Design Principles for Schools:
Putting the Science of Learning and Development Into Action
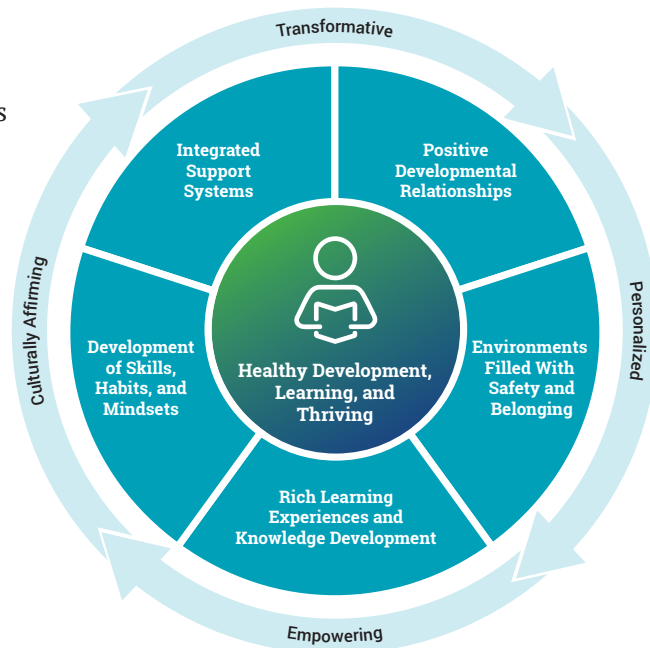
Integrated Support Systems

Learning Policy Institute and Turnaround for Children
in partnership with the Forum for Youth Investment
and in association with the SoLD Alliance

Emerging science tells us an optimistic story about the potential of all learners. There is burgeoning knowledge about the biological systems that govern development, including deeper understandings of brain structure and wiring and their connections to other systems and the external world. This research tells us that brain development and life experiences are interdependent and malleable—that is, the settings and conditions individuals are exposed to and immersed in affect how they grow throughout their lives. This knowledge about the brain and development, coupled with a growing knowledge base from educational research, provides us with an opportunity to design systems for educational transformations that advance social justice and enable each and every young person to learn and thrive.

This playbook, *Design Principles for Schools: Putting the Science of Learning and Development Into Action*, seizes this opportunity. It suggests a set of engineering principles that build on the knowledge we have today to nurture innovations, build new models, and enable policies that advance change. It provides an overarching framework—the Guiding Principles for Equitable Whole Child Design—that can guide the transformation of learning settings for children and adolescents and illustrate the ways that practitioners can implement and integrate structures and practices that support learning and development for all students. That framework includes:

- Positive Developmental Relationships

- Environments Filled With Safety and Belonging

- Rich Learning Experiences and Knowledge Development

- Development of Skills, Habits, and Mindsets

- Integrated Support Systems

This section is part of the larger playbook and focuses on how educators, school leaders, and district officials can strengthen the structures and practices that build and sustain integrated support systems that are responsive to learners. These design principles do not suggest a single design or model for doing this. Rather, the desired result is to spur robust innovations, new collaborations aligned with the resources for positive growth found in young people's communities and cultures, and a commitment to the redesign of our education and learning systems in learning settings. The full playbook can be found online here.

Integrated Support Systems

How Integrated Support Systems Work at Social Justice Humanitas Academy

Social Justice Humanitas Academy is a highly successful community school serving a low-income community in Los Angeles County. There, the needs of the whole child are addressed by integrated support systems that begin with personalized approaches to teaching, advising, and counseling, augmented by a range of fully integrated services, community partnerships, and expanded and enriched learning opportunities. While 96% of the largely Latino/a student population comes from low-income families, 97% of students graduate in 4 years—well above the state and city averages—and 95% of them are prepared for college, having completed the A–G sequence required by California's public universities.

At this small school of just over 500 students, the centrality of relationships—made possible through **advisory classes** and **team-teaching** structures—is activated as the key strategy for identifying the need for academic and social and emotional supports. Educators implement **universal supports**, which include **routine, everyday practices** such as greeting students at the classroom door each period and spending passing periods in the hallways. Teachers, counselors, and other adults use information that is gathered through these practices, and they regularly come together to conduct data reviews to monitor students' well-being and determine if additional and/or more intensive interventions are required. All staff are involved and committed to this approach with students. As one student shared,

> It's not only the teachers. We also have people inside the office [who] help out, too. If they notice I'm struggling, they'll have a one-on-one talk outside. We have three counselors…. Let's say there's a kid crying outside their class. Nobody's just going to walk past them…. Somebody's going to go up to them and help resolve the situation and make it better.

Office hours through which each teacher provides after-school support are another routine support. At Social Justice Humanitas, **counselors** are present in numbers three times the average at other schools in Los Angeles Unified School District. They are assigned to specific students and maintain an open-door policy. Concerns that emerge are addressed at **Very Important Person (VIP)** meetings held regularly among staff, families, and students to identify additional supports when needed. These universal and integrated practices foster relationships, enable each student to feel known, and help staff to discover each student's unique strengths and needs. As one student noted: "The adults here, they care."

A range of **supplemental supports** is readily available. One key support is what the school calls an **adoption process**, by which students who need additional support spend consistent, sustained time with a teacher they know. Each teacher assumes a "caseload" of three to four students to provide them with continuous encouragement and to help students break down barriers that often prevent them from engaging fully at school. The teacher can also help the student access assistance from others who provide additional supports.

In addition to in-school practices, Social Justice Humanitas has partnered with community providers to expand options for students and families. For example, EduCare provides an **after-school space** for students where they can participate in a range of enrichment activities, including exercise

classes and tutoring, a wide range of student clubs, and an **ACE initiative** that is focused on the social and emotional needs of students and includes training for parents and educators as well. The ACE initiative operates through the summer and school year to nurture a sense of belonging, safety, and community. **University partnerships** with UCLA Center X and other local institutions support professional development for staff and school leadership as well as activities for students, ranging from field trips and internships to summer camps.

Students are also connected to a range of outside services, such as a mobile health clinic each week; mental health services, including crisis intervention and individual, group, and family therapy when needed; and connections to food services, housing supports, and clothing for families in need.

One student shared how integrated student supports have made a lifelong difference for him:

> I lived in really bad poverty and never saw myself even going to high school or college…. That wasn't in the plan for me. In orientation [at Social Justice Humanitas] it really got my attention, and it made me believe in myself. The teachers and mentors were working with me one-on-one. I became very good at reading, [got] high test scores, and began doing [well] in school, but they were not only focusing on my academics but what I was going through. I was going through very emotional hard stuff. The counselor[s] took their time talking to me and making sure I was OK…. It really stuck with me, knowing that I can seek out help and that I'm not going to be shamed.

For this student and others, the integration of academic, social, emotional, health, mental health, and family supports becomes a lifeline to success that is part of the school's coherent design for caring.

Source: Adapted from Saunders, M., Martínez, L., Flook, L., & Hernández, L. E. (2021). *Social Justice Humanitas Academy: A community school approach to whole child education*. Learning Policy Institute.

Overview of Integrated Support Systems

As school and community settings empower young people on their individual paths, integrated support systems, like those described at Social Justice Humanitas Academy, are essential to removing barriers to learning and development. Well-designed systems weave together school and community resources for physical and mental health, social services, and expanded learning time, integrating these practices into day-to-day schooling so that students' needs are readily identified and met holistically, without bureaucratic delays. They also ensure that practitioners have a shared developmental approach to thinking about students with an asset-based lens.

All children and youth have unique assets and interests to build upon in their learning journeys. All children also experience challenges that need to be addressed without stigma or shame to propel their development and well-being. These challenges can result from personal or family struggles or adverse childhood experiences, such as discrimination, food or housing insecurity, physical or mental illness, or other difficulties and inequities.

Research has documented that well-designed supports can enable resilience and success even for youth who have faced serious adversity and trauma. These supports include everyday practices that

communicate to students that they are respected, valued, and loved, as well as specific programs and services that prevent or buffer against the effects of excessive stress.

A comprehensive review of integrated student supports found that these approaches can support student achievement, and it highlighted community partnerships as a key lever for implementation.[1] Another research synthesis found significant positive effects of integrated support systems on student progress in school, attendance, mathematics and reading achievement, and grades. These studies also found measurable decreases in grade retention, dropout rates, and absenteeism.[2]

The situation facing young people, families, and educators today underscores the importance and urgency of this endeavor. The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, racial injustice, and economic uncertainty are omnipresent and acutely felt, particularly by Black Americans and other communities of color. Orchestrating integrated supports that systematically assess students' comprehensive needs and strengths and

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coordinate resources in a unified and collaborative way is essential. Such a system can mitigate barriers, enhance coping, strengthen resilience, re-engage disconnected students and families, and help reduce the opportunity gaps.

The community school approach highlighted in the vignette above shows some of the ways that schools can create a coherent web of experiences and structures that enable students' academic success, healthy development, and well-being. Other approaches to school designs, structures, and practices can similarly advance an integrated approach to supporting learners. Regardless of their distinct approaches, schools with integrated support systems create ongoing opportunities for connection and for identifying students who need assistance, taking care to include students who are English learners, are experiencing homelessness, are undocumented or from mixed-immigration-status families, have a disability, live in rural areas, or are impacted by the juvenile justice or foster care systems.

Why Integrated Support Systems Are Important: What the Science Says

Healthy human development depends on nurturing contexts. Human development is shaped by the ongoing interactions between individuals' biology, relationships, and cultural and contextual influences. Most of the brain's growth happens after we are born. The tissue that it is composed of is more susceptible to change from experience than any other tissue in the human body. The brain's architecture is made up of trillions of connections, forming complex and integrated structures that experiences create, strengthen, and reorganize to develop new skills and competencies. It becomes highly connected, efficient, and specialized over time based on the web of experiences in children's lives. The brain is astonishingly malleable, and our growth and development are highly "experience dependent." Thus the context of development is extremely important.

The domains of development are interconnected. No part of the brain develops in isolation: There is no separate "math" part of the brain or "emotions" part of the brain. Academic learning

is tightly intertwined with social and emotional experiences, mental health, and physical health. This means that schools must be prepared to address a variety of individual needs and barriers with supports that are holistic and personalized to fully meet students where they are.

Adversity-related stress is the most common factor that negatively affects contexts for development. When we experience stress, the hormone cortisol is released through our brains and bodies, producing that familiar feeling of fight, flight, or freeze. This mechanism is intense when it happens, but if the stress is mild or tolerable, it is actually adaptive—that is, it makes us alert and sharp and helps us prepare for an event like a test or a performance. This is the limbic system at work—attention, concentration, focus, memory, and preparation. But when children have high levels of continuous stress, and that stress is not buffered by the presence of a trusted adult, something else happens. Children can get locked in a condition of toxic stress, which has biological, psychological, and developmental effects as cortisol damages the structures in the limbic system and creates feelings of fight or flight, hypervigilance, and high levels of anxiety.

Relational trust is the most powerful element of a positive context. The emotions that positive relationships generate are caused by another hormonal system which is mediated by the hormone oxytocin. This hormone produces feelings of trust, love, attachment, and safety. Oxytocin hits the same structures of the brain as cortisol, yet oxytocin is more powerful because it can literally protect children, at the cellular level, from the damaging effects of cortisol. Relationships that are strong and positive cause the release of oxytocin; this not only helps children manage stress, but also offsets the damaging effects of cortisol and produces resilience to future stress. When we speak about the human relationship (see "Positive Developmental Relationships" for more), we are not just talking about being nice to a child. We are speaking of a close connection that supports the release of oxytocin as it is built through consistent caring, protection, presence, and trust.

Today, stress is everywhere. Stress caused by adversity is not something some children have and others do not. It exists along a spectrum of different intensities for children at different times in their lives. However, many children are attending schools where their health and their ability to focus and concentrate will be affected by the stressful contexts of their lives unless they have mediating relationships and opportunities to learn how to manage stress. Today, because of the pandemic and the many experiences of racialized violence, many children's stress mechanisms are on high alert, especially if they have experienced previous trauma. These stress responses can manifest as fatigue and detachment at the mild end, or impulsive, distractable, or angry behavior at the more extreme end.

Discrimination and inequality create increased risks. While adversity and healthy development are faced in all communities, inequality creates increased risks. Poverty and racism, together and separately, make the experience of chronic stress and adversity more likely. The events of 2020 have made this reality even more apparent. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, children and families of color, as well as those in low-income communities, have experienced greater infection and mortality rates, higher unemployment, more housing and food instability, and less access to technology and the internet. The ongoing displays of racial violence have also put a spotlight on the persistent effects of systemic racism and reignited the collective, individual, and intergenerational trauma that U.S. citizens, particularly Black Americans, bear as a result of our nation's embedded systems of power and oppression. These are also the communities that have been under-resourced over many years.

Integrated support systems can counteract these conditions by reducing stigma and judgment around support and empowering young people on their own pathways. Too often, schools assume "some" students will have issues, label them, and create isolated programs, but when schools establish environmental conditions for all students' learning and support, they validate students' rights to wellness and destigmatize the need for assistance.

What Can Schools Do to Create Integrated Support Systems?

Many schools in the United States are designed with the assumption that students begin and continue their education in a state of physical and emotional well-being with the necessary skills, mindsets, and experiences to prepare them for school and rich learning experiences. This is rarely true. Most children experience adversity in some form at some point in their lives and need opportunities for learning and supports that enable them to thrive. Indeed, each year in the United States, at least 46 million children are exposed to violence, crime, abuse, or psychological trauma, representing more than 60% of the total.

Thus, learning environments need to be set up with many protective factors, including health, mental health, and social service supports, as well as opportunities to extend learning and build on interests and passions. Having comprehensive and integrated supports in place can allow schools to build on students' unique needs, interests, and assets and address their areas of vulnerability without stigma or shame, responding in a sensitive

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and timely manner to within-school and out-of-school contexts. In addition, students will have different needs at different times. Both new structures and new practices may be needed to meet these needs:

- **Structures that incorporate universal and tiered supports include:**

  - assessments that help educators understand student wellness and progress and the supports students need;

  - availability of high-quality tutoring and mentoring, counseling, and student support teams;

  - additional before, during, and after-school time for expanded learning, along with summer programs or Acceleration Academies during intersessions; and

  - health, mental health, and community partnerships with social service providers, including community school models.

- **Practices that enable these structures to be effective include:**

    - strategies and practices that ensure collaboration, coordination, and shared developmental approaches across providers of services; and

    - approaches that are culturally competent, carefully integrated, and age appropriate, considering students holistically and with an assets-based lens.

While most practitioners acknowledge that all children and youth need a system of supports with these features, current systems have difficulty meeting learner needs, especially in schools serving families of color and families from low-income backgrounds. Among the many concerns raised by the current state of affairs are that student and learning supports are often:

- narrowly framed, uncoordinated, and implemented in silos;

- mainly designed as out-of-classroom referrals;

- ineffective in monitoring the progress and advancement of students;

- inadequate to serve most of the growing number of students in need;

- misaligned with the strengths and needs of individual learners;

- unable to provide timely help; and

- ineffective in working with home and community resources.

Building a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of supports requires coalescing many of the piecemeal policies and practices that have been added onto the edges of traditional school structures. Integrating these supports into the normal work of the school can increase the likelihood that a school will be experienced as a welcoming, supportive place that accommodates diversity, enhances young people's strengths and resilience, and is committed to ensuring equity of opportunity for all.

Creating Comprehensive, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

In recent years, many schools have sought to create integrated support systems by building multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). MTSS typically include three tiers of support that promote learning and development in ways that prevent difficulties and provide supplemental supports and intensive intervention where needed.[3] Tier 1 is **universal**—everyone experiences it. Ideally, schools are designed to foster developmental relationships and teaching strategies grounded in Universal Design for Learning that are broadly successful with children who learn in different ways, as well as positive behavioral support strategies that are culturally and linguistically competent. Tier 2 includes **supplemental services** and supports that address the needs of students who are at some elevated level of risk. The risk may be demonstrated by behavior (e.g., number of absences), by academic struggles (e.g., difficulty reading), or by having experienced a known risk factor (e.g., the loss of a parent). Tier 2 services could include academic supports (e.g., Reading Recovery, math tutoring, extended learning time) or family outreach, counseling, and behavioral supports. Tier 3 involves **intensive interventions** for individuals who are at particularly high levels of risk or whose needs are not sufficiently met by universal or supplemental supports. Tier 3 supports might include additional social, health, or mental health services, as well as academic supports such as effective special education.

Interventions are tiered, not students, and supports can and should be provided in typical school environments. Students are not "Tier 2" or "Tier 3" students; they receive services for as long as needed but no longer. Providers should recognize that students have strengths in many areas and build upon student assets, not just focus on areas for growth. It is particularly important that Tier 2 and 3 services be implemented in a child- and family-sensitive manner that is culturally affirming. This can maximize engagement and minimize errors that occur when students, families, or teachers are not asked about their context and needs. Interventions should minimize removal from the mainstream classroom or extracurricular environments. These supports are often enhanced by collaboration with local service agencies and community-based organizations, with communication feedback loops to school-based staff. The key is to take a whole child approach in which students are treated in connected, rather than fragmented, ways, and care is personalized to the needs of individuals.

While MTSS do not encompass all that is needed for transforming how schools address barriers to learning, development, and teaching, researchers at the Center for Mental Health in Schools and Student/Learning Supports at UCLA suggest that schools can build such systems to implement a continuum of supports built on an intertwined set of home, school, and community resources to advance student learning and well-being in collaborative ways.

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To organize the many learning supports across the continuum, the center's researchers suggest that interventions can be organized into a set of six domains:

- **Embedding student/learning supports into regular classroom strategies**, which enables teachers and student support staff to (a) work collaboratively to ensure instruction is personalized, with an emphasis on enhancing intrinsic motivation and social and emotional development for all students, especially those manifesting mild to moderate learning and behavior problems; (b) re-engage those who have become disengaged from instruction; (c) provide learning accommodations and supports as necessary, using Response to Intervention strategies in applying special assistance; and (d) address external barriers with a focus on prevention and early intervention.

- **Supporting transitions**, such as assisting students and families as they negotiate the many hurdles related to re-entry or initial entry into school, both routine school and grade changes as well as the more frequent changes often faced by students in foster care or experiencing homelessness. Other support may be needed for daily transitions, program transitions, and transitions associated with accessing special assistance.

- **Increasing home and school connections and engagement**, addressing barriers to home involvement, helping those in the home enhance supports for their children, strengthening home and school communication, and increasing school support of the home and home support of the school.

- **Responding to and, when feasible, preventing school and personal crises** by preparing for emergencies, implementing plans for when an event occurs, countering the impact of traumatic events, providing follow-up assistance, implementing prevention strategies, and creating a caring and safe learning environment.

- **Increasing community involvement and collaborative engagement** by developing 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.[4]

Through enhanced MTSS approaches characterized by these features, schools can create more unified and collaborative systems that can be used to prevent, as well as mitigate, challenges.

Assessing student strengths, challenges, and needs

In addition to formative assessment tools for gauging learning progress, it is important to use tools that help schools regularly assess student wellness and the supports students need.

To create meaningful support systems for learners, educators need to know what students are experiencing, and schools need to be able to identify the supports students need, when they need them. Structures and practices related to assessment of both wellness and learning can provide actionable guidance. These assessment processes should provide insights into:

- students' individual strengths and struggles;

- patterns across grade levels and content areas; and

- school and community resources that should be accessed to meet individual and collective needs for programs and services.

With data like these in hand, practitioners can better understand how to improve the coordination and integration of school and community resources and establish priorities for strengthening supports and filling intervention gaps.
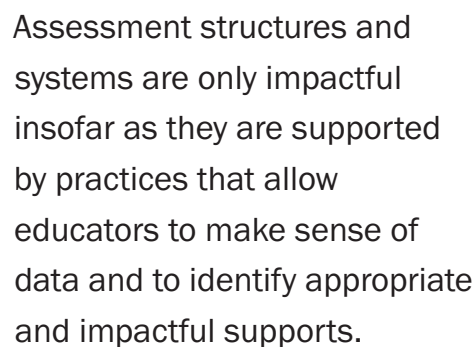
The Boston College Center for Optimized Student Support has produced an assessment tool informed by its 20 years of experience implementing its rigorously evaluated and effective City Connects program with 15 diverse districts. This tool helps practitioners build comprehensive, data-informed, and tailored systems to meet students' varied needs. It does so by guiding practitioners through a series of self-assessments and prompts that allow them to take stock of the resources, personnel, and infrastructure they have in place and to identify ways that their systems can be improved.

Complementing systems assessments with those that provide insights into students' needs and assets is also key. Measures of social, emotional, and academic well-being, such as those created by California's CORE Districts and Kaiser Permanente's Resilience in School Environments (RISE) Index, can be helpful both at the start of school and throughout the year for understanding where students are and what strengths and struggles they have. The use of these tools, coupled with teachers' daily observations and the knowledge gained through relationships, can help practitioners

to understand student experiences, surface considerations of what students have had the opportunity to learn and under what conditions, and connect students to the appropriate supports within school and community systems.[5]

Schools should also have data systems in place that allow for continuous feedback loops that are understandable, timely, and instructive. Some districts are pioneering new digital solutions to offer feedback to school leaders and educators about students' social and emotional and additional learning needs. California's CORE Districts partnered with Education Analytics to provide districts across the state with a new interactive platform, Rally, that helps teachers and school leaders track data on students' well-being and academic progress by putting multiple sources of available data in a dashboard that teachers can regularly look at for each student and across their class. The data include short surveys of student wellness along with data from diagnostic assessments of learning. The goal is to support teachers in their responses to the unique needs of each individual student and to address the trauma that many students experience.

Assessment structures and systems are only impactful insofar as they are supported by practices that allow educators to make sense of data and to identify appropriate and impactful supports. In particular, it is critical that educators and other adults collaborate to analyze data and identify effective interventions to support all students while keeping a keen eye on those who have unique learning needs, including English learners, students experiencing homelessness, students with special needs, and those in foster care.

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Providing universal supports

Tier 1 universal supports should include opportunities for relationship-building and inclusive teaching strategies that advance learning and growth for all students.

As we have described in other sections and highlighted in the vignette on Social Justice Humanitas Academy, there are a number of structures and practices, often referred to as Tier I in MTSS, that make the core work of the school supportive for students.

Universal support can be enabled through **relationship-building structures**, such as advisories, teaching teams, and looping, that enable staff to know their students well, and structures that allow staff to use observations and data to understand student needs, such as assessment tools and collaboration time dedicated to discussing student needs. (See "Positive Developmental Relationships" and "Environments Filled With Safety and Belonging" for fuller treatment of these structures.)

Collaboration structures both among staff and between staff and families are critically important to the provision of effective supports. Family communications benefit from consistent structures that help practitioners connect and communicate with families, such as regular phone calls or emails, home visits, and video or in-person conferences, that allow for home–school connections,

relationship building, and collaborative conversations around how to support students and their growth. In secondary schools, advisory systems are essential to allow effective communication, since it is not reasonable to expect each content teacher to communicate with 100–200 families (depending on their pupil loads), but it is possible for each of them to host an advisory of 15–20 students as an intrinsic part of their teaching load (replacing a content course) and be the point person for communication with those students' families.

Educators at Social Justice Humanitas Academy illustrate this role in their "Very Important Person (VIP)" meetings when an advisor, counselor, administrator, and/or other teacher convene with a student and his or her family to examine data (for example, on attendance, behavior, class performance, or other needs) and determine how to address any challenges that may be surfacing. Informed by previous meetings with other teachers who share that student, team members attempt to figure out what is happening inside or outside of the school that might be contributing to or hindering a student's achievement and build a joint plan for support.

Ongoing opportunities for teachers and school staff to meet within grade levels and subject areas to share their knowledge about students and how to best support them are also important. Collaboration structures like these are most successful when educators share information about students in ways that are focused on building success rather than naming deficits. That is, their conversations do not identify the student as a problem but rather configure their concerns as a situation that can be supported by leveraging and strengthening relationships. (See "Collaborating to Support Students at Oakland International High School.")

Collaborating to Support Students at Oakland International High School

At Oakland International High School, a school for recent immigrants in Oakland, CA, approximately 29% of students arrived in the United States as unaccompanied minors and 33% were identified as homeless in 2019. Some have lost family members to violence; some come to school hungry; some face risks simply getting to and from school. All are English learners, and most live in poverty. Across the country, most students like them experience limited learning opportunities and barriers to success at school. But Oakland International students thrive at surprisingly high rates. In 2019, the most recent year of data available, 93% of students had graduated within 5 years, and 59% were deemed prepared for college and careers, with a majority having taken and passed the rigorous A–G courses required for admission to California state universities. This compares to a graduation rate of only 62% and a college and career readiness rate of only 26% overall for other English learners in Oakland Unified.

Why the difference? As a community school, Oakland International High School has an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth development, and engagement with families and communities. The school directly addresses the out-of-school barriers to learning faced by recently arrived immigrant students. Available supports include free legal representation to students facing deportation, after-school tutoring, English as a second language (ESL) classes for parents (provided by the nonprofit Refugee Transitions), mental health and mentoring services at the school wellness center, medical services at a nearby high school health clinic, and an after-school and weekend sports program run by Soccer Without Borders.

The school also relies upon its collaboration structures to ensure it is meeting students' needs. Like other schools affiliated with the Internationals Network, Oakland International High School is designed so that grade-level teaching teams composed of a math teacher, an English teacher, a social studies teacher, and a science teacher share a group of students and meet at least weekly as a team, along with the counselor attached to that cohort, to discuss their common students and their interdisciplinary curriculum planning.[6]

The school's attention to collaboration also extends to families and communities. To engage families as partners, Oakland International teachers and staff conduct at least two home visits each year to develop relationships with families, and they encourage and support parent participation on school teams that develop programs and determine budgets. Staff also participate in immersive "community walks" designed by parents, students, and community leaders in which they visit important landmarks and meet with community leaders and families.

Community members also serve on the school's site leadership team and the Coordination of Services Team, which help determine the best supports for students and families. Team members review student attendance and other data sources each week to determine which students would benefit from case management, home visits, or other interventions. Because the school values the knowledge and engagement of families and community members, the school climate is infused with trusting relationships that support student well-being.

Oakland International High School is just one of many community schools across the United States that have found a way to become a true hub for the communities they serve and to provide students, families, and staff with the support they need to be successful.

Sources: Adapted from Coalition for Community Schools. (2017). *2017 community schools award profiles*; Maier, A., & Levin-Guracar, E. (n.d.). *Performance assessment profile: Oakland International High School*. Learning Policy Institute. Outcome data from California Department of Education School and District Dashboards.

Schools that foster a **shared understanding of development** also enable educators to provide universal supports to all students. These shared developmental frameworks help practitioners to think about students holistically and nurture them in the same way, providing consistency and safety in school interactions.

A Shared Developmental Framework in the School Development Program

The School Development Program (SDP), developed by Dr. James Comer of Yale University, enables schools to adopt and implement a shared developmental framework by educating principals, parents, teachers, community leaders, and health care workers about child development and establishing mechanisms for collaborative working relationships among them. Building upon these relationships to address six developmental pathways—social-interactive, psycho-emotional, ethical, cognitive, linguistic, and physical—the program enables all parties to become knowledgeable about and supportive of child development in nonpunitive ways. Research on the SDP shows that it helps reduce absenteeism and suspension, improves school climate and relationships among students and teachers, increases student self-competence and self-concept, and strengthens achievement.[7]

Source: Adapted from Darling-Hammond, L., & Cook-Harvey, C. M. (2018). *Educating the whole child: Improving school climate to support student success*. Learning Policy Institute.

Universal supports are also made effective through the implementation of pedagogical practices based on Universal Design for Learning and culturally responsive pedagogies that make content accessible to a wide range of learners. (See "Environments Filled With Safety and Belonging" and "Rich Learning Experiences and Knowledge Development" for a fuller treatment of these practices.)

Providing supplemental supports

Tier 2 supplemental supports that address both academic and non-academic needs should be readily available and easily accessed.

Universal supports—including shared developmental frameworks, student-centered observations, and collaborative processes—also help surface the additional supports that may be needed both for academic progress and for social, emotional, and cognitive development. These additional supports, often termed supplemental supports or Tier 2 interventions, provide students with targeted supports that can address their distinct, personalized needs.

There are several structures that schools can put in place to ensure that supplemental supports are available for the young people who need them. Schools may have **dedicated personnel**, like learning specialists, counselors, or social workers, on-site to provide supplemental supports in classrooms or in established resource rooms to provide extra help. Schools can also **dedicate time** for students throughout the school day to receive additional academic support. This can take the form of flexible scheduling opportunities, like holding open office hours or having dedicated class periods during which students and educators can come together to work through course material or other learning challenges, as well as expanded learning time available after school, in tutoring blocks, or in the summer. (See "Meeting Student Needs With Tier 2 Supports" for a closer look at how supplemental supports can be mobilized to address emerging concerns.) As we illustrate below, the practices used within these structures need to be informed by strong pedagogical knowledge; affirming relationships; and approaches that are focused on engagement, acceleration, and support for student agency, rather than stigma and remediation.

Meeting Student Needs With Tier 2 Supports

Ms. Johnson, a 4th-grade teacher at Garden Street Elementary School in Brewster, NY, left her previous school because she felt isolated in her efforts to address the multifaceted needs of her students, particularly those with more significant needs. Her experience at Garden Street has been quite different, starting with the ongoing professional development that is provided to staff for understanding and supporting the varying academic, behavioral, and social and emotional needs of all students. She began her first school year at Garden Street supported in a culture of collaboration and equipped with a clear understanding of how to effectively navigate the tiered support system to best serve the diverse needs of her new 4th-grade class.

By the end of October, Ms. Johnson had become increasingly concerned about a student in her class named Keisha. She was articulate and creative, possessing a confidence that surpassed her 9 years. However, Keisha's mother informed Ms. Johnson that Keisha's father had been incarcerated over the summer, and Keisha was reluctant to discuss the situation with anyone. Despite performing well in previous grades, Keisha was beginning to receive lower marks in several subjects as her effort diminished, and she was occasionally removed from class to address her

challenging behavior. Her behavior was also causing disruptions for other students in the classroom. She frequently had verbal disagreements with classmates and, on occasion, spoke disrespectfully to Ms. Johnson, despite their positive relationship. Ms. Johnson recognized these changes as "indicators of need" for Keisha, which prompted her to begin the process of submitting a referral to the school's Tier 2 Kid Talk Team.

Next, Ms. Johnson observed and collected the necessary data and background information and submitted the referral form to the "Kid Talk" lead before the team meeting. During the meeting with other grade-level staff members, Ms. Johnson identified Keisha's strengths as well as her concerns, and collaboratively discussed a plan for support. As a result, Keisha was enrolled in the school's 10-week support group for students of incarcerated parents. To help Ms. Johnson provide a supportive environment, the school offered some additional resources to enhance her developing understanding of the connection between Keisha's anger over her father's sudden absence and the shift in her behavior and learning. Ms. Johnson was also provided some additional strategies in class to help Keisha de-escalate and just "take a break" when needed. Ms. Johnson felt confident in implementing the supports suggested, with a plan to monitor Keisha's academic and behavior concerns and report back to the team the next month. Ms. Johnson was able to provide a range of supports to address Keisha's multiple needs so that Keisha could re-establish a more positive set of relationships and behaviors in school.

Source: Adapted from Turnaround for Children. (2020). *Tiered Supports: Educational Practice Toolkit 6.1*.

It is also important to have additional support readily available. Rather than engaging in tracking, which differentiates students' access to quality curriculum and has been found to depress the achievement of low-tracked groups,[8] providing access to **high-quality tutoring** opportunities is an effective means for schools to provide supplemental supports. There is a well-established literature on the positive effects of tutoring, which can produce large gains that can be achieved cost-effectively both in person and virtually.[9] Effective tutoring is accomplished not by a cadre of ever-changing, untrained volunteers, but by a focused group of trained individuals working consistently with individuals or small groups of students. In particular, research supports high-dosage tutoring in which tutors work consistently at least 3 days per week for full class sessions (during or after school) with students one-on-one or in very small groups, often accomplishing large gains in relatively short periods of time.

These may be specially trained teachers, as in programs such as Reading Recovery that use a set of well-defined methods one-on-one or in small groups and have been found to have strong positive effects on reading gains for struggling readers,[10] including students with special education needs and English learners.[11] (See "Targeted Literacy Supports in Gridley Unified.") They may also be recent college graduates, including AmeriCorps volunteers, who receive training to work with students, as in the Boston MATCH Education program. In daily 50-minute sessions added to their regular math classes, two students working with a tutor gained an additional 1 to 2 years of math proficiency by focusing on the specific areas they needed to master while also preparing for their standard class. Tutors in programs such as these have the advantage of a well-developed curriculum with frequent formative assessments to gauge and guide where support is needed.[12]

Targeted Literacy Supports in Gridley Unified

Selected as a "positive outlier" in a recent study of California districts whose Black, Latino/a, and White students outperformed their peers, Gridley Unified School District serves just over 2,000 students across five schools in a small rural town in the upper Sacramento Valley. Key to the district's performance in English language arts is the range of interventions it has in place to support early literacy. The foundation for strong intervention and support begins with 1st-graders at the k–1 primary school.

The school seeks to establish a strong culture of reading early on, engaging parents so that they create habits at home, as noted by the school's principal: "We set the tone early…. In 1st grade they have to go home and read 20 minutes a night. They need to practice…. We just kind of build that in, … that [reading] is just what we do here. This is what we do in Gridley." The school also has a strong base in Reading Recovery. Students receive an initial assessment to identify their progress, and as needed, they receive Reading Recovery tutoring, which provides 30-minute one-on-one reading instruction daily.

In grades 2–5 at the district's elementary school, a two-person reading specialist team assesses every student in the school three times per year for areas needing skills support. The team also assigns targeted intervention or instruction, designates English language development group work, and provides additional resources to students' primary classroom teachers. By assessing every student and working with as many as possible (around 150 of 600 students), the team identifies literacy issues early, and skills-specific reading support is normalized as part of elementary education.

Gridley's middle school offers several tiers of support. Every student has a 5th-period class during which they receive learning support in either mathematics or English language arts or take an enrichment class determined based on needs identified through benchmark assessments. Students can rotate among classes every 6 to 8 weeks as they make progress on the identified skills. Supplementary support is also provided through extended English language arts blocks for students needing additional support. English learners participate in one of three levels of designated English language development. The school also offers additional support for promising students in high school through Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) classes that teach study skills and support success in college preparatory classes.

Source: Adapted from Burns, D., Darling-Hammond, L., & Scott, C. (with Allbright, T., Carver-Thomas, D., Daramola, E. J., David, J. L., Hernández, L. E., Kennedy, K. E., Marsh, J. A., Moore, C. A., Podolsky, A., Shields, P. M., & Talbert, J. E.). (2019). *Closing the opportunity gap: How positive outlier districts in California are pursuing equitable access to deeper learning*. Learning Policy Institute.

Extended learning time (ELT) is another school structure that can enable important supplemental supports during out-of-school time. After-school programs are a common way ELT is incorporated into a school's system of supports. Bridge programs offered during school breaks can also allow expert teachers to work with small groups of students, helping them both catch up and look ahead in specific skill areas.[13] In addition, ELT includes summer learning programs, which have been found to be most effective when they offer nonacademic enrichment along with academic supports, use a trained group of stable staff, are experienced for multiple summers, and provide a purposeful curriculum.[14]

These ELT opportunities can accelerate learning and reduce opportunity gaps between what students from low-income families and their peers from middle- and upper-income families experience during out-of-school hours. Yet additional time will not in and of itself promote positive student outcomes; additional learning time must be characterized by high-quality and meaningful practice in order to move the needle on student achievement and engagement.[15] For example, when ELT programs reinforce a school's curriculum, pedagogy, and core values, they are more effective in supporting student outcomes, growth, and engagement. (See "Aligning Extended Learning Time With Classroom Instruction in Meriden.")

> These extended learning time opportunities can accelerate learning and reduce opportunity gaps between what students from low-income families and their peers from middle- and upper-income families experience during out-of-school hours.

Aligning Extended Learning Time With Classroom Instruction in Meriden

Meriden Public Schools District in Connecticut has integrated extended learning time with traditional instruction. In 2012, the superintendent and the local teachers union in Meriden partnered with the YMCA and the Boys & Girls Club to add 100 minutes per day (roughly equivalent to 40 additional school days annually) of personalized learning time at three low-performing schools. The three participating schools re-engineered their schedules to include an enrichment block, during which community partners staff the classrooms as teachers and provide instruction in three key enrichment areas: healthy living, literacy, and STEM. A key component of Meriden's after-school program is that staff at the community organizations work closely with teachers to align after-school activities with learning during the traditional day and with the schools' instructional goals. Additionally, the participating schools include community partners in professional learning communities with school staff. This type of collaboration between teachers and providers of ELT ensures that additional learning time is strongly linked with the learning opportunities during the school day and that all learning opportunities complement one another in service of supporting primary instructional goals. The results in Meriden were promising: Two of the three participating schools saw gains in attendance rates, core subject test scores, and teacher ratings, which exceeded districtwide averages.

Source: Adapted from Darling-Hammond, L., Schachner, A., & Edgerton, A. K. (with Badrinarayan, A., Cardichon, J., Cookson, P. W., Jr., Griffith, M., Klevan, S., Maier, A., Martinez, M., Melnick, H., Truong, N., & Wojcikiewicz, S.). (2020). *Restarting and reinventing school: Learning in the time of COVID and beyond*. Learning Policy Institute.

ELT opportunities are also more impactful when they incorporate deeper learning practices that engage youth in meaningful content that is connected to students' lives outside of school. Citizen Schools (CS) is an example of ELT programming that engages deeper learning pedagogies for students and generates powerful results for learners.[16] CS youth participate in apprenticeships that consist of hands-on learning projects led by volunteer citizen teachers. Apprentices work in small groups to do project-based work such as litigating mock trials, publishing children's books, and building solar cars. These apprenticeships are complemented with activities that help students develop their organizational and study skills, along with homework help. Programs culminate with opportunities for participants to publicly present their projects.

Deeper learning practices that emphasize culturally relevant learning that increases student participation and motivation are also important features of extended learning opportunities. (See "Culturally Relevant Learning in Freedom Schools" for a closer look.)

Culturally Relevant Learning in Freedom Schools

A summer program associated with the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools illustrates how culturally relevant learning can be infused into extended learning opportunities. CDF Freedom Schools are modeled after the 1963 Mississippi Freedom Schools, which sought to invest in communities by developing leaders who could exercise their political power. CDF Freedom Schools partner with community organizations, churches, and schools to provide literacy-rich summer programs for k–12 students. Programs vary in length from 5 to 8 weeks and include a curriculum designed to promote cultural and historical consciousness. The program incorporates five content areas: social action and civic engagement, intergenerational leadership, nutrition and health, parent and family involvement, and academic enrichment.

A typical CDF Freedom School day begins with a community meeting called Harambee (a Kiswahili word that means "let's come together"). This is followed by a 3-hour block of literacy instruction during which students engage with the Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC). The IRC incorporates a carefully selected array of books that reflect a wide variety of cultures and experiences as well as activities that are designed to be engaging and develop students' love of reading. Afternoons are dedicated to activities related to the themes included in the IRC. Social action and community service are key components of CDF Freedom Schools. At the start of the program, staff and students work together to identify issues affecting their community, and throughout the course of the program, students develop and implement a social action plan to address the community issues they identified. These social action projects embody a foundational idea that the CDF Freedom Schools work to instill in students: I can and must make a difference. A multiyear evaluation reported that participation in CDF Freedom Schools was associated with positive character development outcomes and achievement on standardized reading tests.[17]

Source: Adapted from Darling-Hammond, L., Schachner, A., & Edgerton, A. K. (with Badrinarayan, A., Cardichon, J., Cookson, P. W., Jr., Griffith, M., Klevan, S., Maier, A., Martinez, M., Melnick, H., Truong, N., & Wojcikiewicz, S.). (2020). *Restarting and reinventing school: Learning in the time of COVID and beyond*. Learning Policy Institute.

Providing intensive supports and interventions

Tier 3 supports and interventions should orchestrate programs and partnerships to provide highly personalized and well-integrated supports for learning and well-being.

An integrated support system should have individualized supports in place that can provide more intensive intervention for learners when needed. These supports, often known as Tier 3 interventions, are pursued when it becomes evident that universal and supplemental supports are not adequately supporting a young person's academic growth or well-being and can include assistance from outside agencies. Having strong Tier 3 interventions in place helps to enable access to comprehensive and personalized services that can meet students' varied needs.

These interventions should include individualized opportunities for increased academic support as well as access to social, emotional, and physical and mental health services depending on a learner's areas of strength and struggle. In addition to supporting a young person's healthy development, these interventions can mitigate the effects of trauma and promote healing for those with prolonged exposure to stress and adversity, including those facing racial violence and poverty and the housing, health, and safety concerns that often go with them. (See "Individualized Supports in Ms. Harris's Classroom" for an example of how increasing levels of intervention can be accessed in a school setting.)

Individualized Supports in Ms. Harris's Classroom

Ms. Harris's classroom provides a window into how increasing levels of support and intervention can be collaboratively identified to meet the individual needs of learners in an elementary setting.

Ms. Harris perceived that Eriyanna initially appeared to have low motivation for improving her reading and a fairly high level of avoidance motivation for reading. Most of the time during reading instruction she seemed to be disengaged and often acted out.

Matt seemed highly motivated to do whatever was prescribed to help him learn to read better, but his motivation started to disappear after a few weeks of hard work. He seemed to have trouble persevering, and as his engagement waned, he tended to misbehave.

José had just transferred into the school and was having problems adjusting to the classroom activity and demands.

Ms. Harris asked the school psychologist to spend some time in her class collaborating on strategies to help her learn how to support these students and some others more effectively. They worked out specific plans for enhancing students' motivation, re-engaging those who had disengaged, and addressing needs such as missing prerequisite readiness skills. This was sufficient to help Eriyanna and Matt, but José needed something more.

The psychologist took time to sit down with José in class and ask what was going on. José indicated that some classmates were picking on him. He also said he was having trouble with reading and was generally unhappy at school. Ms. Harris and the psychologist decided that a volunteer trained and supervised by the psychologist would be assigned to provide tutoring and additional support with a specific focus on social and emotional concerns. As José warmed to the volunteer, he began to talk about trauma he had experienced before he came to the United States. The volunteer informed the psychologist, who made an independent assessment and concluded there was a clear need for therapeutic intervention. The psychologist made a referral and coordinated a plan of action between the therapist and the involved school staff. A priority was placed on ensuring that José would have a safe, supportive environment at school. Over the ensuing months, José indicated that he felt more secure; those working with him perceived a similar change. As the volunteer working with him put it, José was now "shining and looking brilliant."

Source: Vignette provided by Howard Adelman from the Center for Mental Health in Schools and Student/Learning Supports at UCLA.

A number of structures help schools integrate services and interventions by linking them to a range of academic, health, and social services. Prominent among these are approaches that enable the **coordination of services**, which can help to ensure access and responsiveness. Some of these practices relate to routines that allow educators, families, and other stakeholders to regularly discuss how learning and well-being are being supported. **Regular check-ins or meetings** across teams, roles, and stakeholders can enhance this kind of consistent communication and data exchange. Internal structures like these create opportunities to ensure that students have access to what they need when they need it and to elucidate areas where additional interventions may be appropriate.

Partnerships between schools and nonprofits also support greater coordination and access to services, youth development programs, and academic and cultural enrichment. The Boston College Center for Optimized Student Support is one such example, as it has partnered with schools in building and sustaining integrated support systems through City Connects. (See "How Integrated Support Systems Operate in Schools Working With City Connects.") Communities In Schools (CIS) is another well-established program that helps schools integrate student supports by leveraging community-based resources. To do so, CIS places a full-time site coordinator at each school who cultivates the community relationships needed to develop and implement services in an effective and integrated way. In addition, site coordinators conduct needs assessments at the beginning of the school year and then meet with partnering schools throughout the year to develop tailored plans to implement integrated support systems.

How Integrated Support Systems Operate in Schools Working With City Connects*

City Connects transforms existing student supports in a school and in the surrounding community into a system of care that addresses the strengths and needs of each student across all developmental domains. To date, City Connects has implemented its approach in 82 schools across 6 states, serving 26,045 students in 2018–19,[18] with positive effects on student achievement in participating schools.[19]

In its approach, City Connects creates a tailored plan of resources, opportunities, and relationships, with the goal of supporting each student to be ready to learn and engage in school. A coordinator, usually a school counselor or school social worker, meets with every teacher in the fall in a process known as "Whole Class Review." There is ongoing feedback and follow-up to ensure a responsive school environment and delivery of the right resources to the right student at the right time throughout the calendar year.

For example, through the City Connects Whole Class Review process, Jonah's 3rd-grade teacher at the Helen Keller School noted strengths and mild educational risk (Tier 2) when she met with the coordinator. Math and attendance were areas of strength for Jonah at the start of the school year. He was reading slightly below grade level. At times, he presented some challenging behaviors in the classroom. On the basis of this review, Jonah was referred to a small-group reading intervention and also to a social and emotional learning intervention.

Later in the fall, an additional need arose. Jonah's family was facing financial hardship, so they received donations from the school and from community-based holiday assistance programs. A need was also identified for seasonally appropriate clothing. A program that distributes supplies and clothing was able to provide Jonah with the warm winter clothing he needed as the seasons changed, along with books and personal care items. Over the course of the year, Jonah's behavior challenges escalated. The coordinator arranged school-based supports (classroom behavioral systems, meetings with the school-based behavior team, counseling) to help manage his oppositional behaviors and anger. The services were effective for Jonah; his behavior improved by the end of the year, and he needed less support as he developed more self-control and emotional awareness. Jonah made strong academic progress in the classroom and on statewide tests.

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Brielle's 2nd-grade teacher at the Dr. Vicente Gold School observed strengths as well as needs and indicated that Brielle could benefit from intensive interventions (Tier 3) when she met with the City Connects coordinator. An area of strength for Brielle was attendance; despite the family's struggles with homelessness and a move in the early part of the year, Brielle maintained good attendance. Family was another area of strength, with a parent advocating for Brielle throughout the school year. Brielle's classroom work was below grade level in both reading and math. She had significant behavioral challenges and poor personal hygiene. Her teacher noted that she was often tired in school and that she struggled with emotional regulation, often hitting adults and other children during outbursts, which were sometimes a result of being teased by peers for having dirty clothing.

Over the course of the school year, Brielle received many services to help support her needs, including reading interventions, out-of-school counseling services, and clothing resources. Building on the strong family involvement with the school, the coordinator arranged education for Brielle's parent on personal care for children. After these services were put in place, Brielle's behaviors improved. The coordinator observed that Brielle was coming to school with better hygiene. She was no longer having outbursts and made more friends.

As the school year continued, Brielle was able to make significant academic progress. She also demonstrated positive growth in behavior, with further reduction in behavior problems. Her teacher reported that she was able to express herself calmly in class, was developing stronger friendships, and appeared to be a happier child.

*Names of schools and children and some additional details have been changed to protect anonymity.
Source: Adapted from City Connects. (2020). *City Connects: Intervention & impact progress report 2020*.

In addition to partnerships, there are school models that incorporate integrated support systems as a characteristic feature of their designs. Prominent among these are **community schools**, which offer integrated student supports, expanded learning time and opportunities, family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices.[20] These schools often draw on a wide range of community and cultural resources, including partnerships with families, to strengthen trust and build resilience as children have more support systems and people work collaboratively to help address the stresses of poverty and associated adversities children may face. Many community schools operate year-round, from morning to evening, serving both children and adults.

Community schools also have dedicated staff (e.g., community school director, family liaison) who support the coordination and sustainability of their various structures and programs. Community school personnel are typically part of the school leadership team and other governance bodies in the school. The community school manager or director generally conducts assets and needs assessments, recruits and coordinates the work of community resources, and tracks program data.[21]

There are several models of community schools, all of which have been adapted to respond to local assets and needs. Common models include the lead agency model, where community schools primarily partner with a community agency to build and sustain their approaches and their integrated support systems. (See "Partnering With a Lead Agency in a Community School.") Other models include those that are university-assisted, such as University-Assisted Community Schools with the University of Pennsylvania and the UCLA Consortium of Community Schools in Los Angeles, which includes the Social Justice Humanitas Academy featured in this section's opening vignette. There are also district-led community schools, like those in Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), where each school is a designated community school with a coordinator who helps organize and formalize partnerships that provide academic supports, mentoring, after-school programming, and mental health services. Schools in OUSD also benefit from 16 school-based health centers across the district that provide medical, optometry, mental health, health education, youth development, and dental services.[22] Finally, new approaches include county-organized networks of community schools, like those developed by Alameda and Los Angeles counties in California, orchestrating a range of federal, state, and county-provided services for students in a network of schools that also function as a learning community.[23]

Partnering With a Lead Agency in a Community School

Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School, located in the South Bronx (New York City) has partnered with the Children's Aid Society, a comprehensive New York City youth service provider, since 2006. Children's Aid Society is fully integrated into the life of the school, providing on-site supports and services such as an extensive extracurricular program and a Student Success Center (college access office). In addition, Fannie Lou students have access to comprehensive school-linked medical and mental health services (including a specialized teen clinic) through the Children's Aid Society Bronx Family Center, located three blocks from the school. Through a partnership with the Helen Keller Institute, free vision screenings and eyeglasses are available to any student who needs them, while a Children's Aid health educator and a full-time social worker provide support during the school day. An extended learning program focuses on youth development, including culinary arts and a student government engaging with local officials.

Source: Example provided by Jane Quinn, the former Vice President for Community Schools and Director of the National Center for Community Schools at the Children's Aid Society.

Evidence shows that community schools can improve outcomes for students, including attendance, academic achievement, high school graduation rates, and reduced racial and economic achievement gaps.[24] A recent study of New York City's community schools initiative, comprising more than 250 schools, found a drop in chronic absenteeism, with the biggest effects on the most vulnerable students, and a decline in disciplinary incidents, as well as higher rates of grade promotion, credit accumulation, and high school graduation.[25]

Community schools have been well positioned to support students through intense moments of crisis, including the recent obstacles posed by COVID-19. Early research suggests that with their integrated support systems and the various structures they have to support engagement and collaborative decision-making, community schools have been rapid responders, allowing them to provide families and students with much-needed supports.[26]

While schools can adopt varied structures and models to coordinate and implement integrated systems of support that provide increasing levels of intervention for students, it is important that approaches are culturally and linguistically responsive and asset-based. In addition, schools must ensure that supports are available and organized in a non-stigmatizing fashion. Supports should be accessible in ways that do not create tracking or segregated learning spaces, and accessing them should be treated as the norm. These practices should extend to the approaches used to support students with special needs, who can receive individualized interventions through inclusion models that benefit all students and allow all to remain part of a broader community.

> While schools can adopt varied structures and models to coordinate and implement integrated systems of support that provide increasing levels of intervention for students, it is important that approaches are culturally and linguistically responsive and asset-based.

Summary

Comprehensive integrated support systems enable youth learning and well-being. There is no single way to create and sustain these systems, but key structures—including assessments and the implementation of universal, supplemental, and intensive supports—can bolster student learning and development, particularly when they are implemented in collaborative, culturally responsive, and coordinated ways. The development and sustainability of learning settings that create unified and integrated support systems has been ongoing across the country for decades. Several organizations provide districts and schools with resources that can guide them in this important endeavor. (See "Where to Go for More Resources.")

Where to Go for More Resources

Multi-tiered systems of support

- Rally Platform for Student Success (CORE Districts): Practitioners can use this interactive tool to support comprehensive data collection and analysis on students' holistic needs and assets. By displaying assessment data over the years, information about students' well-being, open-ended student quotes, and teacher notes, practitioners can gain more comprehensive background knowledge on students. Additionally, the platform incorporates equity pauses, which are brief activities that facilitate individual or collective reflection on students to help identify strategies that best support them.

- Center for Mental Health in Schools and Student/Learning Supports at UCLA: The center offers a wealth of free resources on its website, including a System Change Toolkit for transforming student and learning supports and Gateway to a World of Resources for Enhancing MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, which is a links "map" that facilitates various forms of networking and helps analyze strengths, weaknesses, and gaps or inequities in available resources. A core facet of the center's work is the National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports.

- National Center on Intensive Intervention: The center provides information and resources on effective academic and behavioral intervention programs, including research reviews of intervention programs, to assist with selecting an evidence-based approach matched to a school's or district's needs.

- Turnaround for Children: Turnaround produces research-based tools for educators, such as a toolkit on how to use a whole child vision to assess and plan for tiered systems of support and resources to inform a school crisis plan, to accelerate healthy student development and academic achievement. These include Tiered Supports, a toolkit to help educators use a whole child vision to assess and plan for Tier 2 and Tier 3 systems, and Responding to Crisis Within a Tiered Supports System, a collection of tools to build a school crisis plan, including engaging caregivers and families, monitoring for progress, and providing services and support.

- *Academic Success for All Students: A Multi-Tiered Approach* (Edutopia): This Edutopia video, and several other articles, highlights how a school in Florida is using a multi-tiered systems of support framework to meet the needs of every student.

- Integrate Student Supports With Schoolwide SEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning): This resource provides guidance on how schools can integrate social and emotional learning into their multi-tiered systems of support framework.

Extended learning time

- How Learning Happens (Edutopia): This video series illustrates strategies that enact the science of learning and development in schools and other learning settings. It includes several video series on various topics, such as fostering positive relationships, cultivating a belonging mindset, developing foundational skills and academic confidence, establishing positive conditions for learning, and learning beyond the school day.

- A School Year Like No Other Demands a New Learning Day: A Blueprint for How Afterschool Programs & Community Partners Can Help (Afterschool Alliance): This blueprint offers building blocks for school–community partnerships to address equity and co-construct the learning day in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Afterschool Programs: A Review of Evidence Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (Research for Action): Based on a literature review of studies published since 2000, this review summarizes the effectiveness of specific after-school programs. The review uses the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) evidence framework to assess the evidence of over 60 after-school programs. A companion guide provides profiles of each after-school program included in the review as well as studies of each program's effectiveness.

- *Getting to Work on Summer Learning: Recommended Practices for Success*, 2nd Ed. (RAND Corporation): Based on thousands of hours of observations, interviews, and surveys, this report provides guidance for district leaders and their partners for launching, improving, and sustaining effective summer learning programs.

- *Investing in Successful Summer Programs: A Review of Evidence Under the Every Student Succeeds Act* (RAND Corporation): This report provides current information about the effectiveness of summer programs for k–12 students to help practitioners, funders, and policymakers make evidence-based investments. The review uses the ESSA evidence framework to assess the effectiveness of summer programs and includes descriptions of 43 summer programs that align with ESSA evidence standards.

School-based health supports

- Whole Child Network (ASCD): The Whole Child Network offers a set of tools for practitioners to support students across ASCD's five whole child tenets: healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. These resources include a needs assessment survey, action guide, benchmarks for each tenet, and more.

- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL): CASEL offers a comprehensive collection of high-quality social and emotional learning tools and resources to inform and support educators, researchers, policymakers, and parents who are leading this work in the field.

- Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC): HSC aims to support schools in providing students with healthy environments, nutritious food, health services, and physical activity. HSC's resource center provides several tools that enable school districts, educators, and families to engage in this work, including advocacy guides and resources to incorporate health and wellness into schools.

- Rural Health Information Hub: The website contains a database of resources that can support practitioners who work in rural schools. Specifically, its resources can help leaders, educators, and other school-based personnel to build schools and systems that integrate services in ways that acknowledge and address the unique needs and infrastructure of rural communities.

- The Children's Safety Network (CSN): CSN works with state and jurisdiction Maternal and Child Health programs and Injury and Violence Prevention programs to create an environment in which all infants, children, and youth are safe and healthy.

- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP): NASP has made many handouts from its resource "Helping Children at Home and School III" freely available as a public service to provide parents and teachers with up-to-date information and proven, solutions-based strategies for home and classroom applications.

Community schools

- *What Are Community Schools?* (Partnership for the Future of Learning): This video describes the four key features of community schools, the importance of community school coordinators, and strategies for funding community schools.

- *Community Schools Playbook* (Partnership for the Future of Learning): This playbook provides model legislation, real-world examples, and many additional resources for state and local leaders who want to support community schools.

- On the Rise: Cincinnati's Community Learning Centers (Partnership for the Future of Learning): This film series highlights how Cincinnati's community schools, called "Community Learning Centers," are working to support students and families. The videos address several topics, including community engagement, community development, pathways for all students, and teaching partnerships.

- How to Start a Community School (Coalition for Community Schools): This toolkit provides information on how to implement a community school initiative and focuses on several topics, including vision and strategic planning, building a leadership team, needs and capacity assessments, sharing space and facilities, financing your community school, and research and evaluation.

- Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships: The Community Schools Strategy (Coalition for Community Schools): This interactive guide is intended to support communities in planning, implementing, and sustaining a community schools strategy.

- *Building Community Schools: A Guide for Action* (National Center for Community Schools): This guide provides information on several topics related to implementing and sustaining community schools, including key elements of community schools, models of community schools across the country, and case studies.

- National Center for Community Schools (NCCS): The focus of NCCS, a part of Children's Aid, is to build the capacity of schools and districts to work in meaningful long-term relationships with community partners. Since 1994, NCCS has developed a variety of free planning tools, implementation guides, videos, and other resources and has also provided intensive assistance (training, on-site consultation, and strategic planning facilitation) on a fee-for-service basis. NCCS is a founding and active member of the Coalition for Community Schools.

- Office of Community Schools (New York City Department of Education): The New York City Office of Community Schools runs the largest community school initiative in the country and offers a wide variety of well-developed, free resources for schools and community partners on topics ranging from proven strategies to reduce chronic absence to how to run weekly student support meetings.

- Coalition for Community Schools: Housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership, the Coalition for Community Schools leads advocacy and networking activities for the community school field. The coalition is an alliance of national, state, and local organizations in k–12 education, youth development, community planning and development, family support, health and human services, government, and philanthropy.

- *Financing Community Schools: A Framework for Growth and Sustainability* (Partnership for the Future of Learning): This finance brief discusses community schools funding in depth. It provides a framework for financing community schools and examples of how community schools at varying stages of development can identify and implement financing strategies.

- *Leading With Purpose and Passion: A Guide for Community School Directors* (National Center for Community Schools): This printed guide, developed by the National Center for Community Schools, provides practical advice and concrete resources for community school directors, with an emphasis on their leadership role in schools.

References

For more information on the research supporting the science and pedagogical practices discussed in this section, please see these foundational articles and reports:

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