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State Strategies for Fixing Failing Schools and Districts

Executive Summary

At least 5,000 public schools have failed to meet their academic achievement targets for at least five consecutive years.¹ The underlying causes of such failure are usually a combination of weak leadership, inadequate skill levels among teachers, and insufficient high-quality teaching materials. Compared with a typical school, a failing school often has twice the number of high-poverty students and many more students who enter the school below grade level.

Failing schools lead to failing districts, places where one-third to one-half of all schools are chronically low-performing. These districts rarely have a comprehensive strategy for how to implement reforms. Although some states have been engaged in school and district turnaround efforts for 20 years, often they have lacked the capacity to undertake the work at the scale required to create sustainable improvements in teaching and learning.

In 2009, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) awarded competitive grants to four states to participate in the State Strategies to Improve Chronically Low-Performing Schools project. The project provided Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Mississippi with grant funds and consulting services to develop policies and plans that create the conditions to turn around chronically low-performing schools and districts. It yielded valuable lessons and suggested strategies that states and territories can use to fix failing schools and districts.

States and territories have already begun to access new federal funding—\$3.5 billion for School Improvement Grants were available in fiscal 2010; \$545 million is proposed for fiscal 2011 and \$600 million proposed for fiscal 2012—to focus efforts on failing schools and their districts. Thus far, grants have gone to support 730 “persistently low-achieving” schools². States can use the lessons learned from the NGA Center’s project, along with the new federal funding, to step up their efforts to fix failing schools and districts in these ways:

- Build state capacity to support the turnaround of failing schools and districts;
- Engage external partners to manage school and district turnarounds;
- Set ambitious but realistic goals for school improvement that incorporate multiple measures;
- Develop a human capital strategy to improve the quality of leadership and teaching; and
- Increase state authority to intervene in failing schools and districts, if other approaches prove insufficient.

Another strategy, school closure can also be used. Too often, however, students from a closed school are placed in another weak school. This strategy should be pursued only when the state or district authority is certain it can send students to a better-performing campus.

Past turnaround efforts have been successful only 10 percent to 20 percent of the time.³ Yet, as managers of education systems, states are best positioned to remedy school and district failure. As policymakers implement the suggested strategies, they can evaluate them to improve their understanding of what works, under what conditions, and why.

Defining Failure and Understanding Why it Occurs

Three million children in the United States attend 5,000 failing schools. These schools have missed their achievement targets for at least five consecutive years in reading and/or mathematics and, under current federal rules, are in “Restructuring.” Schools in some states have spent more than a decade in “Restructuring.”

The underlying causes of school failure are similar, regardless of whether the schools are located in urban, rural, or suburban communities. First, the schools are characterized by weak leadership, starting with a principal who fails to keep the school focused on teaching and learning. Second, teachers’ skill levels tend to be inadequate, and teachers are not afforded the coaching necessary to help them improve as professionals. Third, failing schools do not pay enough attention to using high-quality curricula and instructional materials and often lack the capacity to analyze student test results to guide improvement. Finally, compared with a typical school, a failing school often has twice the number of high-poverty students and many more students who enter the school below grade level.⁴

Failing school districts are defined as places where one-third to one-half of all schools within the district are chronically low-performing. These districts lack the capacity to meaningfully work with schools, and district leaders rarely have a strategy for how to implement comprehensive reform. State agencies often contribute to the problem by failing to provide an initial, external diagnostic about the root causes of poor district performance. More money might be made available to these districts, but the financial support is rarely accompanied with mechanisms to ensure funds are spent effectively.

In addition, a key assumption of much state policy—that negative incentives will turn around low-performing schools and districts—is flawed. The reasoning is that the possibility of sanctions, including terminating personnel, providing vouchers for students to transfer to another school, converting the school to a charter school, or closing and reopening the school, will force the staff and leadership in a low-performing school to make the desired improvements. Evidence from the business sector offers no support for this assumption. Organizations under threat tend to respond rigidly, restricting information and tightening control. The crises overwhelm the staff and leadership, so they retreat to doing what they know—the very practices that got them in trouble in the first place.⁵ The only way this pattern is broken is if organizations are given appropriate support from outside sources and new opportunities to learn.⁶

Turnaround efforts during the past 20 years have a mixed and often disappointing record. Baltimore, Chicago, and San Francisco closed and reopened schools in the early 1990s, using a policy known as “reconstitution,” but the move was regarded as a failure because the districts did not have qualified personnel to fill the new teaching vacancies.⁷ Mayors of several big cities also have taken over governance of their school system, with mild success; on average, elementary school achievement has improved but high school achievement has stayed the same.⁸

Several large urban districts have brought in external partners to work with low-performing schools. Yet these efforts often have been “light touch” and not very comprehensive, emphasizing student test preparation and compliance with reporting requirements over system learning.⁹ Some of the partners with well-researched designs frequently had trouble building their own staff capacity to assist schools, which led to programs being implemented superficially. In addition, many of the strategies were designed for improvement in average schools and were not tailored to the needs of chronically low-performing schools.

When left to their own devices, schools and districts have taken the path of least resistance. A 2007 Government Accountability Office study found that 40 percent of the schools in “Restructuring” did not enact any of the five options required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation.¹⁰ Most schools and districts have selected the “other major governance” option when placed in “Restructuring”, This affords them maximum flexibility to design a remedy, without requiring substantial change.¹¹ State takeover has been virtually nonexistent, happening in only 0.1 percent of schools.¹²

Identifying State Challenges in Addressing the Needs of Failing Schools and Districts

Thirty-five states and territories had more than a quarter of all schools missing adequate yearly progress (AYP) in 2008–2009; in nine states, more than half of all schools missed AYP.¹³ Three problems hinder states' efforts to improve failing schools and districts:

- Limited resources and capacity exist to support and take over schools.
- Accountability goals are unrealistic and obscure improvement.
- Human capital policies inhibit reform.

Resources and Capacity Are Insufficient to Support Schools and Districts

States have been reluctant to intervene, because agencies have lacked the resources and capacity to engage in meaningful turnaround efforts. External support, geared to helping individuals learn new skills and helping organizations craft new strategies, is a proven element of effective turnaround in the business sector.¹⁴

In a national survey, 32 states reported that federal Title I funds to state agencies and schools have been insufficient to improve student achievement in failing schools. State education agencies are allowed to set aside only 5 percent of School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds for state use and are required to allocate the remaining 95 percent to school districts, even if inadequate district leadership contributed to school failure.

Congress authorized SIGs in 2002 under NCLB to assist schools that had missed their adequate yearly progress targets, but the federal government initially failed to allocate any grant funds. Eventually the federal government budgeted \$500 million for states to distribute, but these funds were to serve all schools that missed AYP, not just schools experiencing persistent failure. When the allocated funds were spread across all low-performing schools that needed assistance, this amounted to approximately \$25,000 per school. School turnaround costs an estimated \$300,000 to \$500,000 per school per year; extending the duration of the school day and year can double that amount.¹⁵

Internal capacity problems are most acute in states that have large numbers of schools missing their AYP targets.¹⁶ Most states have only between two and ten employees dedicated to turnaround efforts. In the face of continuing economic difficulties, state agencies have endured severe budget cuts and, in some states, the number of schools that are low-performing is higher than the number of employees who work at the state department of education.¹⁷

Even states that had established leading systems of support for low-performing schools in the 1990s have found it impossible to do the work at the scale required in recent years. State offices in **California, Kentucky, and North Carolina** were created to assist dozens, not hundreds of schools. In 2009, state teams in California were able to intervene in only 24 of the state's 1,171 schools in "Restructuring".

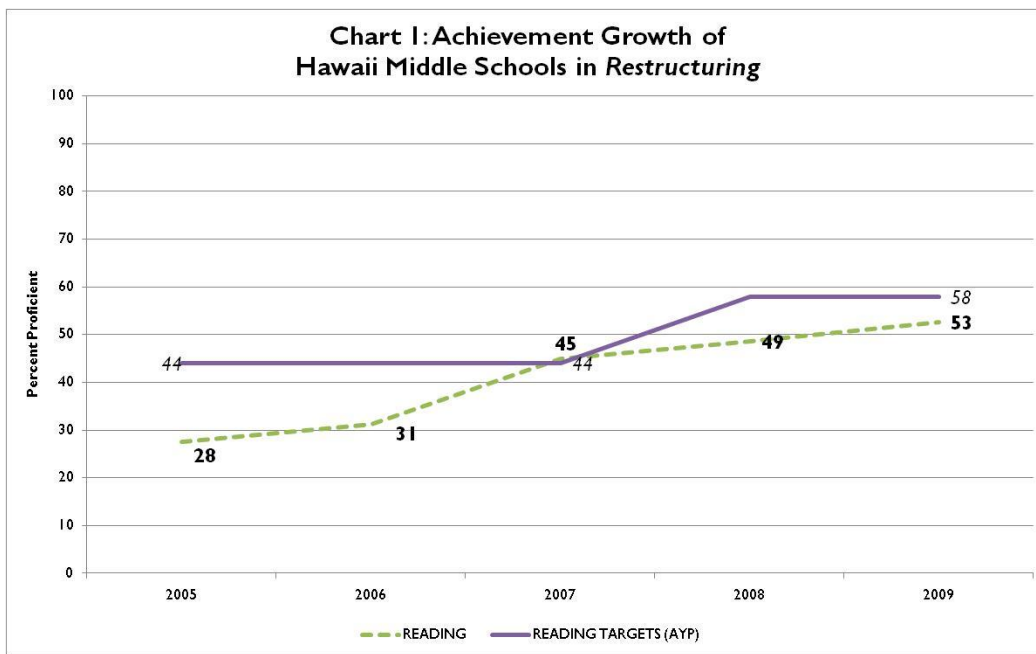
State education agencies have had so many failing schools and districts and such limited capacity that they often have been in triage mode; they are eager to get schools and districts off watch lists quickly so they can move on to serve others. The result is shallow reform. Although test scores may have improved, the underlying operating conditions in these schools and districts remain unchanged. In addition, states have tried approaches such as smaller learning communities that are better suited for schools that miss only one or two targets but are not in deep trouble. In *The Turnaround Challenge*, Mass Insight Education and Research Institute argues that failing schools and districts need more comprehensive support to rethink the instructional program and the allocation of funds, time, and people.¹⁸

Accountability Goals for Schools Are Unrealistic and Obscure Improvement

Although NCLB has called attention to the achievement inequities among groups of students, flaws exist in how states have had to structure accountability requirements. States with ambitious definitions of reading and mathematics excellence have been especially penalized. Some states watered down their definitions to appear more successful,

while others did not.¹⁹ Some states, such as **California, Missouri, and South Carolina**, started out with a very high bar for proficiency and refused to tinker with it. They have been required to increase the number of students meeting adequate yearly progress targets by 7 percent to 8 percent a year for a decade. These rates of gain are not found in even the most consistently high-achieving schools anywhere in the United States. Such targets also run contrary to the research on goal setting, which finds that in any sector, goals must be challenging, achievable, and meaningful if they are to motivate others to work harder.²⁰

In the face of unrealistic targets, the steady improvements made by chronically low-performing schools can be hard to discern. In California, 600 of the lowest-performing elementary and middle schools raised test scores from 13 percent proficient in reading and math to 33 percent proficient in reading and math over four years. Notwithstanding this historically unprecedented growth, an independent analysis by the Fordham Institute deemed only 2 percent of the schools to be “turned around.”²¹ In **Hawaii**, the state with the largest percentage of schools in “Restructuring”, only one of the four middle schools in their 2005 cohort has moved out of the category. Yet the middle schools grew the number of students reading at proficiency by 5.5 percent a year over four years (see figure). Again, this was more growth than had ever been experienced and exceeded the rate expected of schools (4.7 percent). The schools were able to meet the AYP targets, but the unprecedented progress was still not enough to move them out of the “Restructuring” category because they started so far behind.



Source: Author’s Calculations.

Improvement also is obscured because AYP targets are focused solely on a single point in time (status) and do not allow states to consider the growth of all students over time. As a result, states are unable to recognize the value schools add when they successfully teach large numbers of impoverished students who start the year behind their peers. When researchers reclassify schools using value-added methods, they find that 30 percent of schools would have different classifications. Simply put, schools with low starting points but high rates of growth are mislabeled as low-performing.²²

Human Capital Policies Inhibit Reform

Failing schools and districts are often extremely difficult places to work and hard to staff. To assess and improve the quality of school working conditions, **North Carolina** policymakers have surveyed all teachers biannually since 2002. In the state's lowest-performing high schools, teachers report they are less likely to have a common vision, less likely to have sufficient access to instructional materials, and less likely to have leadership that shields them from interruptions.²³ In Chicago, Illinois, a study found lower levels of trust among teachers and less peer collaboration in elementary schools remaining on the state watch list, compared with elementary schools moving out of academic probation.²⁴ Not surprisingly, the nation's lowest-performing schools have an annual teacher turnover rate of between 30 percent and 50 percent.²⁵

Weak or nonexistent evaluation policies make it hard to identify poor-performing principals and teachers. Only 15 states require the annual evaluation of teachers and only 13 states require a measure of student achievement to be included in a teacher's evaluation.²⁶ Even in places that do conduct regular teacher evaluations, the ability of those evaluations to identify high performance and areas of need is limited. A recent study of Chicago's 25,000 teachers rated 93 percent of them as superior or excellent, 6 percent as satisfactory, and .003 percent as unsatisfactory.²⁷ Even though the district leadership identified 69 schools as failing, 87 percent of the schools did not give a single teacher an unsatisfactory rating between 2003 and 2006. In schools in Denver, Colorado, that did not make adequate yearly progress, more than 98 percent of tenured teachers received the district's highest rating.

Until recently, resources have been insufficient to fund school and district turnaround in many states, and the achievement targets often have been unrealistic. In this context, states have been reluctant to use authority to intervene directly. They have imposed sanctions but have been unable to offer sufficient support. Furthermore, failing schools and districts need help on different human capital policies to improve evaluation systems, workplace conditions, and teacher and principal quality.

Implementing State Policies to Fix Failing Schools and Districts

In 2009, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices awarded competitive grants to four states to participate in the State Strategies to Improve Chronically Low-Performing Schools project. **Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Mississippi** received grant funds and consulting services to develop policies and plans that create the conditions to turn around chronically low-performing schools.

Although turnaround efforts generally have not been successful, they have shown success about 10 percent to 20 percent of the time. Lessons learned from the four project states and other states around the nation suggest actions state policymakers can take to engineer fundamental change in failing schools and districts. In particular, states and territories can:

- Build state capacity to support schools and districts;
- Engage external partners;
- Set ambitious but realistic goals that incorporate multiple measures; and
- Develop a human capital strategy.

Build State Capacity to Support Schools and Districts

Intervening in schools and districts is a new role for most states and requires a new structure for providing support. In some states, this means creating a new entity that has the authority to govern schools. In others, it means creating a cross-divisional effort with existing state staff. To help pay for these efforts, states can use the 5 percent set-aside from their School Improvement Grant.

Maryland's Breakthrough Center engages urban and rural districts in collaborative problem solving, rather than compliance monitoring as most state education departments tend to do. In rural Kent County, the Breakthrough Center has been a broker of services, connecting the district with experts who assist teachers with reading instruction and who create new tools for principals to observe classroom teachers. It has coached district leadership to rethink the structure of its middle and high schools. The center also has been a catalyst for developing partnerships with Apple, EdisonLearning, and the Verizon Foundation to improve the use of technology throughout the district and develop credit recovery programs for struggling students. Finally, it has engaged the community through forums and a task force on high school reform. As a result, Kent County moved out of "district improvement" status, and its high school avoided moving into "Restructuring" status.

In **Texas**, support teams at each of the 20 regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) provide professional development and data analysis for low-performing schools and district leadership. **Michigan** also uses its regional agencies, known as Intermediate School Districts (ISDs), to help provide assistance through a School Improvement Framework. The state audits schools and this guides the work of process mentor teams. Composed of state, regional, and district officials, the teams review school improvement processes four to eight times a year. Working with universities across the state, the ISDs send in leadership coaches for 100 days. During the past four years, 247 schools have moved out of "In Need of Improvement", "Corrective Action", and "Restructuring", and the state has worked with two districts to close an additional 35 schools.²⁸

States also have enhanced their ability to support districts and schools in improving underlying conditions *before* more drastic steps are necessary. For example, **Virginia** and **Louisiana's** Recovery School District²⁹ develop memoranda of understanding (MOU) with low-performing districts that specify the support the state will offer and the changes necessary to avoid takeover. **Georgia** enters into MOUs with individual schools that have missed their targets for at least eight years. The nonnegotiable activities for the state-directed schools include a full-time state director who administers benchmark assessments, hires instructional coaches, observes teachers, provides feedback, and is involved in the replacement of staff, as needed. In 2008, 12 of the 19 state-directed schools made AYP for the first time ever.³⁰

Engage External Partners

States cannot do this work alone because of their limited internal capacity. To supplement their efforts, state policymakers need to engage external partners who can also support turnaround efforts. The most prominent partners are comprehensive school reform (CSR) providers and charter management organizations (CMOs), both of which are often nonprofit firms. Despite their limitations, the CSR designs and CMOs that are well grounded in research and pay strong attention to program implementation demonstrate success in raising achievement among high-poverty students.³¹

Well-specified CSR designs improve literacy achievement as a result of the instructional guidance they provide to principals and teachers.³² In 2005–2006, **Hawaii** began using three research-based comprehensive school reform designs—America's Choice, Edison Schools, and ETS Pulliam—in 24 schools in "Restructuring", at a cost of \$400,000 per school. As a result of this intensive assistance, 10 schools have met AYP targets in both reading and math and four schools have improved achievement enough to move out of the category. In **Connecticut**, Hartford Public Schools brought in several research-proven CSR designs and provided rigorous implementation support. Combined with other strategies such as student-based budgeting, Hartford has seen the largest gains on state tests of any urban district.³³ In **Colorado**, the state has engaged CSR designs by releasing a request for proposals with specific criteria to fund only designs with evidence of narrowing the achievement gap and improving performance at scale.

Charter management organizations such as Green Dot in **California**, Mastery Charter in **Pennsylvania**, YES! Prep in **Texas**, and the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), have proven they can turn around failing schools at scale. Their preferred strategy is to employ a “restart” model where most of the original school’s faculty is replaced as the CMO restaffs the school. **Louisiana**’s Recovery School District has used charters as a remedy for persistent school failure and plans to expand from 38 to 45 charter schools in 2010–2011. In 2005, before New Orleans schools entered Louisiana’s Recovery School District, only 48 percent of fourth graders and 37 percent of eighth graders met the state promotion standard. In 2009–2010, those percentages rose to 63 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

Set Ambitious But Realistic Targets That Incorporate Multiple Measures

States should also set ambitious but realistic achievement growth targets for all schools. **Virginia** has received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education under Section 9401 of NCLB to freeze its AYP targets, and other states could similarly request permission to reconfigure their achievement targets. To establish future targets, states should look to the Title I schools that have made large gains over several years.³⁴ This would ground expectations in what is possible and provide low-performing schools with proof that substantial achievement gains can be made in schools they know and can learn from.³⁵

Federal policymakers have expressed a desire to include “multiple measures” when evaluating schools and students, but clarity is lacking on what this means. One approach is to allow states to consider measuring the amount of improvement not just in test scores, but in the underlying conditions that affect performance. To understand changes in these conditions, **Louisiana**, **Massachusetts**, and **New York** use the [SchoolWorks Quality Criteria](#), which are organized around three domains: teaching and learning, district leadership, and operations and support systems. The diagnostic and evaluative review of a school or district enables these states to adjust the support they provide and assess whether turnaround efforts have been effective. For example, Louisiana will use the quality criteria in conjunction with test scores to consider whether 68 schools have made enough progress to soon depart the Recovery School District and return to their home district.

Develop a Human Capital Strategy

More than anything else, policies to promote the development of human capital will help failing schools and districts begin to improve student achievement. Governors can consider taking action on increasing the supply of new teachers, developing better educator evaluation systems, understanding and improving working conditions, and creating a cadre of turnaround leaders.

States can optimize the supply of new teachers in hard-to-staff schools by creating financial incentives and changing recruiting techniques. Several experimental projects to create incentives to teach in hard-to-staff schools are under way. The Talent Transfer Initiative gives highly effective teachers a \$10,000 bonus to move to a lower-performing school for two years. Teach Plus is recruiting teams of teachers to go into a turnaround school as a cohort. Although promising in their design, it is too early to determine whether these efforts are effective.

In **Louisiana**’s Recovery School District, partners such as Teach for America (TFA) and the New Teacher Project have helped the state recruit five to ten applicants for every vacancy in a failing school. They develop active marketing campaigns in the region, prescreen the candidates, and give them a quality rating. **Colorado** now allows alternative training programs such as TFA to also certify new teachers. **Maryland**’s Breakthrough Center has created the Teach for Maryland Consortium to train and place new teachers in chronically underperforming schools. The 2010 Education Reform Act signed by Governor Martin O’Malley also provides incentives for highly effective teachers to move to struggling schools. Improving the talent pipeline creates the conditions for improving the quality of teaching, but it is not sufficient.

States also need to develop better evaluation systems, which will enable schools to more accurately assess each teacher's strengths and weaknesses. With better evaluation systems, state and district leaders can also avoid the stigmatizing practice of sweeping staff firings. **Delaware**'s statewide evaluation tool includes student learning measures and is used to determine professional learning needs. **Illinois** has changed the support given to low-performing teachers. The state's new evaluation law creates a "needs improvement" category for rating teachers and requires a professional development plan to be created. The teacher can be dismissed if he or she does not achieve a higher rating after the remediation period. **Louisiana**'s state-run Recovery School District has designed a teacher competency model, using the research of Charlotte Danielson, so principals can see what teaching behaviors distinguish novice, proficient, and distinguished instructors in low-performing schools. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is validating teacher evaluation instruments, and states will soon pilot them at scale.

States can help districts attract high-quality educators to their lowest-performing schools once leaders understand what organizational improvements are needed. Surveys on how teachers and principals perceive their working conditions can be especially effective. In **Maryland** and **North Carolina**, the survey results have helped the state tailor its assistance to the unique needs of low-performing schools. Discussion of the survey results can lead to improvements in the levels of trust and professional collaboration among teachers and principals, thereby reducing high turnover rates.³⁶ (For more information on these issues, see the NGA Center's [Building a High-Quality Education Workforce: A Governor's Guide to Human Capital Development](#)).

Finally, states can develop a cadre of turnaround leaders to place into schools. Evidence from the business and government sectors suggests that a turnaround leader requires a different skill set from other successful leaders.³⁷ **Missouri** and **Texas** are sending candidates to be trained at the University of Virginia's [Partners for Leaders in Education](#), which is co-taught by business and education school faculty. In one Ohio school district using these turnaround leaders, 14 out of 16 schools made 10 percent gains in reading and math achievement and six schools made their AYP targets. **Mississippi** recently built its own Turnaround Leadership Academy at Mississippi State University, and it will combine the academy with the National Institute for School Leadership at Ole Miss. **Michigan** has a [Coaches Institute](#) and a Principals Fellowship, a two-week residential training program for turnaround leaders at Michigan State University.

Expanding State Authority to Intervene as a Last Resort

Some states have begun to realize that after years of ineffective improvement efforts in some districts and schools, more drastic measures must be tried. State takeover of districts and schools—dissolving locally elected boards of education and firing superintendents—is contentious and raises the stakes for state government. Despite these hardships, several states have begun to expand their authority to be more prescriptive than they might have in the past; they recognize that continued failure has severe consequences for students. States are no longer just appointing a new governing board but are moving toward direct control of operations by creating a special zone or "super" district managed by the state.

Louisiana was the first state to expand its authority to intervene. It created the Recovery School District in 2003 to take over any school that had been rated by the state as "academically unacceptable" for four consecutive years. Legislation in **Massachusetts** (SB 2247) grants the state power to place chronically "underperforming" schools under state receivership. As many as 35 schools, serving 17,000 students in 10 school districts, could be affected in 2010–2011. A law signed by Governor Deval Patrick earlier this year also lifts the cap on charter schools in the lowest-performing districts, allowing for the creation of "readiness schools" that are freed from contractual constraints and given more freedom over hiring and use of time.

In **Mississippi**, the Children's First Act (SB 2628) allows the governor to declare a state of emergency in any school district labeled as "failing" for two consecutive years, remove both the local board and superintendent, create

community-based councils, and place those districts in a state-run Recovery School District (MS-RSD). The New Start Schools Act (SB 2293) allows MS-RSD to take over individual schools that have been labeled “failing” for three consecutive years. If more than 50 percent of parents petition to do so, they can convert a failing school into a charter school.

Colorado’s Education Accountability Act (SB-09-163) creates a more precise method—looking at value added over time instead of status—to identify failing schools and districts while giving the state commissioner more power to recommend needed interventions. The Innovative School Zones Act (SB-08-130) allows schools to request contract waivers and flexibility in operating conditions, such as the duration of the school day and time spent in professional learning.

Legislation in **Michigan** (HB 4787) places the lowest 5 percent of schools in the State School Reform/Redesign District (SSRD). The state schools chief appoints an officer to lead the SSRD; the officer oversees and manages schools and has all the powers of a local school board, including control over curriculum and discretionary spending. Schools in the SSRD will also create an addendum to the local district’s collective bargaining agreement to address work rules that could be impediments to implementing the reform design. A new **Wisconsin** law requires school boards in low-performing districts to adopt model teaching standards, create support programs for struggling students, and provide more time for learning. The lowest-performing schools also are required to adopt new standards for evaluating teachers.

School closure, another strategy of last resort gaining traction in some states, should be implemented only when the district or state authority is certain it can send students to a better-performing campus. Too often, students from a closed school are placed in another weak school. From 2001 to 2006, Chicago closed 44 low-performing schools and, on average, the achievement of displaced students was no different, except for the few students placed in academically stronger schools.³⁸

Evaluating Strategies to Better Understand What Works, When, and Why

Previous attempts at school and district turnaround have experienced mixed results, but enough lessons learned exist for policymakers to develop a new strategy. In particular, states and territories should use their School Improvement Grant funds to build their internal capacity to assist struggling schools and districts, engage external partners, set ambitious but realistic goals that incorporate multiple measures, and develop supporting human capital policies. As a last resort, states can also build on the experience of other leading states and increase their authority to intervene in chronically failing schools and districts. Although such experience offers examples of “better” practices, no strategy currently works all the time or even on average. Consequently, states’ future turnaround efforts must rigorously evaluate what works, under what conditions, and why. Fixing failing schools and districts is hard but necessary work for governors to ensure all students have access to an education that prepares them to compete in the modern economy.

Notes

¹ U.S. Department of Education, “Data Reflecting the Number of Schools in Improvement, Corrective Action, and Restructuring in School Year 2008-09.” Accessed March 1, 2011 at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/statestabilization/schooldata.pdf>. These are the most current data available.

² Alyson Klein, “Rural Schools Get Nearly One-Fourth of Turnaround Grants,” *Education Week*, Published online December 12, 2010. Accessed at: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/12/10/15turnaround.h30.html>

³ The lower range of 10 percent is calculated from David A. Stuit, *Are Bad Schools Immortal? The Scarcity of Turnarounds and Shutdowns in Both Charter and District Sectors* (Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, December 2010). The upper range of 20 percent was cited by Doug Mesecar, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, U.S. Department of Education, at the forum Turning Around the Nation’s Worst Schools of the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC, March 11, 2008 (see <http://www.aei.org/event/1646>).

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⁶ Carole K. Barnett and Michael G. Pratt, “From Threat-Rigidity to Flexibility—Toward a Learning Model of Autogenic Crisis in Organizations,” *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2000): 74–88.

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⁹ Jennifer O’Day, “Complexity, Accountability and School Improvement,” *Harvard Education Review*, vol. 72, no. 3 (2003: 293–329); and Andrew Calkins, William Guenther, Grace Belfore, and Dave Lash, *The Turnaround Challenge* (Boston, MA: Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, 2007).

¹⁰ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *No Child Left Behind Act: Education Should Clarify Guidance and Address Potential Compliance Issues for Schools in Corrective Action and Restructuring Status*, GAO-07-1035 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, September 2007).

¹¹ Angela Minnici and Deanna D. Hill, *Educational Architects: Do State Education Agencies Have the Tools Necessary to Implement NCLB?* (Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy Study, May 2007).

¹² Robert Manwaring, *Restructuring ‘Restructuring’: Improving Interventions for Low-Performing Schools and Districts* (Washington, DC: Education Sector, April 2, 2010).

¹³ Shelby Dietz, “How Many Schools Have Not Made Adequate Yearly Progress Under the No Child Left Behind Act?” (Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy, March 2010).

¹⁴ Amy C. Edmondson, Brian R. Golden and Gary J. Young, “Turnaround at the Veterans Health Administration (A).” Harvard Business School Case 608-061.

¹⁵ Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, *Meeting the Turnaround Challenge: Strategies, Resources & Tools to Transform a Framework into Practice* (Boston, MA: Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, 2009).

¹⁶ Minnici and Hill.

¹⁷ Information is based on author’s calculations. The New Hampshire Department of Education has 110 employees, and 236 schools have missed their adequate yearly progress targets for two consecutive years or more.

¹⁸ Calkins et al.

¹⁹ John Cronin, Michael Dahlin, Deborah Adkins, and G. Gage Kingsbury, *The Proficiency Illusion* (Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2007).

²⁰ Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Latham, “Building a Practically Useful Theory of Goal Setting and Task Motivation: A 35 Year Odyssey,” *American Psychologist*, vol. 57, no. 9, (2002: 705-717)

²¹ Stuit, 27.

²² Douglas N. Harris, “Clear Away the Smoke and Mirrors of Value-Added,” *Phi Delta Kappan* (May 2010): 66–69.

²³ Eric Hirsch, Scott Emerick, Keri Church, and Ed Fuller, *Teacher Working Conditions Are Student Learning Conditions: A Report on the 2006 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey* (Chapel Hill, NC: Center for Teaching Quality, 2007).

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²⁵ Heinrich Mintrop and Gail L. Sunderman, “Predictable Failure of Federal Sanctions-Driven Accountability for School Improvement—And Why We May Retain it Anyway,” *Educational Researcher*, vol. 38, no.5 (2009): 353–64.

²⁶ Tabitha Grossman, *Building a High-Quality Education Workforce: A Governor’s Guide to Human Capital Development* (Washington, DC: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2009).

²⁷ Tim Daly, presentation to the Early Childhood Education and Workforce Committee at the National Governors Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, Pa., July 13, 2008.

²⁸ Maggie Randolph, “School Turnaround Efforts in Michigan,” presentation to the National Governors Association, Governors Education Policy Advisors Institute, Miami, Fla., April 27, 2010.

²⁹ Louisiana’s Recovery School District is a special zone of chronically low-performing schools run by the state department of education.

³⁰ Learning Point Associates, *School Restructuring: What Works When*, 3rd. ed., (Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates, June 2010).

³¹ Geoffrey D. Borman, “The Past, Present and Future of Comprehensive School Reform,” *Research Brief* (Naperville, IL: The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, August 2009).

³² Brian Rowan, Richard Correnti, Robert J. Miller, and Eric M. Camburn, *School Improvement by Design: Lessons from a Study of Comprehensive School Reform Programs* (Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, August 2009).

³³ Laura Pappano, *Inside School Turnarounds: Urgent Hopes, Unfolding Stories* (Boston, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2010).

³⁴ Robert L. Linn, “Accountability, Responsibility and Reasonable Expectations,” *Educational Researcher*, vol. 32, no. 7 (2003): 3–13.

³⁵ More rationale for existence proofs can be found in Chip and Dan Heath, *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard* (New York, NY: Broadway Books, 2010). In particular, see Chapter Two, “Find the Bright Spots” and the case of Jerry Sternin improving child nutrition in Vietnam.

³⁶ Grossman, 25.

³⁷ Lucy Steiner, Emily Hassel, and Bryan Hassel, *School Turnaround Leaders: Competencies for Success* (Chapel Hill, NC: Public Impact, 2008).

³⁸ Marisa de la Torre and Julia Gwynne, *When Schools Close: Effects on Displaced Students in Chicago Public Schools* (Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2009).