



*Improving Schools,
Engaging Students*

Guide for Practice . . .

**General Guide for Strategic Planning Related to
Developing a Unified and Comprehensive
System of Learning Supports**

December, 2013

The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA,

Write: Center for Mental Health in Schools, Box 951563, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563
Phone: (310) 825-3634 email: smhp@ucla.edu website: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

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General Guide for Strategic Planning Related to Developing a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

SEAs, LEAs, and schools need to develop a *Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* in order to enhance equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school and beyond. Such a system directly addresses barriers to learning and teaching and re-engages disconnected students. Developing the system requires transforming existing student and learning supports – see Appendix A and other brief online overviews at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkit1.htm> .

Every district and school involved in transforming student and learning supports into a unified and comprehensive system needs to strategically plan the transformation. The following document has been drafted as an aid for such planning. ***The draft reflects processes that others have found useful. It also highlights some major lessons learned that can help avoid problems previously encountered.*** The focus is on SEAs and LEAs, but the process can readily be adapted for schools.

Major Process Steps

- I. Introductory presentation to and decision making discussion with SEA/LEA leadership**
- II. Action Planning and implementation related to**
 - A. establishing and mobilizing system change *mechanisms***
 - B. crafting and widespread distribution of a *Design Document***
 - C. preparation of an *Initial Strategic Plan***
- III. Strategic Implementation**
- IV. Formative Evaluation (designed to lead to Summative Evaluation)**

Appendices

- A. Five Essential Elements of a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports**
- B. Unifying and Developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: *Prototype for System Change Mechanisms***
- C. Illustrative Examples of Major Steps During the First Phases of Establishing a Learning Supports Component**
- D. Some Major Tasks for Coaches/Mentors to Help Address as a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports is Established**

Note: A prototype of the strategic system change plan that we use as external mentors/coaches in guiding such work is online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/stratplan.pdf> .

Also an example of a district strategic plan is at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/alstrategic.pdf>

Facets of these documents can be adopted/adapted in formulating your strategic plan.

About Strategic Planning

The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order.

Alfred Lord Whitehead

Strategic planning is key to effective implementation, sustainability, and replication to scale of major education innovations. In pursuing such planning, it is essential to approach the task from the perspective of systemic change/transformation.

And, it is also essential not to lose sight of a simple truth:

If innovations do not end up playing effective roles at a school and in the classroom, they aren't worth the time and effort. Schools and classrooms must be the center and guiding force for all strategic education planning.

Strategic planning is a systematic process that translates a desired future into a design, a broad set of goals or objectives, and a sequence of steps to achieve the vision. With specific respect to developing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports, strategic planning is meant to ensure that the vision and design are effectively and efficiently implemented. The plan spells out an answer to:

How do we get there from here?

Strategic and Action Planning Operationalizes the Design: To this end, the specific goals for strategic planning are to accomplish the major phases and tasks of systemic change.

First Phase – Introduction and Creating Readiness, Commitment, & Engagement

Second Phase – Start-up and Phase-in: Building Infrastructure, Capacity, and Pursuing Initial Implementation

Third Phase – Replicating to Scale, Sustaining, and Evolving to Enhance Outcomes

Fourth Phase – Generating Creative Renewal and Replication to Scale

The multi-year plan stresses objectives, steps, tasks, to be accomplished during each phase and general strategies for accomplishing them. Our focus here is on the first year which covers the first two phases and does so in ways that lay a foundation for the third. See examples in the appendices of major steps during the first and second phases. For purposes of this strategic plan we have divided the process steps into seven sections and have included cautions based on lessons learned from work in states, districts, and schools. The strategies in each section provide the basis for action planning and developing MOUs and work plans.

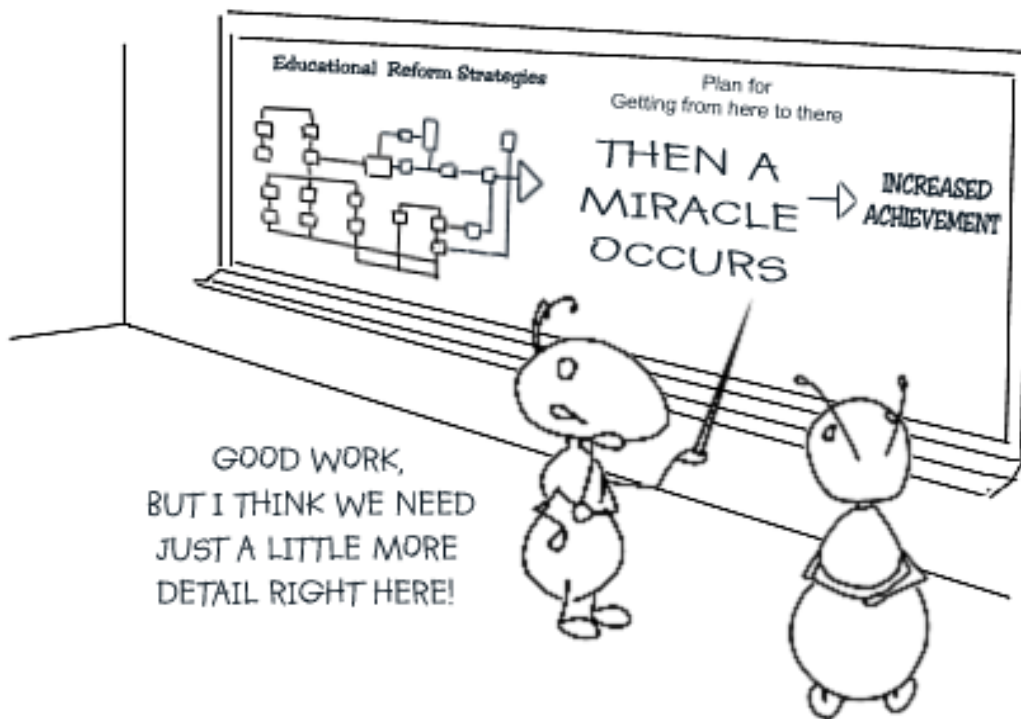
Strategic Planning Needs to Reflect Organizational Context: Strategic planning for developing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports is done within the organizational context and is intended to be fully integrated into the overall approach to school improvement.

What is strategy?

“Strategy is . . . well, strategy is everything. Strategy is timing . . . as the comedians tell us, timing is everything. When the time is right, we use the word "opportune" and thus imply the existence of opportunity. This is how intention reconciles itself with reality and how tactics shape strategy. As Tom Peters once said, ‘Execution is strategy.’ Algebraically speaking, that means strategy is execution. In much simpler terms, we adapt to changing circumstances.

So does strategy.”

Fred Nickols



Planning for Getting from Here to There

For SEAs and LEAs, respectively, a good strategic plan details what the agency needs to do to help each participating school establish its multi-year strategic plan and fully integrate that plan into existing plans for school improvement at all levels.

The aim, of course, is to substantively transform and sustain existing marginalized and fragmented student and learning supports into a unified and comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. Without detailed strategic planning, we have found few districts and schools are successful in achieving the complex systemic changes involved.

Remember that the overall goal of the *strategic plan* is to guide internal leaders in transforming student and learning supports into a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports. Leadership preparation is done through providing material resources, personalized coaching, and technical assistance, as well as networking with others pursuing similar new directions. Most of this can be done through email, phone, and other non face-to-face interchanges.

I. Introductory presentation to and decision making discussion with SEA/LEA leadership

Objectives:

- (1) To provide an introductory overview about
 - A. The bases and frameworks for understanding the nature, scope, and implications of a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports
 - B. What is involved in the systemic transformation (Getting from here to there)
- (2) To enhance readiness and commitment to moving forward
- (3) To delineate and reach agreement on the following as next steps
 - A. Immediate need to designate a dedicated administrative leader position for the transformation and ongoing work
 - B. Need to establish a temporary set of task-dedicated mechanisms for the transformation (e.g., steering group, planning team and related work groups, implementation team)
 - C. Set a date for a full day leadership institute for all who will be staffing the mechanisms
 - D. Need to develop an immediate action plan for the above next steps and for
 - >establishing a *critical mass of stakeholder support*
 - >preparing a *Design Document*
 - >developing a *Strategic Plan*
 - E. Immediate need to identify who will do the action planning
 - F. To prepare and send back a MOU detailing what has been decided (assuming a decision is made to move forward)

Planners need to detail a strategic approach for how each of the above objectives will be effectively accomplished.

For an example, see the prototype strategic system change plan we use as external mentors/coaches in guiding such work – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/stratplan.pdf>

Addressing Lessons Learned

The complexity of the work means that it is almost always the case that initial introductory presentations are only partially understood. Planning needs to account for a variety of strategies to deepen understanding and counter misinterpretations.

It is essential to do this early to

- (a) minimize the problems that will arise from uninformed “grape vine gossip” across a district about changes that are to take place and
- (b) support substantive rather than cosmetic changes.

Of particular importance is ensuring understanding and commitment to the five essential elements of the system (see Appendix A).

Furthermore, staff changes require planning a process for bringing newcomers up to speed.

The nonplanner’s creed:

I don’t just believe in miracles, I rely on them!



II. Action Planning and implementation related to

A. establishing and mobilizing system change *mechanisms*

B. creation and widespread distribution of a *Design Document*

C. preparation of an *Initial Strategic Plan*

Objective:

Establish and build the capacity of a planning team to formulate how each of the delineated next steps will be accomplished. In doing so, clarify the functions and sources for mentors, coaches, and technical assistance.

For SEAs, this objective relates to planning for changes at the state department that will enhance the SEA's capacity for guiding the work at districts.

For LEAs, this objective relates to planning for changes at the district level that will enhance the district's capacity for guiding the work at schools.

A. Establishing and Mobilizing System Change Mechanisms

Appendix B provides a prototype of relevant system change mechanisms. The planning team needs to pay particular attention to establishing and mobilizing:

(1) Leadership Mechanisms

Planning here involves not only establishing but also *building the capacity* of the leadership mechanisms for planning, developing, and guiding implementation of the new system. Such mechanisms include the district administrative leader for the work, a steering group, a *Learning Supports Leadership Team*, and work groups.

The plan should

- >establish an early date (as soon as the membership on the various mechanisms is set) for a *full day leadership institute* to inform and enhance readiness and commitment to move forward
- >first designate and provide relevant training for the administrative leader and steering group
- >designate that the steering group, along with the administrative leader
 - >>establish and train a *Learning Supports Leadership Team* to develop and guide the system transformation
 - >>provide essential capacity building (including special training) for the *Learning Supports Leadership Team*

(2) Work Groups

Planning here involves not only establishing but also *building the capacity* of groups (at SEAs, LEAs, and schools) to carry out specific tasks. Examples of such tasks are

- developing and implementing procedures for building a *critical mass of stakeholder support* (e.g., providing all key stakeholders with an introduction to the design and the systemic changes that are planned and doing so in a way

that enhances engaged involvement) -- see Guide to Practice on *Enhancing Readiness ...*)

- preparing a *Design Document* (see Section III of this plan)
- developing a long-range *Strategic Plan* (see Sections IV and VII of this plan)
- enhancing component visibility, communication, sharing, and problem solving within the department/districts/schools and beyond

Addressing Lessons Learned

It will help if planners, address the following concerns:

The administrative position of transformation and ongoing leader for the learning supports component needs to be well delineated by an official job description and specific accountabilities (see Center' System Change Toolkit for a job description). The nature and scope of the systemic changes involved requires that the work not just be tacked on to someone who is already overly committed. It also requires immediate planning for capacity building related to the functions of this role and special professional preparation for the designated leader.

While establishment of a transformation leader and Steering Group is readily comprehended, the importance of creating a broad-based systemic change infrastructure mechanisms is less understood. Therefore, it is essential to plan for clarifying the need for and eliciting commitment to establishing and building the capacity of a full set of *transformation mechanisms* as quickly as feasible.

While the Steering Group is meant to champion the work, it is invaluable to plan for cultivating a cadre of other *high level* decision makers as influential champions who can remove barriers to moving forward.

To the degree feasible, continuous efforts should be made to reach out and include in work groups those who are resistant to unifying fragmented ("siloeed") student and learning supports and reluctant to give up protecting their turf.

As understanding of what is involved deepens, plans should call for reviewing and revising initial agreements and procedures if necessary.

There's never time to plan things right.



True, but there's always time to do things wrong!



B. Crafting and Widespread Distribution of a Design Document

Objectives:

To create a design document by drawing on existing prototypes

To inform stakeholders about the design in ways that enhances engaged involvement and builds a critical mass of stakeholder support.

Process

Preparing the Document. Usually, the administrative leader establishes a work group to plan and implement a strategic way to personalize a design document.

(At the SEA, the need is to produce a prototype.

At a district, the need is to adapt and then adopt a design that can guide schools.

If the SEA has produced a prototype, this provides a guide for districts; otherwise prototypes from other SEA's can be drawn upon.)

The intent is for the group to prepare a draft design document that articulates

- *the imperative* for a comprehensive system of learning supports
- **an *intervention framework for the system***
- an ***organizational and operational infrastructure*** that ensures schools can begin and sustain development of the system
- ***policy recommendations*** to end the marginalization of learning supports and enable development and sustainability of the system by ensuring existing resources are coalesced and (re)deployed cost-effectively.

The starting point is the various online design documents at

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm> – click on Alabama, Louisiana, Iowa.

Also online is a generic outline for a design document and a set of templates developed to aid work groups in creating a design document. See

- Outline – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/Genericoutline.pdf>
- Templates – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/sectiontemplates.pdf>

Note about Work Group Membership. The group needs personnel who understand the basic nature and scope of a comprehensive system of learning supports and who want such a system developed. The composition should include

- the administrative leader
- a cross section of school improvement leaders representing concerns related to student and learning supports, instruction, and management/governance.

Note about Work Group Process. Much of the work is done outside of meetings. Each member pursues (alone or as part of a subgroup) a set of delineated tasks between meetings focused on crafting specific facets of the design document. Draft sections are emailed to all team members for review before meetings.

The general format for any meeting involves:

- discussion of strengths and weakness of draft sections and ideas for revision
- clarification of what will be accomplished before the next meeting

Feedback and Final Approval. If feasible, it helps to share information along the way with key stakeholders so that they are aware and providing input before being presented with the completed design draft. In some places this takes the form of periodic progress presentations that outline key ideas for feedback. In the final stages, additional *representative stakeholder input* should be sought (especially from those who can derail the work) and relevant feedback integrated.

Throughout the process the team can access e-coaching and feedback from the external mentor/coach guiding the process.

When the document is in good shape, the members sign off and the design is submitted to decision makers for adoption.

Widespread Distribution. While the design document is being readied for circulation, the administrative leader establishes a work group to plan and implement a strategic way to inform all key stakeholders about the design and the implications for systemic changes.

Addressing Lessons Learned

With respect to the design, plan to address the following concerns:

In adopting/adapting the design to account for situational opportunities, strengths, and limitations, plan for reviews that can ensure essential facets of the prototype are not lost (see Appendix A). Feedback from mentors guiding the process is essential in this respect.

Don't assume because someone is using the language of the design that it is well understood or accepted. Many times new terms are adopted, but the substance of the transformation is not. When this happens, only cosmetic changes are made. Plan for assessing whether the substance and not just the form is in place.

Again, as understanding deepens, remember to review and revise initial agreements and procedures as necessary. Plan for this.

What are the basic steps in strategic planning?



**One is to prepare the plan.
Two is to shelve it!**



C. Preparation of an Initial Strategic Plan

Objectives: To draft a plan that

- (1) provides an *overview* of intended systemic changes
- (2) conveys a *detailed initial plan for the initial implementation* of system changes and related formative evaluation (designed to lead to summative evaluation) done in ways that anticipates sustainability and renewal
- (3) delineates a strategic approach to capacity building.*

***Capacity building involves:**

- ensuring sufficient resources for the transformation
(e.g., staffing; budget; guidance materials; external mentoring, coaching, professional development, and technical assistance processes that are designed to develop comparable internal mechanisms/processes for deepening understanding, commitment, and skills)
- development of effective mechanisms/processes** for the transformation
(e.g., mechanisms/processes for
 - >steering and enabling systemic change
 - >everyday leadership to guide and support the work (e.g., administrative lead, learning supports leadership team, internal mentors/coaches)
 - >collaboration with external mentors and coaches
 - >internal mentoring, coaching, professional development, & technical assistance
 - >providing information to all stakeholders
 - >preparing a design document
 - >planning a strategic approach to the work, conducting analyses needed for planning, (e.g., resource mapping and gap analyses, ways resources can be redeployed), and clarifying priorities
 - >implementation (initial and long-term, replication to scale)
 - >monitoring, problem solving, and enhancing progress

**Re. mechanisms for accomplishing system change see Appendix B.

Process for Developing the Plan

The administrative leader for transforming student and learning supports into a unified and comprehensive system establishes a work group to draft the strategic plan. Exhibit I outlines some guidelines for establishing and conducting a strategic plan work group. The immediate focus is on planning strategic ways to implement system changes and conduct formative evaluations.

At the same time, to facilitate the planning, the leader establishes one or more additional work groups to map, analyze, and recommend changes with respect to

- current policies (bulletins, guidelines, etc.)
- current operational infrastructure
- current programs and initiatives
- possible ways to redeploy resources.

(Tools to aid such mapping and analyses are in Section B (4) of the Center's System Change Toolkit – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm> .)

Coaching, technical assistance, and networking with others doing similar planning are used to prepare work groups. This includes careful reading and discussion of the design document and of this aid and other presentations on the processes of system change. As the work groups prepare to undertake their tasks, further coaching, related resources, and feedback are provided.

Beyond ensuring adequate introductory presentations, related interchanges, and agreements about proceeding, the implementation plan should include strategic approaches for

- continuing to enhance and deepen understanding the bases, frameworks, and implications of a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports
- clarifying what is involved in getting from here to there
- ensuring establishment and maintenance of effective leadership and operational infrastructure for daily implementation and formative evaluation
- enhancing stakeholder engagement
- building capacity related to unifying student and learning supports and developing and implementing the intervention framework
- enhancing component visibility, communication, sharing, & problem-solving

Note: As the work is implemented at enough schools, plan for establishing a Learning Supports Leadership *Council* that brings together representatives from the Learning Supports Leadership *Teams* in a feeder pattern or family of schools. This formal collaborative mechanism is essential for helping to fill program or service gaps and achieving economies of scale. (And it provides a mechanism for linking clusters of schools and connecting school and community resources.)

Exhibit II

About the Strategic Planning Work Group

About Group Size and Composition

Group size varies. Five members is a reasonable guideline. One should be designated as the team facilitator.

Too large a planning group usually is not a good idea. The majority should have had some formal strategic planning training and/or experience.

All members need to have a good understanding of the current organizational environment (vision, mission, values; political, social, economic, and technical considerations) in which the district and schools operate.

The group can call upon others to form ad hoc workgroups when special expertise is needed.

About Team Process

Much of the work can be done through individual assignments and email exchanges – with meetings as needed.

- Most of the initial work constitutes drafting sections, sharing them for feedback with team members via email and at meetings, and integrating the feedback.
- This process is continued until each section is seen by members as a good draft.
- Then 1-2 members compile and refine the sections into a draft document which is emailed to all members for feedback.
- Feedback is integrated and the draft is sent back and forth until it is in good shape.
- Workgroup members sign off on the revised draft and it is submitted to decision makers who may ask for revisions before final approval is given.

Schedules should be tight enough to avoid losing momentum.

Throughout the process the group should access e-coaching and feedback from an external mentor/coach as needed.

Representative stakeholder input should be sought (if feasible as the plan is developed and especially from those who can derail the work); relevant feedback is integrated. (Note: Circulating the draft to as many other stakeholders as feasible provides an opportunity to deepen their understanding and appreciation for the importance of the work.).

The finished draft is reviewed by designated decision makers, specific concerns are addressed by the team, and relevant changes are made until a final plan is approved.

The document is then placed on the website, an announcement is crafted to indicate the work is proceeding on schedule and what's next. (Note: This too provides an opportunity to enhance stakeholder understanding, readiness, commitment, and engagement.)

III. Strategic Implementation

Objectives: To establish system change mechanisms and rework the existing operational infrastructure to ensure capability for

- >developing an action plan based on the strategic plan
- >enhancing capacity for strategic implementation and eventual sustainability
- >guiding, monitoring, problem-solving, and continuously improving implementation

Expert mentoring and coaching are used to establish and build the capacity of system change mechanisms and for reworking the existing daily operational infrastructure. See Appendix B for a prototype of the set of system change mechanisms that can accomplish these objectives. See Section B of the Center's System Change Toolkit for a prototype of a reworked daily operational infrastructure. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkitb3.htm>

Note: A parallel approach is involved in rolling out the work from the SEA to LEAs and from LEAs to schools. See Exhibit II for a sense of the phase-in and start-up activity that the implementation plan needs to address at the LEA and school levels.

Addressing Lessons Learned

Systemic change requires continuous policy and resource support. For significant systemic change to occur, policy commitments must be backed up with effective allocation and redeployment of resources that facilitate organizational and operational changes.

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 planning, development, systemic changes, sustainability, and ongoing capacity building.

Transforming organizations is challenging, frustrating, tiring, and sometimes makes individuals professionally vulnerable. Plan continuous strategies for keeping stakeholders engaged and for re-engaging those ready to give up. This includes revising initial agreements and planned procedures as appropriate. Moreover, remember that it is easy to get so caught up in the work that the value of continuously *celebrating accomplishments* and publicizing accomplishments is ignored. Plan to make the work and its impact visible on websites, social media, and in the press. The public relations aspect of this is important social marketing.

Finally, because they are called upon to do many things that may be unpopular with some stakeholders, plan appropriate protections for those on the front line of change.

Exhibit II

Start-up and Phase-in with Schools

To implement the work with SCHOOLS, the LEA Needs to

(1) Establish and build the capacity of the District Implementation Team.

The Implementation Team needs to provide a school with

- > guidance
- > facilitation of organizational change and personnel capacity building (including PD designed for spiral learning to deepen understanding)
- > facilitation of systemic change and inclusion of the work into the school improvement and related strategic plans
- > continuous problem-solving
- > constant support for getting from here to there.

See Appendices C and D for examples of tasks.

(2) The District's Implementation Team will need to have a plan of action for carrying out the following introductory tasks:

- > initial presentations to key school leadership
- > a follow-up personal session with each principal and key school leaders to enhance readiness, commitment, and engagement
- > review of plan delineating how the district will work with the school leaders to *facilitate (help them)* start-up and phase-in a unified and comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.

(3) The Implementation Team will need to have a guide for establishing a school Steering Team and for providing capacity building and ongoing technical assistance for this team.

(4) The Implementation Team will need to provide school leadership with information resources and supports that enable the school to clarify the following for school stakeholders:

- > the imperative for change
- > the state's design prototype and the rationale for adopting (and adapting) it
- > the current and future plans for roll-out to districts and schools
- > the systemic changes that will be involved at district and school levels and the process to be used in bringing the changes about

IV. Formative Evaluation (designed to lead to Summative Evaluation)

Objectives:

- (1) To establish standards and related benchmark indicators for the work
- (2) To implement strategically planned monitoring and problem solving to enhance progress

Establish work groups to adopt/adapt

- benchmarks and mechanisms for monitoring progress (see *Benchmark Checklist for Monitoring and Reviewing Progress in Developing a Comprehensive System to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/studentssupport/toolkit/benchmarktool.pdf>)
- standards (e.g., see *Common Core Standards for a Learning Supports Component* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/commcore.pdf>)
- a system for continuous quality improvement and evaluation of impact and integrate it into regular planning
- indicators that can eventually be used for summative evaluation and accountability (see indicators described in *Common Core Standards for a Learning Supports Component* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/commcore.pdf>)

Assign the *Learning Supports Leadership Team* to implement the system for continuous quality improvement.

Ensure that the administrative leader and the *Learning Supports Leadership Team* use the formative evaluation information to enhance capacity including providing personalized professional development.

Addressing Lessons Learned

Problems arise when benchmarks are used as progress indicators. Benchmarks are good indicators of whether specific tasks have or have not been accomplished. They are not a basis for evaluating big picture progress.

With specific respect to progress monitoring and formative evaluation in general, care must be taken so that

- >progress monitoring is not experienced as supervisory evaluation
- >formative evaluations are not used prematurely as a summative evaluation
- >formative evaluations are not used prematurely for policy accountability

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Anticipating Sustainability and Renewal

Initial strategic planning focuses on the first two phases of system change: Phase 1 *Introduction and Creating Readiness, Commitment, & Engagement* and Phase 2 *Start-up and Phase-in: Building Infrastructure, Capacity, and Pursuing Initial Implementation*. As noted in the discussion of systemic change at the beginning of this guide, Phases 3 and 4 of systemic change involve, respectively, *Sustaining and Evolving to Enhance Outcomes* and *Generating Creative Renewal and Replication to Scale*. Specific planning for phases 3 and 4 can be deferred until initial implementation is proceeding satisfactorily. However, awareness of and commitment to these matters is essential throughout in order to avoid working in ways that will be counterproductive to accomplishing these phases.

See *Sustaining and Scale-up: It's About Systemic Change* –

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/Fall04.pdf>

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Addressing Lessons Learned

- While it is always important to customize a plan to account for situational opportunities, strengths, and limitations, it is essential not to do so in ways that undermine accomplishing basic aims, goals, and objectives. At the same time, as the work proceeds and understanding deepens, periodic review and revision of initial agreements and procedures often are necessary.
- Mentors/coaches are always concerned about relationship building. However, this is not about building a few good personal relationships; fundamental and sustained system changes require developing effective *working* relationships among all who are involved. Such relationships emerge from a initial and ongoing strategic planning for enhancing readiness, commitment, and engagement.
- Those who are reluctant or resistant to making the transformation often raise points meant to block change. Most fundamentally they suggest that there is no money for the work. For many LEAs and schools, it appears that about 25% of the budget is being expended to address barriers to learning and teaching. Strategic planning focuses on redeploying such resources and using them in ways that benefit from economies of scale. And good planning should ensure that “special initiatives” (even those supported by extra-mural funding) are not allowed to redirect resources away from the transformation.
- Frequent leadership changes (e.g., superintendents, principals, other key stakeholders) can undermine agreements. This requires early attention to reworking policy and procedures in ways that can be sustained in spite of such changes. It also requires planning strategies for effectively bringing new leaders and other key stakeholders up to speed.

Appendices

- A. Five Essential Elements of a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports**
- B. Unifying and Developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports:
*Prototype for System Change Mechanisms***
- C. Illustrative Examples of Major Steps During the First Phases of
Establishing a Learning Supports Component**
- D. Some Major Tasks for Coaches/Mentors to Help Address as a Unified and
Comprehensive System of Learning Supports is Established**

Appendix A

Five Essential Elements of a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

It is clear that developing a *Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* is a complex, multi-year process. We have delineated the specifics nature and scope of the system and of the processes for getting from a fragmented and marginalized set of student and learning supports to a unified and comprehensive system (see the Center's *System Change Toolkit* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>).

In doing so, we have stressed that such a system needs to be *adapted* to localities.

While reasonable adaptation is wise, care must be taken not to eliminate elements that are essential to a fundamental transformation of how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. A constant problem we encounter in efforts to implement the type of approach our Center has delineated is the tendency for some places to adopt the terminology and not the substance of system transformation.

To counter this tendency, here are five essential elements that should be the focus of any place that indicates it is developing a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports.

(1) A three component policy for schools

To enable all students to have an equal opportunity to succeed at school, schools need to be able to directly address barriers to learning and teaching. This requires elevating such efforts so that they are a third primary and essential component for school improvement. As indicated in Exhibit A, the third component might be called a learning supports component or a component to address barriers to learning and teaching or something comparable.

The policy must be translated into a *design document* and *strategic plan* that ensures learning supports are unified and then developed into a comprehensive system that provides supportive interventions in classrooms and school-wide. The design and strategic plans for the third component must be fully integrated with the strategic plans for improving instruction and management at schools.*

Obviously, it is desirable that the three component policy be adopted at all levels (SEA, LEA, and schools), however, most schools can move forward once the district has enacted such a policy.

*Re. examples of policy statements and design and strategic planning, see Sections A and B of the Center's toolkit – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm> .

(2) A transformative intervention framework for addressing barriers to learning and teaching

A unified and comprehensive intervention framework combines both an integrated and systemic continuum of school and community intervention (delineated as levels)* and is organized into a multifaceted and cohesive set of five to seven content arenas. (See prototype presented in Exhibit B.)

*The continuum is designed to (a) promote positive development and prevent problems, (b) intervene as early after the onset of problems as is feasible, and (c) provide special assistance for severe and chronic problems. This continuum must not be presented as identical to the tiers or pyramid currently emphasized in relation to Response to Intervention (RTI) and behavioral initiatives.

(3) An operational infrastructure dedicated to the third component

To ensure effective daily functioning and continuous development and improvement in keeping with the design and strategic plan, there must be

- an administrative leader (e.g., assoc. superintendent, assistant principal)
- a learning supports leadership team (e.g., a resource-oriented, system development team)
- work groups to carry out specific tasks.

(See prototype presented in Section B of the Center's System Change Toolkit for a prototype of a reworked daily operational infrastructure.

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkitb3.htm>)

The leader's job description must be revised to reflect the new responsibilities and accountabilities and to ensure this leader is at administrative planning and decision making tables so that component development is a regular part of the agenda.*

Along with the administrative leader, a learning supports leadership team clarifies, analyzes, identifies priorities, recommends resource redeployment, and establishes and guides workgroups for developing each facet of the component over a period of several years.

*For job and team descriptions, see Section B of the Center's toolkit – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm> .)

(4) Continuous capacity building (especially professional development)

Capacity building plans and their implementation must include a specific focus on development of the unified and comprehensive system of learning supports.* Professional development must provide on-the-job opportunities and special times focused specifically on enhancing the capability of those directly involved in the learning supports component. Professional development of teachers, administrators, other staff and volunteers, and community stakeholders must also include and emphasis on learning about how best to address barriers to learning and teaching.

*For resources related to capacity building, see Sections B and C of the Center's toolkit – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm>

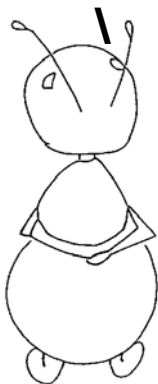
(5) Monitoring for improvement and accountability*

Essential facets of the ongoing development of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports involve (a) continuous monitoring all factors that facilitate and hinder progress and then (b) ensuring actions are taken to deal with interfering factors and to enhance facilitation. These are done in the context of a set of standards for learning supports.

As significant progress is made in developing the system, the monitoring expands to evaluate the impact on student outcomes that are direct indicators of the effectiveness of learning supports (e.g., increased attendance, reduced misbehavior, improved learning).

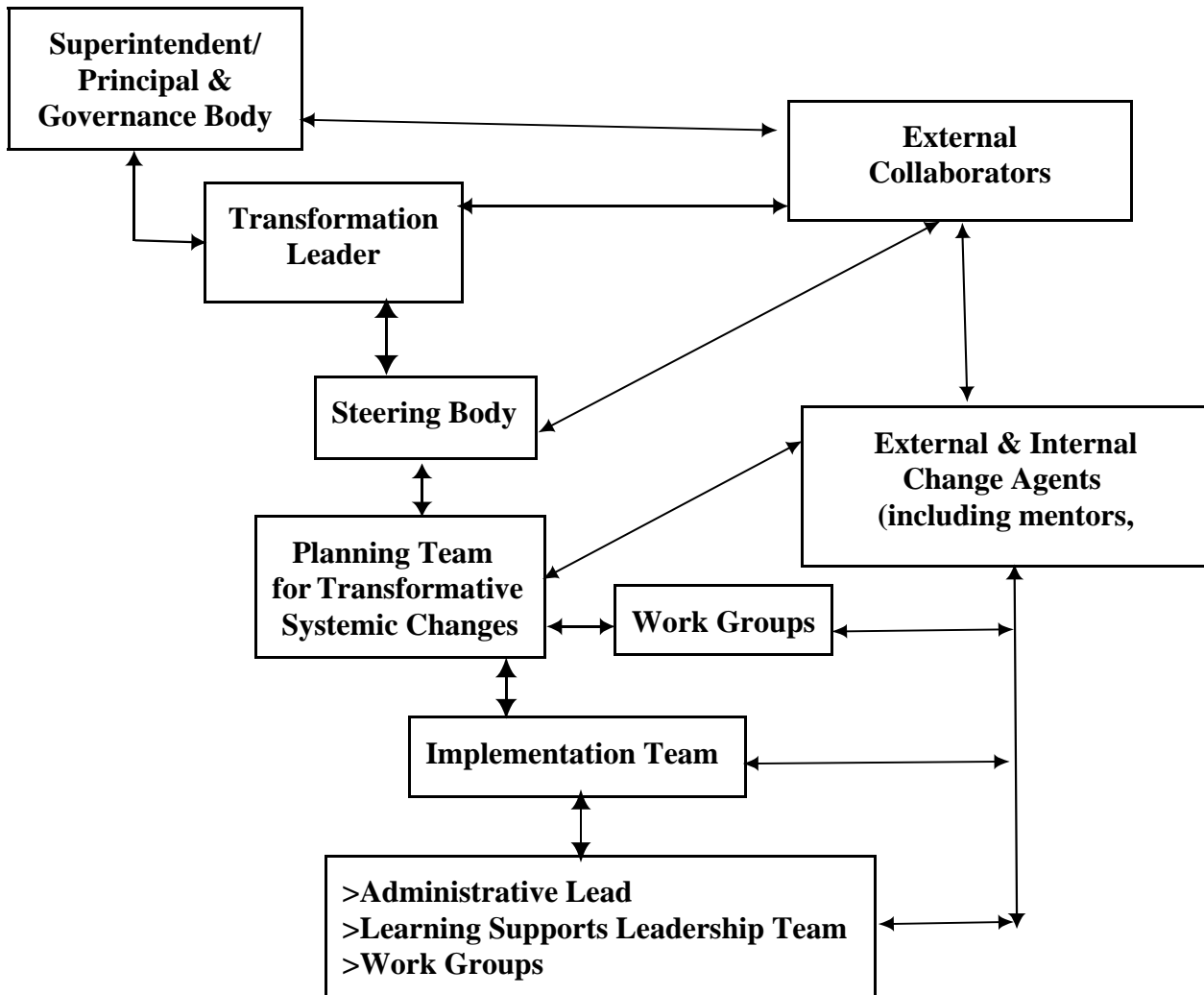
*For more about accountability indicators for monitoring, evaluation, and accountability and standards for learning supports, see *Common Core Standards for a Learning Supports Component* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/commcore.pdf>

**The trouble with doing something right the first time
is that nobody appreciates how difficult it was.**



Appendix B

Unifying and Developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports: Prototype for System Change Mechanisms*



*These mechanisms are needed at the SEA and at LEAs. At the SEA, the focus is on changes in the department and planning and facilitating roll-out and roll-on at LEAs.

At each level, any given staff member may be part of several of the above mechanisms.

For the functions related to each of the above mechanisms, see *Guide for Planning Coaching for SEAs/LEAs to Establish a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/coaching.pdf>

Appendices C and D provide examples of specific tasks.

Appendix C

Illustrative Examples of Major Steps During the First Phases of Establishing a Learning Supports Component

First Phase: Introduction and Creating Readiness, Commitment, and Engagement

- Frameworks for a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports are introduced to relevant groups of decision makers
- Readiness, commitment, and engagement of key stakeholders are enhanced
- A MOU detailing agreements and procedures is established
- An administrative leader (equivalent to the leader for the instructional component) is appointed to lead the transformation and guide the work of the new component.

Second Phase: Start-up and Phase-in: Building Infrastructure, Capacity, and Pursuing Initial Implementation

- External Mentors provide professional preparation for the administrative leader
- Temporary mechanisms are established to facilitate initial implementation and systemic change (e.g., groups to steer, plan, implement); capacity building is provided for each of these mechanisms with respect to delineated functions.
- Strategic and action plans are formulated and implemented for the initial phases
- Operational infrastructure is reworked so that the component is unified, continuously developed, and fully integrated with the instructional and management components:
 - Ongoing responsibilities and accountabilities are formalized for administrative leader related to unifying and then developing, over time, a comprehensive system of learning supports
 - Administrative leader becomes part of key decision making bodies (e.g., administrative cabinet, school improvement team)
 - Resource-oriented mechanisms (e.g., a Learning Supports Leadership Team and work groups) are established to work with administrative leaders; capacity building is provided for each of these mechanisms with respect to delineated functions.
- A system for quality improvement and evaluation of impact is established and integrated into school improvement planning, evaluation, and accountability.
- Program or service gaps are filled and economies of scale are achieved 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).

Appendix D

Some Major Tasks for Coaches/Mentors to Help Address as a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports is Established

Coaches and Mentors can prepare leaders to

- Deepen understanding of and enhance committed readiness for what is involved in
 - >unifying & developing a comprehensive learning supports system
 - >making systemic changes
- Establish and build the capacity of the administrative leader for the learning supports component and of a Learning Supports Leadership Team
- Engage a critical mass of key stakeholder groups (building interest and consensus for the work and garnering feedback and support)
- Guide development of a design document and strategic system change plan
- Establish and build the capacity of a set of system change mechanisms
- Build the capacity of work group(s) to
 - >map prevailing status of student and learning supports within the district (e.g., current activity, gaps, redundancies, priority needs, etc.) using the intervention framework in the design document
 - >analyze the resource map and priority needs and recommend
 - >>how to unify the work into a system
 - >>yearly priorities for developing the system into a comprehensive approach
 - >analyze and recommend changes that fit with the design for a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports with respect to
 - >>current policies (bulletins, guidelines, etc.)
 - >>current operational infrastructure
 - >>current programs and initiatives
 - >>possible ways to redeploy resources
 - >>adapt benchmarks & mechanisms to monitor progress at district/school levels
- Provide a set of recommendations for change that will be submitted to the agency head (e.g., changes in policy and operational infrastructure)
- Fully integrate the system as a primary and essential component of school improvement
- Enhance component visibility, communication, sharing, and problem solving (e.g., within the district and beyond)
- Establish a system for continuous quality improvement and evaluation of impact and integrate it into regular planning, evaluation, and accountability
- Connect resources to enhance effectiveness and achieve economies of scale (e.g., weave resources at SEA/LEA levels; connect a "Family" of schools/a feeder pattern)
- Enhance outreach to establish formal collaborative linkages with community resources
- Update and deepen resource mapping and analyses
- Plan and implement continuous capacity building and technical assistance
- Celebrate progress