

# Addressing Barriers

# to Learning

New ways to think . . .

Better ways to link

Volume 3, Number 3

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*Prevailing policy marginalizes efforts to address barriers to learning, development, and teaching. If we want achievement test scores to rise, we must not only improve instruction, we must enable learning by effectively addressing barriers. This, of course, requires elevating efforts to address barriers to a much higher level of focus in policy and practice.*

## OPEN LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, RICHARD RILEY

Editors note: On June 2nd, 1998, Secretary Riley issued an invitation to all concerned to submit written comments regarding the upcoming reauthorization of programs under the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. (ESEA has been described as the cornerstone of federal aid to schools. It provides about \$12 billion a year in assistance to states, districts, and schools to enable students to benefit from their schooling and meet challenging standards.) We encourage everyone to accept Secretary Riley's invitation. The following is our response to his call for comments.

Dear Secretary Riley:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. In doing so, we have chosen not to use the framework of "Issues for Public Comment" published in the *Federal Register*. We avoid that framework because it embodies the fundamental flaw that results in the ESEA and the Educate America Act playing out poorly at too many school sites.

We understand the emphasis on high standards, high expectations, assessment, accountability, and no

excuses. We applaud the calls for consolidated planning, school-wide approaches, flexibility, and cohesive, integrated practices. Initially, we were also hopeful that Title XI would be used as a mechanism to stimulate reform and restructuring of how schools use their resources to address barriers to student learning.

The fundamental fact remains, however, that prevailing policy fails to deal adequately with a critical reality confronting most schools presently receiving federal assistance. The reality is that the best instructional reforms cannot produce desired outcomes for a large number of students as long as schools do not have *comprehensive* approaches for addressing external and internal barriers to learning, development, and teaching. And, it is evident that schools are not developing such approaches because current policy *marginalizes* the focus on addressing barriers.

The litany of barriers to student learning is all too familiar to anyone who works in schools. Besides violence, drugs, and language and cultural considerations, student and home involvement in schooling is hindered by frequent school changes and the many other problems confronting recent immigrants and families living in poverty. When one analyzes how schools address these matters, it becomes painfully clear that short shrift is given to such interfering factors. Quite relatedly, the same disregard is found when one looks at the educational and research products of institutions of higher education.

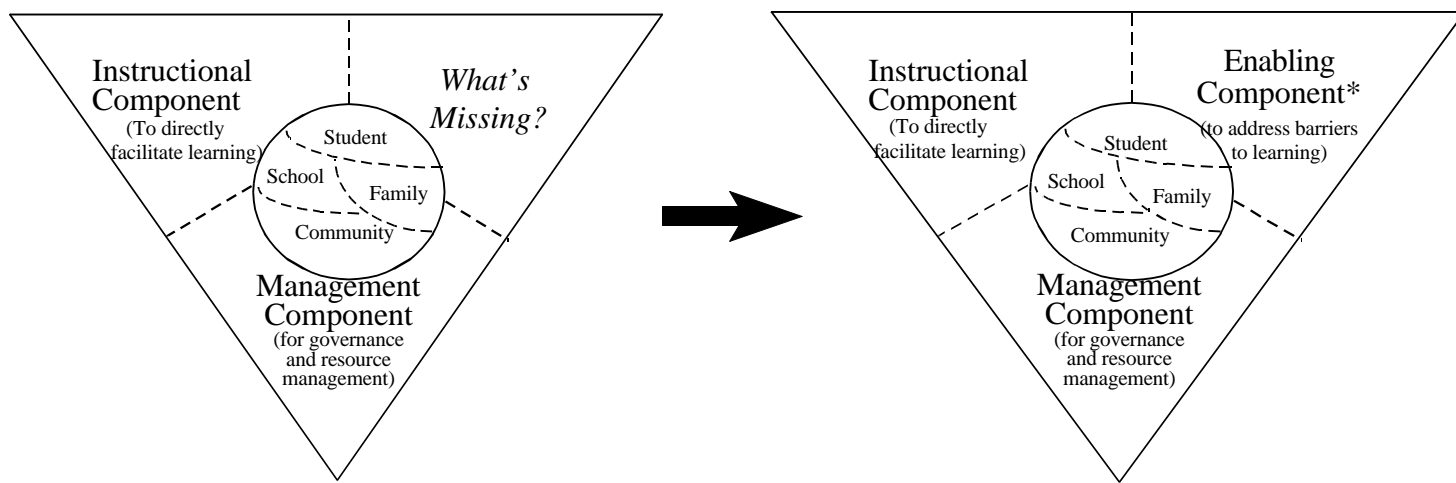
What causes this lamentable state of affairs? In great part, it stems from legislation and related guidelines that pay relatively little attention to fostering systemic reforms aimed at addressing barriers to teaching and learning. The absence of an adequate policy focus on addressing such barriers has resulted in almost no *fundamental restructuring* of existing school resources that are allocated for these purposes. As Figure 1 portrays, current policy overrelies on a two rather than a three component model for improving student learning and performance. The results speak for themselves. It is time for a basic policy shift.

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### Contents

- *Need some help?* See page 3.
- See page 4 for some lessons learned about home involvement in schooling.
- Pages 10-12 offers a self-study survey instrument for schools to improve efforts to involve those in the home.

Figure 1. Moving from a two to a three component model for reform and restructuring



\*The third component (an enabling component) is established in policy and practice as primary and essential and is developed into a comprehensive approach by weaving together school and community resources.

As illustrated above, policy must move from the prevailing, inadequate two component model to a three component framework that guides reforms so that *all* young people *truly* have the opportunity to learn at school. The three component model calls for elevating efforts to address barriers to learning, development, and teaching to a high level of policy focus. All three components must be treated as fundamental and essential facets of educational reform. There's no way around it. Better achievement requires more than good instruction and well-managed schools. Also essential is an enabling component that comprehensively addresses barriers. Recognition of the third component underscores the need to develop a *comprehensive* policy framework to guide schools in addressing barriers to learning.

The idea of an enabling component provides a useful concept for combating marginalization. It can also help address fragmentation by providing a unifying term that encompasses the disparate approaches used in dealing with psychosocial concerns. In this respect, it should be noted that the concept encompasses models calling for "integrated services" and full-service schools and *goes well beyond them* by fully merging with school reform. While some service-dominated approaches describe themselves as comprehensive, services alone cannot

enable learning in the ways that are *essential* to the success of school reform.

Emergence of a cohesive enabling component requires policy reform and operational restructuring that allow for weaving together what is available at a school, expanding this through integrating school, community, and home resources, and enhancing access to community resources by linking as many as feasible to programs at the school. This involves extensive restructuring of school-owned enabling activity, such as pupil services and special and compensatory education programs, and doing so in ways that truly integrate the enabling, instructional, and management components. In the process, mechanisms must be developed to coordinate and eventually integrate school-owned enabling activity and school and community-owned resources. These include assets in the home and in the business and faith communities, as well as all available resources for enrichment and recreation.

The usefulness of the concept of an enabling component as a broad unifying focal point for policy is evidenced in its adoption by the California Department of Education (whose version is called *Learning Supports*) and by one of the New American School's design teams.

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## Center News



Information and technical Assistance always are close at hand. Contact us at:

E-mail: **smhp@ucla.edu** Phone: **(310) 825-3634**  
 Write: Center for Mental Health in Schools  
 Department of Psychology, UCLA  
 Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

And don't forget about our website:

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

If your not receiving our monthly electronic news (ENEWS), just send an E-mail request to:

**maiser@bulletin.psych.ucla.edu**  
 leave the subject line blank, and in the body of  
 the message type: **subscribe mentalhealth**

Also, if you want to submit comments and information for us to circulate, note them on the form inserted in this newsletter or contact us directly by mail, phone, or E-mail.

### School Nurses: Pursuing Mental Health Skills

Based on our Center's continuing education modules (*Mental Health in Schools: New Roles for School Nurses*), the Center has prepared a guide on *Psychosocial Screening* for the National Association of School Nurses' (NASN). This is part of their series on *Nursing Assessment of School Age Youth*. Contact us directly for the 3 continuing education modules or download them from our website. For the guide on *Psychosocial Screening*, contact: the NASN at: P.O. Box 1300, Scarborough ME 04074. Ph: 207/883-2117; Fax: 207/883-2683; E-mail: NASN@aol.com

We also are continuing to work with NASN to train a cadre of school nurses as leaders and trainers for NASN's efforts with respect to mental health in schools. Anyone interested in NASN's plans related to school nurse's role in mental health should contact the association's new Executive Director, Judy Robertson.

### From the Center's Clearinghouse

**New:** *A Sampler on School-Based Health Centers*. This resource offers a brief overview of the nature and status of SBHCs and provides info about some basic books, articles, guides, reports, and agency and internet supports.

**Revised and Updated:** Our introductory packet on *Financial Strategies to Aid in Addressing Barriers to Learning*. (Can be ordered or downloaded from our website.)

**Also now available by downloading from our website are resources on:**

- \* *Confidentiality and Informed Consent*
- \* *Understanding and Minimizing Staff Burnout*
- \* *Addressing Barriers to Learning: A Set of Surveys to Map What a School Has and What It Needs*
- \* *Students and Psychotropic Medication: The School's Role*
- \* *School-Based Mutual Support Groups (For Parents, Staff, Older Students)*
- \* *Guiding Parents in Helping Children Learn*
- \* *Evaluation and Accountability*

**Related**

*to Mental Health in Schools*

See directions for downloading in the resource section of our website.

### Report from the Summit on the Maternal and Child Health Bureau's Initiative for Mental Health in Schools

The summit was held in Washington, D.C. in March, 1998. In attendance were representatives from each of the five infrastructure states, the directors of the two national centers, and interested national organizations. The report outlines the nature of this major initiative implemented by MCHB's Office of Adolescent Health in 1995 and describes each state project, explores key similarities and differences, and highlights implications for the future. Available on request from our center or download from our website.

Center Staff:

Howard Adelman, Co-Director  
 Linda Taylor, Co-Director  
 Perry Nelson, Coordinator  
 Judy Onghai, Asst. Coordinator  
 . . . and a host of graduate and undergraduate students

*Lack of money is  
 the root of all evil.*

George Bernard Shaw

## Lessons Learned

## Toward Improving Home Involvement in Schooling



Currently, all school districts are committed to some form of parent involvement. However, we have learned the hard way that the term means different things in different schools and among the various stakeholders at any school. There are two lessons that seem fundamental.

First, we find that most efforts to involve parents seem aimed at those who want and are able to show up at school. It's important to have activities for such parents. It's also important to remember that they represent the smallest percentage of parents at most schools. What about the rest? Especially those whose children are doing poorly at school. Ironically, efforts to involve families whose youngsters are doing poorly often result in parents who are even less motivated to become involved. Typically, a parent of such a youngster is called to school because of the child's problems and leaves with a sense of frustration, anger, and guilt. Not surprisingly, such a parent subsequently tries to avoid the school as much as feasible. If schools really want to involve such families, they must minimize "finger wagging" and move to offer something more than parent education classes.

A second basic lesson learned is that in many homes mothers or fathers are not the key to whether a youngster does well at school. Many youngsters do not even live with their parents. Besides those placed in foster care, it is common for children to live with grandparents, aunts, or older siblings. Moreover, even when a youngster is living with one or more parents, an older sibling may have the greatest influence over how seriously the individual takes school. Given these realities, we use the term home involvement and try to design involvement programs for whoever is the key influence in the home.

Home involvement is a basic area for enabling learning (see pages 8 and 10-12). Schools must develop programs to address the many barriers associated with the home and the many barriers in the way of home involvement. Unfortunately, as with other facets of enabling learning, limited finances often mean verbal commitments are not backed up with adequate resources. Meaningful home involvement requires on-site decision makers to commit fully. This means creating and maintaining effective mechanisms for program development and overcoming barriers related to home involvement.

There are many ways to think about an appropriate range of activities. We find it useful to differentiate whether the focus is on improving the functioning of individuals (students, parent/caretaker), systems (classroom, school, district), or both. And with respect to those individuals with the greatest impact on the youngster, we distinguish between efforts designed mainly to support the school's instructional mission and those intended primarily to provide family assistance (see figure).

Improve individual

\*meeting basic obligations to the functioning student/helping caretakers meet their own basic needs

\*communicating about matters essential to the student

\*making essential decisions about the student

\*supporting the student's *basic* learning and development at home

\*solving problems and providing support at home and at school re. the student's *special* needs

\*working for a classroom's/school's improvement

Improve system functioning

\*working for improvement of all schools

## A Few Resources

## Just out:

*From Parent Involvement to Parent Empowerment and Family Support -- A resource guide for school community leaders* -- Using the nationally-acclaimed RAINMAKER program as a centerpiece, this resource outlines a philosophy that calls for restructuring the way educators and families work together, defines roles for each, highlights parent-run Family Resource Centers, provides an overview of a step-by-step model of training for parents, covers matters related to funding, and much more. By Briar-Lawson, Lawson, Rooney, Hansen, White, Radina, & Herzog. Available from the Institute for Educational Renewal. Ph: 513/529-6926.

## Available from our Center:

An introductory packet on: *Parent and Home Involvement in Schools* -- Provides an overview of how home involvement is conceptualized and outlines current models and basic resources. Issues of special interest to underserved families are addressed

A technical aid packet on: *Guiding Parents in Helping Children Learn* -- Contains (1) a "booklet" to help nonprofessionals understand what is involved in helping children learn, (2) info about basic resources to draw on to learn more about helping parents and other nonprofessionals enhance children's learning, and (3) info on other resources parents can use.

(continued from page 2)

### Policies Focused on "Integrated Services" & "School-Linked Services" are Insufficient

Recent policies for improving how schools address barriers to learning mostly focus on concerns about fragmented approaches and how to link community services to schools. Efforts to counter fragmentation call for "integrated services" to reduce redundancy, waste, and lack of effectiveness. Special attention is given to the many piecemeal, categorically funded approaches, such as those created specifically to reduce substance abuse, violence, school dropouts, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and so forth. Efforts to foster "school-linked services" aim at co-locating community services at schools to increase student and family access to needed assistance. Ironically, such initiatives increase fragmentation at some school sites, and with the dearth of services available in poor communities, increased access benefits relatively few students and families.

*Clearly, the impact of current policy has been relatively minor.* By focusing primarily on the above matters, policy makers fail to deal with the overriding issue, namely that addressing barriers to learning remains a *marginalized* aspect of school policy and practice. As long as this is the case, reforms to reduce fragmentation and increase access are seriously hampered. More to the point, the desired impact on the learning and performance of large numbers of students will not be achieved.

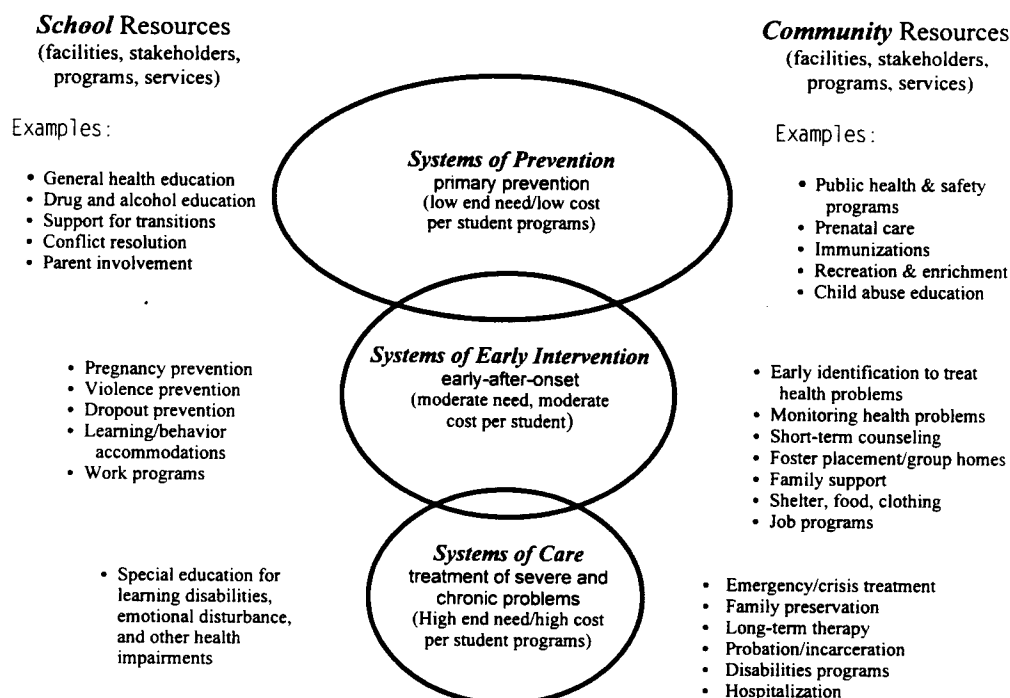
### Policy Must Foster a Full Continuum of Integrated Enabling Systems

Because enabling activity is so marginalized, schools devote relatively little serious attention to restructuring such activities and integrating them with school reforms. This neglect is seen in the lack of efforts to map, analyze, and rethink resource allocation related to addressing barriers; it is evident in the lack of attention given these matters in consolidated plans and program quality reviews; it is apparent in the token way these concerns are dealt with in inservice education agendas for administrative and line staff; and on and on.

As a result, schools continue to operate with virtually no comprehensive frameworks to guide thinking about *potent* programs for addressing barriers. Comprehensive frameworks are needed to guide development of a multifaceted continuum of intervention systems focused on individual, family, and environmental barriers. The continuum must include *systems of prevention*, *systems of early intervention* to address problems as soon after onset as feasible, and *systems of care* for those with chronic and severe problems (see Figure 2). A policy emphasis on developing such systems and implementing them seamlessly is the key not only to unifying fragmented activity, but to using all available resources in the most productive manner.

(cont. on page 6)

Figure 2. Interconnected systems for meeting the needs of all students.



## Policy Must Delineate Basic Areas for Developing School-Wide Approaches for Addressing Barriers to Learning

Developing comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approaches requires *more than* outreach to link with community resources (and certainly more than adopting a school-linked services model), *more than* coordinating school-owned services, *more than* coordinating school services with community services, and *more than* creating Family Resource Centers and Full Service Schools. None of these constitute school-wide approaches, and clearly, school-wide approaches are essential. Unfortunately, when it comes to addressing barriers to learning, schools have no guidelines delineating basic areas around which to develop school-wide approaches. Thus, it is not surprising that current reforms are not generating potent, multifaceted, integrated approaches.

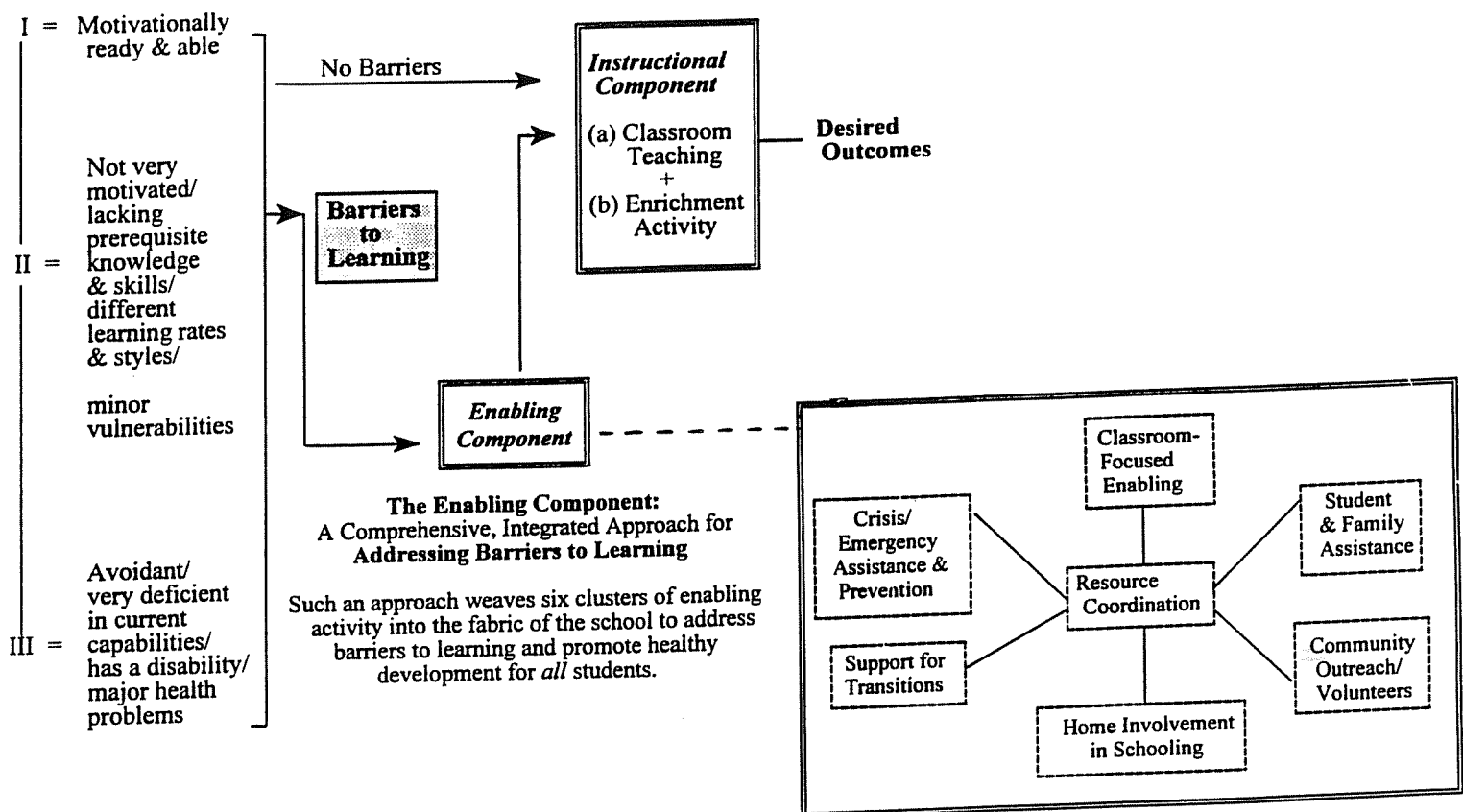
Addressing barriers is not a separate agenda from a school's instructional mission. Moreover, in policy, practice, and research, all categorical programs can be integrated into a comprehensive component for addressing barriers. Analyses indicate that schools

can build such an enabling component by developing programs in six basic areas (see Figure 3 and the Appendix on page 7). Work with school reform indicates that delineating these six areas for schools can foster comprehensive, integrated, school-wide approaches.

Viewed from the above perspective, the apparent logic of immediately tying accountability to rising achievement test scores amounts to a Catch 22 for many schools. The absence of policy for developing comprehensive and multifaceted approaches to address barriers to learning means that many schools do not have the range of programs that are essential prerequisites to raising test score averages. The reauthorization of ESEA and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act must address this dilemma by incorporating a three component view of school reform and restructuring.

Note: The *Federal Register* indicates that written comments should be sent to Judith Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Ave., SW, (Portals Building, Rm. 4000), Washington, DC 20202-6100

### Range of Learners (categorized in terms of their response to academic instruction)



## Appendix

### Six Interrelated Clusters of Enabling Activity

Operationalizing an enabling component requires formulating a delimited framework of basic programmatic areas and creating an infrastructure to restructure enabling activity. Based on extensive analyses of existing efforts to address barriers to learning, we group enabling activity into the following six interrelated areas (see Figure 3). A brief description of each is provided below.

A well-designed and supported *infrastructure* is needed to establish, maintain, and evolve the type of a comprehensive approach to addressing barriers to student learning outlined. Such an infrastructure includes mechanisms for coordinating among enabling activity, for enhancing resources by developing direct linkages between school and community programs, for moving toward increased integration of school and community resources, and for integrating the developmental/instructional, enabling, and management components.

(1) ***Classroom Focused Enabling.*** This area provides a fundamental example not only of how the enabling component overlaps the instructional component, but how it adds value to instructional reform. When a teacher has difficulty working with a youngster, the first step is to address the problem within the regular classroom and perhaps to involve the home to a greater extent. Thus, programmatic activity is introduced to enhance classroom-based efforts to enable learning. This is accomplished by increasing teachers' effectiveness in accounting for a wider range of individual differences, fostering a caring context for learning, and preventing and handling a wider range of problems when they arise. Such a focus is seen as essential to increasing the effectiveness of regular classroom instruction, supporting inclusionary policies, and reducing the need for specialized services.

Work in this area requires systematic programs to (a) personalize professional development of teachers and support staff, (b) develop the capabilities of paraeducators and other paid assistants and volunteers, (c) provide temporary out of class assistance for students, and (d) enhance resources. For example: Personalized help is provided to increase a teacher's array of strategies for accommodating, as well as teaching students to compensate for, differences, vulnerabilities, and disabilities. Teachers learn to target the activity of paid assistants, peer tutors, and volunteers to enhance social and academic support. (The class-

room curriculum already should encompass a focus on fostering socio-emotional and physical development; such a focus is seen as an essential element in preventing learning, behavior, emotional, and health problems.) As appropriate, support *in the classroom* is provided by resource and itinerant teachers and counselors. This involves restructuring and redesigning the roles, functions, and staff development of resource and itinerant teachers, counselors, and other pupil service personnel so they are able to work closely with teachers and students in the classroom and on regular activities. All this provides the teacher with the knowledge and skills to develop a classroom infrastructure that transforms a big classroom into a set of smaller ones.

(2) ***Student and Family Assistance.*** Student and family assistance should be reserved for the relatively few problems that cannot be handled without adding special interventions. In effect, this one area encompasses most of the services and related systems that are the focus of integrated service models.

The emphasis is on providing special services in a personalized way to assist with a broad-range of needs. To begin with, social, physical and mental health assistance available in the school and community are used. As community outreach brings in other resources, these are linked to and integrated with existing activity. Additional attention is paid to enhancing systems for triage, case and resource management, direct services for immediate needs, and referral for special services and special education resources and placements as appropriate. Ongoing efforts are made to expand and enhance resources. A valuable context for providing such services is a center facility (e.g., Family/Community/Health/Parent Resource Center).

A programmatic approach in this area requires systems and activities designed to (a) support classroom focused enabling -- with emphasis on reducing teachers' need to seek special programs and services, (b) provide all stakeholders with information clarifying available assistance and how to access help, (c) facilitate requests for assistance and evaluate such requests (including strategies designed to reduce the need for special intervention), (d) handle referrals, (e) provide direct service, (f) implement effective case and resource management, and (g) interface with community outreach to assimilate additional resources into current service delivery. As major outcomes, the intent is to ensure that special assistance is provided when necessary and appropriate and that such assistance is effective.

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(3) ***Crisis Assistance and Prevention.*** Schools must respond to, minimize the impact of, and prevent crises. This requires systematic programs for (a) emergency/crisis response at a site, throughout a school complex, and community-wide (including ways to ensure follow-up care) and (b) prevention at school and in the community to address school safety and violence reduction, suicide prevention, child abuse prevention and so forth.

Desired outcomes of crisis assistance include ensuring provision of immediate emergency and follow-up care so students are able to resume learning without undue delay. Prevention activity outcomes are reflected in indices showing there is a safe and productive environment and that students and their families have the type of attitudes and capacities needed to deal with violence and other threats to safety.

A key mechanism in this area often is development of a crisis team. Such a team is trained in emergency response procedures, physical and psychological first-aid, ensuring aftermath needs are addressed, and so forth. The team also can take the lead in planning ways to prevent certain crises by facilitating the development of programs for conflict mediation and enhancing human relations and a caring school culture.

(4) ***Support for Transitions.*** Students and their families are regularly confronted with a variety of transitions (e.g., changing schools, changing grades, and encountering a range of other daily hassles and major life demands). Many of these can interfere with productive school involvement.

A comprehensive focus on transitions requires systematic programs to (a) establish school-wide and classroom specific activities for welcoming new arrivals (students, their families, staff) and rendering ongoing social support, (b) provide counseling and articulation strategies to support grade-to-grade and school-to-school transitions, moving to and from special education, going to college, and moving to post school living and work, and (c) organize before and after-school and intersession activities to enrich learning and provide recreation in a safe environment. Anticipated outcomes are reduced alienation, enhanced positive attitudes toward school and learning, and increased involvement in school and learning activities. Outcomes related to specific programs in this area can include reduced tardies as the result of participation in before school programs and reduced vandalism, violence, and crime at school and in the neighborhood as the result of involvement in after

school programs and increased experiencing of school as a caring place. There also are suggestions that a caring school climate can play a significant role in reducing student transiency. Articulation problems can be expected to reduce school avoidance and dropouts, as well as enhancing the number who make successful transitions to higher education and post school living and work.

(5) ***Home Involvement in Schooling.*** This area expands concern for parent involvement to encompass anyone in the home who plays a key role in influencing the student's formal education. In some cases, parenting has been assumed by grandparents, aunts, or older siblings. In many cases, older brothers and sisters are the most significant influences on a youngster's life choices. Thus, schools and communities must go beyond focusing on parents in their efforts to enhance home involvement.

Included here are programs to (a) address the specific learning and support needs of adults in the home, such as offering them ESL, literacy, vocational, and citizenship classes, enrichment and recreational opportunities, and mutual support groups, (b) help anyone in the home learn how to meet basic obligations to a student, such as providing instruction for parenting and helping with schoolwork, (c) improve communication that is essential to the student and family, (d) enhance the home-school connection and sense of community, (e) foster participation in making decisions essential to a student's well-being, (f) facilitate home support of basic learning and development, (g) mobilize those at home to problem solve related to student needs, and (h) elicit help (support, collaborations, and partnerships) from those at home with respect to meeting classroom, school, and community needs. The context for some of this activity may be a *parent center* (which may be part of a *Family Service Center* facility if one has been established at the site). Outcomes include indices of parent learning, student progress, and community enhancement specifically related to home involvement.

(6) ***Community Outreach for Involvement and Support (including a focus on volunteers).*** Most schools do their job better when they are an integral and positive part of the community. Unfortunately, schools and classrooms often are seen as separate from the community in which they reside. This contributes to a lack of connection between school staff, parents, students, and other community residents and resources. For schools to be seen as an integral part of a community, steps must be taken to create and maintain collaborative partnerships.



Outreach to the community can build linkages and collaborations, develop greater involvement in schooling, and enhance support for efforts to enable learning. Outreach is made to (1) public and private agencies, organizations, universities, colleges, and facilities, (2) businesses and professional organizations, and (3) volunteer service programs, organizations, and clubs. Programs are designed to (a) recruit community involvement and support (e.g., linkages and integration with community health and social services; cadres of volunteers, mentors, and individuals with special expertise and resources; local businesses to adopt-a-school and provide resources, awards, incentives, and jobs; formal partnership arrangements), (b) train, screen, and maintain volunteers (e.g., parents, college students, senior citizens, peer-cross-age tutors and counselors, and professionals-in-training to provide direct help for staff and students -- especially targeted students), (c) outreach to hard to involve students and families (those who don't come to school regularly -- including truants and dropouts), and (d) enhance community-school connections and a sense of community (e.g., orientations, open houses, performances and cultural and sports events, festivals and celebrations, workshops and fairs). Outcomes include indices of community participation, student progress, and community enhancement.

A good place to start is with community volunteers. Greater volunteerism on the part of parents, peers, and others from the community can break down barriers and increase home and community involvement in schools and schooling. Thus, a major emphasis in joining with the community is establishment of a program that effectively recruits, screens, trains, and nurtures volunteers. Another key facet is opening up of school sites as places where parents, families, and other community residents can engage in learning, recreation, enrichment, and find services they need.

Learning is neither limited to what is formally taught nor to time spent in classrooms. It occurs whenever and wherever the learner interacts with the surrounding environment. All facets of the community (not just the school) provide learning opportunities. *Anyone in the community who wants to facilitate learning might be a contributing teacher.* This includes aides, volunteers, parents, siblings, peers, mentors in the community, librarians, recreation staff, college students, etc. They all constitute what can be called the *teaching community*. When a school successfully joins with its surrounding community, everyone has the opportunity to learn and to teach.

## For More on the Concept of an Enabling Component and Learning Supports

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# Self-study to Enhance Home Involvement in Schooling



This survey is one of a set that a school's stakeholders use to map and analyze programs. Team members might

work separately in filling out items, but the real payoff comes from discussing items. In doing so, the group may decide that an existing activity is not a high priority and that the resources should be redeployed to establish a more important program or to embellish an existing effort so that it is more effective. In making such decisions, priorities and timelines are established. The instrument also can be used as a form of program quality review. (The entire set is available from our clearinghouse.)

## Survey (self-study) -- Home Involvement in Schooling

Please indicate all items that apply

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes but more of this is needed</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>If no, is this something you want?</u>
A. Which of the following are available to address specific learning and support needs of the adults in the home?				
1. Does the site offer adult classes focused on				
a. English as a Second Language (ESL)?	___	___	___	___
b. citizenship?	___	___	___	___
c. basic literacy skills?	___	___	___	___
d. GED preparation?	___	___	___	___
e. job preparation?	___	___	___	___
f. citizenship preparation?	___	___	___	___
g. other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
2. Are there groups for				
a. mutual support?	___	___	___	___
b. discussion?	___	___	___	___
3. Are adults in the home offered assistance in accessing outside help for personal needs?	___	___	___	___
4. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
B. Which of the following are available to help those in the home meet their basic obligations to the student?				
1. Is help provided for addressing special family needs for				
a. food?	___	___	___	___
b. clothing?	___	___	___	___
c. shelter?	___	___	___	___
d. health and safety?	___	___	___	___
e. school supplies?	___	___	___	___
2. Are education programs offered on				
a. childrearing/parenting?	___	___	___	___
b. creating a supportive home environment for students?	___	___	___	___
c. reducing factors interfering with student learning and performance?	___	___	___	___
3. Are guidelines provided for helping a student deal with homework?	___	___	___	___
4. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
C. Which of the following are in use to improve communication about matters essential to the student and family?				
1. Are there periodic general announcements and meetings such as				
a. advertising for incoming students?	___	___	___	___
b. orientation for incoming students and families?	___	___	___	___
c. bulletins/newsletters?	___	___	___	___
d. back to school night/open house?	___	___	___	___
e. parent teacher conferences?	___	___	___	___
2. Is there a system to inform the home on a regular basis				
a. about general school matters?	___	___	___	___
b. about opportunities for home involvement?	___	___	___	___
3. To enhance home involvement in the student's program and progress, are interactive communications used, such as				
a. sending notes home regularly?	___	___	___	___
b. a computerized phone line?	___	___	___	___
c. frequent in-person conferences with the family?	___	___	___	___
4. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

**Survey -- Home Involvement in Schooling (cont.)**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes but more of this is needed</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>If no, is this something you want?</b>
D. Which of the following are used to enhance the home-school connection and sense of community?				
1. Does the school offer orientations and open houses?	___	___	___	___
2. Does the school have special receptions for new families?	___	___	___	___
3. Does the school regularly showcase students to the community through				
a. student performances?	___	___	___	___
b. award ceremonies?	___	___	___	___
4. Does the school offer the community				
a. cultural and sports events?	___	___	___	___
b. topical workshops and discussion groups?	___	___	___	___
c. health fairs?	___	___	___	___
d. family preservation fairs?	___	___	___	___
e. work fairs?	___	___	___	___
f. newsletters?	___	___	___	___
g. community bulletin boards?	___	___	___	___
h. community festivals and celebrations?	___	___	___	___
5. Is there outreach to hard to involve families such as				
a. making home visits?	___	___	___	___
b. offering support networks?	___	___	___	___
6. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
E. Which of the following are used to enhance family participation in decision making essential to the student?				
1. Families are invited to participate through personal				
a. letters	___	___	___	___
b. phone calls	___	___	___	___
2. Families are informed about schooling choices through				
a. letters	___	___	___	___
b. phone calls	___	___	___	___
c. conferences	___	___	___	___
3. Families are taught skills to participate effectively in decision making.	___	___	___	___
4. Staff are specially trained to facilitate family participation in decision making meetings.	___	___	___	___
5. Other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
F. Which of the following are used to enhance home support of student's learning and development?				
1. Are families instructed on how to provide opportunities for students to apply what they are learning?	___	___	___	___
2. Are families instructed on how to use enrichment opportunities to enhance youngsters' social and personal and academic skills and higher order functioning?	___	___	___	___
3. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
G. Which of the following are used to mobilize problem solving at home related to student needs?				
1. Is instruction provided to enhance family problem solving skills(including increased awareness of resources for assistance)?	___	___	___	___
2. Is good problem solving modeled at conferences with the family?	___	___	___	___
H. For with which of the following are those in the home recruited/trained to help meet school/community needs?				
1. Improving schooling for students by assisting				
a. administrators	___	___	___	___
b. teachers	___	___	___	___
c. other staff	___	___	___	___
d. with lessons or tutoring	___	___	___	___
e. on class trips	___	___	___	___
f. in the cafeteria	___	___	___	___
g. in the library	___	___	___	___

**Survey -- Home Involvement in Schooling (cont.)**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes but more of this is needed</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>If no, is this something you want?</b>
h. in computer labs	___	___	___	___
i. with homework helplines	___	___	___	___
j. in the front office to welcome visitors, new enrollees/families	___	___	___	___
k. with phoning home regarding absences	___	___	___	___
l. outreach to the home	___	___	___	___
2. Improving school operations by assisting with				
a. school and community up-keep and beautification	___	___	___	___
b. improving school-community relations/	___	___	___	___
c. fund raising	___	___	___	___
d. PTA	___	___	___	___
e. enhancing public support by increasing political awareness about the contributions and needs of the school	___	___	___	___
f. school governance	___	___	___	___
g. advocacy for school needs	___	___	___	___
h. advisory councils	___	___	___	___
i. program planning	___	___	___	___
3. establishing home-community networks to benefit the community	___	___	___	___
4. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
I. What programs are used to meet the educational needs of personnel related to this programmatic area?				
1. Is there ongoing training for team members concerned with the area of Home Involvement in Schooling?	___	___	___	___
2. Is there ongoing training for staff of specific services/programs?	___	___	___	___
3. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
J. Which of the following topics are covered in educating stakeholders?				
1. designing an inclusionary "Parent Center"	___	___	___	___
2. overcoming barriers to home involvement	___	___	___	___
3. developing group-led mutual support groups	___	___	___	___
4. available curriculum for parent education	___	___	___	___
5. teaching parents to be mentors and leaders at the school	___	___	___	___
6. other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
K. Please indicate below any other ways that are used to enhance home involvement in schooling.	L. Please indicate below other things you want the school to do to enhance home involvement in schooling.			
_____	_____			
_____	_____			

**Please use the enclosed form to ask for what you need and to give us feedback.  
Also, send us information, ideas, and materials for the Clearinghouse.**

**School Mental Health Project/  
Center for Mental Health in Schools  
Department of Psychology, UCLA  
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563  
PX-27**

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