



Indicator: For each school in need of rapid and substantial improvement (restructuring or turnaround, for example), the district selects the intervention options and strategies that best fit the school's context and are most likely to achieve the desired results. (18)

Explanation: Whether in response to federal and state accountability requirements or as a matter of district policy, persistently low-achieving schools require strong district intervention. The intervention may mean a change in the way the school is governed and structured, but in all cases it means the application of "turnaround principles." Selecting the appropriate intervention and applying the principles in a manner that is most likely to succeed means understanding the school's context, past performance, and prevailing professional practice.

Questions: Does your district have clear policy on when and how decisions are made about interventions in persistently low-achieving schools? How does your district take into account the school's context, past performance, and prevailing professional practice in making these decisions?

Restructuring options are similar to more recent intervention strategies for turnaround. The district might close the school and send its students elsewhere, reopen the school as a charter school or under management by an Education Management Organization (EMO), or make substantial changes in the way the school operates, including changes in leadership or leadership and a significant number of staff. In 2011, the U. S. Department of Education introduced seven turnaround principles that would apply in all cases, whether preceded by structural and governance changes or not. These turnaround principles are met to be applied in total rather than selecting only a few from the list. They work together for optimal effect.

Turnaround Principles

- **Leadership.** Providing strong leadership by reviewing the performance of the current principal, replacing the current principal or ensuring the principal is a change leader, and providing the principal with operational flexibility;
- **Effective Teachers.** Ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by reviewing all staff and retaining those determined to be effective, carefully selecting new teachers including transfers, and providing job-embedded professional development informed by teacher evaluation;
- **Extended Learning Time.** Redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;
- **Strong Instruction.** Strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with state academic content standards;
- **Use of Data.** Using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including providing time for collaboration on the use of data;

- **School Culture.** Establishing a school environment that improves safety and discipline and addressing students' social, emotional, and physical health needs;
- **Family and Community Engagement.** Providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement. (U. S. Department of Education, 2011)

References and Resources

- Hassel, E. A., Hassel, B. C., Arkin, M. D., Kowal, J. M., & Steiner, L. M. (2006). *School restructuring under No Child Left Behind: What works when? A guide for education leaders*. Washington, DC: Learning Point Associates. Retrieved Fall 2006 from <http://www.center-forcsri.org/files/RestructuringGuide.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2011, September 23). *ESEA flexibility*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility/documents/esea-flexibility.doc>

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