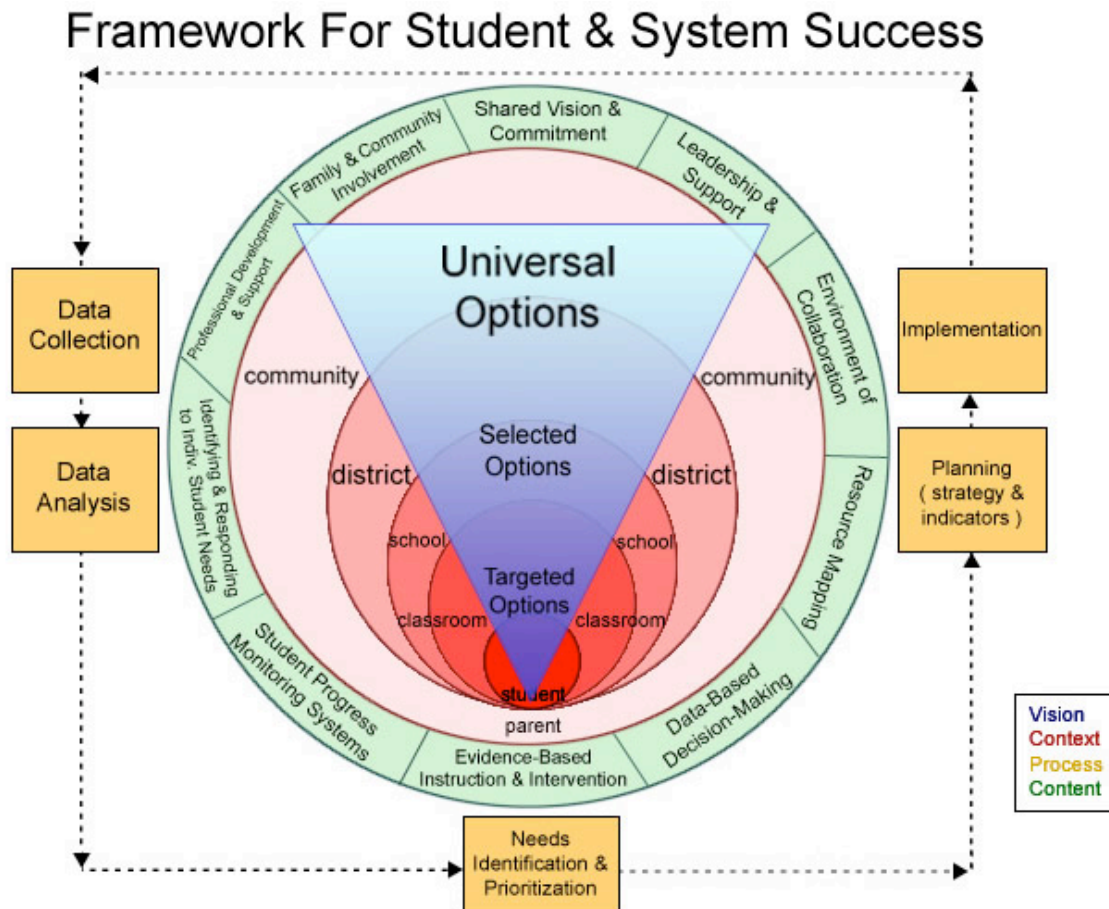


The REACH Framework for Student Success is based upon a data-driven, continuous improvement model. The framework is organized at four levels:

- Vision (what responsive schools look like)
- Context (who/where)
- Process (how)
- Components (what)



Vision (what responsive schools look like)

The REACH Initiative’s vision of how responsive schools look is grounded in a model of prevention and response to intervention. Although the specifics of each school’s program structure and offerings may vary, the REACH vision assumes that everyone in the school community works toward removing barriers to learning and enabling student success through a model that incorporates at least three levels of support for academic and behavioral concerns: Universal, Selected and Targeted. Education options including interventions and supports at all levels are made freely available to all students as needed.

Universal Options

Options provided to all students through a core curriculum, differentiated instruction, screening, progress monitoring, and school wide pupil services and behavioral supports. Universal options are aimed at enhancing success and reducing barriers to learning for the vast majority of students

Selected Options

Supplemental options provided to small groups of students who have not met benchmarks. Enhancements and supports are provided to reduce the potential for increased difficulty and risk for long term failure if concerns are not addressed. Some examples include supplemental reading instruction, short-term tutoring, support from adult mentors, and family support.

Targeted Options

Individually designed interventions for students who have a high likelihood of developing a lasting pattern of academic failure or high levels of social or emotional distress. Because of the intensive nature of such options, targeted interventions are needed by very few students. Examples include individualized supplemental or replacement instruction, individual behavior plans, special education services and wrap-around services provided by mental health professionals.

Context (who/where)

Who is involved in making the decisions and where the effects of decisions will be directed. The student is the focal point of the REACH framework with family members being the first stakeholders and primary supports for the student, followed by teachers, other school staff, district and finally, community. At all phases of the decision-making process, leadership must consider possible effects and necessary connections at the classroom, school, district and community levels.

Process (how)

How decision-making occurs is critical to the REACH Framework. REACH schools use a data-driven school improvement model at all levels of decision-making across all contexts. Needs related to creating or enhancing existing supportive learning environments are identified and prioritized, planning and implementation takes place, data is collected and analyzed and further needs identified. REACH schools develop action plans to help them track effects of their enhanced efforts. Many schools participate in organized data retreats to help them identify and prioritize areas of need. The REACH project uses Action Research to drive the process of continuous improvement and systems change. The inquiry process is used to improve the quality of the organization and its performance. The REACH Project requires that individual school teams focus on the project priorities, address the expected outcomes and base their research on their self-evaluation in relation to the 10 Framework Components for Student Success. Each school team determines a specific area of need based on internal and/or external evidence. They develop a question and an action plan and collect, analyze and interpret data. In April they summarize the data, share the information during a celebration event and repeat the cycle in the next year thereby establishing a process for continuous improvement.

Components (what)

The final level of the REACH framework describes what system and student-based activities responsive schools engage in to guide systemic change that results in positive outcomes for all students. The REACH components were selected and refined following an extensive literature review and validation with state specific research over a four year period. They are described below.

Building Capacity

- Shared Vision and Commitment
- Administrative Leadership and Support
- Environment of Collaboration

Adopting Processes

- Resource Mapping
- Collaborative Procedures for Responding to Individual Student Needs

Making Informed Decisions

- Student Progress Monitoring Systems
- Evidence-based Instruction and Intervention
- Data-based Decision Making

Ensuring Sustainability

- Ongoing Professional Development and Support
- Family and Community Involvement

Component #1: Shared Vision and Commitment

Successful implementation of a system of Early Ongoing Collaboration and Assistance (REACH) requires a commitment to the vision that all students can succeed and that the vast majority of academic, social and behavior problems can be prevented before school failure sets in. Responsive educational systems are organized to reduce barriers and create a supportive learning environment for all students. Without shared vision and commitment to the prevention concept, change will likely be uneven and staff, families and students are more likely to feel confused about the nature and purpose of the educational program in general and intervention planning specifically.

Component #2: Administrative Leadership and Support

The school reform literature clearly indicates that the principal plays an important role in ensuring that the vision and commitment to change is maintained. Building principals must take on a strong leadership role in all REACH activities. However, leadership must also be distributed for change to be sustained. The creation of a Leadership Team provides a mechanism for distributed and shared leadership among staff, families and school administration.

Component #3: Collaborative Planning and Decision-Making

Decision making and planning activities at all context levels (district, school, classroom and student intervention) should reflect an environment of meaningful partnership among stakeholders. The number and composition of collaborative teams vary across school sites. Mentors help foster an environment of collaboration by helping school staff establish common routines for communication, shared decision-making and support for implementation and evaluation of prevention options. Such routines are designed to maintain strong and productive working relationships among educators, students, families and the community.

Component #4: Resource Mapping

Coordinating resources around responsive education can be a challenge. REACH schools construct a “resource map” of human and program assets within the school, district and community that can be mobilized to facilitate student success. Resource mapping is a strategic process with maps continually updated as new resources are identified, acquired or developed.

Component #5: Data-Based Decision Making

Data-based decision-making occurs within a cyclical process. Data is used to evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to enhance student achievement and for planning and prioritization of subsequent activities. A variety of quantitative and qualitative data is used to make decisions at four levels: district, school, classroom and student. Information gained from all context levels is considered when identifying priorities for improvement activities.

Component #6: Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention

Participating schools identify and locate research-based options at the universal, selected, and targeted levels of prevention as well as engage in local analysis of outcomes as a means of developing an evidence base for locally designed programming. A number of REACH toolkits include information on this component.

Component #7: Student Performance Monitoring System

Making decisions about what students should learn and do is considered an essential responsibility of educational communities. The REACH Framework emphasizes the importance of developing procedures that help educators and families know what each student has learned, analyze possible explanations for failure to meet expectations, and identify what to do if students have not met expectations. In order to fully implement the REACH framework, schools must design common and relatively simple procedures for monitoring student response to universal options and selected and targeted intervention using curriculum-based data. Such procedures help educators more easily make decisions about the degree to which education options enable student learning and when selected (supplemental) interventions are needed. Screening for potential signs of concern is embedded within the system. At the targeted level, more frequent progress monitoring allows a collaborative team to decide whether an intervention plan is effective and being implemented with fidelity.

Component #8: Collaborative Procedure for Responding to Individual Student Needs

A well designed progress monitoring system provides school communities with the capacity to provide timely response to student concerns by addressing the signs of failure early. When a student is not meeting expected academic or social emotional and behavioral benchmarks, despite the availability of well designed universal and selected options, turning this negative pattern into one of success becomes extremely important. When a need for targeted options is identified, schools use a collaborative problem-solving process to develop an intervention support plan for students, staff and families. The process includes the following steps for addressing student needs:

1. Define the concern
2. Analyze factors related to the concern
3. Develop aPlan including interventions and progress monitoring
4. Monitor, Review, and Revise the plan as needed.

This collaborative process is not intended to serve as a special education referral screening process, although the information gathered as a result might be used to document student response to intervention that could be useful if a referral for a special education evaluation becomes necessary.

Component #9: Professional Development and Support

Establishing a professional learning community is an expectation of REACh schools. Within the context of a professional learning community, professional development and support activities are identified following a collaborative analysis of needs using the REACh framework. Professional development activities are directed at improving skills needed to implement the REACh Framework and enhance instructional effectiveness, particularly for students most likely to experience failure. It is expected that family members are included in professional development plans in addition to school staff and administrators. Professional development opportunities are provided through REACh mentors as well as by community and other sources.

Component #10: Family and Community Involvement

As school communities engage in a change process, responsive schools meaningfully involve communities and families. Family and community members offer valuable perspectives during the planning and analysis stages of decision-making, when developing resource maps, and when designing and implementing plans developed through a collaborative decision making process. Family members also play a critical role in the successful development and implementation of targeted options for their child. Family and community involvement provides an important link between school and non-school resources, experiences and expectations. The School Leadership Team is one formal structure in REACh schools for promoting family and community involvement.