



Evaluating School Turnaround:

**Establishing benchmarks and metrics to
assess school turnaround**

September 2010

This report represents an extension of Mass Insight's research on school turnaround. It focuses on promising practices for evaluation and identifies leading and lagging indicators of school turnaround. This report aims to answer the following question: How can we measure the effectiveness of school turnaround efforts, both during and after their completion?

Turnaround is a relatively new field. In order to collect data that validates its efficacy, codifies promising practices for reform, and increases the imperative for turnaround, stakeholders must commit to establishing ongoing evaluation systems and processes. This report provides a framework for defining and implementing those components. Individuals from the following organizations were interviewed for this publication: Office of School Turnaround at Chicago Public Schools, iDesign at Los Angeles Unified School District, Green Dot, High Tech High, and Talent Development.

Mass Insight continues to lead research and development efforts in the turnaround sector. Our work is defined by two convictions: 1) school reform at scale depends on the practical integration of research, policy, and practice; and 2) only dramatic and comprehensive changes will produce significant achievement gains in high-poverty schools. In line with these beliefs, we focus our work on a number of core activities, including the development of cutting edge, research-based toolkits, communication of both our principles and strategies to key stakeholders, and support for states and districts in designing and implementing dramatic reform strategies.

The culmination of our research is the launch of the Partnership Zone Initiative, a national effort to implement proof points of our Partnership Zone framework in six states over the next several years. This work is funded by an initial grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, with a partial match from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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This main publication is part of a larger STG toolkit on evaluation

Visit www.massinsight.org/stg to access a broader set of tools pertaining to evaluation. This toolkit will be updated on an ongoing basis.



1. Evaluation primer

About this guide: Provides an overview of evaluation theory and provides a framework for evaluating school turnaround; those new to evaluation should review this piece prior to the other documents.

2. Evaluating school turnaround (PRIMARY DOCUMENT)

About this publication: Provides an introduction to evaluation in the context of school turnaround; describes the evaluation process and identifies leading and lagging indicators of school turnaround.

3. Turnaround data from the field

About this tool: Compiles data from successful turnaround schools across the country; suggests what is achievable in years 1, 2, etc. under a turnaround model and can inform benchmarks in other states, districts, and schools.

4. Metrics for evaluation

About this list: Provides a comprehensive list of metrics that can be used to evaluate turnaround. The metrics are grouped into six major categories: demographic data, school environment data, student achievement data, perception data, instructional data, facilities/resources data.

5. Protocol for data use

About this guide: Provides teachers, administrators, Lead Partners, and LEA/SEA staff with a process to collaboratively use and analyze data, thereby using the evaluation process for decision-making and to set strategic goals. Not yet released.

This publication represents a combination of promising practice research and lessons learned from the field

Research methodology for this publication:

1

A scan of national research pertaining to data, evaluation, and measuring school improvement efforts

- Due to the newness of the turnaround field, there is a lack of research surrounding evaluation and data monitoring in the context of turnaround.
- This report draws mostly upon general promising practices for data and evaluation in education, adapted to the particular needs of turnaround.



2

Interviews with data/performance managers and additional lessons from the field

- This compilation of promising practices summarizes interviews conducted with districts and charter/education management organizations that have developed robust evaluation practices while leading dramatic school improvement efforts.
- There was a striking commonality in what these interviews yielded as good practice for evaluation and barriers to this work.

This guide is not all-inclusive. Data and evaluation processes should represent a significant undertaking at the school, district, and state levels; this publication is designed to help frame conversations and thinking around strategic data collection and evaluation.

- An introduction: The central importance of evaluation
- What to track: Understanding leading and lagging indicators of success
- Next steps for practitioners: A guide to implementing an evaluation process
- Barriers to implementation: Common challenges when starting this work

Executive summary

- **Evaluation is critical to the success of school turnaround**, both at the individual school level and at scale.
 - Turnaround efforts are fast-paced, dramatic and challenging; constant monitoring ensures that efforts stay on track and produce results.
 - Turnaround is a relatively new field with only early strategies for success; new intervention plans should be evaluated and the results disseminated to build a base of shared practices.
- Evaluation cannot simply happen at the end of an intervention; **it must be an ongoing process**, occurring throughout the turnaround effort.
- Leaders should **identify a manageable set of metrics** that can be tracked and analyzed, resisting the urge to track a comprehensive list that is overwhelming to collect and use.
 - Turnaround efforts must be tracked at the school, district, and state level.
 - When selecting metrics, leaders should leverage and align metrics with current data reporting requirements (e.g., School Improvement Grants, NCLB).
- Among these metrics, it is critical to **track both leading and lagging indicators** of growth and improvement.
 - Leading indicators should correlate with specific lagging indicators; this will allow leaders to make mid-course corrections and predict long-term results.
 - Both types of indicators must also be linked to the specific goals of the turnaround and strategy for change.
- When setting goals, leaders must **balance the need to be ambitious with the realistic challenges** of turnaround.
- **Evaluation is futile if it is not tied to action**; schools, districts, and states should develop protocols to track, analyze, and act upon data. These protocols should **establish ownership and accountability for each metric**.
- Implementing an effective evaluation involves a **cyclical process of identifying, collecting, and utilizing data**.

What is turnaround?

Experts have identified over 5,000 schools as chronically low-performing. To address this problem systemically, State Educational Agencies, Local Educational Agencies, and partners need to implement comprehensive school turnaround strategies that produce dramatic change.

Turnaround is

a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that

- 1 produces significant gains in achievement within two years;
- and
- 2 readies the school for the longer process of transformation into a high-performance organization.

Note: The School Turnaround Group's definition of school turnaround, articulated above, describes a broad range of school improvement strategies and is not synonymous with USED's turnaround intervention model.

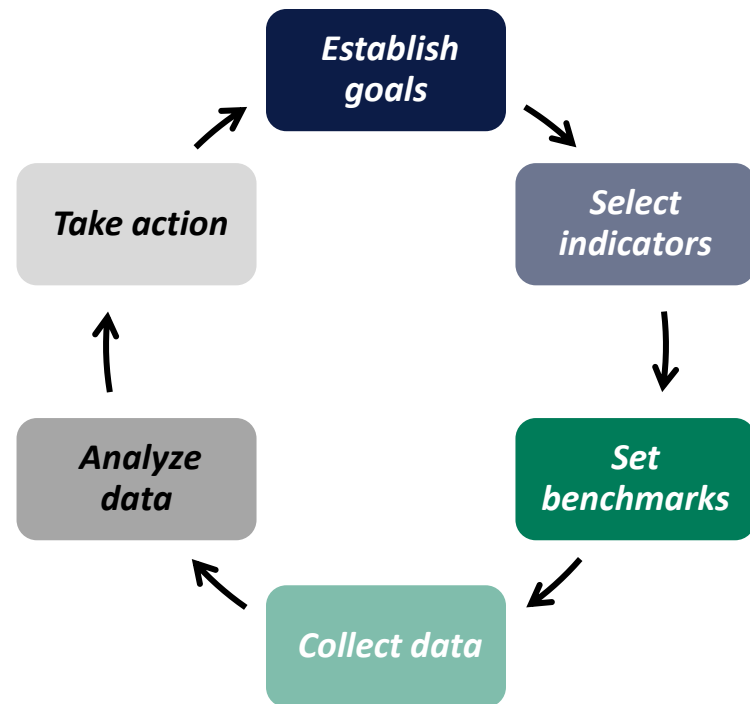
Evaluation is critical to the field of school turnaround

Evaluation:

the systematic assessment of the implementation and/or outcomes of a program or policy compared to a predetermined set of objectives or standards.

Evaluation is the process of:

- Establishing desired goals or outcomes
- Selecting indicators to measure goals
- Setting benchmarks for each indicator
- Collecting data
- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Taking action



Evaluation is crucial to ensuring dramatic improvement in chronically low-performing high schools

“Old world” evaluation:

Evaluation as a compliance mechanism

- The current policy landscape requires state and local education agencies to use data reporting cycles to promote mutual accountability and determine future funding and program status.
- Under this rigorous and complex accountability system, evaluation is often reduced to a compliance exercise.



“New world” evaluation:

Evaluation as a tool to inform and advocate for successful strategies

- Compliance is still a critical purpose of evaluation, but evaluation can be used more broadly and effectively.
- Evaluation can allow leaders to assess, monitor, and improve operational and instructional strategies, ultimately leading to gains in student achievement.

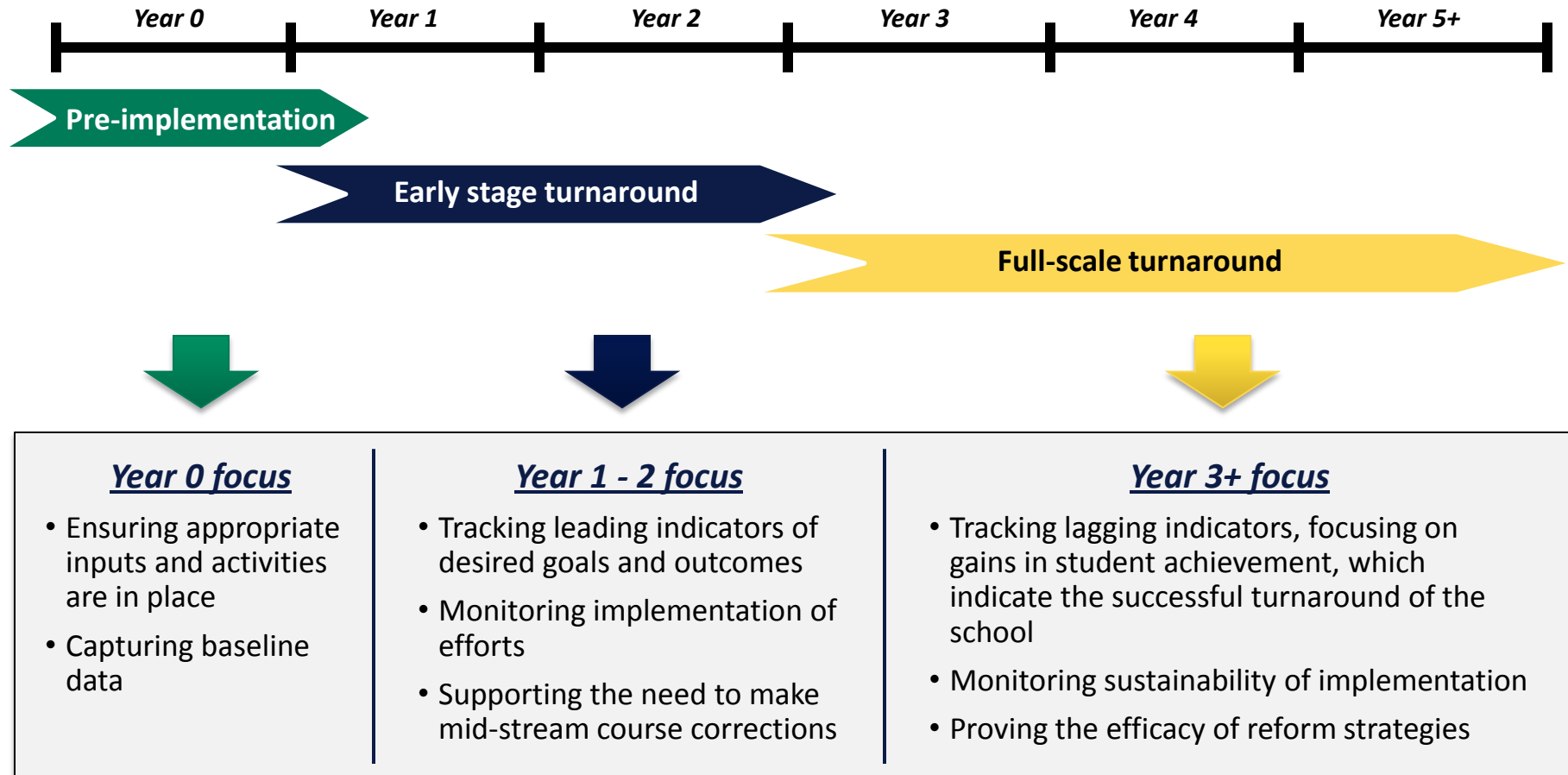
The “new world” functions of school turnaround evaluation:

- To ensure that turnaround is improving school conditions and positively impacting student achievement
- To create an ongoing feedback cycle where measures of change inform and modify interventions
- To document successful turnaround strategies, as supported by concrete data
- To pinpoint successes and challenges
- To create mutual accountability among all stakeholders (e.g., LEAs, SEAs, Lead Partners)
- To influence policy and increase the knowledge base around school turnaround

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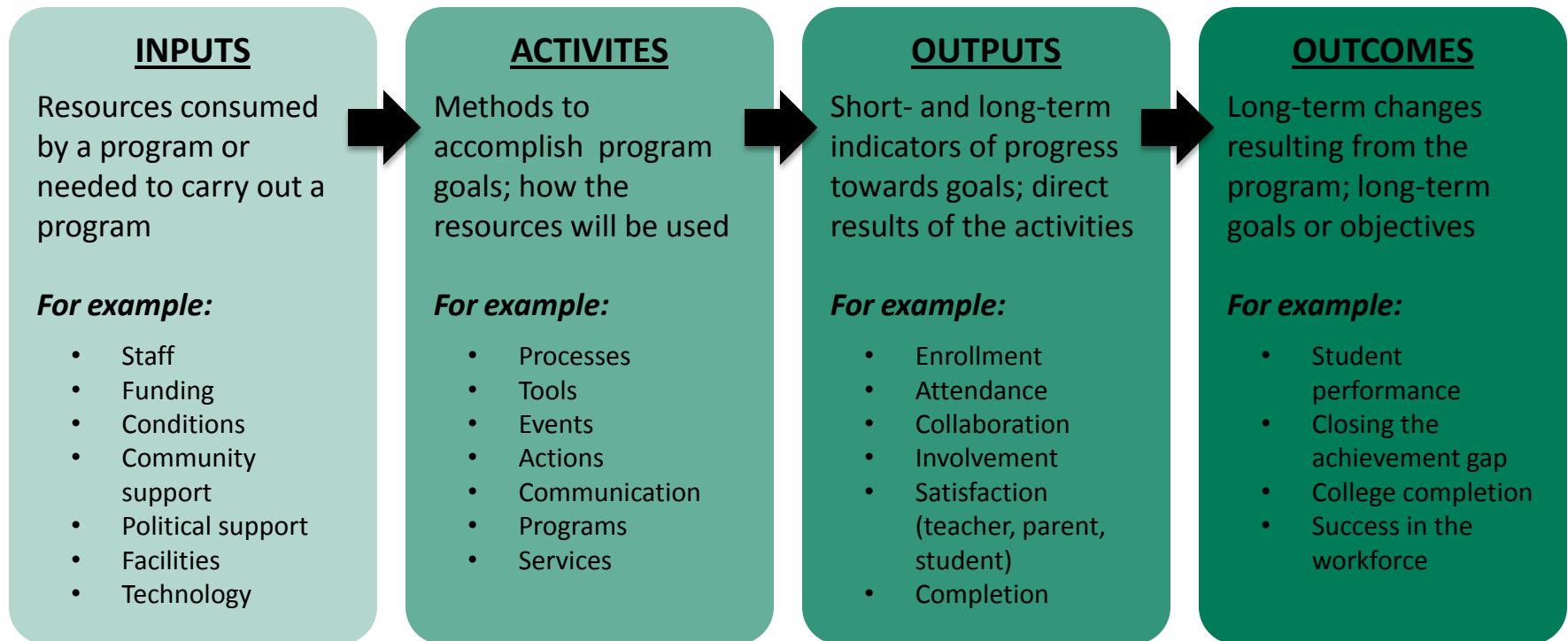
Evaluation must be an ongoing practice, serving different needs throughout the turnaround process

Evaluation timeline mapped against the turnaround process:



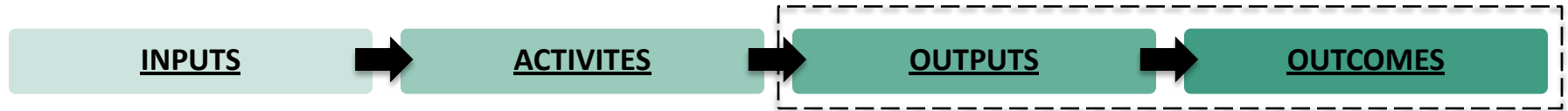
A logic model* can structure strategic goal-setting and the evaluation of turnaround efforts

A logic model outlines how and why a program, policy, or initiative should work. It shows the relationship between resources, how the program will operate, and what the program aims to achieve.



*See our publication, “An Evaluation Primer,” for additional information on logic models for evaluation.
(www.massinsight.org/stg).

Leading and lagging indicators must both be measured to employ the logic model



*Leading indicators are outputs and short-term outcomes;
lagging indicators are longer-term outcomes.*

Leading indicators:

- Demonstrate signs of growth or change in a given direction
- Provide an early read on progress towards long-term outcomes
- Measure conditions that are prerequisite to the desired outcomes

Lagging indicators:

- Measure the success and consequences of activities that have already taken place
- Often expected in the long-term
- Measure achievement of the desired outcomes

A comprehensive evaluation of turnaround efforts must track and monitor of both leading and lagging indicators.

Leading indicators suggest “early wins” and areas needing improvement

- It may take between 3 to 5 years to turn around a historically failing school; in the interim, leading metrics gauge progress
- Leading indicators serve as proxy metrics for long-term impact; they allow practitioners to make midstream adjustments and forecast longer-term results
- Collecting strictly outcome data (e.g., standardized test scores) is like *“playing the game with the scoreboard off. When the buzzer sounds at the end of the game, you flip the scoreboard on and say, ‘Wait a minute. I thought we were ahead.’”* (Foley et al, 2006, p. 3).

Leading indicators should be:

- **Timely:** Offer prognostic data before it is too late to make changes and offer interventions
- **Action-oriented:** Stimulate process changes and allow educators to change their course of action
- **Meaningful:** Are directly aligned with and predictive of outcome data
- **Benchmarked:** Are tied to predetermined metrics

“Year 1 is about creating a culture of high expectations...to measure that, we look at retention, attendance, disciplinary incidents, and student and staff surveys. Later, we focus on growth according to our 11 critical metrics -- for example, graduation rates, college-going indicators, and reading and math proficiency.”

-Cristina de Jesus,
Chief Academic Officer, Green Dot

Leading indicators predict specific lagging indicators

Leading indicators should correlate with long-term goals, allowing Lead Partners and school leaders to predict long-term outcomes and apply mid-course interventions.

For example:

Leading indicators:

Corresponding lagging indicators:

of students who apply to college



of students who earn a college degree

Attendance rate



Graduation rate/drop-out rate

% of over-aged, under-credited students



Graduation rate/drop-out rate

Hours of effective professional development



Teacher quality and effectiveness

of disciplinary incidents

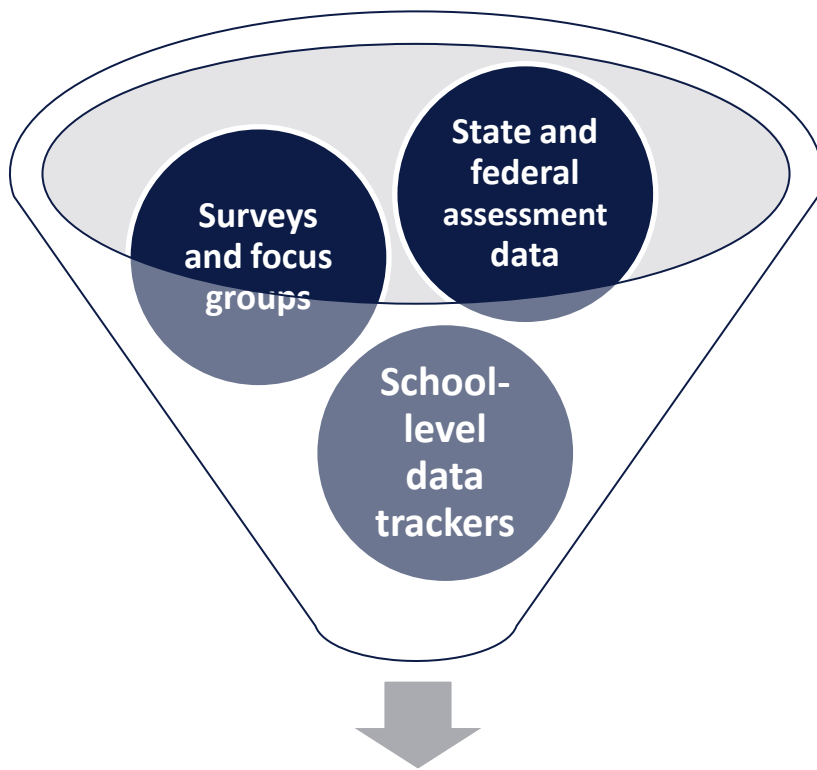


College-going culture

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Schools, LEAs, and SEAs already collect and report a tremendous amount of data

Therefore, evaluating turnaround should not introduce significant, new data collection processes. Conversations with school- and district-level staff revealed that schools use similar tools and methods to gather data.



A robust data collection process

1. School-level data trackers

- Schools rely on internal data trackers to store data (e.g., attendance, disciplinary incidents, etc)
- In most cases, schools have replaced homegrown Excel tools with more robust technology, such as PowerSchool and Naviance

2. Surveys and focus groups

- Schools also survey students, staff, and community members and conduct focus groups (~once per year) to collect qualitative data to allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the school's culture

3. State and federal assessment data

- Increasingly, SEAs are providing schools with data portals that include itemized state assessment data and annual school report cards* (*required by NCLB)

Data and evaluation for turnaround: Promising practices

Promising practices from the field

- **Clearly defined metrics.** To facilitate longitudinal analysis and inter- and intra- school comparisons, the same metrics must be collected in a consistent and regular manner
- **Regular reporting cycles.** Data reporting cycles must be consistent and ongoing
- **Data management systems and infrastructure.** A growing number of web-based tools and data software programs allow schools to easily warehouse and access data
- **Staff data capacity.** To cultivate a data-driven culture, staff must receive professional development around data use
- **Turning data into action.** Schools must have protocols for using data (e.g., monthly performance management meetings or tools for teacher collaboration and use of assessment data)
- **Data ownership.** It is critical to establish data ownership and accountability (e.g., the assistant principal responsible for student behavior may own the monitoring and reporting of suspension data)

*“Technology can be exceedingly helpful, but it, in and of itself, is insufficient. An amazing, expensive **data collection and reporting platform is extremely helpful, but only if practitioners have bought into the importance of data and find value in it.** The data need to be current, accurate, and presented in a way that can immediately change practice.”*

-Dalia Hochman,
Former Director of
Research and Evaluation,
iDesign Schools, LAUSD

Evaluation represents a shared responsibility

Responsibilities of various stakeholders in evaluating school turnaround

Lead Partners and school leaders (school level)

- Collect and manage school-level data
- Use data to inform decision-making
- Comply with state and federal policies (e.g., NCLB) and grant requirements (e.g., SIG)
- Are held accountable for implementation and student results by the district and/or state

Local Educational Agency*

- Monitor school data and prepare report cards
- Use data to inform decisions, interventions, and resource allocation
- Comply with state and federal policies (e.g., NCLB) and grant requirements (e.g., SIG)
- Are held accountable by the SEA and USED

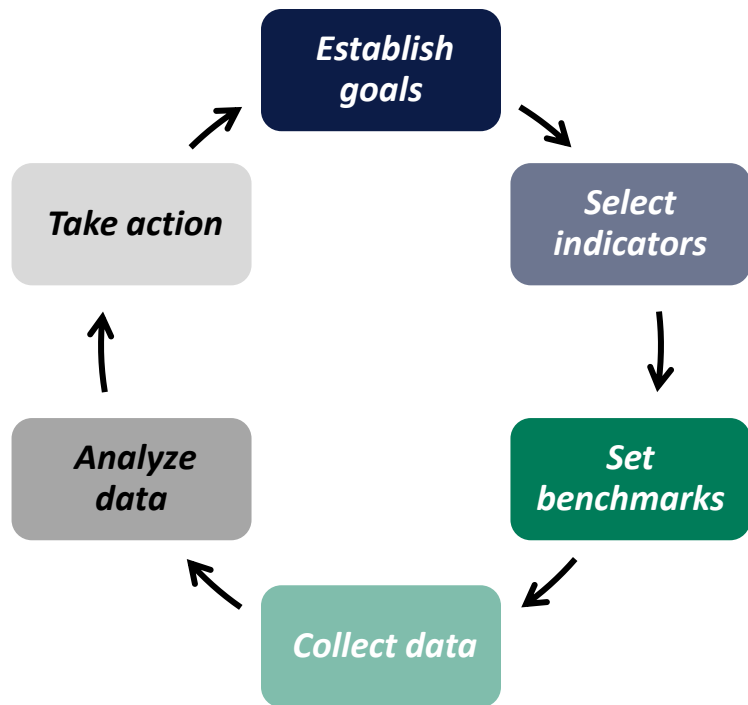
State Educational Agency*

- Monitor school and district performance and grant compliance
- Prepare state and district report cards
- Provide access to longitudinal data
- Comply with federal policies (e.g., NCLB) and grant requirements (e.g., RTTT, SIG)

*Ideally, evaluation should be housed in the District Turnaround Office at the LEA and the State Turnaround Office at the SEA. See the STG's [additional research](#) on these entities.

Leaders must establish an ongoing process to evaluate school turnaround

The cyclical nature of evaluation:



- 1 **Establish goals** Define the discrete and measurable goals of the turnaround effort
- 2 **Select indicators** Identify leading and indicators that predict and assess these goals
- 3 **Set benchmarks** For each indicator, set target benchmarks for each year (or more frequently)
- 4 **Collect data** Use a streamlined process to collect and organize the data
- 5 **Analyze data** Analyze the data on a regular schedule with standard, effective protocols
- 6 **Take action** Use the results of the data analysis to modify intervention strategies

This process should be repeated on an ongoing and regular basis, even after turnaround is complete.

Employing the logic model to guide the goal-setting and indicator-selection process

- 1 Establish goals
- 2 Select indicators

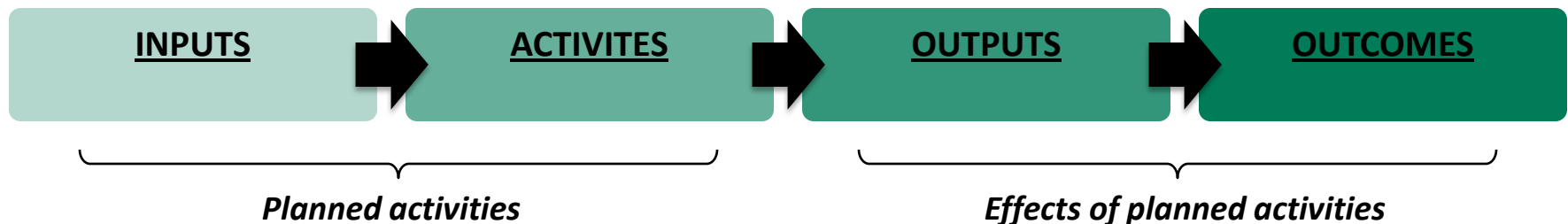
Leaders can utilize the logic model to establish goals and select indicators using one or both of the following processes:

Prospective mapping

- Ascertain available inputs and planned activities first, then identify what potential outcomes are possible and what outputs lead to them
- Forward mapping must be relied upon when resources and activities are constrained

Backward mapping

- Begin by identifying ultimate goals of turnaround effort, then move backwards along the logic model to identify outcomes and associated outputs, and the required activities and inputs to ultimately achieve them
- Preferred method, if feasible



Note: **Leading indicators** are outputs and short-term outcomes; **lagging indicators** are longer-term outcomes.

Applying the logic model: An example

Schools, LEAs, and SEAs should not track all of the metrics outlined in the metrics publication; rather, it is important to track key metrics that can be used to measure progress toward a manageable set of identified school goals.

Step 1. Select 5-10 school goals based on needs

For example:

- Increase the college enrollment and graduation rates
- Increase the high school graduation rate
- Increase math proficiency
- Decrease the dropout rate
- Decrease student and community violence

Step 2. Identify programs and resources leading to the desired outcome

For example:

- SAT/ACT prep course
- One-on-one college counseling
- AP/IB program
- College visits
- Advisory period

Step 3. Measure leading and lagging indicators or progress toward each goal*

For example:

- Course passage rate
- Graduation rate
- Enrollment in AP/IB courses
- Average daily attendance rate
- SAT participation rate/ average SAT score
- GPA

*These targeted metrics provide a good indication of likely college enrollment and progress toward that particular goal.

Step 4. Create growth targets for each metric

For example:

Increase the percent of student taking the SAT exam by the end of 11th grade.*

Baseline	Year 1	Year 2
50%	80%	95%

*When setting growth targets, consider the nuances of each metric (e.g., increasing the percent of students taking the SAT may decrease the average SAT score).

SIG requirements mandate the use of certain leading indicators

2

Select indicators



Federal School Improvement Grants (SIG) require SEAs and LEAs to meet evaluation criteria; SEAs may also develop state-specific SIG evaluation requirements for LEAs.

LEA evaluation requirements

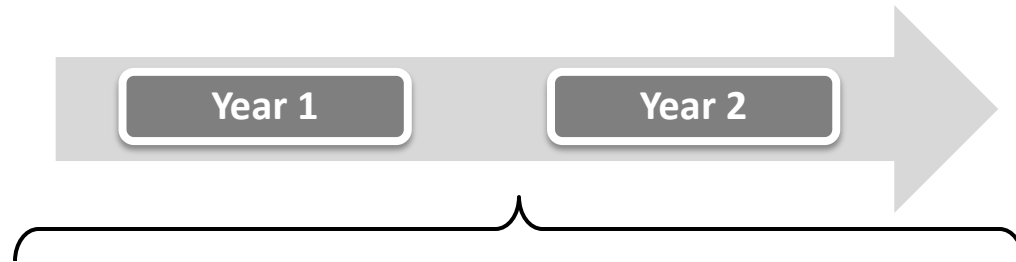
- Needs assessment of schools
- Implementation timeline
- Annual goals for student achievement on standardized tests
- State AYP requirement
- Reporting of school-level data to the SEA
- Accountability for improvements
- **Improvements on 9 leading indicators**

1. Minutes in the school year
2. Participation rates on state exams
3. Dropout rate
4. Student attendance rate
5. Disciplinary incidents
6. Truancy
7. Number/Percent of students taking AP/dual-enrollment courses
8. Teacher attendance rate
9. Distribution of teachers by performance levels

At minimum, schools are accountable for tracking these leading indicators. Additionally, schools should also track indicators that are directly aligned with the school's strategic goals.

Growth timeline: Expected gains vary for leading and lagging indicators

Leaders must establish achievable but aggressive growth timelines for turnaround; however, a full turnaround may still take 3 to 5 years. In the initial years, schools may experience gains aligned with the leading indicators outlined below.



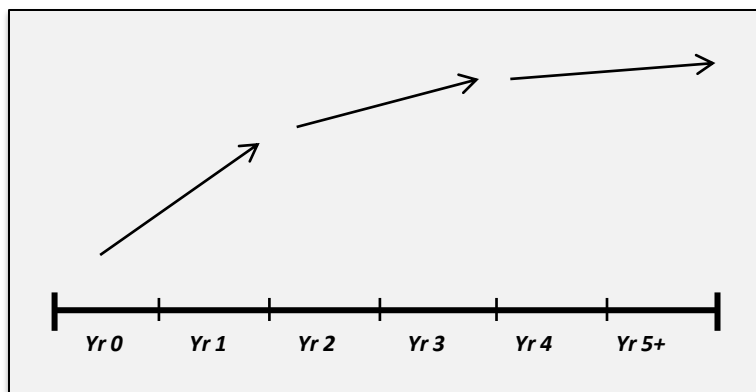
School environment/ Perceptions	Student achievement	Human capital, facilities, resources
↑ Attendance rate	↑ Standardized test participation	↑ Staff attendance rate
↓ Truancy	↑ Credit accumulation	↑ Teacher/principal quality
↓ Disciplinary incidents/suspensions	↓ Retention/# of over-aged, under-credited students	↑ Professional development and staff collaboration
↓ Drop-out rate	↑ Graduation rate	↑ Access to resources
↑ Perceptions of school culture	↑ SAT/ACT participation rate	↑ Safe and clean school facilities
↑ Community understanding of turnaround	↑ College-going rate	

Schools may also experience gains associated with lagging indicators, including standardized test scores, before year two.

Expected growth timelines will be unique for different metrics

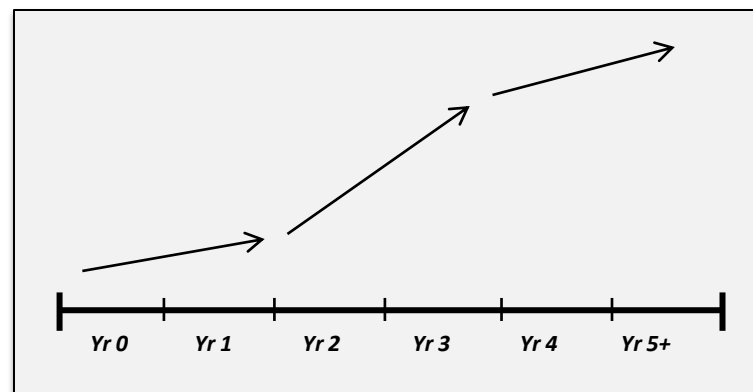
Gains are difficult to predict, particularly because each metric is unique, and responds to context differently. The following examples explain data trends documented in the field for separate metrics.

Average daily attendance



- Attendance is a leading indicator
- Schools should experience a steep increase in attendance early in the turnaround process
- After schools reach between 80-90% attendance, these early gains begin to plateau

Standardized test scores



- Standardized test scores are lagging indicators
- Once discipline is under control and students show up for class, student learning can become the primary goal
- Schools typically experience a significant bump in year 2 or 3
- Growth varies based on the school's historic data and the distribution of scores

Please also reference the supplemental data publication, "Turnaround Data from the Field," which summarizes these data patterns as documented in the field. This document is available on our website, www.massinsight.org/stg/research.

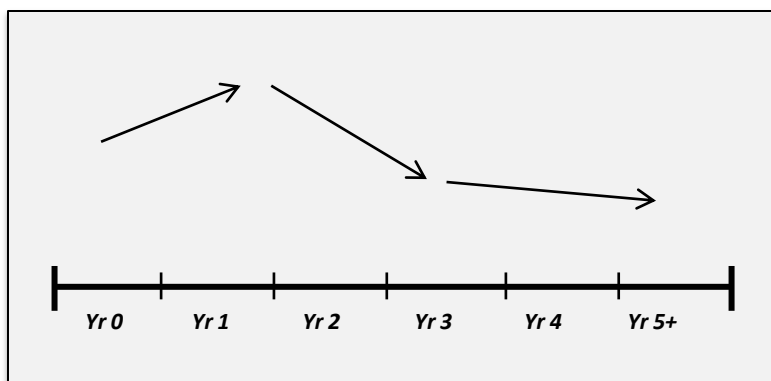
The curious case of the counterintuitive leading indicator

3

Set
benchmarks

While most indicators move in a predictable, single-directional pattern, others can move in a counterintuitive manner.

An example: Disciplinary incidents



- Discipline can be a counterintuitive leading indicator
- Over time, disciplinary incidents should drop dramatically, yet may rise in year 1 for several reasons:
 - Many turnaround schools have had poor data management; increases may result from data being properly recorded
 - Discipline codes are stricter and/or being enforced
 - Students may, initially, react poorly to increased rigor, including increased academic focus and longer day
 - Significant staff turnover may cause initial disciplinary issues
- Behavior should dramatically improve during/after year 1

It is critical to understand and communicate counterintuitive movements so that leaders can:

- **Avoid misdiagnosing problems:** The key purpose of evaluation is to be able to course correct if interventions are unsuccessful; incorrect interpretation of counterintuitive indicators can cause abandonment of strategies that are working
- **Intercept communications headaches:** Turnaround is a highly politicized activity; if counterintuitive indicators are misinterpreted, they can be employed by opponents to obstruct successful efforts

School leaders must commit to analyzing and using data to inform decision-making

A data protocol is:

an established process or tool used to facilitate collaboration, inquiry, conversation, and decision-making based on data. Using a systematic approach, stakeholders look at data, discuss trends, identify problems, discuss the causes, craft interventions, develop goals, and track results.

- Collecting the data is not enough; school staff, Lead Partners, district staff, and SEA staff must use data protocols to interpret data and plan interventions
- The most critical step may be synthesizing and disseminating data to improve school programs and instruction
- Data-driven decision-making is a best practice for improving instruction and student outcomes

Sample data protocol:

- 1 Introduce a specific set of data for review
- 2 Discuss trends and identify problems
- 3 Identify potential causes
- 4 Create interventions
- 5 Develop S.M.A.R.T. goals
- 6 Identify indicators and track results

*"We hold weekly performance management sessions at each school and **use a formalized process to look at and discuss data**. During each meeting, we discuss data related to one of our desired outcomes. We model and scaffold how to have conversations about data."*

-Gavin Doughty, Director of Performance Management, Office of School Turnaround, CPS

Many districts and schools produce and utilize user-friendly data dashboards

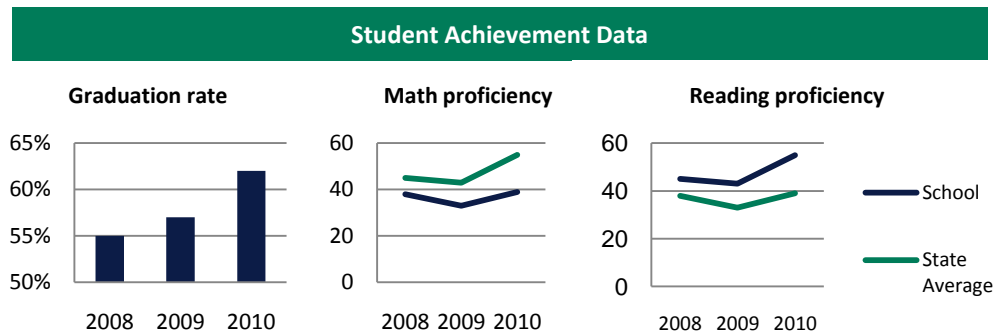
5 Analyze data

Dashboards are visually compelling and present the most pertinent data; these can be customized for the audience.

Demographic Data	09-10	08-09	07-08
Total Enrollment:	500	500	500
9 th grade	125	100	100
10 th grade	125	125	150
11 th grade	150	100	125
12 th grade	100	175	125
Demographics:			
African American	50%	48	51
Asian	10	8	8
White	10	13	13
Latino	25	30	27
Free/Reduced lunch	90	88	91
English language learners	40	43	40
Special education	20	25	21

Instructional Data	09-10	08-09	07-08
% of teachers fully licensed	93	98	100
% with 5+ years experience	25	30	31
% classes taught by "highly qualified" teacher	88	87	90

School Environment Data	09-10	08-09	07-08
Average daily attendance rate	76%	80%	82%
Number of suspensions	150	125	140
School stability	90%	93%	93%
Dropout rate	10%	8%	7%



% enrolled in a 2- or 4- year college	45%	50%	52%
% of students over-aged/under-credited	25	25	23
% of students who have passed 1+ AP exam	10	12	11

Turnaround is an all-encompassing intervention that should be the main focus of the entire school; a single dashboard should be used to measure turnaround success and school performance, as they are one and the same

The last, and most critical step, is to act on the information produced from the evaluation

1 Course correct current strategies

- Turnaround is too difficult and unpredictable for implementation plans to be static; leaders must continue to modify them in response to the data
- Leaders must balance the need to be patient while interventions begin to work with the need to be dynamic and course correct quickly if strategies are not working

2 Hold stakeholders accountable

- Accountability is still an important use of evaluation data; the accountability system, including consequences for failure to meet benchmarks, must be clearly delineated and communicated upfront
- Action must be taken if benchmarks are not met; this can range from providing additional resources and support to removing responsible parties (e.g., leadership, staff, Lead and Supporting Partners)

3 Inform future turnaround efforts

- Turnaround is a relatively new field; standards of practice are still emerging
- Practitioners can contribute to the field by codifying both promising practices and failed strategies

*“The most thoughtful and comprehensive evaluation in the world is **worthless if it is not connected to making real change** in the way resources are being employed and strategies are being selected and implemented.”*

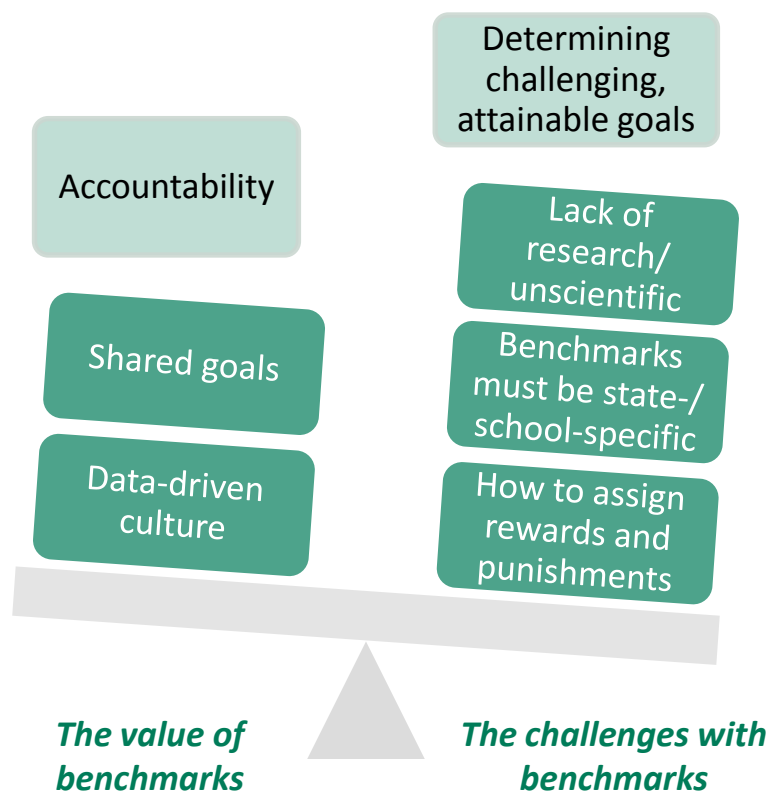
-Dalia Hochman, Former Director of Research and Evaluation, iDesign Schools, LAUSD

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Barriers and challenges to evaluation (1 of 4)

Interviews with school leaders revealed similar challenges and barriers related to evaluation and data collection.

1. Setting growth benchmarks



- Benchmarks serve a critical function by: 1) requiring schools, districts, and/or SEAs to set goals; 2) motivating staff to achieve those goals; and 3) promoting accountability
- Benchmarks are challenging to set, communicate, evaluate, and uphold
- Setting benchmarks is difficult due to a severe lack of research and consensus supporting what level of growth is possible and/or probable
- For example, turnaround schools typically experience a growth “bump” between years 1 and 3; then, growth typically begins to plateau, making overall growth benchmarks difficult to predict

Please also reference the supplemental data publication, “Turnaround Data from the Field,” on our website, www.massinsight.org/stg/research, to find gains that have been documented in the field.

Barriers and challenges to evaluation (2 of 4)

2. Communicating results

- The “catch 22” of school turnaround: anticipating dramatic gains vs. setting unreasonable goals
- Setting high expectations for turnaround during years 1 and 2 may create an unwarranted communications problem if school fails to meet those goals
- This illustrates the importance of a thoughtful communications strategy

*“We did not set out with a full understanding of the timeline and appropriate targets. The **media expects huge gains right away**, but the research shows that it takes longer to improve student achievement.”*

-Cristina de Jesus, Chief Academic Officer, Green Dot

3. Generating buy-in and ownership

- School leaders and staff should feel a sense of ownership over discrete pieces of data
- To achieve this, data must be accessible and user-friendly
- Staff need professional development and training around data-driven instruction
- Similarly, staff must collaborate around data.

*“**Ultimately, teachers drive change; therefore, teachers need access to data and the skills and tools to use data effectively.** We have to present data in a way that makes sense, and we have to present data that teachers find relevant.”*

-Laura McBain, Director of Policy and Research, High Tech High

Barriers and challenges to evaluation (3 of 4)

4. Accounting for school-level context

- This document provides a framework for evaluation and does not prescribe a standardized method and process for evaluation
- Individual schools and districts must develop evaluation based on context including:
 - Historical and baseline data
 - State-specific standardized assessments (e.g., nature of the test, state averages)
 - Available resources and implementation constraints
 - Percent of students on the cusp (e.g., proficient vs. slightly below proficient)
 - Realistic vs. politically acceptable numbers

*“Educators need to **analyze historical trends carefully, look at disaggregated data, and recognize that growth is non-linear** (e.g., it is easier to go from basic to proficient than from proficient to advanced).”*

-Dalia Hochman, Former Director of Research and Evaluation, iDesign Schools, LAUSD

5. Overlapping accountability systems

- At minimum, schools are required to report data to the LEA, SEA, and USED
- Additionally, turnaround schools now have to fulfill data requirements for SIG
- These segmented yet overlapping data requirements further the notion that data are used strictly for compliance, rather than to improve classroom instruction and student outcomes
- Accountability systems may be misaligned, making data capture and reporting burdensome

Barriers and challenges to evaluation (4 of 4)

6. Avoiding the “data rich, information” trap

- The metrics publication provides a thorough list of metrics; however, not all should be tracked
- Schools/Lead Partners, districts, and states must be thoughtful in selecting the metrics that are most relevant to assessing and driving impact
- It is critical to balance the burden of tracking and understanding many metrics with the desire to obtain a comprehensive picture of the situation
- Leaders should work to identify the most critical and relevant data points to advance the goals of the turnaround
- Schools leaders must then strategically allocate resources for data collection and reporting

“There is a tendency to collect more data than you actually need or will use. We have identified 11 critical metrics that help us to hone in and focus on the most important areas to advance our mission.”

-Cristina de Jesus, Chief Academic Officer, Green Dot



Ultimately, the data are only as valuable as the decision-making processes that it informs

Get involved

The School Turnaround Group is a division of Mass Insight Education, an independent non-profit that organizes public schools, higher education, business, and state government to significantly improve student achievement, with a focus on closing achievement gaps.

For more information on how your state can employ these promising practices for school turnaround, please contact the School Turnaround Group at:

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*The School Turnaround Groups **offers a broad range of strategic consulting services to state and district clients.** This work includes **building organizational capacity** through the development of state and district turnaround offices, **securing more flexible operating conditions**, including through the development of modified collective bargaining agreements; **attracting and supporting Lead Partners** through the development of Request for Proposal and Memorandum of Understanding tools; and **auditing state and district readiness** to implement dramatic turnaround strategies.*

In each of our engagements, we seek to deeply understand the needs of our client to offer highly customized solutions and to develop lasting relationships to support the difficult work of school turnaround over the necessarily long time frame.

The presentation and related documents are the result of a research and development process led by Mass Insight with the support of various partners.

It should be used in conjunction with the Main Report, “The Turnaround Challenge: Why America’s best opportunity to dramatically improve student achievement lies in our worst performing schools,” and a variety of other resources we have developed and distributed.

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