

Wise Ways

School Leadership identifies and allocates/reallocates resources needed for Learning Supports' implementation. (CL2)

Evidence Review:

Many schools invest a substantial amount of resources on educational support programs and services because they recognize the many barriers that interfere with teaching and learning. Unfortunately, schools tend to implement educational support programs in a piecemeal way and “overemphasize the use of individual and small group interventions and underemphasize school-wide approaches and community partnerships.... With so many youngsters experiencing problems, schools should be adopting new models that use support personnel and resources more effectively.”

According to Adelman and Taylor, a comprehensive multi-faceted approach to addressing barriers to learning that integrates with school reform efforts is essential. The approach must be well integrated with existing management and instruction strategies and provide a full continuum of support that includes systems for prevention and early intervention, and a system of care for those students with chronic and severe problems. In order to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of “Learning Supports”, it is essential to use existing resources in better ways. For example, investments in prevention programs “result in longer term savings as children and families who benefit from these services are diverted from needing more intensive, expensive services in the future” (Meyers, J.C., 1994).

One strategy would involve expanding the roles of pupil support personnel in mapping, analyzing, and redeploying resources as well as working with team members to develop programming to address gaps in services. Pupil support personnel can be instrumental in providing training and consultation to teachers on creating or enhancing conditions for learning and improving classroom-based efforts to address barriers to learning. “All who work to address barriers to student learning must have the time, continuing education, and opportunity not only to provide direct help but to act as advocates, catalysts, brokers, and facilitators of reform. And, it is emphasized that these additional duties include participation on school, district-wide, and community governance, planning, and evaluation bodies.”

Effective allocation/reallocation of resources to support a comprehensive system of “Learning Supports” requires that resources are woven together at the school and expanded through the integration of school, community, and home resources. In addition schools should enhance their capacity by establishing formal linkages with community resources. “As clusters of schools work together (e.g., high schools and their middle and elementary feeder schools), they create additional opportunities to integrate and expand resources and achieve economies of scale.”

Financial strategies should be designed to support the *best strategies* for achieving improved outcomes. Diversified funding strategies should be utilized and include both public and private funding sources. Federal entitlement funding can be utilized in creating a comprehensive System of Learning Supports. “For example, under Title I (Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged), the need for coordination and integration of student supports is highlighted in the statement of Purpose (Section 1001) # 11 which stresses coordinating services under all parts of this title with each other, with other educational services, and, to the extent feasible, with other agencies providing services to youth, children, and families.... The need is also implicit in Part C on migratory children, Part D on prevention and intervention programs for neglected, delinquent, or at-risk students, and Part F on comprehensive school reform, and Part H on dropout prevention, in Title IV 21st Century Schools, and so on.”

Sources: Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA

- Financial Strategies to Aid in Addressing Barriers to Learning
- New Directions in Enhancing Educational Results: Policymakers' Guide to Restructuring Student Support Resources to Address Barriers to Learning
- Using Federal Education Legislation in Moving Toward a Comprehensive, Multifaceted, and Integrated Approach to Addressing Barriers to Learning (e.g., Creating a Cohesive System of Learning Supports)

Reference and Other Resource

Meyers, J.C. (1994). Financing strategies to support innovations in service delivery to children. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 23, 48-54.