

# Restructuring California Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching in the COVID-19 Context and Beyond

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**T**his brief highlights the need and ways to transform—systematically—how schools address the overlapping learning, behavioral, and emotional problems that can interfere with learning and teaching. The aim is to provide a blueprint to enable the state, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and schools to play a greater role in providing student and learning supports, and to do so in ways that enhance equity of opportunity.

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## Introduction

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, extended school shutdowns, and renewed protests about racial injustice, schools confront sharp increases in student learning, behavioral, and emotional challenges. Despite this, the matter of how best to address these pervasive concerns—many of which result from long-standing structural and systemic barriers that necessitate structural and systemic solutions—remains unresolved.<sup>1</sup> More than ever, schools need to address directly barriers to learning and teaching, and to reengage disconnected students.

**This brief highlights the need and ways to transform systematically how schools address the overlapping learning, behavioral, and emotional problems that interfere with effective instruction. The aim is to provide a blueprint to enable the state, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and schools to play a greater role in providing student and learning supports, and to do so in ways that enhance equity of opportunity.**

### Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching Is Critical to Transitioning All Students Back to School

The unique circumstances surrounding the transition back to physical schooling introduces challenges for all students, their families, and staff. Everyone has experienced considerable stress. Some have been ill, some have experienced economic hardship, some are grieving for a relative or friend who died. While many students are coming back to their former schools, some are entering a new school. While many are pleased to return, others are not. On top of this, there are students for whom special assistance and outreach is always indicated (e.g., those experiencing learning difficulties, homelessness, or foster care; English learners; those who previously were chronically absent).

Educators, families, and students are eager for school to go “back to normal.” However, even the most expert teachers with the best curricula cannot be expected to overcome these barriers to learning and teaching with quality instruction alone. Schools in California can leverage the current discontinuity in schooling as an opportunity to consider transformative policy and structural changes that better support students and help them overcome barriers to learning.

## What Are Barriers to Learning?

How a student experiences school is a function of ongoing transactions between the individual and environmental factors.<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, barriers to learning and teaching are any external or internal factors that independently or in combination interfere with a student's development and well-being.<sup>3</sup> That is, youngsters' learning, behavioral, and emotional difficulties may be caused by (a) external factors related to neighborhood, family, school, and/or peers; (b) a significant mismatch in the transaction between external and internal factors; and/or (c) individual differences, vulnerabilities, and/or disabilities. Below are frequently cited examples.

### External

- Neighborhood factors (e.g., prolonged periods in economically impoverished, contaminated, or hostile environments; community disorganization, including high levels of mobility, violence, drugs, etc.; lack of access to medical and social services);
- Family factors (e.g., living environments that are impoverished, overcrowded, neglectful, rejecting, abusive, overly demanding; frequent residence changes; insufficient support at home for school learning due to finances, illiteracy, lack of English language skills; family members in conflict and/or with dysfunctions; socialization practices that breed prejudices); and
- School and peer factors (e.g., poor-quality schooling; negative encounters with teachers and/or peers; inappropriate peer models).

### Internal

- Negative cognitive and affective schemata and states of being (e.g., lack of knowledge or skills such as basic cognitive strategies; inability to cope effectively with emotions such as performance anxiety and negative feelings about self; negative attitudes about school);
- Physical characteristics (e.g., visual, auditory, or motor deficits; excessive or reduced sensitivity to stimuli; extremely high or low levels of activity; factors such as race, sex, age, unusual temperament, or appearance that produce stereotype-based or prejudiced reactions from others);
- Physiological insults (e.g., cerebral trauma such as accident or stroke, endocrine dysfunction, or chemical imbalance; illness affecting brain or sensory functioning);
- Genetic anomalies (e.g., genes that limit or slow down development, or lead to any atypical development); and
- Actions that are experienced by others as inappropriate or deviant (e.g., performance or adjustment problems such as excessive performance errors; misbehaviors).

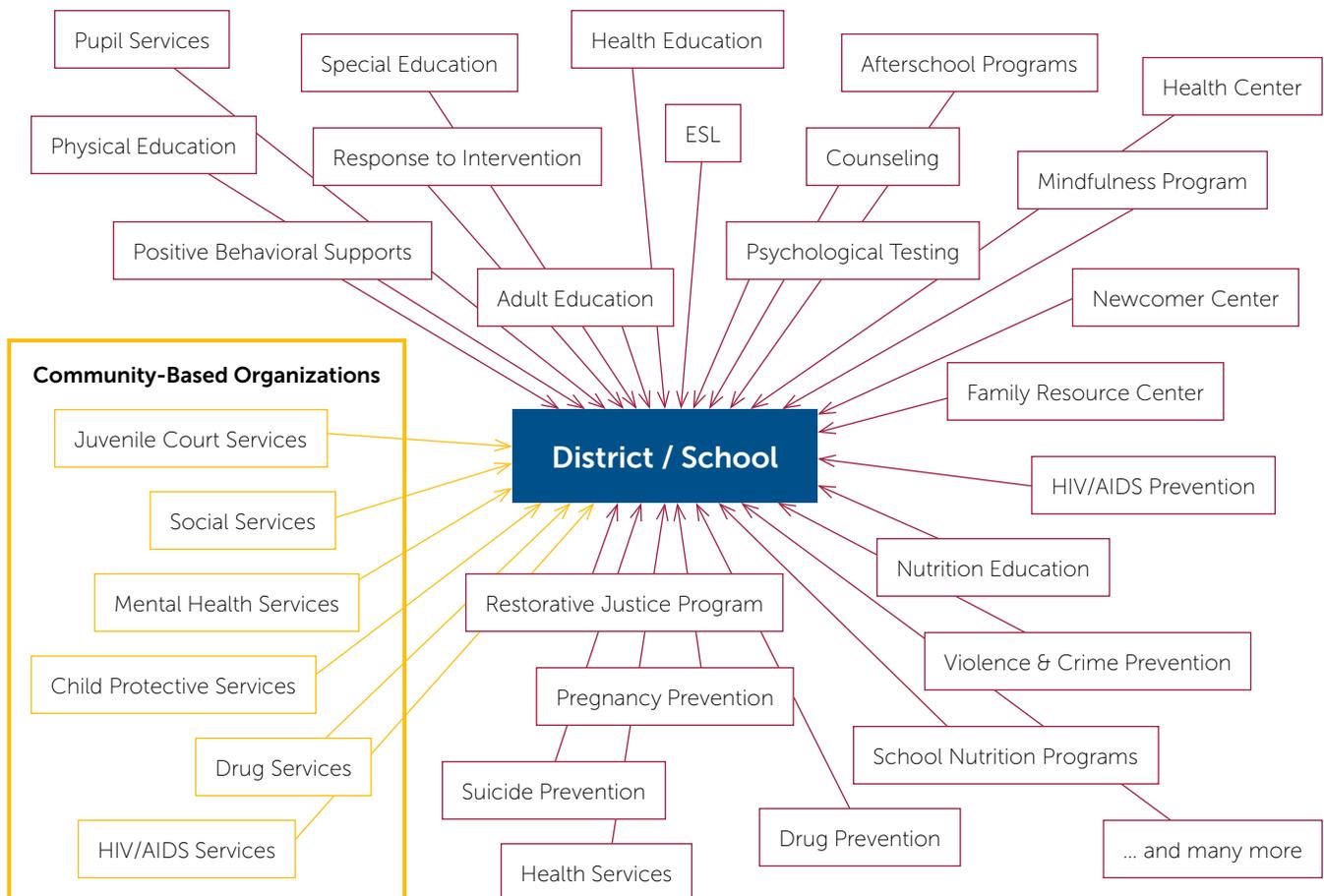
A common example of a transaction between external and internal factors that causes problems is when highly active youngsters are in school situations that do not tolerate their level of activity. Another example is when students with disorders in auditory perceptual ability are expected to do auditory-loaded tasks. In general, transactional problems arise when (a) a student's assets and protective buffers are insufficient for coping with school demands and (b) differences, minor vulnerabilities, or disabilities are not addressed or accommodated by the school.

## Prevailing Efforts to Address Barriers are Fragmented, Marginalized, and Inadequate

While the pandemic has introduced considerable challenges to teaching and learning, it must be remembered that students in California were struggling prior to COVID-19, with only half of California students meeting English language arts standards and only 40 percent meeting math standards in 2018–19.<sup>4</sup> While the causes and numbers vary, every school has students who are not doing well and all schools devote resources to address this reality. Some strategies are designed to reach the entire student body, others are targeted interventions that address discrete problems, and a few are specialized services that can only be provided to a relatively small number of students.<sup>5</sup>

For a variety of reasons, schools differ with respect to the student and learning supports they have in place. Common, however, is the fragmented and disorganized way supports are developed and implemented. See Figure 1 for a depiction of the fragmented and marginalized approaches districts often take and that schools draw upon to address barriers to student learning.

**Figure 1.** A Fragmented Approach to Addressing Barriers to Learning



This piecemeal and disjointed approach to addressing student learning, behavior, and emotional challenges has long been of concern—as reflected in policy initiatives calling for integrated and coordinated student supports.<sup>6</sup> Heightened concern can be expected as student needs and barriers increase in the wake of the pandemic and eventual recovery efforts; because school budgets are always tight, cost-effectiveness is a constant consideration. In some schools, principals have reported that up to 25 percent of their budget is consumed in efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching. Analyses of current approaches to providing student and learning supports indicate 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 the competition.

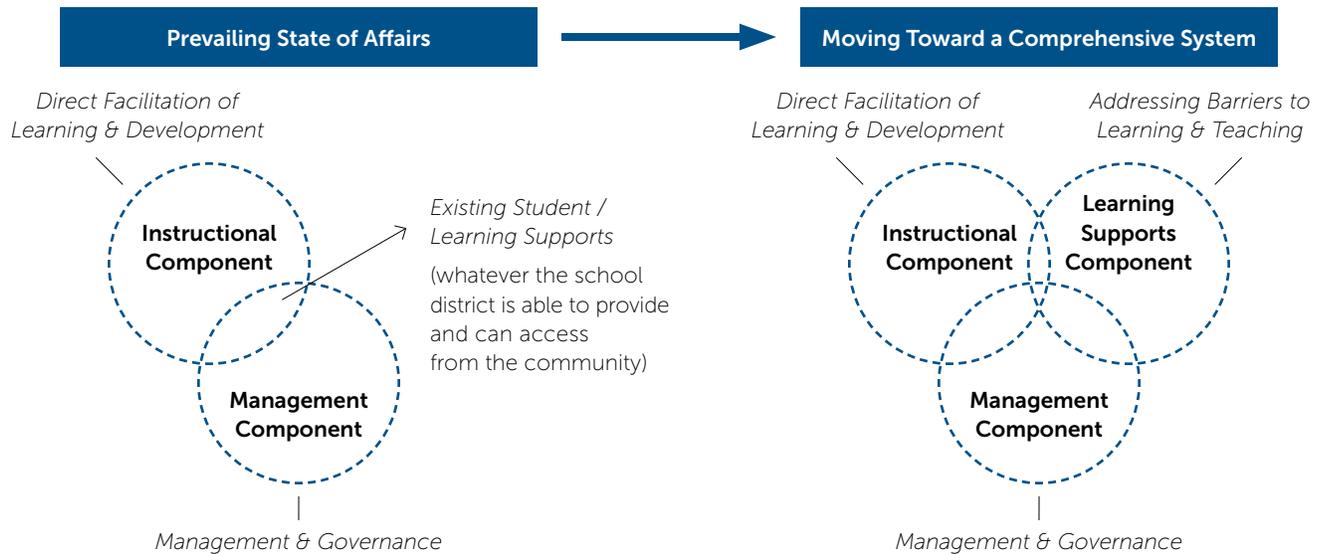
**Addressing the pervasive and complex barriers that impede student learning requires a systemwide approach that comprehensively supports whole-child development and learning.**

### **Comprehensive School Improvement Policy Requires Elevating the Emphasis on Addressing 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.<sup>7</sup> 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 Figure 2).

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.

**Figure 2.** Expanding the Framework for School Improvement Policy and Practice



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

Our prototype for a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system to address barriers and reengage students 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.

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

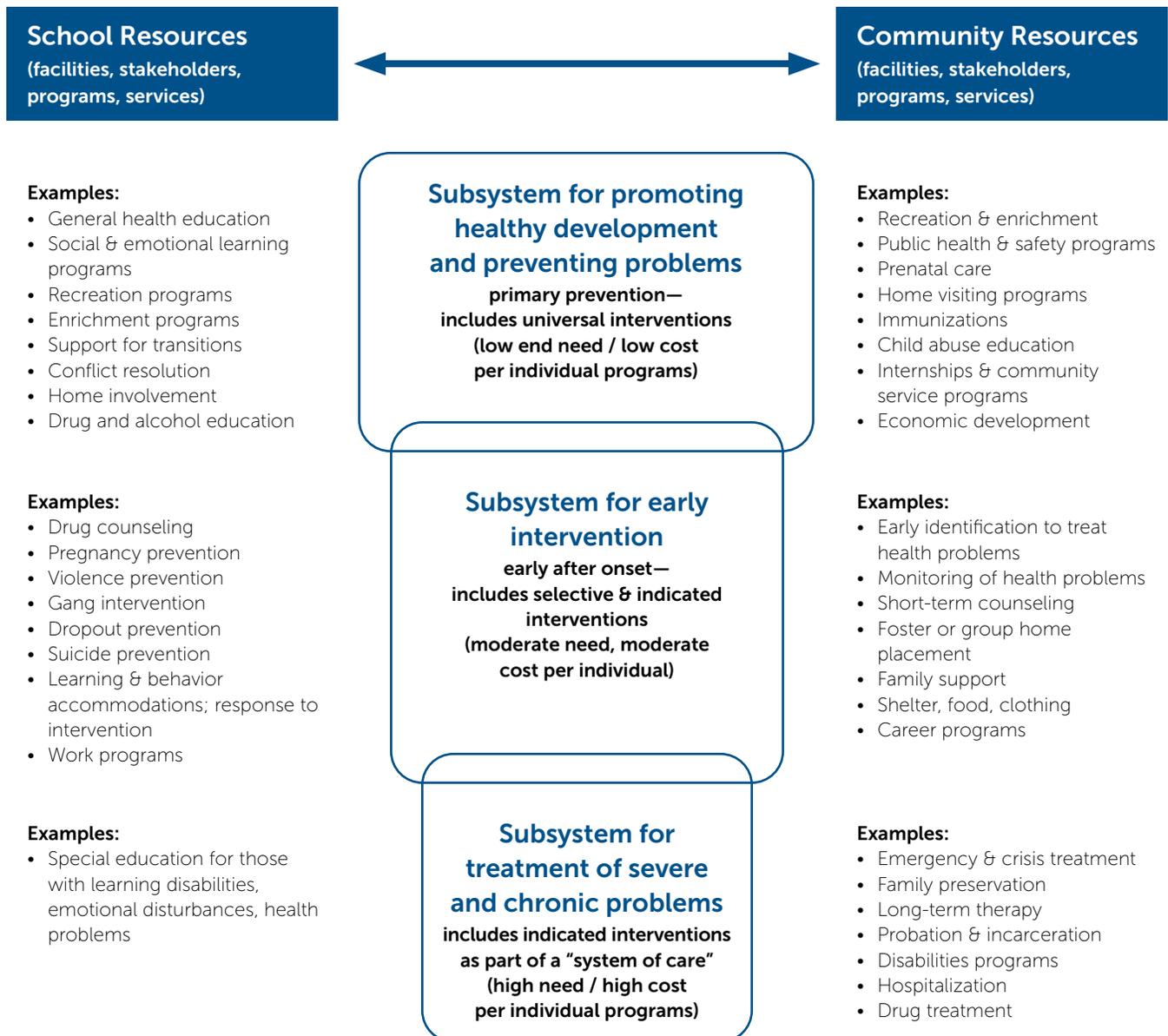
The California Department of Education (CDE) promotes a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as “an integrated, comprehensive framework for local educational agencies (LEA) that aligns academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning in a fully integrated system of support for the benefit of all students.”<sup>8</sup> The CDE has invested over \$30 million in the California Scale-Up MTSS Statewide Initiative, or SUMS Initiative, which is designed to promote and expand the use of the MTSS. As a result, over the last few years schools in California have increasingly framed student and learning supports in terms of tiers or levels.

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.<sup>9</sup> Figure 3 portrays such a continuum in ways that take the multi-tier system several steps forward.

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 prevention, identifying and addressing problems as soon as they arise, and providing for students with 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.

**Figure 3.** Framing a School–Community Intervention Continuum of Interconnected Subsystems



## 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); and
- **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.<sup>10</sup>

## A Comprehensive Approach Frames the Continuum and Domains as a Unified System

As illustrated in Figure 4, 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. This 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.<sup>11</sup>

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.

In sum, the intent is to unify and develop a comprehensive and equitable intervention system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching as well as for reengaging disconnected students. Establishing such a system requires coalescing ad hoc and piecemeal policies and practices. Doing so will help end the fragmentation of student and learning supports and related system disorganization, and will provide a foundation for weaving together whatever resources a school has with whatever a community is doing to confront barriers to learning and teaching. Implementation of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports as a primary school improvement component is essential to the focus 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.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 4.** Intervention Framework for the Learning Supports 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>	<b>Classroom-based learning supports</b>	e.g., personalized instruction	e.g., special assistance in the classroom provided as soon as a problem arises	e.g., referral for specialist assistance
	<b>Supports for transitions</b>	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
	<b>Home involvement &amp; engagement</b>	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
	<b>Community involvement &amp; collaborative engagement</b>	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
	<b>Crisis response &amp; prevention</b>	e.g., promoting positive relationships	e.g., immediate response with physical and psychological first aid	e.g., referral for follow-up counseling
	<b>Student &amp; family special assistance</b>	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. This 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 language learning; psychosocial and mental health issues; use of specialized instructional support personnel; adoption of evidence-based interventions; integration of funding sources; and braiding of community resources. The specific examples provided are illustrative of those schools may already have in place. For a fuller array of examples of student and learning supports that can be applied in classrooms and schoolwide, see the set of surveys available at [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf).

## 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.<sup>13</sup>

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

**A three-component policy for schools.** As a basis for ensuring that the learning support component (Figure 3) 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.<sup>14</sup>

**A transformative intervention framework for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.** As illustrated in Figure 4, 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.

**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. 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.<sup>15</sup>

**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.<sup>16</sup>

**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).<sup>17</sup>

## 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, California needs to develop and implement a more transformative and comprehensive approach. The prototype for addressing barriers to teaching and learning highlighted in this brief is such an approach.

We know from experience how hard it is to achieve the outlined policy and practice changes in a district. And, given the scale of public education, the degree of transformative system change proposed here gives rise to many complications.

For example, the approach calls for a major reworking of the operational and organizational infrastructure for the school, the family of schools, and the district, as well as for school–family–community collaboration. It also calls for enhancing in-classroom supports by 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.). In particular, the jobs of these personnel need to be modified to include working collaboratively with regular teachers in classrooms (in person and online) for part of each day. Improving student and learning supports in classrooms requires such collaboration, which is essential to ending the myths and expectations that teachers can do it all and can do it alone.

Certainly, the challenges are daunting. But maintaining the status quo is untenable, and just doing more tinkering will not meet the need.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> See, for example, Terada, Y. (2020, June 23). COVID-19's impact on students' academic and mental well-being. *Edutopia*. [edutopia.org/article/covid-19s-impact-students-academic-and-mental-well-being](https://edutopia.org/article/covid-19s-impact-students-academic-and-mental-well-being); Weir, K. (2020, September 1). Safeguarding student mental health. *Monitor on Psychology*, 51(6). [apa.org/monitor/2020/09/safeguarding-mental-health](https://apa.org/monitor/2020/09/safeguarding-mental-health)
- <sup>2</sup> Bandura, A. (1978). The self system in reciprocal determinism. *American Psychologist*, 33(4), 344–358. [doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.33.4.344](https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.33.4.344); Reciprocal determinism is applied to intervention theory and practice in Adelman, H. S., & Taylor, L. (1994). *On understanding intervention in psychology and education*. Praeger. [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/understandingintervention.pdf](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/understandingintervention.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> Adelman, H. S., & Taylor, L. (2018). *Addressing barriers to learning: In the classroom and schoolwide*. [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress. (n.d.). *English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics: Smarter balanced summative assessments. Test results at a glance. 2018–19*. [caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/caaspp/DashViewReport?ps=true&lstTestYear=2019&lstTestType=B&lstGroup=1&lstSubGroup=1&lstSchoolType=A&lstGrade=13&lstCounty=00&lstDistrict=00000&lstSchool=0000000](https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/caaspp/DashViewReport?ps=true&lstTestYear=2019&lstTestType=B&lstGroup=1&lstSubGroup=1&lstSchoolType=A&lstGrade=13&lstCounty=00&lstDistrict=00000&lstSchool=0000000)
- <sup>5</sup> Adelman, H. S., & Taylor, L. (2011). Expanding school improvement policy to better address barriers to learning and integrate public health concerns. *Policy Futures in Education*, 9(3), 431–436. [doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2011.9.3.431](https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2011.9.3.431)
- <sup>6</sup> Anderson Moore, K., Caal, S., Carney, R., Lippman, L., Li, W., Muenks, K., Murphey, D., Princiotta, D., Ramirez, A. N., Rojas, A., Ryberg, R., Schmitz, H., Stratford, B., & Terzian, M. A. (2014, February). Making the grade: Assessing the evidence for integrated student supports [Report]. *Child Trends*. [childtrends.org/publications/making-the-grade-assessing-the-evidence-for-integrated-student-supports](https://childtrends.org/publications/making-the-grade-assessing-the-evidence-for-integrated-student-supports). In response to limited outcomes and the fragmented and redundant implementation of student supports, one policy response has been to fund initiatives focused on integrating student supports. See our discussion of the problems associated with such initiatives, Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. (2014, March). *Integrated student supports and equity: What's not being discussed?* [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/integpolicy.pdf](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/integpolicy.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> Center for Mental Health in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA. (2018, January). *ESSA and addressing barriers to learning and teaching: Is there movement toward transforming student/learning supports?* [Policy report]. [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/2018%20report.pdf](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/2018%20report.pdf)
- <sup>8</sup> California Department of Education. (n.d.). *Multi-Tiered System of Supports*. [cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri](https://cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri). Quotation from para. 1.
- <sup>9</sup> 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.
- <sup>10</sup> Each of the six domains are discussed in detail in Adelman, H. S., & Taylor, L. (2019). *Addressing barriers to learning: In the classroom and schoolwide*. UCLA. [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf). The domains have been explored in a variety of venues across the country over the last decade (see [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/nind7.htm](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/nind7.htm)).
- <sup>11</sup> 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 [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf)
- <sup>12</sup> See Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. (2008). *A sampling of outcome findings from interventions relevant to addressing barriers to learning*. [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sampler/outcome/outcome.pdf](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sampler/outcome/outcome.pdf); Moore et al., 2014.
- <sup>13</sup> See [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm)
- <sup>14</sup> 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 ([smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm)).
- <sup>15</sup> For details and prototypes for transforming operational infrastructure to implement a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports, see Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. (2011, November). *Key leadership infrastructure mechanisms for enhancing student & learning supports* [Policy and practice report]. [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/resource\\_oriented\\_teams.pdf](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/report/resource_oriented_teams.pdf); see also Adelman, H. S., & Taylor, L. (2019). Getting from here to there. In *Addressing barriers to learning: In the classroom and schoolwide*. [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf), for a discussion of the operational infrastructure needed for and the problems associated with making sustainable system changes.
- <sup>16</sup> For capacity building resources, see Sections B and C of the Center for Mental Health in Schools & Student/Learning Supports's System Change Toolkit ([smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm)).
- <sup>17</sup> See The Center for Mental Health in Schools & Student/Learning Support at UCLA. (n.d.). *Standards for a learning supports component*. [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/commcore.pdf](https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/commcore.pdf); this resource includes indicators for monitoring, evaluation, and accountability.

## Author Biographies

Professor of Psychology **Howard S. Adelman** and **Linda Taylor** co-direct the national Center for Mental Health in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA. They have worked together for over 40 years to improve how schools and communities address barriers to learning and teaching, reengage disconnected students, and promote healthy development. Taylor and Adelman's current focus is on policies, practices, and large-scale systemic transformation, including facilitating the National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports.

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## Related Publications

Kimner, H. (2020, July). ***Community schools: A COVID-19 recovery strategy*** [Policy brief]. Policy Analysis for California Education.

Gee, K., Murdoch, C., Vang, T., Cuahuey, Q., & Prim, J. (2020, August). ***Multi-Tiered System of Supports to address childhood trauma: Evidence and implications*** [Policy brief]. Policy Analysis for California Education.

Farkas, G. (2020, February). ***Achievement gaps and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in California*** [Policy brief]. Policy Analysis for California Education.

Powell, R., Estes, E., & Briscoe, A. (2020, February). ***Realizing one integrated system of care for children*** [Policy brief]. Policy Analysis for California Education.



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