

**MPS Behavior Coaching Model**  
**Adapted from Tim Lewis, et. al**  
**DRAFT 8/18-present**

| Systems Leadership | Tier |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Behavior Coach: Areas of Focus                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Role of the Admin  | Tier | Role of Behavior Coach per MPS MTSS Model                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Knowledge of...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Disposition                                                                                                                                                                     |
| TBD                | 1    | <p><b>Systems Coaching</b><br/> Support the development and implementation of a Tier I school-wide behavior program.</p> <p>Assist with planning and designing of Tier I and Tier II-1 behavior interventions in alignment with the Tier I school-wide behavior skills program.</p> <p><b>Collaborative Coaching (student/teacher)</b></p> <p>Support 8 Effective Classroom Practices through observation and coaching feedback</p> <p>Observations- provide information to classroom teachers about observations, thoughts, next steps, etc.</p> <p>Participation in PLC behavior conversations and /or other building level behavioral teams to support problem solving, data collection methods, etc.</p> | <p>MPS MTSS framework to support all students</p> <p>All schools are a hybrid model with influences of behavioral approaches and philosophies (PBIS/BIST)</p> <p>Data systems (SWIS, IC attendance, SAS, TFI etc)</p> <p>Preventative and responsive services</p> <p>Family and School Collaboration</p> <p>Knowledge of criteria for a referral to Tier 2 (majors, minors, etc)</p> <p><a href="#">The 8 effective classroom practices from Missouri PBIS</a></p> <p>MTSS- Behavior team structure in buildings with defined purpose, structure, members, (MTSS, problem solving teams, SAP); meeting schedule; connected to MTSS, defined roles of members</p> | <p>Lead from within an organization/team</p> <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Understanding and Facilitation of MPS MTSS</p> <p>Facilitation of the problem solving process</p> <p>Foundation of Behavioral Analysis (ABCs, function, etc.)</p> <p><a href="#">Partnership Principles in Instructional Coaching</a> by Jim Knight</p> <p><a href="#">Coaching on the Red Line Principles</a> by Steven Gering</p> <p>Network with other behavior coaches to get support and ideas needed at that building</p> <p>De-escalation and R&amp;S</p> | <p>Self- Reflection <a href="#">MIM Professional Responsibilities</a></p> <p>Reflection- self assessment (i.e. FL example) or PBIS <a href="#">Trainer/Coach assessment</a></p> |

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| TBD                | Tier 2-s | <p><b>Systems Coaching</b><br/> Assist as needed with gathering parent input and home communication.</p> <p>Participate in professional development related to data collection, intervention planning and progress monitoring.</p> <p>Bring in additional problem solving supports such as other psychologist, District social workers, District special education team members, (program facilitators, coordinators, etc.) to assist with the development of the intervention plan as needed.</p> <p><b>Collaborative Coaching</b><br/> Teacher/Student<br/> Participate in the development of the intervention plan.<br/> Coach with implementation to ensure fidelity, according to the specifications identified by the intervention plan.</p> <p>Assist with ensuring progress monitoring data is collected according to the plan designed.</p> <p>Assist as needed with gathering parent input and home communication.</p> | <p><b>Systems Coaching</b><br/> Methods for identifying students/reviewing data</p> <p>Knowledge of criteria for a referral to Tier 2 (majors, minors, etc.)</p> <p>Preventative and responsive services</p> <p>Family and School Collaboration</p> <p>Interventions and Mental Health Services to Promote SEL and wellbeing</p> <p><b>Collaborative Coaching</b><br/> Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">8 Effective practice</a></li> <li>• Function Based thinking Interventions</li> </ul> Student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social skill interventions: CICO, <a href="#">Student Intervention Matching Form</a>, etc.</li> </ul> </p> | <p>Understanding of MPS MTSS-B</p> <p>Data Collection/Analysis</p> <p>Intervention fidelity</p> <p>Leading from within an organization or team</p> <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Network with other behavior coaches to get support and ideas needed</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Facilitation of the problem solving process</p> <p>Foundation of Behavioral Analysis (ABCs, function, etc.)</p> <p><a href="#">Partnership Principles in Instructional Coaching</a> by Jim Knight</p> <p><a href="#">Coaching on the Red Line Principles</a> by Steven Gering</p> <p>De-escalation and R&amp;S</p> <p>Fierce Conversations Models</p> | <p>Self-Reflection <a href="#">MIM Professional Responsibilities</a></p> <p>Reflection- self assessment (i.e. FL example) or PBIS <a href="#">Trainer/Coach assessment</a></p> |

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|                   |        | Support team in “Thinking functionally” about behavior                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| TBD               | Tier 3 | <p><b>Systems Coaching &amp; Collaborative Coaching Student/Teacher</b><br/>           Complete a <a href="#">Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA)</a> with the appropriate team members.</p> <p>Develop a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan (P-BIP) with the appropriate team members.</p> <p>Coach and support those implementing the Positive Behavior Intervention Plan (P-BIP).</p> <p>Assist with ensuring progress monitoring data is collected according to the plan designed.</p> <p>Assist as needed with gathering parent input and home communication.</p> | <p><b>Systems Coaching</b><br/>           8 Effective teaching practice</p> <p><b>Collaborative Coaching</b><br/>           Teacher/Student</p> <p>Function Based thinking Interventions</p> <p><b>Tier 3 “ESSENTIAL PRACTICES”</b><br/>           In development<br/>           Request for assistance/Decision rule met</p> <p>Operationally define problem/replacement behavior</p> <p>Background/archival data/data collection/Environmental Assessment</p> <p>Functional Behavior Assessment<br/>           Indirect measures<br/>           Direct observation</p> <p>Develop hypothesis regarding function of problem behavior</p> <p>Develop a Behavior Intervention Plan<br/>           Social skill instruction<br/>           Self management</p> | <p>Understanding of MPS MTSS-B</p> <p>Data Collection/Analysis</p> <p>Intervention fidelity</p> <p>Leading from within an organization or team</p> <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Facilitation of the problem solving process</p> <p>Foundation of Behavioral Analysis (ABCs, function, etc.)</p> <p>De-escalation and R&amp;S</p> <p><a href="#">Partnership Principles in Instructional Coaching</a> by Jim Knight</p> <p><a href="#">Coaching on the Red Line Principles</a> by Steven Gering</p> <p>Fierce Conversations Models</p> | <p>Self Reflection <a href="#">MIM Professional Responsibilities</a></p> <p>Reflection- self assessment (i.e. FL example) or PBIS <a href="#">Trainer/Coach assessment</a></p> |

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|  |  |  |                                                                                |  |  |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
|  |  |  | Environmental modifications<br><br>Implement, Monitor and<br>Evaluate progress |  |  |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|

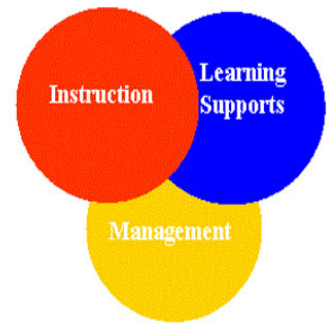
# 2021 Virtual PBIS Leadership Forum

October 26 - 28, 2021

## Strand I - District Leadership

### Resources:

- [District Systems Fidelity Inventory \(DSFI\)](#)
- [PBIS District Leadership Team Practice Guide for Implementation Using the District Systems Fidelity Inventory \(DSFI\)](#)
- [DRAFT Training Slides for DSFI Strands](#)
- [Targeted Brief: Logic of District-wide Implementation](#)
- [Podcast: The Educators' Blueprint](#) – a podcast produced by the University of Missouri Center for School-wide Positive Behavior Supports
- [The School-Climate Transformation Grant \(SCTG\) webinar series from the Center on PBIS](#)
- [PBIS Evaluation Blueprint](#) (Center on PBIS)
- [Training and Professional Development Blueprint for PBIS](#) (Center on PBIS)
- [District Annual PBIS Implementation Report Template](#)
- [District Action Plan Template Aligned to the District Systems Fidelity Inventory \(DSFI\)](#)
- [Exemplar District Model for Standard Tier 2 and Tier 3 Systems and Practices](#)
- [Copy of Exemplar District Systems Fidelity Inventory \(DSFI\) Action Plan – Ferguson-Florissant \(MO\)](#)
- [Copy of Exemplar District Systems Fidelity Inventory \(DSFI\) Action Plan – Clifton Public Schools \(NJ\)](#)



*A Center Report . . . .*

***New Directions for  
School Counselors, Psychologists, & Social Workers***

*(revised March, 2021)*

Part I:  
***Ending the Marginalization and Fragmentation of Student/Learning Supports***

Part II:  
***Reworking Operational Infrastructure for Student/Learning Supports***

Part III:  
***New Roles and Functions for Student/Learning Support Staff***

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## Preface

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the educational mission at too many schools was thwarted because of multifaceted factors that interfere with youngsters' learning and performance. The pandemic enlarged the pool of students experiencing learning, behavior, and emotional problems. This lamentable state of affairs revitalized long-standing calls to hire more student support staff.

Budget shortfalls, of course, always work against districts hiring more support staff. Indeed, with funding cutbacks, such personnel usually are prime candidates when lay-offs decisions are necessary.

*An unfortunate reality is that schools have never had and are unlikely to ever have the numbers advocated as needed by student support professionals' guilds.*

*Given this reality, it is time for education policymakers and planners to rethink student and learning supports.*

Ultimately, if *all* students are to have an equal opportunity to succeed in school and beyond, there must be a focus on transforming how school and community resources are used to help counter learning, behavioral, emotional, and health problems.

This report highlights the current state of affairs with respect to how schools address barriers to student learning and proposes new directions for moving forward to establish a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student and learning supports. Developing and sustaining such a system requires reframing the roles and functions of student/learning support staff. With changing roles and functions comes the need for changes in preservice preparation, certification, and continuing professional development. Thus, the report concludes with a series of frameworks to suggest ways to rethink these matters.

Our focus here is on school counselors, psychologists, and social workers. However, we know the work of nurses and other student support personnel are an essential facet of what is proposed in this report, and we hope they will see the implications for changes in their roles and functions.

As always, our Center's efforts reflect what we have learned from working with many concerned stakeholders across the country. We are especially grateful to those involved in making major systemic changes who have generously offered their insights and wisdom. And, of course, we are indebted to hundreds of scholars whose research and writing is a shared treasure. And special thanks to our Center colleague, Perry Nelson, and the host of graduate and undergraduate students at UCLA who contribute so much to our work each day, and to the many young people and their families who continue to teach us all.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,

Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor, Co-directors



## New Directions for School Counselors, Psychologists, and Social Workers

With the ongoing upheavals in public education, the ways in which schools address student support services and programs are changing and therefore so are the roles and functions of school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and other student support staff. What will it all look like in the coming years? In part, that probably depends on whether such personnel approach the future reactively or take the lead in restructuring systemic changes. It seems clear to us that a reactive stance will lead to dire consequences. Thus, we encourage all concerned to pursue a proactive, visionary approach focused on framing new directions.

To underscore the need for new directions, we begin by briefly highlighting the current state of the art and its deficiencies. Then, we discuss a proactive agenda to shape the future of student and learning supports, emphasizing changing roles and functions for student support staff.\*

### Some Background

Ask any teacher: *Most days, how many of your students appear motivationally ready and able to learn?* We have asked that question across the country. The consistency of response is surprising and disturbing. In urban and rural schools serving economically disadvantaged families, teachers tell us they're lucky if 10-15% of their students fall into this group. In suburbia, before COVID-19, teachers usually indicated 75% fit that profile; during the pandemic the number of disengaged students increased.

**Teachers ask for  
and need help;  
they can't and  
shouldn't be  
expected to  
do it alone**

It is not surprising, therefore, that teachers are continuously asking for help in dealing with problems. They can't and shouldn't be expected to do it alone. And, to prevent problems, they also would like support in facilitating their students' healthy social and emotional development and in fostering the involvement of parents. Despite all this, student and learning supports tend to be a supplementary item on a school's agenda. This also is not surprising. Administrators and education policy makers tend to see any activity not directly related to instruction as taking resources away from their primary mission which is to educate.

At the same time, most school stakeholders have long recognized that learning, behavior, emotional and physical health problems must be addressed if schools are to achieve their mission. Related to this are legal mandates requiring certain services for some students diagnosed with special education needs.

The bottom line is that designs for improving schools must reflect the full implications of the word *every* in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA).

Clearly, *every* includes more than students who are motivationally ready and able to profit from demands and expectations for "high standards." *Every* means effectively addressing the problems of the many who aren't benefitting from instructional reforms because of a host of *external* and *internal* barriers interfering with their development and learning and with factors interfering with good teaching.

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\*For more detailed discussions, see the recent volumes available at  
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html).

Most learning, behavior, and emotional problems seen in schools are rooted in failure to address external barriers and learner differences in a comprehensive manner. And, the problems are exacerbated as youngsters internalize frustrations of confronting barriers and experience the debilitating effects of performing poorly at school.

*It has been estimated that 40% of young people are in bad educational shape and therefore will fail to fulfill their promise*

*How many are affected?* Figures vary. The Center for Demographic Policy at one time estimated that 40% of young people “are in bad educational shape” and therefore will fail to fulfill their promise. For many large urban schools, the reality before the COVID-19 pandemic was that well-over 50% of their students manifested significant learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

In a great many instances, these problems are rooted in the restricted opportunities and difficult living conditions associated with poverty. The litany of barriers to learning is all too familiar to anyone who lives or works in communities where families struggle with low income.

In such neighborhoods, the inequities contrast markedly with respect to school and community resources and opportunities found in higher income communities. The resources in low income neighborhoods often are grossly inadequate for dealing with threats to well-being and learning such as health problems, difficult family circumstances, gangs, violence, and drugs. Inadequate attention to language and cultural considerations and to high rates of student mobility creates additional barriers not only to student learning but to efforts to involve families in youngsters' schooling. Such conditions are breeding grounds for frustration, apathy, alienation, and hopelessness.

It would be a mistake, however, to think only in terms of poverty. As the pandemic has demonstrated and as previous widely-reported incidents underscore, violence, especially bullying, is a specter hanging over all schools and has a debilitating impact on some youngsters at every school. Although the data are limited, those who study the many faces of violence suggest that large numbers of students are caught up in cycles where they are the recipient or perpetrator (and sometimes both) of physical and sexual harassment ranging from excessive teasing and bullying to mayhem and major criminal acts.

Efforts to deal with the above concerns have led to a variety of school-financed student/learning supports and to school-community collaborations. These include a host of counseling, psychological, and social service programs and initiatives to link schools with community service agencies and other neighborhood resources.

### **School-Financed Student/Learning Supports**

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, many school districts had a wide-range of interventions to cope with student and teaching problems. Some specific programs were provided throughout the district, others were carried out at or linked to targeted schools. Some were designed to benefit all students in a school, others were for specified grades, and others were for those identified as having special needs. Some were implemented in regular or special education classrooms, with activities geared to an entire class, groups, or individuals. Some were designed as "pull out" programs for designated students and encompassed ecological, curricular, and clinically oriented activities.

On paper and websites, it can look like a lot. It is common knowledge, however, that few schools come close to having enough resources to respond when confronted with a large number of students who are experiencing a wide range of psychosocial barriers that interfere with their learning and performance. Most schools offer only bare essentials. Too many schools can't even meet basic needs. Primary prevention often is only a dream. The simple fact is that education support activity is *marginalized* at most schools and implemented in a piecemeal fashion. As a result, the positive impact for the whole school is sharply curtailed.

While schools can use a wide-range of persons to help students, most schools hire a relatively small number of student support staff. Federal and state mandates tend to determine how many are employed, and states regulate compliance with mandates.

Governance of daily practice usually is centralized at the school district level. In large districts, counselors, psychologists, social workers, and other specialists may be organized into separate units. Such units straddle regular, special, and compensatory education. Analyses of the situation find that this results in programs and services that are planned, implemented, and evaluated in a fragmented and piecemeal manner. Student support staff at schools tend to function in relative isolation of each other and other stakeholders, with a great deal of the work oriented to discrete problems and with an overreliance on specialized services for individuals and small groups. In some schools, a student identified as at risk for grade retention, dropout, and substance abuse may be assigned to three counseling programs operating independently of each other. Such fragmentation not only is costly, it works against developing cohesiveness and maximizing results.

## **School-Community Collaborations**

Recent years have seen increased interest in school-community collaborations as one way to provide more support for schools, students, and families. The interest is bolstered by a renewed policy concern about countering widespread fragmentation of community health and social services and by various initiatives for school reform, youth development, and community development. Various forms of school-community collaborations have been advocated, including state-wide initiatives in California, Florida, Kentucky, Missouri, New Jersey, Washington, Oregon, among others. In addition to community schools, the initiatives have fostered advocacy for *school linked services*, *coordinated services*, *integrated services*, *wrap-around services*, *one-stop shopping*, and *full service schools*. The youth development movement has added calls for *promoting protective factors*, *asset-building*, *wellness*, and *empowerment*.

In building school-community collaborations, it is important not to limit one's thinking about communities by focusing only on *agencies*. The range of resources in a community is much greater than the service agencies and community-based organizations that often are invited to the table. The most important resource in a community, of course, is the families that reside there. Other community resources include businesses, libraries, parks, youth, religious, and civic groups, and any facility that can be used for recreation, learning, enrichment, and support.

Not surprisingly, findings indicate how hard it is to establish school-community collaborations. Still, a reasonable inference from available data is that such collaborations can be successful and cost effective over the long-run. However, they must be established in ways that minimize counterproductive competition for sparse resources and with effective and sustainable operational infrastructures.

### **Marginalization & Fragmentation: Still the Norm**

Policymakers have come to appreciate the relationship between limited intervention efficacy and the widespread tendency for complementary programs to operate in isolation. Limited efficacy does seem inevitable as long as interventions are carried out in a piecemeal and often competitive fashion and with little follow through. From this perspective, reformers have pursued initiatives intended to reduce fragmentation and increase access to health and social services.

The call for *integrated services* clearly is motivated by a desire to reduce redundancy, waste, and ineffectiveness resulting from fragmentation.\* Special attention is given to coordinating the many piecemeal, categorically funded approaches, such as those created to reduce learning and behavior problems, substance abuse, violence, trauma, suicide prevention, school dropouts, delinquency, and teen pregnancy.

By focusing primarily on reducing fragmentation, policy makers fail to deal with the underlying problem, namely that addressing barriers to development and learning remains a marginalized aspect of school policy and practice. Fragmentation stems from the marginalization, but concern about such marginalization is not even on the radar screen of most policy makers.

Despite the emphasis on enhancing collaboration, the problem remains that the majority of programs, services, and special projects designed to address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students still are viewed as supplementary (often referred to as support or auxiliary services) and continue to operate on an ad hoc basis. The degree to which marginalization is the case is seen in the lack of attention given such activity in consolidated plans and certification reviews and the lack of efforts to map, analyze, and rethink how resources are allocated. School improvement initiatives virtually have ignored the need to rethink and restructure the work of student support professionals. As long as this remains the case, efforts to reduce fragmentation and increase access are seriously hampered. More to the point, the desired impact for large numbers of children and adolescents will not be achieved.

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\* Adler, L., & Gardner, S. (Eds.), (1994). *The politics of linking schools and social services*. Washington, DC: Falmer Press.

Center for Mental Health in School (2014). *Integrated student supports and equity: What's not being discussed?* Los Angeles: Author at UCLA. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/integpolicy.pdf>

Moore, K.A., (2014). *Making the grade: Assessing the evidence for integrated student supports*. Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014-07ISSPaper.pdf>

At most schools, community involvement also is a marginal concern, and the trend toward fragmentation is compounded by most school-linked services' initiatives. This happens because such initiatives focus primarily on coordinating *community* services and *linking* them to schools, with an emphasis on *co-locating* rather than integrating such services with the ongoing efforts of school staff to address barriers to learning and teaching.

In short, policies shaping current agenda for improving school and community student/learning supports are seriously flawed. Although fragmentation and access are significant concerns, marginalization is of greater concern.

### **Two Parables Help Clarify the Need to Broaden Understanding of the Role of Student/Learning Supports in Schools**

The prevailing view is illustrated by the starfish metaphor.

The day after a great storm had washed all sorts of sea life far up onto the beach, a youngster, set out to throw back as many of the still-living starfish as he could. After watching him toss one after the other into the ocean, an old man approached him and said, "It's no use your doing that, there are too many. You're not going to make any difference."

The boy looked at him in surprise, then bent over, picked up another starfish, threw it in, and replied, "It made a difference to that one!"

This parable, of course, reflects all the important efforts undertaken by staff working alone and when they meet together to discuss specific students. It is one way to think about providing student support.

The bridge parable underscores the need to put such efforts into broader perspective.

In a small town, one weekend a group of school staff went fishing together down at the river. Not long after they got there, a child came floating down the rapids calling for help. One of the group on the shore quickly dived in and pulled the child out. Minutes later another, then another, and then many more children were coming down the river.

Soon everyone was diving in and dragging children to the shore and then jumping back in to save as many as they could. But, there were too many. All of a sudden, in the midst of all this frenzy, one of the group stopped jumping in and was seen walking away. Her colleagues were amazed and irate. How could she leave when there were so many children to save?

After long hours, to everyone's relief, the flow of children stopped, and the group could finally catch their breath. At that moment, their colleague came back. They turned on her and angrily shouted, "How could you walk off when we needed everyone here to save the children?"

She replied, "It occurred to me that someone ought to go upstream and find out why so many kids were falling into the river. What I found is that the old wooden bridge had several planks missing, and when some children tried to jump over the gap, they couldn't make it and fell through into the river. So I fixed the bridge."

Fixing and building better bridges is a good way to think about the value of preventing problems. Devoting time to improve and enhance resources, programs, and systems is especially critical for schools since their mission encompasses *all*, not just some students, and calls for preventing problems and promoting development.

## Part I:

### ***Ending the Marginalization and Fragmentation of Student/Learning Supports\****

**F**or a variety of reasons, schools differ with respect to the student/learning supports they have in place. Common, however, is the fragmented and disorganized way the supports are developed and implemented. The status quo is maintained because school improvement policy and practice continue to marginalize student/learning supports.

#### **Ending the Marginalization is Essential to Moving Forward**

The problems encountered by students and schools are complex and overlapping. The number of students not doing well at some schools is staggering. Student/learning supports as they currently operate can't meet the need, especially in schools serving low wealth families.

School budgets always are tight; cost-effectiveness is a constant concern. In some schools, principals have told us that up to 25% of their budget is consumed in efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching. Analyses indicate extremely limited results and redundancy in resource use.

Rivalry for sparse resources also has produced counterproductive competition among support staff and with community-based professionals who link with schools. Each new initiative compounds matters.

All this works against schools playing a significant role in stemming the tide with respect to low achievement, delinquent behavior, student and teacher dropouts, and a host of other serious problems. School improvement and related capacity building efforts (including pre- and in-service staff development) have yet to deal effectively with these concerns.

***Addressing the pervasive and complex barriers that impede student learning requires a systemwide approach that comprehensively supports whole-child development and learning.***

#### **Adopting a Component to Address Barriers to Learning**

Our analysis of school improvement policy and planning in the wake of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) indicates that districts and schools tend not to address – directly and comprehensively – barriers to learning and teaching. Policy and practice planning is guided primarily by a two-component framework, namely (a) instruction and (b) governance/management. School improvement plans focus on these two components; interventions for addressing learning barriers and reengaging disconnected students are given secondary consideration at best. This marginalization is a fundamental cause of the widely observed fragmentation and disorganization of student and learning supports. An enhanced policy framework is needed to ensure that efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching are pursued as a primary and essential component of school improvement (see Exhibit 1).

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\*Parts I and II of this report draw on the compiled research and development work presented in Adelman, H.S. & Taylor, L. (2017). *Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*. Los Angeles: Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports.  
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55w7b8x8>

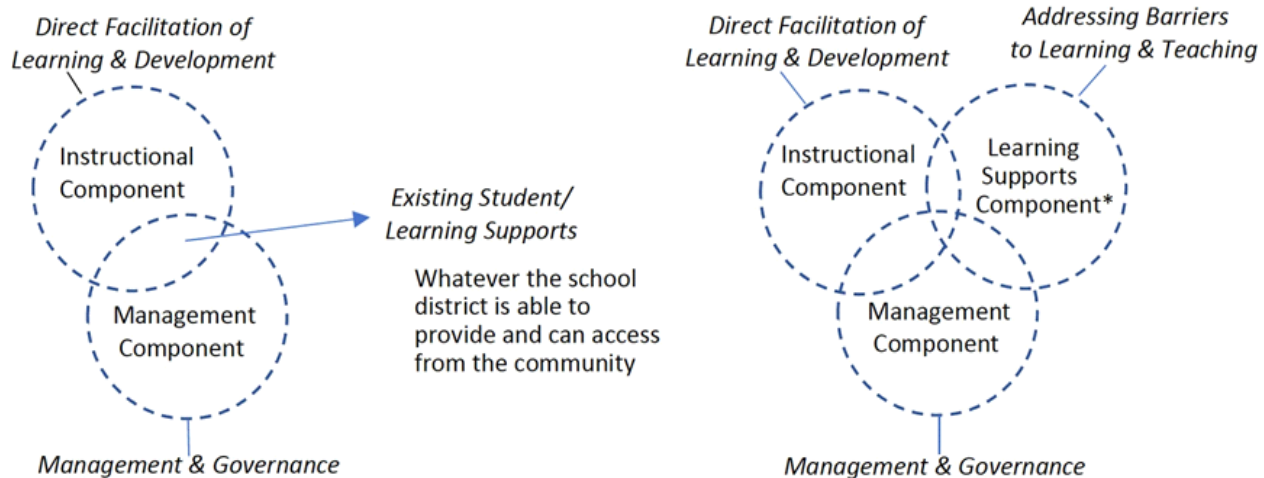
Adelman, H.S. & Taylor, L. (2018). *Improving School Improvement*. Los Angeles: Center for MH in

Exhibit 1

## Expanding the Framework for School Improvement Policy and Practice

Prevailing State of Affairs

Moving toward a Comprehensive System



We conceive the learning supports component as enabling learning by (a) addressing factors that affect learning, development, and teaching and (b) reengaging students in classroom instruction. The reality is that students experience overlapping learning, behavioral, and emotional problems; any system of interventions must be designed with this in mind. The intent of the expanded framework is to help districts and their schools unify all efforts to prevent and minimize the impact of barriers interfering with learning and teaching. The expanded framework requires personnel and an operational infrastructure that coalesces programs, services, initiatives, and projects that (a) provide compensatory and special assistance, and (b) promote and maintain safety, physical and mental health, school readiness, early school adjustment, and social and academic functioning. The point is to weave school and a wide range of community resources together, and to move away from approaching diverse student concerns as if they had no relationship to each other.

### School Board Committee on Addressing Barriers to Learning

Most school boards do not have a standing committee that gives full attention to the problem of how schools address barriers to learning and teaching. This is not to suggest that boards are ignoring such matters. Indeed, items related to these concerns appear regularly on every school board's agenda. The problem is that each item tends to be handled in an ad hoc manner, without sufficient attention to the "Big Picture." Given this, it is not surprising that the administrative structure in most districts is not organized in ways that coalesce various functions for preventing and ameliorating student problems. The piecemeal structure reflects the marginalized status of such functions and both creates and maintains fragmented policies and practices. Given that every school endeavors to address barriers to learning and teaching, school boards should carefully analyze the way they deal with these functions and consider whether they need to restructure themselves to enhance cohesion of policy and practice.



## Reframing Student and Learning Supports

In addition to expanding the policy framework, moving forward requires

- reframing traditional student and learning supports
- reworking the organizational and operational infrastructure and redeploying resources to enable the development, implementation, and sustainability of the new system.

The aim is to help districts and their schools unify all efforts to prevent and minimize the impact of problems interfering with learning and teaching. This includes programs, services, initiatives, and projects that provide compensatory and special assistance and promote and maintain safety, physical and mental health, school readiness, early school-adjustment, and social and academic functioning. The point is to move away from approaching such concerns as if they had no relationship to each other. Students have complex and overlapping learning, behavior, and emotional problems, and schools require a *unified and comprehensive system* to address the complexity.

Strategically, given limited resources, developing a comprehensive system involves deploying, redeploying, and weaving together all existing resources used for student and learning supports. The focus is on *braiding together all available school and community resources* to equitably strengthen interventions and fill critical gaps.

In reframing student and learning supports, a major emphasis is placed on developing a system to address all students and, as feasible, a wide range of barriers to learning and teaching. Minimally, student/learning supports must address barriers that are interfering with the learning of a majority of students. And, as we have stressed, while addressing barriers is essential, it is not a sufficient approach to enhancing equity of opportunity and enabling learning at school. Also essential is a potent approach for *reengaging students in classroom instruction*. All conceptualizations of a learning supports component must ensure not only that returning students are engaged in instruction but that disconnected students are reengaged.\*

Research and development has produced an intervention prototype for a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system to address barriers and re-engage students. The prototype has two facets:

- (a) a full continuum of integrated intervention subsystems that interweave school–community–home resources and
- (b) an organized and circumscribed set of classroom and schoolwide student and learning support domains.

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\*Adelman, H. S. & Taylor, L. (2021). *Restructuring California Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching in the COVID 19 Context and Beyond*. Stanford University: Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE).

<https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/restructuring-california-schools-address-barriers-learning-and-teaching-covid-19>



## Conceptualizing a Continuum of Interventions as a Set of Subsystems

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) emphasizes a schoolwide tiered model (e.g., a *multitier* system of supports) as a framework for preventing and addressing problems. The tiered model is defined as “a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students’ needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making.” MTSS and its pyramid depiction provide a good starting point for framing the nature and scope of student and learning supports.

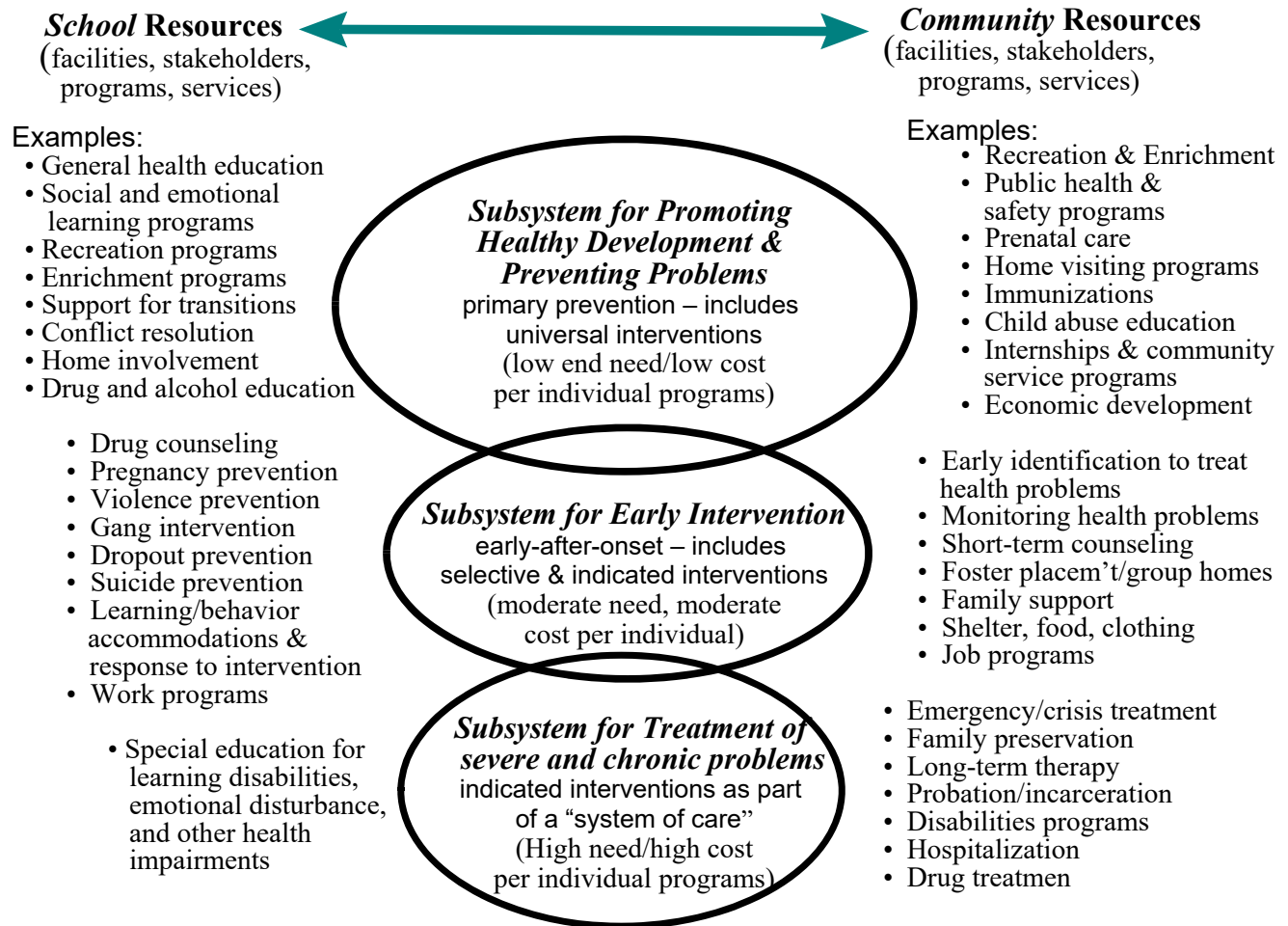
As widely conceived, however, the multi-tier model needs to be expanded to become an organizing framework for developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. Specific concerns about the MTSS framework are that (a) it mainly stresses levels of intensity, (b) it does not address the problem of systematically connecting interventions that fall into and across each level, and (c) it does not address the need to connect school and community interventions. As a result, most adoptions of MTSS in school improvement plans do little to guide better directions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Emphasis on the tiered model is a carryover from previous federal policy guidelines related to Response to Intervention and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. The result of these guidelines over the last few years is that schools increasingly are framing student and learning supports in terms of tiers or levels. As currently conceived, however, the multi-tier model is an insufficient organizing framework for developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Few will argue against conceiving a continuum of intervention as a *starting point* for framing the nature and scope of student and learning supports. Exhibit 2 portrays such a continuum in ways that take the multitier system several steps forward.

## Exhibit 2

### Framing a School-Community Intervention Continuum of Interconnected Subsystems



As illustrated, the intervention continuum consists of intertwined sets of subsystems. The intent at each level is to braid together a wide range of school and community (including home) resources. The subsystems focus on

- promoting whole child development and preventing problems
- addressing problems as soon as they arise
- providing for students who have severe and chronic problems.

The subsystems are illustrated as tapering from top to bottom. This is meant to convey that if the top subsystem is designed and implemented well, the number of students needing early intervention are reduced and fewer need “deep-end” interventions.

## Domains of Support

*A system of student and learning supports requires more than conceiving a continuum of intervention: it is necessary in addition to organize interventions cohesively into a circumscribed set of well-designed and delimited domains that reflect a school's daily efforts to provide student and learning supports in the classroom and schoolwide.*

Our analysis of typical “laundry lists” of district programs and services used to address barriers to learning and teaching led us to group them into six domains. In organizing the activity in this way, it becomes clearer what supports are needed in and out of the classroom to enable student learning. The six domains are:

- Embedding student and learning supports into regular classroom strategies to enable learning and teaching (e.g., working collaboratively with other teachers and student support staff to ensure instruction is personalized with an emphasis on enhancing intrinsic motivation and social-emotional development for all students, especially those experiencing mild to moderate learning and behavior problems; reengaging those who have become disengaged from instruction; providing learning accommodations and supports as necessary; using response to intervention in applying special assistance; addressing external barriers with a focus on prevention and early intervention);
- Supporting transitions, including assisting students and families as they negotiate the many hurdles related to reentry or initial entry into school, school and grade changes, daily transitions, program transitions, accessing special assistance, and so forth;
- Increasing home and school connections and engagement, such as addressing barriers to home involvement, helping those in the home enhance supports for their children, strengthening home and school communication, and increasing home support for the school;
- Responding to—and, where feasible, preventing—school and personal crises(e.g., by preparing for emergencies, implementing plans when an event occurs, countering the impact of traumatic events, providing followup assistance, implementing prevention strategies, and creating a caring and safe learning environment);
- Increasing community involvement and collaborative engagement (e.g., outreach to develop greater community connection and support from a wide range of resources—including enhanced use of volunteers and developing a school–community collaborative infrastructure);
- Facilitating student and family access to special assistance, first in the regular program and then, as needed, through referral for specialized services on and off campus.

As illustrated in Exhibit 3, combining the continuum and the six domains of supports provides an intervention framework that can guide development of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports.

Exhibit 3

## Intervention Framework for the Third Component

|                                                                                      |                                                  | Integrated Intervention Continuum (levels)                                       |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                      |                                                  | Subsystem for promoting healthy development & preventing problems                | Subsystem for early intervention                                                                                | Subsystem for treatment ("system of care")                                                                                |
| <b>Categories of Classroom &amp; Schoolwide Student and Learning Support Domains</b> | Classroom-based learning supports                | e.g., personalized instruction                                                   | e.g., special assistance in the classroom provided as soon as a problem arises                                  | e.g., referral for specialist assistance                                                                                  |
|                                                                                      | Supports for transitions                         | e.g., welcoming newcomers and providing social and/or academic supports          | e.g., when problems arise, using them as teachable moments to enhance social-emotional development and learning | e.g., personalized supports for students returning to school from incarceration                                           |
|                                                                                      | Home involvement & engagement                    | e.g., outreach to attract and facilitate participation of hard-to-reach families | e.g., engaging families in problem-solving                                                                      | e.g., support services to assist families with addressing basic survival needs                                            |
|                                                                                      | Community involvement & collaborative engagement | e.g., outreach to recruit volunteers                                             | e.g., developing community links and connections to fill critical intervention gaps                             | e.g., outreach to reengage disconnected students and families                                                             |
|                                                                                      | Crisis response & prevention                     | e.g., promoting positive relationships                                           | e.g., immediate response with physical and psychological first aid                                              | e.g., referral for follow-up counseling                                                                                   |
|                                                                                      | Student & family special assistance              | e.g., enhancing coping and problem-solving capability                            | e.g., providing consultation, triage, and referrals                                                             | e.g., ongoing management of care related to specialized services                                                          |
|                                                                                      |                                                  | <b>Accommodations for differences &amp; disabilities</b>                         |                                                                                                                 | <b>Specialized assistance &amp; other intensified interventions (e.g., special education, school-based interventions)</b> |

**Note:** The above matrix provides a guide for organizing and evaluating a system of student and learning supports and is a tool for mapping existing interventions, clarifying which are evidence-based, identifying critical intervention gaps, and analyzing resource use with a view to redeploying resources to strengthen the system. As the examples illustrate, the framework can guide efforts to embed supports for compensatory and special education, English learners, psychosocial and mental health problems, use of specialized instructional support personnel, adoption of evidence-based interventions, integration of funding sources, and braiding in of community resources.

\*The specific examples inserted in the matrix are just illustrative of those schools already may have in place. For a fuller array of examples of student/learning supports that can be applied in classrooms and schoolwide, see the set of surveys available at

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf>

This intervention framework is designed as an essential facet of a school's accomplishing its instructional mission, not an added agenda to that mission.

The matrix provides a guide for organizing and evaluating a system of student and learning supports, and is a tool for mapping existing interventions, clarifying which are evidence based, identifying critical intervention gaps, and analyzing resource use with a view to redeploying resources to strengthen the system.

As the examples illustrate, the framework can guide efforts to embed supports for compensatory and special education, English learning, psychosocial and mental health problems, use of specialized instructional support personnel, adoption of evidence-based interventions, integration of funding sources, and braiding in of community resources. The specific examples in the matrix are illustrative of those that schools already may have in place.

Using the framework to map and analyze resources provides a picture of system strengths and gaps. Priorities for filling gaps can then be included in strategic plans for system improvement; outreach to bring in community resources can be keyed to filling critical gaps and strengthening the system.

Clearly, the intervention domains can be conceived in other ways. The points for emphasis here are that the many activities that schools pursue along the intervention continuum can and need to be further organized.

For an aid in mapping and analyzing resources, see

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/tool%20mapping%20current%20status.pdf>

## **Part I Concluding Comments**

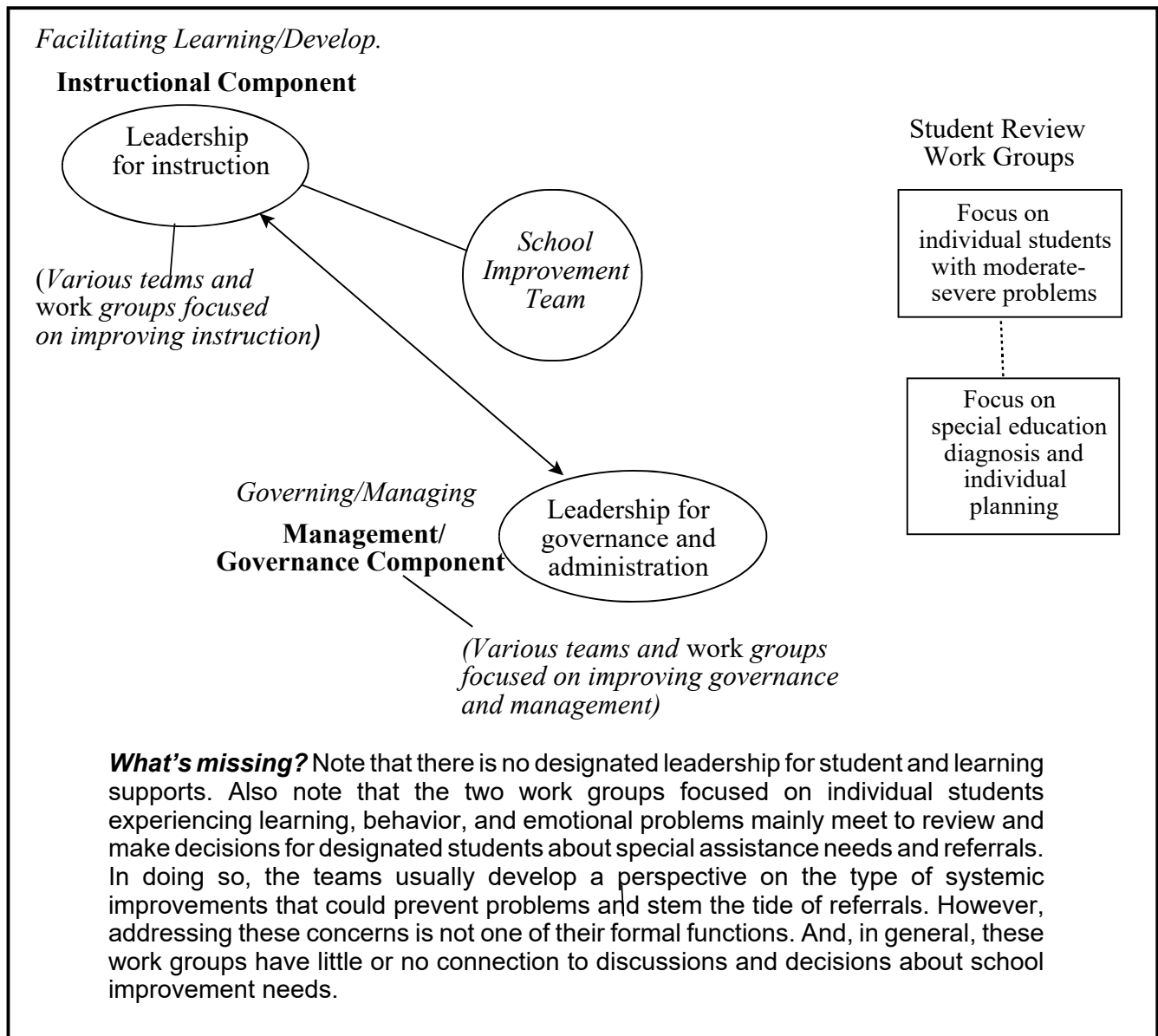
In sum, schools need to end the marginalization of student/learning supports. To this end, school improvement policy and practice must move from a two to a three component approach. Districts and their schools must establish a system that coalesces ad hoc and piecemeal policies and practices. The prototype shared here involves unifying and developing a comprehensive and equitable intervention system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching as well as for reengaging disconnected students. Such a prototype can end the fragmentation of student and learning supports and related system disorganization and provides a foundation for weaving together whatever resources a school has with whatever a community is doing to confront barriers to learning and teaching.

A unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports as a primary school improvement component focuses on whole child, whole school, and whole community (including fostering safe schools and the emergence of a positive school climate). Properly implemented, the component increases the likelihood that schooling will be experienced as a welcoming, supportive experience that accommodates diversity, prevents problems, enhances youngsters' strengths, and is committed to assuring equity of opportunity for all students to succeed.

## Part II:

### ***Reworking Operational Infrastructure for Student/Learning Supports***

**B**ecause student and learning supports are so-marginalized, it is not surprising that the current operational infrastructure at schools reflects this state of affairs. It tends to look like this:



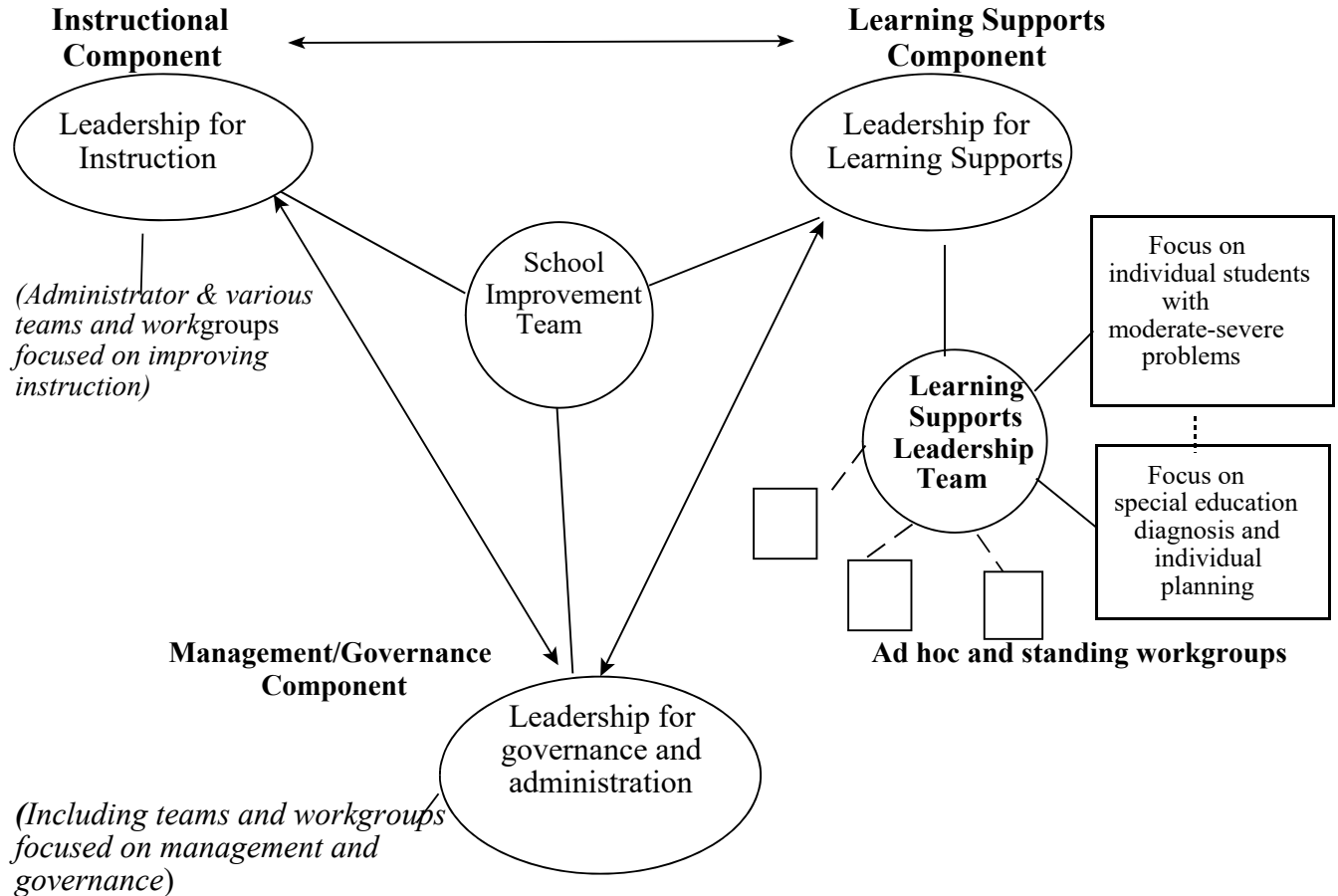
### **Rethinking the School's Operational Infrastructure**

Exhibit 4 illustrates a school level operational infrastructure that fully emphasizes and integrates student/learning supports. This prototype was designed to ensure the type of interconnected leadership and workgroups necessary for daily operation and ongoing development of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students.

## Exhibit 4

### Prototype for an Integrated Operational Infrastructure at the School Level

(This operational infrastructure should be paralleled at the district level, see [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/resource\\_oriented\\_teams.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf).)



Note: Each of the three primary and essential components for school improvement requires

- administrative leadership and other advocates/champions with responsibility and accountability for ensuring the vision for the component is not lost,
- a leadership team to work with the administrative lead on system development,
- standing workgroups with designated ongoing functions and occasional ad hoc workgroups to accomplish specific short-term tasks.

To ensure coordination and cohesion, the leaders for the instructional and learning supports components are full members of the management/governance component, and if a special team is assigned to work on school improvement, the leaders for all three components are on that team.

For examples of a job description for an administrative leader for learning supports, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkitb4.htm>



To be more specific: Establishing an administrative lead and a system development leadership team (e.g., a *Learning Supports Leadership Team*) for the learning supports component fills a fundamental infrastructure gap. It ensures essential leadership for all three components. And it assigns each component with responsibility and accountability for improving and fully weaving together a *whole* school and *whole* student approach to facilitate the learning and well-being for all students.

**At the school level:** The administrative lead and the leadership team meet weekly to guide and monitor daily implementation and ongoing component development. The initial focus is on mapping and analyzing all resources and related budget allocations for student and learning supports.

*Which resources?* Student support personnel (e.g., school psychologists, counselors, social workers, nurses; compensatory and special education staff); specialized services; special initiatives; grants; programs for afterschool, wellness, dropout prevention, attendance, drug abuse prevention, violence prevention, pregnancy prevention; parent/family/health centers; volunteer assistance; community resources linked to schools, and more. Allocated funds come from the general budget, compensatory and special education, and special projects (including those supported by extra-mural sources).

*Analyzing gaps and clarifying priorities for system development.* Using the intervention framework for a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports (review Exhibit 3), resource analyses identify critical gaps, redundancies, and which resources can be redeployed to develop the system. Then, priorities are set for moving forward.

**At the district level:** Essential at this level is administrative leadership and capacity building support that helps maximize component development at each school.

Note: The district leader for this work should be an active participant at key planning and decision-making tables; so the appointment should be at a high level, (e.g., an associate superintendent (see [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/resource\\_oriented\\_teams.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf)).

### ***How Can Small Schools Staff a Three Component Infrastructure?***

All schools are confronted with (1) improving instruction, (2) providing learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching, and (3) enhancing management and governance. The challenge in any school is to pursue all three functions in a cohesive, equitable, and effective manner. The added challenge in a small school is how to do it with so few personnel.

In small schools, the key is to modestly convert existing personnel roles and functions to establish the type of operational infrastructure illustrated in Exhibit 4. Usually, the principal and whoever else is part of a school leadership team will lead the way in improving instruction and management/governance. As constituted, however, such a team may not be prepared to advance development of the learning supports component. Thus, someone already on the leadership team must assume this role and be provided training to carry it out effectively.

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



## **Contrasting *Case-focused* Work Groups and a *System Development* Leadership Team**

Every school that wants to improve student and learning supports needs a mechanism to enhance how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. As noted, most schools have work groups that focus on individual student and related family problems (e.g., a student assistance team, an IEP team). These teams pursue functions such as referral, triage, and care monitoring or management. They are not, however, empowered or positioned to focus on systemic improvements that could prevent problems and stem the tide of referrals. Exhibit 5 contrasts their case-by-case focus, with the functions required for system development leadership.

Exhibit 5

### **Contrasting Case-oriented and System Development Functions**

#### ***A Case-oriented Work Group***

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

Sometimes called:

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

#### **EXAMPLES OF FUNCTIONS:**

>triage  
>referral  
>case monitoring/management  
>case progress review  
>case reassessment

#### ***A System Development Leadership Team***

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

Possibly called:

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

#### **EXAMPLES OF FUNCTIONS:**

>aggregating data across students and from teachers to analyze school needs  
>mapping resources at school & in the community  
>analyzing resources & formulating priorities for system development (in keeping with the most pressing needs at the school)  
>recommending how resources should be deployed and redeployed  
>coordinating and integrating school resources & connecting with community resources  
>planning and facilitating ways to strengthen and develop new programs and subsystems  
>developing strategies for enhancing resources  
>establishing workgroups as needed  
>social "marketing"

The starfish and bridge-fixing metaphors presented on page 8 help differentiate the two types of teams and the importance of both sets of functions. The starfish metaphor, of course, reflects all the important clinical efforts undertaken by staff individually and when they meet together to work on specific cases. The development leadership focus is captured by the bridge-fixing metaphor which stresses prevention and system improvement.

### ***Who's on a Learning Supports Leadership Team?\****

Where feasible, a Learning Supports Leadership Team is formed as an inclusive group of informed, willing, and able stakeholders. This might include the following:

- administrative lead for the component
- school psychologist
- counselor
- school nurse
- school social worker
- behavioral specialist
- special education teacher
- representatives of community agencies involved regularly with the school
- student representation (when appropriate and feasible)
- others who have a particular interest and ability to help with the functions

***\*Schools with few student/learning support staff will begin with only a few people.***

**Because schools have case-oriented work groups that group may be able to expand its focus to cover the functions of a system development leadership team. This can work if the members are trained and facilitated to divide their time and agenda effectively.**

### **Connecting a Complex or “Family” of Schools**

Once a Learning Supports Leadership Team is operational at a school, the organizational focus can turn to connecting it with other local schools, the district, and the community.

As the COVID-19 crisis underscored, schools in the same neighborhood experience and often share similar problems. Feeder schools commonly enroll students from the same family, and their children may all be experiencing problems at school. Some schools share student and learning support personnel. We think of schools with such natural affiliations as a potential family of schools.

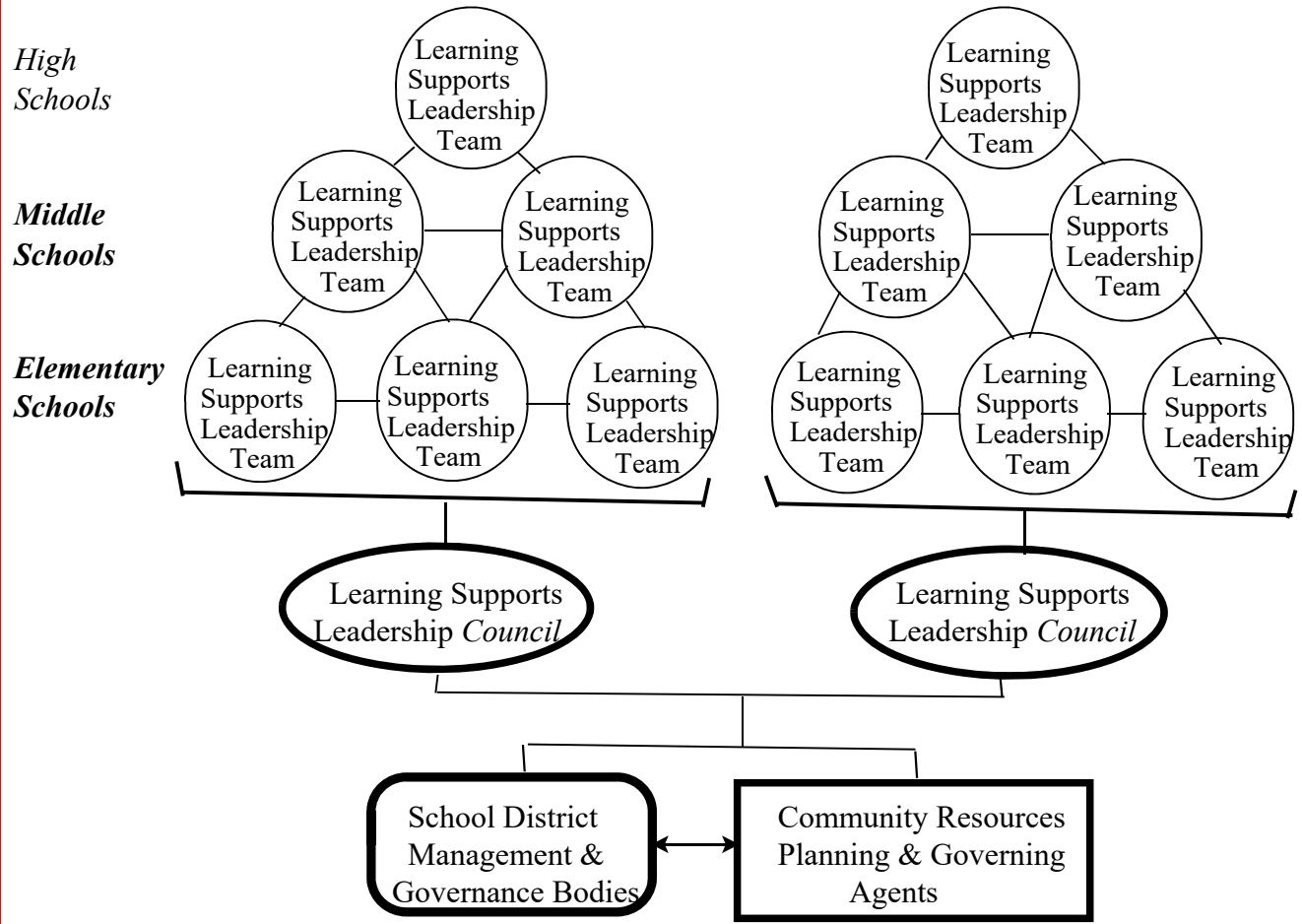
As illustrated in Exhibit 6, the mechanism for connecting schools is a multi-site body, or what in this prototype is designated as a Learning Supports Leadership *Council*. It brings together one-two representatives from each participating school's Learning Supports Leadership *Team*. The objectives are to

- identify and meet common needs with respect to common functions, concerns, and certain personnel development efforts
- create processes for communication, linkages, coordination, and collaboration among schools and with community resources (note: multi-school councils are especially attractive to community agencies lacking the time or personnel to link with each individual school)
- ensure cohesive and equitable deployment of student/learning support resources
- weave together human and financial resources from public and private sectors and encourage the pooling of resources to minimize redundancy, reduce costs, and achieve economies of scale

A multi-site council is particularly useful for unifying the efforts of high schools and their feeder middle and elementary schools. Think about supports for transitions. Think about shared crises. And think about working with families who have youngsters attending more than one level of schooling in the same cluster. (When such a family has several children in need of special attention, it is neither cost-effective nor good intervention for each school to work with the family separately.)

Exhibit 6

**Connecting Resources Across a Family of Schools, a District, and Community-Wide**



Natural starting points for councils include sharing each other's needs assessment, resource mapping, analyses, and recommendations about priorities for system improvement. Specific attention is paid to how each school can work together on common problems such as truancy, bullying, and community violence.

With the many challenges ahead, it is essential that families of schools work collaboratively, especially in providing student/learning supports.

## A Word About Substantive System Change

While reasonable adaptation of the learning supports component to fit localities is wise, care must be taken not to eliminate elements that are essential to an effective and sustainable transformation of how schools address barriers to learning and teaching as well as reengage disconnected students. An unfortunate tendency has been for some places to adopt the terminology and not the substance of the intended system transformation.

To counter this tendency, our research has identified five elements as essential in implementing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports.

- (1) **A three-component policy for schools.** As a basis for ensuring that the learning support component (Exhibit 1) is pursued with fidelity, policymakers must be certain it is translated into a design document and strategic plan. Such documents are critical guides for unifying student and learning supports as well as for developing them into a comprehensive and equitable system that provides supportive interventions in classrooms and schoolwide (in person and online). The design and strategic plans for the learning supports component must be fully integrated with the strategic plans for improving instruction and management at schools.

For examples of policy statements as well as design and strategic plans, see Sections A and B of the Center for Mental Health in Schools & Student/Learning Supports's System Change Toolkit ( <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm> ).

- (2) **A transformative intervention framework for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.** As illustrated in Exhibit 3, a unified, comprehensive, and equitable intervention framework combines (a) a continuum of school and community interventions (that goes well beyond what is typically presented by a simple MTSS framework) and (b) an organized set of domains of student and learning supports.
- (3) **An operational infrastructure dedicated to the learning supports component.** Such an infrastructure calls for administrative and team leadership in addition to workgroups that are responsible and accountable for the successful development and daily operation of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports (Exhibit 4). Examples of assigned functions include: aggregating data across students and from teachers to analyze school needs; mapping school and community resources; analyzing resources; identifying the most pressing program development needs at the school; coordinating and integrating school resources and connecting with community resources; establishing priorities for strengthening programs and developing new ones; planning and facilitating ways to fill intervention gaps; recommending how resources should be deployed and redeployed; developing strategies for enhancing resources; and social marketing.
- (4) **Continuous capacity building (especially professional development).** Capacity building plans and their implementation must include a specific focus on unifying and developing the system. Professional development must provide on-the-job opportunities and time 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 an emphasis on learning about how best to address barriers to learning and teaching.
- (5) **Monitoring for improvement and accountability.** Essential facets of the ongoing development of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports involve (a) continuously monitoring all factors that facilitate and hinder progress and then (b) ensuring actions are taken to deal with interfering factors and to enhance facilitation. As significant progress is made in developing the system, the monitoring expands to evaluate the impact on student outcomes with specific reference to direct indicators of the effectiveness of learning supports (e.g., increased attendance, reduced misbehavior, improved learning).

## **Part II Concluding Comment**

Transformation of student/learning supports clearly requires reworking the existing operational infrastructure at school and district levels. Currently, many do not have mechanisms focused specifically on how to prevent and ameliorate barriers to learning and teaching. Few have someone who has the formal responsibility, time, and competence to lead the way and who sits at the administrative decision making table. It is unlikely that a school can create, institutionalize, and foster ongoing renewal of a comprehensive approach to addressing barriers to learning without an administrator or team that has responsibility for mapping existing efforts, analyzing how well resources are being used to meet needs, and planning how to enhance such efforts.

The reality is that development and sustainability of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable learning supports component requires establishment of an administrative leader, a leadership team, and workgroups. This necessitates restructuring systemic mechanisms and personnel roles and functions at schools and central offices, and benefits from a school board committee that is dedicated to addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Together such an operational infrastructure enables schools to (a) arrive at wise decisions about resource allocation, (b) maximize systematic and integrated planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of enabling activity, (c) outreach to create formal working relationships with community resources to bring some to a school and establish special linkages with others to fill critical system gaps, and (d) upgrade and modernize interventions to reflect the best models and use of technology. Implied in all this is redeployment of existing resources as well as finding new ones.

***Also implied are new roles and functions for student/learning support staff.***

### Part III:

#### ***New Roles and Functions for Student/Learning Support Staff***

Besides changes called for by the growing knowledge-base in various disciplines and fields of practice, initiatives to improve and restructure education and weave in community resources have unleashed a trend toward less emphasis on intervention ownership and more attention to accomplishing desired outcomes through flexible and expanded roles and functions for staff. This trend recognizes underlying commonalities among a variety of school concerns and intervention strategies and has fostered interest in cross-disciplinary training and interprofessional education.\*

The changes outlined in Parts I and II of this report call for fundamental changes in how student/learning support function at schools, districts, regional, state, and federal levels. Clearly, such personnel will continue to be needed to provide targeted direct assistance and support. At the same time, their roles as leaders and facilitators of systemic reform must be expanded to ensure development and sustainability of the type of nonmarginalized system of student/learning supports described in Parts I and II of this report (e.g., a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system).

Efforts to capture key implications for new roles and functions are illustrated in the following frameworks. These frameworks were sketched out by an expert panel convened by one state's credentialing commission to provide guidelines for revision of the state's standards for developing and evaluating pupil services personnel credential programs. *Clearly, all this has major implications for changing professional preparation and credentialing.*

**Framework 1** – *Areas of function, levels of professional development, and nature & scope of competencies.* The first framework outlines three basic dimensions that can guide development of programs to prepare pupil personnel professionals. As illustrated on the next page, the following four major areas of function are conceived.

- (1) direct interventions with students and families
- (2) interventions to enhance systems within schools
- (3) interventions to enhance *school-community linkages & partnerships*
- (4) supervision/administration

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\*Lawson, H., & Hooper-Briar, K. (1994). *Expanding Partnerships: Involving Colleges and Universities in Interprofessional Collaboration and Service Integration*. Oxford, OH: The Danforth Foundation.

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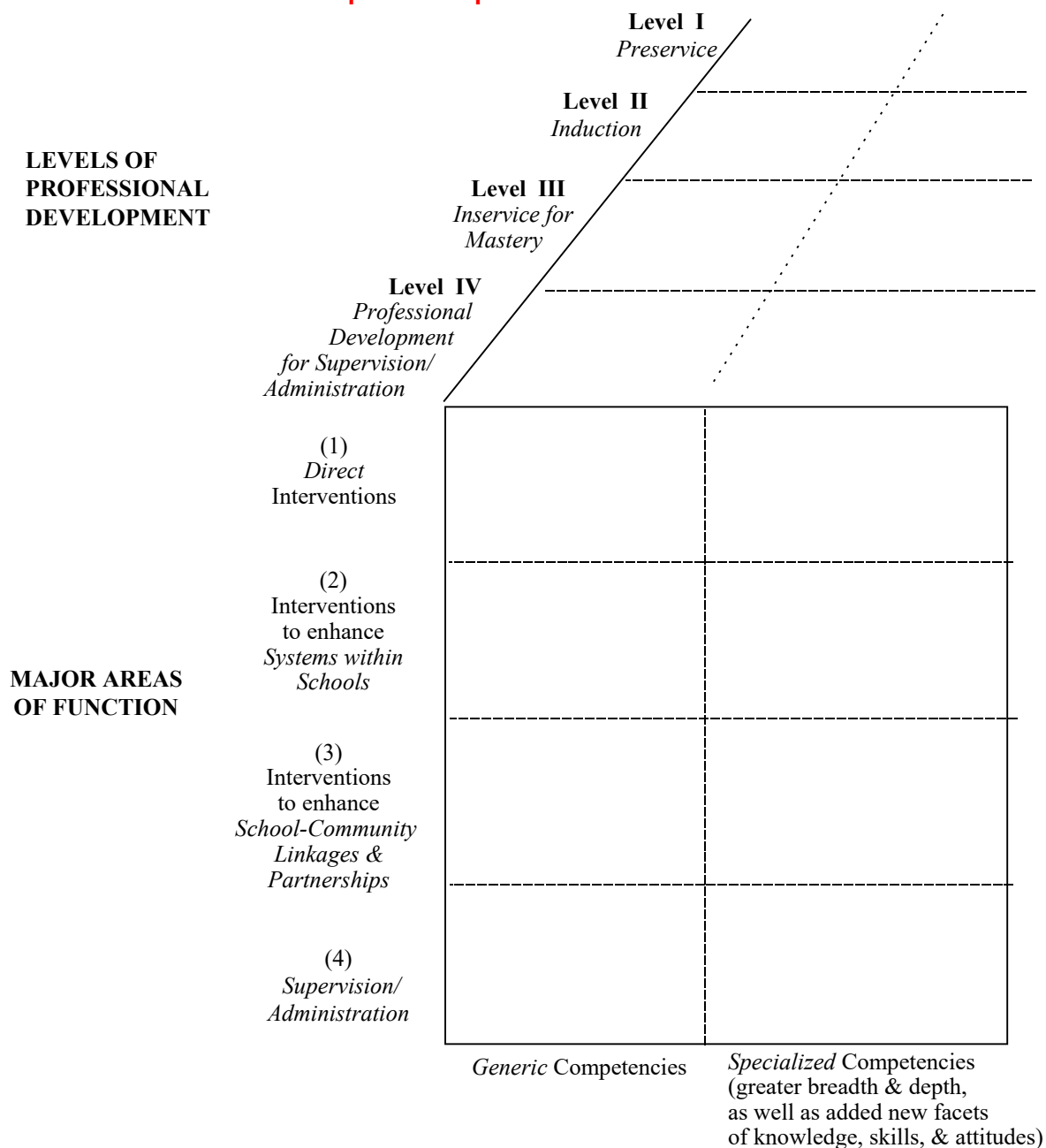
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Within each of these areas are sets of generic and specialized competencies. The many competencies are learned at various levels of professional development. There is a need to develop criteria with respect to each of these areas. (See examples in the exhibit following the framework.) Of course, the number of criteria and the standards used to judge performance should vary with the specific job assignment and level of professional development.

Although some new knowledge, skills, and attitudes are learned, *specialized* competence is seen as emerging primarily from increasing one's breadth and depth related to generic competencies. Such specialized learning, of course, is shaped by one's field of specialization (e.g., school counselor, psychologist, social worker), as well as by prevailing views of job demands (e.g., who the primary clientele are likely to be, the specific types of tasks one will likely perform, the settings in which one will likely serve).

Note that most competencies for supervision/administration are left for development at Level IV. Also note that cross-cutting all dimensions are foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to areas such as (a) human growth, development, and learning, (b) interpersonal/group relationships, dynamics, and problem solving, (c) cultural competence, (d) group and individual differences, (e) intervention theory, (f) legal, ethical, and professional concerns, (g) applications of advanced technology.

**Framework 1. Areas of Function, Levels of Professional Development, and Nature & Scope of Competencies**



**Notes:**

Cross-cutting all dimensions are foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to such topics as (a) human growth, development, and learning, (b) interpersonal/group relationships, dynamics and problem solving, (c) cultural competence, (d) group and individual differences, (e) intervention theory, (f) legal, ethical, and professional concerns, and (g) applications of advanced technology.

- (a) *Direct interventions* = implementing one-to-one, group, or classroom programs and services
- (b) *Interventions to enhance systems within schools* = coordination, development, & leadership related to programs, services, resources, and systems
- (c) *Interventions to enhance school-community linkages & partnerships* = connecting with community resources
- (d) *Supervision/Administration* = responsibility for training pupil personnel and directing pupil personnel services and programs



## **Exhibit: Examples of Generic Criteria for Staff Performance in Each Area of Function**

### **(1) Direct interventions with students and families**

Student support – demonstrates the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate programs and services that equitably address barriers to learning and promote healthy development among a diverse range of students (e.g., developmental and motivational assessments of students, regular and specialized assistance for students in and outside the classroom, prereferral interventions, universal and targeted group interventions, safe and caring school interventions; academic and personal counseling; support for transitions)

Family assistance – demonstrates the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate programs and services for students' families whenever necessary to enhance student support (e.g., providing information, referrals, and support for referral follow-through; instruction; counseling; home involvement)

### **(2) Interventions to enhance *systems within schools***

Coordination and integration of programs/services/systems – demonstrates the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate *mechanisms* for collaborating with colleagues to ensure activities are carried out in the most equitable and cost-effective manner consistent with legal and ethical standards for practice (examples of mechanisms include case-oriented teams; resource-oriented teams; consultation, coaching, and mentoring mechanisms; triage, referral, and care monitoring systems; crisis teams)

Development of program/service/systems – demonstrates the ability to enhance development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of interventions for equitably addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development among a diverse range of students and their families (e.g., collaborates in improving existing interventions; collaborates to develop ways to fill gaps related to needed prevention programs, early-after-onset interventions, and assistance for students with severe and/or chronic problems; incorporates an understanding of legal and ethical standards for practice)

### **(3) Interventions to enhance *school-community linkages & partnerships***

Coordination and integration of school-community resources/systems – demonstrates the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate *mechanisms* for collaborating with community entities to weave together school and community resources and systems to enhance current activity and enhance development of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of interventions for equitably addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development

### **(4) Supervision/administration**

Supervision of professionals-in-training and induction of new staff -- demonstrates the ability to coach, mentor, and supervise professionals-in-training and newly hired pupil services personnel both with respect to generic and speciality functions

Administration of pupil services -- demonstrates the ability to design, manage, and build capacity of personnel and programs with respect to specialized pupil services activities and generic systemic approaches to equitably addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development

Administrative leadership in the district -- demonstrates the ability to participate effectively in District decision making to advance an equitable and cost-effective role for pupil services personnel in addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development

In addition to the above, each field (e.g., school psychology, counseling, social work) will want to add several specialized competencies.

**Framework 2** – *Levels of competence and professional development and possible types of certification.* The second framework stresses the need to articulate different levels of competence and clarify the level of professional development at which such competence is attained. It also highlights types of certification that might be attached to the different levels of competence and professional development.

Key outcome criteria for designing preservice programs (including internship) are conceived as developing at least the minimal level of competence necessary to qualify for initial employment. The appropriate certification at this level is described as a preliminary credential.

Criteria for professional development at Level II is defined as the level of competence necessary to qualify as a proficient school practitioner. This competence can be developed through on-the-job inservice programs designed to "Induct" new professionals into their roles and functions. Such an induction involves providing support in the form of formal orientation to settings and daily work activity, personalized mentoring for the first year on-the-job, and an inservice curriculum designed specifically to enhance proficient practice. At the end of one school year's employment, based on supervisor verification of proficient practice, a "clear credential" could be issued.

**Framework 2.**

**Levels of Competence and Professional Development and Possible Types of Certification**

| O<br>N<br>G<br>O<br>I<br>N<br>G<br>D<br>E<br>V<br>E<br>L<br>O<br>P<br>M<br>E<br>N<br>T<br>O<br>F<br>P<br>R<br>O<br>F<br>E<br>S<br>S<br>I<br>O<br>N<br>A<br>L | LEVELS OF COMPETENCE                                                    | LEVELS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT                                                                                                                                       | POSSIBLE TYPES OF CERTIFICATION                           |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------|
|                                                                                                                                                              | Competencies to qualify as a <i>supervisor/administrator</i>            | <b>Level IV</b><br>Professional Development for Supervision/Admin.                                                                                                       | Supervisory/Administrative (recommended but not required) | R      |
|                                                                                                                                                              | Competencies to qualify as a <i>master practitioner</i>                 | <b>Level III</b><br>Inservice for Mastery                                                                                                                                | Master Practitioner (recommended, but not required)       | N<br>E |
|                                                                                                                                                              | Competencies to qualify as a <i>proficient school practitioner</i>      | <b>Level II</b><br>Inservice for Induction<br>(program to provide support for beginning professionals – orientations, mentoring, and inservice professional development) | Clear Credential                                          | W<br>A |
|                                                                                                                                                              | Minimal Competencies necessary to qualify for <i>initial employment</i> | <b>Level I</b><br>Preservice Education – including practicum and internship                                                                                              | Preliminary Credential                                    | L      |

Note:

Cross-cutting all levels of competence are foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to such topics as (a) human growth, development, and learning, (b) interpersonal/group relationships, dynamics, and problem solving, (c) cultural competence, (d) group and individual differences, (e) intervention theory, (f) legal, ethical, and professional concerns, and (g) applications of advanced technology.

Both with respect to ongoing professional development and career ladder opportunities, availability of appropriate on-the-job inservice and academic programs offered by institutions for higher education is essential. These should be designed to allow professionals to qualify as master practitioners and, if they desire, as supervisors/administrators. At the same time, it is important to appreciate that few school districts are ready to accept formal certification at these levels as a requisite for hiring and developing salary scales. Thus, such certification is seen as something to be recommended – not required.

Because of the many controversies associated with renewal of certification, the best solution may be to tie renewal to participation in formal on-the-job inservice programs. This presupposes that such inservice will be designed to enhance relevant competencies for pupil service personnel.

**Framework 3 – Generating generic and specialized competencies.** To guide professional program design and evaluation and for purposes of evaluating candidates for certification, lists of competencies need to be generated. As already stressed, such competencies can be grouped with respect to cross-cutting foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes and four general areas of function. Thus, *the foundational step* in listing competencies involves delineating what is to be learned related to each cross-cutting area.

As noted with respect to the four general areas of professional functions, the necessary competencies in each of these areas can be divided into those common to all pupil services personnel ("generics"), those common to more than one specialty but not shared by all (specialty overlaps), and specialized competencies unique to one specialty.

Logically the nature and scope of competencies listed for each level of professional development varies. The process in generating competencies at each level should be done in steps. At Level 1, this involves delineating cross-cutting foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes and then generating those generics and specialized competencies that provide at least the minimal level of competence necessary to qualify for initial employment. At subsequent levels of professional development and with respect to each area of function, the first step involves delineating generics and the second step encompasses delineating specialized competencies for each specialization. In generating specialized competencies for school psychologists, and social workers, specialty overlaps and perhaps previously unidentified generics are likely to emerge.

***As the prototypes presented in Parts I and II illustrate, discussions of essential competencies are shaped by how a student/learning supports system is conceived and what is involved in its development and sustainability.***

### **About Reviewing Pupil Personnel Programs**

Finally, a few words about developing standards for the operation of credentialing programs.

After the new set of competencies are delineated, there will be greater clarity about how to revise standards with respect to (1) institutional resources and coordination and (2) admission and candidate services.

In revising these particular sets of standards, the first concern is to clarify the necessary program *functions* for developing intended competencies at a specified level of professional development.

The next concern is to delineate the types of *structures*, specific *mechanisms*, and degree of *resources* essential for ensuring that program functions are well planned, implemented, and evaluated.

With specific respect to admission and candidate services, the ongoing concerns are to ensure that diversity and equity are appropriately addressed.

In clarifying expectations for various levels of institutional involvement, current standards should be extended. That is, in addition to evaluating the overall resources of the institution, reviews should clarify how resources are deployed at the level of (a) a school/department of education and (b) areas and the specific professional preparation programs within the school/department.

It also is essential to clarify the degree of coherence between the credential preparation program's curriculum and practicum and internship placements.

### Framework 3.

#### Steps for Generating Generic and Specialized Competencies

**Foundational Step:** Delineate **cross-cutting foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes** (e.g., related to topics such as (a) human growth, development, and learning, (b) interpersonal/group relationships, dynamics, and problem solving, (c) cultural competence, (d) group and individual differences, (e) intervention theory, (f) legal, ethical, and professional concerns, and (g) applications of advanced technology)

| <b>AREAS OF FUNCTION</b>                                 |          | <b>DESIGNATE THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF COMPETENCIES FOR ALL FOUR LEVELS</b> |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>First Step:</b> Delineate <i>generic</i> competencies |          |                                                                           |  |
| (1)                                                      | 1) _____ |                                                                           |  |
| Direct                                                   | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
| Interventions                                            | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
|                                                          | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
|                                                          | x) _____ |                                                                           |  |
| -----                                                    |          |                                                                           |  |
| (2)                                                      | 1) _____ |                                                                           |  |
| Interventions                                            | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
| to Enhance                                               | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
| Systems                                                  | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
| within                                                   | x) _____ |                                                                           |  |
| Schools                                                  |          |                                                                           |  |
| -----                                                    |          |                                                                           |  |
| (3)                                                      | 1) _____ |                                                                           |  |
| Interventions                                            | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
| to Enhance                                               | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
| School-                                                  | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
| Community                                                | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
| Linkages &                                               | x) _____ |                                                                           |  |
| Partnerships                                             |          |                                                                           |  |
| -----                                                    |          |                                                                           |  |
| (4)                                                      | 1) _____ |                                                                           |  |
| Supervision/                                             | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
| Administration                                           | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
|                                                          | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
|                                                          | > _____  |                                                                           |  |
|                                                          | x) _____ |                                                                           |  |

**Second Step:** Separately delineate *specialized* competencies in each of the above areas of function for

**School Counselor      School Psychologist      School Social Worker**  
(greater breadth & depth, *as well as* added new facets of knowledge, skills, & attitudes)

Note: The essential competencies for carrying out child welfare and attendance functions are seen as readily embedded in both the school counselor and school social work specialization and perhaps eventually in the school psychology specialization.

## Concluding Comments

The COVID-19 pandemic and growing concerns about social justice mark a turning point for how schools, families, and communities address student and learning supports. Those adopting the prevailing MTSS framework have made a start, as have the initiatives for community schools, integrated student supports, and school-based health centers. Given the growing challenges, however, schools need to develop and implement a more transformative and comprehensive approach. The prototype for addressing barriers to teaching and learning highlighted in this report is such an approach.

Ongoing forces for transforming schools provide both a challenge and an opportunity for all who work at schools and education agencies. Policy and practice changes carry with them calls for improving how problems are prevented and ameliorated. This is a critical time for student/learning support personnel to assume a broader set of roles and functions – providing services *and much more*.

Although some current roles and functions will continue, many will disappear, and others will emerge. Opportunities will arise for student/learning support personnel not only to provide direct assistance, but to play increasing roles as advocates, catalysts, brokers, and facilitators of school improvements. Hopefully, they can move beyond consulting with teachers to teaming with them as collaborators (in person and online) for part of each day. Improving student and learning supports in classrooms requires such collaboration, and is essential to ending the myths and expectations that teachers can do it all and can do it alone.

We know from experience how hard it is to achieve the type of policy and practice changes we have outlined in this report. We know there are many barriers to retooling what ESSA labels as specialized instructional support personnel (e.g., student and learning support personnel—psychologists, counselors, social workers, nurses, Title I staff, special educators, dropout/graduation support staff, etc.). Adopting new roles and functions involves the difficulty of reworking of operational and organizational infrastructures and more.

Given the scale of public education, many in the field will be daunted by the complications inherent in the degree of transformative system change proposed in this report. Certainly, the challenges are daunting. But maintaining the status quo is untenable, and just doing more tinkering will not meet the need. It is time to end the marginalized status of efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching and ensure that there is full participation of student/learning supports on school and district governance, planning, and evaluation bodies.

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\*The Center for Mental Health in Schools was renamed the Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports in 2017; all documents from the Center can be accessed from the Center's website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>.



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Note: The Center has many resources relevant for Professional Development. See the menu of Quick Find topics at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm> .