Fortifying the Backbone of Safe and Supportive Schools Utilizing an Integrated MTSS Framework

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Systems of the Human Body

- Integumentary
- Muscular
- Skeletal
- Nervous
- Circulatory
- Lymphatic
- Respiratory
- Endocrine
- Urinary/Excretory
- Reproductive
- Digestive
Human systems are complex.
Complex systems are non-linear, dynamic, and interconnected.
Complexity in **complex adaptive systems** refers to the potential for emergent behavior in **complex** and unpredictable phenomena. Examples of **complex** adapting **systems** include the economy, ecosystems, the human brain, developing embryos and ant colonies. Each is a **system** with a network of many agents acting in parallel.
Initiative Fatigue

When the number of initiatives increases while time, resources and emotional energy are constant, each new initiative no matter how well conceived or well intentioned – will receive fewer minutes, dollars and ounces of emotional energy than its predecessors. - ASCD
A complex adaptive system (CAS) is defined as “a group of semi-autonomous agents who interact in interdependent ways to produce system-wide patterns, such that those patterns then influence behavior of the agents.” (Dooley, 1996)
Layered Systems

**Chaotic**: No relationship between cause and effect at systems level

**Simple**: The relationship between cause and effect is known

**Complicated**: Relationship between cause and effect requires analysis, investigation, or expert knowledge

**Complex**: Relationship between cause and effect can only be perceived in retrospect
Building a System Structure
MTSS Components are also essential for integration.
Conditions for Integration

Achieving Large-Scale Change through Collective Impact Involves 5 Key Conditions for Shared Success

- **Common Agenda**: All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
- **Shared Measurement**: Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.
- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**: Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
- **Continuous Communication**: Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and appreciate common motivation.
- **Backbone Support**: Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.

Source: Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work, 2012; FSG Interviews
Role of the State Education Agency in School Based Mental Health
# Backbone Effectiveness: 27 Indicators

## Guide Vision and Strategy
- Partners accurately describe the **common agenda**
- Partners **publicly discuss / advocate for** common agenda goals
- Partners’ **individual work is increasingly aligned** with common agenda
- Board members and key leaders increasingly **look to backbone** organization for initiative support, strategic guidance and leadership

## Support Aligned Activities
- Partners **articulate their role** in the initiative
- Relevant stakeholders are engaged in the initiative
- Partners **communicate and coordinate** efforts regularly, with, and independently of, backbone
- Partners report increasing levels of **trust** with one another
- Partners increase **scope / type of collaborative work**
- Partners improve **quality** of their work
- Partners improve **efficiency** of their work
- Partners feel **supported and recognized** in their work

## Establish Shared Measurement Practices
- Shared **data system** is in development
- Partners **understand the value** of shared data
- Partners have robust / **shared data capacity**
- Partners **make decisions** based on data
- Partners utilize data in a meaningful way

## Build Public Will
- Community members are increasingly **aware** of the issue(s)
- Community members express **support** for the initiative
- Community members feel **empowered** to engage in the issue(s)
- Community members increasingly **take action**

## Advance Policy
- Target audience (e.g., influencers and policymakers) is increasingly **aware** of the initiative
- Target audiences **advocate** for changes to the system aligned with initiative goals
- Public **policy** is increasingly **aligned** with initiative goals

## Mobilize Funding
- Funders are asking nonprofits to **align** to initiative goals
- Funders are **redirecting funds** to support initiative goals
- **New resources** from public and private sources are being contributed to partners and initiative

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Source: FSG and Greater Cincinnati Foundation
Top Takeaways

• Individual organizations struggle with integration without intentional support assisting with collective impact.
• Build systems that bring out the best in employees and learners across state, district, and school systems.
• SEAs and partners can and should shift focus over time with lessons learned from the field.
• SEA partners need ongoing assistance with data—make using data for decision making easy.
• External communications, building public will, and advancing policy are common SEA challenges and actions.
NEVADA’S FRAMEWORK FOR INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS

MTSS Components:
- Teaching
- Data based decision making
- Tiered supports
- Instruction as prevention
- Screening
- Evidence based practices
- Progress monitoring

System of Care Values:
- Family driven
- Youth guided
- Culturally & linguistically appropriate
- Individualized & community based
- Evidence based services & practices

Intervention Plan
- Tiered supports
- Evidence based programs/practices
- High Fidelity Wraparound

Screening/Assessment
- Data based decision making
- Progress Monitoring

Integrated Student Support Team
Parents/Guardians as Partners
- Effective communication
- Consent & Release of Information

SCHOOL
Referral

No Wrong Door – Referring Sources May Include:
At School:
- SafeVoice
- Universal Screener
- Educator concern
- Parent/Guardian
- Student
- Behavior
- Attendance
- Mental Health

In the Community:
- Community Coalitions
- Law Enforcement
- Community MTI Providers
- Parent Advocacy Groups
- Juvenile Justice
- Child Protective Services

Universal Services Promote Prevention & Early Intervention
Academic:
- High Expectations/Rigor
- Differentiated Instruction
- Comprehensive Student Supports (Counselors & Psychologists)

School Climate:
- Surveys (students, parents, & educators)
- Violence & Risk
- Threat Assessment
- Anti-bullying laws
- SafeVoice

Behavior:
- PBIS
- Restorative Practices
- Trauma Informed Schools
- Zero disproportionality

SEL/SEAD:
- For students and educators
- Professional training
- Development

Mental Health:
- Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)
- Signs of Suicide (SOS)
- System of Care
- Social Workers in Schools (SWiS) state block grant

Equity as Our Foundation: “All Means All”

Partnerships
(System of Care)
- Community Providers
- Mobile Crisis Response
- Juvenile Justice
- Child Protective Services
- Parent/Community Organizations

SafeVoice MDT

Preventing/MI for data & information sharing

= Individualized supports continue for as long as additional supports are needed, as indicated by progress monitoring & data

Juvenile Justice
Hospital/ER

Community Provider

Mobile Crisis Response

Law Enforcement

Nevada Ready!
Signs of Initiative Fatigue

- **Overwhelm**
  - Can be accompanied by physical symptoms
  - Increased stress and/or anxiety
  - Lack of patience
  - Extreme fatigue
- **Apathy**
  - Feelings of disempowerment
  - Emotional or physical Withdrawal
- **Frustration**
  - Conflict or animosity between colleagues
  - Verbal outbursts
- **Atypical Attrition**
  - Educators leaving profession prior to normal life-cycle of employment
Strategies to Avoid Initiative Fatigue

• Use data to determine what IS working, and more importantly, what is NOT
  • Use Data to make decisions include ALL members of community in the decision making process to pursue a new initiative

• Communicate with transparency, sincerity and active listening skills
  • Process current initiatives/practice and ways in which the new initiative may complement or support current practice

• Emphasize INCREMENTAL implementation

• Use MTSS framework
  • Including targeted support
Strategies through the MTSS Lens

- Introduce the WHAT and WHY of initiative to ALL
- Gather feedback and perspectives from ALL
- Introduce small groups to pilot, then provide targeted support
- Implement intensive support for individual resistors
- Meet with small groups as needed to address concerns and provide targeted support
- Provide intensive support for individual resistors
Example of Integration

If Restorative Practices is the new initiative and SEL and PBIS have already been implemented, then begin to incorporate restorative practice circles to:

• discuss, promote and develop social and emotional skills
• provide opportunities to recognize positive behavior
• build community, trust and practice active listening
Design Strategy Specific to Your Needs

• Consider challenge... Then reframe it to answer...
  • What would good look like?
  • Use this as your starting place.

• Establish conditions for success
  • What do those involved need to feel, believe, experience, be assured of in order to move forward?

• Reverse engineer by asking: What would it take?
  • And what would that take? Keep asking, processing and solution-seeking until a tangible objective is reached

• It can look like this....
Reverse Engineer Design

Challenge: Integration of new initiative... Staff is resistant

Staff will invest fully in new initiative

Reframe:
What would good look like?

What do they need to know, feel, experience, be assured of?

- Rationale and Purpose
- Time
- Inclusion
- Support
- They have a voice
- Opportunity to share concerns
- Schedule focus groups

What will that take?

Explanation of What and Why
- Presentation to ALL staff using data and program outcomes

What will that take?

And, what will that take?
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