

A New Partnership Paradigm:

Developing strong partnerships to tackle turnaround – and increase capacity in public education

Strategies, Resources & Tools to transform a framework into practice

Revised Summer 2010

This report was developed from over a year of research & development on school turnaround strategies. The goal of this R&D effort was to “operationalize” the framework for turnaround of underperforming schools from Mass Insight’s 2007 report, *The Turnaround Challenge*.

The series of documents from this R&D work includes:

- An Executive Summary
- **Report I:** Partnership Zones: Using school turnaround as *the entry point for real reform* – and reinventing the district model in the process
- **Report II:** A New Partnership Paradigm: Developing strong partnerships to tackle turnaround – and increase capacity in public education
- **Report III:** At the Ground Level: School Transformation in Action (school-level case studies)

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Partnership Zones are clusters of schools operating as mini-districts characterized by model organizational practices, such as *strong partnerships* and more *flexible operating conditions*.

Why a new partnership paradigm?

Addressing capacity is critical to transforming state and district strategies for school turnaround

The Turnaround Capacity Challenge: Why a New Partnership Paradigm is Vital to Transformation of Districts & Schools




Why a New Partnership Paradigm?

Turning around chronically underperforming schools presents new and deep challenges that require new solutions, and increased and enhanced capacity to develop and implement these solutions.

The main challenges of turnaround include:

- **The reality faced by chronically underperforming schools** – most chronically underperforming schools enroll a high percentage of students of poverty, resulting in learning deficits, and a great range and variability in students’ needs. Individual and family risk factors are compounded by the effects of poor community environments and resource inequities, resulting in significant challenges in students’ readiness to learn.
- **Systems not responsive to the needs of these schools or their students** – Current state and district strategies and educational models are inadequate to address the unpredictability and turbulence among the student population and community. At the same time, current state and district organizational structures and processes tend to inhibit, rather than support, transformational change in these schools.

What’s needed to enable schools and districts to address these challenges:

<u>Conditions</u>	Change the rules and incentives governing people, time, money, & program	 ZONES
<u>Capacity</u>	Build turnaround resources & human capacity in schools, lead operating partners, and within strategic leadership	 PARTNERSHIPS
<u>Clustering</u>	Organize by region, need, or type -- where new conditions apply and states/districts create special capacity	 CLUSTERS OF SCHOOLS

Why Existing School and District Reforms are Ineffective

Why a New
Partnership
Paradigm?

Traditional improvement strategies have clearly shown they are *insufficient to turn around consistently under-performing schools* – and school districts.*

Why aren't traditional, single-school approaches to turnaround effective?

- Don't address the underlying conditions and systems – particularly those involving HR and staff management – that undercut the impact of even well-conceived reforms
- Ignore potential economies of scale
- Hampered by district reticence to make major changes in operating conditions for single schools

Why aren't typically "light-touch" district-wide improvement efforts effective?

- Similarly: lack of serious engagement on underlying operating conditions
- Political difficulty of achieving go-ahead for major change across an entire district at once
- Attention to all schools diffuses resources and capacity to the point of ineffectiveness

Partnership Zones are clusters of schools operating as mini-districts characterized by model organizational practices, including *strong partnerships* and more *flexible operating conditions*.

**The Turnaround Challenge*, Mass Insight Education & Research Institute, 2007

Organizing Turnaround Through *Partnership Zones*

Why a New
Partnership
Paradigm?

Partnership Zones change conditions and empower Lead Partners to integrate investments in capacity among a cluster of schools.

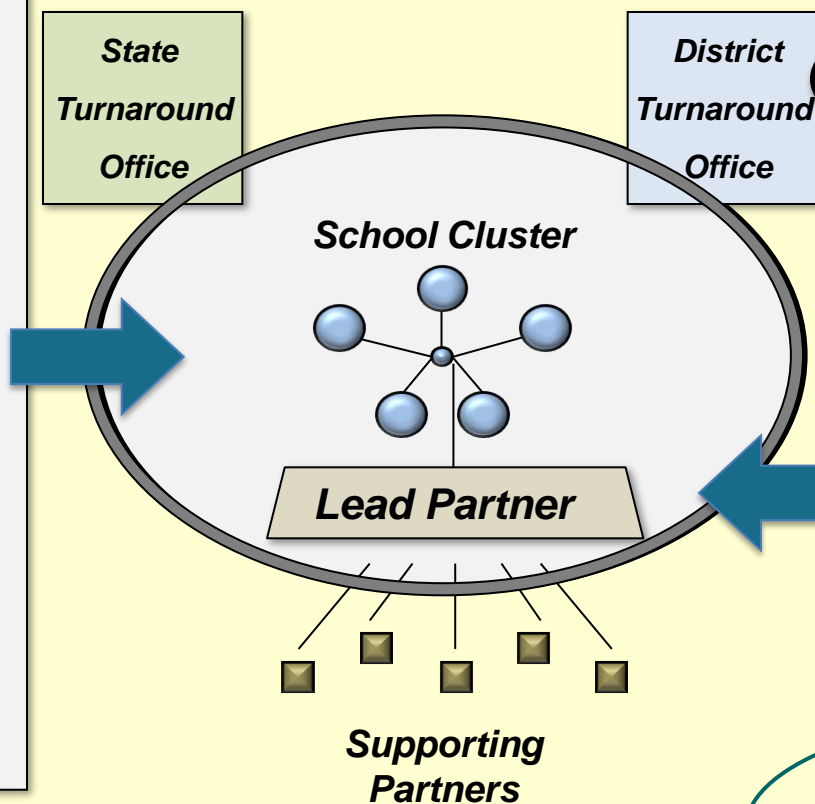
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Partnership Zones are part of the district but have more flexible operating conditions

- Supported by state policy (targeted funding, compliance streamlining) and **State Turnaround Office**
- Flexibility to make mission-driven decisions and establish model systems for people, time, money, school programs
- Clusters remain within the school district and schools have access to central office services

For much more on turnaround zones, see **Partnership Zones**, one of the companion reports in this series.

Partnership Zone



2

Lead Partners work with districts to support clusters of 3-5 schools

- New-model partner with accountability for student achievement and responsibility to support school staffing on behalf of the district or state
- Lead Partners team up with principals to manage schools
- Lead Partner aligns the work of all outside programs and partners, and builds capacity for the district and schools

This report focuses on the partners needed to increase capacity in turnaround zones, with an emphasis on Lead Partners.

The New Lead Partner Model

Lead Partners (LPs) are school turnaround partners that align authority with accountability.

Lead Partners are non-profit organizations or units of central offices on contract with the district central office or state to turn around schools

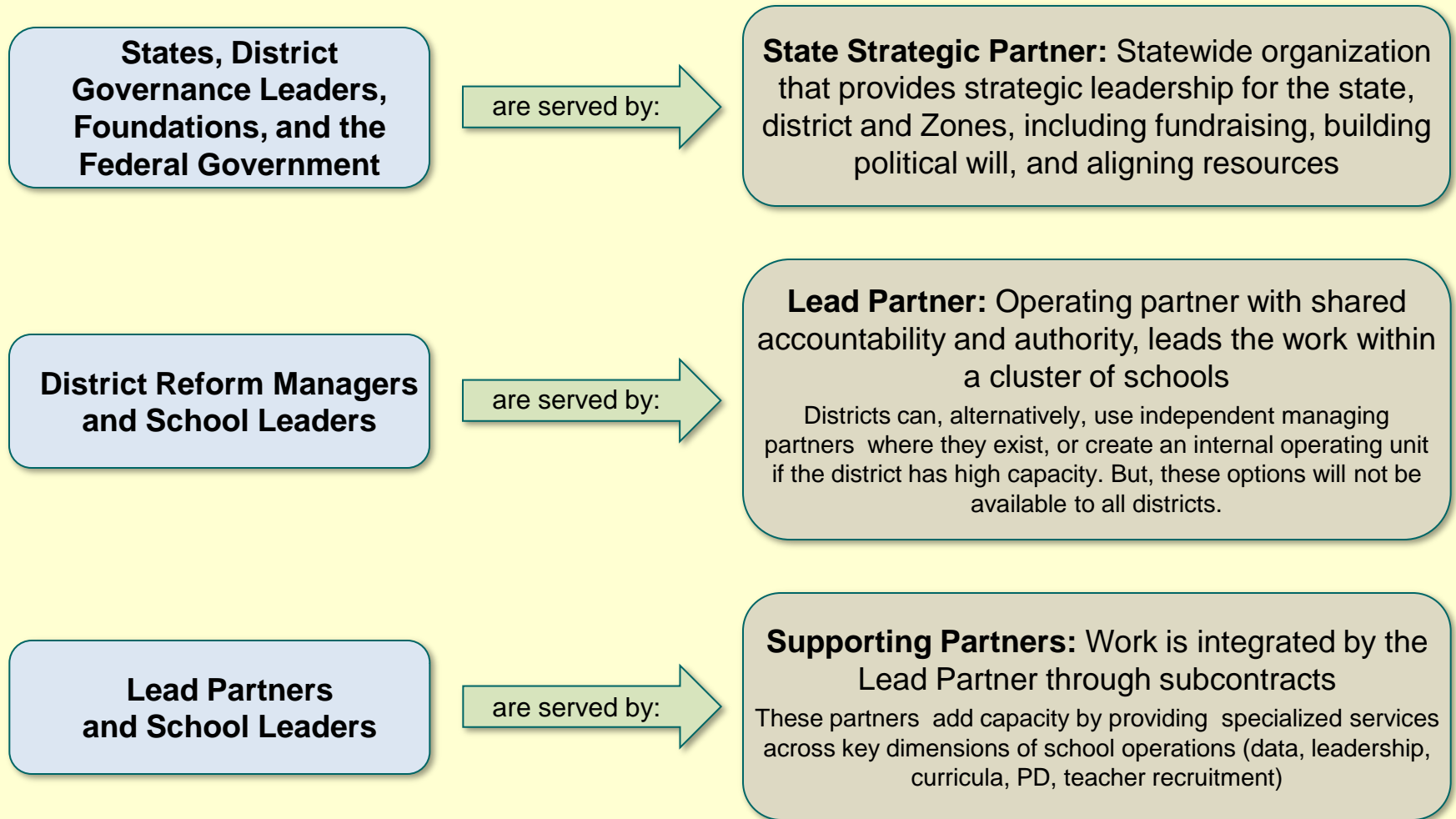
Responsibilities of a Lead Partner

- **Sign a 3-5 year performance contract for student achievement** with the district or state; the agreement:
 - Assigns the Lead Partner responsibility for a small “intentional” cluster of schools* where systems and programs will be aligned
 - Holds the Lead Partner accountable for improving student achievement
- **Assume authority for decision making on school staffing** (as well as time, money and program); in particular, the Lead Partner:
 - Hires a new principal or approves the current one
 - Supports the principal in hiring and replacing teachers and has responsibility for bringing in a meaningful cohort of new instructional staff
- **Provide core academic and student support services** directly or by aligning the services of other program and support partners, who are on sub-contracts with the Lead Partner, and build internal capacity within the schools and by extension, the district
- Has an **embedded, consistent and intense relationship with each school** during the turnaround period (5 days per week)

**Under ideal circumstances, a LP will manage a cluster of 3-5 schools within a district to achieve alignment and leverage scale, however the LP could also begin by managing a single school.*

Why do Partnership Zones Focus on “Partnerships”?

Turnaround and district redesign at this fundamental level requires *significant* new capacity. The best and fastest way to import capacity is through a new paradigm of partnerships from the state level to the district and school levels.

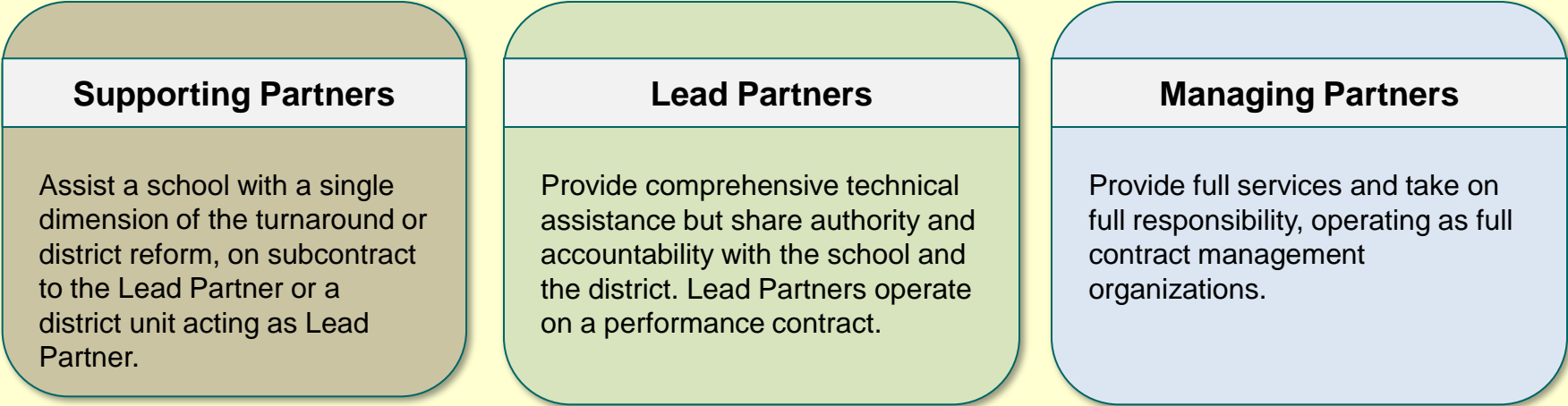


For more on the role that these partners play within Zones, see *Partnership Zones*, a companion report in this series.

Building Partnership Capacity in Schools and Zones


The remainder of the report focuses on partnerships at the zone level (with a brief look at State Strategic Partners as well). A variety of external partners is needed to complement school, district, and state capabilities, especially when they are focused on the schools with the greatest needs.

Partnerships with external operating organizations will need to take a variety of forms, involving:



While the other two types of partners already exist in the education sector, Lead Partners will largely need to be developed. Lead Partners are particularly important because they can help bring coherence to the turnaround effort and may be the most effective approach to leverage outside capacity, while still allowing district oversight.

The following section overviews the existing partner landscape, explaining the need for the addition of this new paradigm.

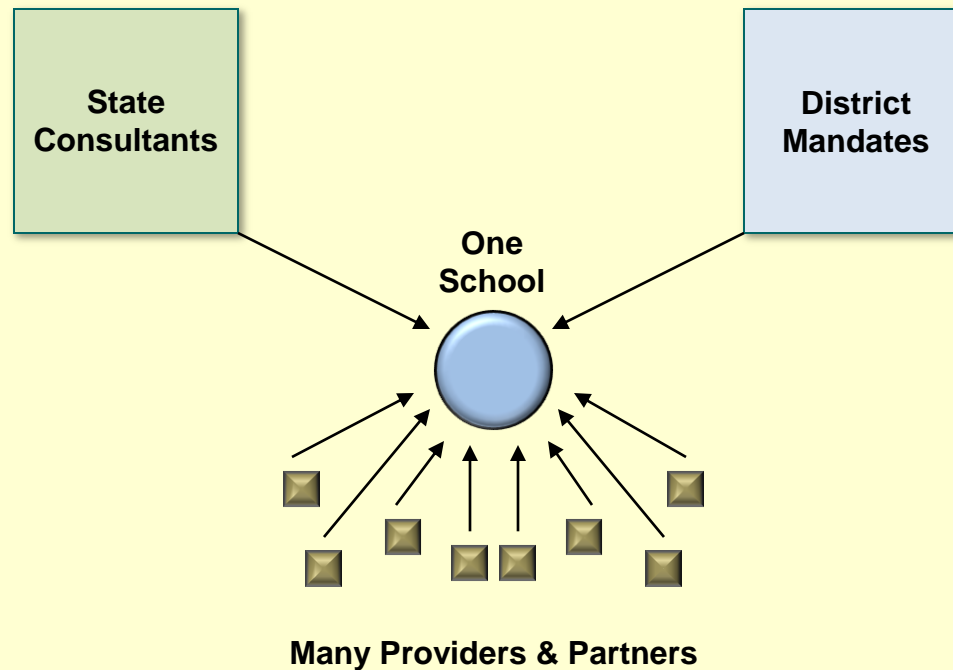


The Existing Partnership Landscape: How it fails to address core turnaround needs (and can make transformation more difficult)

Lack of Coherence and Alignment Mean Partner Effort Too Often Fragmented, Even a Burden to Schools

The use of partners is far from new in the school reform space. Schools and districts have used partners for decades to supplement and expand capacity.

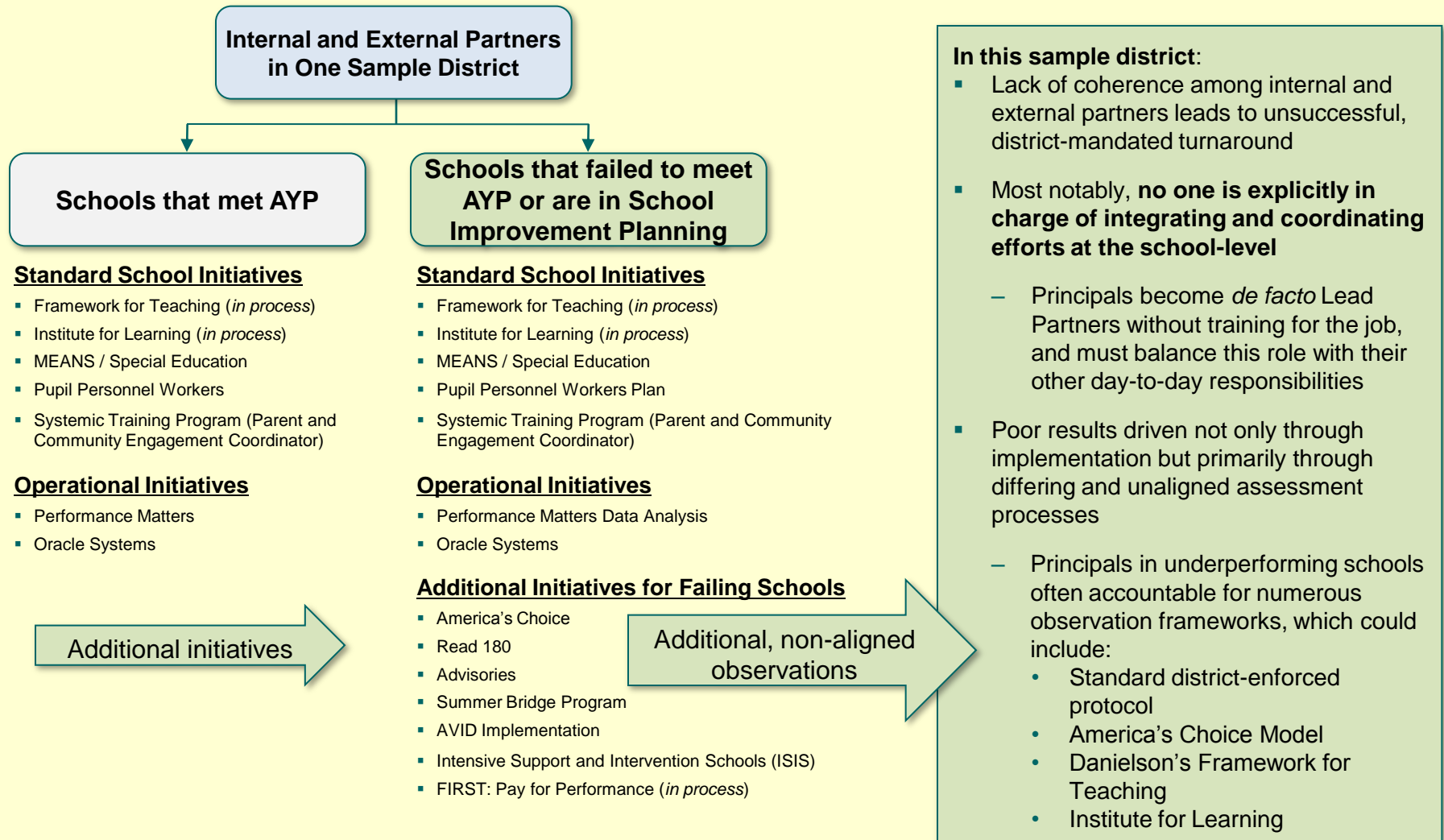
“Old World” Intervention Capacity & Roles: Fragmented, Competing Improvement Projects



In fact, “project-itis” results in a plethora of partners, who often get in the way of schools being able to channel their energies into coherent, radical transformation.

Low-Performing Schools are More Likely to be Overburdened with Poorly Aligned Initiatives and Partnerships

Multiple partnerships, which can lead to inefficient or contradictory reform efforts that burden and confuse school leadership, are especially prevalent in schools that are already underperforming.



Partner Roles Developed for Current School Reform Landscape

Existing
Partner
Landscape

A variety of partner roles have developed to serve the existing reform landscape, from those supporting a single curriculum or capacity need, to organizations that manage public schools for districts.

Supporting Partners

The New Teacher Project

- Helps schools build capacity by recruiting and training highly capable teachers to work within the public schools

Education Resource Strategies

- Assists schools and districts with financial planning, budget allocations, and performance management

Textbook Publishers (Houghton, Scholastic, etc.)

- Develops content for curriculum and instruction through prescriptive, traditional methods

Comprehensive School Reform Organizations

American Institute for Research (AIR)

- Consults with schools and districts on professional development and coaching strategies to help improve student achievement

America's Choice

- Offers a more comprehensive approach to curriculum and instruction design

First Things First (FTF)

- Provides framework to operationalize school reform that focuses on instruction, engagement, and shared accountability

Institute for Student Achievement

- Supports schools through capacity building in teachers and leadership with shared accountability with district for results

New Visions for Public Schools

- Creates new schools and acts as an ongoing partner after the start-up phase.

Talent Development High School

- Provides comprehensive curricular and organizational reform

Managing Organizations

Edison Schools

- Partners with districts to provide academic and managerial services to schools and is an example of a for-profit school operator model

Mastery Charter Schools

- Non-profit operating middle and high school charter school conversions in Philadelphia

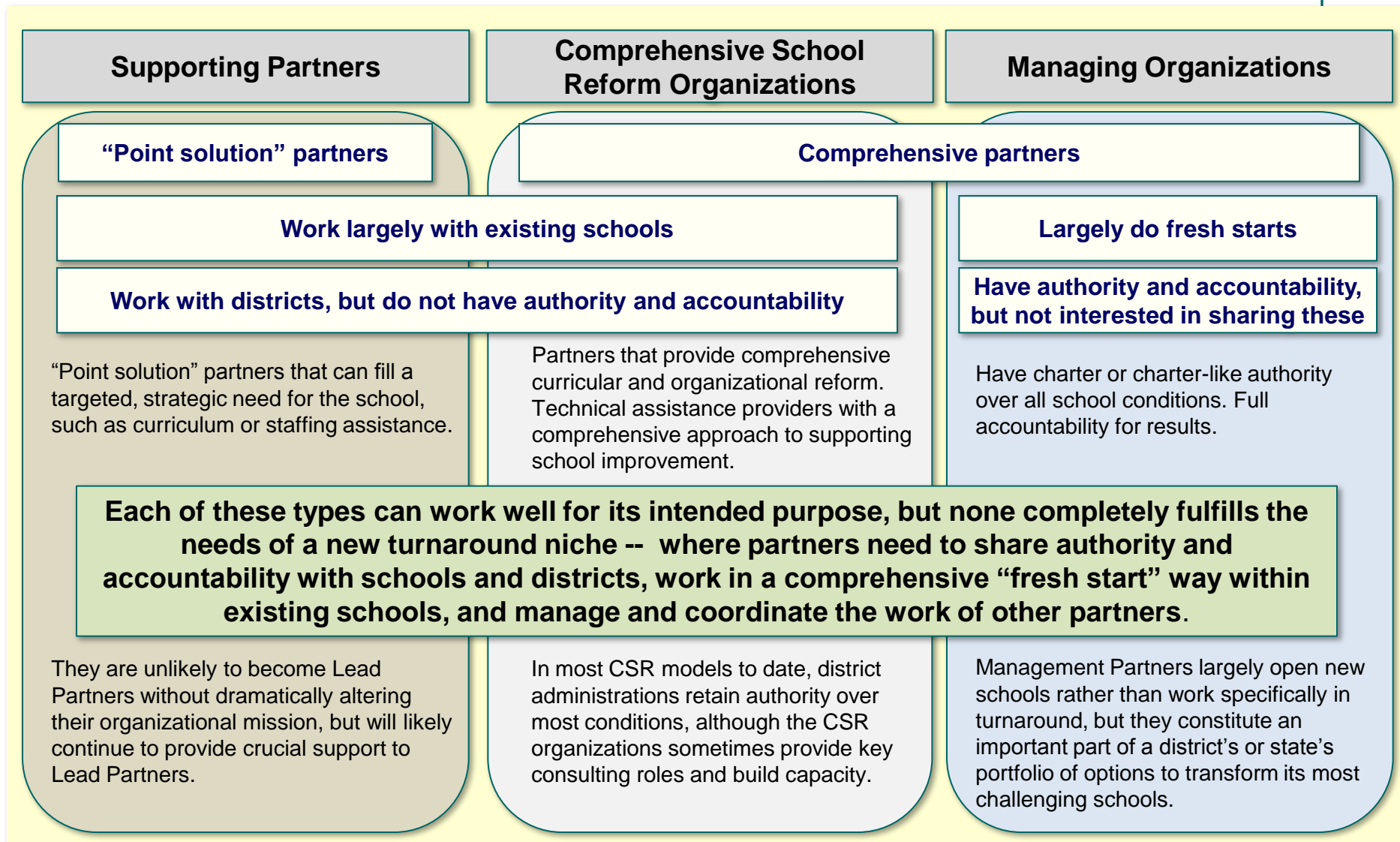
Green Dot Public Schools

- Non-profit that operates charter schools in LA and is focused on influencing Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to transform its failing high schools

None of Current Partners Types Combine Required Capacity, Accountability and Intensity

Existing
Partner
Landscape

The complexity of chronically underperforming schools, the urgency of turnaround, and the political realities of working with districts and unions create the need for a new partner paradigm.

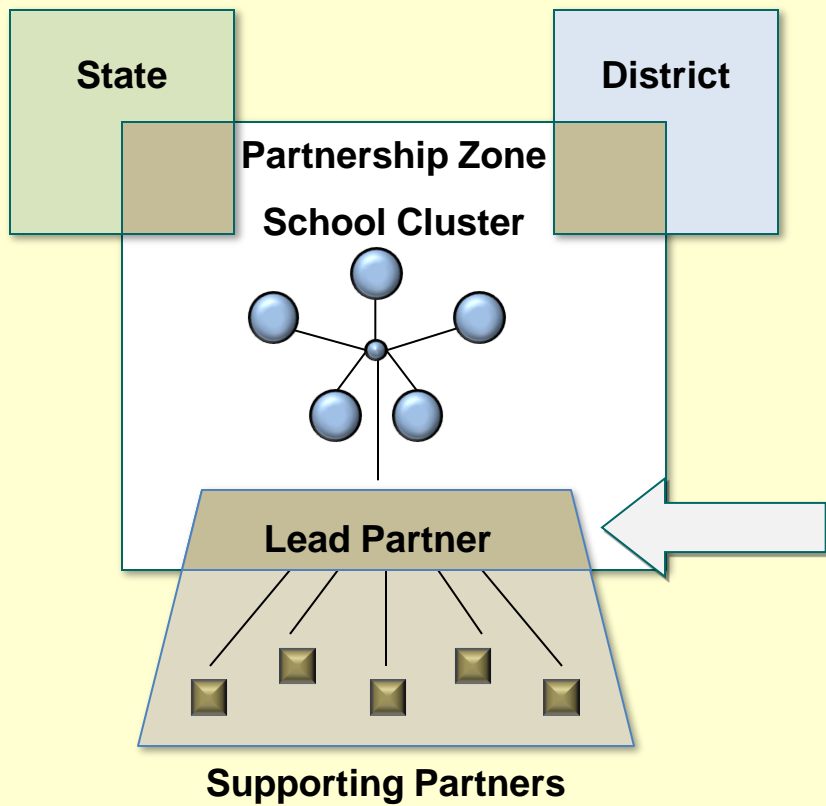


Lead Partners: The need to develop a new breed of operating partner to work with schools within district and state zones

New Lead Partner Model Created to Align the Chaos

Our research indicates that turnaround needs a new model: deeply embedded Lead Partners, possessing capacity and authority similar to management organizations, working with districts in special partnership zones, and integrating the work of other providers.

“New World” Capacity & Roles Within a Comprehensive Turnaround Framework



Lead Partners

work with districts to support clusters of 3-5 schools

- New-model partner with accountability for student achievement and responsibility to support school staffing on behalf of the district or state
- Lead Partners team up with principals to manage schools
- Lead Partner aligns the work of all outside programs and partners, and builds capacity for the district and schools

See more detail on these roles in the following slides.

What's New About This Paradigm?

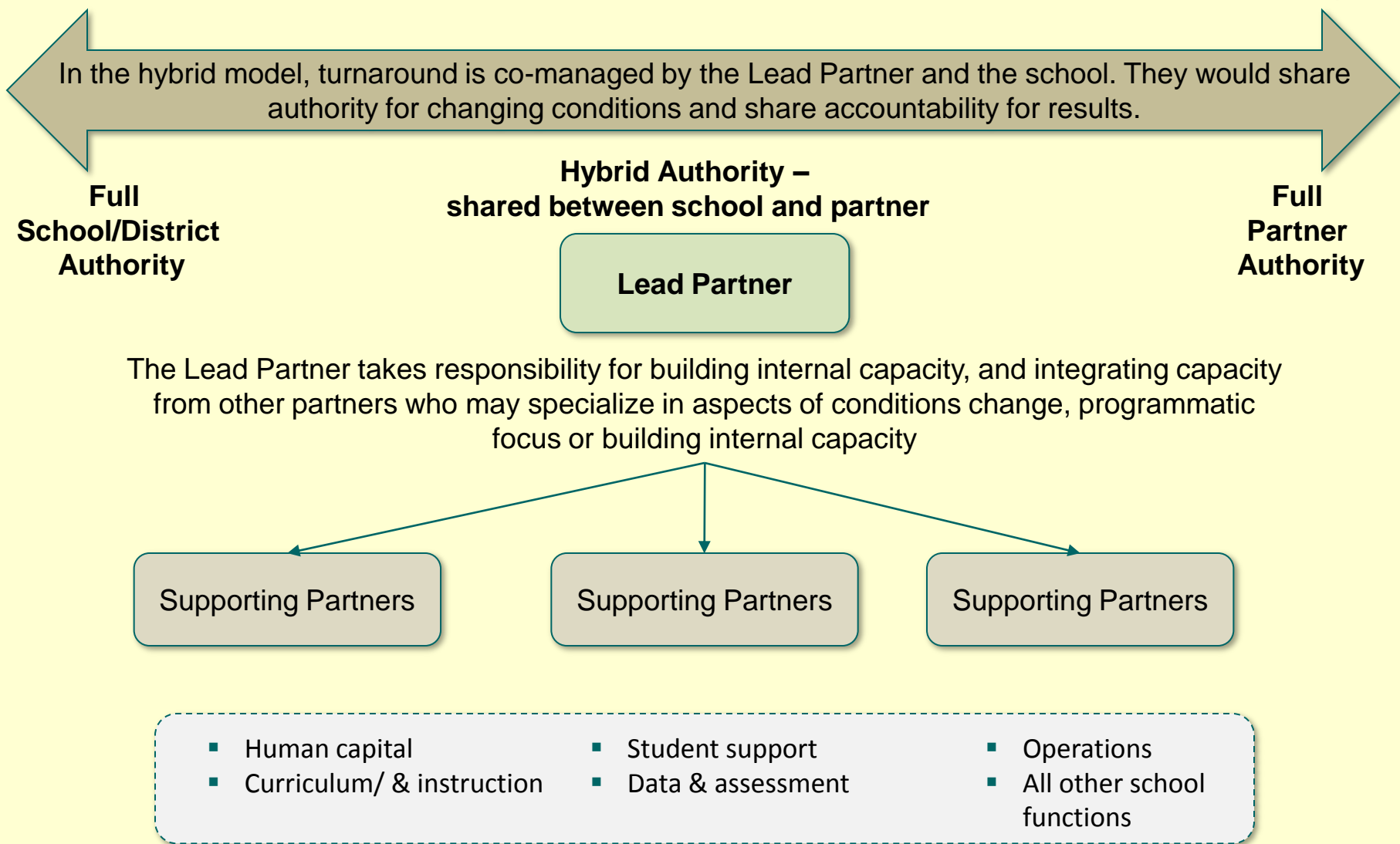
Individual elements of the new paradigm have operated in some past partner relationships, but attempts to share accountability were not always supported with shared authority, and expectations were not always clear. The new paradigm emphasizes coherence and transparency.

Current Landscape	New Partnership Paradigm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacking coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Partner plays a coordinating function Supporting Partners can have important parts to play in turnaround, where needs are broad and deep, but management of the various partner organizations is key.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple, disconnected initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any initiative the school takes on fits tightly with advancing the organizational mission Non-aligned initiatives divert effort from the work of coherent transformation; the scale of challenge in turnaround schools demands that all resources be applied effectively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear lines of authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner has authority (or shared authority) over key conditions Partners must be able to gain at least shared control over the conditions they need to implement transformation – particularly people, money, and time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School, not partner, accountable for results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School and partner share accountability for results Lead Partner needs to be a true, accountable partner in order for partnership to function in the best interests of students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectations for who does what underspecified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectations transparent, clearly delineated in MOU A strong partnership must delineate who is responsible for what types of task, and set the metrics to be used to define success

What's New? The Linchpins of Authority and Integration

The most important operating elements of the Lead Partner paradigm are, on the one hand, authority and accountability, and on the other, alignment, coordination, and the building of capacity.

Lead Partner
Paradigm

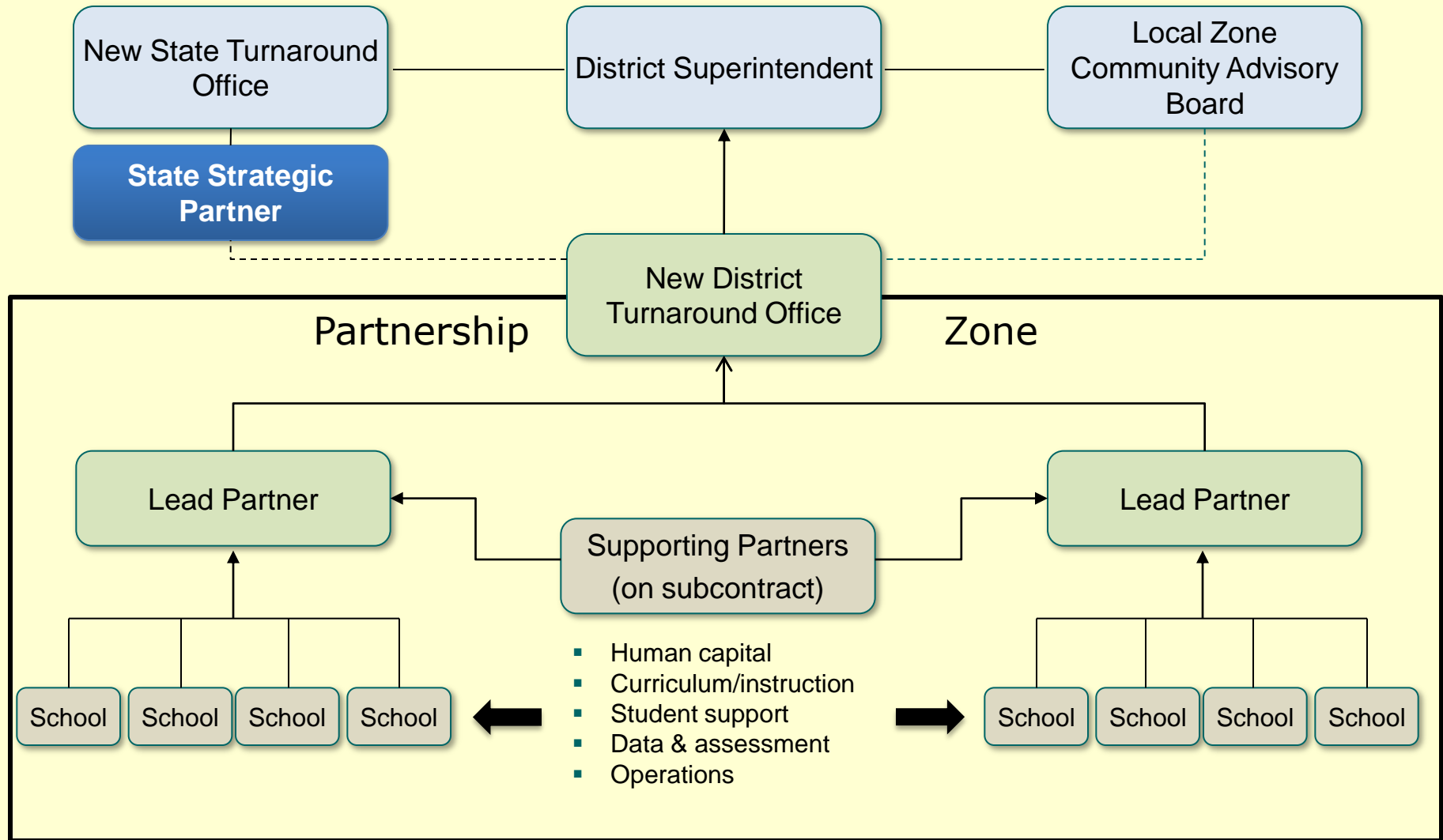


State Strategic Partner: The need for an extra-governmental entity to provide strategic leadership at the state level

Increasing Strategic Capacity at the State Level

While this report focuses on the partners needed to operate the Zone, State Turnaround Offices will also need the assistance of a State Strategic Partner to design, implement and lead state level strategies, and to provide direction and context for the work of the zones.

State Strategic Partner



State Strategic Partners Coordinate Multiple Stakeholders

State Strategic
Partner

The State Strategic Partner will also serve an essential function by assisting the state turnaround office in aligning, coordinating and brokering state agency supports and additional services from external providers to bring the turnaround strategies to scale.

Roles of a State Strategic Partner

- Provide on-the-ground advocacy and communications support for the new turnaround efforts
- Serve as an incubator for Lead Partners including working with the state to create a conducive environment
- Raise and manage local financial resources to support this work
- Coordinate the effort to achieve broader impact throughout the state

Additional Strategic Partners (Independent, Nonprofit Organizations)

- Current funder organizations that expand their role to take on greater responsibility and accountability for implementation, e.g.
 - Public/Local Education Funds
 - Community foundations
 - Venture philanthropy/innovation funds
- New organizations formed with public and private funding and governance, e.g.
 - National Math & Science Initiative
 - Development Corporations

The Turnaround Management Portfolio:

Maintaining a range of options for managing Partnership Zones

The Broader Portfolio of Turnaround Options

While states and districts will need to develop the new Lead Partner option, they will also want to maintain a portfolio of turnaround models to match the political realities, local capacity and legal options available.

The new Lead Partner paradigm must be developed because it is **most likely to meet the requirements of dealing with existing schools in a way that can be implemented quickly, while at the same time building district capacity** to deal with turnaround in the future.

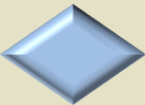
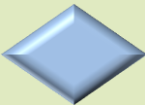

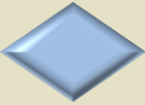
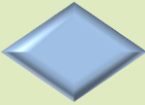
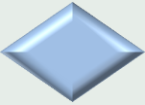
However, the optimal solution for any given state or district will differ from the solution for another location. Some districts may only have some options available for political or legal reasons, and in any event the scale of the problem requires that **districts have a portfolio of options to manage transformation within their partnership zones.**

This section will look at **the two main turnaround strategies (existing school transformation and close and replace) across the range of three governance models.** The matrix of different models suggests the range of options, choice of which will depend on issues like district capacity, the capacity and availability of Lead Partners, and the availability and acceptability of more independent, charter-like management options.

Portfolio of Turnaround Approaches

States and districts may need to offer a range of turnaround options to suit the requirements and capacity found in different situations. The Turnaround Matrix presented here illustrates the options available in-district (first two columns) and using self-managing partners (third column).

Turnaround
Options

	District Management (with supporting partners)	District & Lead Partner	Managing Partner (charter or non-charter)
Existing School			 *
Close and Re-open			

* This option is unlikely to occur, as charter turnarounds tend to be close and re-open



New Partner Option

The Two Basic Turnaround Strategies

Turnaround Options

Any dramatic change in management and instructional approach at a school that serves the same students or same demographic of student is considered turnaround. Each strategy has benefits and disadvantages.

Turnaround of Existing Schools

- Process keeps the same school and same students
- Dramatically different approach, with new school leaders and at least partly new staff, whether led by district or Lead Partner management
- Sometimes a more acceptable approach for political or local community reasons

Turnaround Through Close & Reopen

- Closure of existing school and replacement with one or more schools in the same geographic area, serving the same or similar students*
- Close and reopen can make getting conditions change easier
- In many ways a cleaner model than turning around existing school, but politically difficult in many places

*New York City uses Close and Reopen in large underperforming high schools, where the failing high school is phased out one grade at a time while new smaller schools grow in same building. This provides new options to the same (or demographically similar) students.

The Three Basic Governance Models

Each strategy and governance model has benefits and disadvantages. Districts will need to consider internal capacity, partner availability, community opinion and union involvement when deciding which type of turnaround effort to pursue.

District Management

- Districts can set up an office to act as an internal Lead Partner. This needs to be an operating unit, separate from the district turnaround management office, to whom this unit would report on performance contract similar to that of other Lead Partners
- Based on research in large urban districts, it is likely that only a few, probably large, districts would have sufficient internal capacity to act as their own Lead Partners without significant restructuring

District and Lead Partner

- Districts share authority and accountability with a high-capacity partner
- Partners operate under performance contracts
- Likely to be the most effective option for most districts to bring turnaround to scale
- Requires less district capacity in the details of turnaround, but demands expertise in partner management
- Depends on the availability of high-capacity Lead Partners with whom the district can work

Managing Partner

- Independent Managing Partner is contracted to manage turnaround, with full authority and accountability for results
- Contract includes clearly defined metrics for measuring success
- Good option for districts with little demonstrated capacity to contribute to the management of turnaround, or as part of portfolio for large districts
- Depends on availability of Managing Partners willing to take on turnaround

Emerging Cases Illustrate Matrix of Turnaround Models

Turnaround
Options

Mass Insight identified ten examples of promising turnaround approaches, and completed site visit case studies on eight of them, which illustrate some of the advantages and challenges of five of the six options in the Turnaround Matrix.

	District Management (with supporting partners)	District & Lead Partner	Managing Partner (charter or non-charter)
Existing School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">McDaniel Delaplane Elementary School, PhiladelphiaMiami Dade School Improvement Zone*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Newton Street School, Newark, NJDuggan Middle School, Springfield, MAHarvard Elementary School, Chicago	<p>* Case studies were not completed for any existing school/managing partner turnaround models. These schools could be run as charters.</p>
Close and Re-open	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tech Boston, Dorchester, MA*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bronx International High School, NYC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pickett Middle School, Philadelphia (Mastery)Locke Animo #1, Los Angeles (Green Dot)SCI Academy, New Orleans

* Two examples not full site visit case studies



For findings and highlights from the work of these turnaround pioneers, see the case studies on our website: www.massinsight.org/stg/

Summary of Partner Roles Within Turnaround Partner Portfolio

Turnaround
Options

Only Lead and Managing Partners provide full operating support, but Supporting Partners can add crucial capacity to both Lead Partners and internal district turnaround offices.

		Operating Partners	
Functional Role	Supporting Partner	Lead Partner	Managing Partner
Authority Over School	None or advisory	Authority over key levers, but district retains some authority	Full authority
Accountability for Student Achievement	None (except to extend contract)	Full accountability	Full accountability
Intensity	Varies, but most often minimal in schools	Fully embedded; management in close collaboration with principal	Fully embedded: managing the school
Relationship to Other Partners	None (usually)	Integrator, with school, of all other providers	Full authority over all partner/subcontractors
Services Provided	Single service (except for Comprehensive School Reform models)	All academic services, with school, and oversight of others	All academic services and oversight of others
Examples	Scholastic, WestEd, America's Choice, SREB, New Leaders for New Schools, New Teacher Project, Center for Collaborative Education (MA Co-pilot schools)	AUSL (Chicago)	Mastery Charter Schools (Philadelphia), Green Dot Public Schools (Locke HS in LA)

Building the Partner Marketplace: Getting from what we have to what we need

Building the Partner Marketplace: How to Get There from Here

In order to develop a turnaround portfolio, districts need access to a variety of high quality, high capacity partners, but the supply has not developed as fast as the demand for school transformation.

Mass Insight research into existing and developing markets indicates that, **while working with partners may not be new, to date a very small part of current education expenditure has been devoted to this approach.** In addition, those partnerships have struggled with significant issues relating to authority and accountability. Control of people and money are particularly rare.

As presented earlier in the report, **districts will want to consider how they can develop the new Lead Partner option, and states to consider how they can increase the availability of such partners.**

The remainder of the report focuses on **issues to be considered and addressed to accelerate development of the partner marketplace for turnaround**, including:

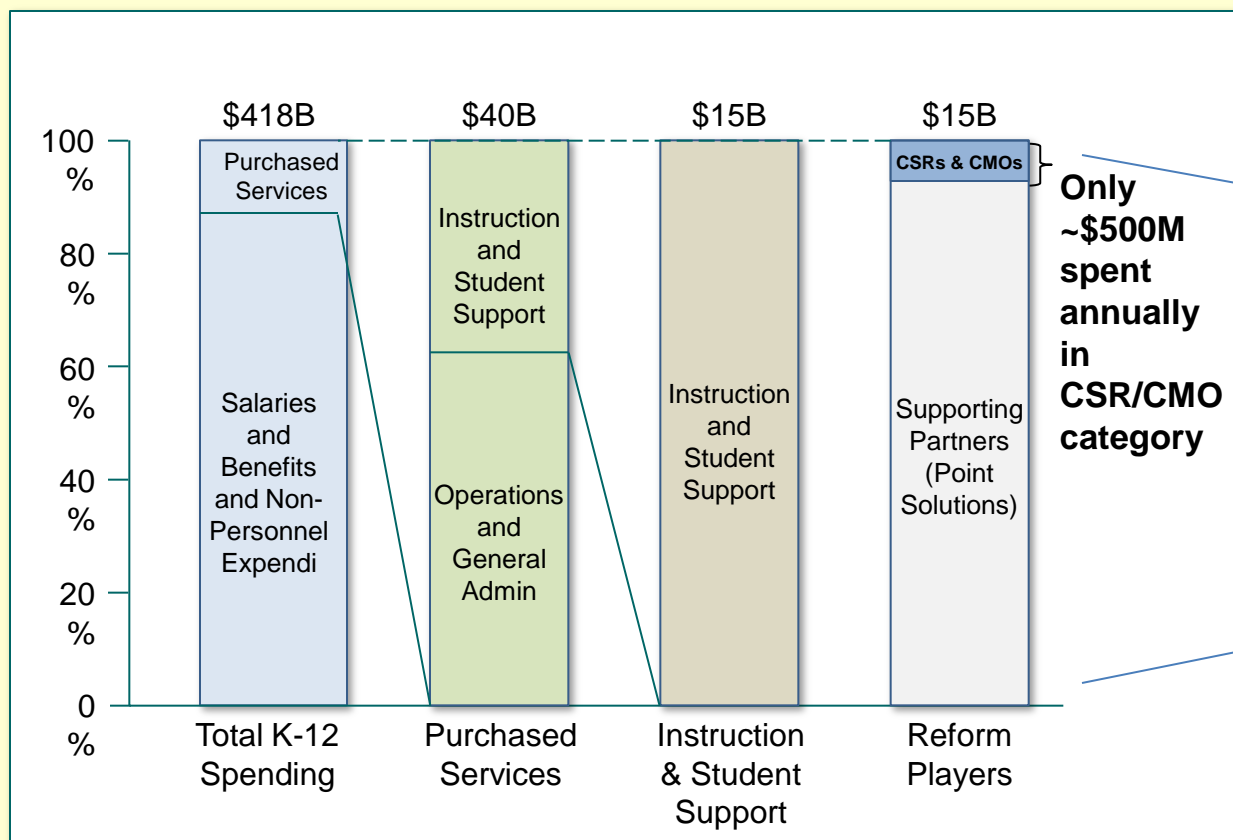
- Potential sources for new-style partners
- Attracting players to enter the market
- Potential market mix
- Funding and transparency
- Clarifying roles and expectations

Existing Expenditure on Reform Partners Low

Expenditure on potential Lead Partners [Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) and Charter Management Organizations (CMO)] has historically comprised less than 10% of spending on school reform.

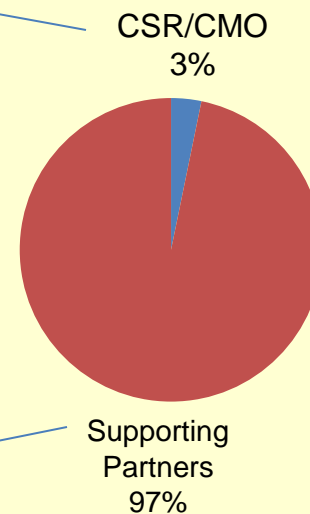
Partner
Marketplace

K-12 District Expenditures, 2005



Only
~\$500M
spent
annually
in
CSR/CMO
category














Expenditure on Reform Players



Source: CSRQ; Company websites; Northwest Regional Education Laboratory; Parthenon Analysis

District Use of Outside Partners Falls Short of Intensive Role

Districts active in school reform have historically differed in their reliance on outside partners and the intensity of involvement.

	Miami – School Improvement Zone	NYC – Chancellor’s District (1996-2002)	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Achievement Zone	NYC (2002-present)	Chicago
Role of Partners Approaching Intensity and Authority of New “Lead Partner” Role	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When operating no roles similar to Lead Partners 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No roles similar to Lead Partners 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No current roles similar to Lead Partners 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some turnaround partners play role in opening new small schools in place of phasing out under-performing large schools 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners have significant autonomy and authority to lead turnaround efforts at lowest-performing schools
Other Partner-Provided Solutions Focused on Turnaround Schools	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic intervention programs with literacy focus provided by Early Success, Soar to Success, Voyager Passport, READ 180, Learning Express and Reading Plus 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prescribed instructional program and required curriculum utilize programs from outside partners Success for All, Balanced Literacy and Trailblazers Success for All also provides classroom facilitators 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic intervention programs from America’s Choice and READ 180 are part of a standardized program for turnaround schools 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner organizations provide models and support for new school openings 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEdO brings in outside partners for academic intervention and support
Noteworthy Use of Partners Outside of Turnaround Efforts			 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NC New Schools Program serves as model for new small schools 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside partners also play role as Partnership Support Organizations, but this is not focused only on low-performing schools (principal has authority) 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside of turnaround efforts, coordinated use of outside partners for academic intervention programs and assessments



Heavy reliance on outside partners



No reliance on outside partners

While academic intervention programs provided by outside partners are common both in turnaround schools and in overall district strategy, few districts have increased capacity through the use of “Lead Partner”-like roles.

Partners Have Varying Degrees of Authority

Control over the key conditions varies among existing partners. And, each level of authority has its own set of trade-offs. In general, charters are the only type of organization to gain authority over these conditions, although AUSL shares authority in Chicago.

People (staff and leadership hiring):

No authority	Influence over	Authority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> America's Choice Renaissance Schools Textbook Publishers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Inst. for Research First Things First Institute for Student Achieve. Talent Development New Teacher Project New Visions for Pub Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AUSL (shared) Edison Mastery Green Dot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although staff and leadership buy-in is critical, some CSR and SP organizations do not want any more than influence given the highly sensitive and political nature of staff changes Allowing staff to "opt-out" of over time can be as effective as having full authority, but the change process is much slower and not appropriate for turnaround Ability to change staff doesn't mean the ability to attract staff

Money (budgeting and additional funding):

No authority	Influence over	Authority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American inst for Research First Things First Institute for Student Achieve. New Teacher Project Talent Development Textbook Publishers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> America's Choice New Visions for Pub Schools Renaissance Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AUSL (shared) Edison Mastery Green Dot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional funding is necessary to the extent that resources are available to implement reform (for capital intensive ramp-up, adding staff, extending the day, etc.) Influencers sometimes feel they can help districts and principals reallocate money towards reform, even without explicit authority Without budgetary flexibility, resources may not be allocated efficiently

Time (extended time and flexibility of scheduling):

No authority	Influence over	Authority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Inst for Research Renaissance Schools New Teacher Project Textbook Publishers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> America's Choice First Things First New Visions for Pub Schools Talent Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AUSL (shared) Edison Instit for Student Achieve. Mastery Green Dot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even if full authority for additional time is not granted, CSR organizations typically demand that districts exercise their authority to meet their needs, given that time is a critical requirement for most reform models Scheduling flexibility is easier to attain than other conditions, although non-academic constraints (athletics, etc.) can sometimes make it difficult

Program (curriculum and instruction):

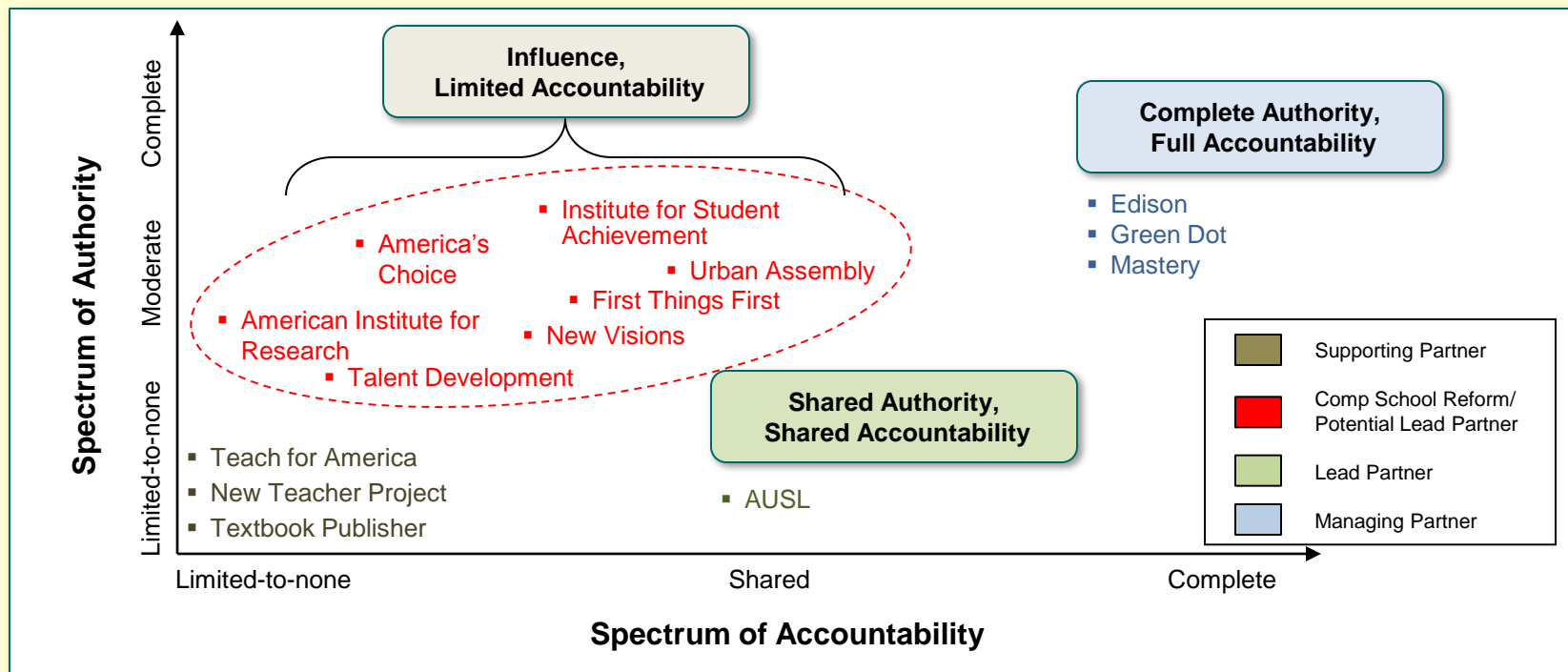
No authority	Influence over	Authority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Inst for Research New Teacher Project Renaissance Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Things First Institute for Student Achieve. New Visions for Pub Schools Talent Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> America's Choice AUSL (shared) Edison Mastery Textbook Publishers Green Dot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence of curriculum or instruction tends to be the easiest condition to attain

- SP - supporting partners
- CSR - comprehensive school reform orgs
- CMO - charter contract mgmt orgs

People and money are hardest to control and also the two most critical conditions to have authority over.

Partner Accountability for Results is Correlated with Authority

Accountability for results requires some authority over both the conditions and resources needed to obtain those results, and is necessary for Lead Partner work. However, partners that choose to remain in the bottom left of this graph play very important Supporting Partner roles in turnaround.



Influence, Limited Accountability

- Shared-accountability is necessary for a successful partnership
 - “The district needs to have skin in the game.”
- Consequences should still exist for not meeting targets despite lack of full accountability
 - “Consequences should be powerful enough to make people pause.”

Complete Authority, Full Accountability

- Full accountability is critical, especially in gaining authority and creating a sense of urgency
 - “We wanted accountability for results in order to get the authority we needed. If we’re held accountable, then we’ll be on the hook to make sure change happens.”
- Consequences exist for not meeting targets
 - “If we don’t meet our targets, our contract can be cancelled. That’s a real threat.”

Source: Parthenon interviews with partner organizations for Mass Insight research

Potential Sources of Lead and Managing Partners

Lead and managing partners could come from a number of sources. Each of these types of organization has different incentives and disincentives to move into this marketplace. Some individual non-profits or companies will choose to stay in important supporting or specialist roles.

Potential Source	Illustrative Examples
Startups and Scale-up of Small Organizations	
Existing School Management and Charter Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AUSL CMOs: Mastery, Green Dot, Aspire, Yes, Victory, Edison
Intentional startups of Lead Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chicago Rise [attempt by Chicago International Charter Schools to open a contract turnaround school with CPS, launch postponed in spring 2009, but likely to renew efforts in the future.]
New Focus Adopted by Mid-Sized Organizations	
Partner organizations that could transition into Lead Partner role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School developers (The Urban Assembly) Community-based organizations (Good Shepherd Services transfer schools) Community-engagement organizations (Citizen Schools, Communities in Schools) Comprehensive School Reform and significant PD providers (e.g. Talent Development High School, IRRE-First Things First, WestEd) Universities: University of Chicago's Chicago Center for Urban School Improvement Virginia School Turnaround Specialist Program
New Subsidiaries of Large Organizations	
Large educational organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publishers
Other Potential Sources	
Local funders that transition into an operating role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community foundations Public education funds Innovation funds

Potential Sources for Turnaround Supporting Partners

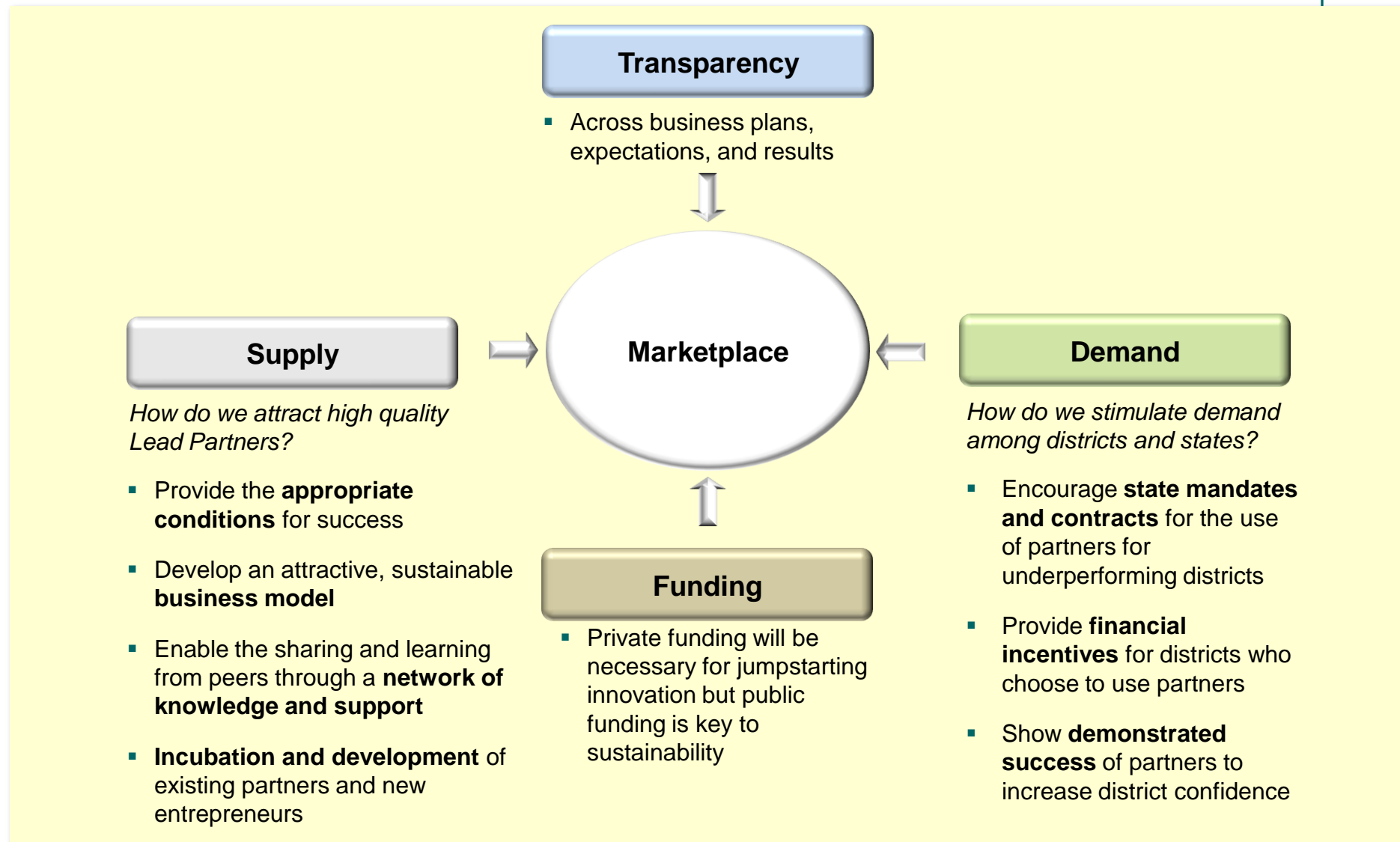
Increasing capacity within chronically underperforming schools also requires the input of high-quality Supporting Partners, whose impact will be magnified through greater integration of their work.

Human Capital	Curriculum/ Instruction	Student Support	Data & Assessment	Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The New Teacher Project ▪ Teach for America ▪ The New Teacher Center ▪ New Leaders for New Schools ▪ Math for America ▪ Virginia School Turnaround Specialist Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project GRAD ▪ Talent Development High School ▪ America's Choice ▪ IRRE-First Things First ▪ Houghton ▪ Scholastic ▪ National Academy Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AVID ▪ Mentors Inc. ▪ Big Brothers Big Sisters ▪ Jobs for America's Graduates ▪ Good Shepherd Services ▪ B.E.L.L. ▪ College Summit ▪ Gear Up ▪ Posse ▪ Communities in Schools ▪ Citizen Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measured Progress ▪ Compass Learning ▪ The Grow Network (McGraw Hill) ▪ WestEd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educational Resource Strategies ▪ Civic Builders ▪ Revolution Foods

Note: Some of these organizations provide services in more than one category, but are listed here in one for illustrative purposes only.

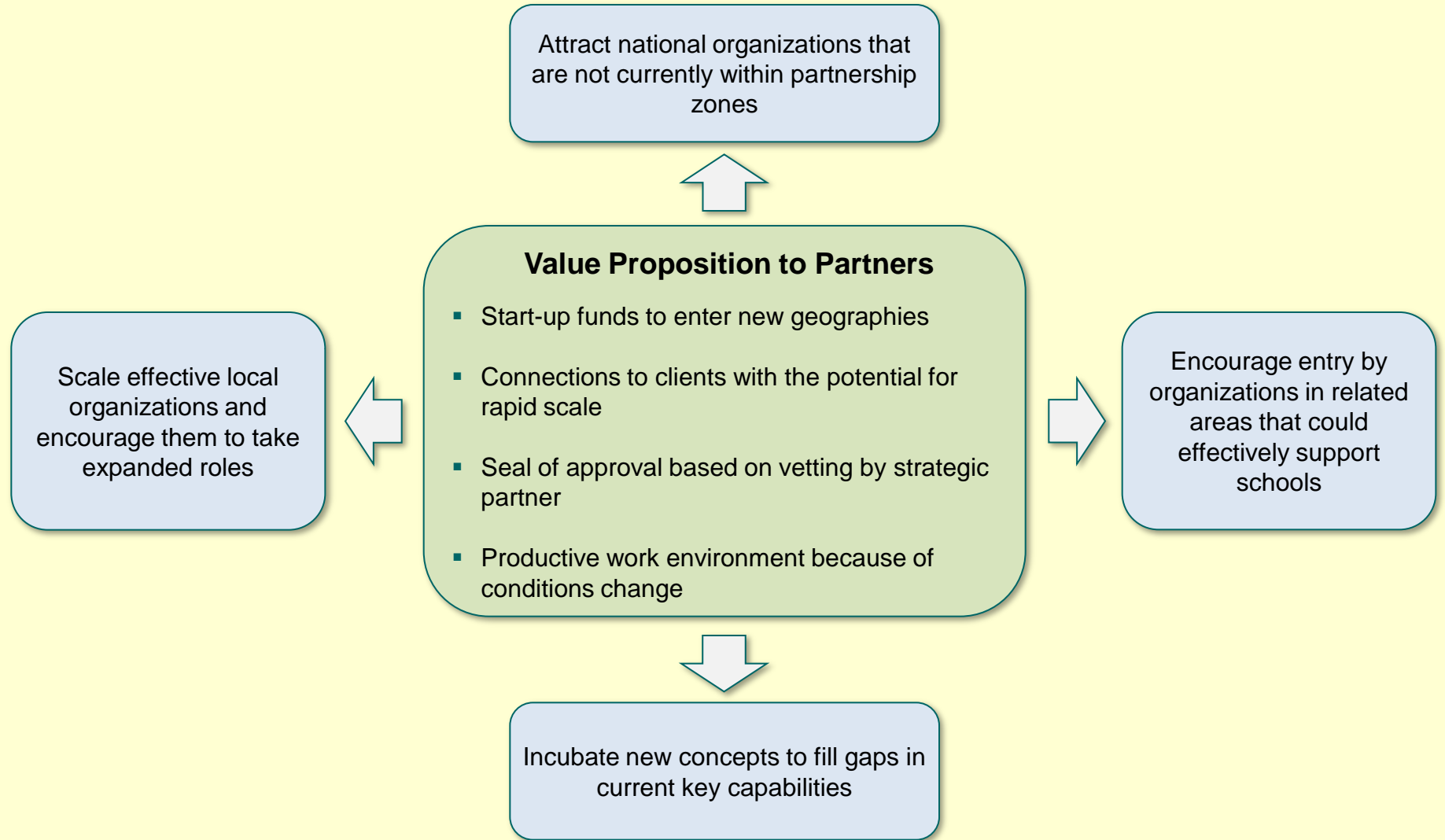
Accelerating the Market for Lead Partners

Accelerating the market for Lead Partners will require funding and culture change, as well as attention to conditions and incentives relating to both supply and demand.















Demonstrating Value to Convince Partners to Enter

Shortages of partner capacity will need to be addressed by targeted efforts, demonstrating the value of potential business and helping local organizations scale up for expansion in the Lead Partner space.



Contracts Can Either Support or Undercut Partners' Efforts

The reform landscape offers examples of both. The Chicago RFP and contracts for turnaround operators provide significant latitude, accountability, and support – unlike LAUSD's.

	LAUSD School Improvement Partners	NYC Partnership School Support	Chicago Turnaround Operators
Partner Role Overview	Partner role is not clearly delineated; broadly described as facilitator of improvement plan development and implementation	The parameters of the Partner role are detailed, but not prescriptive. Assist principals with operations, planning, and enhancement of school programs	Partners are turnaround operators with significant autonomy. They must be pre-qualified through a Ren2010 RFP process
Partners' Decision-Making Authority			
Partners' Programmatic Freedom/ Flexibility			
Partner Accountability			
Accountability Detail	Partners are accountable for attendance at the schools and during key meetings, and for monthly progress reports	Partner performance evaluated by the schools' Progress Report and Quality review ratings and evaluation of the partner by schools receiving support	Annual evaluation to determine progression of academic performance defined in accountability plan, fiscal management, and compliance
Breadth of Services Provided			
Number of Schools Served	3-34 schools, MS and/or HS	10 schools minimum. Schools select partner from among internal and external options	Unspecified number, ES or HS, piloting with 4 operators in year 1
Length of Contract	18 months, 2 renewal options	5 years, 1 renewal option	5 years
RFP Evaluation Criteria	Primarily qualifications of experience, followed by cost	Primarily program plan description, followed by organizational capacity, and demonstrated results	Turnaround strategies and required participation in community forums and public hearings

Source: NYCDOE 2007 Partnership School Support RFP, CPS 2007 Supplemental Turnaround Process for Pre-Qualified School Operators RFP, LAUSD Consulting Services for School Improvement RFP



High



Low

Effective Partnerships Share Key Factors

Extensive interviews with partner organizations working with districts on turnaround reveal three key factors in the success, or alternatively the frustration, of such partnerships.

Key Partnership Success Factors

Direct or Indirect Control Over Key Conditions

- To be able to implement plan with fidelity
 - “Ideally, we would love to have authority over everything. Since this isn’t possible, I’ll settle for influence”
 - “When we were working in the schools, often teachers would ask us ‘Who are we supposed to listen to? There are too many things going on.’ Without coherence amongst partners, success is next to impossible.”
 - “Without fidelity to our model, how can we be held accountable?”
 - “It doesn’t matter if the partner or the district has the authority, but one of them needs to create the right conditions”

Transparency Around Expectations and Rules of Engagement

- To understand exactly what is expected to be done, by whom, and when, for both districts and partners
 - “The key is to make the agreement public and to connect required actions to specific people.”
 - “We’re accountable for the implementation process and timeline.”
 - “The most important lesson is to be clear about outcomes and responsibility.”
 - “Our program views college acceptance as the number one metric of success, which is not entirely aligned with standardized testing. I’m not making any excuses for not reaching district goals, but think that our accountability measures must be viewed differently.”

District Commitment and “Air Cover”

- To help partner navigate the system and realize the desired conditions and authority levels
 - “I need a district advocate to support my efforts.”
 - “Without someone in the district that was working on our behalf, I’m not sure we would have seen such high levels of success.”
 - “We won’t go anywhere unless the district leadership reaches out to us and asks us to come.”
 - “The hardest part is holding the district accountable when they don’t do what they said they would.”

Source: Interviews by Parthenon for Mass Insight research

Clarifying Partner Roles and Responsibilities

Being clear about responsibilities, outcomes, metrics, etc. requires up-front planning and definition. Districts and partners could use the tool below to guide initial conversations.

Checklist for Clarification of Partner Roles and Expectations

- ☐ Why are both parties entering into the partnership?
- ☐ What is the partnership vision? How long will it last?
- ☐ What are district and state accountability expectations?
- ☐ What is the definition of success? How is it similar or dissimilar from the district's definition of success?
- ☐ What are the expected process and performance targets in the first year, second year, third year, etc.? What are the consequences for being off track?
- ☐ What meetings and trainings will occur and when?
- ☐ Who has authority for what? What is the recourse if authority is not realized?
- ☐ Who provides what services and supports? What is the recourse if services and supports are not provided?
- ☐ What are the direct and indirect costs of the implementation plan?
- ☐ What are the funding sources?

For More Information on School Turnaround Strategies

- This report was created through analysis of higher-performing high-poverty schools and best practices from turnaround initiatives to date.
- The report and related documents are the result of a Research & Development process led by Mass Insight and various partners including: Apollo Philanthropy Partners, Cambridge Education, Education Counsel, Holland + Knight, and The Parthenon Group.
- 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 available on our website
- The report and related research and development efforts were generously funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- For more information on *The Turnaround Challenge*, please visit our website at www.massinsight.org/stg/ or contact us at turnaround@massinsight.org.

Turnaround is a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that a) produces significant gains in achievement within two years; and b) readies the school for the longer process of transformation into a high-performing organization. Successful turnaround requires strong partnerships and flexible operating conditions, and is best conducted across small clusters of schools in ways that can lead to whole-district redesign.