

TOPIC: Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools

Topic inventories list every component of a DWW topic. Use this document to get an overview of the Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools topic, identify multimedia pieces, and plan for professional development.

Topic Overview & Tools

Leadership

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Instruction

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Quick Wins

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Committed Staff

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Topic Overview & Tools

Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Turning Around Chronically Low- Performing Schools (Video, 6:56 min)	This overview shows how the practices for School Turnaround fit together into a research-based and practical solution for quickly turning around chronically low-performing schools.	Turning Around Chronically Low- Performing Schools (Practice Guide) (.pdf) Turning Around Chronically Low- Performing Schools Visual Diagram (.pdf)
Turning Around Chronically Low- Performing Schools Visual Diagram (.pdf)	This diagram shows an approach that integrates four practices to support quick and dramatic improvement in student achievement. School turnaround efforts aim to improve student outcomes in chronically low-performing schools by changing how schools and classrooms operate.	
Recommendations of the Turnaround Practice Guide (Video, 8:20 min) Rebecca Herman, American Institutes for Research	Rebecca Herman, the chair of the expert panel that produced the Practice Guide, provides an overview of the school turnaround topic and discusses the four recommendations that are described in the Practice Guide.	Transcript and Bio (.pdf)
People, Time, Money, and Programming (Video, 6:25 min) Andrew Calkins, Mass Insight Education and Research Institute	Andrew Calkins discusses strategies to facilitate school turnaround. He emphasizes the need to establish a readiness to learn in turnaround schools through effectively managing the schools' use of people, time, money, and programming resources.	Transcript and Bio (,pdf)
School Turnaround Planning Template #1 (.doc)	Offering school- and district-level personnel key actions to facilitate school turnaround efforts. Key actions are presented for leadership, instructional feedback, and organizational practices, teacher quality, monitoring of instruction, use of data for planning, collaborating with families and the community, and ensuring a supportive learning environment.	



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
School Turnaround Planning Template #2 (.doc)	Offering district-level personnel key actions to facilitate their work in turning around low-performing schools. Key actions are presented for district leadership, research-based instructional strategies, teacher quality, enrichment programs, and engaging families and the community.	
School Turnaround Planning Template #3 (.doc)	Suggesting ways for state-level personnel to facilitate the work of districts and schools in turning around low-performing schools. Key considerations are presented for state leadership, standards and expectations, recommending research-based resources, teacher quality, support systems for districts and schools, and fiscal policies.	
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Practice: Signal the need for dramatic change with improved leadership. (Leadership)

Schools should make a clear commitment to dramatic departures from the status quo, and the leader should signal the magnitude and urgency of that needed change. A low-performing school that fails to make adequate yearly progress must improve within a short timeframe; it does not have the luxury of years to implement incremental reforms.

A change in leadership practices, either with a new principal knowledgeable about turnaround strategies or with turnaround training for a continuing principal, shows that the school will be setting a new direction for improvement. Installing a new principal with turnaround experience or training can immediately signal change. If a change in leadership does not take place, the existing principal may signal change by substantially reforming existing leadership practices. The principal sends the message that everyone, including administrators, needs to change the daily school operations and the way instruction is delivered.

Overview & Tools

Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Signaling the Need for Dramatic Change With Strong Leadership (Video, 8:37 min)	This overview describes strong leadership and its importance. It outlines the characteristics of strong leaders and effective leadership practices in turnaround schools.	Transcript (,pdf)
School Principal Self-Reflection: Leadership Strategies (.doc)	A self-assessment tool for modifying existing leadership strategies in the following areas: communication with staff, instructional leadership, and connections with key stakeholders.	
Leadership Needs Assessment (.doc)	A self-assessment tool to assess the need for immediate changes in leadership strategies to enable the beginning of a turnaround process and the school's readiness for change.	Signaling the Need for Dramatic Change With Strong Leadership (Video, 8:37 min)
District Reflection: Identifying the School Turnaround Principal (.doc)	District administrators can use this questionnaire to help evaluate principal candidates (including current principals) to lead a turnaround effort.	



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Signaling Change (Video, 3:56 min) Bryan Hassel, Public Impact	Bryan Hassel describes the importance of strong leadership in school turnaround and the role that principals play in signaling the need and direction for change. Turnaround leaders must personally analyze data to pinpoint the big problems.	Transcript and Bio (.pdf)
	Successful leaders need to be willing to break norms, rules, and traditions. They must make clear that change is mandatory. Turning around a school can start with high-visibility "quick wins" to show the staff and community that change is possible and to build momentum.	
Supporting and Developing Turnaround Leaders (Video, 6:25 min) Bryan Hassel, Public Impact	Turnaround leadership requires special skills. Bryan Hassel describes how principals must take responsibility for existing problems and newly hired principals must learn about existing relationships and politics.	Transcript and Bio (.pdf)
	Districts must give schools the freedom to build the team and allocate time to get results and support principals meeting resistance. Districts should also monitor progress.	

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See How It Works

Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Engaging Teachers and Students Through Strong Leadership (Slideshow w/ audio)	An elementary school principal discusses steps for planning a school turnaround process: • Identify stakeholders' needs & engage the community through	Description of Turnaround With
Jarvis T. Sanford, Dodge parent meetings. Renaissance Academy, Chicago, IL Use a weekly newsletter to provide information and profedevelopment.	parent meetings. • Use a weekly newsletter to provide information and professional	
	 Focus on helping teachers become better instructors and on being open to feedback. 	



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Description of Turnaround With New Leadership (.pdf) Dodge Renaissance Academy, Chicago, IL	This document describes the overall school turnaround process one principal used. The processes include: developing a disciplined environment, building a cadre of talented teachers, and implementing standards-based instruction.	Engaging Teachers and Students Through Strong Leadership (Slideshow w/ audio) Site Profile (.pdf)
A State and District Partnership That Facilitates School Improvement (Audio, 4:57 min) Middleton High School, Tampa, FL	Representatives from both the Florida Department of Education and the Hillsborough County School District describe how they work together to support Middleton High School in Tampa, FL. They note in particular how they ensure that their partnership with each other as well as with school staff is supportive and complementary to promote the school's success.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Moving Turnaround Efforts Forward (Audio, 4:12 min) Brad Huebert, Jackson Elementary School, Sanger, CA Melissa Bazanos, Edgemont Elementary School, Moreno Valley, CA	Two new elementary school principals describe their school turnaround decision-making processes regarding curriculum, communication, scheduling, and assessment. One principal used assessments at the class, grade, and school level to guide instructional decisions. Another describes the school's expanded individualized reading program and use of assessment portfolios that follow students from grade to grade.	Transcript (.pdf) Jackson Site Profile (.pdf) Edgemont Site Profile (.pdf)
Establishing a Climate for Learning (Video, 6:05 min) Natalie Elder, Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	A new principal establishes a climate for learning through change. Changes include: implementing a character education program, developing hallway decorum, and providing interventions for struggling students. Teachers receive professional development to improve instruction and data use.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Building Turnaround Principals' Knowledge and Skills (Audio, 4:28 min) Alan Anderson & Josh Edelman, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, IL	Two district leaders describe efforts to develop principals with skills to turn around schools. One challenge in school turnaround is finding leaders with the talent, motivation, and vision. Accessing nationwide data to compare school leaders and identify strong performances can be helpful when hiring school leaders.	Transcript (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Cultivating the Ability to Lead (Part 1) (Audio, 3:51 min) llene Friedman, NYC Leadership Academy, New York, NY	The Academy's vice president describes the Aspiring Principals Program, which recruits, trains, and places effective leaders in high-need schools.	Transcript (.pdf) Leadership Performance Standards Matrix (.pdf)
Cultivating the Ability to Lead (Part 2) (Audio, 4:11 min) llene Friedman, NYC Leadership Academy, New York, NY	The Academy's vice president describes the structure of the Aspiring Principals Program, and the intensive preparation programs that lead up to it.	Transcript (.pdf) Leadership Performance Standards Matrix (.pdf)
Leadership Performance Standards Matrix (.pdf) NYC Leadership Academy, New York, NY	A rubric for evaluating aspiring leaders of newly restructured schools on 12 behaviorally based standards.	Cultivating the Ability to Lead (Part 1) (Audio) Cultivating the Ability to Lead (Part 2) (Audio)
Five Pillars That Guide Change (Video, 4:39 min) Don Davis, Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A high school principal describes principles that guided a school improvement process, which includes personalization. "Personalization" means teachers are involved in the student's life beyond the classroom. The school's instruction, assessments, and professional focus are based on content standards. Embracing standards and focusing on formative assessments makes the school "purpose driven."	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Districts and Schools Working Together to Achieve Results (Video, 4:34 min) Charles Vidal, San Joaquin County Office of Education, Stockton, CA	A district administrator discusses how regional support systems work with schools and districts to improve instruction by analyzing the use of time, quality of lessons, student engagement, and teacher behavior. District leaders must work with schools to provide them the support and technical assistance they need.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Building Relationships With Parents (Video, 5:46 min) Natalie Elder, Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	A new principal describes changes to build stronger relationships with parents and the community. Meeting structures and communication processes encourage parental participation in staff meetings. Events such as parent workshops and family nights can win parent support.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Staff Meeting Agendas (.pdf) Edgemont Elementary School, Moreno Valley, CA	A sample agenda for bi-monthly staff meetings. It provides a guide for ways principals can organize staff meetings and allow for teacher teams to work together toward common goals.	Site Profile (.pdf)



Practice: Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction. (Instruction)

Chronically low-performing schools need to maintain a sharp focus on improving instruction at every step of the reform process. To improve instruction, schools should use data to set goals for instructional improvement, make changes designed to immediately and directly affect instruction, and continuously reassess student learning and instructional practices.

Successful turnaround schools use data to set goals for instructional improvement by examining school average test scores to identify areas that need schoolwide improvement, classroom data to identify teachers' instructional strengths and professional development needs, and student data to focus on the instructional needs of individual students. Turnaround schools take action designed to immediately and directly affect instruction, such as teacher collaboration in instructional planning, targeted professional development, and reviews of curricula against standards. They also monitor student progress continuously and make adjustments using benchmark assessments, observations, and daily student progress.

Overview & Tools

Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Maintaining a Consistent Focus on Improving Instruction (Video, 7:39 min)	School leaders can use student, classroom, and schoolwide data to identify targeted areas where instruction can be improved. They must then set clear and targeted goals for instructional improvement then provide training and resources to meet these goals, and monitor results. The principal should be a highly visible and active instructional	Transcript (.pdf)
	leader and act as a role model for teachers.	
Learning Together: Using Data to Improve Instruction (.doc)	A workshop that can be used for an in-service on using student data to improve instruction and learning. Teachers learn how to collect, analyze, and use student data on a regular basis.	Maintaining a Consistent Focus on Improving Instruction (Video)
		Planning Together to Support Student Growth (Video)
		An Assessment System that Works for Teachers (Slideshow w/ audio and Transcript)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Planning Classroom Observation (.doc)	Principals and instructional leaders can use this observation tool to plan classroom observations and follow-up dialogue. The focus is on observations to help teachers improve their instruction rather than observations to evaluate teachers.	
Curriculum Mapping Tool (.doc)	This curriculum mapping planning tool provides one approach schools can use to align the curriculum with standards and assessments.	

Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
How Principals Can Help (Video, 5:16 min)	Dr. Duke describes strategies from school and business turnaround literature that can improve instruction:	Transcript and Bio (.pdf)
Daniel Duke, University of Virginia	Test frequently and analyze the results to help identify students who are struggling.	
	Develop teams within grade levels for teachers to discuss issues related to students and across grade levels for teachers to ensure that curriculum is aligned and students progress from one grade to next.	
	Encourage teachers to examine how they grade homework, how they distribute assignments, and how they manage their classroom to gain insight into where change might be necessary.	
3:45 min) Joseph F. Johnson, Jr., National Center for Urban School Transformation	Dr. Johnson discusses how high-performing schools align curricula to state standards, teach the content with a focus on student learning, and prioritize core content to improve student learning.	Transcript and Bio (.pdf)
	Improving instruction is the core of generating better results for children. School and district curriculum guides must be checked for alignment with standards, in addition to monitoring what is actually being taught in the classroom.	



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Differences Between Successful and Unsuccessful Turnaround Efforts (Video, 7:45 min)	To address a school's needs, if instruction does not change, achievement will not change. The entire school staff must believe in the new practices being pursued.	Transcript and Bio (.pdf)
Joseph F. Johnson, Jr., National Center for Urban School Transformation	Successful schools focus on a small number of practices that match their students' needs. All practices must acknowledge that the ultimate goal is improving student learning. Teachers cannot merely present content—they must ensure that their students are learning.	
The Principal's Role (Video, 3:55 min) Joseph F. Johnson, Jr., National Center for Urban School Transformation	Principals can help their schools improve instruction by being present in the classroom, checking if new teaching strategies are being successfully implemented. The principal must win the trust of the school's teachers to ensure that they feel supported, and feel motivated to succeed and improve instruction.	Transcript and Bio (.pdf)

See How It Works

Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Additional Goals for Improving Instruction (Audio, 4:31 min) Brad Huebert, Jackson Elementary School, Sanger, CA	Two principals discuss improving instruction through standards, data, and a return to academic basics: • Schoolwide assessments monitor student progress and ensure	Transcript (.pdf) Jackson Site Profile (.pdf) Edgemont Site Profile (.pdf)
Melissa Bazanos, Edgemont Elementary School, Moreno Valley, CA	curriculum is consistently administered. • Curriculum maps incorporate academic standards.	
Planning Together to Support Student Growth (Video, 3:11 min) Vonetta Maston, Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	A fourth-grade teacher explains how she and her grade-level team meets weekly to review assessment data, discuss individual students, and share teaching strategies. Meetings shape the school's curriculum and help create a team environment.	Transcript (.pdf) Fifth-Grade Reading Lesson Plan (.pdf) Curriculum Alignment Maps (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Fifth-Grade Reading Lesson Plan (.pdf) Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	A fifth-grade teacher's weekly reading lesson plan outlines each day's lesson, the standards and learning objectives, the teaching strategies, and lesson evaluation.	Planning Together to Support Student Growth (Video) Site Profile (.pdf)
Curriculum Alignment Maps (.pdf) Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	A map that aligns language, math, social studies/science standards to assessments and themes teachers in pre-K and fifth grade need to cover.	Planning Together to Support Student Growth (Video) Site Profile (.pdf)
Setting High Standards (Audio, 4:34 min) William Broderick-Villa, Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A geometry teacher discusses an approach for determining students' grades to ensure students reach proficiency on all math standards. Tests are broken up by standard; students must get 80% or above on each standard, but may keep trying until they do.	Transcript (.pdf) RSDSS 6 Instructional Time Survey: Aggregated Survey Results (.pdf) Mission Statement, Five Pillars, and Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs) (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
RSDSS 6 Instructional Time Survey: Aggregated Survey Results [.pdf] Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	Findings and recommendations from the Regional System of District and School Supports Instructional Time Survey (RSDSS). It provides schools with aggregate statistical findings on their level of efficiency in the use of instructional time.	Setting High Standards (Audio) Site Profile (.pdf)
Mission Statement, Five Pillars, and Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs) (.pdf) Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A resource that presents a high school's mission statement, Five Pillars, and Expected Schoolwide Learning Results.	Setting High Standards (Audio) Site Profile (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Professional Community Time (Video, 6:12 min) Don Davis, Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A principal leads his staff in a discussion of the school vision. Teachers then work collaboratively to develop activities to foster higher-order thinking. Higher-order thinking activities can improve student learning; these are easier to plan ahead of time than to incorporate "on the fly." A culture of collaboration must be focused on the right things to be productive.	Transcript (,pdf) Professional Development Concept Attainment Presentation (,pdf) Site Profile (,pdf)
Professional Development Concept Attainment Presentation (.pdf) Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A professional development presentation focused on concept attainment. Topics include: Conceptual Clarity, Multiple Examples, Dual Discrimination, and Conceptual Competence. Slides that check for understanding are included along with group activities.	Professional Community Time (Video) Site Profile (.pdf)
Teachers Implement Changes to Improve Instruction (Video, 6:19 min) Lindy Blazek, Jennifer Hartley & Dustin Dotzler, Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	A music, special education, and fifth-grade teacher discuss strategies they have learned and successfully implemented, including using centers to differentiate instruction. State assessment results are used to shape curriculum and integrate literacy instruction in all subject areas.	Transcript (.pdf) Daily Student Report (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Daily Student Report (.pdf) Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	The daily behavior report for students allows teachers to highlight areas of concern or praise. Parents are required to read, sign, and return the forms to the classroom.	Teachers Implement Changes to Improve Instruction (Video) Site Profile (.pdf)
Strategic Math Support Classes (Video, 3:54 min) Don Davis, Ed Rapinchuk & Maria Salgado, Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A principal discusses how placing support classes within the regular school day help students who perform below the basic level in algebra. Math teachers collaborate to align the support classes with the core algebra classes. A support class is taught in English and Spanish.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Improving High School Instruction (Video, 7:17 min) William Frey, Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	The science chair shares instructional strategies used to engage students in learning. Teachers need to have a clear objective, regularly check for understanding, and provide opportunities for meaningful collaboration among students. An effective way to monitor student learning is to consistently call on students who are not raising their hand or volunteering answers.	Transcript (,pdf) New Teacher Orientation Manual (,pdf) Site Profile (,pdf)
New Teacher Orientation Manual (.pdf) Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A manual to help orient new staff to the school's culture that focuses on continuous conversations and collaboration to improve instruction. It presents the mission, vision, five pillars, instructional norms and goals, and administrative procedures.	Improving High School Instruction (Video) Site Profile (.pdf)
Observing Instruction to Build Capacity (Video, 5:17 min) Carolyn Viss & Travis Walsh Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A math department chair conducts a coaching session with a math teacher based on a classroom observation of a core algebra class. She acknowledges good instructional practices and offers solutions for specific dilemmas.	Transcript (.pdf) Walk-In Observation Form (.pdf) Assessment Data and Math Department Success Elements (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Walk-In Observation Form (.pdf) Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	An observation form used by instructional leaders to check on the alignment of teachers' instruction with the schools' instructional norms.	Observing Instruction to Build Capacity (Video) Site Profile (.pdf)
Assessment Data and Math Department Success Elements (.pdf) Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A data report used by math teachers to collaboratively analyze data to determine strengths/weaknesses in student learning.	Observing Instruction to Build Capacity (Video) Site Profile (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Instructional Tours (Video, 2:08 min) Don Davis, Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A principal explains how teachers visit each other's classrooms to learn new instructional strategies. Classroom observations can spark conversations between teachers about instructional practices and decision-making.	Transcript (.pdf) Walk-Through Observation Form (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Walk-Through Observation Form (.pdf) Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	A checklist used by an elementary school principal during routine classroom walk-through. Feedback is provided on such practices as: classroom environment, clear instructional objectives, use of instructional strategies, and student engagement.	Instructional Tours (Video) Site Profile (.pdf)
Using Data to Improve Instruction (Video, 6:22 min) Yvonne Brandon, Richmond School District, Richmond, VA	A superintendent believes using data to assess school performance is critical. The district meets with school teams to review data and monitor the school's progress toward its goals.	Transcript (.pdf) Charting the Course to Academic Excellence (.pdf)
Charting the Course to Academic Excellence (.pdf) Fairfield Court Elementary School, Fairfield, VA	A district template for school data management. This school uses it to record three-year data trends, data from the previous year, biweekly data reports, and discipline issues in order for staff to direct and improve instruction.	Using Data to Improve Instruction (Video) Site Profile (.pdf)
Creating an Actionable Plan (Video, 5:00 min) Eric Jones, Teresa McDaniel Jackson Central-Merry Academy of Technology, Jackson, TN	A principal and assistant principal explain their high schools' implementation of a comprehensive literacy plan across all content areas. A literacy council was established to support the implementation of evidence-based practices by all teachers.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
DEEPER (.pdf) Jackson Central-Merry Academy of Technology, Jackson, TN	This sample material describes a schoolwide instructional model that contains the basic components of rigorous literacy-based instruction in all content areas.	Site Profile (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Increasing Student Engagement for Instructional Change (Video, 3:53 min) Owen Young, Middleton High School, Tampa, FL	A principal describes strategies to increase attendance, offer more opportunities for student input, and provide more academic support.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Lifelong Learning for Capacity Building (Video, 4:30 min) James Johnson-Waldington, Sanders Elementary School, Hollandale, MS	A district superintendent talks about the steps taken to build a cadre of qualified teachers, including offering tuition incentives and professional development.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
State Support for Turnaround Schools Part 1 (Video, 4:53 min) Dallas Saunders & Danielle Butler, Southern Local Jr./Sr. High School, Salineville, OH	A principal and transformation specialist meet to discuss the implementation of a School Improvement Grant. The specialist visits regularly to conduct walkthroughs and analyze data with the principal and help determine resources that fit the school and staff needs.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
State Support for Turnaround Schools Part 2 (Video, 4:45 min) Dallas Saunders & Danielle Butler, Southern Local Jr./Sr. High School, Salineville, OH	A principal and transformation specialist meet to discuss the implementation of a School Improvement Grant. They review data and discuss next steps and the focus of upcoming visits.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Transforming Elementary Math Instruction (Video, 3:59 min) Susan Theunissen & Cortez Johnson, Sanders Elementary School, Hollandale, MS	Math teachers discuss how they changed their classroom practices and integrated educational technology and hands-on, inquiry-based activities to create standards-aligned instruction.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Awards Sheet (.pdf) Dodge Renaissance Academy, Chicago, IL	A log for staff to celebrate student successes by displaying those who made honor rolls and received "Extra Effort" awards.	Site Profile (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Strategic Instructional Plan (.pdf) Dodge Renaissance Academy, Chicago, IL	A template for teachers to outline their instructional strategies for other staff. Teachers describe how a concept was taught	Site Profile (.pdf)
Homework Trouble Sheet: Eighth- Grade Mathematics (,pdf) Dodge Renaissance Academy, Chicago, IL	A worksheet completed by students having trouble answering questions on their math homework. They explain the problem and show their work and strategies they have tried to solve the problem.	Site Profile (.pdf)
Homework Log (.pdf) Dodge Renaissance Academy, Chicago, IL	A log that outlines students' daily homework for the week. It allows parents, students, and teachers to be knowledgeable about what is expected of them.	Site Profile (.pdf)
ELA Goal-Setting Plan (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	A tracker for students to plan their short- and long-term literacy goals, and track their proficiency progress.	Site Profile (.pdf)
Professional Action Plan and Year- End Goals Evaluation (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	A planning form used by teachers to identify content, environment, and professional development goals, as well as contributions to school.	Site Profile (.pdf)
Curriculum Map (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	K-5 curriculum maps that help plan the year's instruction in all subject areas.	Site Profile (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Balanced Literacy Evaluation Checklist (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	A checklist used by administrators to observe and evaluate the effectiveness of literacy instruction.	Site Profile (.pdf)
Teacher Teams Data Chart (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	Teachers use this chart to analyze student performance data during inquiry team meetings. Allows for assessing students' progress, plan instruction, and group students.	Site Profile (.pdf)
December Walkthrough (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	An instructional protocol used by administrators during classroom walkthroughs.	Site Profile (.pdf)
Tennessee State Assessment Results Score Report (.pdf) Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	This report displays student proficiency levels by year, grade, gender, and subject area. The data can determine strengths/weaknesses in student learning, thus guiding instructional planning.	Site Profile (.pdf)



Practice: Make visible improvements early in the school turnaround process. (Quick Wins)

Dramatic improvement on an entrenched problem, early in the turnaround process, can build enthusiasm and commitment to the larger reform effort. For example, painting, cleaning, or landscaping the school can help staff and students see it as a place with potential. Reducing hallway chaos through 'hands-down' types of rules can help eliminate distractions from learning. Successful quick wins generally can be done by the school leaders without substantial additional resources or approvals, and should make a visible difference in the daily lives of staff and students. In the short term, focusing on quick wins can establish a climate for long-term change. At times, principals may feel that they are faced with competing, urgent priorities. However, when they are able to identify one or two clear goals that can be accomplished quickly, the positive results focus attention on the message that it is possible to reach a school's overarching goal—raising student achievement.

Overview & Tools

Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Making Visible Improvements Early in the Turnaround Process (Video, 5:57 min)	Turnaround principals should go for "quick wins" to rally staff and parents around the turnaround effort, build momentum, and overcome internal resistance. Quick wins are highly visible improvements that can be implemented early in the turnaround process; they have been used in many successful turnarounds. The key components of quick wins are conducting a needs assessment at the school site, setting goals that can be achieved quickly and are visible to the school staff and the community, and developing a process for accomplishing these goals.	Transcript (.pdf)
Observing the School: Identifying Potential Quick Wins (.doc)	This observation tool provides examples of areas and behaviors to observe in order to note where a quick win activity could be implemented and where an improvement would make a positive difference for students and teachers.	Examples of Quick Wins (Slideshow and Transcript) Making Visible Improvements Early in the Turnaround Process (Video)
Planning for the Implementation of Quick Wins (.doc)	A planning worksheet to document ideas for areas of immediate change, plan possible solutions, and anticipated results.	Observing the School: Identifying Potential Quick Wins (Tool) Increasing Time on Task (Video)
Tracking the Implementation of Quick Wins (.doc)	An assessment matrix for school administrators to track the progress of the implementation of quick wins and to reflect on the lessons learned from them.	
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Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Motivating Reform With Quick Wins (Video, 3:40 min) Sam Redding, Center on Innovation & Improvement	Sam Redding discusses that turning a school around should start with high-visibility "quick wins" to show the staff and community that change is possible. Turnaround leaders need to have cooperation and support from the district and engage the staff and community in identifying	Transcript and Bio (,pdf)
	targets for these first changes.	
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See How It Works

Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Examples of Quick Wins (Slideshow w/ audio) Andrew Calkins, Mass Insight Education & Research Institute Lindy Blazek & Natalie Elder, Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN Lynn Garner, Edward H. White Career Academy, Chicago, IL	Quick wins provide staff the boost they need to invest in turnaround. A quick win to help struggling students master basics in reading and math was to use flashcards all over the school to help the students practice. Another quick win focused on how problems at home were distracting students from learning at school. Teachers began meeting students at their drop-off with a friendly face and easing them into school.	Transcript (.pdf) Grade-Level Scheduling (.pdf) Hardy Site Profile (.pdf) White Site Profile (.pdf)
Grade-Level Scheduling (.pdf) Edgemont Elementary School, Moreno Valley, CA	This document outlines the instructional and library schedule for each grade level. All teachers follow the same daily schedule to provide support services, ensure adherence to required instructional minutes, implement intervention programs, and allow for collaborative planning.	Examples of Quick Wins (Slideshow with audio and Transcript) Site Profile (.pdf)
Increasing Time on Task (Video, 4:04 min) Don Davis, Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A high school principal discusses quick wins to reduce classroom interruptions and increase the class time dedicated to instruction and learning. Moving announcements to a single time stops the school's administrative interruptions. An alternating block schedule decreases transitions and maximizes time on task.	Transcript (.pdf) "Caught You Teaching to the Norms" Notepad (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
"Caught You Teaching to the Norms" Notepad (.pdf) Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	Teachers and instructional leaders use this notepad during brief observations to provide positive comments and note integration of the school's instructional norms into daily lessons.	Site Profile (.pdf)
Immediate Attention (Audio, 3:35 min) Danika LaCroix, Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	An inner-city school principal describes quick changes that would foster a new energy throughout the school. At this school, giving the main office a facelift helped create a welcome space for students, staff, and parents.	Transcript (.pdf) School Implementation Plan (.pdf) New School Intensive Scope and Sequence (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
School Implementation Plan (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	A plan used to determine transactional structures that develop a school, including: categories of action and underlying tasks, the person responsible, and timeline for completion.	Immediate Attention (Audio) Site Profile (.pdf)
New School Intensive Scope and Sequence (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	An outline of a training series for principals of new and restructured schools.	Immediate Attention (Audio) Site Profile (.pdf)



Practice: Build a staff committed to the turnaround process. (Committed Staff)

Research has shown that many successful turnaround schools made staffing changes to ensure that the staff is committed to the school's improvement goals and is qualified to carry out school improvement. Changes in staff may be required, such as releasing, replacing, or redeploying staff members who are not fully committed to turning around the school or bringing in new staff to better meet the goals. School principals should be careful to examine the staff's strengths and weaknesses and choose the right staff for the school and to deploy staff members carefully to meet all students' needs. This task may include modifying job descriptions, differentiating staffing, or creating intervention teams. A committed staff displays this mindset by caring about students; building pride in the school, the staff, and oneself; and demonstrating a willingness to do "whatever it takes" to meet goals and raise student achievement.

Overview & Tools

Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Building a Staff Committed to the Turnaround Process (Video, 9:25 min)	Building a committed school staff may require reassigning, releasing, and hiring staff members. Staffing decisions must be based on a personal knowledge of each individual teacher.	Transcript (.pdf)
	Committed teachers and administrators believe that all students can learn, and it is reflected in their interactions with students.	
	Committed teachers support the school's plan to make dramatic changes in order to turn around the school and are willing to change old habits, dedicate time to professional development, and collaborate with other teachers.	
Build a Protocol for Job Candidate Interview (.doc)	A self-assessment tool to reflect on current practices for interviewing new staff and consider ways to improve interview protocols in turnaround schools to ensure that schools recruit staff with the right types of skills.	
Learning Together to Build a Committed Staff (Part 1) (.doc)	District leaders can use the professional development materials in this workshop for an in-service for school leaders on the importance of and steps for building a staff committed to school turnaround.	Understanding and Meeting Staffing Needs (Video) Building a Staff Committed to the Turnaround Process (Video)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Learning Together to Build a Committed Staff (Part 2) (.doc)	District leaders can use the professional development materials in this workshop for an in-service for school leaders on the importance of and steps for building a staff committed to school turnaround. In Part 2, principals and school leaders will watch multimedia presentations of principals who have been successful in building a committed staff and develop a plan to change the school climate.	Knowledge and Skills Inventory (Tool) Empowering and Motivating Teachers in Two Turnaround Schools (Audio) Building a Sense of Community (Video)
Knowledge and Skills Inventory (.doc)	A self-assessment tool to evaluate the school's staffing strengths and needs, in order to reassign, hire, or otherwise change staff assignments to better turn around the school.	Learning Together to Build a Committed Staff (Part 2) (Tool) Building a Sense of Community (Video) Empowering and Motivating Teachers in Two Turnaround Schools (Audio)
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Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Understanding and Meeting Staffing Needs (Video, 7:18 min) Julie Kowal, Public Impact	The turnaround leader must build a committed staff early in the process. At the beginning of the school year, look at test results and grade reports and informally observe as many teachers as possible.	Transcript and Bio (.pdf)
	Successful turnarounds are often the product of selective staff replacement—not an entirely new staff. One or two staff members who are not on board can bring the whole school down.	
	The district must trust the school leader and give the leader control over staff decisions but can help through recruiting efforts and negotiating with the union.	



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Developing a Climate for Change (Video, 6:12 min) Julie Kowal, Public Impact	Leaders of turnaround schools must be able to get buy-in from every staff member in the school for the radical changes that will be required. Principals should form quick bonds with the school and community's informal leaders early in the turnaround, and enlist the help of these allies. Successful turnaround schools undergo a transformation in the climate of the school.	Transcript and Bio (.pdf)
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See How It Works

Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Reconstitution: Reinvigorating Teacher Practices (Video, 6:24 min) Nancy Zima-Gentry, Patricia Harvey & Vonetta Maston, Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	Three literacy teachers discuss the process of applying to be rehired after the school was reconstituted. The school hired only those who bought into its vision. School leaders used staff retreats to create a sense of family and reinforce teachers' commitment to the school. The school now has a waiting list of new teacher applicants.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Empowering and Motivating Teachers in Two Turnaround Schools (Audio, 5:21 min) Lynn McGinnis-Garner, Edward H. White Career Academy Jarvis Sanford, Dodge Renaissance Academy, Chicago, IL	Principals of two turnaround schools discuss challenges and strategies to teacher resistance and empowerment. Teachers with tenure were resistant to change, creating a challenge to improving the school. The principal worked to build relationships with individual teachers and to rally all staff behind the goal of academic improvement.	Transcript (,pdf) Dodge Site Profile (,pdf) White Site Profile (,pdf)
A District Strategy to Improve Nine Struggling Schools (Audio, 3:37 min) Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	A district leader discusses the district's rationale and process for school reconstitution. During the process, all teachers reapplied for their positions and new principals were assigned to the schools. Test scores immediately went up. This process combined with professional development has resulted in continuing score increases.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Starting Over With New Staffing (Audio, 4:36 min) Danika LaCroix, Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	A principal describes her approach to hiring new staff prior to the school's reopening. Teaching positions were offered to a mix of new, veteran, and second-career teachers. Professional development focused on teaching skills and building a shared vision.	Transcript (,pdf) Suggestions for the Conduct of Personnel Committee Meetings (,pdf) Elementary Staffing Plan (,pdf) Staff Commit Two Program (,pdf) Mid-Year Staff Survey (,pdf) Site Profile (,pdf)
Suggestions for the Conduct of Personnel Committee Meetings (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	Guidelines used to ensure a consistent hiring process. Included are conduct standards for school leaders and suggested ways to choose staff.	Starting Over With New Staffing (Audio) Site Profile (.pdf)
Elementary Staffing Plan (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	A plan used by administrators to visualize their core programs, the students served, and the number and types of teachers needed to support instructional goals.	Starting Over With New Staffing (Audio) Site Profile (.pdf)
Staff Commit Two Program (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	An agreement form completed by staff where they indicate which planning team and professional development activity they will participate in.	Starting Over With New Staffing (Audio) Site Profile (.pdf)
Mid-Year Staff Survey (.pdf) Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, Brooklyn, NY	A teacher survey to gather feedback about school climate, professional development, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	Starting Over With New Staffing (Audio) Site Profile (.pdf)



Resource	Description	Related Media and Files
Building a Sense of Community (Video, 5:48 min) Irene Williams, Fairfield Court Elementary, Richmond, VA	An elementary school principal describes building a sense of community among staff by: establishing an open-door policy, planning team-building activities, and highlighting teachers' successes that helped build morale. Teachers strengthen their commitment through grade-level team planning and support from master teachers.	Transcript (.pdf) Site Profile (.pdf)
Teacher Interview Questions and Scoring (.pdf) Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A resource of interview questions and scenarios asked to prospective high school language arts teachers.	Site Profile (.pdf)
Lesson Observation (.pdf) Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	The high school uses this data and assessment form in formal lesson observations.	Site Profile (.pdf)
Postcard: We are #1! (.pdf) Waterford High School, Waterford, CA	A postcard depicting a high school's status as having the highest California performance index score in a 5-county region.	Site Profile (.pdf)
Staff Norms (.pdf) Hardy Elementary School, Chattanooga, TN	Norms for staff interactions and communications are included in this list.	Site Profile (.pdf)
Key Ideas of Professional Learning Communities (.pdf) Edgemont Elementary School, Moreno Valley, CA	Professional learning communities are built on three foundational ideas: focus on learning, a collaborative culture, and focus on results. The presentation describes these ideas and the essential skills needed to implement them within professional learning communities.	Site Profile (.pdf)
Grade Level Norms Edgemont Elementary School, Moreno Valley, CA	This document outlines the norms that guide teacher behavior and collaboration at grade-level team meetings.	Site Profile (.pdf)

