

A Solution-Finding Report

Title: Resources for School Restructuring

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This Solution-Finding Report was prepared by the Center on Innovation and Improvement in response to a request from Stephen A. Moats, state liaison to Tennessee at the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, for “information related to the processes/procedures/requirements other SEAs have developed to assist LEA/schools develop restructuring plans.”

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Introduction

According to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, a school which fails to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for four consecutive years—that is, for four years after being identified as in need of improvement and including one year of implementing “corrective action”—must institute “restructuring” (NCLB, Section 1116(b)(8)). The definition of AYP is established by the individual states, and that progress must be measured primarily by reliable annual assessments of students’ academic achievement. For convenience, a tabular summary of required actions for schools, as opposed to actions required of districts, for failing to make AYP is presented below. For those schools that fail to make AYP after one year of being engaged in corrective action, the local education agency must establish “alternative governance arrangements for the school consistent with State law”; these arrangements may include:

- reopening the school as a public charter school;
- replacing all or most of the school staff (which may include the principal) who are relevant to the failure to make adequate yearly progress;
- entering into a contract with an entity, such as a private management company, with a demonstrated record of effectiveness, to operate the public school;
- turning the operation of the school over to the State educational agency, if permitted under State law and agreed to by the State; and
- any other major restructuring of the school’s governance arrangement that makes fundamental reforms, such as significant changes in the school’s staffing and governance, to improve student academic achievement in the school and that has substantial promise of enabling the school to make adequate yearly progress.

NCLB Requirements for Identified Schools and Districts

School Year After Being Identified (After Not Making AYP For Two Consecutive Years)	Schools	Districts
1st Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified as <i>in need of improvement</i> Develop improvement plan that addresses reasons for not making AYP Offer students public school choice until school exits improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified as <i>in need of improvement</i> Develop improvement plan that addresses reasons for not making AYP Can no longer be a direct provider of supplemental education services (tutoring) to its students
2nd Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement school improvement plan Continue to offer public school choice Offer students supplemental education services until school exits improvement By end of school year, district must implement <i>corrective action</i>, which may include replacing school staff, instituting new curriculum, decreasing management authority at school level, extending the school year or day, bringing in outside experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement district improvement plan By end of school year, state must implement <i>corrective action</i>, which may include deferring program funds, instituting new curriculum, replacing district personnel, allowing students to attend school in another district, appointing new administrators, abolishing or restructuring the district
3rd Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to offer choice and supplemental education services Implement corrective action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement corrective action
4th Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter <i>restructuring</i> Continue to offer choice and supplemental education services District must develop and implement a 2-year plan which can include reopening the school as a charter school, making significant staff changes, turning school over to state education agency or private firm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement corrective action
5th Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement school restructuring Public school choice and supplemental education services must continue to be provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement corrective action

Source: Center on Educational Policy. (2005, March). *Identifying school districts for improvement and corrective action*. Washington, DC: Author.

Links to Resources on Restructuring

The website (<http://www.centerii.org>) of the Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII) provides resources on School and District Improvement, Restructuring, and Supplemental Educational Services, among other topics. In each category, the site offers: 1) Research, Reports, and Tools; 2) State Spotlight; 3) State Policies, Programs, and Progress. For the topic of this report, restructuring, the *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement* (<http://www.centerii.org/handbook/>), prepared by the Center on Innovation and Improvement, provides expertly written chapters on issues relating to restructuring and is highly recommended as an initial guide. In addition, the CII site provides the following links that relate to the “processes/procedures/requirements” of school

- Four papers by Learning Point Associates series of four knowledge issues that are designed to help district leaders understand what is known about when and under what circumstances each of four specified school restructuring options works to improve student learning.

Chartering

<http://www.centerforsri.org/pubs/restructuring/KnowledgeIssues2Chartering.pdf>

Turnarounds with new leaders and staff

<http://www.centerforsri.org/pubs/restructuring/KnowledgeIssues4Turnaround.pdf>

Contracting with external education management providers

<http://www.centerforsri.org/pubs/restructuring/KnowledgeIssues3Contracting.pdf>

State takeovers of individual schools

<http://www.centerforsri.org/pubs/restructuring/KnowledgeIssues1StateTakeovers.pdf>

- Two documents prepared by the Education Commission of the States: *State policies for school restructuring*, a digest of state policies; and *Closing low performing schools and reopening them as charter schools: The role of the state*, focusing on one option for restructuring. Web addresses for the two documents are, respectively, as follows:

<http://www.centerii.org/resources/5702%20state%20policies%20for%20restructuring%20ecs.doc>

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/54/25/5425.pdf>

- Also useful is a guide prepared by the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (CCSRI). This guide, *School restructuring under No Child Left Behind: What works when? A guide for leaders*, provides users with a step-by-step approach to restructuring, from organizing a district team, assessing the district’s capacity, and governing restructuring decisions to conducting a school-by-school analysis and implementing a restructuring plan. The text of the guide is supplemented with templates, checklists, and other practical tools.

<http://www.centerforsri.org/files/RestructuringGuide.pdf>

- RAND’s *Evaluating Comprehensive School Reform Models at Scale: Focus on Implementation* (2006), by Georges Vernez, Rita Karam, Louis T. Mariano, and Christine DeMartini, finds that few schools undertaking comprehensive school reform fully implement their CSR models. Due to lukewarm implementation, comprehensive school reform produces little effect to improve student achievement. Using a unique five-step methodology, incorporating surveys and twelve in-depth case studies to quantitatively measure the level of implementation of comprehensive school reform (CSR), RAND measured implementation of four different CSR models. These models are: Accelerated Schools, Core Knowledge, Direct Instruction, and Success for All. RAND also included a sample of schools that did not use any CSR model. Principals and teachers in 250 model schools in two states completed surveys, along with principals and teachers in comparison schools.

<http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG546/>

- The National Governors' Association produced three framing papers for its 2003 annual conference. The first of these papers, *Knowing the Right Thing to Do: School Improvement and Performance-Based Accountability* by Richard Elmore, looks in detail at two schools classified as low performing in their states and draws lessons from the experiences of these schools for state policies regarding school improvement and accountability. The second paper, *Reaching New Heights: Turning Around Low-Performing Schools: A Guide for Governors*, offers succinct policy options for turning around low-performing schools and highlights best practices from states, districts, and schools. It provides specific information about the merits of various strategies, summaries of research findings, and recommendations for policy actions. Also available is a report on the 2003 meeting of governors education advisors and education experts concerning fiscal and legislative matters and advising governors on reform efforts. These documents are currently under review for inclusion on the CII website and are available at:
<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.1f41d49be2d3d33eacdcbeeb501010a0/?vgnnextoid=63f48cc156de1010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD>
- *School District Leadership That Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement* by MidContinent Research for Education and Learning presents a meta-analysis of 27 research reports on the effect of superintendent leadership on student achievement. The study finds a statistically significant relationship between district leadership and student achievement, identifies five district-level leadership responsibilities that have a statistically significant correlation with average student academic achievement, and suggests the length of superintendent tenure in a district positively correlates to student achievement. This documents is currently under review for inclusion on the CII website and is available at:
http://www.mcrel.org/pdf/leadershiporganizationdevelopment/4005RR_Superintendent_Leadership.pdf

State Tools for School Improvement and Restructuring

The *CII directory of state links and contacts in restructuring* is currently available on the CII website database (<http://www.centerii.org/centerIIPublic>). It includes state policies and contact information at all 50 state education agencies, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands for school restructuring. It also includes weblinks for several categories in school restructuring: policy guidance or state accountability law; leadership standards and professional development resources for principals (particularly guidance for turnaround of low-performing schools); charter school resources and state law; and comprehensive school reform resources and programming. The following tools and documents have been drawn from a review of state-provided materials examined in development of the database.

Illinois

- *Guidance for Restructuring: Broad Strokes* (December 2005). This PowerPoint overview and guidance information was shared with schools, districts and regional service providers' staff during the regional meetings for the schools in restructuring planning status. The guidance document reflects Illinois and federal law on school restructuring and what must be done to reflect local restructuring planning. It also directs the reader to the Illinois Interactive Report Card (<http://iirc.niu.edu/>) for a link to the *Illinois e-Plan* which contains the suggested School Improvement Plan template with the required component to reflect the restructuring planning summary.
http://www.isbe.net/nclb/powerpoint/guidance_restructuring_broad_strokes.ppt
- *Illinois State Board of Education Guidance Document: School Restructuring*
http://www.isbe.net/nclb/pdfs/restructuring_guidance_0106.pdf
- *Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Guidance to Districts with Schools in Corrective Action*
http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/guidance_CA.pdf
- *NCLB Application Handbook for Title IA, Title IIA & D, Title IVA, and Title VA*
http://www.isbe.net/grants/pdf/nclb_handbook.pdf
- *Illinois State Board of Education Overview of Public School Choice for Illinois Schools*
<http://www.isbe.net/nclb/pdfs/FAQchoiceML.pdf>
- *Title I – Neglected and Delinquent, Part D*
<http://www.isbe.net/nclb/pdfs/FAQTitleIML.pdf>
- *Frequently Asked Questions About Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)*
<http://www.isbe.net/ayp/faq.htm>

California

- The California Department of Education (CDE) offers, on its website, its informational training tool on school and district improvement and restructuring for local educational agencies (LEAs) and their schools in Program Improvement (PI) status years 1–5. These materials provide specific guidance and formal technical assistance in meeting the identified needs of schools and the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/lp/vl/pitrainingmaterial.asp>
- The CDE developed its *2005 Accountability Progress Report Information Guide* to help schools and districts better understand AYP.
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ay/documents/infoguide05.pdf>
- In its efforts to assist schools and LEAs to exit PI status, the CDE has developed Essential Program Components (EPCs), which are considered to be keys to an effective academic program. The EPCs support academic student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics. The EPCs become a critical piece in the school reform effort when made a priority in the school program. Additionally, the CDE has developed and made available various tools to assist LEAs and schools with the school improvement process. These tools include the Academic Program Survey (APS) instrument that is used to evaluate a school's implementation of the EPCs; the District Assistance Survey (DAS), which can be used to examine an LEA's processes and protocols to determine possible gaps in support for schools; the English Learner Subgroup Self Assessment (ELSSA), designed to serve as a technical assistance tool for LEAs in analyzing and addressing program services to the English Learner (EL)

subgroup; and the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) survey which can be used to analyze LEA and school special education programs. These instruments for all school levels can be found in the Virtual Library located on the CDE website.

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/lp/vl>

Michigan

- *NCLB/Adequate Yearly Progress Report Packet*. In 2004–2005, Michigan reported 70 schools in restructuring planning or implementation (Year 4 of school improvement or more). The Michigan Department of Education provides a comprehensive *NCLB/Adequate Yearly Progress Report Packet* for schools in any phase/year of school improvement: 1) Identified for School Improvement, 2) Continuing Improvement, 3) Corrective Action, 4) Planning for Restructuring, 5) Implementation of Restructuring Plan, 6) Continue Implementation of Restructuring Plan, and 7) Continue Implementation of Restructuring Plan. This comprehensive packet includes sample letters, reporting documents, checklists, listing of mandatory steps, funding worksheets, and process guidelines for each phase of the improvement process.
http://michigan.gov/documents/Complete_Packet_107615_7.pdf

New Jersey

- *Title I School Restructuring Plan: District Plan for Restructuring Year 5 Schools* provides a timeline of activities for school restructuring, a restructuring plan component checklist, district and school information forms, and forms districts are to use to describe the proposed the restructuring choice, assessment of its implementation, specific strategies to implement the plan, professional development to implement the plan, and other optional planning documents. The document is keyed to the Collaborative Assessment for Planning Achievement.
<http://www.nj.gov/njded/title1/accountability/restructure.doc>
- For low-performing schools in New Jersey, “the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) uses a school review process or Collaborative Assessment for Planning Achievement (CAPA). The CAPA is modeled after the Kentucky Scholastic Audit. The purpose of CAPA is to empower schools and districts to go beyond current efforts to improve student achievement. CAPA establishes teams to work in concert with schools and districts, using a thoughtful, systematic, evidence-based process to reach agreement about the changes needed in order to make a positive difference in teaching and learning. The process is collaborative, demonstrating a commitment to shared responsibility for student learning among the state and local educators and a commitment to continuous school improvement for the benefit of all children.”
<http://www.nj.gov/njded/title1/accountability/>
- New Jersey has produced an excellent state reference manual for implementing NCLB:
<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/grants/entitlement/nclb/nclbrefman07.pdf>
- The New Jersey Quality Single Accountability (NJQSAC) is a system for evaluating and monitoring public school districts throughout New Jersey. This approach is intended to be a comprehensive accountability system to determine the extent that districts are providing a thorough and efficient education. The NJQSAC system through the use of the District Performance Review (DPR) focuses on five key components of school district effectiveness—instruction and program, personnel, fiscal management, operations, and governance. Within the NJQSAC components are the standards and indicators designed to assess student achievement, progress toward proficiency, local capacity, and the need for support and assistance. The goal of the 2006 NJQSAC field-test/pilot program is to proactively assess the validity of the DPR and identify barriers in the process of verifying the performance of districts prior to full implementation.
<http://www.nj.gov/njded/genfo/qsac/overview.htm>