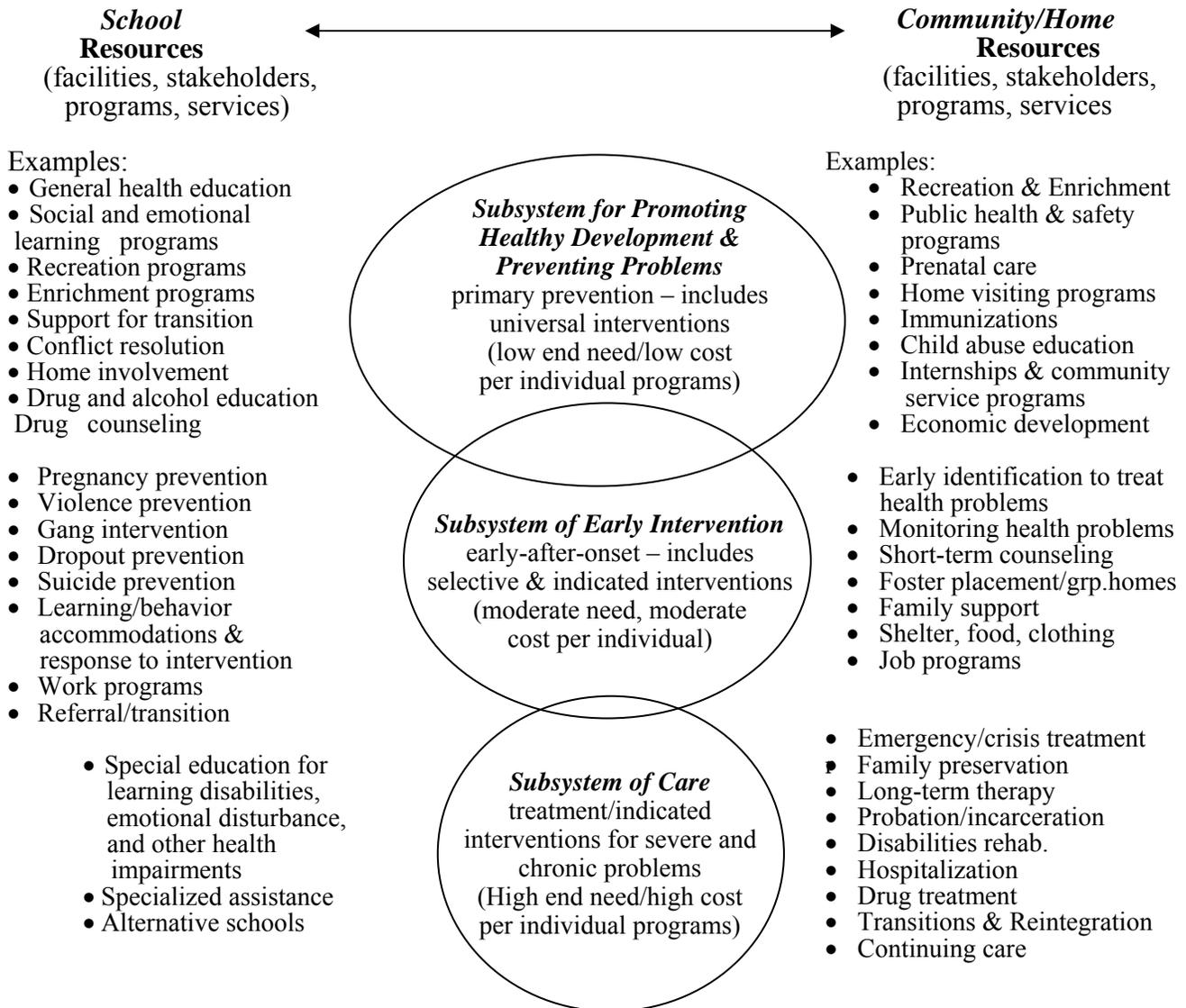
B. Needed: Policies to Establish an Umbrella for School Improvement Planning Related to Addressing Barriers to Learning and Promoting Healthy Development



Unified Intervention Framework for Student and Learning Supports

As is widely recognized, one dimension of a comprehensive intervention framework is a full continuum. This is reflected in the three-tier pyramid used in relation to Response to Intervention (RTI) initiatives. To emphasize the importance of system development and braiding school and community/home resources, researchers at UCLA have conceived the continuum as an integrated set of subsystems (see Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3
Integrated Continuum of Intervention Subsystems*



Note: Systematic school-community-home collaboration is essential to establish cohesive, seamless intervention on a daily basis and overtime within and among each subsystem. Such collaboration involves horizontal and vertical restructuring of programs and services.

*Various venues, concepts, and initiatives permeate this continuum of intervention systems. For example, venues such as day care and preschools, concepts such as social and emotional learning and development, and initiatives such as positive behavior support, response to intervention, and coordinated school health. Also, a considerable variety of staff are involved. Finally, note that this illustration of an essential continuum of intervention subsystems differs in significant ways from the three tier pyramid that is widely referred to in discussing universal, selective, and indicated interventions.

With respect to the *content* of a comprehensive system of supports, most prototypes are emphasizing some version of six basic arenas related to each of the three integrated intervention subsystems. The six content arenas we have adopted are:

- Classroom-Based Approaches -- 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)
- Support for Transitions -- (e.g., assisting students and families as they negotiate school and grade changes, daily and many other transitions)
- Family Engagement in Schooling – strengthening families and increasing home and school connections
- Community Support - increasing community involvement and support (e.g., outreach to develop greater community involvement and support, including enhanced use of volunteers and mentors-
- Crisis Assistance and Prevention -- responding to, and where feasible, preventing school and personal crises
- Student and Family Interventions -- facilitating student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed.

(See Appendix for more examples of each arena.)

Combining the six content arenas with a continuum of interventions provides the broad unifying framework for developing a comprehensive system of learning supports (see Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4
Continuum + Content = A Comprehensive and Cohesive Approach

		Integrated Intervention Subsystems		
		Subsystem for Promoting Healthy Development & Preventing Problems	Subsystem for Early Intervention	Subsystem of Care
Arenas of Intervention Content	Classroom-Based Approaches			
	Support for Transitions			
	Family Engagement in Schooling			
	Community Support			
	Crisis response/prevention			
	Student and Family Interventions			
		Accommodations for differences & disabilities	Specialized assistance & other intensified interventions (e.g., Special Education & School-Based Behavioral Health)	

This matrix along with protocols developed by UCLA researchers provide guides for mapping and analyzing available district, school, and community resources and establishing priorities for filling gaps.

Enhancing Operational Infrastructure

Well-designed, compatible, and interconnected operational infrastructures for a school, the family of schools (e.g., the feeder pattern), the district, and a school-community collaborative play a key role in weaving together existing school and community resources and developing a comprehensive system of learning supports. The infrastructure encompasses a leader and work groups whose job description includes establishing priorities for developing the system and doing so in ways that ensure resources are effectively (re)deployed and enhanced to produce an increasingly cohesive, cost-efficient, and equitable set of student and learning supports. Such mechanisms contribute to cost-efficacy by ensuring student and learning support activity is planned, implemented, evaluated, and sustained in a coordinated and increasingly integrated manner. Creation of such mechanisms is essential for outreaching to and braiding together existing school and community resources and, encouraging services and programs to perform in an increasingly cohesive way.

Steering and continuous development and improvement at a school is accomplished by a designated leader, a resource-oriented team, and ad hoc workgroups. Exhibit 5 illustrates a school infrastructure prototype. The district's Director of Learning Supports meets with school based leadership teams and community resources to guide and facilitate development of each school's learning supports component. To minimize redundancy, enhance coordination and cohesion, and achieve economies of scale, representatives from each school's resource team meet monthly.

At the district level, steering and continuous improvement is addressed through the work of a *district-level Goal Work Team* that meets regularly to plan, implement, monitor, and assess the work of each component and its integration with the others.

GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE

Given that developing a comprehensive system of learning supports involves transformative systemic changes, the work is being accomplished in four major phases:

- (1) Creating Readiness and Commitment: enhancing the climate/culture/conditions for innovative systemic change
- (2) Start-up and phase in – initial implementation: adapting and phasing-in a prototype with well-designed infrastructure and capacity building
- (3) Sustaining, evolving, and enhancing outcomes: ensuring institutionalization, maintenance, momentum, and progress
- (4) Ongoing evolution: replication to scale and creative renewal.

The tasks and change agent mechanisms related to each phase have been delineated by the researchers at UCLA (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/implementingls.pdf>).

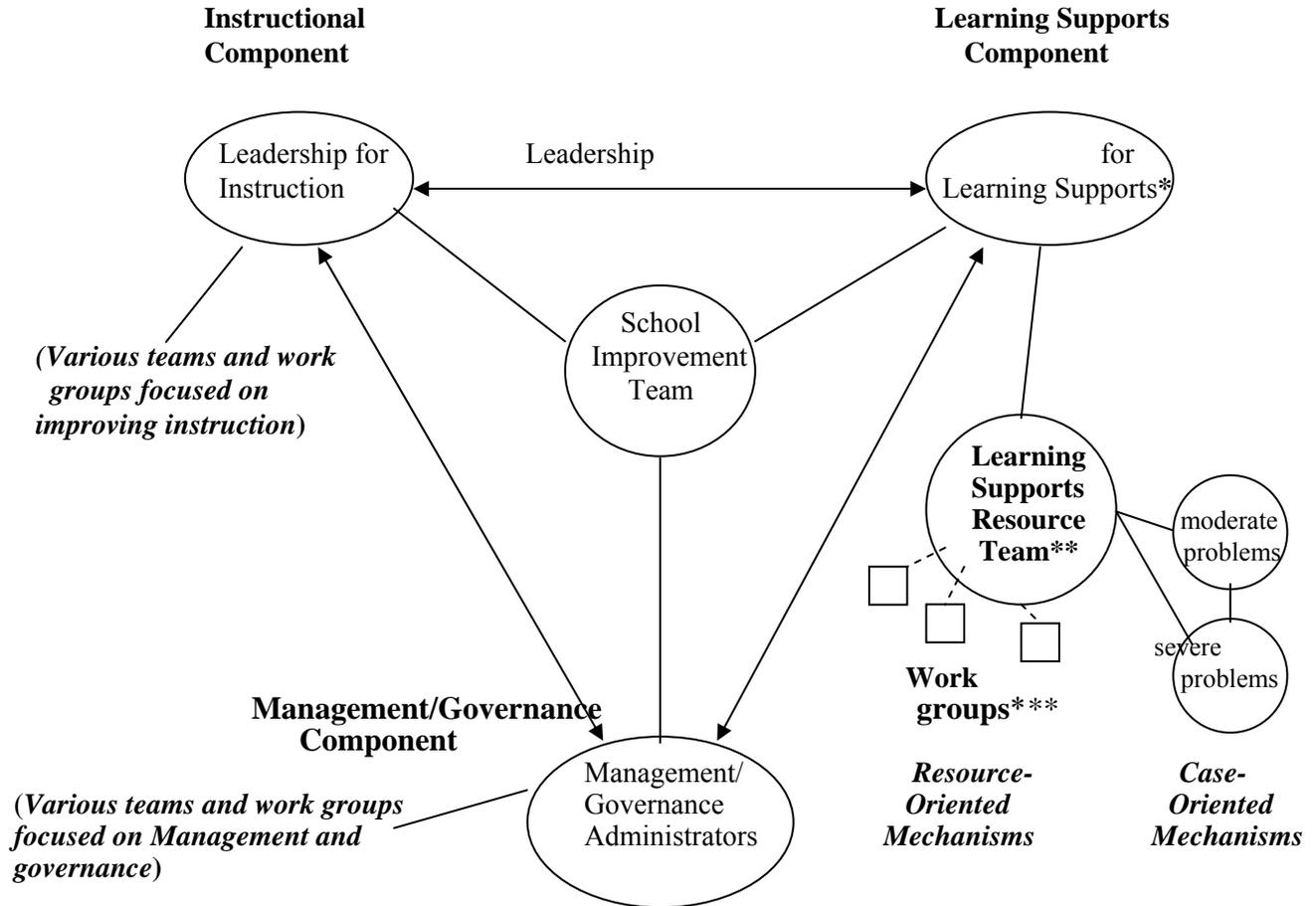
CONCLUDING COMMENTS

For some children, regular development and improvement in school performance and academic achievement are hampered because of the absence of comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approaches for addressing barriers to development and learning. At this stage in the ongoing development of our schools and community, it is essential to take the next steps toward ensuring such approaches are in place.

By reshaping the functions of all school personnel who have a role in the development of students, we are enhancing each school's capacity to (a) address barriers to learning and teaching and (b) re-engage disconnected students. A focus on developing a comprehensive system of learning supports prevents and ameliorates the many learning, behavior, and emotional problems experienced by students. The power is in embedding all student and learning supports into a unified approach, reworking the operational infrastructure, and fully integrating the component as a primary and essential facet of school improvement policy and practice. Through our commitment to innovatively improving our processes and outcomes, Gainesville City Schools is moving ever closer to fulfilling the aim of assuring every child has an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

Exhibit 5

An Integrated Infrastructure at the School Level



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

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

***Ad hoc and standing work groups – Initially, these are the various “teams” that already exist related to various initiatives and programs (e.g., a crisis team) and for processing “cases” (e.g., a student assistance team, an 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 such a team’s functions.

For more on this, see
 ><http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/infrastructure/anotherinitiative-exec.pdf>
 ><http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/aidk.pdf>

Appendix

*Examples of AContent@ Areas for a Component to Address Barriers to Learning**

(1) Classroom-Based Approaches

Opening the classroom door to bring available supports in (e.g., peer tutors, volunteers, aids trained to work with students-in-need; resource teachers and student support staff work in the classroom as part of the teaching team)

Redesigning classroom approaches to enhance teacher capability to prevent and handle problems and reduce need for out of class referrals (e.g. personalized instruction; special assistance as necessary; developing small group and independent learning options; reducing negative interactions and over-reliance on social control; expanding the range of curricular and instructional options and choices; systematic use of prereferral interventions)

Enhancing and personalizing professional development (e.g., creating a Learning Community for teachers; ensuring opportunities to learn through co-teaching, team teaching, and mentoring; teaching intrinsic motivation concepts and their application to schooling)

Curricular enrichment and adjunct programs (e.g., 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

(2) Crisis Assistance and Prevention

Ensuring immediate assistance in emergencies so students can resume learning

Providing Follow up care as necessary (e.g., 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 (e.g., 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

Capacity building to enhance crisis response and prevention (e.g., staff and stakeholder development, enhancing a caring and safe learning environment)

(3) Support for Transitions

Welcoming & social support programs for newcomers (e.g., welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions; peer buddy programs for students, families, staff, volunteers)

Daily transition programs for (e.g., before school, breaks, lunch, afterschool)

Articulation programs (e.g., grade to grade B new classrooms, new teachers; elementary to middle school; middle to high school; in and out of special education programs)

Summer or intersession programs (e.g., catch-up, recreation, and enrichment programs)

School-to-career/higher education (e.g., counseling, pathway, and mentor programs; Broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions; students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education)

Broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions (e.g., students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education)

Capacity building to enhance transition programs and activities

*In each arena, there is broad involvement of stakeholders in planning the system and building capacity. Emphasis at all times in the classroom and school-wide is on enhancing feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to others at school and reducing threats to such feelings because this is essential to engagement and reengagement and creating and maintaining a caring supportive climate.

“Content” Arenas for a Component to Address Barriers to Learning (cont.)

(4) Home Involvement in Schooling

Addressing specific support and learning needs of family (e.g., 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 (e.g., 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 and/or e-mail from teacher and other staff with good news; frequent and balanced conferences B student-led when feasible; outreach to attract hard-to-reach families B including student dropouts)

Involving homes in student decision making (e.g., families prepared for involvement in program planning and problem-solving)

Enhancing home support for learning and development (e.g., family literacy; family homework projects; family field trips)

Recruiting families to strengthen school and community (e.g., volunteers to welcome and support new families and help in various capacities; families prepared for involvement in school governance)

Capacity building to enhance home involvement

(5) Community Outreach for Involvement and Support

Planning and Implementing Outreach to Recruit a Wide Range of Community Resources (e.g., 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 (e.g., mechanisms to orient and welcome, enhance the volunteer pool, maintain current involvements, enhance a sense of community)

Reaching out to Students and Families Who Don't Come to School Regularly B 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 (e.g., policies and mechanisms to enhance and sustain school-community involvement, staff/stakeholder development on the value of community involvement, Asocial marketing@)

(6) *Student and Family Assistance* encompasses

Providing extra support as soon as a need is recognized and doing so in the least disruptive ways (e.g., prereferral interventions in classrooms; problem solving conferences with parents; open access to school, district, and community support programs)

Timely referral interventions for students & families with problems based on response to extra support (e.g., identification/screening processes, assessment, referrals, and follow-up B school-based, school-linked)

Enhancing access to direct interventions for health, mental health, and economic assistance (e.g., school-based, school-linked, and community-based programs and services)

Care monitoring, management, information sharing, and follow-up assessment to coordinate individual interventions and check whether referrals and services are adequate and effective

Mechanism s for *resource* coordination and integration to avoid duplication, fill gaps, garner economies of scale, and enhance effectiveness (e.g., braiding resources from school-based and linked interveners, feeder pattern/family of schools, community-based programs; linking with community providers to fill gaps)

Enhancing stakeholder awareness of programs and services

Capacity building to enhance student and family assistance systems, programs, and services



Gainesville City Schools

Comprehensive Local Improvement Plan (CLIP) 2010-2011

Strategic Plan for Comprehensive Systems of Learning Support

Framework Provided by the UCLA Center for Mental Health
LEARNING SUPPORTS COLLABORATIVE

Provided by the American Association of School Administrators and Scholastic

Project Management and Organizational Structure
Under the Direction of the *Partners for Leadership Excellence*
University of Virginia Darden School of Business- Curry School of Education
Funded by the Wallace Foundation

Aligned with Goals from the Georgia Department of Education

www.doe.k12.ga.us

Data Used to Inform Planning

DATA SOURCES	GREATEST AREA OF NEEDS DETERMINED (GANS)
Georgia High School Graduation Test	Economics
End of Course Tests (EOCT)	
SAT and ACT	
CRCT	
ITBS	
Writing Assessments 3, 5, 8	Writing Grades 3 and 5
GKIDS	
Attendance	
Participation in Extracurricular and Activities	
Discipline Reporting (Positive Behavior Support Data)	
Social Work and Counseling Referrals	
Student Information System (SIS)	
FTE Reporting- Certified Personnel Index	
Maintenance and Operations Reports and Surveys	
Finance and Business Operations Reports and Surveys	
Charter Schools Survey Data and Focus Group Data	

Goal 3: We will support students by addressing barriers to learning.

Goal 2: We will identify our barriers to learning and align our support systems to address those barriers and, therefore, improve student performance. GaDoE Goals: 1, 2, 3, 5 CLIP: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 US DoE Race to the Top Goal: Turn Around Low-Performing Schools		
Measures: Graduation Rate Percentage of decrease in discipline referrals Grade Level Retention Percentage		
Project Management Group: Learning Supports Meetings: 2nd Monday of each month Project Management Oversight: Jarod Anderson Team Members: Assistant Principals, Counselors, Parent Coordinator, Graduation Coaches, Social Workers, Susan Macken, Janice Young, Lisa Sheehy, LaCrisia Larkin. Chris-Wade Curry, Laura Herrington		
Work Groups: Counselors and Grad Coaches, Social Workers, PBS, Parent Coordinators Meetings: 8/23, 9/27, 10/25, 11/29, 1/24/ 2/28, 3/28		
PROJECT ACTIONS	TIMELINES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
1. Align supports based on data results for: (a) Classroom based approaches- Asst. Principals, Lisa Sheehy (b) Support for transitions - APs © Home Involvement& Student Family Assistance- Parent Coordinators and Social Workers (d) Crisis Prevention and Assistance, Student Family Assistance- Social Workers, Counselors, Janice Young, (e) Grad Track Plans for Student- Counselors	August- Coordinate Parent Programs August- May: Bi-monthly meetings with United Way agencies through Hall County Commission on Children and Families August- May: Monthly monitor referrals, interventions, Grad Track activities, and transition situations	1. Jarod Anderson LaCrisia Larkin and Kay Holleman: Graduation Track Planning Transitions: APs Parent Coordinators: L. Herrington
2. Provide on-going professional guidance through the weekly teaching team meetings to identify specific barriers, problem-solve to provide preventative and intervening methods, and serve as consultant to teachers.	2. Planning: April - July 2010 Implementation: August - May	2. Jarod Anderson (Coordination) Team Members at Schools
Budget Priorities: (1) Resource books for faculty (2) Printing for Grad Track Plans (3) Professional Conferences		

Goal 4: We will support learning by improved instructional and organizational effectiveness.

<p>Goal 2: We will improve the <u>design and management</u> of organizational systems and <u>instructional and organizational effectiveness</u> to provide support for student learning. GaDoE Goal: 6 U.S. DoE: Race to the Top - supports all goals</p>		
<p>Measures: LEADER KEYS: Performance Management, and Process Improvement (1-4). % of Leaders Satisfactory Community Survey Indicating Level of Satisfaction Financial Audit</p>		
<p>Project Management Group: Operational Supports Meetings: Weekly Tuesday mornings @ 8:30 a.m. in Conference Room SBO Project Management Oversight: Merrienne Dyer Team Members: Janet Allison, Elfreda Lakey, David Shumake, Linda Youngblood, Jamey Moore, Tiffany Lommel, Jerry Castleberry, Keith Palmer, Keith Vincent, Christine Brosky</p>		
<p>Work Groups: Finance, Human Resources, Revenue Development, Capital Projects, Maintenance , Transportation, Community and Business Support, College and University, Special Projects</p>		
PROJECT ACTIONS	TIMELINES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
1. Departments will collaborate to plan, develop and allocate resources, distribute, and report in a timely manner in order to meet the needs of students.	July – June	Merrienne Dyer Project Management Team Shumake- Reporting for Scorecard
2. Compliance mandates will be met to ensure maximum revenue development.	July – June	Project Management Team
3. Complete specialized projects: * SPLOST * Fair Street Construction * Implement INSIGHT & Data Director Series * Wood's Mill Operations * Internship for HR	SPLOST July- March Fair Street- July – July INSIGHT/ DD- July – May Wood's Mill- July – May HR- July – July	SPLOST- Dyer and Allison Fair Street- Shumake Insight/DD- Moore Wood's Mill- Youngblood HR Internship- Lakey
<p>Budget Priorities: (1) Personnel (2) Technology to support blended learning at WMHS (3) technology innovations- mobile computing</p>		

Goal 4: Roles and Responsibilities

MERRIANNE DYER SUPERINTENDENT	DAVID SHUMAKE ASSOCIATE SUPT. 49%	ELFREDA LAKEY ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	JANET ALLISON CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	JAMEY MOORE DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT	LINDA YOUNGBLOOD ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT 49%
Board of Education Development System Operations State and Federal Compliance	Charter School Governance Project Management Oversight 3: Teacher and Leader Quality Training and Implementation	Human Resources and Operations Title II Compliance State Reporting Professional Standards Commission	Finance Operations Business Services	Standards and Assessments Project Mgt. Oversight Group 1	Testing Coordinator Compliance Disciplinary Tribunals
Community-University Partnerships College Internships	Capital Projects: New Construction Energy Management	Board Policy Development and Management	Procurement	Instructional Data Systems	Innovative Programs: Woods Mill Academy Alternative Learning
Title IX Athletics Compliance	KEITH VINCENT DIRECTOR OF MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS	JERRY CASTLEBERRY DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION	CHRISTINE BROSKY DIRECTOR OF REVENUE DEVELOPMENT	SARAH BELL DIRECTOR OF GIFTED PROGRAMS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT	JANICE YOUNG DIRECTOR: WOODS MILL LEARNING CENTER
SUSAN MACKEN DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION	KEITH PALMER DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY	TIFFANY LOMMEL DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL NUTRITION	Federal and State Funding Grants Compliance		LAURA HERRINGTON DIRECTOR OF ESL AND MIGRANT SERVICES Compliance
JAROD ANDERSON DIRECTOR OF LEARNING SUPPORTS Project Mgt Oversight 2	PRISCILLA COLLINS Proj. Mgt Oversight 3: Teacher Quality	PRISCILLA COLLINS HR INTERN			