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A POLICY ADVOCATING FOR TURNAROUND REFORM TO IMPROVE FAILING SCHOOLS: POLICY ADVOCACY DOCUMENT

Kenyatta Starks

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A POLICY ADVOCATING FOR TURNAROUND REFORM TO IMPROVE FAILING

SCHOOLS: POLICY ADVOCACY DOCUMENT

Kenyatta M. Starks

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of requirements, of

Doctor of Education

In the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National Louis University

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DISSERTATION ORGANIZATION STATEMENT

Despite my projects having different topics, teacher professional learning was a critical lever in all three as a means to improve academic achievement. Effective and sustained learning will not only improve teachers' practice but will also give them agency over their learning. As a result of my research I will continue to work with schools and leaders to develop cohesive learning structures for all teachers.

For the **Program Evaluation,** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The "program" can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning. In this program evaluation, an overall theme that emerged was that while teachers received professional learning to implement strategies, they did not use what they learned to improve academic achievement. In the **Change Leadership Plan**, candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006). An overall theme from this change plan was that teachers have to receive professional learning that enables them to be successful when implementing learned content in the classroom. In the **Policy Advocacy Document,** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state, or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane, and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995). In this Policy Advocacy document, one common theme was teacher preparation and development. Teachers that were hired during turnaround were sometimes novices. However, unlike many schools, turnaround ensures that a robust learning structure for teachers is a priority.

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ABSTRACT

I am advocating for the districts to adopt Turnaround reform. This reform would be available to all schools that are considered failing in the district and not showing sufficient academic improvement. The district has implemented many initiatives to reform schools including turnaround. The implication and effectiveness of turnaround reform if done with fidelity and monitoring can be successful. There is ample research that support turnaround reform and the positive academic gains and improvement in discipline, attendance, and teacher quality. My research and experience in this work has led me to understand that specific concepts are vital to Turnaround success, including but not limited to: strong leadership, use of data, data cycles, teacher recruitments, and intensive professional learning.

As a result of my work, I realize that educating teachers is critical in education and if done effectively can improve academic achievement. I am also excited about my next journey to ensure that I am developing learning structures for teachers are well as leaders to improve their practice. I look forward to someday becoming a change agent at the university level to ensure potential teachers and leaders are prepared to move the needle in academic settings.

PREFACE: LESSONS LEARNED

I am the Director Supervisor at a Charter School in the City of Chicago District 299. My job responsibilities include coaching four principals and working with each one to build their capacity to achieve sustained academic success in their schools. Since 2007, I have worked in several schools on the south and west side of Chicago. I have also served as the Deputy of School Transitions in District 299. During my tenure as a Turnaround leader, I have seen implementation and sustainability of Turnaround be successful, but I have also witnessed turnaround reform fail. The importance of the work that stands out for me is the power of the success of failing schools and this requires ensuring effective coaching and support for principals. Moreover, as an experienced turnaround leader I had to be a good fit for the school environment and community, but most importantly, there needed to be supports in place to ensure my success at the district level. My prior experiences have sparked my motivation to advocate for better infrastructure at the district level to support school leadership.

Schools that are chosen to be part of turnaround are required to have great outcomes and meet goals in very little time. My experience with school turnaround confirms that if the building leaders are not supported at the district level this work will fail. My personal experiences and research on school turnaround identify two factors: (1) the district should be a partner that ensures the resources and support are evident and sustained, and (2) turnaround will fail if the leaders are not supported and trained. The purpose of this project is to advocate that school districts have support and accountability measures using the plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle. This paper is advocating for school districts to make changes to the how turnaround is supported, implemented, and

monitored. As a result of my work, I am also excited about working closely with teachers' and leaders' programs to develop cohesive learning structures for both groups to improve their practice. I look forward to someday becoming a change agent at the university level to ensure potential teachers and leaders are prepared to move the needle in academic settings.

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SECTION ONE: VISION STATEMENT

Across the country, states and school districts are focusing on how to improve the nation's lowest-performing schools. These schools have experienced academic failure for years and success seems unrealsitic for many of these schools. The dropout, attendance, and college rates are incredibly dismal (Tanenbaum, Boyle, & Graczewski, 2015). The students, parents, and community appear to have given up on the schools. Teachers feel that the resources are limited, students have low expectations, and parents seem uninterested and uninvolved. As a result, most schools are solely focused on school culture and climate – ensuring that students are safe (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009).

In my twenty-year plus tenure in education and over ten years as a school leader, I have seen the challenges that low performing schools face. I have seen teachers leave the profession because of the lack of resources. I have also worked with students who not only were uninterested, but they were not hopeful that they could achieve. The ultimate challenge that leaders face day- to- day is enlisting the support of parents to actively promote the mission of the school (Reform Support Network, 2014).

To respond to these challenges, many school districts have implemented school turnaround reform. In my school district, due to the high number of failing schools, turnaround schools have become a reality. I have experienced working in failing schools throughout my tenure. In my first school as principal, the district implemented its plan to embark on turnaround reform, and I became the first turnaround high school principal. Once chosen as the principal, a turnaround team was developed that served as the liaison between the district and the school leaders. Subsequently, a timeline for implementation

was created and several metrics were developed to assess the implementation of the very critical work of turnaround reform.

Thus, my awareness and support of school turnaround reform were heightened through my first-hand experiences, training, and research. Through this experience, I came to believe that turnaround reform has a positive impact on student achievement, school improvement, and the community. During my tenure at Harper and Marshall we saw a 20% increase in attendance the first year. Academically, at Harper, we saw a small increase on the ACT, but Marshall received a one-point gain on the ACT. The turnaround reform process consisted of metrics that measured success such as attendance, academics, state assessment data, and teacher retention. The process was monitored and evaluated by the Office of School Improvement. I have seen this reform changing lives for the better by sending first generation students to college. I have witnessed the growth and development of teachers and less attrition and turnover. I have seen collaborative school groups take ownership and accountability for school improvement. I have seen dying communities begin to thrive on hope, community partnerships eager to support, and students excited to be part of a community. I also witnessed increases in parental involvement with a higher number of parents attending school events and supporting the mission of the school. Because of this, I am recommending this policy of Turnaround with improved implementation and training initiatives at the district level as it relates to funding, resources, and sustainability. As a result, the district is ensuring equitable education and safe environments in high poverty neighborhoods for low performing and/or failing schools (Caref, Hainds, Hilgendorf, Jankov, & Russell, 2012).

For this policy advocacy project, Turnaround is defined as a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in low performing schools (Calkins, Guenther, and Belfiore 2007). In general, the Turnaround policy can be implemented in four different models: Turnaround, Restarts, Transformations, and School Closures. According to the Wallace Foundation (2010):

> 'Turnaround' requires replacing the principal and rehire 50% of the school's staff, 'Restarts' require the control of, or close and reopen, a school under a school operator that has been selected through a rigorous process, 'Transformation' requires replacing the principal but no requirement for staff to be replaced. Finally, school closures require the closing of the school, layoffs of all staff, and the relocation of students". All the models are designed to increase growth in student achievement, increase attendance, and college enrollment. Also, it is geared to improve school culture and climate while including parents and community organizations (p. 4).

I, however, am advocating for Turnaround, Restarts, and Transformations. I do not support school closure, because I believe that all schools have some strengths and weaknesses. School closure is not the answer to improve a low performing school. It results in the loss of jobs and, more importantly, the loss of important adults in students' lives. This experience traumatizes students and the community.

In July 2008, my school district's current Turnaround policy was adopted for secondary schools. In 2009, the policy changed to incorporate elementary school, but the policy was not consistent across the district. The policy was created by a team, which

included myself, with the goal of helping failing schools to improve academically and create a safe school environment.

As the Turnaround reform began to improve schools failing schools, it piqued national interest (Calkins, Guenther, and Belfiore, 2007). The reform was aimed at improving underachieving schools. On February 17, 2009, former President Barack Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The ARRA introduced the Race to the Top Program, a competitive grant program designed to encourage and reward states that create conditions for innovation and reform while achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement and closing achievement gaps. In my district, the grant was used for the implementation of turnarounds, restarts, or transformations.

Several key issues made the Turnaround policy, a process to support failing schools, a necessity. Per the U.S. Department of Education's statistics, there are more than 5,000 schools, representing 5 percent of schools in the United States, chronically failing (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010). The schools serve an estimated 2.5 million students. At this rate, the number of students who are illiterate and unable to attend college, find jobs and are unprepared to be productive and contributing members of society will continue to increase. Students will lack the 21st-century skills that major companies seek. Due to students being unskilled to be employed, prison populations and crimes will increase if we are unable to improve education (Breslow, 2012). Currently, in the United States, approximately 1,235 high schools serving 1.1 million students—only five percent of the nation's secondary schools—have graduation rates at or below 67 percent. While nationally, the high school graduation rate recently

reached 81 percent (Brown & Miller, 2015). Ultimately, the results will impact future generations of students.

In 2013, the number of chronically failing high schools remained much too high (Brown & Miller, 2015). Among this group of failing public high schools, approximately seven percent of students—who are overwhelmingly low-income students of color—were attending schools where it is not likely that they will go on to college or obtain a career (Brown & Miller, 2015). The number of failing neighborhood schools in large urban areas has doubled over the last two years, and without successful interventions, could continue to increase (Kutash, Eva, Gorn, Rahmatullah & Tallant, 2010). Without immediate attention to rectify this critical need, there will be limited options for parents who want their children to receive a quality education in neighborhood schools.

Most struggling neighborhood schools do not receive adequate funding to develop and support the whole child (OECD, 2012). However, additional grant funding for Turnaround reform provides opportunities to address the social, emotional, and academic needs which constitute supporting the whole child. For example, Race to the Top is a grant that has funded Turnaround reform which helps support the whole child.

Many reforms and programs have been implemented to improve failing schools. Some were successful, but others could not be sustained and unfortunately failed. I am recommending an improvement to the current district school reform policy because the persistently low-performing schools face unique challenges. They require aggressive customized and sustainable interventions. Even though every school is different, in most cases, my district's model was a one-size-fits-all which does not allow leaders to differentiate and use the resources as needed for their schools. During the time that I was

part of the turnaround team as the principal, there was a Lead Education Agency (LEA) which was the Office of School Turnaround, and they were responsible for the accountability system. It allowed the development of best practices for turnaround and new strategies to sustain success in the schools chosen to be part of the reform. As Turnaround initiatives progressed, I recognized the need to make sure that each school model is individualized for each school based on their specific needs.

As mentioned earlier, there are several models of school reform that consist of turnaround, restart, and transformation. Each model has its significant debate that centers around the social, political, and human capital frameworks. The turnaround intervention chosen for a school should meet the need of that school and district.

I envision the Turnaround policy being effective because it will allow schools and districts to impact student achievement and create safer school environments by ensuring the implementation is monitored and evaluated. It will allow the schools and districts to receive additional funding that enables the school to support the whole child. Currently, the additional funding from the district has no specific guidance for it use, it is given in a lump sum, and it is used at the discretion of the LEA, district, or building leader. The proposed policy directly addresses the problem of failing and low-performing schools because the model directly addresses teaching and learning, climate and culture, school stabilization, community resource development, family and community involvement, performance management, and human capital (Meyers & Gerdeman, 2013).

Teaching and learning require deploying coherent curricular materials, establishing an interim assessment cycle, and creating a teacher observation system aligned with student growth. Climate and culture require increasing student attendance,
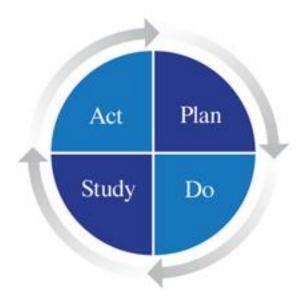
decreasing serious misconducts, and increasing the satisfaction of the student body. School stabilization which involves getting the school back to functioning effectively and human capital consist of hiring staff which is the process that happens once the school has been identified. The process consists of support from the LEA, principal and district.

Human capital is the process that requires the hiring of staff for the building. During this process, the turnaround team works with universities for potential candidates, the turnaround organizational structures are developed, and extensive professional learning for all new and returning candidates is created by the turnaround team. The team also used the turnaround competencies developed by the hiring team to make final decisions. Also, it is important to enhance the diversity of staff across multiple indicators such as race, age, experience, etc. Community resource development requires an extensive portfolio such as out of school programming, increased parent and student participation in the programming process, and increased school and community integration. Family and community involvement consist of communication, partnerships, and ensuring the investment in the school.

Finally, the process that continuously manages all the elements mentioned above is a form of the performance management called the plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle. PDSA is a four-step model for carrying out change. Just as a circle, the PDSA has no end and should be repeated for continuous improvement (www.deming.org). The cycle allows for testing change and developing a plan for carrying out the change. The cycle allows for observing and determining modifications that should be made to the changes or process. The cycle is used to test the implementation and adjust when needed. The PDSA cycle closes the bridge between the goals and required outputs.

Figure 1. PDSA cycle.

www.deming.org.

Recommended Policy

I am recommending that my school district adopt turnaround, restart, and transformation reforms that are robust, detailed, and provide structured support for leaders who are charged with the daunting task of effectively implementing Turnaround reforms. This reform would mandate that leaders are supported and trained in the areas of financial sustainability, teaching and learning, student development and intervention, community and family involvement, and detailed structures and processes. The policy would mandate one-year of intensive planning for the areas identified with ongoing progress monitoring and coaching for the district and school leaders.

The Turnaround policy would require school and district leadership to understand and recognize the importance of Turnaround. It would also help leaders would help leaders to understand how to ensure the process is sustainable. The policy would also help the stakeholders believe in the ability of leaders and value the partnerships with the community. Schools would be turned around and working collaboratively with all stakeholders to create a new school environment and achieve academic success.

Through the implementation of this policy, it is expected that over time we will see an increase in academic achievement and an improved student culture. The reform will lose money over time, so the reform is expected to help leaders develop a sustainable plan to maintain the success, despite the loss of staff, resources and funding over time. However, other dollars to sustain specific initiatives would have to be found but if the funded initiatives are successful and supported by data it could make finding continued funding a reality. These actions will lead teachers to develop a sense of calm and high expectations for all children. The achievement gap would begin to close, and educational equity would be realized. However, time is of the essence. It is critical that the implementation has time to develop. Often results are not always immediate, so it may appear that implementation did not work, it is critical that the implementation is given time to work.

The American Institute for Research (AIR) researched the effectiveness of the Turnaround policy. As a result, there were nine overarching elements that if implemented makes the Turnaround policy highly effective. According to the American Research Institute:

Strategic use of staffing and scheduling autonomy, culture of open two way

communication, establishment of clear, consistent, and aligned instructional focus

and expectations, regular use of classroom observation to improve instruction,

consistent implementation of a well-defined multi-tiered system of support,

provision of nonacademic student supports, including social-emotional supports,

consistent implementation of a school wide student behavior plan, focus on

offering expanded learning opportunities, and commitment to engaging families

in student learning (p.6) (Auchstetter, Melchior, Kistner, Stein, & Kistner, 2016).

Many struggling schools have multiple facets that can be addressed. These

elements will provide a clear path for leaders to help narrow the focus. The autonomy to

staff the building based on the needs of the school is crucial. The school may need more

counselors, social workers, deans, and psychologists to accomplish the goal of changing

student behavior. The scheduling autonomy allows for non-traditional classes that

learning to address the individual needs of students. For example, I have seen students

who were credit deficient and not programmed in normal classes instead they were

programmed into an accelerated lab. The lab consisted of online courses that student

needed to recover. The classes were five weeks, and sometimes more, depending on the

individual student. The lab had a certified teacher of who was not certified in the all the

classes the students were recovering.

Developing a culture of open two-way communication can be accomplished in

many ways. The communication begins with the initial phase of Turnaround reform. The

culture of Turnaround is different and communication in a traditional school, in most

cases, is top down. However, during Turnaround and thereafter, it is protocol that

everyone has a voice and that structures are in place to ensure communication is open despite sometimes that communication consisting of difficult conversations.

The instructional focus is vital during and after Turnaround reform. To ensure sustained academic success there should be a team of lead teachers and leaders to ensure that the instructional focus is aligned and clear expectations are outlined. The instructional road map should consist of backwards mapping. The individual team's schools would analyze data their data and create actions plans. The actions plans would align to their theory of action and PDSA cycle would allow to observe and adjust accordingly. All nine of the elements will ensure for successful implementation.

SECTION TWO: ANALYSIS OF NEED

This section will analyze the need for the turnaround reform and the problem of providing supports for the school district. It will provide specific suggestions on the educational, economic, social, political, and moral and ethical analysis implications.

Educational Analysis

The goal of any change in an educational policy is to increase academic achievement and close the achievement gap. While enacting reforms, state legislatures are very concerned with the nation's educational performance. For example, the elementary and secondary act (ESEA) was passed December 10, 2015 to close the skill gaps which address urban, suburban, and rural school districts when it appeared that Russia was out performing the USA in space development. Also, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act scaled up the federal role as it aligned to the ESEA when urban performance was lagging. Currently, the Student Success Act was passed on July 19, 2013 and it triggered attention and movement of the third major reform the Student Success Act. As stated, I am advocating for my school district to refine their implementation of the Turnaround model for failing and low-performing schools. Similarly to these reforms, turnaround reforms will assist in increasing student achievement, therefore, closing the achievement gap. For my purpose, however, the relevant educational analysis focuses less on the state and national level decision to turn around underachieving schools and more on the subsequent district levels choice of how strongly to embrace implementing change via the Turnaround policy (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010).

A significant sector of urban school student population has persistently failed to make adequate academic achievement and progress. Although all nationalities are

included; unfortunately, African American students have been impacted the greatest. It is vital that all students have equal access to a high standard education to prepare them to function in a 21st-century world. States' standardized test scores across the nation have revealed a gap in knowledge. According to the 2014 ACT results, the average black student's score was 15.8 versus the average white student's which was 22.3. Also, black students achieved significantly below their white counterparts on the optional writing section. Consistently over the years, black students lagged significantly below white students on the ACT. Also, there are significant gaps in student reading and mathematics scores compared to their white counterparts (Kena, Musu, Gillette, Robinson, 2015).

Graduation rates among low performing schools and high performing schools are substantially marginalized. Lower performing schools' students are not prepared for college. Upon entering their first year, most urban students are required to take remediation classes (Breslow, 2012). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), only 34 percent of black students who took the ACT were deemed ready for college-level English courses. Unfortunately, this is less than half of the rate for white students who took the ACT. When it comes to math, only 14% of black students were college ready compared to 52% of white students.

Payne (2008) reported that low performing schools are staffed by low performing teachers. Payne believes that high performing teachers are not attracted to teach in low-performing schools. Payne noted that high poverty or high-minority schools are taught by teachers without a specific certified content area which has a direct impact on student achievement (2008). These schools have experienced intense teacher turnover but some

high performing teachers stay because they are committed to the school community. However, high-performing schools attract high performing teachers (Payne, 2008).

I believe the Turnaround model will address the above concerns because the goal is to ensure that schools and districts recruit and retain teachers. Good teachers who get on board are excited about the professional learning cycle and support for teachers. My experience is that teachers who worked in turnaround are either still working in turnaround schools or have gone on to leadership positions.

Students who attend Turnaround schools or attended schools that meet the criteria for a Turnaround in most cases have varying educational needs. Many of the students require additional support in literacy and math in turnaround schools. According to Meyers and Gerdeman (2013) students are reading below grade level by as many as four or five grades and math skills are usually at the very basic or low level. As a result, during my tenure as a Turnaround leader, students in ninth grade were required to take a double period if below grade level more than a year in literacy or math. It was required that students be placed in a Response to Intervention programs that addressed reading and math, and we used Reading 180, System 44, Reading Plus, Math 180 and Lexia. Additionally, there is usually a high special education population that requires individualized learning. Many students were also credit deficient which prevented them from going to college, and many of their families did not require or think that college was important. Most the students in Turnaround are the first ever to attend college in their family.

The Research Alliance reported Turnaround schools that were successful shared three conditions that principals and teachers reported were essential to their capacity to

improve student achievement: 1) aligning needs with goals, 2) creating a positive work environment, and 3) addressing student discipline and safety. Principals and teachers also attributed their schools' success to the implementation of specific strategies aimed at improving teaching and learning: 1) developing teachers internally, 2) creating small learning communities, 3) targeting student sub-populations, and 4) using data to inform instruction (Villaviceno & Grayman, 2012).

Finally, achieving the educational objective of Turnaround is complicated by the disconnect between parents and the district, school principals and districts, and how to support parents through this process of change and implementation (Reform Support Network, 2014). A 2012 report found that parental resistance was due in large part to parents not understanding how bad their schools were and the lack of engagement in conversation districts and school leaders were having with parents (National Education Policy Center, 2012).

The educational analysis highlights the importance of succeeding in a Turnaround if expected goals are met that includes sustained success and implementation of the Turnaround reform. As a result, the intended goals for all schools and districts will be met. At the same time, many stakeholders agree that poorly-executed change in this area could have a significant negative effect on the morale with schools and ultimately a negative impact on students' education (Ravitch, 2000).

Political Analysis

Politics plays a significant role in school Turnaround. Legislation may differ in the reasoning for a turnaround, specifically, school closure. For example, in Chicago during the Daley's era, the criteria for closure was based on school performance, while in

Emmanuel's era closure is based on school utilization. In combination with school utilization, school closure occurred when students in low enrollment schools also exhibit low academic performance and, some will argue, because they were African Americans. Districts differ greatly in the distribution of political power among school leaders. However, the distribution of the political power is likely to have an impact on the success of any effort to make a change.

Payne (2008) looked at two political perspectives: conservative-oriented reform and rooted liberal reform. The conservative-oriented reform that has been centered on accountability, structural change, and managerialism. On the other hand, there is the liberal-rooted reform that has pushed for reform endorsing the voluntary involvement model which relies on people's engagement in implementation once they realize the changes bring about reform. The turnaround methods have been created to resemble the conservative-oriented reform where accountability is heightened for the school and community. Specific metrics lead discussions on schools' progress or lack of progress.

In my experiences, politically some staff were exempt from being part of the recruiting and interviewing process. It was understood that these staff members were being hired despite not going through the hiring process. These staff members brought their personal requests and agendas. Likewise, some schools' local school council (LSC) play a significant role in the transition of schools. The local school council is comprised of thirteen individuals consisting of parents, community members, teachers, non-teachers, the school principal, and a student representative. The main duties of the local school council consist of: 1) approving how school funds and resources are allocated, 2) developing and monitoring the annual school improvement, and 3) evaluating and

selecting the school's principal. In addition to the main duties, the local school council was requesting to be part of the hiring and decision making process, mandating special hiring requests, and access to confidential information. Despite the district getting the community buy-in, the team had to continue to meet with the LSC to answer their concerns. As a result, the political agendas continued regarding the LSC. For example, before entering my second Turnaround school, I was told that per the request of the LSC, two employees would not go through the normal hiring process. Due to the political landscape in that community, my team and I knew that would be best for our team if we wanted continued buy-in and support.

Social Analysis

Race also significantly impacts Turnaround reform. Turnaround reform has overwhelmingly impacted black students. Particularly, in Chicago Public Schools because CPS intentionally built new schools to avoid bridging black and white students There have been concerns with gentrification and the connections to school closures. (Journey for Justice Alliance, 2014).

Ninety percent of school closures for low academic performance targeted African American communities particularly in south and west side communities and this makes community members feel they were being pushed out. In communities like Englewood and Austin, the census bureau reports that the median income is approximately 10,000 dollars and more than 95% African American and Hispanic (Peltz, 2016). Ironically, it also reports that within feet of these neighborhoods are Chatham and Beverly communities the median income is $98,677 (Peltz, 2016).

Also, school stakeholders' morale has a social dimension in the communication and process. Districts should be conscious about how the negative social climate among stakeholders may have a corresponding effect on school communities. For the most part, schools that are selected for a turnaround have generally been failing for years. Despite the school's failing track record, the social climate of the building sometimes is still a positive due to the collaboration among the staff, relationships developed with students, and relationships with parents and community.

Also, if the school leader is not chosen to stay, many staff members' motivation decreases. For example, my first experience as a turnaround leader, I was not going to be asked to return. However, my former supervisor, Dr. Donald Frayne (Chief Education Officer), came to my building and walked with me for a day. Dr. Fraynd immediately realized that my relationships with staff and students were vital to the success of the turnaround. Dr. Fraynd knew if I was not retained the social disruption would be detrimental not only to the stakeholders but most importantly to the teachers and students. The social aspect of turnaround reform has a great influence on the school and community as well as students having agency in their community and education. Relationships among all stakeholders are essential to continue improve student achievement. The community has a desire to see familiar faces.

Moral and Ethical Analysis

The national level decision to overhaul struggling schools as moral and ethical analysis revolves around the idea that students have a right to a quality education in a quality school. If one believes that turning struggling schools around will lead to better schools either by the turnaround, restart, or transformation, then the right of the students

to a good education leads to a conclusion that national laws are important and advocate on behalf of students.

This paper focuses, however, on the policy response of a district and how it will choose to implement the Turnaround. One question is how aggressively to implement the new policy: whether it should aim to effect real change by implementing all Turnarounds, or whether they should choose the options of a restart, transformation, or turnaround and the effect of the moral and ethical implications? If one believes that Turnaround will improve education quality, then the right of the students to a quality education and school demands that Turnaround reform is implemented with fidelity.

The current four types of Turnaround models provide mixed support for the arguments made by critics who claimed that CPS was intentionally driving students toward more privatized education options. Although our descriptive statistics revealed that closed and turnaround schools were physically closer in distance to charter schools the distance-to-nearest-charter variable was never a significant factor (Caref, 2012). This finding does not necessarily imply that CPS' policy of encouraging the spread of charter schools was incidental to the closures. Instead it is likely that school choice is less neighborhood bound in that parents may choose charter schools in places that have little relationship to where their (closed) neighborhood schools were located. This, too, is likely the effect of a long history of policy and market behavior that has resulted in a city that is highly polarized and segregated by race and class.

Considering the neighborhood, demographic, spatial, and political variables together, our results provide mixed evidence about the relationship between school closures and gentrification. On the one hand, neighborhood factors were relatively weak

in predicting school closures. The fact that these variables lacked significance could indicate that because so many CPS students attend school outside of their neighborhood attendance boundaries, neighborhood attributes feature only weakly in school planning decisions. On the other hand, there are clear spatial patterns: where a school was located influenced the probability that it would close.

Although CPS may not have been actively speculating on the future of the local property market when they made their decisions, the location of the band of school closures, an average of six miles from the city center and in predominantly African-American neighborhoods, places them in what sociologists and urban scholars have called the "zone of transition" on the perimeter of the central business district (Weber, Farmer and Donoghue 2016). Closing schools in this visible and highly dynamic zone could have been part of the City's "shock therapy" used to transform public perceptions of the school district in hopes of both attracting more affluent households there and keeping them from moving to the suburbs. School districts are caught between a desire to maintain legacy infrastructures that anchor communities and be flexible enough to accommodate changes in educational policies, enrollments, and student needs.

These processes move at different paces, causing friction in the planning process. For example, education reform movements like the marketized "school choice" one popular with both the Daley and Emanuel administrations may encourage the construction of new schools (including charters) to increase the number of options for parents. In the process, however, this policy devalues the existing stock of schools. The spatial embeddedness of school buildings often clashes with the quick changing fads in educational policy. While school districts draft educational facilities master plans to solve

space puzzles and optimize school facilities, these plans are often disconnected from the waves of education reform that have their own, often deleterious, spatial implications (Weber, Farmer, and Donoghue 2016).

Districts must also choose how to implement the Turnaround in schools, for instance, whether to make substantial changes quickly and how to communicate changes to teacher's stakeholders. It is insufficient just to apply the right of students to a quality education to reach any conclusions. For these decisions, a moral and ethical approach should focus on the social quality of the community and how to implement policy in a way that strengthens, rather than weakens, the sense of community within a school (Block, 2009). For example, turnaround teams should conduct community focus groups for decision-making and collaboration. The Hiring process must be sensitive to the needs of the staff. In many turnaround schools, teachers have been there for years and have built a connection with the community – positive or negative. When the turnaround process begins, the existing staff are morally defeated. It is vital that the implementation process is sensitive to the teachers' and community's emotional needs.

The social quality of the community implementation could include, but not limited to, researching the change that has happened in the past and looking at what worked and what did not work. The research will allow the implementation team to a come up with a strategy that will address the quality of individual communities. If this approach is taken, this means that every Turnaround implementation would look different to ensure the community is strengthened and involved throughout the process. Change that happens in the communities looks different and can hurt or help each community in a different way. In my experience, I have found that being forthright and trustworthy in

most cases, tends to help to ease the doubts and reservations of stakeholders. The turnaround team began the pitch which allowed people to get on board one year before the actual implementation.

A well-functioning community is a moral good in itself. In addition, a well-functioning school community also leads to better student learning; as a result, the right of students to a quality education may also weigh in favor effecting change through an inclusive process (Block, 2009).

Economic Analysis

Turnarounds in Chicago begin in July 2008, the Office of School Turnaround, later called the Office of School Improvement, was one of the first offices charged to manage high school Turnarounds. It was one of the agencies supported by state funding aimed at turning around low performing schools in high poverty areas. Arne Duncan, then the Chief Education Officer for Chicago Public Schools, supported and led this effort. Turnaround reform operated under the concept that students who attended low performing schools deserved an equitable education in a safe environment. When nationwide districts struggled to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act passed in 2001, the U.S. Department of Education shifted its focus to turning around the nation's lowest-performing schools. These reforms were not inexpensive. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 cost over 97 billion dollars. In 2009, the federal government overhauled the Title I School Improvement Grant program, increased its value to $3.5 billion with money from the Recovery Act, and spelled out four turnaround options from which perennially failing schools would have to choose to

get a share of the funding. Additionally, No Child Left Behind reform expenditures were over $56 billion.

The turnaround reform investments placed the federal government in a position for instant policy change at the state level and to set guidelines for the turnaround strategies for states and Local Education Agencies (LEA). The Turnaround funding in 2009 was granted from three competitive sources, the first being the race to the Top Fund which is a $4.35 billion grant provided to the state. The Race to the Top key focus is an incentive for districts to implement a turnaround, transformations, and restarts. The second source of funding is the School Improvement Grant (SIG) for $3.55 billion allocated to the state according to the Title I formula. SIG funds were available for the bottom 5 percent of schools across the nation. The undistributed SIG funds and 2010 appropriations were an unprecedented amount for school improvement, and they equaled the State Race to the Top funding (www.air.org). Finally, investing in Innovation Grants which provides a 650 million dollar grant awarded to nonprofit-LEA partnerships that have a record of impacting education.

The funding of the model varies depending on how much the district invests in each. According to Calkins, Guenther, and Belfiore (2007) the cost of turning a failing school around ranges between $250,000-$1,000,000 per year. During my tenure, transformations were the least expensive for districts because there was no staff replacement during this implementation. The comparison of the other three options was expensive with closure of a school accruing the highest cost due to closing expenses. For example, it is costly to move and store books, busing students can coast up to five thousand dollars a day, and finally the cost of unemployment for staff that is unable to

find another job. The economic cost of closure is even more reason why I am not

advocating for closures as an option for Turnaround.

SECTION THREE: ADVOCATE POLICY STATEMENT

This section provides a detailed explanation of what this proposed policy advocates and discloses its goal and objectives. Three central questions are explored and discussed:

1. What are the policy's goals and objectives?

2. Whose needs, values, and preferences are being represented by the policy advocated?

3. On what basis are the goals and objectives validated to be appropriate and good?

As a country, we are struggling with low student achievement and solutions to resolve this issue. The Chicago Public Schools echo this concern and has searched for answers with Turnaround being at the forefront of this effort. Turnaround is defined in many ways and implemented in many ways.

I am advocating for the Turnaround policy to be revised. The advocated policy would clearly state for the Turnaround implementation to provide more guidance and training to those in the district as it relates to funding, resources, and sustainability. Therefore, school leaders can receive the knowledge and support for the implementation of a successful Turnaround. Despite changes in leadership, this knowledge will allow schools to maintain sustainable processes. The processes should be documented and done with fidelity. As the resources and funding decrease yearly, schools will be able to effectively operate without losing turn around protocols. No matter who is leading the building, these structures would have been proven to be successful and should continue to be implemented. In the proceeding sections, a case will be made for how the proposed

policy would ensure leaders are trained and supported to effectively implement

turnaround, restart, and transformations.

Policy Goals and Objectives

Currently, in the nation, many districts chose the Turnaround reform as a way of

improving low-performing schools (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatulla and Tallant, 2010).

The reform is executed differently depending on the district. I believe that

implementation should be differentiated but structured. Turnaround reform can happen

in several ways which include turnaround, restart, transformation, and school closing.

The goal of this policy is to ensure that the district has a clear map of how to make this

reform sustainable and reach the goal which is to impact academic achievement and

create a safe environment.

The objective of this policy provides the district with a structure to manage

funding, resources, and create robust structures to ensure a successful implementation.

The overarching goal is for the district to ensure fidelity of the structures for longevity.

All stakeholders would work together to define what this looks like in the district.

American Institute of Research researched the school district in New Orleans that

implemented Turnaround. A school district lessons implemented and learned during the

course of turnaround, which includes the following:

Protect School Autonomy. Establish policies that protect schools'

autonomy over their educational program, staffing, finance, and operations to

support continued innovation and performance (i.e., a clear, well-crafted

performance contract that legally binds the district and school board to grant the

school-wide authority; and that authority cannot be rescinded or amended except in specified cases of nonperformance or severe noncompliance).

Set Clear, Ambitious, and Attainable Performance Expectations. Create systems to define clear, ambitious, and measurable goals for each school (including student-learning goals and those related to finance and operations); monitor their performance and compliance; reward positive performance, and hold schools strictly accountable for nonperformance. Where necessary, develop a rigorous process to intervene, renewal (in the case of charters), or closure decisions with solid evidence.

Tailor Voluntary Support to Returning Schools. Tailor voluntary support to schools in areas of weakness, while not mandating acceptance (e.g., create direct, personal relationships between individual central office administrators and school principals specifically focused on helping every principal become a stronger instructional leader). This support can come directly or with third-party intermediaries (e.g., New Schools for New Orleans).

Ensure Funding Follows Each Child. Implement mechanisms in which dollars (including local, state, federal, and other revenue streams) are tied to students, ensuring that funds are allocated by the leader of the school for specific student needs and only a limited, and narrowly defined set of funds are retained by the governing entity.

Assure Balance. Promote coordination and economies of scale where appropriate without impeding on the school's autonomy. Assure that schools are treated

equitably in terms of enrollment, facilities, funds, and other services (Pastorek &

Vallas, 2010, pp. 6–7).

As an experienced leader, the lessons learned from previous school districts are

vital data to assist districts with what to do and not to do. School autonomy was a non-

negotiable because it gives the school the opportunity to be specific to the school and

student's needs. Districts or the LEA need to ensure that there is a collaborative

agreement created to specify autonomy. The school's autonomy allows the school to

make all decisions for the school. Setting clear, ambitious, and attainable performance

expectations will happen before, during and after implementation. Setting clear goals will

consist of creating a strategic plan, action plan and implementation of the theory of

action. As result, the tools used to monitor performance will be performance management

to measure the KPI's (Key Performance Indicators). The PDSA cycle will also keep

districts and schools accountable by continuous observation and adjusting based on their

findings and data. Another lesson learned was that there needs to be a way to ensure that

leaders and district personnel develop and sustain good relationships, and secondly,

ensuring that leaders have consistent individual professional growth support from the

district or LEA.

In my experience, the lack of equitable funding is the real culprit as to why

schools and districts fail in this process. Turnaround reform comes with the funding

support needed to ensure every school and every student in a Turnaround school get what

is needed to achieve social and academic success. The autonomy of the school leader to

decide how the funding is used for his or her school ensures that the governing entity is

not receiving the money as stated by a lesson learned in New Orleans. The Recovery

School District (RSD) was a special statewide school administrated by the Louisiana Department of Education. The legislation was passed in 2003 and it was designed to take underperforming schools and transform them into successful places for children to learn. Principals were provided flexibility to foster the development of rigorous curricula, high quality instruction and expectations for all students, and professional learning communities. The district was able to hire more than 600 teachers. As a result, they saw gains in test scores and other indicators progress (aypf.org). New Orleans learned that assuring balance and promote coordination and economies of scale where appropriate without impeding on the school's autonomy assure that schools are treated equitably in terms of enrollment, facilities, funds, and other services.

Student Needs, Values, and Preferences

The need for education cannot be overstated. A quality education should be accessible to all students. Our public education system constantly fails the poor, underprivileged, and minorities. Schools across the nation are producing students that are unequipped for college and or a career. Forty percent of students who continue to college require remedial instruction in areas, of reading, math, and writing. As a result of dismal statistics, school Turnaround is the main topic of conversation (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, and Lash, 2010)

Former President Barack Obama implemented major reform efforts to advance the quality of our schools. Blankstein (2004) states in his book, *Failure is Not an Option,* that we have to find ways to educate all students successfully. Our current schooling system is still leaving students academically behind other nations despite the No Child

Left Behind Act (NCLB), whose central aim was to close the achievement gaps and ensure academic success for all students (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).

Principals who lead Turnarounds have a great obligation because they are charged with serving the low-income and high poverty communities. Papa and English (2011) note "the key to turning around a low-performing school is to focus on instruction" (p.13). However, one cannot entrust this task upon a leader unless he or she has a strong knowledge of Turnaround priorities. Brubaker and Coble (2005) note, "being a competent leader is what matters most is determining your effectiveness as a leader" (p.57). Turnaround must start with a major change that requires dispelling old social norms and accepted practices.

SECTION FOUR: POLICY ARGUMENT

The Turnaround model presents pros and cons from many different perspectives. It can be assumed that many stakeholders will support Turnarounds without conflict. However, some stakeholders are against implementing the model. This section will discuss the pros-and-cons of implementing the Turnaround model beginning with the pros.

Argument (Pros)

Students should always be first when making decisions about education. It is vital that students attend schools that are not only safe but also provide a stellar education and prepares them for a career and college. However, some people believe that because of where students live or the color of their skin a stellar education will never be an option. If every CPS student is going to live the CPS slogan "Children First" it is in imperative that failing schools are given an opportunity to turn around and impact academic achievement.

The pros of this policy are many, but most importantly Turnaround policy gives students who have consistently failed the same opportunity to be successful as others. Struggling schools and neighborhoods have the chance to thrive again and change their academic, culture and climate reputations.

The staffing process is a huge positive impact on the turnaround and is vital to the success. Providing school leaders with autonomy to select new staff members who are willing to engage in the Turnaround process. Schools set high expectations for and how to get results. A robust interview process is followed to ensure effective candidates are hired and are willing to work at a higher level.

Effective teachers bring adequate knowledge and provide students with a successful academic experience. For teachers to successfully educate all students, they need to have a rich knowledge based curriculum, pedagogy, learners, and educational goals tied to the ability to assess, evaluate, and improve practice (Darling-Hammond, 1992).

Turnaround reform provides teachers the resources to be successful. Often times these teachers are working with limited resources but are held to the same standards as teachers with an abundant amount of resources before the implementation of turnaround. Turnaround increases the collaboration for teachers and aligned differentiated professional development based on the supported needed to improve the teacher's practice. Staff is required to begin professional learning and cross training two weeks before students return in the fall. The learning in year one is based on the protocols of the Turnaround. After year one, the professional learning is tailored for the individual school and staff.

In addition, the Turnaround model provides additional teachers, counselors, social workers, psychologists, and deans. The resources afforded to the Turnaround schools allow the whole-child approach to impact students. Programs such as Restorative Justice (RJ) which is an alternative to out-of-school suspension can be implemented. Restorative Justice teaches children and adults how to deal with conflict and repair relationships which have a direct impact on school culture and academics.

In addition, turnaround provides an opportunity for flexible scheduling, creating a longer school year or day. Written in 1983, *A Nation at Risk* called for a change in the amount of time our students spend in school (ECO Northwest & Chalkboard Project,

2008). Time is an important factor to consider when improving a fialing school to ensure academic success. As a result, Turnaround requires a longer school day and the days of instruction are increased for student learning. School programs are personalized to meet individual student needs. School leaders have more authority to design various programs to address academic and social/emotional needs.

Lastly, the ultimate pro of the turnaround model is the opportunity to hire skilled and transformative leaders who will continue to build their capacity as well as their staff. Leaders who are willing to be driven by data and unafraid to leash their untapped potentials will impact students, schools, and communities for generations to come.

Argument (Cons)

Based on a report from the National Education Policy Center school turnaround policies that include firing and replacing teachers and administrators in hopes of raising test scores are detrimental to schools. Trujillo and Renee (2012) say, "When these types of mass layoffs have occurred, they have reduced institutional knowledge and led to increased racial and economic segregation in terms of who's left over. We have documented the range of detrimental effects, including deteriorating teacher morale and declining test scores over time" (p.5).

The Consortium on Chicago School Research (Meyers and Gerdeman, 2013) reported that most students who transferred out of closing and/or Turnaround schools re-enrolled in schools that were also academically weak. Elementary Schools did not immediately "turnaround" student achievement. Elementary Schools that went through the reform made significant improvements in test scores compared with similar schools that did not; however, large improvements did not occur in year one (p.38). After four

years, Turnaround schools were still below the system average (p. 39). Turnaround also showed less success at the high school level even though further research was needed when this report was published. However, the difference in the absence rate in yearly growth was two to four years compared to a similar school in year one there was a large variation (p. 44). Additionally, Freshman on Track rates in high schools show more improvement in on-track rates than earlier efforts (p. 45).

Further research from the Consortium on Chicago School Research (Meyer and Gerdeman, 2013) stated it is difficult to re-staff a school in one year; the teaching staff was less experienced in most schools after the reform, and there was a shift in teachers' racial composition, from less African-American to Caucasion. The research findings further stated that after four years, treated schools were still below the system average (Meyers and Gerdeman, 2013).

In addition, stakeholders' mindsets must continue to be nurtured for the duration of the Turnaround process. Unfortunately, Payne (2008) discussed how often people tend to revert to their original beliefs. Most stakeholders believe that a failing school cannot be successful. As a result, it is vital that change processes being effective is core. Although training and discussions are conducted to help change that mindset, for some reasons staff tends to lower their expectations, water down the curriculum, abandon effective strategies, and resist change.

Teachers and students in the building prior to and during the planning stage of Turnaround deal with the changes first hand. It is essential that they buy in and important things must be done right in the opening weeks of school. It is essential that priorities are identified and accomplished. Some priorities will be accomplished more quickly and

referred to as "low hanging fruit", while larger priorities will be preceded by a timeline of structured planning, progress monitoring and reflection. It is important to remember that students and teachers in low performing schools have been subjected to a myriad of failed reforms. It is vital that Turnaround is different.

SECTION FIVE: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Turnaround Model calls for the recruiting, training, implementing, administering, reflecting and revising to reestablish a healthy school that benefits all students and the entire community. There is a basic two-year implementation cycle for the model in a newly identified Turnaround school. The model supports the belief that improving academic performance requires changing school climate and culture, engaging community and parents, and ensuring the best staff are hired and trained before significant improvements in student achievement can be anticipated. Turnaround implementation varies based on the district and, more important, the Turnaround that is being implemented. I am advocating for Turnaround implementation with an intense support and training for school districts that includes allocation resources and ensuring sustainability. The support of leaders is a priority and should consist of a robust and intense training program. The training program would begin as soon as the school is designated to be a Turnaround. If school reform efforts are to be sustained for long-term improvement, positive changes to school climate and culture are foundational.

Training for leadership is one the most critical levers for success. Researchers Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) believed that leadership training is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to academic achievement. Johnson (2006) agreed and viewed the principal as the "broker of workplace conditions"—someone whose "influence on the school as a workplace for teachers extends well beyond being in charge of the school" (p. 15)

The training will consist of high-quality learning that will help drive results. Research states that ideally, turnaround leaders should already have led and have proven

results at low-performing schools. Currently, principals are chosen based on meeting the traditional requirements for the position (Reform Support Network, 2012). The Reform Support Network believes that leaders who bring about dramatic change and gains in student achievement consistently take some combination of fourteen actions within four general categories: initial analysis and problem solving, driving for results, influencing inside and outside the organization, and measuring, reporting, and improving (p. 2).

All chosen Turnaround leaders will be required to attend and be successful for the duration of training in four key areas. The first is initial analysis and problem solving which requires collecting and analyzing data and creating an action plan based on those analyses. Second is driving for results, which requires focusing on a few early wins, breaking the organizational norms, replacing staff, emphasizing successful tactics, and resisting the urge to tout progress and success. The third key area is influencing inside and outside the organization. Turnaround leaders will be required to communicate a positive vision, be helpful to staff, exhibit empathy, gain the support of key influencers, and silence critics with success. The report by the Public Education Fund Network (2003):

> New teachers working in schools run by principals they describe as effective and
> competent had a much easier transition into teaching.... Teachers gave high marks
> to principals who made it easy for them to ask questions and discuss problems,
> and those that provided them with assistance, guidance, and solutions. (p. 22)

Finally, measuring, reporting, and improving will require measuring and reporting progress frequently. This step will require decision-makers to share data and solve problems. Although Turnaround leaders often find ways to work through the challenges

they face, this program will ensure they will be equipped to lead despite those challenges or even the lack of support from the district.

Year One Implementation

Once leaders have been chosen, then the plan of implementation begins. This requires defining and analyzing the performance and clearly identifying the areas of concern currently in the district. Once the district has identified the areas to stabilize, it can begin the development of a strategic plan that involves identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (i.e., a SWOT analysis). The results of the SWOT will help define the long-term vision, mission, and objectives for the district relating to the implementation of the policy. Following the completion of the strategic plan, the action plan will be developed. The plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle will help with the process of monitoring and observing which tasks are daily, weekly, and monthly, and how each one contributes to the overall mission.

In the first year, principals in schools will create collaborative structures for the ongoing collection and analysis of data and make frequent visits to classrooms, providing constructive feedback to teachers. Improving student achievement is a non-negotiable priority in year one, and principals must support and engage their staff in the review of data and development of strategies and practices, fostering a shared sense of responsibility for student achievement throughout the school. As a result, teachers and the school community can grow in their collective and individual commitment to increasing student achievement, in addition to developing greater responsiveness and transparency in decision-making throughout the school. In schools, an instruction- and results-oriented

leadership approach must emerge as collective accountability for increasing student achievement.

The second critical lever to improve academic achievement involves teachers. Year one teachers will be recruited and interviewed, and if justified, hired. New teachers will have to attend a three-day orientation that informs them about Turnaround and the related research. Those teachers will spend three days learning about the academic strategy, team building, and the community by taking a bus ride with a community historian. Teachers will also be required to return to work two weeks before students to participate in an intense training program focused on academics, along with well-managed classroom, social, and emotional learning, and so much more.

In the first year, the schools will put into place teacher teams (e.g., grade-level teams) and work to focus conversations on student-specific data to improve instruction. Principals and coaches will begin to actively use classroom observations and informal visits to monitor the instruction provided by all teachers.

In the first year, schools begin to use new data systems to collect and review student assessment data much more frequently, focusing on identifying the specific needs of students. Student data will be used to ensure that Tier I instruction is appropriately differentiated and that additional Tier II interventions are provided to students based on their specific needs. Staffing, the placement and grouping of students, and the allocation of resources must be responsive to these identified needs.

Year Two Implementation

In year two, all staff will continue to receive intense coaching and support in the areas of teaching and learning, classroom management, student intervention, and social

and emotional support. It is critical that this be done with fidelity—without it, all of the planning will go to waste. The staff has to receive ongoing communication, consultation, and coaching on a regular basis. This continuous review is vital and will involve use of the PDSA cycle, which will ensure Continuous Improvement is achieved and will identify any corrective action and further observation needed.

In year two, schools will employ a formal teacher development system involving teacher-specific coaching in the classroom; administrator walkthroughs followed by specific feedback; peer observations; and some instances of targeted mentoring of teachers. These steps will be taken in tandem with teaming structures and practices that target effective, student-driven instruction. As a result, schools will have developed a tiered system for supporting teachers as well as students.

Year two academics will become more intense, with the development of an assessment cycle, lesson planning that includes small groups, and enhanced efforts to meet the required state goals. Schools will become more precise with how interventions are identified and deployed. Teacher teams will meet frequently and use multiple sources of data to inform the identification of student needs and the (multiple) interventions provided to students, as articulated in student-specific action plans. Schedules will be modified to maximize the use of resources (e.g., teachers, enrichment, tutors) that provide targeted support to more students, and with greater intensity, than in year one (and significantly more than in pre-turnaround efforts.) As a result, schools in year two will move from "routine" use of a tiered system of instructional support to continuously improving and refining the precision of instruction provided to students.

The implementation of restorative practices is a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged by bullying. It does this by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the offender and forgiveness by the victim. The Acceleration Lab will also be implemented for students who are credit-deficient to grant them time within their regular schedule to recover on courses they failed. Intense parental and community involvement begins in year two, consisting of home visits, weekly meetings, and activities for parents' afterschool based on the feedback from parent surveys.

The cost of turnaround reform can differ from district to district and school to school. However, there are similar expected expenses in almost every turnaround, such as staff, leadership, new curriculum, and academic support, in addition to behavioral programs such as Well-Managed classroom and restorative practices. The turnaround also hires additional social workers, psychologists, and counselors to address the needs of the whole child. Additionally, schools in year two will create incentives for student academic and behavioral success. Teachers will be paid additional monies to facilitate before and after-school programs, for instance. We also partner with community agencies such as BAM (Being a Man) and Youth Guidance. Funds are allocated for college trips and other activities for the student body. Overall, the cost for this plan would be approximately three million dollars.

SECTION SIX: POLICY ASSESSMENT PLAN

The policy assessment plan will monitor on going progress and evaluate the outcomes and results of implementation. The assessment plan will also describe who is responsible for implementation and accountability for results. The accountability measure will be looked at via performance management and ongoing monitoring.

Performance Management

Performance Management (PM) is the platform to help individuals make differentiated data driven decisions. PM will occur on a quarterly basis and will focus on the key priority areas for the district and the school and promote an intra-year performance discussion that leads to data driven-driven decision making. PM will demonstrate the willingness to vary structural responses and make tough decisions. PM will ensure that we articulate an overall strategy and not just sum up initiatives. It is important that we frame the components of PM, so we can identify a path moving forward which consists of defining excellence, tracking progress and creating transparency, making informed decisions, and establishing rewards and consequences. Performance management will work simultaneously with the PDSA cycle through the assessment process.

Performance Management will asses the district's and school's understanding of the process and the data. The principal will receive support from the district to ensure that this process is understood and implemented with fidelity. One support would be to assign a mentor who has been successful when implementing turnaround. Principals who require additional support for this process will receive more frequent check-ins as well as more face to face visits. The district will always be a part of the meeting to ensure the

principals are on track for implementation. The district or lead education agency(LEA) will meet with individual principals to set goals and define the measures of success. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will need to be developed after the analysis of the data. As a result, the principal and district will develop systems and structures that will be sustainable over time. KPIs are a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively a company is achieving. KPI's for the district are usually universal and the KPI's for the school are specific. The PDSA cycle will help the district and school ensure they are planning, acting, doing, and studying the KPI's to ensure results.

The district and the principal will work together to develop the KPIs specific to their school context and data that aligned with State requirements for Turnaround. Figure 2 represents the Theory of Action that will be used to ensure we have a focus, and the PDSA cycle will help hold the district accountable. In Figure 2, there are four main points: inputs, school based practices, leading indicators, and academic achievement. Inputs are the big picture of the work that helps meet the goals. The inputs are usually universal across the district. Inputs are tied to the other three main points starting with school based practices that consist of the planning. School based practices will vary based on the needs of the schools in the districts. The leading indicators consist of academics, attendance, discipline, and many more. However, the indicators may differ based on the school and the district. Leading indicators are the goals related to adult and student behaviors. Academic achievement will be based on the districts goals but most importantly the goals of individual schools. The Theory of Action connects to the KPI's and the PDSA cycle and as result there will be continued observation and adjustment based on data and results.

Figure 2. Theory of action.

Inputs	School Based Practices	Key Performance Indicators	Academic Achievement
• Leader competencies • Teacher competencies • Autonomy: people, time, money, and programs • Funding • Support from district and external partners	Turnaround Planning • Leader Actions • Instructional Practices • Staffing • Scheduling • School Culture and climate • Family and Community Engagement • Performance Management	Adult Behaviors • Decrease teacher turnover • Increase teacher attendance • Increase teacher effectiveness • Increase teacher satisfaction Student Behaviors • Decrease student drop outs • Increase attendance • Decrease incidents • Increased advanced courses • Increase satisfaction • Increase enrollment	Short-Term Outcomes • Mid-Year interim achievement Intermediate Options • Achievement and growth on annual state assessments • College and Career readiness Long-Term Outcomes • College and career success

Monitoring Implementation

The monitoring of implementation is crucial because it allows for a sustainable model. According to Villavicencio and Grayman (2012) the following are essential conditions for success and will be leading indicators as we continuously monitor:

Improved Teacher Quality: Teacher and leader effectiveness, distribution of teacher quality, and highly effective teaching.

Increased Participation In School: Student and teacher attendance, student and teacher turnover rate, student truancy rate, drop rate, and 100% participation on state assessments.

Improved School Culture: decrease in students' misconducts and student, teacher, and parent satisfaction.

Early Achievement Gains: Short-cycle assessments, year one state assessment gains, and early year assessments.

The new approach will be setting attainable targets for each indicator. The academic metrics focus on how the school will rise in the statewide percentile rankings on proficiency, the school's position ranking in growth and for high schools, and also include graduation and dropout rates. The PDSA cycle that will continue to ensure we act, plan, study and do. The cycle allows for continuous observation and adjustments as needed.

SECTION SEVEN: SUMMARY IMPACT STATEMENT

Education has always and always will be a vital part of life for most everyone in the world. However, not all students in every community are awarded an education that will prepare them to be productive citizens. Because of this, many of the students in low-income community's experience education in schools that are labeled as failing. This document argues that schools chosen for Turnaround reform gives students in Turnaround school an opportunity to experience a better social and academic education in their own communities. To effectively ensure the schools in Turnaround provide the best education students' unique learning needs, culture, and needs are taken into consideration during the planning phase.

Appropriateness of the Policy

Advocating for Turnaround reform that is sustainable and effective is valid and necessary to improve education for all students. Giving all schools adequate funding regardless of the location appears to be the approach that reduces the socioeconomic stereotyping as it relates to failing schools.

This policy is appropriate for school districts because it decreases the number of failing schools, and Turnaround reform that is sustainable and effective. By accomplishing this, failing schools will get better and students in all communities will have an opportunity to receive a great education.

Needs and Values at the Core of the Policy

In order for this policy to be effective, the needs of all stakeholders must be taken into consideration. The stakeholders who are affected by the implementation of this policy include students, teachers, parents, and the community.

Students

When this policy is implemented, the students will have their needs met regardless of what community they live in. When students are afforded the opportunity to learn, to learn in an environment that promotes academic success and social emotional support, that is a motivator, their needs are being met. When students are not penalized for their lack of background knowledge and understanding of the context in which curriculum and instruction are based, then their needs are being met.

Teachers

The needs of teachers are being considered with the execution of this policy because the reform allows for appropriate learning opportunities for all students. In addition, the teachers are supported in the implementation of this new policy. They will have access to continued professional development opportunities, allowing them to pursue their growth with the best practice of differentiation. New learning for teachers is expected in this policy as teachers begin to explore the concept of tiered levels of curriculum and instruction and social emotional support. Tiered levels of professional development are offered to teachers to expose them to the components needed to increase their instructional and social emotional knowledge. Learning experiences ranging from conferences to guest presenters to group text readings support teachers' needs in the implementation of this policy. Teachers will also visit and work with other schools that have been in the Turnaround and can share some reflections and best practices.

Parents

Parents' priority is for their children to have valuable learning experiences, and the implementation of this policy accomplishes that for all students. Parts of this policy create

opportunities for greater student motivation and engagement in learning and increase in learning how to manage themselves socially and emotionally. The needs of the parents of children affected by the policy are being met because this policy considers all students as individuals regardless of their backgrounds.

Community

The communities benefit from the implementation of this policy because it increases the possibility of students receiving more meaningful learning experiences in low-income communities and failing schools. When students are offered differentiated instruction and social emotional support, they stand to become more educated citizens that can benefit our local community. These benefits to the students affected by this policy will meet the needs of the communities.

Overall, implementing turnaround reforms has a lasting and significant impact on schools, students, and the community. It is not an easy decision to close and/or turnaround a school. Unfortunately, some schools face continuous failure. It is a moral responsibility of the district to ensure all students receive an equitable and supportive learning environment.

Schools are sacred monuments with a vast amount of history for many. When a district decides to turnaround a school, it is essential that effective support is provided in order for the schools to become successful and is able to embrace as well as maintain its legacy. Through my experiences, districts directly place more harm on a failing school if it neglects to provide the appropriate ongoing support. A school can revive itself with the proper and adequate resources for the students, parents and community by implementing

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turnaround reform. However, as stated in this paper, turnaround implementations must be done with support and fidelity.

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