**Mental Health in Schools Program and Policy Analysis+**
**UCLA Center**

**Leadership Institute**

# Enhancing School Improvement:
# Addressing Barriers to Learning and Re-engaging Students

## Session Topics:

I.   Why is a System of Learning Supports *Imperative* for School Improvement

II.   What is a System of Learning Supports?
*An intervention perspective*

III.   What is a System of Learning Supports?
*An infrastructure perspective*

IV.   What is a System of Learning Supports?
*A policy perspective*

V.   What's Involved in Getting from Here to There?

VI.   Engaging and Re-engaging Students with an Emphasis on Intrinsic Motivation

VII.   Concluding Comments

Note: Most of the handouts from this presentation are included
on the Center website in both powerpoint & PDF formats.

## *Session I*

**Why is a *System* of Learning Supports *Imperative* for School Improvement?**

>**Some Major Concerns**

>**Lenses for viewing school improvement efforts**

>**School improvement planning:**
>        **What's being done & what's missing?**

**Why is a *System* of Learning Supports *Imperative* for School Improvement?**

# Some Major Concerns

Teachers shouldn't be expected to, never mind being held accountable for, ***doing it alone!***

The current focus of school improvement policy and practice is too limited to ensure that *all* students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

The limited focus contributes to:

- C High Student Dropout Rates

- C High Teacher Dropout Rates

- C Continuing Achievement Gap

- C So Many Schools Designated as Low Performing

- C High Stakes Testing Taking its Toll on Students

- C Plateau Effect

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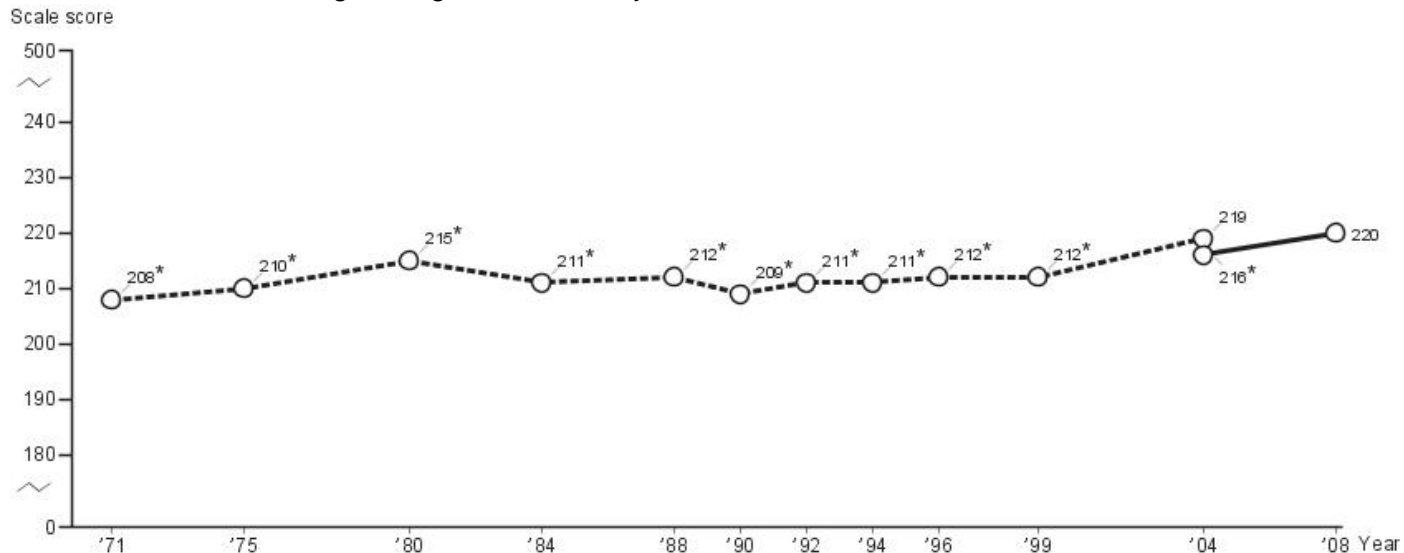**Data from the *National Assessment of Education Progress* (NAEP) clearly shows the plateau effect related to academic achievement**
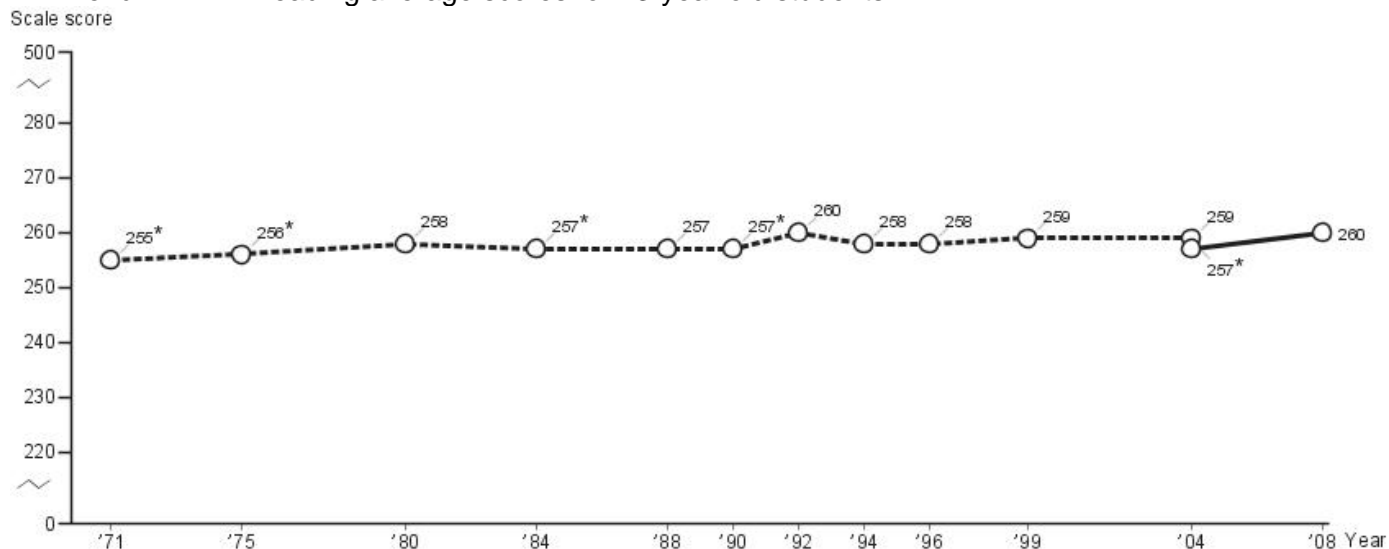
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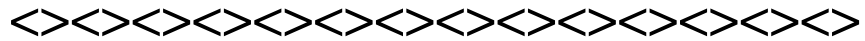
The Nation's Report Card – National Center for Education Statistics

Trend in NAEP reading average scores for 9-year-old students

Scale score

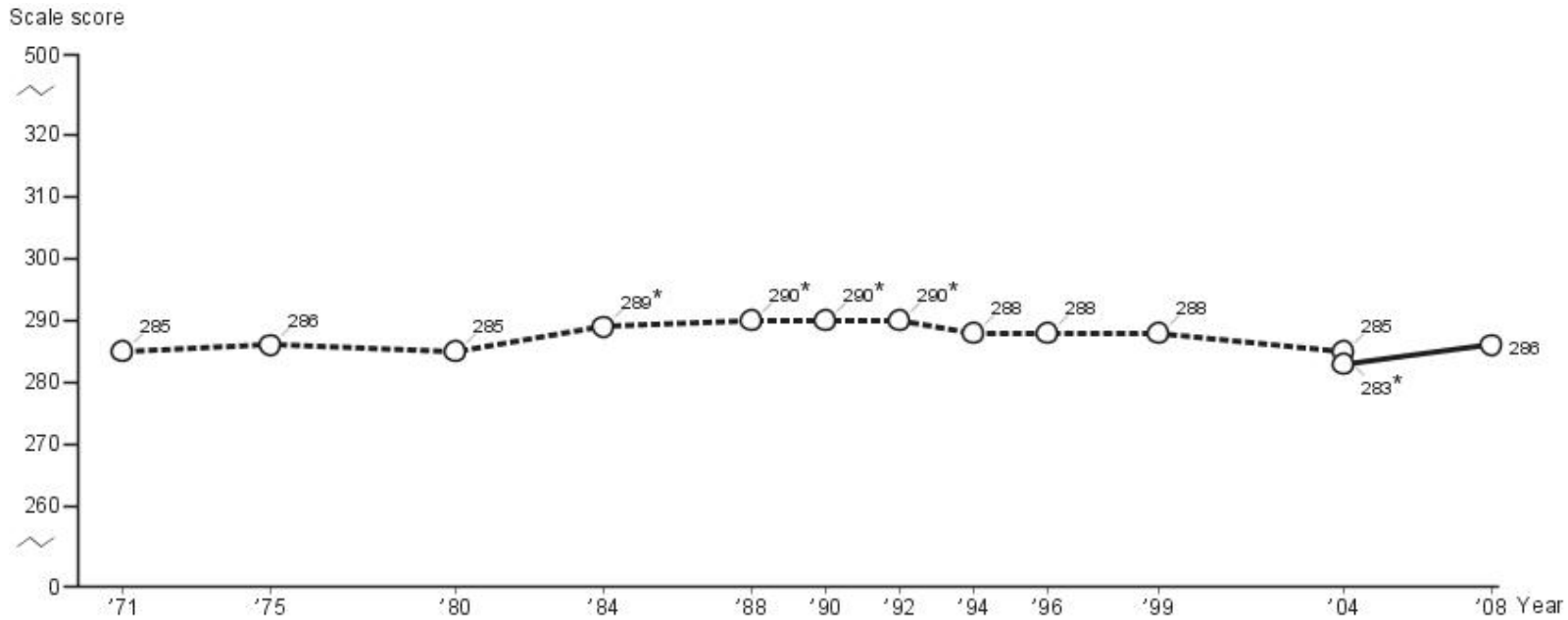Trend in NAEP reading average scores for 13-year-old students

Scale score

See key on next slide

Trend in NAEP reading average scores for 17-year-old students

Scale score



* Significantly different (*p* < .05) from 2008.

| Key | |
|---|---|
| _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ | Original Assessment Format |
| ——————— | Revised Assessment Format |
| **See note below** | |

**Note:**

The long-term trend assessment was updated in several ways in 2004. Outdated material was replaced, accommodations for students with disabilities (SD) and for English language learners (ELL) were allowed, and administration procedures were modified. A special bridge study was conducted in 2004 to evaluate the effects of these changes on the trend lines. The study involved administering both the original and revised formats of the assessments to determine how the revisions may have affected the results.

**Why is a *System* of Learning Supports *Imperative* for School Improvement?**

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**Three Lenses for viewing school improvement efforts**

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> # Lens #1 = *ALL* Students
>
> **Not some –**
>
> **$ALL$ youngsters**
> **are to have an equal**
> **opportunity to succeed at school**

# Range of Learners

(categorized in terms of their response to academic instruction)

**I = Motivationally ready and able\***

**II = Not very motivated/**
     **Lacking prerequisite knowledge & skills/**
     **Different learning rates and styles/**
     **Minor vulnerabilities\*\***

**III = Avoidant/**
      **Very deficient in current capabilities/**
      **Has a disability**
      **Major health problems**

\*Few youngsters start out with internal problems that interfere with learning what schools teach. There can be little doubt that external factors are primarily responsible for the majority of learning, behavior, and emotional problems encountered in schools.

\*\*All learners have *assets/strengths/protective factors* that can contribute to success; all have *differences* that require some degree of personalization by instructional systems; any may *internalize negative experiences* that interfere with learning at school.

# Lens # 2 = *Barriers to Learning*

## Barriers to Learning and School Improvement

Range of Learners
(categorized in terms of their
response to academic instruction
at any given point in time)

I = Motivationally
ready & able

Not very
motivated/
lacking
prerequisite
knowledge

II = & skills/
different
learning rates
& styles/
minor
vulnerabilities

III = Avoidant/
very deficient
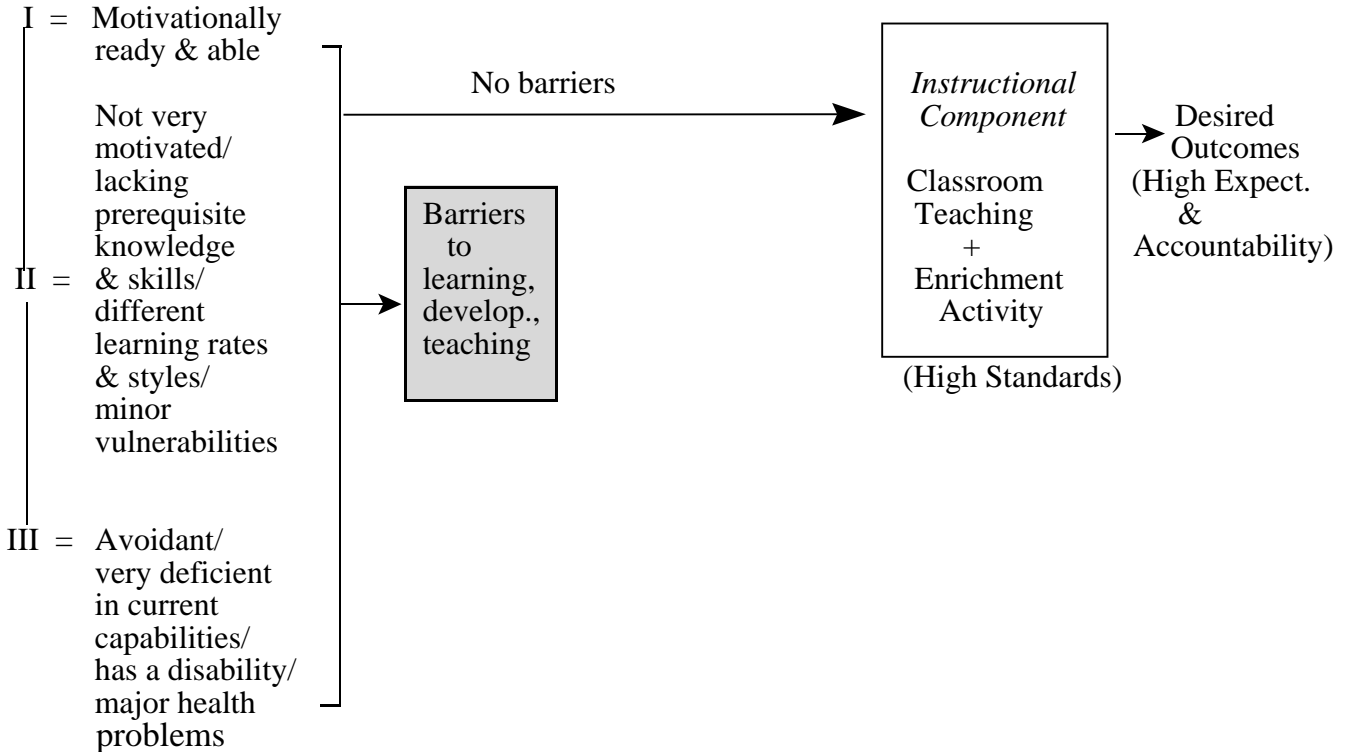in current
capabilities/
has a disability/
major health
problems

No barriers

Barriers
to
learning,
develop.,
teaching

*Instructional
Component*

Classroom
Teaching
+
Enrichment
Activity

(High Standards)

Desired
Outcomes
(High Expect.
&
Accountability)

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

**E n v i r o n m e n t a l   C o n d i t i o n s\*\***      **Person Factors\*\***

| *Neighborhood* | *Family* | *School and Peers* | *Individual* |
|---|---|---|---|
| >extreme economic deprivation<br>>community disorganization, including high levels of mobility<br>>violence, drugs, etc.<br>>minority and/or immigrant status | >chronic poverty<br>>conflict/disruptions/violence<br>>substance abuse<br>>models problem behavior<br>>abusive caretaking<br>>inadequate provision for quality child care | >poor quality school<br>>negative encounters with teachers<br>>negative encounters with peers &/or inappropriate peer models | >medical problems<br>>low birth weight/ neurodevelopmental delay<br>>psychophysiological problems<br>>difficult temperament & adjustment problems<br>>inadequate nutrition |

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

Caution: Don't misinterpret the term

- ***Barriers to Learning***

It encompasses much more than a deficit model of students.

And, it is part of a holistic approach that emphasizes the importance of

- ***Protective Buffers***
(e.g., strengths, assets, resiliency, accommodations)

and

- ***Promoting Full Development***

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

## E n v i r o n m e n t a l   C o n d i t i o n s*

| Neighborhood | Family | School and Peers | Person Factors*<br>Individual |
|---|---|---|---|
| >extreme economic deprivation<br>>community disorganization, including high levels of mobility<br>>violence, drugs, etc.<br>>minority and/or immigrant status | >chronic poverty<br>>conflict/disruptions/violence<br>>substance abuse<br>>models problem behavior<br>>abusive caretaking<br>>inadequate provision for quality child care | >poor quality school<br>>negative encounters with teachers<br>>negative encounters with peers &/or inappropriate peer models | >medical problems<br>>low birth weight/ neurodevelopmental delay<br>>psychophysiological problems<br>>difficult temperament & adjustment problems<br>>inadequate nutrition |

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## Examples of *Protective Buffers*

Conditions that prevent or counter risk producing conditions – strengths, assets, corrective interventions, coping mechanisms, special assistance and accommodations

### E n v i r o n m e n t a l   C o n d i t i o n s*

| Neighborhood | Family | School and Peers | Person Factors*<br>Individual |
|---|---|---|---|
| >strong economic conditions/ emerging economic opportunities<br>>safe and stable communities<br>>available & accessible services<br>>strong bond with positive other(s)<br>>appropriate expectations and standards<br>>opportunities to successfully participate, contribute, and be recognized | >adequate financial resources<br>>nurturing supportive family members who are positive models<br>>safe and stable (organized and predictable) home environment<br>>family literacy<br>>provision of high quality child care<br>>secure attachments – early and ongoing | >success at school<br>>safe, caring, supportive, and healthy school environment<br>>positive relationships with one or more teachers<br>>positive relationships with peers and appropriate peer models<br>>strong bond with positive other(s) | >higher cognitive functioning<br>>psychophysiological health<br>>easy temperament, outgoing personality, and positive behavior<br>>strong abilities for involvement and problem solving<br>>sense of purpose and future<br>>gender (girls less apt to develop certain problems) |

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## Examples of Conditions for *Promoting Full Development*

Conditions, over and beyond those that create protective buffers, that enhance healthy development, well-being, and a value-based life

### E n v i r o n m e n t a l   C o n d i t i o n s*

| Neighborhood | Family | School and Peers | Person Factors*<br>Individual |
|---|---|---|---|
| >nurturing & supportive conditions<br>>policy and practice promotes healthy development & sense of community | >conditions that foster positive physical & mental health among all family members | >nurturing & supportive climate school-wide and in classrooms<br>>conditions that foster feelings of competence, self-determination, and connectedness | >pursues opportunities for personal development and empowerment<br>>intrinsically motivated to pursue full development, well-being, and a value-based life |

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

For more on this and for references to relevant literature, see:

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2006). *The school leader's guide to student learning supports: New directions for addressing barriers to learning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

# Lens # 3 = Engagement & Disengagement*

## Source of Motivation

|                           | Extrinsics | Intrinsics | Intrinsics/ Extrinsics |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------------------|
| **Intervention Concerns** Engagement |  |  |  |
| Disengagement (psychological reactance) |  |  |  |

*Avoiding Over-reliance on Extrinsics, Maximizing Intrinsic Motivation, and Minimizing Behavior Control Strategies*

# Engaging & Re-engaging Students in Classroom Learning

How are schools

>maximizing Intrinsic Motivation?

>minimizing Behavior Control Strategies?

*Motivation,*

*and especially Intrinsic Motivation*

are fundamental intervention considerations

related to student (and staff) problems.

# Addressing Barriers Requires Enhancing
# How a School Approaches *Motivation*

Motivation, and Especially *Intrinsic* Motivation is a Fundamental Intervention Consideration Related to Student (and Staff) Problems

First Concern –
>    Enhancing understanding of *intrinsic motivation* as related to academic achievement and the achievement gap

Second Concern –
>    Reducing overemphasis on behavior/social *control* & enhancing appreciation of the impact of *psychological reactance*
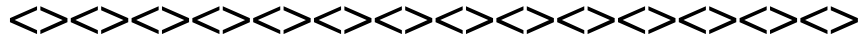
Third Concern –
>    *Re-engaging* students who have become actively disengaged from classroom instruction

Fourth Concern –
>    *Teacher motivation*

**Why is a *System* of Learning Supports *Imperative* for School Improvement?**

<>><>><>><>><>><>><>><>><>
## *School Improvement Planning:*
## *What's Being Done & What's Missing?*

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# School Improvement Planning

*Missing: A Comprehensive Focus on:*

*–Addressing Barriers to Learning & Teaching*

*–Re-engaging Disengaged Students in Classroom Learning*

## This becomes evident when we ask:

*What do schools currently do to*

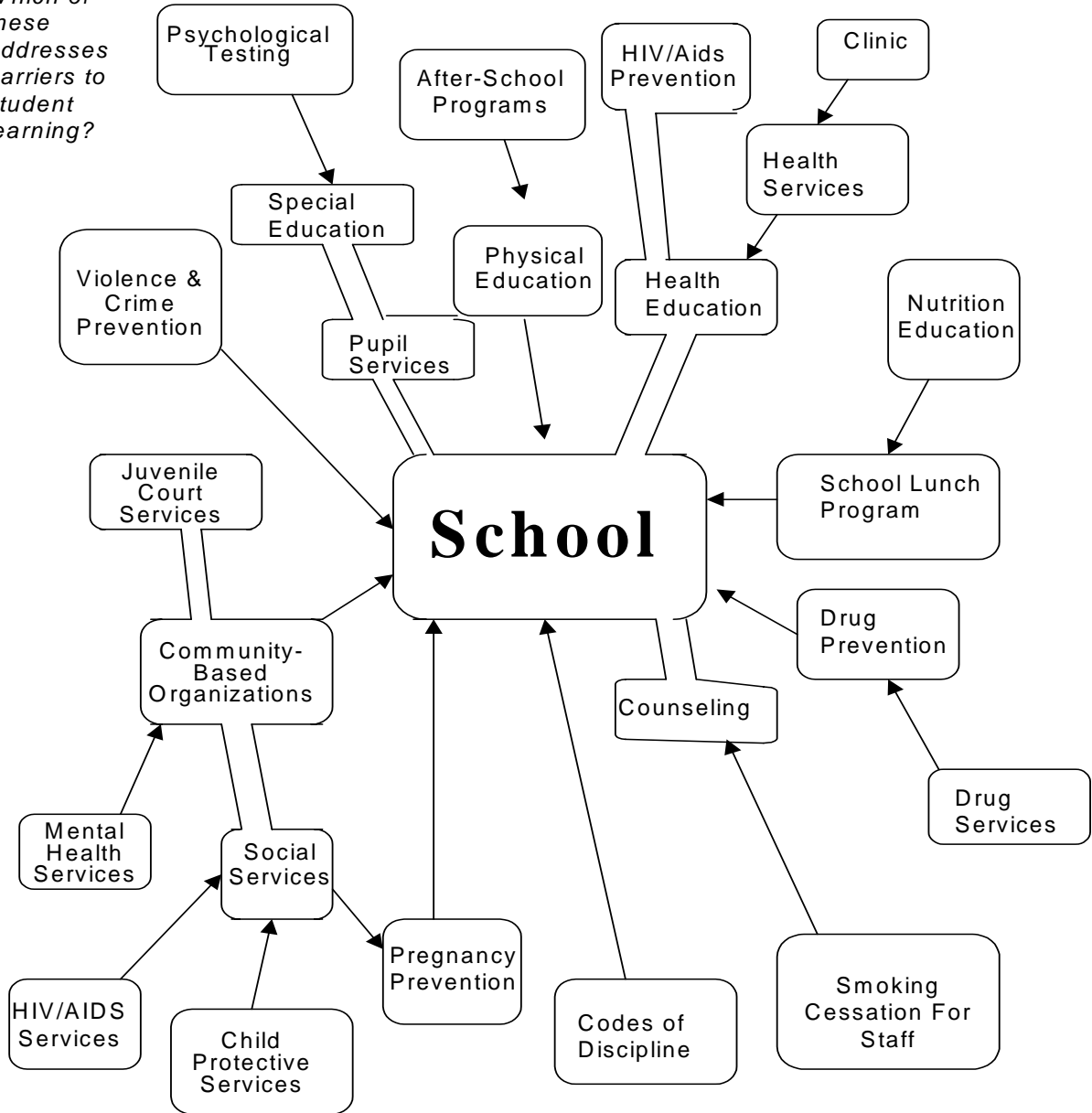**(1) address barriers to learning and teaching**

**and**

**(2) re-engage students in classroom instruction?**

How is the district/school *addressing barriers to learning* & teaching?

# *Talk about fragmented!!!*

*Which of these addresses barriers to student learning?*

Psychological Testing

After-School Programs

HIV/Aids Prevention

Clinic

Special Education

Physical Education

Health Services

Violence & Crime Prevention

Pupil Services

Health Education

Nutrition Education

Juvenile Court Services

**School**

School Lunch Program

Community-Based Organizations

Drug Prevention

Counseling

Mental Health Services

Social Services

Drug Services

HIV/AIDS Services

Child Protective Services

Pregnancy Prevention

Codes of Discipline

Smoking Cessation For Staff

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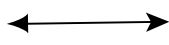
Fragmented policy ⟷ Fragmented practices

# What does this mean for the district and its schools?

## Current Situation at All Levels in the Educational System with Respect to Student/Learning Supports

- Marginalization

- Fragmentation

- Poor Cost-Effectiveness (up to 25% of a school budget used in too limited and often redundant ways)

- Counterproductive Competition for Sparse Resources (among school support staff and with community-based professionals who link with schools)

# What's the

# community doing?

# AGENCY REFORM
## Restructuring and Reforming
## *Community* Health and Human Services

**The intent of current agency reform policy –**
>**end fragmentation**
>**enhance access to clientele**

**The focus –**
>**interagency collaboration**
>**school-linked services, sometimes
 based (co-located) at a school**

**Problems –**
>**doesn't integrate with school's efforts to
address barriers to learning**
>**limits the focus to current agency work**

**As a result, current agency policy produces –**
>**an additional form of fragmentation**
>**counterproductive competition**
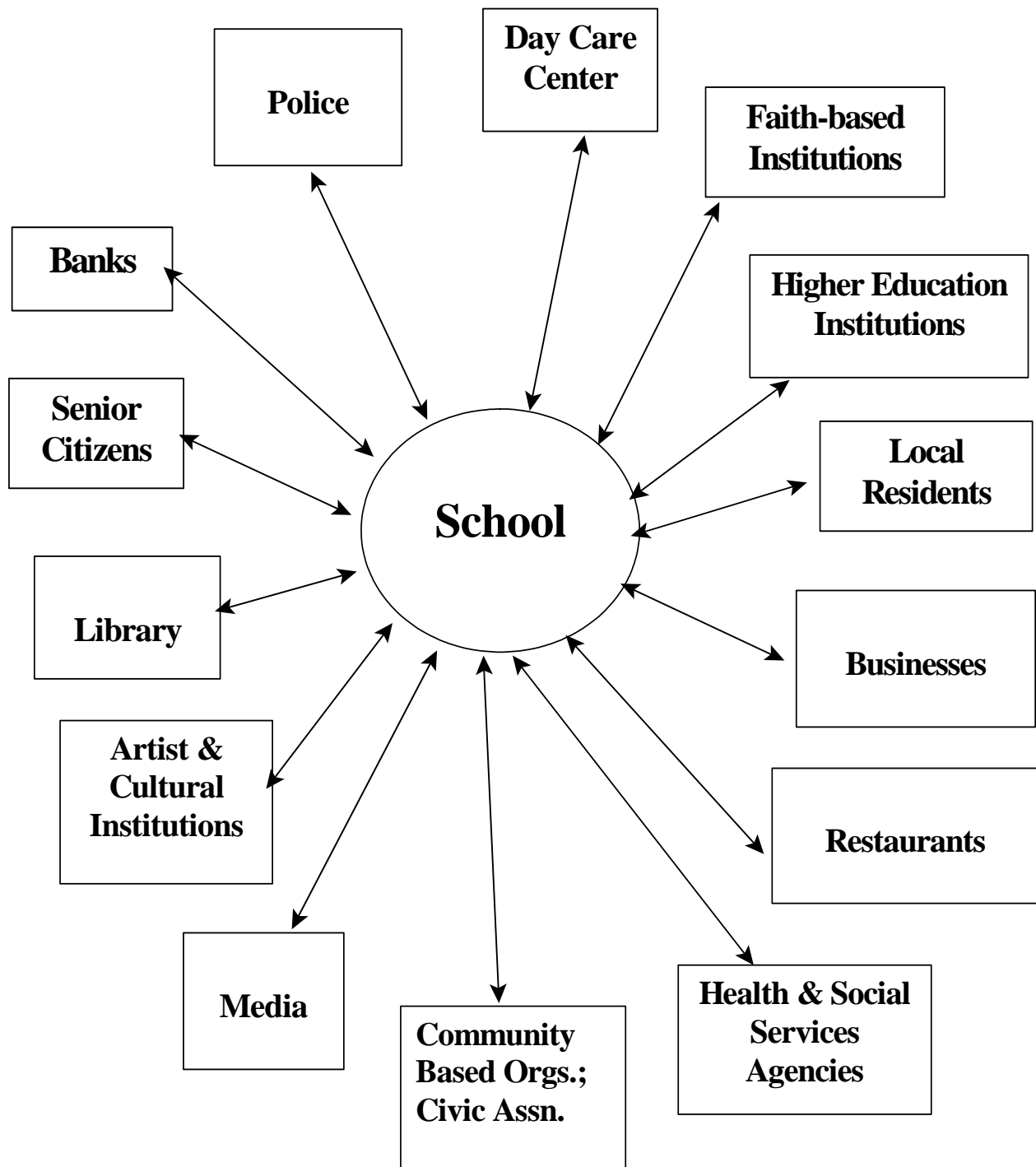>**greater marginalization**

It is important to remember that

**Community *Agency* Reform**
**is not the same thing as**
**Strengthening *Communities***

- •    The major intent of agency reform is to restructure services to *reduce fragmentation*.

- •    The emphasis is mainly on *interagency collaboration*.

- •    Schools have been included since they offer better access to agency clients. Thus, the concept of *school linked services*, and the idea of community agencies *co-locating* services on a school site.

**Because the focus is on *services*,**
**little attention is paid to**

» *integrating* community *resources* with existing school programs and services designed to address barriers to learning;

» *including a full range of community resources;*

» *strengthening families and neighborhoods* by improving economic status and enhancing other fundamental supports.

Police

Day Care Center

Faith-based Institutions

Banks

Higher Education Institutions

Senior Citizens

**School**

Local Residents

Library

Businesses

Artist & Cultural Institutions

Restaurants

Media

Community Based Orgs.; Civic Assn.

Health & Social Services Agencies

Excerpted from: J. Kretzmann &                    J. McKnight (1993). *Building Communities from the Inside out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*.  Chicago: ACTA Publications.

*To Recap:*

- School improvement policy and planning have not addressed barriers to development, learning, and teaching as a primary and essential component of what must be done if schools are to minimize behavior problems, close the achievement gap, and reduce the rate of dropouts

- As a result, current efforts are marginalized, fragmented, often redundant and off track, and they have resulted in counterproductive competition for sparse resources

- The need is for a comprehensive system of learning supports that
    (1) addresses barriers to development, learning, and teaching
  &
    (2) (re-)engages students in classroom learning

## *Study Questions*

What are the many external and internal barriers that interfere with students learning and teachers teaching and how does all this affect the school?

What is currently being done to address barriers to learning and teaching and what is keeping the work from being as effective as needed?

How would you change school improvement planning to ensure a comprehensive system of learning supports is developed to more effectively address barriers to development, learning, and teaching *and* also (re-)engage students in classroom learning?

## *Some Relevant References & Resources*

>*School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsmissing.htm

>*Addressing What's Missing in School Improvement Planning*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/enabling/standards.pdf

>*The School Leader's Guide to Student Learning Supports: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning*
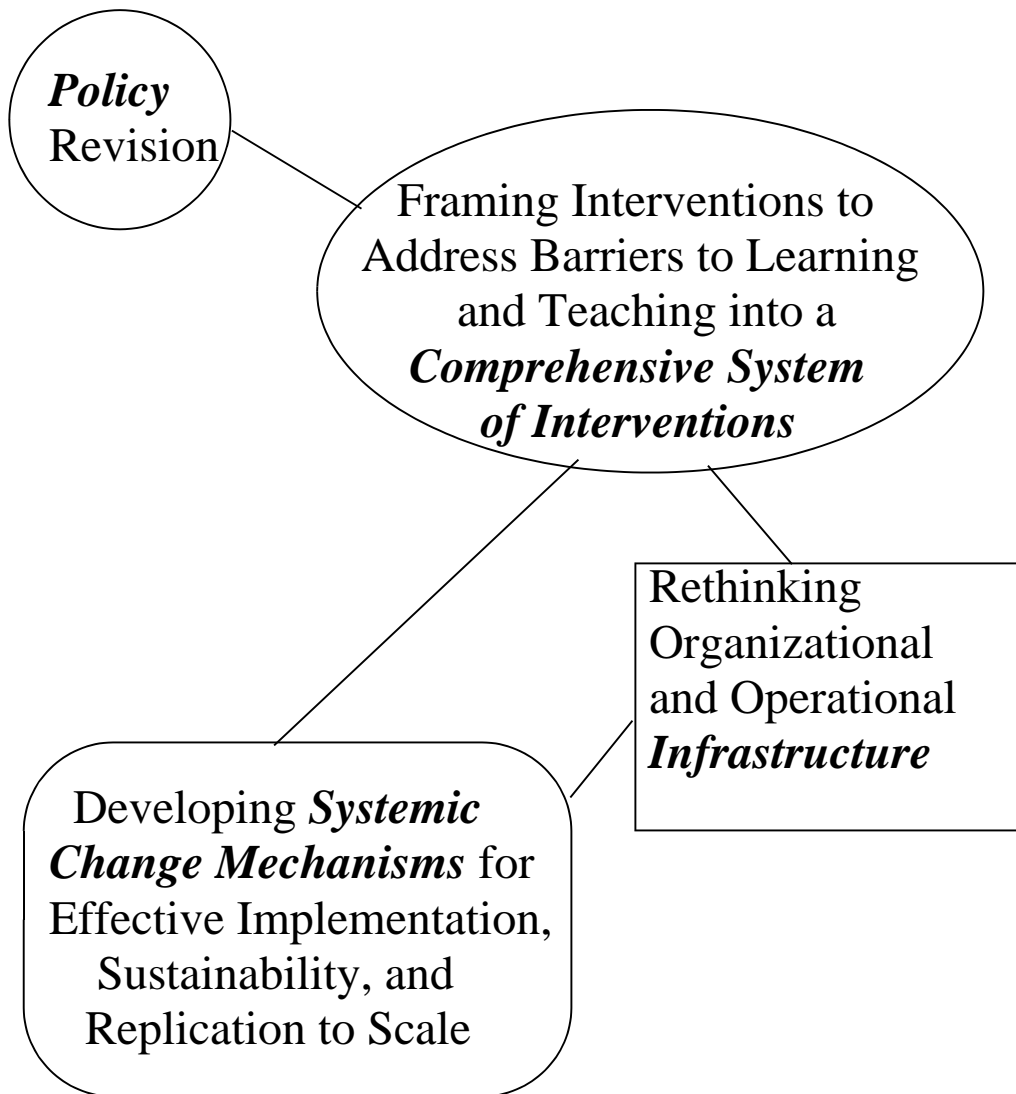http://www.corwinpress.com/book.aspx?pid=11343

*Next:*

**We turn to four fundamental, interrelated concerns involved in moving forward to develop**

*A Comprehensive System of Learning Supports*

# Developing a System to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching and Re-engage Students in Classroom Instruction

## *Four Fundamental and Interrelated Concerns*

**Policy** Revision

Framing Interventions to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching into a *Comprehensive System of Interventions*

Rethinking Organizational and Operational *Infrastructure*

Developing *Systemic Change Mechanisms* for Effective Implementation, Sustainability, and Replication to Scale

Additionally, because of the overemphasis on using extrinsic reinforcers in all aspects of efforts to improve schools, we find it essential to re-introduce a focus on *intrinsic motivation.*

**In Session II, we begin with the concern for framing interventions to address barriers to learning and teaching as a *comprehensive system of interventions***