

INTRODUCTION

Many schools are hiring new school personnel and adopting new frameworks and programs to respond to the diverse post-pandemic needs of students. Yet, the addition of ‘more’ on top of existing personnel, programs, and services adds to the complexity of schooling. Designing schools to address this complexity includes developing a coherent and systematic approach to supporting students, also known as a system of integrated student support.

WHAT IS INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORT?

Integrated student support is an evidence-based approach for schools to provide student support by intentionally and systematically leveraging and coordinating the resources and relationships available in the school and in the surrounding community to address the comprehensive strengths and needs of every student in a school to help promote healthy child development and learning.

WHAT ARE THE NATIONAL GUIDELINES?

The National Guidelines for Integrated Student Support are a first effort to encapsulate evidence-based best practices and define what high-quality implementation looks like in the day-to-day functioning of schools.

Developed by leading practitioners and researchers, the guidelines describe *how* schools can more efficiently and effectively establish the infrastructure and best practices to broker the resources, relationships, and opportunities that promote student learning and life chances. The purpose of the National Guidelines is to share widely, with practitioners and schools already integrating student support and those considering it, how to implement integrated student support so that all students, in all communities, can receive the resources and opportunities they need and deserve. The Guidelines offer an improved process for accelerating student learning and well-being.

WHAT ARE THE CORE COMPONENTS?

The core components describe the process for schools to develop an operational infrastructure. Such components emphasize the importance of teaming, resource mapping, and data systems while weaving relationships and resources together into a network of support and opportunity around each student. The National Guidelines’ core components include:

- Setting the stage
- Structures & staffing
- Processes
- School & community resources
- Record keeping & data
- Sustainability

WHAT DO THE CORE COMPONENTS EQUIP SCHOOLS TO BUILD?

The guidelines are a **roadmap** for practitioners to develop an operational infrastructure within their unique school environment. All schools already provide student support, and many have approaches and practices in place that allow for student review, multi-tiered supports, and various programs and services for students. The National Guidelines build on what a school is already doing, bringing student support efforts into a coherent and aligned system. While there are many steps along the way, the ultimate result is a whole-child-centered approach that includes:

REVIEW	PLAN	FOLLOW-UP	DECISION-MAKING
School personnel collaborate to holistically review every child's strengths and needs across multiple developmental domains such as academics, social/emotional/behavioral, health, and family.	Develop an individualized, comprehensive plan for each student, including a tailored set of services and enrichment opportunities available in the school and the community.	Follow up to ensure delivery of each plan and make adjustments as needed in order to best support student readiness to learn and engage in school.	Use data to inform student plans and alignment between individualized supports, school-wide approaches, programs, and partnerships.

When these functions are in place, educators report improved school climates, feeling more supported in their jobs, and improved relationships with their students. Preliminary research shows that teachers in schools with high-quality integrated student support are more likely to choose to remain in their jobs.

CONCLUSION

With this knowledge, educators and administrators can move from a reactive to a preventive approach to student support, raise the standards of quality care and opportunity provided to students, and improve the conditions for learning and lifelong possibilities. To learn more about how to build a system of integrated student support, review the [National Guidelines](#).



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