

January 2017

Thank you for your request for **research on incremental to dramatic school turnaround efforts or how struggling schools successfully escalated interventions.** Ask REL Southwest is part of a collaborative Ask A REL reference desk service provided by the 10 regional educational laboratories (RELs). By design, this service functions much in the same way as a technical reference library, by providing references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations for research-based education questions.

Please note that REL Southwest has not done an evaluation of the resources themselves but offers this list to you for your information only.

BACKGROUND

“Successful school turnarounds—characterized by quick, strategic changes in school culture and systems that result in dramatic improvement in student achievement in persistently low-performing schools—are hard work and difficult to achieve and sustain. Further complicating the issue, few states and districts have a clear, robust definition of turnaround success, which would enable states, districts, and schools to:

- Identify successful turnarounds and examine factors that contribute to success, creating lessons useful to other schools.
- Determine as early as possible when a turnaround attempt is off-track in order to respond more quickly and effectively.”¹

Following an established REL Southwest protocol, we conducted a search for research reports, websites, as well as descriptive briefs on incremental to dramatic school turnaround efforts. **We searched the references in the response from the most commonly used resources of research, but they are not comprehensive and other relevant references and resources may exist.** The sources included federally funded organizations, additional research institutions, educational databases, and general Internet searches using Google and Bing. See the methods section at the end of this Ask A REL for additional information on how we identified the following sources.

QUESTION

What types of interventions, from incremental to dramatic, have been found to be successful in struggling schools? (How have struggling schools successfully escalated interventions?)

¹ Lutterloh, C., Cornier, J.P., & Hassel, B. C. “Measuring school turnaround success.” The Center on School Turnaround. WestEd.

http://www.schoolturnaroundsupport.org/sites/default/files/resources/Measuring_School_Turnaround_Success.pdf.

SOURCES

Bogotch, I.; Reyes-Guerra, D.; & Freeland, J. (2016). Turnaround school leadership: From paradigms to promises. *Leadership in diverse learning contexts*, Volume 22 of the series *Studies in Educational Leadership* pp 35-58.
http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-28302-9_2.

From the abstract: This chapter “*Turnaround School Leadership* is a contemporary term for a method of school reform and school improvement. It emerged in the US, circa 2004, as a new category of school leaders: individuals with the skills to turn around struggling or “low-performing” schools into “successful” schools. It is typically an attempt to blend both transformational and heroic leadership theories with business models of accountability. As a result, individual school leaders are held accountable for turning around schools by raising test scores. This definition is rooted in U.S. law (No Child Left Behind), U.S. policy (Race to the Top) and state and local governments’ political cultures. The authors of this chapter deconstruct the U.S. government’s definition as well as research-based definitions grounded in school improvement studies (e.g., Fullan, Murphy, Leithwood, and Duke). The authors argue that turning around schools should be a systemic educational idea grounded in social constructions of meaning based on curriculum inquiry (Reyes-Guerra and Bogotch 2011). The chapter describes the collaborative professional development model (PROPEL) of a university-school district partnership for developing turnaround school leaders. Central to the model is the use of program and course metaphors to help participants articulate effective answers regarding the purpose of U.S. public education in the twenty-first century.”

Hansen, M. (2012). "Key issues in empirically identifying chronically low-performing and turnaround schools." *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)* 17.1-2: 55-69. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ965549>.

From the ERIC abstract: “One of the US Department of Education's key priorities is turning around the nation's persistently low-achieving schools, yet exactly how to identify low-performing schools is a task left to state policy makers, and a myriad of definitions have been utilized. In addition, exactly how to recognize when a school begins to turn around is not well established in the research literature. This article presents some of the lessons learned from a project that empirically identified chronically low-performing and turnaround schools in 3 states, and maps out the decision-making process involved in identifying these schools based on performance.”

Herman, R., Dawson, P., Dee, T., Greene, J., Maynard, R., Redding, S., and Darwin, M. (2008). *Turning around chronically low-performing schools: A practice guide* (NCEE #20084020). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/7>.

From the abstract: “This guide identifies practices that can improve the performance of chronically low-performing schools—a process commonly referred to as creating “turnaround schools.” The four recommendations in this guide work together to help failing schools make adequate yearly progress.”

Herman, R. (2012). Scaling School Turnaround. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, v17 n1-2 p25-33. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ965553>.

From the ERIC abstract: This article explores the research on turning around low performing schools to summarize what we know, what we don't know, and what this means for scaling school turnaround efforts. "School turnaround" is defined here as quick, dramatic gains in academic achievement for persistently low performing schools. The article first considers the case set out in a recent paper and then expands the discussion to explore the scalability of strategies for turning schools around. Following this paper, it appears that chartering alone is not enough to effect turnaround. Other existing turnaround options have not clearly led to successful turnaround at scale, but research does suggest turnaround practices and approaches to scaling. (Contains 2 tables.)”

Hines, E.; Moore, J.; Mayes, R.; Harris, P.; Vega, D.; Robinson, D.; Gray, C.; & Jackson, C. (2017). Making student achievement a priority: The role of school counselors in turnaround schools. *Urban Education*.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0042085916685761>.

From the abstract: “Much attention has been paid to administrators and teachers in turnaround schools; however, little focus, if any, is given to school counselors and the vital role that they play in improving student outcomes. In turnaround schools, it is critical that all school personnel are involved in improving school outcomes, such as academic achievement and graduation rates, in the lowest performing high schools in the United States. The authors highlight the critical role that school counselors play in turnaround schools and offer specific recommendations on how they may collaborate with other stakeholders to improve student achievement in such school settings.”

Hochbein, C. (2012). Relegation and reversion: Longitudinal analysis of school turnaround and decline. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 17(1–2), 92–107. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ965570>.

From the ERIC abstract: “School turnaround has become a popular strategy for improvement of chronically low-performing schools. Research related to school turnaround has relied substantially upon case studies. These case studies often focus on successful turnarounds and report immediate outcomes, failing to provide information about the sustainability of the results. In addition, schools with equally dramatic declining academic performance garner little attention from educators, policy makers, and researchers. This study addresses this gap in school effectiveness and school improvement literature by examining the longitudinal performance of schools after experiencing a dramatic improvement or decline. Results of the study indicated that 3 years after a school experienced turnaround, on average, academic performance declined from peak performance, but did not revert to prior low levels of performance. Similarly, academic performance of downfall schools, on average, did not relegate schools to a status of chronic low performance, yet achievement levels did not rebound to prior levels.”

Klute, M. (2016). State Policies for Intervening in Chronically Low-Performing Schools: A 50-State Policy Scan. Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED567047>.

From the ERIC abstract: “This study seeks to answer the question: ‘What policies are in place in each of the 50 states related to state intervention with chronically low-performing schools?’ To address this question, the study provides a summary of policies in place related to state interventions with chronically low-performing schools that can inform education leaders, particularly those in states where policies are changing, as they make decisions about how to support school improvement in their lowest-performing schools. The study focused on all 50 states. Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Central conducted a systematic search of states’ laws, regulations, and other publicly available documents. Qualitative data analysis methods were used to identify common themes in the data. The systematic search for legislation proceeded in three steps: (1) Researchers searched the Westlaw database of laws and regulations for each of the 50 states using 12 keyword combinations; (2) Researchers scanned the section titles for each state’s statutes and regulations to ensure that all relevant sections were included; and (3) When reading laws and regulations, researchers made note of other legislation that was referenced. If not already located through the previous search steps, these laws and regulations were located and reviewed. This search retrieved 1,370 sections of state laws and regulations. All laws and regulations were imported into MAXQDA qualitative analysis software. To supplement the information contained in laws and regulations, REL Central researchers obtained approved requests for Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) flexibility for 43 states from the U.S. Department of Education website (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html>). The study authors examined and coded legislation and ESEA flexibility requests and prepared a summary of policies for each state. The summaries included detailed information from these sources for each category of interventions. Six broad categories of policies related to intervening in chronically low-performing schools were identified through the coding process: (1) development or monitoring of school improvement plans; (2) changes in staffing; (3) closing a school; (4) financial incentives or interventions; (5) reforms to the day-to-day operation of the school; and (6) changes related to the entity governing or operating the school. A table is appended.”

Klute, M.; Cherasaro, T.; & Apthorp, H. (2016). Summary of research on the association between state interventions in chronically low-performing schools and student achievement. REL 2016-138. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED565613>.

From the ERIC abstract. “This report summarizes the research on the association between state interventions in chronically low-performing schools and student achievement. Most of the research focused on one type of state intervention: working with a turnaround partner. Few studies were identified that examined other types of interventions, such as school closure, charter conversion, and school redesign. Most studies were descriptive, which limits the conclusions that can be drawn about the effectiveness of the interventions. Results of studies of turnaround partner interventions were mixed and suggested that student achievement was more likely to improve when particular factors--such as strong leadership, use of data to guide instruction, and a

positive school culture characterized by trust and increased expectations for students--were in place in schools. Studies in California examined the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program or its successor, the High Priority School Grant Program. Ten studies examined interventions in states other than California. Studies varied somewhat in the details of the interventions studied, including whether additional funding was provided to support implementation of reforms. Unlike interventions in California, studies in other states did not describe school participation in interventions as voluntary. The following are appended: (1) Literature search procedures; and (2) Characteristics of studies included in the literature review.”

Lam, L.; Mercer, C.; Podolsky, A.; and Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). Evidence-based interventions: A guide for states. Learning Policy Institute, Policy Brief. [https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Evidence Based Interventions Guide for States.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Evidence%20Based%20Interventions%20Guide%20for%20States.pdf)

From the abstract: “The new Every Student Succeeds Act offers states flexibility to create new approaches to school accountability and to design appropriate interventions for schools in need of assistance. The law states that the interventions should be “evidence-based” and defines the kinds of research evidence states need to provide when choosing strategies for improvement. This brief analyzes the research base and identifies the conditions under which four commonly used interventions have been found to be effective when well-implemented. The four areas are: high-quality professional development, class-size reduction, community schools and wraparound services, and high school redesign.”

Murphy, J. (2008). Turnaround insights from the organizational sciences: A review of the empirical evidence and the development of a staged model of recovery with potential implications for the PK-12 education sector. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 7, 331357. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ810909>.

From the ERIC abstract: “In this article, we review research from the organizational sciences to develop lessons for educators and policy makers. The approach is an integrative review of the literature. We employ a comprehensive process to unpack and make sense of the turnaround literature from the organizational sciences. We rely on strategies appropriate for document analysis, and borrow analytic strategies (e.g., memoing, coding) employed with interview data. We capture insights from the five major research pathways for studying organizational turnaround. We blend research findings into seven dimensions within the two-stage model of retrenchment and recovery. We then outline more explicitly four macro-level conclusions for educators and policymakers. We posit that the literature on turning around failing organizations in sectors outside of education provides blueprints for recovery activity in failing schools. The implications for turnaround leadership are particularly strong. This is the first systematic effort to mine research in the corporate, nonprofit, and public sectors to develop a staged framework for shaping efforts to turn around failing schools. (Contains 1 figure.)”

Player, D.; & Katz, V. (2016). Assessing School Turnaround: Evidence from Ohio. *Elementary School Journal*, v116 n4 p675-698 Jun 2016.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1103948>.

From the ERIC abstract: "Policy makers have struggled to find successful approaches to address concentrated, persistent low school achievement. While NCLB and the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program have devoted significant time and attention to turnaround, very little empirical evidence substantiates whether and how these efforts work. This study employs a comparative interrupted time series (CITS) to examine a sample of 20 Ohio schools that participated in a school turnaround program and finds participating schools experienced meaningful improvements in student achievement after completing the 2-year program, which persisted and grew in the 2 years subsequent to the completion of the program. Improved student achievement is not wholly concentrated within specific performance categories, suggesting that participation in the program is associated with increases in overall student performance rather than focusing only on students at the margin of proficiency. These results provide some of the first causal evidence of the potential efficacy of focused school improvement efforts."

Rutherford, Amanda. "Organizational turnaround and educational performance: The impact of performance-based monitoring analysis systems." *The American Review of Public Administration*, Vol 44, Iss 4: 0275074012470022.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0275074012470022>.

From the abstract: "How do accountability policies affect failing organizations? Are additional interventions used to improve underperforming agencies effective in raising performance outputs? This article investigates the effectiveness of turnaround policies in organizations that persistently fail to meet accountability standards. Using Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System data from 169 school districts in Texas, this article shows that turnaround interventions have only limited success. While monitoring strategies work for the most salient performance indicator in the short term, improvements quickly dissipate following an intervention. Supporting the notion that management matters, results also show that the type of monitor assigned to a failing school can affect the extent of improvement in performance."

Schaffer, E., Reynolds, D., & Stringfield, S. (2012). Sustaining turnaround at the school and district levels: The high reliability schools project at Sandfields Secondary School. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 17(1), 108-127.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ965554>.

From the ERIC abstract: "Beginning from 1 high-poverty, historically low-achieving secondary school's successful turnaround work, this article provides data relative to a successful school turnaround, the importance of external and system-level supports, and the importance of building for sustainable institutionalization of improvements. The evidence suggests the importance of creating a more nearly high-reliability set of reform supports at the school and district levels. (Contains 1 table and 3 footnotes.)"

Strunk, K.; Marsh, J.; Hashim, A.; Bush-Mecenas, S; & Weinstein, T. (2016). The Impact of Turnaround Reform on Student Outcomes: Evidence and Insights from the Los Angeles Unified School District. *Education Finance and Policy*, v11 n3 p251-282 Sum 2016. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1106899>.

From the ERIC abstract. “We examine the Los Angeles Unified School District's Public School Choice Initiative (PSCI), which sought to turnaround the district's lowest-performing schools. We ask whether school turnaround impacted student outcomes, and what explains variations in outcomes across reform cohorts. We use a Comparative Interrupted Time Series approach using administrative student-level data, following students in the first (1.0), second (2.0), and third (3.0) cohorts of PSCI schools. We find that students in 1.0 turnaround schools saw no significant improvements in outcomes, whereas students enrolled in 2.0 schools saw significant gains in English Language Arts in both years of the reform. Students in 3.0 schools experienced significant decreases in achievement. Qualitative and survey data suggest that increased support and assistance and the use of reconstitution and restart as the sole turnaround methods contributed to gains in 2.0, whereas policy changes in 3.0 caused difficulties and confusion in implementation, leading to poor student performance.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Aldaco, A. L. G. (2016). *Fiery passion and relentless commitment: The lived experiences of African American women principals in turnaround model schools. Leadership, Adult Education and School Psychology*. Texas State University. Doctoral Dissertation. <https://digital.library.txstate.edu/handle/10877/6412>.

From the abstract. “Chronically low performing schools in the United States have required targeted support and interventions to increase student achievement. In recent years, the school turnaround model has emerged as a swift, dramatic, comprehensive approach to implementing interventions in the lowest performing schools (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007) where incremental school improvement efforts have failed. Such schools require school leaders who demonstrate a sense of urgency and address underperformance with immediacy and targeted actions (Fairchild & Demary, 2011). African American female principals often lead chronically low performing schools that require turnaround efforts (Murtadha and Larson, 1999). However, documented accounts of their lived experiences are extremely limited in scholarly literature (Clemmons, 2012). This research seeks to close the gap in literature on the experiences of African American women principals. Situated in Black Feminism and Black Women’s Standpoint Theory, this study redefines what it means to be a Black woman (Collins, 1998) school leader and assesses African American women’s shared experiences, perceptions, and how social and oppressive constructs impact their lives and leadership. This research also critiques the educational system and the turnaround model through the lens of Black women leaders’ experiences in order to spark new thinking and new approaches to address chronically low performing schools and bring awareness to the potentially oppressive structures which African American women educators experience as leaders. Furthermore, this research examines how Black women principals determine their identities, function as leaders, and overcome obstacles to be inspirational and successful school leaders of turnaround model

schools. Turnaround principals in this study have courageously, selflessly, and voluntarily worked in grim educational situations, and they have all prevailed. This research reveals the women have focused on a growth mindset, relationship building, and ownership and accountability to drive school turnaround. However, at the core of their leadership is an endless passion and unwavering commitment to providing a quality education for all children. The results of this study have implications on education policy, policy-makers, and school turnaround practices.”

Baroody, K. (2011) "Turning around the nation's lowest-performing schools: Five steps districts can take to improve their chances of success." *Center for American Progress*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED535862>.

From the ERIC abstract: “Across the country, states and school districts are focusing on turning around the nation's lowest-performing schools. Unprecedented federal Race to the Top and School Improvement Grant funding accompanied by a more prescriptive approach for using the funds has raised the profile of turnaround efforts. This focus on school turnaround, while welcome, is not new. State, district, and school leaders have been trying for years to turn around persistently low-performing schools. But while some schools have made significant gains in student achievement, results overall are decidedly mixed. One of the overarching reasons for the uneven results is that districts generally have failed to recognize that persistently low-performing schools face unique challenges that require aggressive, customized, and sustained interventions. Education Resource Strategies, Inc., or ERS, has identified five steps that districts can take in designing and implementing their school improvement programs that will increase the probability that their efforts will achieve lasting improvement: (1) Understand what each school needs; (2) Quantify what each school gets and how it is used; (3) Invest in the most important changes first; (4) Customize the strategy to the school; and (5) Change the district, not just the schools. There is no silver bullet--no single solution for how to turn a failing school around. But by taking these five steps district leaders can improve their probability for sustainable and scalable success. (Contains 26 endnotes.)”

NOTE: This source was not peer reviewed.

de la Torre, M., Allensworth, E., Jagesic, S., Sebastian, J., Salmonowicz, M., Meyers, C., and Gerdeman, D.R. (2012). Turning around low-performing schools in Chicago. Summary Report. Consortium on Chicago School Research. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED529371>.

From the ERIC abstract: “The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research and the American Institutes for Research (AIR) partnered to examine five different models initiated by the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in 36 schools. CPS was an early adopter of dramatic intervention strategies in low-performing schools, and the reforms in this study were implemented between 1997 and 2010. All of the schools were identified as chronically low performing and were reformed in ways consistent with the elements described in the school improvement models recommended by the federal government. The goals of the study were to make clear how school reform occurred in Chicago--showing the actual changes in the student population and teacher workforce at the schools--and to learn whether these efforts had a positive effect on student learning overall. Since 1997, CPS has initiated five distinct reforms that aim to

dramatically improve low-performing schools in a short time. These initiatives are Reconstitution (seven high schools), School Closure and Restart (six elementary schools and two high schools), placement into the School Turnaround Specialist Program (STSP) model (four elementary schools), placement into the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) model (ten elementary schools and two high schools), and placement into the CPS Office of School Improvement (OSI) model (two elementary schools and three high schools). Main findings from the study include: (1) Elementary/middle schools that went through reform made significant improvements in test scores compared with similar schools that did not; however, large improvements did not occur immediately in the first year; (2) High schools that underwent reform did not show significant improvements in absences or ninth grade on-track-to-graduate rates over matched comparison schools, but recent high school efforts look more promising than earlier ones; (3) Schools that underwent reform generally served the same students as before intervention, with the exception of one model of reform; (4) Schools under the Closure and Restart model experienced substantial changes to their student body composition; (5) The vast majority of teachers in schools under Closure and Restart, AUSL and OSI models were not rehired after reform; and (6) The teacher workforce after intervention across all models was more likely to be white, younger, and less experienced, and was more likely to have provisional certification than the teachers who were at those schools before the intervention. School-by-School Changes in Student Achievement are appended.” NOTE: This source was not peer reviewed.

Hansen, M., & Choi, K. (2012). *Chronically low-performing schools and turnaround: Evidence from three states* (ED 535509). Paper presented at the SREE [Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness] Fall 2012 Conference, Washington, DC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED535509>.

From the ERIC abstract: “The criteria for determining the student outcomes that define a school as having ‘turned around’ are not well defined . . . , and the definition of turnaround performance varies across studies. . . . Although current policy initiatives offer guidelines for identifying CLP [chronically low performing] schools, there is no standard definition or methodology in common usage. . . . This paper summarizes the lessons learned from this exercise of empirically identifying CLP schools and binning them into performance categories based on their trajectories. This paper provides guidance for others charged with a similar task. Specifically, the authors learned the critical importance of using student-level data (rather than school-level aggregate measures), using growth-based measures in conjunction with status-based performance metrics, the stability of these performance metrics over time, and how to empirically recognize turnaround in schools as it occurs. Also, [the authors] learned that low-performing schools turned around their performance more frequently than one might have presumed based on prior research. In Florida, they identified approximately 15% of chronically low-performing elementary and 14% of chronically low-performing middle schools as turnarounds. Similar rates were observed in North Carolina—13% and 16%, respectively. NOTE: This source was not peer reviewed.

Knudson, Joel, Larisa Shambaugh, and Jennifer O'Day. Beyond the school: exploring a systemic approach to school turnaround. Policy and Practice Brief. California Collaborative on District Reform (2011). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED526853>

From the ERIC abstract: “Educators have long grappled with the challenge presented by chronically underperforming schools. Environments that consistently fail to prepare students for higher levels of education threaten opportunities for high school graduation, postsecondary education, and career success. The U.S. Department of Education reinforced the urgency of reversing sustained poor performance in early 2009 when it identified intensive supports and effective interventions in lowest-achieving schools as one of its four pillars of education reform. However, federal and state policies have often situated the cause--and thus the remedies--for persistent low performance at the school level. This brief uses the experience of eight California school districts--all members of the California Collaborative on District Reform--to suggest a more systemic approach to school turnaround. The authors explore the district perspective on school turnaround by describing several broad themes that emerged across the eight districts in the California Collaborative on District Reform. They also profile three of these districts to illustrate specific strategies that can create a coherent district-wide approach to turnaround. Building on these district perspectives, they explore considerations for turnaround efforts in the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). (Contains 10 endnotes.) [Additional funding for this paper was provided by the Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation.]” NOTE: This source was not peer reviewed.

McMurrer, J. (2012). Changing the school climate is the first step to reform in many schools with federal improvement grants. Center on Education and Policy. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED533561>.

From the ERIC abstract: “School Improvement Grants (SIGs) financed through the economic stimulus package are intended to spur dramatic change in persistently low-performing schools. Many state and local officials charged with implementing SIGs view the creation of a safe, orderly, collegial, and productive school climate as an essential step in raising student achievement, according to case studies by the Center on Education Policy (CEP) at George Washington University. The importance of establishing a school climate conducive to learning has also been recognized by other studies of school reform and endorsed in federal SIG guidance. This special CEP report highlights findings about the critical element of school climate from case studies of the first year and half of SIG implementation in Maryland, Michigan, and Idaho. The information in the report is based on interviews with 35 state, district, and school officials in the three states and on in-depth reviews of six SIG-funded schools. Key findings about school climate from the case study schools include the following: (1) All six SIG-funded schools participating in CEP's case studies have taken steps to create a more positive school climate--often as an initial priority before implementing other reforms; (2) SIG-funded case study schools used a variety of specific strategies to improve school climate--from instituting school uniforms to increasing teacher collaboration; and (3) Administrators and teachers most often cited improvements in school climate as their greatest success after the first year of implementing SIGs.” NOTE: This source was not peer reviewed.

Zimmer, R.; Henry, G.; & Kho, A. (2016). The role of governance and management in school turnaround policies: The case of Tennessee's achievement school district and iZones.

https://aefpweb.org/sites/default/files/webform/41/ASD_iZone%20Impact%20Paper%20conference%20online%20version.pdf.

From the abstract: "In recent years, the federal government has invested billions of dollars through Race to the Top and School Improvement Grants to address chronically low performing schools. These grants required prescriptive turnaround reforms including the option of a "restart" approach, which required a replacement of the management of schools, often with outside providers such as charter management organizations. In some cases, districts spearhead the reform, but in others, the state may intercede, taking over schools and changing governance from the local school district to the state. This latter restart approach assumes that districts do not have the capacity or the will or both to manage meaningful reforms. In this paper, we examine Tennessee's use of the Race to the Top grant to implement reform models that included both a change in governance—i.e., state takeover of schools with management of schools outside of the district—and maintaining governance and management of reforms within the district. Our study examines whether it is necessary to have the governance and management of schools outside of the district in order to have a meaningful change in performance. We find that schools managed by districts are more successful at improving chronically low performing schools than reforms requiring governance and management outside of district auspices..." NOTE: This source was not peer reviewed.

METHODS

Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Searches:

Interventions; interventions AND struggling schools: struggling school interventions; interventions AND turnaround; struggling schools; escalated interventions; struggling school escalated interventions; achievement gap; turnaround districts AND best practices OR intervention OR performance; school improvement; beat the odds schools; school transformation; effective schools; school turnaround AND results OR improvement

Search of Databases and Websites

- Institute of Education Sciences (IES) website (<http://www.ies.ed.gov>) and IES sources: Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Program, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), National Center for Education Research (NCER), What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)
- ERIC database (www.eric.ed.gov)
- Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)
- Google (www.google.com)
- Bing (www.bing.com)

Criteria for Inclusion

NOTE: We have included sources from other REL responses, previously provided to other requestors. These were retrieved from the “REL Intranet” and REL website archived responses.

REL Southwest selected resources that provide research on school turnaround efforts. When REL Southwest staff reviewed resources, we considered – among other things – three factors:

- 1. Date of Publication:** The most current information (primarily published from 2010 to the present) is included.
- 2. Source and Funder of the Report/Brief/Article:** Priority was given to publications written in relevant, peer-reviewed journals or reports or produced by well-known research organizations.
- 3. Methodology:** Sources include reported studies, literature reviews and policy reports.

Ask A REL is a service provided by a collaborative of the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES). This response was prepared by REL Southwest under contract ED-IES-12-C-0012 with IES. The content of this document does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.