

TURNAROUND AS AN EXPERIENCE:
USING SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE AS
THE DRIVER FOR SCHOOL TURNAROUND

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Date October 17, 2018

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education
Teachers College, Columbia University

2018

ABSTRACT

TURNAROUND AS AN EXPERIENCE: USING SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE AS THE DRIVER FOR SCHOOL TURNAROUND

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The number of schools failing to prepare students for post-secondary life continues to increase; thus, school reform continues to be a pressing concern. Millions of dollars have been spent on school reform initiatives, particularly comprehensive reform such as complete school turnaround. Turnaround efforts include full closure, restarts, and transformation of schools that are currently failing. School turnaround requires the immediate disruption of past practices to establish new practices. These changes require the development of new habits of mind, a refocus on expectations and a re-examination of adult-adult, adult-student, and student-student relationships. For stakeholders, school turnaround is viewed as what happens to them rather than what happens for their benefit. The stakeholders who are the students and teachers within the school are affected in numerous ways by the disruption.

This study reviewed literature on turnaround endeavors and pinpointed the important organizational design, traits of leadership, culture and climate, and adult

actions that can be leveraged to create comprehensive school turnaround that is sustainable. The findings of this study resulted in the development of a handbook that provides school turnaround leaders with the tools to design a comprehensive turnaround program. This *Turnaround Handbook* is built on the premise of stabilizing culture and climate within the school to drive change practices that lead to school success. This handbook takes into account the needs of students to have a voice, adults to be supported and developed, and practices to be sustained beyond a finite period of classification as a turnaround school. The significance of this research is that school turnaround leaders can design programs that are sustainable and can significantly improve the lives and educational experiences of those affected by the reform process.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Veronica and Cleveland, for making the life I lead possible.

To my wife, Nyree, for making my life extraordinary.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee, Dr. Brian Perkins, Dr. Erica Walker, and Dr. Christopher Clouet, all of whom I deeply respect, for their advice, support, and dedication to developing practitioners. I will be eternally grateful to my advisor, mentor, and fraternal guide, Brian Perkins, who through forceful concern, inspiration, and unyielding commitment helped me to grow as practitioner. Erica Walker, thank you for decades of support.

I would like to thank my fellow UELP cohort members, Allen, Andrew, Ben, Clarisse, David, Frank, Marcus, Markus, Regina, Veronica, and Safiyah, for their support through the years and for being a source of inspiration and teaching me so much.

To all of my supports along the way: Brother Al, Alpha Phi Alpha, my colleagues, the NBFA family, Team Secondary, the Superintendent, the Chief, the principals at Central Elementary and Central High School, thank you, thank you, thank you!!!

To my mom and dad, who defined the meaning of sacrifice by giving all that they had, leaving their lives in Jamaica to bring my sisters here to start a new life so that we could all prosper. To my sister Dilys, who always sets the example and reaches for the stars. To my sister Gaye, my relentless cheerleader and supporter, who showed me how to be brave.

Finally, to my wife Nyree, who has always been my biggest fan, my support, my source of strength, and my solace. Thank you for your undying, unconditional love for me and your support for everything I have done.

Onward!!!

P. A. W.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

A safe and welcoming learning climate is a prerequisite to high student achievement. School districts need to understand climate issues, conduct assessments, pass policies, and take steps to make improvements where necessary (Perkins, 2007). With this call to action following the largest study of school climate in public education (Perkins & Comer, 2006), the importance of school culture and climate is underscored. The critical elements of establishing a positive successful school climate include safety, parental involvement, expectations of success, bullying reduction, racial self-concept, trust, respect, and the ethos of caring (Perkins, 2007, 2008; Perkins & Comer, 2006). Taking all of these important factors into account, the life of the school and how it affects the lives of the individual members of the school community must be understood to create a positive environment in which the highest caliber of achievement can occur. “Modern-day school reformers are focusing too much on standardized tests and too little on kids’ hearts and minds, a legendary Yale child psychologist said as he prepared to advise the president” (Bailey, 2014, p. 1).

Over the last 20 years, an era of accountability has taken hold in America’s schools. The focus of education has shifted to the quantitative performance of students. Based on students’ performance, schools are characterized as “good” or “bad.” During

this age of accountability, the definitions of “good” and “bad” schools have been quantified by student scores on high-stakes standardized tests. Students and families have been left to deal with the ramifications of such a designation. If one is in a “good” school, one assumes there are qualified teachers, proper resources, high expectations for student behavior, and a high level of student achievement. If one is in a “bad” school, one assumes the teachers are not qualified or not working hard, the school is underresourced, student performance is low, and expectations for student behavior are minimal.

The quantification of performance measures has created the label of “failing” schools as well as the need to change what is happening in them. As many of America’s urban schools continue to “fail,” the concept of the turnaround school has taken shape. Unfortunately, as quantification continues to dominate the schools, culture and climate are taking a backseat to the efforts to improve student achievement by creating more time on task or extended learning opportunities. School climate is defined as: (a) physical environment, (b) social environment, (c) affective environment, and (d) academic environment. Another definition of culture and climate is the historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies and rituals, traditions, and myths, as understood to varying degrees by members of the school community.

Unfortunately, less time is being devoted to quality and to creating schools where high-caliber education efforts can close the achievement gap and provide an equitable education to all students. It has been suggested that more student time on task leads to better test results (Kaplan, Chan, & National Center on Time and Learning, 2012). Time on task is important to student achievement, but without looking at culture and climate,

the interruptions that limit time on task cannot be resolved to improve student achievement, thus creating a cyclical effect.

Schools are social institutions where students spend the majority of their waking hours in school buildings. In some cases, students spend more time in schools during the week than they do with their families. Because children attend school for a good portion of their early lives, their social, moral, physical, and psychological development must be central to the school's mission (Squires & Kranyik, 1995). Among the important literature on this topic is the pioneering work of Dr. James Comer and the Yale Child Study Center. For nearly 50 years, the Comer School Development Program has been designing a model that has succeeded in schools, yielding positive results where others have failed (Squires & Kranyik, 1995).

The Comer Program revealed success in students' relationships with peers, general mental health, achievement on standardized tests, and class grades (Squires & Kranyik, 1995). It has focused on changing school culture and climate in order to make a greater impact on academic aspects of the school environment. The program uses three units: the parents' program, the mental health team, and the school planning and management. The Comer team assumes that students are able in all ways necessary to be successful, but they have not had the pre- and out-of-school experiences needed to be successful in school; thus, they are differently or underdeveloped. The team helps school staff and parents identify multiple and changing building-level challenges to supporting development; then it puts in place a framework that allows school stakeholders to address these challenges in an organic, orderly, collaborative fashion (Comer Child Study Center,

2013). This program is emblematic of the importance of culture and climate in the quest to “turn around” failing schools and improve student achievement results.

“Like other social institutions, schools are permeated by and reflect the larger societal culture.” (Chambers, 2011, p. 3) Creating school cultures that are open and welcoming is important for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is to support success for all students properly (Chambers, 2011). Schools are not just places where learning involves how to analyze and synthesize information; rather, they are key sites for socialization and cultural reproduction (Carter, 2005). Given the socializing effect schools have on society’s development, school culture and climate are extremely important for developing children into socially normative adults. For this change to happen in schools that are failing academically, culture must be the central focus of efforts to reverse negative outcomes. Schools need to determine what the social values are and how they will impart those values within the school itself.

As a school tries to impart norms upon its students, administrators must be cognizant of the challenges that setting norms entails. In his reference to cultural reproduction, Chambers (2011) noted that students also face the reproduction of disparate cultures within and outside of their educational environment. Many students face cultural expectations that are different once they leave the school. Students have to learn to navigate the linguistic, cultural, and social norms of their communities (Myers-Scotton, 2006). In advancing a turnaround model, significant attention must be paid to school culture and how it can drive the transformation required for a school.

Student attitudes towards school are affected by the environment in which they attend school. In a supportive environment, students tend to perform better and have

more positive interactions. The importance of establishing a school climate conducive to learning has also been recognized by other studies of school reform and endorsed in federal School Improvement Grants (SIG) guidance (McMurrer, 2012).

School climate and teacher relationships are important markers of student achievement. Distinct role relationships characterize the social exchanges of schooling: teachers with students, teachers with other teachers, teachers with parents, and all groups with the school principal. “For a school community to work well, it must achieve agreement in each role relationship in terms of the understandings held about these personal obligations and the expectations of others” (Bryk & Schneider, 2003, p. 41). Research has indicated that positive school climate is associated with and predictive of academic achievement, school success, effective violence prevention, students’ healthy development, and teacher retention (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009).

Research and experience in the business sector have revealed that one of the most important interventions during a turnaround is a change in an organization’s culture (Hoffman, 1989). Sarason (1996) stated that if we want to change and improve the outcomes of schooling for both students and teachers, certain features of the school culture must be changed (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009).

Turnarounds

The term *turnaround* comes from business management and is used to describe policy and practices intended to change management and operations in order to turn around the current trend of performance. In the case of schools, the lack of student achievement is the focus of most turnaround efforts. The U.S. Department of Education

(2011) has taken up the charge of turnaround work by creating an office dedicated to supporting turnaround. Under the Obama administration, with Secretary Arne Duncan at the helm, four turnaround models were created as follows:

- **Turnarounds.** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50% of the school's staff; adopt a new governance structure; provide job-embedded professional development; offer staff financial and career advancement incentives; implement a research-based, aligned instructional program; extend learning and teacher planning time; create a community orientation; and provide operating flexibility.
- **Restarts.** Transfer control of, or close and reopen, a school under a school operator that has been selected through a rigorous review process. A restart model must enroll, within the grades it serves, any former student who wishes to attend.
- **Transformations.** Replace the principal (no requirement for staff replacement); provide job-embedded professional development; implement a rigorous teacher evaluation and reward system; offer financial and career advancement incentives; implement comprehensive instructional reform; extend learning- and teacher-planning time; create a community orientation; and provide operating flexibility and sustained support.
- **School Closures.** Close the school and enroll students in other, higher-achieving schools.

Currently, there is a debate over the best mode. Among the reasons for this debate, as cited in the Wallace Foundation report on School Turnaround (Leithwood,

Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004), is that there are not enough turnaround experts or experienced operators. The report also noted that the short length of funding is insufficient for the long-term funding needed to sustain turnaround efforts. Of the 5,017 schools in restructuring mode districts are overwhelmingly attempting to reform their schools, as opposed to closing them permanently. As of 2009, more than \$9 billion has been spent on turnaround models. The majority of school districts has opted for the Transformation Model at approximately 71%, while 21% of districts have used the Turnaround Model—5% being restarts and 3% closures. The debate continues because the models vary in the cost, human capital, provider capacity, efficacy, and political will necessary for implementation. While transformation and turnaround are similar models, they clearly differ from complete closure and restart models. Each of these models has its own strengths and weaknesses; two of them, specifically Turnaround and Transformation, offer federal funding for their execution, while the other two, Closure and Restart, offer the greatest disruption to the student population.

Closing a school can be a huge logistical problem for the district. Shutting down the school requires placing the students from that school elsewhere. This change can lead to overcrowding in other schools or making children attend schools outside of their community. While one may argue that having students attend school outside of the neighborhood may have a positive effect, it is generally disruptive for them. The school closure model only works when the failing school is in an underutilized neighborhood and students who transfer to other schools will not affect the population of the receiving school.

Restarts are generally another underutilized model. A Restart may not be a viable option because the management of the school is turned over to an outside operator. In this case, the school district and the local school board no longer have control over that entity. The control of the school is in the education management organization.

The arrival of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001 ushered in a new era of accountability. New measures of school success were determined and, in many cases, failure was measured. Across the country, thousands of schools were not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as set by the federal government under NCLB (U.S. Congress, House Committee on Education and the Workforce, 2001). AYP is determined by the percentage of students who reach “proficient” level on their state exam. Under NCLB, these set criteria of students’ performance on state standardized tests shifted each year, with the goal of achieving 100% proficiency by 2014. As it became apparent that thousands of schools and school districts would not reach this milestone in time, waivers and revisions to NCLB were created. Most states had to develop accountability systems to meet the changes.

With new guidelines in place, schools have a new metric to determine whether they were successfully meeting the educational needs of their students. Currently, tens of thousands of schools are not meeting the federally mandated proficiency levels. Out of this need were developed the turnaround models for schools. While tens of thousands of schools are in need of restructuring, only slightly more than 5,000 schools are using one of the four models: turnaround, restart, transformation, or closure. Therefore, vastly more schools are in restructuring than are using the models laid out by the federal government (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2009). Dramatic change requires urgency

and an atmosphere of crisis (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007). Selective improvements, innovations, and breakthrough transformations are not in question, but these advances have been overwhelmed by a “silver bullet” mentality of reform, a failure to follow through on implementation, and the ingrained and persistent weaknesses in U.S. elementary and secondary schools (Klein & Rice, 2012).

School turnaround by its nature causes disruptions. The disruptions are intended to create significant changes to, in fact, “turn around” the school that has been on a trajectory towards failure. These disruptive practices take numerous forms and usually have deleterious effects at the outset, followed by improvement. The disruptive practices include the removal and change of leadership, changes to teaching staff, complete closures of the school, and restarts. The experience of turnaround for student parents and staff is viewed through these disruptive practices.

Given the current landscape of school improvement efforts, a great need for school turnaround and funding necessitate that new models be designed. Taking into consideration the scarcity of proven turnaround experts and the limited record of success, a new model must be designed to support school transformation during funding changes. “This is not surprising, given that high-performing, high-poverty (HHP) schools have evolved fundamentally different strategies to achieve success and that, in addition, turnaround initiatives need to break through existing inertia.” (Calkins et al., 2007, p. 10)

The model must build the capacity of the change agents by drawing on researched culture and climate and proven school reform measures that have been used nationwide. Frequently, the culture and climate aspects of school development are omitted from turnaround models. A model that focuses on culture and climate as the central point of school transformation may logically meet the needs of a sustainable and capacity-building model.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine successful models of school turnaround and the successful use of school climate and culture changes in order to create a new way to go about creating a sustainable school model. There is no doubt that school culture is essential for the development of a successful school.

Among the debates on the efficacy of school turnaround is the fact that the money pumped into such efforts are temporary fixes and are not available to sustain these changes after that money has been exhausted. This study attempted to design a model of school transformation under the federal definition that will be sustainable with small expenditures supported by normal funding levels beyond the period of transformation. The new model can be used to support transformation in school districts that seek to improve student achievement as an ongoing process.

Richardson (2009, in Skrla, McKenzie, & Scheurich, 2009) suggested that “transformations do not take place until the culture of the school permits it, and no long-term, significant change can take place without creating a culture to sustain that change” (p. xi). Expanding upon this postulate that transformation only begins with a sustainable culture change, a model should be designed to make culture and climate the central focus of what is implemented. Additionally, the model should take into account proven school reform and improvement measures that have been implemented in successful schools nationwide. Many improved practices in education that have been developed over the past two decades have been less successful than they might have been because they have focused primarily on curriculum, instruction, assessment, and modes of service delivery. Insufficient attention has been paid to child and adolescent development. When these

matters are addressed at all, the focus is often on the student—on a behavior problem—and not on how to create a school culture that promotes good growth along the six critical developmental pathways: physical (including brain development), social/interactive, psycho-emotional, ethical, linguistic, and cognitive/intellectual (Comer, 2005).

Researchers and educators agree that school climate influences students, teachers, and staff members and affects student achievement. Yet many school improvement initiatives primarily address school structure and procedures and virtually ignore school climate. This researcher sought to explore the best practices of culture that have led to significant changes within student achievement.

Research Questions

In this study to develop the principles of a new turnaround model that is focused on school culture and climate, the following questions were answered:

- What are the indicators of a successful turnaround model?
- What are the leadership practices related to culture and climate needed to support school turnaround and sustain the results?

The final product was designed as a manual consolidating best practices supported by data into one model of the actions needed to transform a school. This manual contains the conceptual framework and the practical application to solve the challenges of commencing a school transformation. This product also provides the step-by-step actions needed to transform a school effectively. Finally, the manual includes the lessons learned from turnaround operators as well as schools that are going through the structure and are outside the formal federal turnaround process.

Target Audience

The target audience for this manual is school district leaders, boards of education, and school leaders who desire a sustainable way to transform their underperforming schools. This manual is intended to be a guide for how to achieve the transformation needed to have a positive impact on student achievement while making changes that can outlast temporary funding or competitive grants.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature was organized to reflect the key aspects of this project. First, the researcher undertook a review of school turnaround efforts to understand the history and progress of the models currently in use. Next, the researcher examined the leadership characteristics and qualities needed to manage a turnaround as well as the change agents needed to create a successful turnaround. Finally, the researcher included an analysis of the literature relating to school culture and climate and some of the current strategies used to improve school culture and climate, approaches taken, and perceptions existing among teachers and students.

Decline and Recovery and Turning Around

Presumably, prior to needing turnaround, there is a period of appropriate growth and development. At some point that growth slows, stagnates, and begins to decline. The organization, if it is aware and proactive, will begin to scrutinize the conditions. The researcher Kanter (2003) noted that this scrutiny may begin in secret, then in denial, followed by blame, followed by avoidance and turf protection, which can further the problems before there are solutions. In the corporate world, when a firm begins to have problems such as a decline in revenue or market share, they begin a process of looking at how to turn around. Zimmerman (1991) described the process:

During the period of attempted recovery, specific actions are put in motion to improve the health of the firm. The actions taken can be appropriate or inappropriate—effective or ineffective. Action can be specific steps or they can be thinly veiled rationalization of abdications. The turnaround itself may be successful or unsuccessful.... Successful recovery occurs when the firm experiences a return to profitability and sustainable improvement in its balance sheet and a restoration of competitive position. (p. 29)

The need for the turnaround or restart occurs for various reasons. The company has to find a new relationship with the public, and the public has to trust the company again. In school turnaround, the customer is the parent who must find a reason to trust that the students will be educated.

The rebuilding of trust takes a long time and requires numerous years of success. For example, in 2015, Chipotle suffered from highly publicized outbreaks of *E. coli* bacteria linked to their restaurants. The fast-food chain Chipotle solved its problem and improved its products, yet customers still associated the brand with the previous problem. In an effort to recover and restore its brand name, the CEO stepped down, and a focus was put on the operations and tying employee incentives to customer experience (Trefis Team, 2016). Here, a common turnaround action was taken—a change of leadership. Leadership will prove central to all turnaround activities, and operations is always a key focus of turnaround actions. In the turnaround research on companies, the operations are heavily scrutinized to determine what happens next.

The U.S. auto industry and various banks also needed massive bailouts and turnaround. The American auto industry had been in decline for decades and was being challenged by foreign innovation and large payroll and pension liabilities. As well, the product was not meeting the needs of Americans and was being outpaced in sales as 25% (and growing) of purchases were foreign cars by the mid-1990s (Mannering, Winston,

Griliches, & Schmalensee, 1991). As it faced these challenges and sought recovery or turnaround, the Economic Policy Institute points to a series of strategies that helped the revitalization:

The U.S. auto industry has been revitalized in recent years through a commitment to quality, innovative production and management techniques, a constructive relationship between management and labor, and improved relations with suppliers. (Cutcher-Gershenfeld, Brooks, & Mulloy, 2015, p. 3)

Here, the strategy again focused on the product, operations (management techniques), and partnership between management and the workers. These traits can translate into the work of school turnaround as well. Operations, leadership, and partnerships are key elements in the work of turnaround.

Rebranding

Another element in turnaround is the image the organization currently has and the need to change that image. Companies attempt to reinvent themselves (O'Neill, 1986). British Petroleum, usually known as BP, started marketing as Beyond Petroleum at the turn of the 20th century. It was an attempt to look like a cleaner, "greener" company that was exploring ways of meeting energy needs beyond drilling for oil. The mood of the nation was to be less dependent on fossil fuels, and the rebranding was giving a different impression of the company. Despite branding, however, results were still required to show something that differed from current examples. The changed image came crashing down in 2010 with the Deepwater Horizon explosion and subsequent massive oil leak into the Gulf of Mexico. BP once again found itself seeking a rebrand and an image remake. Some turnarounds can have an immediate effect and redefine the organization,

but it is necessary to step back and make certain that correct steps are being taken to sustain the forward momentum.

In the work of rebranding, there is a need to connect the positive elements of the past with the new innovations that are coming. Merrilees and Miller (2008) noted six principles that:

...were supported, indicating the need for maintaining core values and cultivating the brand, linking the existing brand with the revised brand, targeting new segments, getting stakeholder “buy-in”, achieving alignment of brand elements and the importance of promotion in awareness building. (p. 537)

The principles are a cross-section of the needs to move a turnaround forward. These principles can be considered as universal in moving towards the turnaround process and identifying the core value which is the guidepost for organizations. Linking the past with the future is important to bridge the gap as a new direction is being taken. These principles will be important in moving individuals out of past practices to journey to new and expectedly improved practices. Targeting new segments links beyond corporate as well because, in school turnaround, new areas of work need to be considered. For example, moving from a traditional high school model to a school within a school or academies are ways of targeting a new segment. Stakeholder buy-in is a necessity for launching any endeavor. Without the support of stakeholders, efforts will die on the vine. Finally, awareness of the name brand is required to let consumers know what is different and how it will benefit them.

Rebranding in the context of a school requires a product that parents will have to buy into. In some instances, the parents and children have a choice, such as attending a charter schools or a higher-performing school, but in other cases, other options are limited. For example, if the school in need of turnaround is the only school in a region,

parents may have little choice. Despite a lack of choices, it is incumbent upon the school to create a brand and a concept of success to boost the status and appearance of a change at the school. Schools can create this change by creating specialized programs, new learning opportunities, and improved operations.

In her study of the rebranding of the central city schools in Philadelphia, Cucchiara (2008) noted the efforts that included creating distance and redesigning were new and attractive to parents.

CCD and school district administrators did this first by creating *institutional* distance from the rest of the school district, altering the district's administrative structure to demarcate a particular group of schools as unique. (p. 6)

This also included symbolic distances as well:

According to an administrator with the CCD, it was important for people to recognize *downtown* schools as such, which necessitated some form of visual continuity from school to school. She continued that “we want to brand the Center City schools using banners and signage” (Administrator, CCD). Branding as a marketing strategy deliberately creates connections, operating on emotional and subconscious levels, between the goods being marketed and broader conceptions of lifestyle and identity (Cucchiara, 2008; Greenberg, 2000). (p. 6)

While signage and banners may appear superficial, the connections and rallying point of symbols are important. Symbols, such as a mascot or the insignia of a special group, create a sense of exclusivity and can be a status toward which stakeholders strive. In the case of CCD, those were among the most attractive selling points of this new division. In a turnaround, the impression of change needs to be deeper than surface treatments. Symbols by definition are designed to illustrate information, but beyond the symbols, substance is required if people are to remain involved. The substance is what the new product is and does for the customer or stakeholder. When rebranding works,

stakeholders understand what the symbols mean and know they are representations of a solid end goal.

Turning Around Schools

School improvement, or more specifically school turnaround, draws on a sense of hope and dread simultaneously as the process begins to make the school better than it currently is. A turnaround culture fuses strong community cohesion with an academic press; one without the other is insufficient (Center for School Turnaround, 2017).

The first challenge is that of designing, enacting, and coordinating functional educational infrastructure in chronically underperforming schools. Doing so requires dismantling existing infrastructure that reinforces deeply habituated, counterproductive norms and practices; designing new infrastructure that is sufficiently comprehensive and coordinated as to quickly support new norms and practices; and enacting that infrastructure in schools prone to “Christmas tree”-like fragmentation and incoherence (Sebring & Bryk, 2000). (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015, p. 385)

From the present researcher’s experience, turnaround schools are portrayed as having “nothing going for them.” They are defined as having an out-of-control atmosphere; they are places where learning is nonexistent, and they are even labeled as dangerous for students and staff alike. The schools researched in this study very much had this reputation. Both schools historically were sources of pride for their alumni, but both have struggled for numerous years prior to intervention. While both schools are spoken of very fondly, there is a second conversation about each of them. That second conversation is one of the serious problems both schools have or are perceived to have. Persons who do not live the day-to-day realities of these schools, both places are viewed as providing vacuous learning and elusive success. For those living the reality of these

schools, they are places of hope and ability displayed in qualitative ways, most often not in quantitative ways. This dichotomy is difficult for many people to understand.

Turnaround can bring the “addict” out in some change agents. Certain leaders or those seeking a new start will change everything, which can also be problematic. Change theory has a negative view of the past. For example, Hargreaves (2007) noted that for those who are attracted to change, “the past is a repository of regressive and irrational resistance amongst those who like to stay where they are and are emotionally unable to ‘let go’ of old habits, attachments and beliefs” (p. 226). Nevertheless, the past has an important role in change and the future.

The challenge of educational change is not to respect or retreat to the past, but to develop an intelligent relationship to the past that acknowledges its existence, understands its meaning for those who are the bearers of it, and learns from it wherever and whenever possible. (p. 227)

As individuals struggle with the new reality, some are left even more destabilized by the complete disregard for the past. The best route for leadership in this case would be to provide a synthesis of the past and the present to render sustainable change.

Looking at urban school turnaround, the culture and climate very frequently revolve around the concept of discipline. In terms of discipline, the focus is on in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions. Discipline is one aspect of the story of schools in need of turnaround, but there is far more to the story of these schools. The story of turnaround begins with the question: How did the school fall to where it is now?

Measured against global standards, far too many U.S. schools are failing to teach students the academic skills and knowledge they need to compete and succeed (Klein & Rice, 2012, p. 3). More than 20 years have passed since the introduction of the concept of

holding schools accountable for student performance. In 1994, the Improving America's Schools Act introduced the concept of holding schools accountable for student performance on state assessments. Although this Act encouraged states to assess whether schools were making progress and impose sanctions on those that did not, it lacked much force. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 changed that by requiring a regimen of annual testing in Grades 3 through 8 and by imposing sanctions on schools that fail to make AYP (Herman et al., 2008). AYP is the yearly benchmark school districts must meet toward the goal of 100% proficiency. NCLB significantly altered how schools approached the success of their students. The policy ushered in a "new age of accountability" and created a carrot-and-stick paradigm. The "carrot" or reward included additional funding, while the "stick" was the sanctions that could be imposed on school districts. The threat of sanctions caused school districts to pay special attention to schools that have struggled for generations. Now it was necessary to make certain all students were progressing toward a benchmark of 100% proficiency. As accountability increased, high-stakes testing provided the metric for student achievement. Using this metric, schools were categorized into bands that indicated their level of success. Schools that consistently failed were said to be in need of a turnaround which would provide rapid change—unlike the change offered through SIGs and other comprehensive school measures previously taken.

In 2008, in its efforts to improve education for the lowest-performing schools, the Obama administration endorsed four models for turnaround:

- **Turnarounds.** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50% of the school's staff; adopt a new governance structure; provide job-embedded

professional development; offer staff financial and career advancement incentives; implement a research-based, aligned instructional program; extend learning and teacher planning time; create a community orientation; and provide operating flexibility.

- **Restarts.** Transfer control of, or close and reopen, a school under a school operator that has been selected through a rigorous review process. A restart model must enroll, within the grades it serves, any former student who wishes to attend.
- **Transformations.** Replace the principal (no requirement for staff replacement); provide job-embedded professional development; implement a rigorous teacher evaluation and reward system; offer financial and career advancement incentives; implement comprehensive instructional reform; extend learning- and teacher-planning time; create a community orientation; and provide operating flexibility and sustained support.
- **School Closures.** Close the school and enroll students in other, higher-achieving schools.

These four models of turnaround have created much confusion, given that one of the models is itself called Turnarounds. Turnaround in general requires dramatic changes that produce significant achievement gains in a short period (within 2 years), followed by a longer period of sustained improvement. Turning around chronically underperforming schools is a different and far more difficult undertaking than school improvement (Calkins et al., 2007). Calkins et al. further defined the degree of change that is necessary between “turnaround” and “school improvement”—change that, in fact, is propelled by

imperative: the school must improve or it will be redefined or closed. Dramatic change requires urgency and an atmosphere of crisis (Calkins et al., 2007).

Turnaround, as defined for this present study, differs from school improvement because it focuses on the most consistently underperforming schools and involves dramatic, transformative change (Calkins et al., 2007). Despite the confusion, the goal remains the same: create change in failing schools. All failing schools, especially those that persistently fail, need guidance on what will work quickly to improve student outcomes. These schools generally have explored a variety of strategies to improve student achievement, but without rapid, clear success. They now need to look beyond slow, incremental change and examine practices that will raise and sustain student achievement within 1 to 3 years (Hassel, Hassel, & Rhim, 2007).

These turnarounds are classic: rapid U-turns from the brink of doom to stellar success (Emily Ayscue & Hassel, 2009). The turnaround concept prods educators to confront failure head on and accept responsibility for “making things right”—not at some vague time in the distant future, but soon (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009). Hassel et al. further grouped education reformers into the “Incrementalist” and the “Clean State” groups. The “Incrementalists” hold that meaningful improvement can only happen slowly, with soul-wrenching culture change leading to instructional change and eventual student success. The “Clean Slate” group believes the only way to fix failing schools is to shut them down and start fresh, with entirely new rules, staff, and leadership (Emily Ayscue & Hassel, 2009). In looking at other efforts, Calkins et al. (2007) noted that “light-touch” efforts redirecting curriculum or providing leadership coaching may help some average-performing schools improve, but they are clearly not sufficient to produce

successful turnaround of chronically poor-performing schools. Emily Ayscue and Hassel (2009) further postulated that both groups have it wrong.

A point where strategy from the corporate world would differ from the education world is the speed of change. While Zimmerman (1991) noted that gradual incremental change is a hallmark of successful turnaround companies, schools do not have that luxury.

Gradual and consistent incremental improvements is the managerial style of successful turnarounds.... Gradual and constant incremental improvements, interspersed by occasional major improvements provide the framework for successful companies to constantly progress. (p. 20)

Students and lives are affected daily by the conditions of the school in need of turnaround. Twenty years of changes represent generations of students who would go unserved without more rapid changes to a school.

The incremental approach does not work, and most organizations near failure that have turned around have done so without a full clean slate. While acknowledging this dual approach, it is important to point out that management change is a core element in the turnaround, and recovery from decline is often facilitated by replacing the CEO and other top executives (Barker & Duhaime, 1997; Murphy & Meyers, 2008).

The Most Important Turnaround Actions

Fortunately, the steps toward turnaround success are very consistent across sectors; the complete list of critical actions appears on the following page. However, school leaders trying turnarounds must stay focused on accomplishing the most *critical, consistent success actions*. In nearly all cases, leaders of successful turnarounds:

- **Identify and focus on a few early wins with big payoffs**, and use that early success to gain momentum. While these “wins” are limited in scope, they are high-priority, not peripheral elements of organization performance.
- **Break organization norms or rules** to deploy new tactics needed for early wins. Failed rules and routines are discarded when they inhibit success.
- **Act quickly in a fast cycle** of trying new tactics, measuring results, discarding failed tactics, and doing more of what works (see Figure 1). Time is the enemy when the status quo is failure.

School turnaround is a disruptive experience in the lives of the students, faculty, and parents who are involved in the experience. Taking the concept from the business world, *disruptive innovation* can be applied to work in school turnaround. Disruptive innovation, a term of art coined by Clayton Christensen (1997), describes a process by which a product or service takes root initially in simple applications at the bottom of a market and then relentlessly moves up market, eventually displacing established competitors.



Figure 1. Fast cycle of actions in a turnaround

Source: Steiner, Hassel, Hassel, & Valsing (2008)

Extending that theory to education, Christensen noted that schools and students have not been able to reap the benefits of technology because of the web of constraints—called “interdependencies”—that schools have not been able to escape, including the organization of the school day; the division of learning in academic disciplines; the architecture of school buildings; and the federal, state, and local levels. By the same measure, school improvement efforts have not worked because of the same interdependencies that have prevented significant change. Thus, in an effort to make greater change, disruptions must be introduced. Although there continues to be two basic types of innovations—those that sustain the status quo and those that disrupt it, hybrids often emerge as a prelude to pure disruption in the category of a sustaining innovation (Business Wire, 2013).

Murphy and Meyers (2008) stressed the need to evaluate conditions in a turnaround. Understanding should precede evaluation. What makes this point so salient is that nearly all literature in education leaps from problem (e.g., failure) to solutions (e.g., adoption of whole school reform models), with remarkably little effort to understand the reason schools and districts fail. There is a significant strand of theory and research about turning around underperforming organizations; however, very little of it speaks to the unique mission and character of schools. This literature is unambiguous in its claim that leadership is the pivotal explanation for success, suggesting that efforts to understand better the nature of successful school turnaround processes would do well to begin with a focus on successful school turnaround leadership (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009).

Fullan (2014) drew on various approaches to change. Among them is Hamal’s (2000) work, which delineates the eight-step process of change that can be summarized

as creating a vision, getting others to buy into the vision, having others communicate, and creating wins as quickly and as often as possible.

In another process, Kotter (1996) viewed the change process similarly, including board base action. Making change in an organization is a stress-inducing traumatic experience for the various stakeholders. The status quo is a powerful force because individuals come to rely on it as the foundation of their existence within the organization. There is no urgency to change unless outside forces create that urgency.

Early Wins/Small Wins

A common thread for successful turnaround has been early wins (Emily Ayscue & Hassel, 2009; Fullan, 2014; Hamel, 2002; Kotter, 1996). Kotter's sixth step is generating small wins. The small wins that newly empowered people create are the first sign that a turnaround is on track (Kanter, 2003). Hamel pointed to "win small, win early, win often" as an important step in the turnaround process. Successful turnaround leaders choose a few high-priority goals with visible payoffs and use early success to gain momentum. Wins are an urgently needed. "Early wins are critical for motivating staff and disempowering naysayers" (Emily Ayscue & Hassel, 2009, p. 23).

The importance of early wins cannot be overstated. Those in the midst of the turnaround experience are seeing cyclical or even generational struggle for improvement. The stakeholders in the turnaround need these wins as a beacon. The stakeholders already experience the loss; they are mourning the loss of the status quo. Without early wins, there is the belief that the status quo can be resurrected. Early wins show that change is possible. They also create the credibility needed to change existing systems, structures, or policies (Institute for Sustainable Performance, 2014). In the psyche of those who

experience the change, nothing about the change experience seems possible. By creating early wins—whether by getting a few supplies or taking care of a minor vexing problem within the school—leaders have the ability to illustrate what change can look like. Failure to gain these early wins projects the image that nothing will ever change—or more aptly, as the metaphor goes, they are “shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic.”

In revisiting Kotter’s work, authors Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo, and Shafiq (2012) noted that throughout, a leader should set high expectations and reward behaviors that meet the vision. Additionally, it is noted that “It is also important that a leader models the behaviors required to sustain the change and sets the expectations for the others to emulate” (Eisenbach et al., 1999, p. 85). Their analysis suggested that small wins are still an important factor in getting change to stick.

During the initial efforts at turnaround in Central High School (pseudonym), the site of the present study, no change appeared to work. There were no small wins; every early step was unsuccessful and reinforced the negative assumption that no change could be made. Central went through a quick change in building culture via a shock. Midway through the school year, the principal resigned because of the challenges of the turnaround process. School climate, particularly teacher culture, was cited as a concern. With a mid-year change, the new leader was given the authority to make sweeping changes in policies to effect change. Within a week, the school added new security guards, reorganized the duties of staff members, and changed its leadership. Prior to any other change efforts at this school, small accomplishments by the interim leadership brought a sense that change was occurring and the school would change. While some of the positive work was put into play earlier, the timing of the completion coincided with

the new leader's arrival, giving a sense of the early win. Numerous staff members who were interviewed echoed how the changes made a huge difference for the school. The small wins proved repeatedly to be central to innovation and change. In this regard, Kotter's work continues to show viability many years after its initial publication:

In *The Heart of Change*, which is beyond the scope of this review, Kotter determines that the core problems people face while implementing his eight steps are never due to "strategy, structure, culture or systems" but rather are about "changing the behavior of people" (Kotter and Cohen, 2002). This continues to be in evidence 15 years after the initial model was presented. (Appelbaum et al., 2012, p. 776)

Small wins/early wins are essential to moving the turnaround process forward. Building on the small wins, the larger wins appear to be in sight and the leader must push the group forward towards them.

Mourning the Status Quo

In order for turnaround to take place, the status quo must die. This death cannot be allowed to linger or languish. The plug must be pulled. While this may sound very aggressive, it is a necessary early step for true turnaround. Allowing anything but the death of the status quo permits the stakeholders who were moving through the change process to cling to the hope that things can stay just the way they were. This again points to the importance of early wins, so that there is some solace for those mourning the death of the status quo while also serving as the first steps in the process of moving on. The death of the status quo simply means the birth of change. Doug Reeves (2008) noted certain aspects of change simply and clearly:

Why are barriers to change so powerful? See if you recognize the following terms. They are associated with our reaction to a particular type of change:
Denial
Anger

Bargaining
 Depression
 Acceptance

....We can only confront the power of barriers to change when we recognize that, in fact, change is death. Change represents the death of past assumptions, practices, and comfort zones. The loss of those sources of security—my beliefs about students, teachers, and the entire enterprise of education—is threatened at deeply personal level. (pp. 57-58)

The examples that Reeves gave illustrated the power of the status quo and how difficult it can be to change. Equating this to the struggles of losing weight, stopping smoking, or dealing with alcohol clearly defines the challenge. The same amount of power that resisting change requires makes it so difficult that when change occurs, many feel that a death has occurred. In another of his works, Reeves equated the process of change to the steps one goes through as they mourn. The stakeholders in the midst of the change will deny, be angry, bargain, become depressed, and then finally—if there is enough hard work—be willing to accept. In the schools studied, research stakeholders have gone through these stages, and some at Years 3 and 4 into the process are still holding out hope that the situation will return to the way they were. This cling to hope that the standard school returns from an organizational view can be viewed as a “Psychic Prison,” according to Gareth Morgan’s (2006) work, *Images of Organizations*. Psychic prisons, as a favored way of thinking, act as traps that confine individuals to socially constructed worlds and prevent the emergence of other worlds. The concept of groupthink is also introduced as a means of maintaining a shared illusion. Morgan’s work is important to the idea and concepts of organization design or redesign as going through turnaround, and will be discussed later in this literature review. Change can create initiative overload and organizational chaos, both of which provoke strong resistance from the people most affected (Abrahamson, 2000, p. 75).

The forces to bring about change will constantly battle the forces to keep things as they are; individually, stakeholders note “something” must be done, but that “something” should not involve changing individual behavior. While leaders in turnaround schools are making efforts to improve the conditions of the organization, they must change people.

Change leaders know that they do not change organizations without changing individual behavior, and they will not change individual behavior without affirming the people behind the behavior. (Reeves, 2009, p. 10)

The question becomes: Do people change or will the people have to be changed into new people? Among the more drastically engaged turnaround models, the changing of people is usually a part of the process. The restart model and the turnaround model call for at least 50% of the staff of the previously failing school to be removed, along with the leadership.

Changing people dramatically changes the status quo, but this may be difficult to achieve in a system that does not have a place to absorb the new displaced staff.

Revisiting the power of status quo inertia, changing people can cause resentment, harsh feelings, and sympathy for the displaced that can be detrimental to the change process. Individuals have to be treated with respect and support through the change. Just as a person may seek counseling while grieving, the stakeholders need similar supports to make the move to the new way that work will be done and students will be serviced.

Who are these people clinging to the old and wanting it to remain? Do they want the worst for students? Do they want to feel unsuccessful all the time? Of course, the answer to these questions is no; nonetheless, they cling to the familiar—and what does that mean? Without the security of knowing they will be “okay” in the future, their psychological contract has been broken. This contract is the unwritten agreement around

work and expectations. The psychological contract can be defined as “an individual’s beliefs about the terms of the exchange agreement between employee and employer” (Rousseau, 1989, p. 2). Such contracts can be transactional and relational. The Relational type of contract concerns a relationship built on the utmost trust, implicit emotional attachment, and long-term employment (Curwen, 2016; Rousseau, 1989). The relational appears to be the most similar to the type of contract built within the school.

Hess and Gift (2009) acknowledged that schools are broken and fresh thinking is needed:

Acknowledging that thousands of schools are profoundly, perhaps irrevocably, broken is a vital start. But this acknowledgment will amount to little unless education reformers embrace fresh thinking and show a willingness to challenge old nostrums. (Hess & Gift, 2009, p. 4)

In looking at change capacity in secondary schools, Ross and Hannay (2001) noted some structures were difficult to change or even imagine in a different way. One example they gave was of the subject-based organization of secondary schools:

Certainly the past reliance on subject structures as a means of organizing secondary schools has often resulted in images based on the subject as opposed to creating images that challenge that box. (p. 329)

Many schools maintain antiquated structures for their organization and operation. In many ways, these schools remain in the box that was created for them decades and even centuries ago. These sorts of changes require “thinking outside the box.” While this is a cliché, it again is a core component of the necessary change. Ross and Hannay noted that challenging structures of the past “required that participants think deeply about their tacit knowledge and the purpose they deemed most important for the learning opportunities offered to students” (p. 335). Moreover, “These initial decisions concluded: that the status quo was not acceptable; school models were to be both program- and context-

based; school committees were to design and then annually review their models; and learning organizations required professional learning opportunities” (p. 338).

Another reason that change is difficult is the cognitive dissonance that is created by some changes.

In educational change, cognitive dissonance can become acute when the implementation of the innovation requires individuals to question their own tacit knowledge that is derived from their experiences and their milieu (Lam, 2000). (Ross & Hannay, 2001, p. 331)

Understanding the Organization

Organizations are living civilizations onto themselves, and schools act in the same way. They have leaders, systems of governing, rituals, and customs that shape the culture of the civilization. Who are the people resisting the change? At the core, are these people who have no desire to see improvement or are they people who cannot make themselves change?

In his work, Pedro Noguera (2003) outlined research strategies that would bring to light some of the unequal outcomes and opportunities that occur within schools:

1. Make the familiar seem strange and problematic—by using research to enable teachers, students, and parents to question their assumptions about why they do or do not succeed academically and understand how these link to assumptions about natural or race identity.
2. Two critically examine the organization and structure of privilege—by making the various constituencies within the school aware of the ways in which organizational practices harm the educational interests of some students while enhancing the opportunities for this.
3. Empower the disadvantaged and marginalized—by utilizing the inquiry process to make the needs and interests of those who historically have been most peripheral to the school central to its operation and missions. (p. 67)

These concepts provide a starting ground for an approach to look at what needs to be done within the organization and then moving it to build the capacity to think of things

in ways that have not been considered before. In thinking about change capacity, researchers Ross and Hannay (2001) stated:

In developing and utilizing change capacity, the means and ends interact. Change capacity includes the ability to generate alternatives beyond those previously experienced, and yet generating such alternatives might be problematic in a static and taken-for-granted organizational structure. Conceptualizing and creating new organizational structures can expand the alternatives considered possible but only when the participants are engaged in creating the structures; imposing such structures is less likely to perpetuate change capacity. (p. 339)

Organizational Design

According to Evans, Thornton, and Usinger (2012), the beginning of organizational change is based upon four theoretical frameworks for change. As they stated:

Central to the ability of leaders to understand and implement complex change is a solid foundation in the theory of change. Organizational change can be greatly influenced by theoretical frameworks; however, within the educational environment, often, the focus of school reform has been on implementation of programs independent of appropriate theories of change. A firm grounding in change theory can provide educational leaders with an opportunity to orchestrate meaningful organizational improvements. (p. 155)

The four models include Deming's theory of continuous change, Argyris and Schön's organizational learning, Senge's learning organization, and Cooperrider's Appreciative Inquiry. Each will be discussed in turn below.

Deming (2000) offered the following 14 strategies to support continuous improvement in an organizational setting:

...(1) create constancy and purpose toward improvement of product and services, (2) adopt a new philosophy, (3) cease dependence on inspection, (4) end the practice of awarding business on the basis of price, (5) improve the system of production and service, (6) institute training on the job, (7) institute leadership, (8) drive out fear, (9) break down barriers between departments, (10) eliminate slogans and targets for production, (11) eliminate quotas and management by

objectives, (12) remove barriers to pride in workmanship, (13) institute a program of education, and (14) include everyone in the transformation of the organization. (pp. 19-24)

Beyond the strategies, Deming's model is concisely referred to as the Plan-Study-Do-Act process of continual improvement. As the process name clearly delineates, one plans change by analyzing data, studying the effect of the change, "doing" a change, and acting on the data from the implemented change.

The second model is the Organizational learning model, in which there are single and double loops for reflection to drive the learning within. According to Argyris and Schön (1978) and Morgan (2006), organizational learning and individual learning are closely linked. However, in order for organizational learning to occur, an organization must employ strategies to integrate individual and collective learning systematically into skills and knowledge that will deeply affect the organization (Evans et al., 2012). The reflective approach when applied to the whole organization can increase the capacity within the organization through an understanding of lessons learned.

Another model is the learning organization which is from Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline*. The first four components of learning organizations are personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. The fifth aspect is systems thinking. The learning organization is a model that schools seeking to turnaround would find essential to the necessary changes.

Appreciative inquiry (AI), an organizational change framework principally developed by David Cooperrider, postulates that organizations change in the direction from which they inquire. As Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros (2005) stated, "AI is based on the simple assumption that every organization has something that works well

and these strengths can be the starting point for creating positive change” (in Evans et al., 2012, p. 3). In this model, schools will build on what they do well. This can be an important approach considering that turnaround schools tend to be viewed as not going right. The school would need to assess its strengths and make that jump point to create other success.

In a turnaround, numerous issues in the design of the organization must be addressed. It is important for interacting competitively to achieve organizational goals as some managers think organizations and strategies are interchangeable (Daft, 2013, p. 62). However, each organization is as unique as each human being. While some strategies can be applied universally, most need tailoring to meet the individual needs of organizations.

An organization can be observed through metaphors. Morgan (2006) viewed organizations as various metaphors such as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, and psychic prisons. These views of organizations help to frame how to look at the current works of the organization—in this case, the school. The framing can help conceptualize organizational flaws that contribute to a school’s failure. Earlier, it was discussed that the power of the status quo can create a groupthink or psychic prison, as Morgan described. “The psychic prison metaphor alerts us to pathologies that may accompany our ways of thinking and encourage us to question the fundamental premises on which we enact everyday reality” (p. 211). This limiting element within a school that needs turnaround illustrates the prison that the stakeholders who lead change need to break free of and questions the reality that allows people to stay in the same place.

The metaphor of the organization as a brain is another illustration of what a school in turnaround must strive toward. The organization must learn to learn and adapt

to changes. In linking to a theory of communication and learning, four key principles are stressed:

1. Systems must have the capacity to sense, monitor, and scan significant aspects of their environment.
2. They must be able to relate this information to the operating norms that guide system behavior.
3. They must be able to detect significant deviations from these norms.
4. They must be able to initiate corrective action when discrepancies are detected. (Morgan, 2006, p. 83)

Summarizing the requisite conditions for the learning organization includes understanding the assumptions, frameworks, and norms guiding current activity and then challenging and changing them when necessary (p. 89). Furthermore, an organization must be able to adjust in order to meet changing requirements and avoid duplicating the mistakes that led them to their current state. For a school needing turnaround, understanding the organization through the lens of being a brain or learning organization is the mindset that will prepare the organization to make change.

As a school goes through its own soul-searching process, specific key elements to the organizational design become the foundation of the new school. Murphy (2013) noted some of those necessities. The building material of school improvement include:

1. Quality instruction through effective teachers and quality pedagogy;
2. Curriculum through content coverage, time, rigor, and relevance;
3. Personalized learning environment for students through safe and orderly climate, meaningful connections, and opportunities to participate;

4. Professional learning environment for educators through a collaborative culture of work, participation and ownership, and shared leadership;
5. Learning-centered leadership through developing supportive culture;
6. Learning-centered linkages to the school community, connections to parents, linkages to community agencies and organizations; and
7. Monitoring of progress and performance accountability through performance-based goals and systematic use of data and shared accountability. (Murphy, 2013, pp. 258-259)

Mass Insight Education, the organization that produced *The Turnaround Challenge*, is frequently referenced as a source of creating viable turnaround models. Its work refers to the three Cs—creating conditions, building capacity, and creating clusters of support—as essential to the turnaround effort (Calkins et al., 2007). In terms of conditions, Mass Insight seeks to create “turnarounds zones” in order to advance the work. By creating the conditions stated below, rapid change can occur in schools.

- **Clearly defined authority to act** based on what is best for children and learning, i.e., flexibility and control over staffing, scheduling, budget, and curriculum.
- **Relentless focus on hiring and staff development** as part of an overall “people strategy” to ensure the best possible teaching force.
- **Highly capable, distributed school leadership**, i.e., not simply the principal, but an effective leadership team.
- **Additional time** in the school day and across the school year.

- **Performance-based behavioral expectations** for all stakeholders including teachers, students, and (often) parents.
- **Integrated, research-based programs and related social services** that are specifically designed, personalized, and adjusted to address students' academic and related psychosocial needs.

Capacity is the ability to make changes necessary to move schools. At this time of the turnaround challenge, Calkins et al. (2007) felt there was sufficient capacity to take this work to scale. "It should be recognized within education—as it is in other sectors—as a distinct professional discipline that requires specialized experience, training, and support" (p. 4).

The issue of capacity relates to the fact that turnaround is a still emerging field; thus, the number of qualified operators in this field is limited, compared to the thousands of schools that need turnaround. Numerous successful charter school management companies have refused to take on turnaround work (Smarick, 2010).

America's most famous superior urban schools in the restructuring process are virtually always new starts rather than schools that were previously underperforming. Probably the most convincing argument for the fundamental difference between start-ups and turnarounds comes from those actually running high-performing, high-poverty urban schools Groups like KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) and Achievement First open new schools; as a rule, they do not reform failing schools. (Smarick, 2010, p. 12)

Organizationally, CMOs have operate from a fresh start approach where they select the students as opposed to inheriting those of a school they would take over. These organizations prefer to pick the students rather than impose their methods on students who are already in a school.

Furthermore, according to *The Turnaround Fallacy* turnarounds are not a suitable strategy for improving the schools that struggle the most (Smarick, 2010). According to the author, this has been proven repeatedly.

Other reasons for why not as many turnaround experts operate include the nature of the work required to change a school. In a failing organization, existing practices contribute to failure. Successful turnaround leaders break rules and norms. Deviating to achieve early wins shows that new action gets new results (Emily Ayscue & Hassel, 2009). This necessity to change rules can be difficult for adults to adjust to and embrace. In some instances, new organizations had to be created to support the turnaround work; New Leaders for New Schools (now New Leaders) is one such organization. According to their website:

Through our leadership programs, we develop talented educators into transformational school leaders who create a vision of success for all students and engage the whole staff and community in realizing this vision. Through our leadership services, we also collaborate with districts, charter management organizations and states to foster the conditions that enable highly effective school leaders to drive results for students. (Emily Ayscue & Hassel, 2009, n.p.)

Turnaround school literature is largely informed by the organizational sciences and was adapted to fit the needs of educational policy (Mette, 2013).

A synthetic chronicle of the turnaround narrative flows as follows. Period one represents a state of success, or at least stability. Period two encompasses the time when the factors that push an organization into a turnaround situation begin to occupy centerstage. Period three includes the time when actions in response to decline, failing status, and crisis that are designed to stabilize the organization are brought into play. (Murphy, 2008, p. 75)

From this literature, turnaround is viewed as a concept, a condition, and a process or consequence. As a condition, it is akin to that of a medical situation, such as a firm in declining health. It is also defined as a crisis needing action. In a business model, the

crisis needs an action that would be called profitability (Bibeault, 1982, p. 81), “a lost sense of direction” (Crandall, 1995, p. 9), or poor performance (Hambrick & Schechter, 1983, p. 234). In an academic model, the turnaround is linked clearly to student performance on standardized tests.

The question of why models of turnaround are not being used must be explored. “It should be recognized within education—as it is in other sectors—as a distinct professional discipline that requires specialized experience, training, and support” (Calkins et al., 2007 p. 4). Among the reasons more schools are not in the federal turnaround models are funding and capacity (Kutash et al., 2009). The federal government has offered billions of dollars of support through SIGs, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), Race to the Top (RTTT), and temporary grant measures. With funding tied to competitive structures such as RTTT or temporary structures such as ARRA, districts struggle to maintain a viable turnaround effort that would go beyond a few years.

According to the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, some key success factors and key challenges lay in governance, environmental, leadership, and organizational considerations (Kowal & Hassel, 2005). Governance is the management of the turnaround process, while environmental consists of the factors outside the control of the leader and staff. Leadership, which has been referenced by numerous authors, is seen as a determining factor. Finally, organizational factors are seen as the most challenging factor (Kowal & Hassel, 2005). Specifically, accountability within an accelerated timeframe is an important element of governance. Turnarounds require the urgency of how much must be achieved in what amount of time and whether

leaders have the freedom to act. Following this element, it is important that districts support and systems align to support change (Kowal & Hassel, 2005).

Turnaround Conclusion

In approaching turnaround, it is important to understand why schools fail. Turnaround work differs from school improvement in speed and scope. The federally funded SIG program permitted slow incremental change. However, turnaround is not intended to be slow or incremental. Supports for turnaround seek significant change in a short period, generally 2 to 3 years. Turnaround work requires a commitment to disrupting the status quo. When applied to education, Disruptive Innovation captures the approach to be taken. The actors in this field must break norms, take the organization in a different direction, and do so quickly. For these changes to happen, the school will need the correct environment around it.

Turnaround needs the correct environment of support. The school district must put elements in place for it to succeed; in particular, it must give school leaders autonomy to create the turnaround. The environment for change must also be supported at the state level with the conditions set for turnaround to happen. The internal environment of the school needs to focus on hiring, staff development, distributed school leadership, extended day and year, change in behavioral expectations for all stakeholders, and increased related social services.

Turnaround work needs operators who are willing to struggle with complexities to bring about change. Experienced operators, notably charter management organizations, must choose to work under conditions they are not normally used to facing. Struggles for turnaround include level of funding and ability to sustain growth once the funding ends.

Even more pressing for the turnaround effort is the issue of sustainability. As noted in a variety of fields, significant change is very difficult to sustain. As Hess and Gift (2009) noted:

Failure to sustain significant change recurs again and again despite substantial resources committed to the change effort (many are bankrolled by top management), talented and committed people “driving the change,” and high stakes.... There is little to suggest that schools, healthcare institutions, governmental, and nonprofit institutions fare any better. (p. 2)

Changing the tide of sustainability requires fully understanding what turnaround efforts have taken place before and look to ameliorate the pitfalls that arise from the change process. Among those is creating systems that transcend individual people, so that no cults of personality are created. In addition, it is necessary to create systems that survive beyond organizational changes. Sustainability needs to survive the early wins for those desiring the status quo in the existing school environment.

The organization design and the culture must be dealt with in order to progress. As Schein (2006) suggested, leaders act proactively, commit to learning, have positive assumptions about human nature, and are dedicated to systems thinking among other points in moving the organizational culture forward.

Leadership

Leadership is frequently referenced as the second most important element affecting student achievement behind teacher effectiveness. The principalship is a key factor in school reform because principal leadership is “Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 5). In addition to school building-based

leadership, there is a need for leadership at all levels to ensure successful turnaround work. The school district has to support change through both leadership and structural supports, the most important of which is providing resources to the building leader (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Turnaround occurs when leadership matters the most, but putting an organization on a positive path toward future success also requires that leaders energize their workforce throughout the ranks (Kanter, 2003).

Leadership assertiveness has been studied as one aspect of the turnaround.

O’Kane and Cunningham (2014) looked at the styles of hard and soft leadership and cited the previous work of Bibeault:

“Hard” leadership is important during turnaround to centralize command, reduce participation and instill close supervision and control. Bibeault (1999), for example, detailed how turnaround leaders are decisive, risk-taking and utilize strict authority, performance evaluations and reward systems.... In contrast a “soft” leadership incorporates a more interpersonal, open and cooperative form of leadership to emphasize shared ownership of the turnaround challenge (Ashmos & Duchon, 1998; Beer & Walton, 1987; Higgs & Rowland, 2005). (p. 965)

These two variations on assertiveness have merits in leading turnaround. Soft leadership is necessary to move the individual, while hard leadership is necessary to get results for early wins. The researchers argued that effective turnaround leadership is less about particular skill sets or “types” of leaders for different stages of the turnaround process, and more about their ability to navigate purposefully and balance apparently conflicting activities within these tensions. Zimmerman (1991) noted in his research over 20 years ago that leadership is among the key factors for successful turnaround: “What we found was that three key factors were evident in each of the success stories: (1) a low cost of operation, (2) differentiated products and (3) quality of leadership” (p. 13). He further noted that successful turnaround leaders usually enjoy positive personal

reputations as being fair with employees, creditors, suppliers, and customers, and their focus is intensely operational. Turnaround can appear as much about the people who lead as it is about operations and systems. The type of leader is as important to the process as are other aspects of the organization.

James Griffith (1999) in his research on leadership and school climate looked at four particular leadership types:

The leaders are categorized as instructional leader, custodial manager, missionary principal, and gamesman or politician. The leaders are further described as *instructional leader*, focused on well designed and managed classroom instruction; the *custodial manager*, concerned with well-designed and operating school; the *missionary principal*, concerned with meeting the social needs of students, school staff, and parents through positive school climate; and the *gamesman* or *politician*, who negotiates needs and demands that are internal and external to the school. (p. 285)

Griffith further noted other traits of effective principals:

In effective schools, principals provide bridging and buffering mechanisms. Individual and group parent involvement may benefit teaching, student learning, and school governance; thus, the principal informs, coordinates, and arranges for community involvement in school activities. In contrast, external pressures may interfere with the school curriculum, teaching, and the professional discretion of teachers; thus, the principal may act as an arbitrator between community demands and classroom teaching. (p. 286)

The principal as the instructional leader in the building must exhibit important skills and capacities to carry out the work. Among the competencies needed is the ability to think systematically (Senge, 1990). Systems thinking involves the ability to look at operations in a holistic way and thus approach the work. Principals articulate a vision, execute the plan of work, and consistently meet expectations. While turnaround principals must be crystal clear about where they begin their travel and where they are headed, what about the journey itself? While no two turnaround principals cover exactly the same route, most must contend with a number of predictable challenges (Duke, 2004).

Throughout this literature review, leadership has been seen as a central variable in the equation of organizational success. Leadership is crucial to the turnaround process. In conceptualizing instructional leadership, Hallinger (2003) proposed a model that features three dimensions of leadership: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate. Within the three dimensions, the model also explains 10 instructional leadership functions. The first two functions link to the first dimension of the school's mission. The functions here are framing and communicating the school's goals. The second dimension incorporates supervising and evaluating instruction, or naming the curriculum and monitoring student progress. The third dimension includes the other functions, namely protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers and for learning (Hallinger, 2003). The school principals remain essential to school performance. Principals contribute to school effectiveness and student achievement indirectly through actions they take to influence what happens in the classroom (Hallinger, 2003).

In Leithwood and Strauss's (2009) article "Turnaround Schools: Leadership Lessons," the stages of turnaround were defined as Declining Performance, Crisis Stabilization, and Sustaining and Improving Performance. The authors further defined four broad dimensions: Direction Setting, Developing People, Redesigning the Organization, and Managing the Instructional Program (p. 27). The Wallace Foundation's (2012) work since 2000 has suggested that this entails five key responsibilities:

1. Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards.

2. Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit, and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail.
3. Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their parts in realizing the school vision.
4. Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn to their utmost.
5. Managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement. (p. 2)

According to Goldstein (1988), it would be more accurate to say that turnaround depends more on a leader with certain personality traits than on certain managerial skills (Goldstein, 1988, p. 55).

The principal's visible commitment is needed to implement a program throughout a grade or school, and to provide the managerial and scheduling support that teachers need. Even such relatively simple strategies as block scheduling require scheduling changes for all participating students; otherwise, teachers must continue with the traditional 42- to 47-minute class period. The principal's support is also needed to counter the inactivity of reluctant or opposing teachers, a critical concern in reforms that are designed to transform content as well as structure. Teacher buy-in is essential to any change effort; the translation and implementation of the program are in their hands. Data from case studies have indicated that schools benefit greatly from strong school leadership and staff buy-in. As with any comprehensive school reform, continuity on the part of school leadership and staff is critical to seeing the reforms carried out. To minimize principal and staff turnover, districts may wish to request staff to commit themselves to staying in the school for the grant period. Similarly, districts must agree not

to transfer supportive staff elsewhere during the same time period. “Successful turnaround leaders are focused, fearless data hounds. They choose their initial goals based on rigorous analysis. They report key staff results visibly and often” (Emily Ayscue & Hassel, 2009, p. 26).

Turnaround Leader Competencies

Steiner and colleagues (2008) identified four competencies and their definitions of a turnaround leader as follows:

Driving for Results Cluster – These enable a relentless focus on learning results:

- **Achievement:** The drive and actions to set challenging goals and reach a high standard of performance despite barriers.
- **Initiative and Persistence:** The drive and actions to do more than is expected or required in order to accomplish a challenging task.
- **Monitoring and Directedness:** The ability to set clear expectations and hold others accountable for performance.

Planning Ahead – This is a bias towards planning in order to derive future benefits or to avoid problems.

Influencing for Results Cluster – These enable working through and with others:

- **Impact and Influence:** Acting with the purpose of affecting the perceptions, thinking, and actions of others.
- **Team Leadership:** Assuming authoritative leadership of a group for the benefit of the organization.

Developing Others – This influence has the specific intent of increasing the short- and long-term effectiveness of another person.

Problem-Solving Cluster – These enable the solving and simplifying of complex problems; analyzing data to inform decisions; making clear, logical plans that people can follow; and ensuring a strong connection between school learning goals and classroom activity.

- **Analytical Thinking:** Breaking things down in a logical way and recognizing cause and effect.
- **Conceptual Thinking:** Seeing patterns and links among seemingly unrelated things.

Showing Confidence to Lead – This competency is concerned with staying focused, committed, and self-assured, despite the barrage of personal and professional attacks common during turnarounds (Steiner & Hassel, 2011; Steiner, Hassel, Hassel, & Valsing, 2008).

The turnaround principal's manager in most cases will be a district leader responsible for a number of schools, and the turnaround principal will be partly dependent on various people in the central office who control school funding and services. In addition, school turnaround leaders cannot build new practices from scratch as start-up leaders can. Instead, they must help school staff members to stop one set of activities and behaviors that have failed to work and start a new set that will work (Kowal & Hassel, 2005). Respect is a cornerstone leadership. "Turnaround leaders must move people toward respect; when colleagues respect one another's abilities, they are more likely to collaborate in shaping a better future" (Kanter, 2003).

A complementary view of leadership practices was developed by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner (1995). The *Leadership Practices Inventory* focuses on five practices of exemplary leadership (Posner, Kouzes, & Dixit, 2011):

- **Model the Way.** Leaders must stand for something, believe in something, and care about something. Do what you say you will do.
- **Inspire a Shared Vision.** Leaders envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities. They enlist others in their dreams by appealing to shared aspirations.
- **Challenge the Process.** The work of leaders is change. Leaders search for opportunities by seeking innovative ways to change, grow, innovate, and improve.
- **Enable Others to Act.** Leaders support collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust.
- **Encourage the Heart.** The climb to the top is arduous and steep. Leaders encourage the heart of the constituents to carry on.

In the complex and dynamic environment of schools, all principals need to understand effective leadership behaviors and teachers' perceptions of their behaviors. Leaders must be able to envision the needs of their teachers correctly, empower them to share the vision, and create an effective school climate (Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005).

In their research, Kurland, Peretz, and Hertz-Lazarowitz (2010) findings demonstrated that

...the school vision was a significant predictor of school organizational learning and functioned as a partial mediator only between principals' transformational leadership style and school organizational learning. Moreover, the principals' transformational leadership style predicted the school organizational vision and school organizational learning processes. In other words, school vision, as shaped by the principal and the staff, is a powerful motivator of the process of organizational learning in school. (Kurland et al., 2010, p. 7)

Leadership is the driver for learning and principals must act as leaders, as opposed to managers, in order to assure the organization moves forward. These leaders must find a balance appreciating their forerunners and charting a new direction.

Turnaround leaders expressing an appreciation for the work of the past may not be looked upon favorably. The past can represent many of the challenges that have brought the organization to where it is now. Yet, out of respect for the past, traditions and practices are important to be honored in order to lead people to a new future. Change and even more so dramatic change is a part of the turnaround process, but change may not always lead to sustainability. It is the leader's duty to create sustainable practices, and there is a link to sustainability in looking at the past. Sustainable development respects, protects, preserves, and renews all that is valuable in the past and learns from it in order to build a better future (Hargreaves, 2007, p. 226).

Valuing what has come before will be important for the leader to maintain the respect of the organization to move into the future. While the past can illustrate what was not successful, completely ignoring that the past exists can be detrimental. The detriment comes in the form of the internalized disrespect that those who have lived through the past and find the good in it will feel if the new leader ignores all that has come before. A little nostalgia can be healthy; too much can be very costly to the efforts.

Leadership Conclusion

Leadership is crucial to the success of a turnaround. Leadership is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the efforts.

Whether the leader is the manager or not, custodial elements are necessary for whichever way turnaround is constructed. It must help students tap into a mindset of achievement and offer them a vision of concrete goals that can seed motivation (Pappano, 2010).

In exercising leadership for climate improvement, the principal's major role is to provide the staff with information, expectations, support, and supervision so that they can serve as mediators and transmitters of the principal's expectations. (Osman, 2012, p. 953)

Leadership is displayed as the things that are done to show that new heights can be achieved. These habits of the mind will show the type of leader that is working on the turnaround. Leadership exists as traits and as actions in behavioral practice. "The effective leader not only triggers change, but also changes the climate for the company, articulates its vision, and gives new direction" (Grinyer, Mayes, & McKiernan, 1988, p. 59). A leader will display sustainable habits such as modeling the way, empowering others, encouraging the future, and honoring the past.

Throughout turnaround efforts, corporate and educational, the actions of leaders create the conditions that allow others to act. In school turnaround, the district leadership is the beginning of the chain to allow others to act. As district leadership sets the parameters for the school leadership, so does the school leadership create it from their internal leadership teams. When the leadership is doing this job correctly, it fosters leadership among teachers and among students.

In most cases, the chief turnaround agent is the firm's chief executive. However, many people are involved in leadership roles in the most successful turnaround cases. One person may receive the bulk of the publicity but a more thorough examination will reveal that team efforts, rather than singular leadership, are really responsible for the restoration of company health. (Zimmerman, 1991, p. 29)

While a cult of personality can help forward the work, distributed leadership will help sustain it beyond. The best leaders create teams and systems that allow the work to continue past their own involvement. A leader needs a team behind him/her to perform the numerous actions necessary to bring the vision to life. The leader can only lead if others are willing to follow and create the reality from the vision.

Culture and Climate

Culture is the organization. Culture encompasses the values, beliefs, and the "who we are," organizationally speaking. "Culture is an abstraction, yet the forces that are created in social and organizational situations that derive from culture are powerful. If we don't understand the operation of these forces, we become victims to them" (Schein, 2006, p. 3). Culture and climate within organizations can move an organization forward or mire it in controversy. In recent years, organizational cultures have been called in to question. In two new economy companies, AirBnB and Uber organizational cultures are defined as follows:

Airbnb appears to have taken the approach of investing significantly in creating community and a feeling of partnership, and of disseminating best practices. Along with the community-building exercises, its recently concluded host convention featured a number of sessions on how to be a better provider.... In contrast, Uber unfailingly appears to place distance between the platform and its providers. (Sundararajan, 2014, p. 1 [HBR website])

In addition to a standoffish culture, Uber recently faced challenges of having an oversexualized “frat culture” that led to board members and its CEO stepping down.

So what Uber desperately needs is a reputable leader who can right the ship and begin to dismantle the rule-breaking, sexist culture that grew up around (the CEO). If nothing else, the chaos at the top illustrates the limits of Silicon Valley’s frat-boy culture when it comes to running a modern corporation. It also is a test of corporate redemption—for Uber and, possibly, for (former CEO) himself. (Belsie, 2017, p. 1 [Blog])

Uber has a culture problem that it will need to solve in order to remain profitable.

Pervasive negative cultures can create legal challenges as the culture portrayed at Fox News is currently playing out. Recently, the news organization paid out more than \$45 million in settlements over sexual harassment and discrimination charges (Snider, 2017).

Organizations have to decide who they are and what their core values are and how they manifest themselves on a daily basis. These core values ultimately guide the development of the culture and the climate in which it operates. Core values, such as espousing the desire for employees to have a work/life balance, must take steps to assure that is the culture. As an example, if the organization is promoting this balance between work time and personal time, there should not be penalties or repercussion for not responding to an email late at night or on the weekend for non-urgent matters.

In looking at organizational culture, Schein (2006) noted levels within culture. Those levels are artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions. The artifacts are the visible structures and processes, while the espoused beliefs are the strategies and goals, and the underlying assumptions are the taken-for-granted thoughts and feelings (p. 59). These elements of culture explain the climate and the ways everything happens within the organization. Schein further noted that “The strength and stability of culture derives from the fact that it is group based—that the individual will

hold on to certain basic assumptions in order to ratify his or her membership in the group” (p. 63). The culture of the organization requires individuals to adapt to the group norms and agree to act within those group norms. During a turnaround effort, what the group knows will need to be challenged, in order to develop new understandings and new ways of operating as an organization.

Culture and climate are evolving entities within an organization. There is the culture brought in by the founders; it developed and the organization grows it. Schools are always in flux. Depending on level and transiency, the population could have the same students for as little as 1 year or as long as 13 years. The teaching staff, particularly in urban environments, can be in constant flux. Developing and maintaining a positive culture will be an ongoing challenge. The faculty can be the driving force in the maintenance of the culture and climate within a building. They can be the force that makes a positive or toxic learning environment. The leader, as discussed earlier, has to be the steward who transcends the negative in order to create a supportive culture and climate in a building. At the heart of this stewardship are the core values that the organization holds.

On the whole, schools espouse certain common values that cross-cut socioeconomic and racial lines. The core value of primary and secondary education is to prepare students to take their place in society. Alignment with core values and measures of success may have variants as schools are studied, but core values are placed on completion and graduation. The climate within a school can show alignment with this core in how students are treated and impacted daily.

Great schools enrich the lives of those who work in them as well as those they serve. Developing and maintaining a winning climate is challenging but extremely rewarding goals for those who want to make a difference (Osman, 2012). Attention to school climate and culture has increased greatly over the past two decades. School climate encompasses: (a) physical environment, (b) social environment, (c) affective environment, and (d) academic environment. Another definition of culture and climate is the historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies and rituals, traditions, and myths, as understood by varying degrees by members of the school community.

Whether it is in schools or private firms, a successful turnaround requires transforming culture, expectations, and routines. That may not always be possible in organizations burdened by anachronistic contract provisions, rickety external support, and years of accrued administrative incompetence. (Hess & Gift, 2009, p. 4)

Creating the climate involves numerous aspects of a school working together and requires systems, as Cohen (2006) indicated:

Systemic intervention to create a safe, caring, and responsive school climate is the unifying goal for evidenced-based work in this area, as it provides the platform upon which we teach and learn. Research reveals that eleven factors define the climate of a school: structural issues (e.g., size of the school); environmental (e.g., cleanliness); social-emotional and physical order and safety; expectations for student achievement; quality of instruction; collaboration and communication; sense of school community; peer norms; school-home community partnerships; student morale; and the extent to which the school is a vital learning community. (p. 212)

Getting these numerous pieces to fit together and work is central to the turnaround effort.

Culture is the core of the transformation that is required to take place in terms of expectations and routines and how individuals relate to one another.

Traditionally, the literature on school culture has focused mostly on student behavior within schools. Some of the notable factors in the research on school discipline have focused on racial and gender bias, misunderstanding of cultural norms, and understanding of what successful classroom management is. Within a school, culture and climate have a significant role to play in day-to-day operations. School discipline codes must reflect the culture and value of the institution. “Discipline is about giving children what they need, not what they deserve” (Morrish, 2003, p. 37). Discipline is only one piece of school culture and climate. The way communications happen between adults and children as well as between adults and other adults need to be studied. How parents are engaged in the school is another important component to study as well.

School culture and climate have varying meanings and encompass a great number of circumstances (Sherblom, Marshall, & Sherblom, 2006). According to Sherblom et al., school culture is said to represent the values, norms, professional structures, and orientations that give a school a distinctive identity and ideology. Further, Sergiovanni (2000) called school culture “the normative glue” (p. 1) that holds a particular school together, and he argued that a strong school culture leads to a sense of individual and community commitment which, in turn, can force personal and communal achievement (Sergiovanni, 2000; Sherblom et al., 2006).

School climate and culture have various definitions:

School climate is described as the system of meanings that shapes what people think and how they act (Stolp, 1994). It could mean the social system of shared norms and expectations (Brookover et al., 1978); the set of norms and expectations that others have for students (West, 1985); the psychosocial context in which teachers work and teach (Fisher & Fraser, 1990); teachers’ morale (Brown & Henry, 1992); level of teachers’ empowerment (Short & Rinehart, 1992); and students’ perceptions of the “personality of a school.” (Johnson & Stevens, 2006, p. 111)

According to Johnson and Stevens (2006), school climate can be seen either as a construct representing the involvement of everyone in the school or as primarily a function of the teachers and the students. School climate is also described as the lived embodiment and experience of how the school is organized, how people relate to one another, and how those relationships are institutionally supported (Creemers & Reezigt, 1999; Fleming & Bay, 2004). As for culture, according to Stolp (1994), it is a system of meaning that often shapes what people think and how they act.

From the viewpoint of Cohen, Pickeral, and McCloskey (2009), “virtually all researchers and the National School Climate Council have agreed that four major factors shape school climate: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and institutional environment” (p. 46). Cohen et al. further stated that.

school climate is best evaluated with surveys that have been developed in a scientifically sound manner and are comprehensive in (a) recognizing student, parent, and school personnel voice; and (b) assessing all the dimensions that color and shape the process of teaching and learning as well as educators’ and students’ experiences in the school building. Although there are hundreds of school climate surveys today, few meet these two criteria. (p. 46)

School improvement requires coordinated, sustained, and intentional efforts to create learning climates that promote students’ social, emotional, ethical, and intellectual abilities. By providing a range of formative information about both academic and nonacademic aspects of school life, school climate data give school leaders scientifically sound information to gauge and direct these efforts (Cohen et al., 2009). MacNeil et al. (2009) summarized that strong school cultures have better motivated teachers who, in turn, have greater success in terms of student performance and student outcomes. School principals seeking to improve student performance should focus on improving the

school's culture by getting the relationships right between themselves, their teachers, their students, and their parents.

Climate of the School Day

In approaching culture, climate, and student achievement, one can see that the school runs on its schedule. Making the school day work for students and adults is essential to advancing student achievement. On any given day, schools across the country operate in a variety of ways that either benefit students, or adults; under the best circumstances, they serve both needs. Unfortunately, there are cases where only adults are served and student needs in a modern society are not met. In looking at school climate and the needs of students, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has been expanding over the past decade. SEL is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2017). Dr. Jonathan Cohen (2006) argued that SEL is a cornerstone for our future as a country and should be part of schools.

For our country's future, and for social justice, it is essential that all children, particularly the disadvantaged and the poor, have the opportunity to develop the social-emotional competencies and ethical dispositions that provide the foundation for the tests of life, health, relationships, and adult work. (p. 227)

To meet the mandates of the NCLB Act, various strategies have been recommended to improve academic achievement, among them increasing instructional time. The National Center on Time and Learning believed time on task leads to better test results (Kaplan et al., 2012). One aspect of the NCLB Act is the identification of schools'

AYP. Stecher and Vernez (2010) noted that identified schools were more likely to offer extended-time programs than non-identified schools. The identified schools referred to the schools not meeting AYP. In addition, some schools reorganized the school day to change the amount of instructional time for specific subjects as a strategy to support turnaround. While many find the increase in the use of instructional time important to improving student achievement, researchers have talked about the protection of that instructional time.

Gandara (1999) noted practices in exemplary schools. These schools protect time to learn by eliminating distractions in the classroom. The schools avoid pulled outs, in-class announcements and other interruptions, so teachers can expect uninterrupted instructional time (Gandara, 1999). The reports of instructional time can only reflect the official block of time scheduled. Not calculated into these reports is the loss of instructional minutes. In a given school day, numerous elements affect actual instructional time, including disruptive behavior, snow days, announcements, pull-outs, and assemblies.

Protection of instructional time and arranging for additional instructional time in other activities are habits of effective school leaders. Bartell's (1990, in Cotton, 2003) 21 subjects were found to "establish rules, guidelines, and operational and protect instructional time" procedures (p. 5). Agreeing with the protection of instructional time, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) urged schools to establish agreed-upon policies and procedures for scheduling practices that do not interrupt instructional time. With the importance of protected instructional time noted, actual learning time can be examined.

Research findings have indicated that the key to improving achievement is to increase actual learning time. Increases in engaged time and actual learning time will occur only when teachers use appropriate instructional strategies with students who experience repeated successes in learning (Suarez, 1991). Engaged time is the minutes spent in instruction with the student receiving the content.

Another approach to making the school day work for students has been to create smaller learning communities (SLC). The SLC program was established in response to growing national concerns about students who were too often lost and alienated in large, impersonal high schools, as well as concerns about school safety and low levels of achievement and graduation for many students (Danielson, 2007). SLC structures and strategies include the following:

Structures

1. **Career Academies** are one type of school-within-a-school that organizes curricula around one or more careers or occupations. They integrate academic and occupation-related classes.
2. **Freshman Academies**, also called **Ninth Grade Academies**, are designed to bridge middle and high school. They respond to the high ninth-grade dropout rate in some high schools.
3. **House Plans** are composed of students assembled across all grades or by grade level (e.g., all 11th and 12th graders) with their own disciplinary policy, student activity program, student government, and social activities.

4. **Schools-Within-a-School** break large schools into individual schools, which are multiage and may be theme-oriented; they are separate and autonomous units with their own personnel, budgets, and programs.

Strategies

1. **Block Scheduling:** Class time is extended to blocks of 80-90 minutes, allowing teachers to provide individual attention and work together in an interdisciplinary fashion on a greater variety of learning activities.
2. **Career Clusters, Pathways, and Majors:** These broad areas identify academic and technical skills that students need as they transition from high school to postsecondary education and employment.
3. **Adult Advocates or Mentors:** Trained adult advocates meet with students individually or in small groups on a regular basis over several years, providing support and academic and personal guidance.
4. **Teacher Advisory Program:** The homeroom period is changed to a teacher advisory period, assigning teachers to a small number of students for whom they are responsible over 3 or 4 years of high school.
5. **Teacher Teams:** Academic teaming organizes teachers across subjects so that teacher teams share responsibility for curriculum, instruction, evaluation, and discipline for the same group of 100 to 150 students (U.S. Department of Education Implementation Study of Smaller Learning Communities, 2008).

Establishing a positive climate for the school day through scheduling and adult behaviors is one component of the overall climate. To further bolster climate, attention should be paid to student routines and behaviors.

Discipline and School Culture

One element of climate within the school is how discipline is handled, specifically how consequences and rewards are meted out. Student discipline can be symptomatic of issues within the school. Some of the notable factors in the research on school discipline include the focus on racial and gender bias, misunderstanding cultural norms, and understanding what successful classroom management is.

Within a school, culture and climate play a significant role in day-to-day operations. School discipline codes must reflect the culture and value of the institution. Discipline is about giving children the structure they need, not the consequences they deserve (Morrish, 2003). In school, discipline is often only thought about in response to a student's violation of school rules or some form of misbehavior. It is the whole system of expectations and the consequences for meeting and not meeting those expectations.

Expectations for behavior can be set by policy, but people have to interpret and make decisions about whether those expectations are met. Each person brings his or her preconceived notions of who can live up to those expectations and creates labels for those not expected to meet them. In Ferguson's (2000) study of Black boys, school rules and discipline were viewed as ways to create labels and groups. These issues moved students away from their status, as defined organically, to labels based on school-generated norms. "We come to know who we are in the world and we are known by others, through our socially constituted 'individual' difference rather than through an ascribed status such as race and class" (p. 53). Labels such as "good," "bad," "troubled," among others, can reinforce forms of racism within schools. The biases can be both racial- and gender-based.

In *The Color of Discipline*, Skiba, Michael, Nardo, and Peterson (2002) pointed out that boys were four times as likely to be given office referral or suspension as girls. The researchers pointed to the disproportionality of race and gender in these referrals and how this trait is common in schools with predominantly African American faculty. Within such schools, disciplinary issues still exist; thus, other factors must be studied to account for those students who face frequent disciplinary action.

In looking at the pattern of disproportionality by race and gender present in middle schools, Kaufman et al. (2010) posited that office referrals may reinforce behaviors on both the teachers' and the students' parts because this form of intervention may provide a "time out" from the instructor and the child, respectively. In Cavanaugh's (2009) work on predictors of suspendable offenses, when the surveyed girls observed violence at school involving their peers, they tended to model their own behavior on what they witnessed. According to this work, the largest predictor was observation of similar behavior in school.

While the research differs in the reasons for disparities among referrals and suspensions, a common thread is the need for teachers to expand their cultural knowledge of various groups. Teacher training in appropriate and culturally competent methods of classroom management is a pressing need in addressing racial disparities in school discipline (Skiba, 2011). In an earlier work, Skiba et al. (2002) stated, "In many secondary classrooms, cultural discontinuity or misunderstanding may create a cycle of miscommunication and confrontation for African-American students" (p. 336). The suggestion is that teachers of European descent may misinterpret the active and more physical style of communication among African Americans, thereby causing more

referrals. The researchers recommended that teacher training focus on cultural competencies to enable teachers to meet the challenges of the diverse classroom.

The same message of teacher training was echoed in the work of Vincent, Cartledge, Tobin, and Swain-Bradway (2011), who stated that teachers should receive training on cultural competencies to understand in different ways that “the general dimensions on which cultures tend to differ include collectivistic versus individualistic orientations, expressiveness, communication styles, interactions between generations, the role of status and authority, and language” (p. 221). Teachers with a cultural knowledge of other races gained a powerful tool to work with students and increase understanding. In their recommendations, the researchers provided an infrastructure that may facilitate the integration of culturally responsive educational practices into the effective delivery of behavior support. Teachers should be better prepared to understand varying cultural norms in schools.

In understanding cultures and discipline, it is important to recognize that students in urban environments are often asked to make a code switch. The historical definition of the code switch is the practice of moving between variations of languages in different contexts (Myers-Scotton, 1998). In practice, code switching is also used to refer to a change in behavior expectations in different situations. In urban schools the code switch is in behavioral and linguistic expectations. Students who successfully make the code switch are able to follow the rules and meet the cultural expectations within the school. Another code exists to help young people “survive” in an urban area with a different form of communication than within the walls of the school. Teachers must be masterful at helping students make that switch.

The qualities of good teaching are key to helping stem discipline problems in the classroom. The characteristics of being enthusiastic, listening, apologizing for errors, not being intimidating or embarrassing, and treating all students with respect are listed as essential for teaching Black students, especially when teachers are from middle-class backgrounds (Kunjufu, 2002). While Kunjufu equated them as necessary for success in teaching African American children, these are generally considered traits of good teaching. Kunjufu also pointed out other considerations, such as limiting negative comments about students or avoiding giving children a reputation. This is a significant point because in the present research, the participants did carry particular reputations that have followed them over their time at the school. Another consideration is the halo effect or tendency to label a child's overall ability based on a few behaviors.

The models for successful teacher training, cultural awareness, and communication are the most prevalent links in student behavior and discipline. School administration and staff should play a role in helping students make the code switch from their neighborhood to school environment and norms. The school must work on providing a positive climate where negative behaviors are not rewarded or the appearance of reward in order to lessen copycat behaviors. The school also needs to create a structure for discipline that supports a climate of culturally responsive norms. Furthermore, teachers must be aware of their own biases and avoid bringing those into the process of determining referrals and out-of-class interventions.

Howard and Brainard (1987) identified eight indicators of positive school climate, as follows:

1. **Respect.** Each member of the school must be treated with respect and see himself or herself as a person of worth.
2. **Caring.** Individuals at the school should feel that people are concerned about them and interested in their well-being.
3. **High morale.** School members feel good about what is happening; are willing to perform assigned tasks; and are confident, cheerful, and self-disciplined.
4. **Opportunities for input.** Everyone in the school should be given the opportunity to contribute ideas and know they have been considered.
5. **Continuous academic and social growth.** Both students and faculty strive to develop their skills and knowledge; the professional staff holds high expectations for students.
6. **School renewal.** The school is self-renewing, growing, developing, and changing.
7. **Cohesiveness.** School members should feel a sense of belonging to the school; this will result in school spirit or esprit de corps.
8. **Trust.** Individuals within the school must have confidence that others can be counted on to do what they say will do. Integrity is an essential characteristic of school members (Howard & Brainard, 1987; Osman, 2012).

Trust influences academic achievement and is key to maintaining an effective learning environment (Perkins & Comer, 2006). The indicators form a set of elements to “look for” as culture and climate are researched within a school. In addition to indicators, a process for systematic change of culture should be explored. A systematic approach

involves understanding the complex interplay of school improvement and child development.

Comer Approach

For more than 40 years, Dr. James P. Comer has been working on school development process. The Comer Process provides the organizational, management, and communication framework for planning and managing all the activities of the school based on the developmental needs of its students (Comer Child Study Center, 2013). The Comer team assumed that students were able in all ways needed to be successful, but they had not had the pre- and out-of-school experiences needed to be successful in school; thus, they were differently or underdeveloped. The approach helps school staff and parents identify multiple building-level challenges to supporting development; then they put in place a framework that allowed school stakeholders to address the challenges in an organic, orderly, collaborative fashion (Comer Child Study Center, 2013). The Comer Project suggested:

Restructure guiding principles no-fault problem solving, consensus decision making and collaboration among all stakeholders. Other elements central office towards school serve orientation. Create measurable plans developed in collaboration, continuous growth, structure around learning climate value the child support model and finally early and often training. (Squires & Kranyik, 1995, p. 32)

The components of the Comer Process include various teams to be organized. The School Planning and Management Team is the lead decision-making and planning body of the school. Team members work to build a community where all members have a voice in the decision-making process (McLaughlin, Ennis, & Hernández, 2004). The

Student and Staff Support Team promotes desirable social conditions and relationships. It connects all of the school's student services, facilitates the sharing of information and advice, addresses individual student needs, accesses resources outside the school, and develops prevention programs. Serving on this team are the principal and staff members with expertise in child development and mental health, such as counselors, social workers, psychologists, special education teachers, nurses, and others (Joyner, Ben-Avie, & Comer, 2004). The Parent Team involves parents and families in the school by developing activities through which they can support the school's social and academic programs. This team also selects representatives to serve on the School Planning and Management Team.

The program succeeds because it supports a change in school culture and focuses on the children's total development (Squires & Kranyik, 1995). Comer (2005) made the argument that children grow along these developmental pathways and learn, in large part, through interacting with caretakers in reasonably good environments. In the process, they form emotional attachments and identify with, imitate, and internalize the attitudes, values, and ways of the adults and institutions around them. Further, Comer stated, "We often forget that, for many children, academic learning is not a primary, natural, or valued task. It is the positive relationships and sense of belonging that a good school culture provides that give these children the comfort, confidence, competence, and motivation to learn" (p. 758).

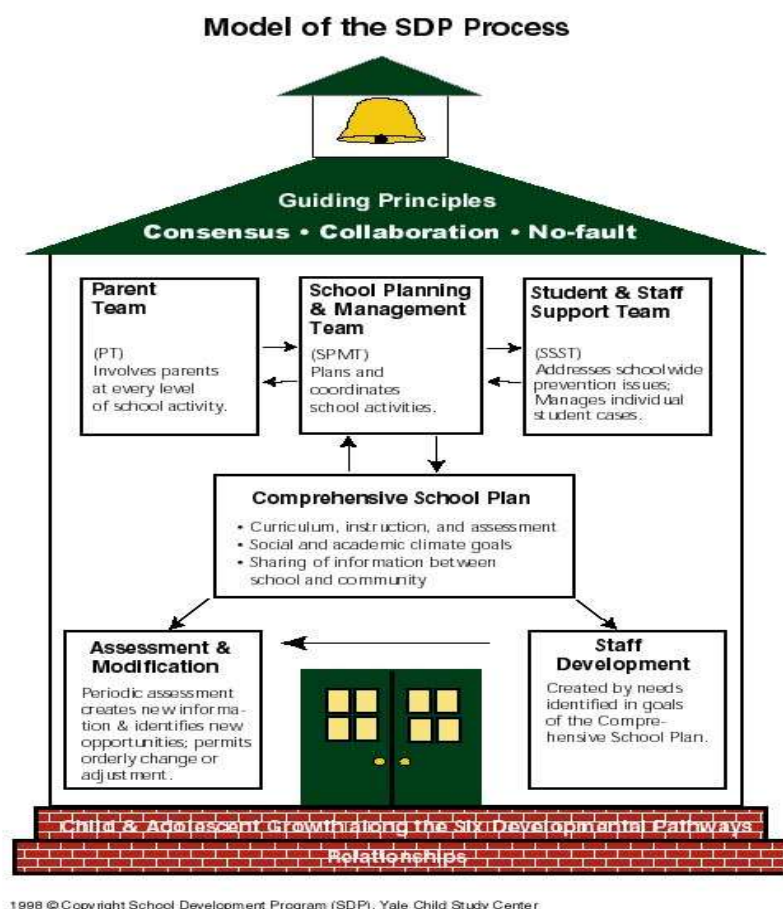


Figure 2. Comer model of SDP process

Student Perceptions

Students have very important perceptions as the individuals affected by turnaround because the most important turnaround in all school reform or improvement efforts happens to the students.

If school reform is to positively impact student achievement, then understanding and responding to students' experiences is essential. The student perspective about schooling and education is an input that can help to complete the picture of what life in classrooms and schools can and should be. After all,

students are the ones these efforts are to benefit. (Iceman Sands, Guzman, Stephens, & Boggs Sands, 2007, p. 341)

Students are the stakeholders that are usually the least empowered in the change process. Paolo Freire (1970) described oppression present in schools as the divide and rule, cultural invasion, and manipulative types of oppression. By constantly reinforcing the negative stereotypes and other negative associations of urban schools, the oppressed—in this case, the students—begin to internalize and believe they are less than. These forces are used by the oppressor to keep those who are oppressed in that state of being, never able to see a way out.

Where children learn is an important concept to consider. In the Council of Urban Boards of Education survey of school climate, *Where We Learn* (Perkins & Comer, 2006), student perceptions of school climate illustrated an important link to achievement. Those who thought their schools were the “best ever” were more likely to feel confident about themselves as learners than were students who felt they were the targets of bullying, racism, or disrespect. Such feelings, both positive and negative, define a school’s climate—that is, the personality of the learning environment (Perkins & Comer, 2006).

This personality will define what student experiences and perceptions will be over the course of their educational career. These perceptions will include the concept of the relationships between students with other students as well as relationships the students have with the adults. While teachers have an important part to play in shaping these perceptions (as discussed later in this dissertation), students have the experience of learning from the adults what is acceptable culture within the building. These perceptions include what the expectations for behavior are toward students and adults, who is

considered “smart” and who may not be considered to be, and other norms. As this environment is being shaped, students have to contend with the existing culture which may include inconsistent rules and expectations during their schooling. Students have to learn how to navigate these challenging norms to succeed. These norms also have cultural expectations woven into them.

In his research on high-achieving African American and Latino students, Chambers (2011) found:

School experience revealed that students employed two strategies to navigate the dominant norms permeated through the schools. Mergers align with dominant norms and merit them in their address behavior and language. Weavers however can navigate the same norms but did not fully align with them in terms of their culture expressed. (p. 3)

The racial identity of students plays a role in the culture within a school. Students will feel pressured to join the culture and at times be expected to adapt cultural norms which are different from the ones they experience at home and in their neighborhood. As Chambers further explained, students take two paths—one of merging and one of weaving—as a metaphor to driving strategies in traffic.

The term Mergers and Weavers framed in an extended driving metaphor appropriately captured these distinct navigation styles as in the case of those who are placed dictated by cars around them in a defensive approach to traffic. Mergers in our study similarly responded to dominant norms in their schools that is facing racialized white norm expectations for speech behavior address present in their high schools aligning with and mirroring them with their primary response. On the other hand Weavers was similarly familiar with the dominant norms of their schools but their approach different in that of the marchers in that mirroring them they were not the primary response instead the expressions of dress speech and behavior were based largely on their racial community norms and culture. (p. 9)

At Central High School, dress code is one of those areas of contention. The dress code has not made much sense over the years. During its implementation, the intent was

to address the appropriateness of the attire and dissuade the wearing of gang colors.

However, with changes in fashion, such as increased availability of colored jeans, rules of the dress code, such as the prohibition of “blue denim,” lacked reasonability. A student could wear green, red, yellow, and any other color, but wearing blue was a problem.

Inconsistency in the code was a source of frustration to students and staff, as reported in focus groups held at the high school.

Early in the school year, an attempt to ease the dress code was initiated by the incoming principal. The decision was not widely supported by the central office or faculty, who desired instead to maintain established traditions. The dress code was a source of tension because hundreds of students per day would not follow it. The disregard of the policy led to strained adult-child relationships within the building. For example, a student would arrive at the school and may not be told by the administration he was out of compliance, but the same student would arrive at class and be told he was out of compliance. The reaction to this situation depended heavily on the relationship between the student and the teacher. In many cases, the relationship was difficult and the discussion of dress code would escalate. A teacher would take an aggressive tone toward the student and the student would respond in kind. At times, the student would make a poor choice in word selection and curse at the teacher. With the use of foul language, the situation would escalate further. A matter that could have been a detention now would become a suspension or, in the worst cases, an arrest.

In the compiled turnaround research of the Center for School Turnaround (2017), one important factor is to have stakeholder input. This reinforces the expectation that stakeholder perceptions play an important part in creating the climate within the school.

Practice 4B: Solicit and act upon stakeholder input**Practice Description:**

1. Collective perceptions—held by school personnel, students, families, and the broader community—about the degree to which their school climate is or is not positive is gathered and used to gauge the climate-related work to be done by a school striving for turnaround.
2. Stakeholder perceptions are considered when identifying priorities and improving the underlying conditions that contribute to school climate issues.
3. Acknowledge and respond to constructive feedback, suggestions, and criticism.

This piece reinforces the need to include all stakeholders in the community to contribute and improve climate. Students along with their families and the broader community all can contribute to the climate within a school. Therefore, the engagement of these various audiences to help in determining and creating a culture that reaffirms and supports students is required. Additionally, mechanisms need to be in place to allow for both positive and negative feedback. Student feedback is an invaluable source of information that can be gathered about how they experience learning, what school means to them, and how we as adults can improve what happens in schools.

The researcher Cook-Sather (2002) has examined student voice in numerous studies and posited:

As long as we exclude student perspectives from our conversations about schooling and how it needs to change, our efforts at reform will be based on an incomplete picture of life in classrooms and schools and how that life could be improved. (p. 3)

Student voice gives students the opportunity to share their learning experience as part of the collective in active learning. The overarching challenge to student voice is a similar issue that maintains the status quo—the desire to fall back on the familiar and comfortable, and as Cook-Sather noted, falling back on the familiar and uncomfortable.

Listening to the student voice not only displays a level of respect and value placed on the students, but it can also be a tool for building the social-emotional learning and emotional intelligence of each student.

Relationships and emotions are central to students' well-being. Supporting children's emotional intelligence contributes to safe, caring, orderly environments (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Caring relations between teachers and students foster a desire to learn and a connection to the school (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Sherblom et al. (2006) researched the relationship between school climate and student education aspects of the school and math and reading achievement scores. Their findings indicated that the development of a school-wide caring community that enhances the relational and social interactions and relationships within a school as well as improves a school's climate through changes in communication and relationships among staff, students, and families can have a direct effect on student achievement (Sherblom et al., 2006). While one study is not the definitive answer to student achievement, it is important to recognize the role that climate and culture can play in turning around a school.

From a study at Eagle Rock school in Colorado, Easton (2002) noted self-esteem, teachers who care, personalized learning, and active learning, among other elements in their students' education. According to Mitra (2003), students serving as classroom experts were important to shaping the culture with the school studied. Students serving in a host of capacities can enhance and illustrate their value and importance within the school's culture.

Teacher Perspective

Teacher perceptions can be influenced in a variety of ways, from leadership to the facilities in which teachers work. In a study of the interplay between school facilities and school climate, Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008) found that when school buildings are shabby and inadequate, there is less likely to be the kind of community engagement that supports teaching and learning. Teacher attitudes and behaviors are related as well because teachers are less likely to show enthusiasm for their jobs and go the extra mile with students to support their learning when they teach in buildings they judge to be of poor quality. While this is only one study, the assertion that facilities affect school climate is important overall.

Teachers have a crucial role to play in the change of a school. They are where the rubber hits the road in terms of the job of schools, which is instruction. Teacher perception or attitude can make or break a school turnaround. Changes in the actions and attitudes of individual teachers should lead to changes in instruction and students' learning conditions (Feldhoff, Radisch, & Bischof, 2016, p. 215). Ideally, these changes will have a positive effect on the student learning in the school.

The perception of the climate in which teachers work and with whom they work contributes to the reality of success or failure. Teachers hold the power to change the trajectory of their students' lives. Their perceptions and ability to change can greatly affect the conditions for student to succeed. Teachers at their most noble are the element that can help students transcend any perceived deficit that is based upon race, social economic class, and gender. Feldhoff et al. (2016) wrote, "we view school improvement as an intentional, planned change process that unfolds at the school level. Its success

however depends on change in the actions and attitudes of individual teachers” (p. 215). How, then, do we make teachers happy in their job and prepared for the challenges of turnaround work?

Duke (2015) noted as a turnaround tip that positive working conditions for teachers included opportunities to exercise leadership, have consistent routines, and maintain open access to the principal. By giving teachers control over certain domains in their jobs, they can be a part of the sustainable change that is needed for turnaround. Teacher attitudes can influence student success in a variety of ways, especially in setting and helping students meet expectations. Differential expectations may present as subtle or even overt but can have lasting effects. In Noguera’s (2003) work, those differential expectations can be shown to play out in a variety of ways both in consequences and sanctions and limited access to higher-level courses.

To this effect, Sorhagen (2013) noted:

There is evidence, however, that teacher expectations have a more substantial impact on more vulnerable students, including students from low-income families, as well as low-achieving students, students who perceive differential treatment from teachers, and minority students (Brattesani, Weinstein, & Marshall, 1984; Jussim, Eccles, & Madon, 1996; Kuklinski & Weinstein, 2001; Madon, Jussim, & Eccles, 1997; McKown & Weinstein, 2008). (p. 465)

In a turnaround school, teacher expectations can be a driving force in differences. At the core, student achievement is the purpose of turnaround; therefore, teacher expectations play an important role in students’ ability to achieve which, in turn, is the process of moving from a turnaround school to an achieving school. In the researched turnaround high school there are special programs for talented and gifted students as well as programs for students with special needs. One of the programs for the talented and gifted essentially keeps these students separated from the rest of the students and on more points

for taking courses. The students were looked upon as having higher potential and achieving more. They have different expectations both academically and behaviorally, and the perception of their ability is perceived by both students and teachers alike. In Sorhagen's (2013) work, the over- and underestimation of student ability created self-fulfilling prophecies in terms of student success in a secondary education career. Just as student perceptions are important in the school turnaround, the teachers control the ability to eventually change student perceptions and give students a role within the school turnaround.

Mitra (2003) noted that with student voice, it is important for teachers to involve students in the classroom routine.

Influencing teachers to involve students in improving classroom practices. In addition to students seeing shifts in teacher perspectives about youth, Student Forum's work inspired some teachers to partner with students to make changes in classroom pedagogy. Working with Student Forum members during professional development sessions and reading research groups encouraged teachers to continue to involve students as they returned to their classrooms to implement what they had learned. (p. 299)

Among teaching strategies, the release of control is a cornerstone of practices to give the student the ability to "do." In scaffolding instruction, some teachers use the I Do, We Do, You Do method, known as the gradual releasing of responsibility in a class (Fisher & Frey, 2013). First is the instruction: I do it, then we work on something together as a guided practice, then finally you the student are able to work on it by yourself. Control is relinquished as the student learns to work independently. This is antithetical to some teachers' perceptions. Historical perceptions of teachers have relied on control. Keeping the young under control and in their place took its present form since the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century (Cook-Sather, 2002). As teachers attempt to

support change and embrace the student voice, this release of control is necessary. The release can be difficult, and mistrust on the part of teachers and student can make this release even more challenging. As teachers allow students to have a role in controlling their education, students and teachers can become partners in the work that must be accomplished to raise student achievement and improve the culture within a school building. Teachers have to choose to change the power dynamics within their relationship with students. By classic design, teachers have the position of power and total authority within the classroom.

These power dynamics in the educational system persist because learning from student voices...requires major shifts on the part of teachers, students and researchers in relationship and in ways of thinking and feeling about knowledge, language, power and self. (Oldfather 1995, p. 87; also see Cook-Sather, 2002)

As Cook-Sather (2002) noted, “Most power relationships have no place for listening and actively do not tolerate it because it is very inconvenient: to really listen means to have to respond. Listening does not always mean doing exactly what we are told, but it does mean being open to the possibility of revision...both thought and action” (p. 8). Even more important is that teachers must make the decision to open that relationship in an ongoing sustaining manner. Students can detect what is “lip service.”

Efforts to attend to student perspectives cannot remain mere add-ons or polite gestures towards listening. Cognizant of many critiques of power dynamics, I do not believe that power can or should be eliminated from any into action. What can be changed however is who is invested with power and how participants in a class, an institution, or national debate about educational reform or supported and rewarded for participation. (p. 11)

If teachers truly adhere to the concept of shared responsibility for learning, they can partner with students in their learning to engage. This engagement can in turn create the

opportunity for improved academic achievement which, as stated before, is the core desire of school turnaround.

Culture and Climate Conclusions

Cultures basically spring from three sources: (a) the beliefs, values, and assumptions of founders of organizations; (b) the learning experiences of group members as their organization evolves; and (c) new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in by new members and leaders (Schein, 2006).

Ultimately, the relationships that shape the culture and climate of a school are strongly influenced by the school principal. In schools where achievement was high and a sense of community was clear, researchers have invariably found that the principal made the difference (Boyer, 1983; MacNeil et al., 2009).

Saranson (1996) stated that if educators want to change and improve the outcomes of schooling for both students and teachers, certain features of the school culture must be changed. Safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school climate tends to foster greater attachment and belonging to a school in addition to providing the optimal foundation for social, emotional, and academic learning.

Successful turnaround required decisive action at the local, district, and state levels. The literature agreed that leadership is crucial to the endeavor, and leadership at the school, district, and state levels should work in concert to create positive conditions. As a school's climate improves, there will be fewer discipline problems, better attendance, improved achievement, dropout decline, more respect for and help to others, and a collective responsibility for the well-being of the school (Osman, 2012).

The present study and accompanying manual will demonstrate the connection of strong leadership at the school and district levels and the imperative of building a strong school culture in order to create meaningful and sustainable change in failing schools. Most turnaround efforts have focused solely on improving student performance but neglected the necessity of creating a climate in which change can happen. Leadership is needed to drive the process, but a positive school culture is the foundation for leaders to succeed and students to improve their life outcomes.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to create a framework that will guide the development of a turnaround manual focusing on both school culture and climate and student achievement. The following questions guided this study:

- What are the indicators of a successful turnaround model?
- What are the leadership traits needed to support school turnaround and sustain the results?

Research Design

This dissertation used both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to determine the elements of leadership practices as well as habits of the mind and best practices for sustainability to create a new model and associated focus on culture and climate for turnaround schools. This process followed a modified version of the Educational Research and Development (R&D) cycle, as described by Borg and Gall (1989). This modified process combines both preliminary and operational field testing, in addition to operational product and final product revision. The steps followed for the R&D of this handbook included:

1. Step 1
 - a. Research and Information Collection
 - i. Literature review
 - ii. Interviews
 - iii. Survey
 - iv. Focus Group
2. Step 2
 - a. Product Planning
 - i. Defining categories and sub-areas to include
 - b. Product Design
3. Step 3
 - a. Preliminary Manual Development
 - i. Detailing process for leader
 - ii. Detailing process to improve climate
 - iii. Preparation best practices
4. Step 4
 - a. Field Testing for Validity
5. Step 5
 - a. Manual Revision
6. Dissemination

Background

The turnaround schools that were studied are located in a small city in the northeastern part of the United States. The two schools in the study were an elementary school and a high school entering the second year in the state-funded school turnaround process. Both schools were admitted to a state-run network of schools with a research year for the development of a plan. The description of the network follows.

The Turnaround School Network is a partnership between local stakeholders and the state Department of Education to improve student achievement in schools. To that end, the Network offers new resources to school leaders to implement research-based strategies in turnaround schools for a period of 3 to 5 years. Network schools remain part of their local school districts, but the districts and the Department of Education secure school-level flexibility and autonomy for the schools.

1. Eligible schools are those classified at the time of selection as category four schools or category five schools, pursuant to the classification system described in the state's Performance and Support Plan.
2. Preference is given to schools (a) that volunteer to participate in the Network on the basis of a mutual agreement between the local or regional board of education for such school and the representatives of the exclusive bargaining unit for certified employees for such school or (b) in which an existing collective bargaining agreement between the local or regional board of education for such school and the representatives of the exclusive bargaining unit for certified employees chosen pursuant to the general statutes will have expired for the school year in which a turnaround plan will be implemented.

3. The Chief Education Officer for the state may consider other factors in selecting or not selecting schools for the Network including performance level, trends in performance, student populations, current interventions, and district capacity.

Turnaround Plan Development

1. Following and concurrent with the operations and instructional audit for the school selected to participate in the Network of schools, the turnaround committee, as assisted by other nonvoting participants, shall develop a turnaround plan for such school.
2. Turnaround plans must include intensive and transformative strategies that are necessary to turnaround schools that, to date, have been unsuccessful in their improvement efforts. These plans must reach beyond surface reforms to achieve dramatic and transformative outcomes. These turnaround plans should address past turnaround efforts and provide an explanation for how the proposed interventions will succeed where previous efforts have failed.
3. Plans must address the seven areas described below, specific, dramatic, and transformative strategies to maintain or establish:
 - a. a strong family and community connection to the school;
 - b. a positive school environment, including a culture of high expectations, a safe and orderly workplace, and attention to nonacademic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, arts, cultural, recreational, and health needs;

- c. effective leadership, as evidenced by the school principal's performance appraisals, track record in improving student achievement, ability to lead turnaround efforts, and managerial skills and authority in the areas of scheduling, staff management, curriculum implementation, and budgeting;
- d. effective teachers and support staff as evidenced by performance evaluations, policies to retain staff determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort, policies to prevent ineffective teachers from transferring to the schools, and job-embedded ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support programs that are tied to teacher and student needs;
- e. effective use of time, as evidenced by the redesign of the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;
- f. a curriculum and instructional program that is based on student needs, is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with state academic content standards, and serves all children, including students at every achievement level; and
- g. effective use of evidence to inform decision making and for continuous improvement, including providing time for collaboration on the use of data (citation removed to maintain anonymity of school and district in study).

Population and Sample

For the purposes of this study, the district schools were referred to as “Central Elementary” and “Central High School.” Each school chose a different model of transformation. Central Elementary chose an Education Management Organization with which to partner in order to run the school. Central High School selected to reorganize into smaller learning communities around themes. The demographics of the city are approximately 110,000 residents and 50,000 households, and 20.6% the population live below the poverty level, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The median income is \$41,499. The ethnic make-up of the city is 45% White, 20% African American, and 31% Hispanic (this includes one or more races) (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2014). The city has an unemployment rate of 9.2%, according to the BLS (2014).

Data Collection

Data collection began during year two of turnaround identification of turnaround, which was the first year of implementation of programing at Central Elementary and continued into year three of implementation.

Student Surveys

The researcher administered surveys to students and staff at the turnaround high school after obtaining parental consent for participants under the age of 18. Student participants were compensated for their time with a gift card. The researcher sought 100 students to take part in the study. There were 116 participants with 100 valid surveys. At the high school level, 75 were collected; at the elementary level, 41 were collected. The Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI), which the researcher chose to

administer, is a nationally-recognized school climate survey that provides an in-depth profile of a school community's particular strengths and needs. With the CSCI, one can quickly and accurately assess student, parent, and school personnel perceptions, and obtain detailed information needed to make *informed decisions* for lasting improvement (see Figure 3). Responses from this survey helped to inform the research study.

Think about your experience in your school as you read each statement below. Then fill in the circle that best describes how much you agree or disagree with each statement.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree (Neutral)	Agree	Strongly Agree
Mark one answer on each line like this: ● Not like this: ⊗ ⊙ ⊚						
1.	My school tries to get students to join in after school activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.	Adults who work in my school treat students with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.	In my school, we talk about ways to help us control our emotions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.	Many students at my school go out of their way to treat other students badly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.	Adults in my school seem to work well with one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.	Students in this school respect each other's differences (for example, gender, race, culture, etc.).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.	In my school, we have learned ways to resolve disagreements so that everyone can be satisfied with the outcome.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.	My school tries to get all families to be part of school activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9.	My teachers encourage me to try out new ideas (think independently).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10.	I have been insulted, teased, harassed or otherwise verbally abused more than once in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.	In my school, we talk about the way our actions will affect others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12.	Students have friends at school they can turn to if they have questions about homework.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13.	In my school, we discuss issues that help me think about how to be a good person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14.	In my school, there are clear rules against physically hurting other people (for example, hitting, pushing or tripping).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15.	Students have friends at school they can trust and talk to if they have problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16.	Adults in this school have high expectations for students' success.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The Center for Social and Emotional Education

Figure 3. Student survey

Staff Surveys

The researcher conducted surveys of staff at both turnaround schools using the CSCI. The researcher sought 50 teacher participants to take part in the study. This is a nationally-recognized school climate survey that provides an in-depth profile of a school community's particular strengths and needs (see Figure 4).

The CSCI is copyrighted by NSCC and cannot be reproduced in whole or in part without express written consent from NSCC
CSCI School Personnel

Think about your experience in your school as you read each statement below. Then fill in the circle that best describes how much you agree or disagree with each statement. If you don't think the statement applies to you, fill in the circle for "Does Not Apply."		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree (Neutral)	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does Not Apply
Mark one answer on each line like this: ● Not like this: ⊗ ⊙ ⊚							
1.	This school encourages students to get involved in extra-curricular activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.	Adults who work in this school treat students with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.	Adults in this school talk with students about strategies for understanding and controlling their emotions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.	The administration at this school is fair in the way they allocate resources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.	Many students at this school go out of their way to treat other students badly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.	This school encourages staff to get involved in extra-curricular activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.	Staff in this school typically work well with one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.	Students in this school respect each other's differences (for example, gender, race, culture, etc.).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9.	The administration at this school provides teachers with opportunities to work together collaboratively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10.	In this school, we teach ways to resolve disagreements so that everyone can be satisfied with the outcome.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.	This school encourages all families to be part of school activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12.	Most staff in this school are generous about helping others with instructional issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13.	Teachers encourage students to think independently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14.	It's common for students to tease and insult one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15.	There are areas of this school where adults do not feel physically safe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 4. Staff survey

Focus Groups

The researcher conducted four semi-structured focus groups with students and teacher participants. He had access to focus group data collected by state consultants who conduct periodic reviews within turnaround schools. Focus groups were voluntary and participants were recruited from the students and staff at turnaround schools. The researcher compensated students for their time with a gift card. The intent was to conduct focus groups during unassigned teaching periods or during lunch. The researcher sought 50 students and teacher participants to take part in the study. As day-to-day practitioners, the teachers were asked to inform the final product through their insights into the daily challenges they face in their work. Students and teachers were asked 10 questions about culture and climate and impressions of the turnaround.

Sample focus group questions were as follows:

- Culture and climate are many things within a school. What best describes the culture and climate of your school? Think about adult-to-student connections and adult-to-adult connections within the school.
- What do you feel are the barriers or obstacles to stronger adult student connections and adult-adult connections?
- What do you feel you as an educator can do to improve climate?
- What do you feel administrators and the district can do systematically to improve culture and climate?
- Please talk about the connection between culture and climate and academics.

Turnaround

- In thinking about the talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations of the school, what changes do you feel are necessary for a successful turnaround?
- How would one go about changing the expectations for adults and students to improve the school?
- What types of autonomy should a school be given to transform itself?

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the responses to the Likert-scale questions. The Likert scale allows respondents to indicate how closely their perceptions correspond with the item or question. Passmore, Dobbie, Parchman, and Tysinger (2002) stated that the Likert-type scale “is familiar to respondents and it lends itself well to measuring constructs like attitudes” (p. 284). The researcher gathered performance information for the schools in turnaround and performed statistical analysis of data to look at the schools’ average achievement before and after any intervention. For any statistical test, the probability of making a Type I error is denoted by the Greek letter alpha (α). The alpha (α) was set at $\alpha = .05$ because it is a robust measure for significance in social science studies (Carroll & Carroll, 2002). The researcher performed a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), which is a statistical technique used to determine the statistical significance of variances of more than two groups (Carroll & Carroll, 2002).

The focus groups were transcribed and organizing the information collected. The researcher categorized, grouped, and coded the information to support the development

of the initial handbook. Findings were reported in groups by student response and staff response.

Limitations

A principal limitation of this study was the sample was limited to a small number of students and staff because of the voluntary nature of the data collection. Surveys may have had biased responses, especially if participants did not trust anonymity, as there was an indirect supervisory relationship with the researcher, as discussed below in ethical considerations.

Ethical Considerations

To complete the study and develop a model, all protocols were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Teachers College, Columbia University. As part of the interview process or focus groups, participants were provided with an overview of the study and the expected duration of their participation. The participants were also assured of anonymity and confidentiality and informed of any potential risks and benefits of the research. In addition, the participant groups were advised that the data collected would only be used to inform future turnaround designs.

The researcher received signed informed consents from each participant. Notes and all data that could identify participants will be maintained in a locked file cabinet and destroyed after a period of 7 years from the conclusion the study.

The researcher holds a supervisory position within the district and has indirect supervisory authority over Central Elementary and Central High School. Where possible,

anonymous surveys were gathered and other appropriately trained individuals conducted the focus groups to reduce bias.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodology that was used to create a turnaround manual and measure the validity of the final product. The researcher conducted an exhaustive literature review of existing best practices and surveyed students, teachers, administrators, and district officials on their impressions of culture and climate as well as their perceptions of the turnaround efforts. Then, the researcher analyzed student achievement data, student discipline referrals, and student and staff attendance data. After the analysis, the researcher synthesized all available data to create a design and plan for the manual. Findings from the survey, focus groups, and interviews helped shape the manual and action steps to improve school culture and climate for successful turnaround schools. The next chapter presents these findings.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to develop a handbook entitled *Turnaround as an Experience: Using School Culture and Climate as the Driver for School Turnaround*.

This handbook was designed to help leaders both at the district and school levels to manage the turnaround process in a way that produces sustainable results.

This handbook addresses the need for alternative methods of sustainable school turnaround; it is particularly focused on ways to sustain growth after the initial funding for transformative measures ends. In this study, the following questions were answered to develop the principles of a new turnaround model that is focused on school culture and climate:

1. What are the indicators of a successful turnaround model?
2. What are the leadership practices related to culture and climate needed to support school turnaround and sustain the results?

Focus Group Analysis

The research and data collection process for this research involved a comprehensive review of literature regarding school turnaround, school culture and climate, and leadership. The researcher conducted four focus groups with students and teachers separately. All students and teachers attended or worked at schools that were

currently in the school turnaround process. All interviews were recorded and audio files were transcribed. After transcription, the researcher organized and analyzed data from both the literature and the focus groups.

The focus groups provided an extraordinary opportunity to hear the perspectives of students and staff about what they thought was important to turnaround culture and climate in leadership. One of the most robust themes from the student focus groups was the desire to have a voice. In each group, students enjoyed the opportunity to discuss and wanted more opportunities of the same; this was present both at the elementary and secondary levels. Staff also voiced the desire to have a voice. They want to be included in activities and have the opportunity to provide their experience and knowledge to help support efforts. Staff noted that while they had a lot of respectful leadership, at times they felt that only certain people were involved and got to participate.

Culture/Climate

1. *Culture and climate are many things within a school. They can be how students act in class or out of class, and/or how they treat others. They can be how teachers act, teach, and or treat others. Thinking about those things, what best describes the culture and climate of your school?*
 - *What is good about it?*
 - *What is bad about your school?*

Students highlighted that teachers were nice and willing to help, there is a family feel at the school, and there is a support system. Among the good things at the school, teachers highlighted the comfortable working and learning environment for students and staff and having some really great kids.

Regarding what was bad about the school, students specifically noted:

- teachers keep getting fired, distractions, nothing really
 - unengaged students
 - you have to slow yourself for other students, too strict sometimes, once you slip it's hard to get back on track
 - kids don't get along, some kids are mean to each other, drama because everyone is so close, drama, bad when people are in a bad mood
2. *Think about students to student connections within the school. Please describe what that's like in your school?*
- *How do students get along with students?*
- Follow-up*
- *If positive—What do you feel makes these strong student-to-student connections?*
 - *If negative—What do you feel are the problems that prevent strong student-to-student connections?*

Students noted that typical teenage drama was probably the cause of most students not getting along. Some of the quotes highlighted that everyone seems to be in harmony with all the different cliques: “We get along with everyone, the jocks, the geeks, the nerds, the Latin kids, the Black kids, White kids, we all get along.” Students repeatedly noted that while most kids do get along, some people have problems with each of the groups, but more so on an individual basis, and they blamed many of the problems on social media. Students pointed out that they have “stuff in common,” so that people overall are not very different: “You know, most the times the fights here, it's because of stuff that happened on the Gram (Instagram), Facebook, twitter.” The majority of the kids at the school get along, but there is typical high school drama: “For the most part, we are all cool with each other, but otherwise we have our slip-ups and have problems, but it is high school so it's bound to happen.”

3. *Think about adult-to-student connections within the school. Please describe what that's like in your school:*
- *How do students get along with teachers?*

Follow-up

- *If positive—What do you feel makes these strong adult-to-student connections?*
- *If negative—What do you feel are the problems that prevent strong adult-to-student connections?*

On this question, the opinion was split. Some students blamed the problems in adult-student relationships on students being rude, while others blamed rude adults. While many admitted that the situation has positive aspects, everyone could point to some negative relationships that are occasional or continuous. One student described how student teachers are very helpful, but sometimes they have an attitude and do not want to help a student when they think he or she should already have the answer; “but that’s why we’re asking because we don’t have the answer.” In the elementary school, it was very clearly noted that the teachers were good and very caring and supportive and, for the most part, students were not a problem anymore. Despite the split, students frequently noted the helpfulness of teachers and could point to someone they felt who cared about them.

The teacher support helped students feel they had wonderful relations with the students, but some teachers were very difficult to work with and talk to, particularly the secondary teachers. Teachers expressed that, in general, the adults cared a lot about the kids, but some students did not reciprocate that same care or respect.

If negative—What do you feel are the problems that prevent strong adult-to-student connections?

Students felt there was a large degree of disrespect toward teachers and, at times, from teachers toward students. Another student mentioned that “adults can have attitudes, like the students, while others noted that students talked back too much and teachers

made students feel dumb sometimes. Still another noted that students can be annoying and disrespectful, triggering a negative reaction from the adults.

From the teacher perspective, teachers felt student behavior was the major impediment to adult-student connections. They felt that while many students were “great,” a few “pushed buttons” and were not motivated or desired to be in school and could make it difficult to form relationships. A couple of teachers did note that some of the strain was due to the adults who enflamed situations that should not have been escalated. Another teacher noted that “sometimes it’s the adults that [are] the issue.”

4. *Think about adult-to-adult connections within the school. Please describe what that’s like in your school:*

- *How do the adults get along with other adults?*

Follow-up

- *If positive—What do you feel makes these strong adult-to-adult connections?*
- *If negative—What do you feel are the problems that prevent strong adult-to-adult connections?*

Overwhelmingly, the students felt teachers got along very well with each other. Others felt that the teachers were all best friends. One student noted, “They are extremely close because they always seem to be laughing and talking [sometimes about students], but they always know what’s going on with each other.”

From the teacher perspective, teachers felt they got along extremely well with colleagues and worked well with their teams. Some of their responses included the words: “Nothing, not sure, drama, no, age differences, strong thinker and outgoing, I am not sure.”

If negative—What do you feel are the problems that prevent strong adult-to-adult connections?

From the students' perception, there were no problems among the teachers and they got along very well.

Leadership

5. *Think about your principals and vice principals.*
 - *What are good characteristics about their leadership?*
 - *What are bad characteristics about their leadership?*

The students noted that they really liked their principals; they felt they were true leaders who were honest about everything and worked hard. The key words students used in their interviews were: "supportive caring, helps, fights for us, treats everyone fairly"; none of the students noted anything negative, except that the students could not "get away with things because the principal is always paying attention."

The students noted mostly rules as being the biggest problem with the leadership. They specifically mentioned not liking some of the rules, which were actually district-wide rules pertaining to cell phone usage and dress code; while they preferred to have no dress code, they understood that leadership must enforce the rule. Specifically, the students cited the following in their interviews: "too many meetings, a lot of rules, can't use cell phones in class or halls, a lot of people coming to the school and interrupting classes, tells us what the district wants us to do, and no choice."

6. *What is important for school leaderships to do when running a school?*

From the teacher perspective, teachers noted the most important aspects that leadership could do was be supportive and include more people in decisions. Some of the teachers noted they would like the facilities to be improved, for example, keeping the building clean. There seemed to be a disconnect on the topic of student discipline. Some

teachers noted that discipline was conducted fairly, while others felt students got away with infractions—the most infuriating of which was the dress code. Across the board, teachers felt the dress code was not fully enforced and was a point of contention.

Teachers also noted that they wanted better faculty because having other good teachers was a struggle. By having too many substitute teachers, problems developed affecting continuity of instruction and maintaining discipline within the school building. Lines of communication were very important and leadership needed to be an example for this, showing the staff they were appreciated and being heard. As another teacher commented:

- (1) Increased support from high level administration at central office,
(2) Increased support from the community, (3) Consistency within the school community regarding the purpose and goal of the school.
- (2) It is important for a school leader to be an effective communicator, provide clear and consistent expectations, and hold students accountable for their actions.
- (3) School leaders are consistent and hold their staff members to high standards, yet they understand of the struggles we face every day and provide support as needed.
- (4) It is important for schools leadership to be strict and consistent, yet understanding to student issues.
- (5) I believe the important traits of a school leader are honesty, compassion, and genuineness.
- (6) When running a school, it is important for school leadership to have the staff that will support them and that they can rely on. One person can't do it all by themselves it takes a team. So it is important to work together as a team and know you have each other's back. Lines of communication are very important and the Leadership needs to be an example and show the staff that they are appreciated and being heard.

Turnaround

7. *How long have you been at the school?*
 - *Were you at this school before or after turnaround began?*

At Central High School, all students interviewed in the focus groups had been at the school since the turnaround process began. Also, all the teachers who were interviewed had been at the school before the school was classified as turnaround. At Central Elementary School, all students and teachers had been in the school since turnaround.

8. *What do you think when you hear your school is a turnaround school?*
 - *What possibilities do starting over or changing open up for the school?*

When asked about turnaround, many of the students said they really did not know what it meant. When asked to guess what it meant, they talked about how the school has had a bad reputation for a long time, but felt this school was actually the same as other schools in the district. Another student noted that turnaround means bad kids go to the school, although in the same breath, he added that the kids “here” are not bad. The students kept returning to the fact that they thought Central was no different than any other school in the district. Teachers shared the same sentiment, stating that their school was no worse off than other schools and statistically their performance was not that far off from the performance of the other high schools in the district.

Follow-up

9. *If the school was starting from scratch, the beginning, what would you want to see happening in the school?*

Among the comments to this question was the thought that this could be a chance for a better reputation: “People actually take the school seriously, we can get new stuff and stuff we need in the school.” Another student noted this meant they would have more people graduating.

Summary for Focus Groups

The focus groups yielded much insight into the lives of students and staff at these turnaround schools. It was clear from the focus group interviews that more work needed to be done in building and strengthening adult-to-student relationships as well as student-to-student relationships. Additionally, students perceived the turnaround as positive for the changes it can bring to the negative because this school was failing and underperforming. From the staff perspective, this same feeling about turnaround was exhibited. Teachers saw the possibility of what a new start may bring and what could be done with such a new start, but they also understood the negative that it brought. At both schools, students and staff were very positive about the leadership in their buildings, noting particularly the relationships they have built and the feelings they derive from the leadership.

Climate Survey Analysis

The climate survey was conducted using the Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI). The CSCI is a validated tool for school climate as developed in 2002 by the National School to measure how critical groups—students, school personnel, and parents/guardians—perceive the school’s climate for learning. The CSCI was evaluated

by three independent survey development experts at Columbia University and Fordham University in 2006 who confirmed that the tool was reliable and valid. In addition, three recent studies confirmed the CSCI's strength:

1. A 2010 by Gangi study of 102 school climate surveys found the CSCI to be one of only three measures to meet American Psychological Association criteria for reliability and validity.
2. A 2011 study by the Social Development Research Group of 73 middle school measures recommended 10 as being reliable, valid, and aligned with social and emotional learning (SEL) research. Of those measures, the CSCI was the only school climate measure recommended.
3. The Clifford, Condon, and Hornung (2012) study, *Measuring School Climate for Gauging Principal Performance: A Review of the Validity and Reliability of Publicly Accessible Measures*, also confirmed the merits of the CSCI.

Table 1 displays the 13 Climate Dimensions, their definitions, and a brief description of each dimension. In analyzing the survey results, a Cronbach Alpha of .938 was determined for the results among all students (see Table 2). Cronbach's alpha describes intercorrelations among test items. This shows internal consistency estimate of reliability of test scores. The high score of .938 demonstrates a high intercorrelation among items on the CSCI.

Table 1

*The 13 Dimensions of School Climate as Measured by the CSCI***The 13 Dimensions of School Climate Measured by the CSCI**

Dimensions	Major Indicators
Safety	
1 Rules and Norms	Clearly communicated rules about physical violence; clearly communicated rules about verbal abuse, harassment, and teasing; clear and consistent enforcement and norms for adult intervention.
2 Sense of Physical Security	Sense that students and adults feel safe from physical harm in the school.
3 Sense of Social-Emotional Security	Sense that students feel safe from verbal abuse, teasing, and exclusion.
Teaching and Learning	
4 Support for Learning	Use of supportive teaching practices, such as: encouragement and constructive feedback; varied opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills; support for risk-taking and independent thinking; atmosphere conducive to dialog and questioning; academic challenge; and individual attention.
5 Social and Civic Learning	Support for the development of social and civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions including: effective listening, conflict resolution, self-reflection and emotional regulation, empathy, personal responsibility, and ethical decision making.
Interpersonal Relationships	
6 Respect for Diversity	Mutual respect for individual differences (e.g. gender, race, culture, etc.) at all levels of the school—student-student; adult-student; adult-adult and overall norms for tolerance.
7 Social Support—Adults	Pattern of supportive and caring adult relationships for students, including high expectations for students' success, willingness to listen to students and to get to know them as individuals, and personal concern for students' problems.
8 Social Support—Students	Pattern of supportive peer relationships for students, including: friendships for socializing, for problems, for academic help, and for new students.
Institutional Environment	
9 School Connectedness/Engagement	Positive identification with the school and norms for broad participation in school life for students, staff, and families.
10 Physical Surroundings	Cleanliness, order, and appeal of facilities and adequate resources and materials.
Social Media	
11 Social Media	Sense that students feel safe from physical harm, verbal abuse/teasing, gossip, and exclusion when online or on electronic devices (for example, facebook, twitter, and other social media platforms, by an email, text messaging, posting photo/video, etc.).
Staff Only	
12 Leadership	Administration that creates and communicates a clear vision, and is accessible to and supportive of school staff and staff development.
13 Professional Relationships	Positive attitudes and relationships among school staff that support effectively working and learning together.

Table 2

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.938	.944	76

Figure 5 presents the National School Climate Center of the 13 Climate Dimensions in relation to the schools participating in this study.

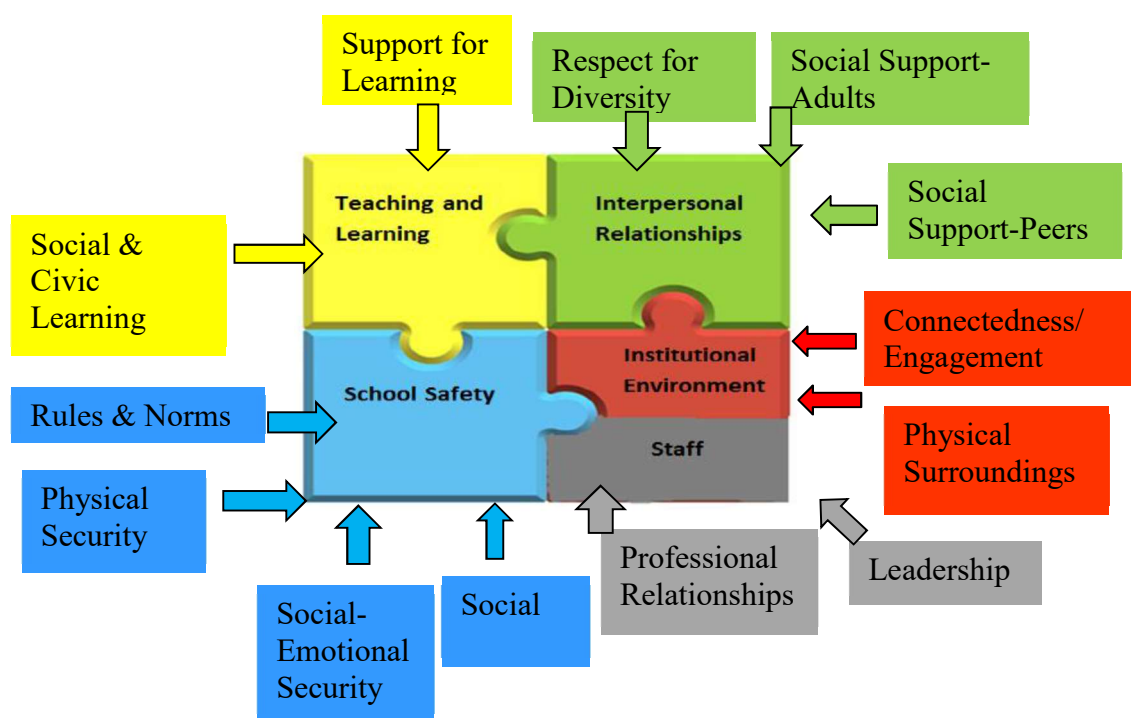


Figure 5. NSCC of 13 Climate Dimensions in relation to the schools

School Profile—Strengths and Needs

- How positive are overall ratings?
- Which climate dimensions are at the top/bottom?
- How do perceptions compare for different population groups: students, staff, and parents?
- Individual and Group Variability
 - How much variability and who?
 - Micro-climates—exposure to different environments, different experiences
 - Individual differences or divergences in perceptions

Central High School Strengths:

- **Safety Rules and Norms** - Overall positive ratings for students and staff; highest ranked dimension among the student population with a median rating of 4.25.
- **Social Support-Students and Social Support-Adults** - Positively perceived Climate Dimensions among students and staff; both of these climate dimensions fall under the broader category of **Interpersonal Relationships**.
- **Support for Learning** - Positively perceived dimension for students and staff; highest ranked dimension for students with a rating of 3.88.

Central High School Areas for Improvement:

- **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** - Perceived neutrally for students and staff; this dimension was one of the lowest ranked Climate Dimensions with a median score of 3 for students and a score of 2.83 for staff.
- **Social and Civic Learning** - Neutrally perceived dimension by students with a median rating of 3.30; student and staff perception diverged on this dimension; staff had a positive perception, whereas students felt neutral.

Central Elementary Strengths:

- Overall positive ratings for students and staff; highest ranked dimension among the students and staff was **Social Support-Adults** with a rating of 4.57 for students and 4.92 for staff.
- **School Connectedness/Engagement** - Second most positively rated among students and staff with ratings of 4.29 and 4.86, respectively. This dimension falls under **Institutional Environment**.

Central Elementary Areas for Improvement:

- **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** - Perceived neutrally by students (3.17) and positively for staff (3.67).

- **Sense of Physical Security** - Perceived neutrally by students (3.00) and staff (3.50).

Table 3 shows the median and range of scores for the climate survey administered to students and staff at Central High School. A median score below 2.50 is considered a negative rating for the Climate Dimension; a median score between 2.50 and 3.50 is considered a neutral rating for the Climate Dimension; and a median above 3.50 is considered a positive rating for this dimension. Any Climate Dimension with a .2 difference in scoring is considered a major difference. Overall, both teachers and students had positive ratings for Safety, Rules and Norms, Support for Learning, Respect for Diversity, Social Supports-Adults, Social Supports-Students, and Connectedness. Students and staff gave neutral but low ratings for Sense of Physical Security, Sense of Social-Emotional Security, and Physical Surroundings. Leadership and Professional Relationships were only rated by staff who responded positively about them.

Table 3

Climate Survey Central High School

		Students			Staff		
	School Climate Dimension	Med.	Min.	Max.	Med.	Min.	Max.
1	Safety, Rules, Norms	3.80	1.80	5.00	4.00	3.60	5.00
2	Sense of Physical Security	3.25	1.00	4.75	3.38	2.00	4.50
3	Sense of Social-Emotional Security	3.00	1.00	4.50	2.83	2.00	3.83
4	Support for Learning	3.88	1.88	5.00	3.78	3.11	4.67
5	Social and Civic Learning	3.30	1.50	4.60	3.90	2.30	4.90
6	Respect for Diversity	3.67	2.17	5.00	3.92	2.67	4.67
7	Social Support-Adults	3.71	1.57	4.86	3.83	3.00	5.00
8	Social Support-Students	3.70	1.00	5.00	4.00	2.80	4.40
9	Connectedness/Engagement	3.71	2.14	5.00	4.07	3.29	5.00
10	Physical Surroundings	3.17	1.00	4.83	3.50	1.17	4.67
11	Social Media	3.17	1.17	4.17	2.80	1.60	4.00
12	Leadership	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.70	2.20	5.00
13	Professional Relationships	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.75	2.50	4.88

In Table 4, both staff and students rated the Climate Dimensions positively: Safety, Rules and Norms, Support for Learning, Respect for Diversity, Social Support-Adults, Social Support-Students, and Connectedness. Students and staff gave neutral but low ratings for Sense of Physical Security and Sense of Social-Emotional Security. Physical Surroundings had the highest median ratings. Overall, the various Climate Dimensions were rated higher by the elementary school than by the high school.

Table 4

Climate Survey Central Elementary School

School Climate Dimension	Students			Staff		
	Med.	Min.	Max.	Med.	Min.	Max.
Safety, Rules, Norms	4.40	3.00	5.00	4.80	4.00	5.00
Sense of Physical Security	3.00	2.00	5.00	3.50	2.75	4.75
Sense of Social-Emotional Security	3.17	1.50	4.33	3.67	2.67	4.33
Support for Learning	4.13	2.88	5.00	4.56	4.00	5.00
Social and Civic Learning	4.10	2.90	5.00	4.50	3.89	4.80
Respect for Diversity	4.00	3.00	5.00	4.50	3.67	5.00
Social Support-Adults	4.57	2.86	4.86	4.92	4.33	5.00
Social Support-Students	4.00	2.40	5.00	4.20	3.80	5.00
Connectedness/Engagement	4.29	3.00	4.71	4.86	4.00	5.00
Physical Surroundings	4.00	2.33	5.00	4.50	2.67	5.00
Social Media	3.67	2.00	5.00	3.80	3.00	4.60
Leadership	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.50	4.00	4.80
Professional Relationships	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.44	4.00	4.88

Table 5 displays the comparative rankings for the Climate Dimensions for Central High School. The first column shows the dimensions; the second column shows the students' rankings; the third column is the school staff's rankings of those same dimensions. The students included Support for Learning, Safety Rules and Norms, Social Supports by Adults (the pattern of supporting and caring adult relationships with

students), and School Connectedness. The staff highlighted School Connectedness, Safety, Rules and Norms, and Social Supports for Students (the pattern of supportive peer relationships).

Table 5

Comparative Rankings for Shared School Climate Dimensions Central High School

School Climate Dimensions	Students	School Personnel
Support for Learning	1	7
Safety Rules and Norms	2	2
Social Support-Adults	3	6
Connectedness/Engagement	3	1
Social Support-Students	5	2
Respect for Diversity	6	4
Social and Civic Learning	7	5
Sense of Physical Security	8	9
Physical Surroundings	9	8
Social Media	9	11
Sense of Social-Emotional Security	11	10

Table 6 displays the comparative rankings for the Climate Dimensions for Central Elementary School. The first column shows the Climate Dimensions; the second column shows the students' ranking; the third column shows the school staff's ranking of those same Climate Dimensions. Leading the list from the student perspective are: Social Supports by Adults (the pattern of supporting and caring adult relationships with students), Safety Rules and Norms, and School Connectedness. From the staff perspective, those same Climate Dimensions were noted, with the highest rank for Connectedness, which ranked higher than Safety Rules and Norms.

Table 6

Comparative Rankings for Shared School Climate Dimensions Central Elementary School

School Climate Dimensions	Students	School Personnel
Social Support-Adults	1	1
Safety Rules and Norms	2	3
Connectedness/Engagement	3	2
Support for Learning	4	4
Social and Civic Learning	5	5
Respect for Diversity	6	5
Social Support-Students	6	8
Physical Surroundings	6	5
Social Media	9	9
Sense of Social-Emotional Security	10	10
Sense of Physical Security	11	11

The next two tables (Tables 7-8) focus only on Central High School because the subgroups from Central Elementary were not large enough to provide reliable data.

Table 7 shows a breakdown of the data based on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) status. Major differences can be noted in Sense of Physical Security, Respect for Diversity, and Social Supports-Adults. The lowest score came from the Sense of Social-Emotional Security for students who identified as LGBT.

Table 8 shows the Climate Dimensions by ethnicity within Central High School. Ratings across ethnic/racial groups did show major differences. While all rankings were neutral to positive, the .2 variance was prevalent in 12 of the 13 Climate Dimensions when comparing African American and White students. The .2 variance was only present in two Climate Dimensions between African American and Hispanic/Latino students. It was also present in five Climate Dimensions between Hispanic/Latino students and White students.

Table 7

Climate Dimensions by LGBT Status Central High School

	Students	Students
School Climate Dimension	LGBT Status Yes	LGBT Status No
Safety, Rules, Norms	3.60	3.80
Sense of Physical Security	3.00	3.25
Sense of Social-Emotional Security	2.83	3.00
Support for Learning	3.88	3.88
Social and Civic Learning	3.20	3.30
Respect for Diversity	3.33	3.83
Social Support-Adults	3.43	3.71
Social Support-Students	3.60	3.80
Connectedness/Engagement	3.57	3.71
Physical Surroundings	3.00	3.17
Social Media	3.00	3.17

Table 8

Climate Dimensions by Race/Ethnicity Central High School

	Students		
School Climate Dimension	African American Median	Latino/Latina/Hispanic Median	White Median
Safety, Rules, Norms	3.80	3.80	3.40
Sense of Physical Security	3.50	3.00	3.00
Sense of Social-Emotional Security	3.17	3.00	2.83
Support for Learning	3.88	3.88	3.57
Social and Civic Learning	3.50	3.30	3.10
Respect for Diversity	3.67	3.83	3.17
Social Support-Adults	3.71	3.71	3.57
Social Support-Students	3.90	3.60	3.60
Connectedness/Engagement	3.86	3.71	3.71
Physical Surroundings	3.33	3.17	3.00
Social Media	3.33	3.17	2.83

Summary for Climate Survey

The climate at both Central Elementary and Central High School indicated many positive aspects within the school. Students felt they were supported enough to build relationships with the faculty. Teachers felt they could build strong relationships with students as well. The .2 variance which represents a major difference in the view one subgroup has of a Climate Dimension indicated work needed to be done to improve the climate for all subgroups.

The .2 variance between students and staff and number of areas also indicated what could be done to help build the adult-adult and adult-student relationships that are critical to a positive school climate built on support, respect, and values safety. Both Central Elementary and Central High School need to build systems that can create clear means of social-emotional support. Students at Central High School noted that Physical Surroundings needed improvement; that area has a relatively low-cost quick fix.

The lowest scoring area was Social Media. This dimension is an area that will require working in the school as well as building resiliency for students not to use social media as a tool for bullying or creating a negative climate within the school. The social media arena is more difficult to police in the sense that many of the incidents occur outside of school but can carry those same issues into the school. School leaders will need to manage situations and create clear policies to address the social media charge. This area will require support from other adults in the building such as guidance counselors, social workers, and other support staff to work with students on better solutions.

While there are many strengths for both Central Elementary School and Central High School based on the results of this climate survey, this is only one look at conditions within the school. It must be noted that students who have negative feelings about the school may not be as apt to engage in a survey process or have a venue to express their feelings about any of the 13 Climate Dimensions queried in this survey.

Achievement Data

At the high school level, student performance is assessed on a nationally administered norm-referenced test, given in only one grade. Because this test is administered to only one grade, there is no means to do cohort comparisons. At the elementary level, student performance is measured on benchmark data as well as administered in numerous states.

At Central Elementary School, the researcher analyzed benchmark data of students who were being taught by teachers who had 0, 1, or 2 years of experience in the implementation of the new program. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a statistical technique used to determine statistical significance of variances of more than two groups (Carroll & Carroll, 2002). The independent variable in this analysis was years of implementation. The dependent variable was the mean scale score gain on math benchmark assessments. These assessment data were chosen because they involved the first null hypothesis to be tested regarding differences in performance among students grouped by No Implementation, 1 Year of Implementation, and 2 Years of Implementation of the new teaching model.

$H_1 =$ There is at least one difference in the mean performance of students after No Implementation, 1 Year of Implementation Year 1, and 2 Years of Implementation of the new teaching model on the Math benchmark assessments.

There was a statistical significant difference between groups as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(2,10) = 4.194, p = .048$) (see Table 9).

Anecdotal Evidence of Positive Change at Central Elementary and Central High School

Graduation rates are calculated as the number of students who start in a 4-year cohort and graduate within the 4-year period. Graduation rates have risen 25% over a 6-year span from prior to turnaround to current year (see Table 10).

Chronic Absence is missing 10% or more of school days. For example, with a calendar of 182 school days, a student who has missed 18 or more days is considered chronically absent (see Table 11).

Teacher retention, the number of teachers who choose to stay at the same school year to year, has been a significant issue in the years prior to and during the first year of turnaround at Central High School. Table 12 illustrates the positive change in retention and the choice of teachers to work at Central High School

Table 9

ANOVA Between and Within Groups

ANOVA					
Average Scale Score Gain					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	327.127	2	163.563	4.194	0.048
Within Groups	389.950	10	38.995		
Total	717.077	12			

Dependent Variable		Average Scale Score Gain				
		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
(I) Implementation					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 Year implementation	2 Year Implementation	-7.600	4.189	0.299	-19.62	4.42
	No Implementation	4.250	4.416	1.000	-8.42	16.92
2 Year Implementation	1 Year implementation	7.600	4.189	0.299	-4.42	19.62
	No Implementation	11.850	4.189	0.054	-0.17	23.87
No Implementation	1 Year implementation	-4.250	4.416	1.000	-16.92	8.42
	2 Year Implementation	-11.850	4.189	0.054	-23.87	0.17

Table 10

Graduation Rates

Year	3 Year Before	2 Year Before	1 Year Before	Year 1 Turnaround	Year 2 Turnaround	Year 3 Turnaround
Central High School	60.9	60.2	65.2	72	69.7	74.1

Table 11

Percent of Students Chronically Absent

School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Central Elementary	17.5	23.8	21.4	12.9	12.6
Central High School	31.7	30.9	34.6	32.0	30.6

Table 12

Teacher Retention

Teacher Retention	
Year 1	21 of 106 leave
Year 2	18 of 110 leave
Year 3	12 teachers leave 4 requests to transfer in first time in last 10 years
Year 4	2 teachers left

Both Central Elementary and Central High School have seen significant drops in Out-of-School and In-School suspensions. District policies dictate which offenses are suspendable. The administration has a certain degree of discretion (see Table 13).

Table 13

Discipline Data

School	Sanction Type	Prior	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Central Elementary	In-School Suspension	82	223	126	45	13
Central Elementary	Out-of-School Suspension	27	142	123	34	25
Central High School	In-School Suspension	1176	1180	1003	1211	918
Central High School	Out-of-School Suspension	1451	988	788	947	806

Table 14 presented the reading data of the mClass reading program. Figure 6 visually depicts composite scores. Red indicates far below benchmark, yellow is approaching benchmark, green is achieved benchmark, and blue is exceeding. BOY is beginning of the year, MOY middle of year, and EOY end of year. The reading data shows a reduction in the number of students starting each year in the red or “far below benchmark” and the exceeding is growing. The benchmark is a moving target for each part of the year.

Anecdotal evidence shows positive trends in a variety of measures: graduation rates have risen and student achievement is increasing, as evidenced by reading and math performance. Performance has improved but there is no evidence for this on state-wide assessments.

Table 14

Central Elementary School Math Achievement Data

	Progress Towards Targeted Growth (Average Across All Students) Target 100%	Average Scale Score Gain	Average Scale Score Gain Required to Achieve Target	% Students Who Achieved Target	% Students On or Above Grade Level	Number of Students in Summary	Number of Students in Grade
2016-17							
Grade 2	98%	+26	27	49%	17%	59	71
Grade 3	92%	+25	27	44%	9%	55	64
Grade 4	122%	+27	22	68%	30%	57	64
Grade 5	102%	+20	20	56%	9%	55	62
2015-16							
Grade K	93%	+30	32	40%	36%	45	49
Grade 1	52%	+17	32	16%	7%	55	61
Grade 2	70%	+21	30	30%	5%	56	64
Grade 3	76%	+21	28	30%	14%	73	77
Grade 4	87%	+19	22	33%	2%	52	59
Grade 5	75%	+17	22	32%	6%	62	66

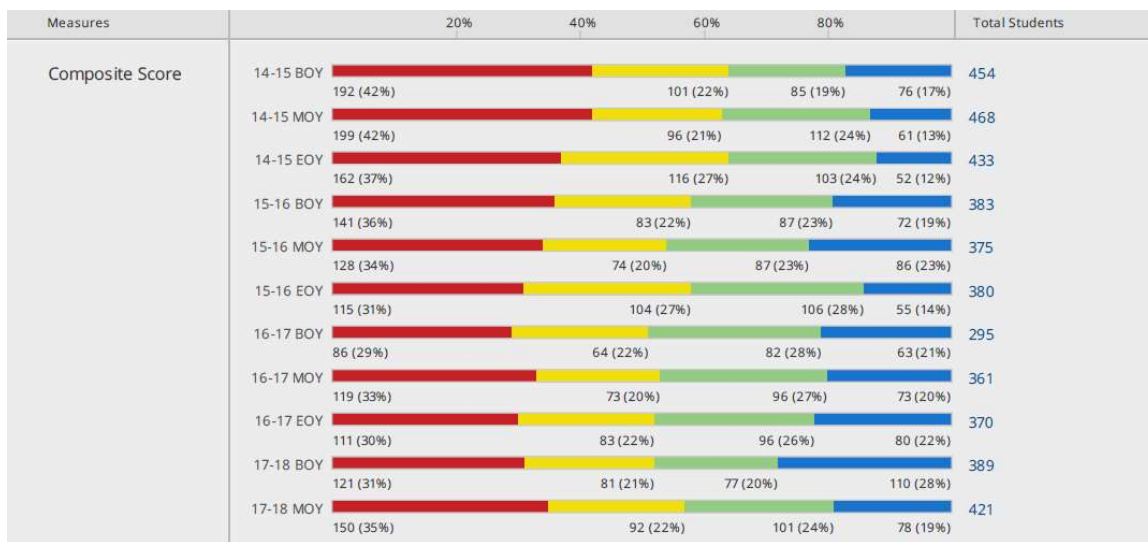


Figure 6. Composite scores

Summary

From the literature and research emerged key factors that can build the foundation for a sustainable turnaround in a school. Leadership and Culture/Climate are the two elements on which all else are built. In establishing these two components, the school can be turned around in the correct way. Following the initial experience of turnaround and the future existence of the school beyond the “turnaround period,” survival can be supported with a strong culture of achievement; moreover, strong relationships developed between adults and students can be further buttressed through strong leadership that is equipped to handle the change situation. When turnaround is accompanied by an investment of money, a plan must be created for how the school will be sustained beyond the turnaround time. Money is supporting the change. This, then, clearly returns to the importance of a strong culture and strong leadership; with both in place, survival can continue beyond a funding stream.

Trust is a key factor holding relationships together, as Bryk and Schneider (2003) indicated:

Good schools depend heavily on cooperative endeavors. Relational trust is the connective tissue that binds individuals together to advance the education and welfare of students. Improving schools requires us to think harder about how best to organize the work of adults and students so that this connective tissue remains healthy and strong. (p. 45)

Turnaround work essentially boils down to trust among stakeholders who are all operating with the best of intentions. The focus groups in the present research noted important insights that, on the surface, may not appear important, but in actuality are indicators of the larger build needed to move culture in a positive direction. The students’ perceptions of being able to ask teachers for help or the sense that the staff gets along

also create a sense of safety and trust. This becomes a feeling of well-being which, when connected to Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs, illustrates its importance. The hierarchy of needs builds from physiological needs, to safety, to belonging and love, to esteem, and ultimately to self-actualization. Students who feel safe in the school environment are able to take the necessary steps up through belonging, esteem, and confidence building to their own self-actualization. For turnaround as well as culture and climate, this intersection is necessary on the part of both students and adults. Adult-to-adult relationships equally fulfill these basic needs of safety and belonging to a group. Such feelings of safety and belonging can then be the foundation of a strong culture of achievement within the school. Again, while these notes and feelings from students may seem initially minor or unimportant, they become an important consideration in the culture of achievement within the school.

Stakeholder relationships in turnaround schools also carry heavy weight in the change process. Stability is the antithesis of change, but certain types of stability during the change process can make the entire situation more palatable. Most of the focus has been on the relationships among adult professionals and between professionals and students. Another important stakeholder relationship is that of parents or caring adults in the life of the students and school. The term *parent* here refers to the caregiving adults who may or may not be the biological or legal guardians of the students. The trust that all are working for the students' best outcomes is difficult to maintain and appears even more difficult at this time in society. As Bryk and Schneider (2003) indicated in discussing a stable school community:

The stability of the student body directly affects teacher-parent trust. Building and maintaining trust depends on repeated social exchanges. Teachers find it hard to develop and sustain direct positive engagement with all parents when the student population changes frequently. Moreover, in transient neighborhoods, parents find it difficult to share reassuring information with one another about their good experiences with teachers; lacking such personal communication, parents who are new to a school community may fall back on predispositions to distrust, especially if many of their social encounters outside of the school tend to reinforce this worldview. (p. 45)

The challenges faced in turnaround can be multiplied by instability within the community. The stronger the establishment of trust, the stronger the connection to the broader work. The home-school connection is important because educators cannot reach students if they cannot also reach the parents. Parents are responsible for setting the tone and value of education and encouraging student development. The relationship of parents to the school is firmly based on their own experience as students themselves. The culture of achievement needs parents as allies because they are needed to reinforce the importance of school and support efforts to change the school for the better. To that end, school leaders need to build a broader base of community trust to enable both parental and community support.

Building a culture of achievement and then combining strong leadership were shown to be practices that can lead to sustainable results. At the schools in the present study, leadership was positively viewed and leadership was a major component in executing and sustaining turnaround work. The positive reception of the principals and the relationship that students and adults noted in the climate survey and the focus groups reinforce the important role leadership plays in turnaround. To further illustrate this point, findings from the *Emerging and Sustainable Practices* research conducted by the

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education highlighted the following:

- The school established student behavioral expectations and a positive climate of teacher professional interactions, support, and collaboration.
- The school has established a community-wide set of student behavioral expectations and teacher responses, as well as a positive, professional culture of collaboration and shared efforts to increase student achievement.
- School leadership has worked with the staff to establish and reinforce student behavioral expectations, and in many cases has established a positive discipline program to support a healthy, orderly, and respectful school environment.
- School leadership is highly communicative with and supportive of teachers, establishing a responsive and inclusive leadership climate, resulting in a culture of collegiality and transparent decision-making and effective communication channels. (Lane, Unger, & Rhim, 2014, p. 15)

These practices have been found to be consistent in all schools showing achievement gains in Years 2 and 3 of their turnaround according to Lane et al. (2014).

Strong leadership and the right kind of leadership for the situation are hallmarks of successful institutions; they are also among the challenges to scalable sustainable turnaround. While the present researcher has categorized numerous leadership traits in this dissertation, the importance of the right leader at the right time cannot be underestimated. Given the studied schools in turmoil over the decline into turnaround status, the new school leaders combined important leadership traits with a situational intelligence that made change possible. Central Elementary School, for example, needed a leader who would listen, be supportive, and restore confidence to the staff before any significant change could be accomplished. Central High School needed a leader who would give clear direction and vision for where the school needed to go. This leader needed to employ the traits of being decisive and being relational to build a coalition to create change. This leader also needed to stand firm when it was easy for stakeholders to

sabotage school inertia. By inertia, the researcher means not being willing to change or keeping the status quo. From the *Emerging and Sustaining Practices*, particularly noted as “Leadership and Culture That Enables Turnarounds,” is the following:

School leaders and professional staff (e.g., teachers, coaches, and interventionists) have embraced collective responsibility and ownership of the pursuit of greater student achievement. A strong leader and a proactive leadership team intentionally foster collective responsibility by mobilizing structures, strategies, practices and the use of resources for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of instruction. (Lane, Unger, & Souvanna, 2013, p. 4)

In the schools studied, the leaders built leadership teams around transparency, training others, and empowering them to act. Through this leadership process, the responsibility for turnaround does not rest only on the leader’s shoulders but on everyone. When this communication and expectation are properly shared, the responsibility expands to both students and outside shareholders as well.

The success or failure of school turnaround rests on adult actions which, in turn, determine student outcomes. Adults need to change their behaviors in order to change children’s behaviors. The behaviors they need to change are how they approach instruction, what they believe their students are capable of achieving, and how they have to behave if the situation they are currently in can change. With the belief that educators do not set out each day to fail students’ needs, educators then must be change agents themselves, following the lead of an effective change agent.

In short, turnaround work is daunting. The literature on this topic has shown many theories and practices that undergird sound school improvement efforts. Moreover, research has shown that school turnaround has not been able to scale up to levels for mass access. A number of factors seem to depend on local conditions or, rather, on the context in which the school is currently operating. For these reasons, the fundamental tenets of

turnaround must occur in a specialized way so that it works in individual communities. Thus, while scalability may be achieved, the work can look different in each localized setting. Culture, climate, and leadership as the cornerstones of turnaround work have many universal elements at the onset, but implementation requires work at localized levels that take into account the history, traditions, and rituals of that local community. However, the universality of the desire to improve is what will guide each journey.

Indicators of Successful Turnaround

In the academic sphere, student performance is the core measure of a successful institution. The primary indicator of success is the improvement in student performance on assessments. In the state where the schools are located, as in most states, there are specific state-wide assessments and student performance criteria. In addition to the obvious need for academic achievement, culture and climate need to be seen from a lens to build trust, establish strong relationships, enhance the voice of stakeholders, engage in the family, and build on the environment.

Context

Understanding the context in which the school is operating is key to the reform process. The context of turnaround work is rife with politics, misgivings, blame, and anger. Did the school finally close because of the teachers, the learners, the lack of district support, and/or the lack of community support? The context of what the school represents in the community will affect how the turnaround occurs.

Research from every sector of the school reform landscape confirms that context is critical. History and experience, type of school, nature of the community and the district, level of schooling, and an assortment of other

contextual factors are important in the development of academic press and supportive culture.... Interventions, built or imported (even when they carry the right DNA), need to be shaped and contoured to fit the school context. When they are not, they tend not to fit. And when improvement efforts do not fit at the school, they rarely flourish. (Murphy, 2013, locator number 2523)

As a school is developing operationally, the fit of its improvement efforts should match the context in which they are operating. The community in which the schools of this study operated have historical contexts. Nostalgia for their glory days could have hampered the schools' turnaround efforts. At both schools, the context revolved around the neighborhood, equity, and generational emotional attachment; in knowing this context, the turnaround plans that were implemented were able to consider those factors.

The plans involved deep investment in professional development to improve the quality of instruction in order to last beyond the funding associated with turnaround. If one had simply approached this community with a model such as closure and restart, the community would have shown significant resistance. To be successful, the leader needs to understand and reshape the context to reflect positive changes. Rebranding, reorganizing, and redefining the school are needed to provide a new context. As the image changes, the context in which the school operates will also shift. The context will be ever-shifting, but the response to these elements will define success.

The ways in which the school responds to challenges and setbacks are another indicator. A school as an entity cannot be afraid of self-study and reflection. Reflective practice not only of the leader but the organization is required for sustained change. The organization must look at challenges as things to be overcome and not as impenetrable. Acknowledging that there will be setbacks, but also knowing that planning how to reset, diagnose the issue, determine root causes, and define the next solution are required. The

school has to become a learning organization. Gareth Morgan's (1998) work discussed images as metaphors of organizations and how organizations must move toward being learning organizations to survive. Among these metaphors is the image of the living organism and its need to adapt to its environments. The reflective approach increases capacity within the organization through an understanding of lessons learned.

Operational and District Support

From an operational level, the school needs to create a process plan to decide and ensure that a system is being built in which consensus can grow but dissenters also have a voice. Operationally, the leader and the team will work to build capacity and approach the task at hand by creating innovation and making small pilots successful. By using successful pilots, the work can then be taken to scale from a whole school strategy.

With turnaround, there is growth, plateauing, and sometimes relapse. Schools that value continuous improvement, collaboration, coherence, and caring are more likely to sustain gains in student achievement (Duke, 2015, p. 179). Duke stated there is more information about how schools improve, as opposed to why schools plateau in student achievement. This conjecture was based on a lack of schools that conduct or permit studies on why plateaus or declines occur. It is important for leaders to monitor the flattening of achievement to ensure that any previous issues contributing to decline in performance do not resurface.

Support from the district level is also required for success. As research has shown, teachers have the greatest impact on student achievement and school leadership has the second highest impact (Leithwood et al., 2004). District-level support would follow as the next layer of support to ensure student achievement. The district will have to provide

resources and protect schools in turnaround from its own policies and procedures that may have stymied the success of the school.

Protection means closely examining how district policies and procedures have affected success and how special dispensation to operate will be afforded the turnaround schools to ramp up success rapidly. The district cannot treat turnaround schools exactly the same way as it treats its most successful schools. Equity and equality have to be monitored to give turnaround schools equitable resources to meet the challenges they face. Cutting the “pie” into equal pieces will not guarantee equity. A look at the population and the needs of each school in a data-driven manner can bring about the required equity.

At the district level, the belief that the school can change is essential to future success. If district-level leaders are in compliance mode, as opposed to partnership mode, with the school, change will not happen. Compliance mode as an example means meeting the minimum requirements of the monitoring entity that oversees turnaround, as opposed to true partnership in providing all possible resources to support the turnaround school.

Investment in People

Investment in people and their abilities is another indicator of success. This involves commitment or buy-in from all stakeholders—students, teachers, administration, and district. Sustainability requires support at the district level. This support means putting continuing protections in place around staffing and implementing transiency policies and continuation of the newly adopted programmatic structure. The district can review what it will do to support the continuation of these programs. Turnaround programs should not end because the formal program ends. Although Central Elementary

and Central High School were at the end of their official time in turnaround, they still have much work to acknowledge universally that success systems and culture have changed in order to support the continuous improvement process. Coming out of the official turnaround means that additional funds allotted for the school will not be available. To that end, both schools have focused on increasing the capacity of the professional staff to continue on the path. Both schools invested in people as opposed to products to achieve this goal.

Turnaround work often involves a deep investment of resources. Money as a primary investment leads to ways that money will be invested. For sustainable turnaround, investment in people is crucial. After the associated turnaround dollars dry up, a properly developed staff will be the enduring element of turnaround. Investments in technology and programs are temporary. Technology may have a 3- to 5-year lifespan; programs only exist as long as there is funding to maintain them; the capacity of the faculty is what can endure, especially as they become the trainers of teachers who join them as time passes.

Data-rich Culture

Another indicator of a successful turnaround is the creation of a data-rich culture—a culture in which data are used to make informed decisions that will improve the students' life outcomes. Using data as the driving force in decision making is prudent because data offer a clear rationale for choices. A dedication to change and wanting to change are necessary criteria for successful turnaround. There needs to be a common understanding that change is good. While change will be slow at times and may even feel painful, it is for an ultimate benefit. Steady growth will come from accepting change and

being a part of change. In the new construct of the turnaround school, data will live as the core element of decision making. Data will be analyzed and systems will be put in place to disseminate the learning from the data and courses of action. Once the school teams act on their analysis, the next phase of the system has a robust reporting structure to note the effectiveness of the action and loop into the next cycle of data collection, analysis, and action.

A careful balance should be struck, however. Action based solely on data should also take into account factors that maintain the integrity of the programming; without this balance, there is no guarantee of success. One example of this need for balance is when making programmatic cuts to an advanced placement programming solely because of low enrollment. A school that is working to improve must have high-level programming to challenge students with higher ability. Teaching to the lower and middle ranges cannot be the only acceptable way to teach. Data analysis must include a lens on equity because data alone do not tell every story. Analysis is useful and can indicate inequities, and so what one does with this information can support the building of a more equitable base from which schools can operate. On the negative end, analysis can support implicit biases and justify the “they can’t” narrative built around low-performing students.

Leadership Practices

Leaders who can build strong relationships across all ranks of the school can rally people to the school’s vision. Relational leadership runs through the daily life of every school as educators attend to the quality *of relationships*, insist on commitment to the school’s *purposes and goals*, and *examine and improve instruction* (Donaldson, 2007).

The vision of what the organization can and will be in the future must be articulated by the leader and shared with others. The leader has to inspire others to be partners in the revision. Sharing this vision and inspiring others to be a part of it manifest a coalition that needs to be built in order to make change. This practice relates to Kotter's (1996) work change. Among the eight steps in the change process is building a coalition for change. The vision must be articulated repeatedly. It should be central to every conversation around the work. The vision of the goals of implementation may be contained in a primary document such as the turnaround plan or school improvement plan. This document, the driving manifesto, should be treated as the key source guide to refer to when setting out on improvement tasks. Turnaround leadership requires daily work to support the mission and ideas espoused in the plan. With the turnaround plan or school improvement as the "sacred text," the leader can point to the direction and basis for decision making. Practical steps for immersion of the plan should include norms that bring reference to this document in most meetings of the leadership team and constituents. Strong leadership practices include establishing norms or operating conditions for the work of improvement. Constant review of documents and progress monitoring with evidence are key to successful implementation. The plan is also the focusing point for the stakeholders to work on continuous improvement. This document should outline the coherent systems to make a functioning school improvement plan successful. General coherence, as Fullan (2014) repeatedly cited, is required of all systems to align with and work toward a common goal.

Proper leadership practices begin with a turnaround plan that is the seminal document for the process. This is a living document—a guide, a vision statement, the

ultimate blueprint—that takes the school through the tumultuous process of change to becoming a successfully functioning school. A leader must make sure that the constituents understand that their singular purpose is to improve the school.

Focus on Continual Improvement

Turnaround leaders must keep focused on goal improvement. Recognizing improvement is not a final destination on the journey, but rather a moving target along the way. Improvement is a road marker that appears repeatedly in different forms. Central Elementary was noted as a shining star in the turnaround efforts of the state program, but as a singular school, its progress was not impressive. The point is that improvement is a local individual measure of one school against itself. Improvement will be ongoing until a school achieves success that is not qualified by various factors. Central Elementary is well on the way to that outcome. The students are stronger academically and better prepared for middle school. The principal made a point of celebrating the small victories with the staff and encouraging them to continue taking positive risks to improve their school. Relationships and an air of collaboration are the hallmarks of the school. Adults hold one another accountable for instruction, supervision, and responsibilities to the students.

Another focus within continuous improvement is having stakeholders remove the statement “they can’t” from their vocabulary when reflecting on student ability. In a turnaround school, student performance has not met expectations at the time of turnaround, but the point of turning the school is to improve student performance. Turnaround leaders must strive to obtain quick wins, but then also to build on these wins for the purpose of larger gains to create unambiguous success.

Fearlessness to Stand on Convictions

Turnaround can be compared to fixing the plane while one is flying it or changing a tire while a vehicle is still moving. Throughout the turnaround process, there will be many obstacles to overcome. Change is one of the most difficult goals for individuals to achieve. Change is death, according to Reeves (2008). Change accompanies the same feelings of loss. People will resist change and refuse to move forward or stop at the first instance of difficulty. When there is resistance from teachers, students, or other stakeholders, leaders must persevere and stand on their principles. The leader must be fearless in the face of this resistance and stand on his or her convictions. Leaders can state what they believe in and how that frames operations throughout the turnaround process. The non-negotiables that the leader articulates will set the stage for ensuring how the vision continues to be implemented so that turnaround can be successful. Standing on one's convictions includes sticking with the plan and the process, despite setbacks in early government. Small wins are often accompanied by losses—both big and small—but the courage to ride through the storms can make the turnaround possible. It is easy to conclude that an effort is not working if it is abandoned at the first sign of trouble. At Central High School, in the early stage of the turnaround, the new principal faced challenges from the rest of the school leadership team who criticized that nothing was working after 1 week, 1 month, and even 1 year. The leader “stuck to her guns” and continuously showed where the small parts of the plan were working, then pressing onward.

Getting Others to Act

No individual can do school turnaround by himself or herself. A leader needs a team of trusted partners to achieve the work. At Central High School, the principal trained the team she had put together and frequently discussed and visually demonstrated how the team was a working element in the process. From a visual and symbolic standpoint, the leadership team had a morning huddle in the front lobby as staff and students arrived. This projected a physical image of teamwork, including open communication and commitment to work together on the issues. These huddles and evidence of common work also made it clear that the vice principal spoke with the same voice as the principal to deliver the same message. At staff meetings, she stated her vision and outlined her beliefs. She took the staff through a variety of exercises to discuss the vision and explained the role of each individual in that vision.

Another example of strong positive leadership practice was employing a variety of respected individuals to assume leadership tasks. The principal identified informal leaders to take on formal leadership roles in the projects. This shows again a commitment to working as a team in order to distribute the “heavy lift” of the work among many people.

In the work of turning a school around, motivating others to act is not only about the adults; it is also about the students. Another powerful act of leadership at Central High School was convening focus groups to discuss issues in the school; these focus groups were similar to the ones conducted for this research. These groups consisted of a variety of students and often featured “non-typical” students. The principal endeavored to find kids who could go unnoticed as well as kids who were noticed for both good and bad

reasons. Through these focus groups, students shared their opinions on how the school was functioning and what can be improved. These groups gave rise to improvements in what happens to “advisory” periods and “activity” periods. Students have continued to express their desire for mentorship opportunities to discuss matters with staff and receive opportunities to know fellow students better. Suggestions from these groups included having activities that require students to work with people outside of their circle of friends in order to build stronger communication and better understanding across the entire school. These opportunities for leadership among students have yielded improved attendance and reduced the number of high-level suspensions in the school.

By redefining leadership practices, adult-to-adult relationships, adult-to-student relationships, and student-to-student relationships, a culture of achievement and success can be built as the foundation for any school. Combining leadership with culture can change the life outcomes of the students who are affected by the need for school turnaround. Dedication, commitment, and willingness to change are the foundation of change. Thus, the goal of turnaround is the improvement not only of academic performance, but ultimately of life outcomes for all students who are affected by the turnaround.

The lessons learned from the analysis of the research and the literature that framed the work include what builds the basis for the handbook developed. Recognizing that conditions and context will affect how turnaround work is implemented, the following handbook focuses on the key learnings that can be applied to the turnaround situation and tailored to meet the localized needs. Change must occur and how one gets to implement change can be shaped by following the handbook.

Implications

Turnaround work is ongoing and arduous work. School improvement can be achieved through a leader with effective turnaround competencies and strong stakeholder relationships. Time is required to allow a turnaround to take hold. While rapid change is needed, sustainable growth requires time to develop a positive culture and a multitiered cadre of formal and informal leaders to promote the work. As resources are devoted to turnaround, small wins and interim benchmarks will show change while the sustainable improvements develop. For significant change to occur, the process will take 3-5 years. An effective turnaround leader will need to be in place to push through the change process. The coalition of people working toward the change will help to trumpet the success along the way.

District leaders will need to commit resources and develop policies to obtain ample turnaround time that will develop sustainable improvements. By placing the correct leader in a position of authority to act, district leaders can support school improvement. As culture and climate are essential to sustainable turnaround, district leaders should increase the focus on student and teacher voice in all reform strategies.

Finally, turnaround implementation must be tailored to the environment and context in which the school community operates. The work will need to be localized to account for the uniqueness of the individual environment. With policies, understanding of the change process, and reasonable expectations for the time required, sustainable improvement is achievable.

Chapter V

HANDBOOK

*TURNAROUND AS AN EXPERIENCE:
USING SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE AS THE
DRIVER FOR SCHOOL TURNAROUND*

This chapter presents the handbook that was the product of an extensive literature review and an analysis of reviewers' responses to an earlier draft of the document. The following document is intended to be a practical guide to setting priorities, managing the change process, and building a strong foundation on which to build a sustainable turnaround.

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INTRODUCTION

Great schools do not just happen. One must design them to work (Pappano, 2010). The design must meet the needs of students and operate in an efficient and sustainable manner. Creating a great school requires a rebuilding of all the major components and involving all stakeholders in the new creation. A great school requires leadership, commitment, and a clear direction which can lead to sustainable success. At the start of this journey towards rebirth as a great school, a turnaround school often does not possess any of the aforementioned characteristics. Far from reaching the heights of their potential, these schools are generally at the nadir of their existence when they are classified as “in need of turnaround.” Evidence of this is clear from the need for the turnaround of numerous systems within the school that are not working. These systems include climate, culture, instruction, and leadership. At times, district systems also support the failure of the individual school. Turnaround schools can often be categorized as having lowered expectations of student behavior and academic performance, but that lowering of expectations can extend to the teaching staff as well. Raising the expectations of both students and faculty is essential to the change process. Students need to understand they are critical to the turnaround process and need to perform socially and academically.

This handbook was informed by literature research as well as field research at schools currently working on turnaround. The research covers education leadership, school turnaround, and school culture and climate. This handbook addresses elements of successful turnaround and practices of leadership that support and sustain positive results. It also encapsulates findings and best practices to advance a school turnaround through

the lens of culture and climate. The purpose of this handbook is to provide methods to start the journey of turnaround for an underperforming school. The process to turn around a school is always arduous, but the success of that process is the improvement of the life outcomes of the students. While not stated directly, all actions of leadership, climate improvement, and the turnaround process itself should lead to the improvement of instructional and student learning.

Culture and climate frame all interactions within a school. The way adults speak to other adults, the way adults speak and interact with students, and the way students speak and interact with other students all develop from the established culture and climate within a building. Within a highly functioning culture, these interactions are productive, respectful, and meaningful for the parties involved. In a dysfunctional climate, these issues multiply themselves into larger issues. While a culture may develop at glacial speed, changing a negative culture must be accelerated or else other necessary elements of the school will never improve. This handbook will help users look at the current situation within an existing school and offer direction on how to go about changing the culture and climate, as well as elements within the school to move it toward turnaround to becoming healthy and successful.

As Peter Senge explained in the Foreword of the book *All Systems Go* by Michael Fullan (2010), America has been trying to turn around schools for a quarter of a century with tragic results. One simplistic quick-fix nostrum after another has seized the political limelight and driven through the system as if that was all that was needed: decentralized site accountability, small high schools, and high-stakes testing. While all these efforts

embody ideas with merit, the belief in “one size fits all” fixes might in fact be the real problem. Quoting noted Daniel L. Duke (2015), an expert in school turnaround:

Windmills, Wishing Wells, and Wings. Each could be a metaphor for the school turnaround process. For some, turning around a low performing school is a quixotic quest, akin to tilting at windmills. For others, the undertaking is from throwing money at school and hoping for the best. When I think of school turnarounds, however, the image of wings comes to mind. Successful turnaround lift low performing schools, allowing students to take flight. (p. 209)

School turnaround must take the form of wings. Ultimately, these schools must improve the life outcomes for the students who inhabit the schools, day in and day out, year in and year out. To approach the problem of turning a school around, one must “get to the bottom” of the issues that have prevented the school community from succeeding in the first place. Contemporary methods of turning around schools have focused on the disruptive practice of removing significant portions of the staff and/or replacing the leadership within the school.

For the purposes of this handbook, the schools are referred to as “Central Elementary” and “Central High School.” Each school chose the “Transformation” model of turnaround but each chose different methods of transformation. Central Elementary chose an Education Management to partner with in order to run the school. Central High School selected to reorganize into smaller learning communities around themes. The schools are located in a city in the northeastern United States. The demographics of the city are approximately 110,000 residents and 50,000 households, and 20.6% the population live below the poverty level, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The median income is \$41,499. The ethnic make-up of the city is 45% White, 20% African American, and 31% Hispanic (this includes one or more races) (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2014). The city has an unemployment rate of 9.2%, according to the BLS (2014).

It is the researcher's hope that this handbook will help schools in need to meet their challenges and find their success. School turnaround is a painful, time-consuming journey that is fraught with false starts, challenges, and defeats along the way, but with perseverance and dedication to sound planning, the reward will be worth the hardships. The reward is a school where learning happens, students and adults grow in a safe supportive environment, and students' life outcomes improve. Turnaround does not set out to create the school of one's dreams, but a school that, in practical reality, works for all stakeholders.

SECTION 1

UNDERSTANDING THE NEED TO CHANGE

Michael Fullan (2007) described how the process of school reform and planning towards that reform requires changes in the way people think about education. Change is difficult for most people. One way to frame how people view change is to view it as the same process a person undergoes in experiencing the stages of grief associated with death. The barriers to change are powerful because in many ways, change is viewed in the same way as death is (Reeves, 2008).

Every person can serve as a change agent. In an effort to make change, individuals must realize they must be a part of the change. One may not be simply a spectator. One must join in the process, with all the struggles, complexities, and discomforts that come with change. On the other side of going through the stress, however, making the change is the success. In terms of school systems, the ultimate goal is the education and preparation of children for the future. Careful attention to a small number of key details during the change process can result in the experience of success, new commitments, and the excitement and energizing satisfaction of accomplishing something that is important (Fullan, 2007, p. 8).

Without any doubt, turnaround is disruption. It is the disruption of the status quo, disruption of what is known, and disruption of “that’s the way we have always done it.” The reason change in schools is particularly hard is that the innovations that will most

likely have an impact on learning are those that are most intimately connected to the directional system, the knowledge development system, and the recruitment and induction system. By contrast, the social systems that determine the flexibility and adaptability of the school organization are the power and authority systems, the evaluation systems, and the boundary systems (Schlechty, 2011). In all cases, disruptions are necessary to move the turnaround process forward.

Disruptive Innovations have served to accomplish this in technology, business management, and other fields. These are incongruent with existing social systems and therefore require fundamental changes to these systems if the innovations are to be correctly installed and sustained (Schlechty, 2011). The Disruptive Innovation theory explains why organizations struggle with certain kinds of innovation and how they can predictably succeed in innovation (Christensen, 2008). Disruptive Innovation must occur if schools are to improve. The disruption of the old status quo must be the beginning of new changes to improve school. Continuing to conduct business as one has done in the past will only allow for previous failures to continue. The level of disruption may vary based on an individual's perception, but disruption nonetheless is the foundation of school turnaround.

In his work *Change Forces*, Fullan (1993) stated that regardless of whether change is simple or complex or mandated, people tend to view change as a temporary fad as opposed to a true transformational effort. In helping educators to think differently about how they approach their change work, a great deal of effort will be required.

Is Perception Reality or Not?

When a school is in need of turnaround, perception and reality have points of intersection and points of digression. As a turnaround school, perception and reality intersect because they both document that the school is not performing to the standard it should. Where the two may differ could even be the degree to which the school is failing and the elements in which the school is failing. Yet while the degree of deterioration may vary, perception can be a multiplier of these facts. Thus, perception can be a very important driver of activities within a school. For example, student behaviors which are considered inappropriate may be much worse in a school suffering from a negative climate. Despite how negative things may seem, some stakeholders may feel differently about this. Across the focus groups conducted by the present researcher, it was noted that the students understood the concept of turnaround in a very different way from educators and other stakeholders. They recognized that external distinction meant their school was not meeting expectations. As the students lived in the school's day-to-day reality, they did not see those distinctions as fitting. Instead, they saw themselves as being just the same as students in other places. The perception adults have of school failure can affect the general morale and ultimately how teaching occurs in the school. Perceptions of a failing school can have their own repercussions within a school.

Below are descriptions of Central High School before it began its turnaround efforts.

Achievement: A significant challenge for Central High School is low academic achievement of students. Compared to all other high schools, Central has the lowest scores and falls well below the scores for the state overall. Rigor is lacking

in many courses at the school. Additionally, there is a lack of clear goals for students who struggle to see connections between their schoolwork and real-world college or career opportunities post-graduation.

Culture: A culture of failure is pervasive throughout the school and serves as a root cause of low academic achievement. Some classes have significantly low success rates; low expectations for student achievement have been accepted and condoned in the past. School leadership has failed to hold teachers accountable for their work and respond to areas of need. Assistant principals, whose time is spent mostly on discipline, rarely act as instructional leaders. Consistent discipline with effective strategies needs to be implemented and followed by all administrators and teachers.

School Environment: There are high rates of suspension and truancy. Behavioral expectations are unclear to students and staff. Staff use SWIS (School-wide Information System) data inconsistently and infrequently, and the school lacks an action plan to implement PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports). Few students participate in clubs and sports, and school-wide celebrations that recognize academic and/or athletic success are rare. Students are not engaged in the school community.

Below are descriptions of Central Elementary School before it began its turnaround efforts.

Student Achievement: The most critical need for Central Elementary is tied to student academic proficiency. In recent years, reading, writing, and math

achievement have remained unacceptably low, even declining in some areas and grade levels. Achievement levels in reading have declined double-digit.

Curriculum and Instruction: There is a pervasive culture of low expectations at Central Elementary. Instructional quality and rigor are inconsistent throughout the building; professional development is inconsistent and not designed to meet teachers' needs as professionals. There is a lack of access to curricular resources and staff struggle with differentiation.

Culture: Though the school environment is relatively calm, student behavior continues to present challenges for the school. The district conducted an assessment of the implementation of PBIS at Central Elementary and found specific areas for improvement. Most notably, behavioral expectations are unclear to students and staff, staff use data inconsistently and infrequently, and the school lacks an action plan to implement PBIS. School staff must work to implement PBIS with fidelity, and this will require ongoing training.

These two descriptions paint pictures of schools languishing in despair and toxic learning environments. By these measures, they are not succeeding as they should. The reality is a variety of quantitative and qualitative measures that have shown both schools to be struggling greatly and in great need of turnaround. Students do not recognize their school as failing; rather, they see their schools as where they go and that for them is simply their reality.

Responding to the idea of being a turnaround school, a student summed it up as "It means we need to be better with some things but that doesn't mean we are a bad school. I don't see as any different from [other local high school] or [other local high

school], we are all the same.” The students’ perceptions of the school become an opportunity to engage in this important stakeholder, particularly at the secondary level. This same sentiment was shared by staff as well. The focus groups stated they thought they were no different than other schools in the district, and results showed that the schools did not have a statistically significant difference between their performances.

A leader must work to project reality over the fiction. A leader must be in front of staff communicating the reality. Here is another point when leaders need to enlist the support of allies. When perception changes, sentiments can change, such as “We don’t do that at the new [name] school”—as one student replied when asked to articulate how the school has changed since being in turnaround. He noted how both behavior and expectations have changed, and summed up his perception as simply, “[Fights] don’t happen at the ‘new’ Central Elementary.”

In this regard, Fullan (1993) suggested that “problems are our friends” (Chapter 3). Problems will inevitably arise as individuals move out of comfortable patterns and are forced to do something different. However, different is not necessarily bad, although it is often viewed as such at the onset. In problem solving, the strengths of inquiry and, ultimately, mastery are necessary to overcome the issues presented. Change is a journey; problems do not form the blueprints and must be handled as they arise.

Root Cause Analysis

For some schools in need of turnaround, an underlying cause is poverty. Poverty and the cumulative effects of poverty have been shown have a deleterious impact on communities and particularly schools. Poverty dictates where families live: typically

urban neighborhoods or rural settings with high concentrations of other poor people and relatively few job opportunities and underfunded schools (Duke, 2015). The effects associated with poverty, such as poor housing and poor access to health and childcare, can create barriers for students to succeed in school, and can be compounded by having less experienced teachers in low-performing districts and poverty-stricken communities. The results of these effects actually become the root cause of other failures—for example, in a community with few jobs and poor access to childcare. According to Hart and Risley (2003), a child whose family is on welfare could hear 26 million fewer words by the time he or she is school-age than his or her counterparts in affluent communities. This sets students behind from the start in kindergarten, and delayed opportunities continue to grow as they continue in school and within communities that create pockets of inequity and schools that do not perform up to standard. By determining the root cause, the correct corrective actions can be taken. Creating more local- and state-funded pre-kindergarten options may be an action that can be taken to solve the issue.

Within turnaround schools, the issues are numerous. Factors resulting in the need for turnaround can be both external and internal. As previously discussed, poverty is among the most important external factors that can lead to low-performing schools. As one begins to examine internal factors, it should be noted that the deterioration in these schools did not begin overnight nor will they recover overnight. Much effort must go into understanding the reasons for failure and taking true action, not against symptoms but against root causes. Root Cause Analysis and Corrective Action is a process to get to “the why” of previous failures. A root cause is the most basic reason the problem occurs in the first place. Paul Preuss (2003) offered numerous processes for approaching root causes

through the lens of school leadership. Root Cause Analysis requires a dive below the symptoms to a clearer understanding of why the issue is an issue and how one can move beyond. Successes, as well as failures, have root causes.

- Root Cause Analysis helps dissolve the cause, not just the symptom.
- Root Cause Analysis eliminates patched and wasted efforts.
- Root Cause Analysis conserves scarce resources.
- Root Cause Analysis induces discussion and reflection.
- Root Cause Analysis provides a rationale for strategy selection.

What are the reasons the school was failing before? Another example of Root Cause Analysis that can help determine what the correct corrective action would be is looking at factors such as transportation. In a high school, for example, there may be few to no means for students to get to school if they miss the bus. A corrective action could be working with the city or town to establish late bus lines or provide bus passes to students so they may attend school. Without such an analysis, the direction may not prove to be the right course of action. Root Cause Analysis offers a pause between problem identification and problem solution that allows for reflection and focus on the issues of causation (Preuss, 2003).

Root causes can have multiple levels. The levels Preuss referred to are: incidents/procedural, programmatic, systematic, and/or external. An example of a programmatic problem could be instructional processes. A systematic problem could arise from elements of the leadership or a culture with low expectation. An external example could be occurrences in the community, such as poverty.

Among various issues that need to be addressed at Central High School is chronic absenteeism. Administration, staff, and students all had opinions on why students were not coming to school. The reasons put forth ranged from student engagement to lack of student discipline and parent involvement. Any or all of these may contribute to the issue with student attendance, but no cause can be determined without a dive into the data analysis of why students are missing school. At the onset, the strategy to combat the absenteeism involved monitoring data and intervening with students who were in the most severe case. As time went on, this seemed to be a daunting task because this meant dealing with hundreds of students. After technical assistance from an outside organization, it was determined that the focus needed to be on those who were not yet chronically absent but were considered “at risk” for chronic absence. In this example, the root causes are on multiple levels because some aspects refer to programmatic issues, systematic issues, and community issues.

Another example of the many causes of school failure is that the curriculum does not match current standards. The collective action would be an update to deliver the curriculum promptly. While numerous strategies can be offered to address the problem, the diagnostic process is one method to consider for exploring causes within the school setting.

The following diagrams and tables indicate several examples of analyzing problems and arriving at solutions. The first tool is the diagnostic tree.

The diagnostic tree provides a structured discovery process that focuses on the whole of the school system, moving from the particular issue to the ever border levels until causal issues are found and proven. It should be cautioned, however, not to allow the structured nature of the process to restrict creative thinking regarding causation. (Preuss, 2003, p. 67)

The tree is divided into layers descending from the Red Flag Event, next location, followed by Initial Hypothesis, then Intermediate Hypothesis, and finally Deep Hypothesis, as illustrated in Figure 1. The team will use this tree to fill in causes and move more deeply to reach a root cause. All possibilities are on the table. As the team dives more deeply, the intent is to reach a core. Getting to the roots should focus the drivers for change.

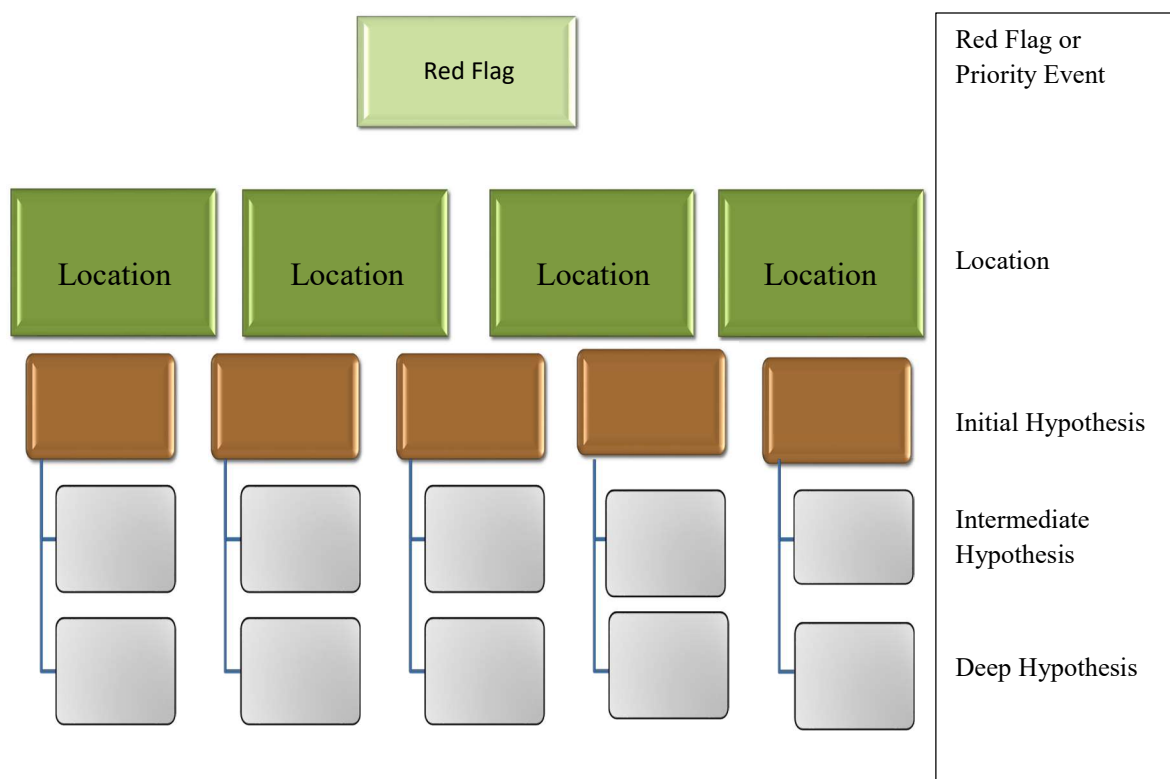


Figure 1. The diagnostic tree process (Preuss, 2003)

The use of the diagnostic tree is outlined below Figure 2. In the example of Central High School's diagnostic tree (Figure 2), note the Red Flag as lower student achievement. Locations for lower achievement are evidenced by the PSAT/SAT and Benchmark assessments. The initial hypotheses are around Curriculum Instruction,

Behaviors, Outside Influences, and Systems/Processes. Next, the team dug more deeply to the next level of hypotheses. This time, the group focused on curriculum and instruction issues such as lack of alignment with current standards, lack of differentiation in class, and sequencing of lessons. The deeper level of analysis looked at instructional strategies.

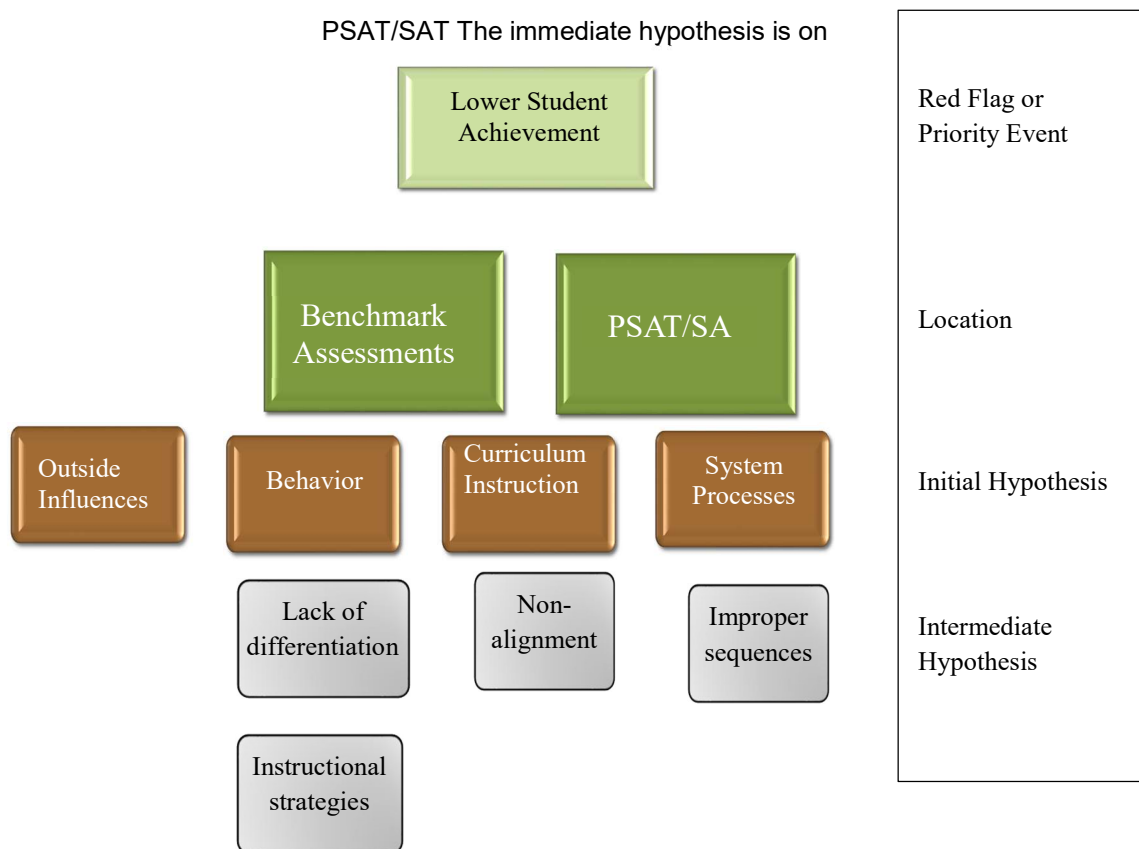


Figure 2. Central High School diagnostic tree

Using this tool helped the team focus on one of the root causes.

Another tool is the Pareto analysis, which is used to consider the various factors as identified possible causes. The Pareto concept theorizes that 80% of the results come from the most important 20% of the factors. Preuss (2003) noted three criteria for root causes:

1. Would the problem have occurred if the cause had not been present?
2. Will the problem reoccur as a result of the same cause if the cause is not corrected?
3. Will correction or dissolution of the cause lead to similar events? (See Ammerman, 1998; Preuss, 2003)

These points are further exemplified in Table 1 and Figure 3.

Table 1

Reasons for Absences During Two-week Period

Root Cause	Occurrences	Cumulative Total	Cumulative Percent
Sick	46	46	33
Don't want to go	36	82	59
Wake up late/Missed bus	20	102	73
Don't like school	9	111	80
Starts too early	7	118	85
No sleep	7	125	90
Boring	6	131	94
Don't care about school	5	136	98
Med reaction	2	138	99
Need breaks	1	139	100
Total	139		

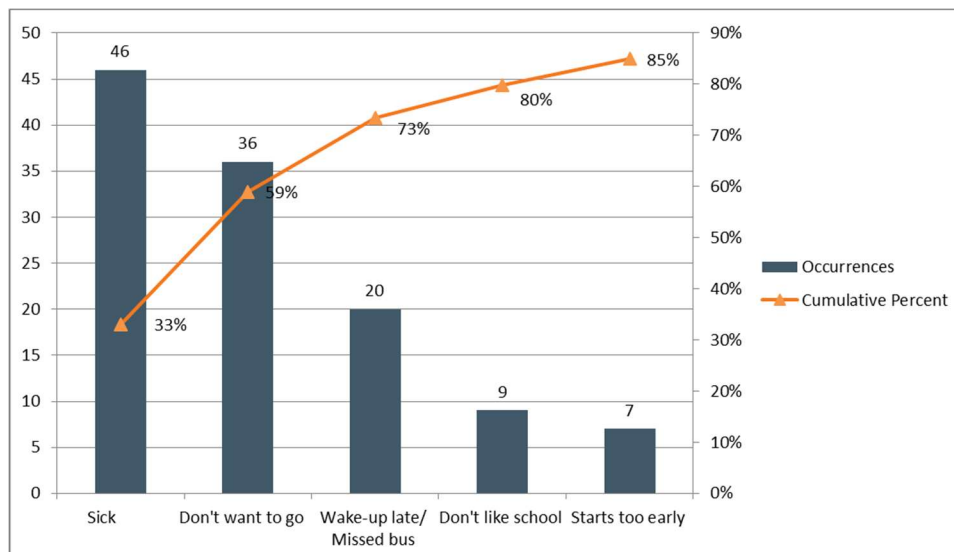


Figure 3. Pareto chart of absences

According to the data presented in Table 1, on the surface it would appear that students were simply sick or did not want to go to school or woke up late. But the data alone are not enough to explain why; the reasons need to have a deeper dive. Here, another helpful tool for discussing root causes is the “Five Whys” technique, a method for diving into causes. In seeking an answer, one should ask and answer a minimum of “why” five times. Looking at the Pareto chart, the five “whys” could be:

1. Why do so many students say they don’t want to be here?
 - a. Answer: They do not care.
2. Why do they not care?
 - a. Answer: They do not find value in school.
3. Why do they not find value in school?
 - a. Answer: They don’t see the connection between what they are learning with their life after school.

4. Why do they not see the connection?
 - a. The curriculum does not engage students in making connections in their future life.
5. Why are the students not engaged?
 - a. Answer: We are teaching the same way we have and curriculum is not updated.

This exploration of five “whys” gives us a snapshot of how we can get to what could be the cause of an attendance issue in school. By starting with surface information, the group can drill down to get deeper answers and eventually come up with a possible root cause.

Summary

Turnaround is a disruption of the status quo. Falling into the trap of “this is the way we’ve always done it” will not allow for changes to be made to improve the school. Teams need to take an uncomfortable look back and a deep dive into reasons for why the process of turnaround can begin. Parsing through the perceptions of students, faculty, and administration to get to the reality of the situation builds the basis for understanding why a school is in need of turnaround.

To maximize the benefit of diagnostics, however, the search for school-based causes of academic problems needs to be ongoing. School administrators should be in the habit of identifying the cause of problems when they first arise (Duke, 2015). Through the use of Root Cause Analysis and Corrective Action, greater understanding is gathered for what actions must be taken. Deep dives through initial, intermediate, and deep

hypotheses give clear insight into what the root causes of previous failures may be. While some causes may be obvious from certain data sources, the underlying reasons may not be determined until teams perform some level of testing. The Pareto Analysis and the five “Whys” to test school issues are just a few of the ways that a deep understanding of the situation can be obtained. Without finding the underlying causes, efforts to correct will be misguided and may not lead to sustainable results even when any noticeable change occurs.

Careful attention to a small number of key details during the change process can result in the experience of success, new commitments, and the excitement and energizing satisfaction of accomplishing something that is important (Fullan, 2014).

SECTION 2

LEADERSHIP

According to Peter Block (2009), leadership begins with understanding that every gathering is an opportunity to deepen accountability and commitment through engagement. It does not matter what the stated purpose of the gathering is (Block, 2009). Throughout this section, leadership will be discussed in a variety of ways. Leadership will be viewed as a series of actions in both mindset and way of being. The action of leadership requires habits of the mind and practices that convey vision, commitment, and clarity.

“The importance of finding a good manager or management team cannot be overstated” (Devos, Hampden-Turner, Trompenaars, & Hampden-Turner, 2002, p. 228). Effective leadership is frequently noted as the second most important factor in student achievement behind teacher effectiveness. Leadership is critically important to turnaround efforts. Turnaround schools need not only leadership practices that will lead the necessary change, but also ultimately practices that will sustain the positive results of a change. Change does not occur easily and is often painful. The pains of change deserve respect. People can sustain only so much loss at any one time. Leadership demands respect for people’s basic need for direction, protection, and order in times of distress. Leadership requires compassion for the distress of adaptive change, both because compassion is its own virtue and because it can improve one’s sense of timing. Knowing

how hard to push and when to let up are central to leadership (Heifetz, 1994). Heifetz further defined leadership as an activity. In that lens, turnaround leaders must continuously take action in the role not only to be perceived as the leader positionally, but also to work actively to perform the job.

Leadership is a normative concept because implicit in people's notions of leadership are images of a social contract. Imagine the differences in behavior when people operate with the idea that "leadership means influencing the community to follow the leader's vision" versus "leadership means influencing the community to face its problems" (Heifetz, 1994, p. 14).

Technical Challenges and Adaptive Challenges

As a leader, one must be prepared to face challenges that will arise during one's leadership. Problems and challenges will vary from minor to major, requiring a leader to learn new practices and frame problems and challenges in different ways. Heifetz (1994) labeled problems that are technical and adaptive. The author of this handbook views leadership as organized around two key distinctions: between technical and adaptive problems, and between leadership and authority. The first points to the different modes of action required to deal with routine problems in contrast with those that demand innovation and learning; the second provides a framework for assessing resources and developing a leadership strategy that depends on whether one has or does not have authority (Heifetz, 1994).

Technical challenge is often easy to identify, tends to have quick and easy solutions, can be solved by an authority or an expert, requires just enough to change a

few items of concern, and is often contained within the organizational boundary.

Technical challenges are also usually very receptive to people and the solutions can be implemented quickly (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997).

Adaptive challenges require new ways of thinking, with both the leader and the organization learning as they go along. Leading a turnaround is a series of adaptive challenges. Leaders need to develop new ways to address problems that have caused the need for turnaround. If one does a deep enough analysis, the problem could go back years, decades, and even generations. In the case of the schools that were studied to compose this handbook, issues have existed for a long period of time, but they bolster the surface with the opportunity to engage in a dramatic, disruptive change process through school turnaround programs.

Within the turnaround, one adaptive challenge to consider is how teaching and learning must be changed to meet the needs of improving the school. This is the type of problem that will require teachers, school leaders, and district administrators to think about teaching and learning in different ways and discover what needs to be done to ensure that students succeed. Adaptive challenges require support at both the school and district level. The school leader will need support to achieve the goals of the change. Solutions to adaptive challenges reside not in the executive suite, but in the collective intelligence of employees at all levels (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997).

In Central High School, some of the adaptive challenges include implementation of the small learning community. Previously, models of small learning communities have been tried, and they were in name only. The plan called for the re-creation of smaller communities as themed academies that required the rewriting of a curriculum and the

re-organization of staff to align with the Academy goals. This required thinking of each structure within the school in a way that differs from how it has been thought of for the last 25 years. The principal has had to redesign systems to work in the context of this school. New learnings were required to make this possible.

Turnaround Competencies

Steiner and colleagues (2008) identified four competencies of a turnaround leader. In both schools, evidence of the leaders working in these capacities cannot be exhibited (Steiner & Hassel, 2011; Steiner, Hassel, Hassel, & Valsing, 2008).

1. Driving for Results Cluster

- **Achievement:** The drive and actions to set challenging goals and reach a high standard of performance despite barriers.
- **Initiative and Persistence:** The drive and actions to do more than is expected or required in order to accomplish a challenging task.
- **Monitoring and Directedness:** The ability to set clear expectations and hold others accountable for performance.
- **Planning Ahead:** A bias towards planning in order to derive future benefits or avoid problems.

In both schools, the turnaround process began when they were identified among the lowest-performing schools in the state. As part of their turnaround plan, they had to create ambitious goals for improving academic scores. Both schools focused on growth as a measure of others. Both schools' turnaround plans were crafted from theories of action that speak fundamentally to investing in staff development. If the schools invest in

the development of current staff and the method of instruction, then student achievement will improve on various measures. The importance of the investment in people and planning ahead is to create a sustainable plan for school growth after the additional resources funded through being a turnaround school are exhausted.

2. Influencing for Results Cluster: This competency enables working through and with others.

- **Impact and Influence:** Acting with the purpose of affecting the perceptions, thinking, and actions of others.
- **Team Leadership:** Assuming the authoritative leadership of a group for the benefit of the organization.
- **Developing Others:** Influence with the specific intent to increase the short- and long-term effectiveness of another person.

At both Central Elementary and Central High School, the leaders exhibited these competencies in their work. Both leaders formed teams that have created a vision and work closely and extensively on problem solving. For example, at Central Elementary School, the principal works closely with the assistant principal and other leaders in the school to monitor the progress constantly. The vision is clear and staff recognize the intended direction of the school. The leadership exudes confidence in its decision making which provides comfort to the staff. At Central High School, the principal has restructured the leadership team to have responsibilities and engage in the decision-making process when appropriate. The leadership is working toward having all members of the team understand what is expected of them and how they can participate in the process.

3. Problem-Solving Cluster: This competency enables solving and simplifying complex problems, analyzing data to inform decisions, making clear and logical plans that people can follow, and ensuring a strong connection between school learning goals and classroom activity.

- **Analytical Thinking:** The ability to break things down in a logical way and recognize cause and effect.
- **Conceptual Thinking:** The ability to see patterns and links among seemingly unrelated things.

Leaders working in the problem-solving cluster need to exhibit the endpoint skills associated with analyzing and conceptual thinking. Turnaround requires looking at the big picture as well as understanding how day-to-day pieces fit together to make the school. A leader must be able to manage the day-to-day operations of the building while maintaining his or her focus on the turnaround plan and the ultimate goal that the school is seeking to achieve.

4. Showing Confidence to Lead: This competency is concerned with staying focused, committed, and self-assured, despite the barrage of personal and professional attacks common during turnarounds.

As recently conducted surveys evidence, both building staffs gave high marks for leadership and a clear vision for where the school was headed. At Central Elementary, leadership was ranked 4.5 to 4.8 on a 5.0 scale. This revealed a very high opinion of the leadership. At Central High School, schools revealed a high rating as well of 3.7 to 5.0 on a 5.0 scale. Through focus groups, students and staff noted the ability to understand the

vision and appreciate the structure. In referring to the principal, one student voiced the following while others agreed:

Ever since she came, there's been structure. When she says something's going to get done, it's going to get done. We had [name] I thought he was going to be big dog. He was very "eh" [weak].

In another focus group, one participant noted:

...when [name] became principal. Because she wants to make the school better. Anytime she tries, we [crosstalk]. We asked her why she changes it. She says, she just says, "Don't worry about it, because I'm trying to make the school better."

In these statements, even in basic ways, the principal is articulating a vision and the student and staff stakeholders understand where their schools are moving.

District Leadership

District leadership is essential to any turnaround effort. Turning around chronically failing schools requires making dramatic changes in schools and districts. School-based leadership must be coupled with strong district supports or else turnaround will not be sustainable (Zavadsky, 2012). District leaders will need to invest resources to support change.

District leaders are crucial and cannot be excluded from this work. This extremely difficult work cannot be done without district leaders who can identify school needs and create innovative solutions; school leaders who can break through long-embedded cultures of failure and change the focus and energy to students; teachers who can trust in trying something new and commit to helping their students reach high standards; and an integrated system that systemically supports all levels of personnel to help them meet their goals successfully (Zavadsky, 2012).

The second challenge is that effecting functional school-level educational infrastructure has long been complicated by weaknesses in system-level educational infrastructure. Seminal arguments for systemic reform hold that primary, system-level barriers to high-quality teaching and learning include unambitious and shallow state curricula, low quality pre-professional and professional development for teachers and leaders, weak research and development, and the lack of high-quality support services for schools (Smith & O'Day 1991; NGA, CCSSO, & Achieve 2008; Jerald, 2008). (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015, p. 385)

In the Center for Comprehensive School Reform brief *Successful School*

Turnaround, Kowal, Hassel, and Hassel (2009) offered the following steps for success to district leaders:

1. Commit to Success
 - a. School board members and district leaders who commit to this strategy must prioritize student learning needs over custom, routine, and established relationships.
2. Choose Turnarounds for the Right Schools
 - a. Determining which schools fall into this “dramatic change” category is a critical step for district leaders.
3. Develop a Pipeline of Turnaround Leaders
 - a. Districts can actively build their supply of turnaround principals by seeking out, training, and placing candidates who have characteristics specific to turnaround leaders, including the ability to engage in consistent patterns of action to carry out the turnaround.
4. Give Leaders the “Big Yes”
 - a. Turnaround principals need flexibility to act based on what works for the school’s student population.

5. Hold Leaders Accountable for Results
 - a. Districts must hold turnaround principals to high standards and a short timeline for results. School turnaround leaders who are likely to succeed will embrace this challenge.
6. Prioritize Teacher Hiring in Turnaround Schools
 - a. Staff replacements in a turnaround tend to be limited, but when they occur, principals must have a ready pool of qualified candidates to replace them.
7. Proactively Engage the Community
 - a. Create a vision of the future.
 - b. Publicize success (pp. 1-8)

When district leadership can provide these seven opportunities, the stage can be set to sustain support for schools that need improvement. While in some districts one or two schools may be actively going through the formal turnaround process often, multiple schools within that district could use the same support. As the district takes an overview and systematically creates the structures, improvement can be made in multiple schools as necessary.

The work of Fullan, Bertani, and Quinn (2004) on district-level leadership identified 10 lessons about district-wide reform dubbed “Phase Two Learnings” (1997-2004). These lessons indicate that districts are successful when they combine the following “drivers” of reform:

1. a compelling conceptualization by district leaders—envisions both the content of reform and includes a special commitment to capacity-building strategies.

2. a collective moral purpose—characterizes the whole district and not just a few individuals; when accountability pressures dominate, even in the presence of good support, the gains can be only short-term.
3. the right bus—the structures, roles, and role relationships that represent the best arrangement for improving all schools in the district.
4. capacity building—training and support for all key leaders.
5. lateral capacity building—connecting schools within a district so that they learn from one another and build a shared sense of identity beyond the individual school.
6. ongoing learning—districts learn as they go, including building powerful “assessment for learning” capacities that involve the use of student data for school and district improvement.
7. productive conflict—some degree of conflict is expected when difficult change is attempted and, thus, is treated as an opportunity to explore differences.
8. a demanding culture—care is combined with high expectations all around to address challenging goals.
9. external partners—selective external groups are used to enhance internal capacity building.
10. focused financial investment—new monies are invested up front to focus capacity development but are framed in terms of future accountability.

The model of transformational leadership developed from research in schools, including factor analytic studies, describes transformational leadership along six

dimensions: building school vision and goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualized support; symbolizing professional practices and values; demonstrating high-performance expectations; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions (Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2009).

Fixed vs. Growth Mindsets

As much as the ability to manage adaptive challenges is necessary for leadership, so is the proper mindset. The correct mindset for the work is essential to be able to understand the need for change and the fortitude to carry the change to fruition. Change leaders cannot have a fixed mindset. Individuals with a *fixed mindset* believe that their intelligence is simply an inborn trait—they have a certain amount, and that is that. By contrast, individuals with a *growth mindset* believe they can develop their intelligence over time (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Dweck, 2006, 2007).

If a leader starting from a position of a fixed mindset, he or she must take steps to change to the growth mindset that is needed to make changes within the school. Some of the steps for changing that mindset include:

CHANGING THE MINDSET

Step 1. Learn to hear your fixed mindset “voice.”

Step 2. Recognize that you have a choice.

Step 3. Talk back to it with a growth mindset voice.

THE FIXED-MINDSET says, “Are you sure you can do it? Maybe you don’t have the talent.”

THE GROWTH-MINDSET answers, “I’m not sure I can do it now, but I think I can learn to with time and effort.”

FIXED MINDSET: “What if you fail—you’ll be a failure.”

GROWTH MINDSET: “Most successful people had failures along the way.”

As you face criticism:

FIXED MINDSET: “It’s not my fault. It was something or someone else’s fault.”

GROWTH MINDSET: “If I don’t take responsibility, I can’t fix it. Let me listen—however painful it is—and learn whatever I can.”

Step 4. Take the growth mindset action. (Dweck, 2007)

Over time with the growth mindset, a leader will be able to grow his or her talents to meet the demands required to turn around the school. A fixed mindset is one way that turnaround can fail. If the leader cannot see opportunity in how to get to the next step in the time, the effort can fail before it begins. Leaders cannot be afraid to fail, and they must work diligently to avoid failure but understand that failure is part of the journey. Not every action will lead to the proposed ideal outcome, but steps in the right direction will ultimately get leaders to a point where they can move the plan forward.

Relational Leadership

Relationships are the cornerstone of building strong leadership within the school. People are motivated based on the relationships they have developed with others. Leaders who can build strong relationships across all ranks of the school can rally people to the

vision. One aspect of relational leadership that ties closely to culture and climate is the modeling of positive relationships. As adults model positive relationships with other adults both at the leadership level and the collegial level, that same modeling of relationship can be translated to the relationship between adults and students. An alternative to the hierarchical model of school leadership is the relational model, which views leadership as residing not in individuals but in the spaces among individuals. This model starts by recognizing that relationships already exist among teachers, principals, specialists, counselors, and support staff.

Relational leadership runs through the daily life of every school as educators attend to the quality *of relationships*, insist on commitment to the school's *purposes* and *goals*, and *examine and improve instruction* (Donaldson, 2006). Reflecting on the quality of relationship, a leader who pays attention to the quality of these relationships will take steps to enhance relationships he or she has with adults as well as those with students.

In Buckingham and Coffman's (1999) book *First, Break All the Rules*, the authors described keys to keeping a happy workforce and use the metaphor of climbing the mountain, with stages of the climb called Base Camp, Camp 1, Camp 2, and Camp 3. At each stage there are questions to clarify the discussion of that stage and the stages are represented as: What Do I Get, What Do I Give, Do I Belong Here, and How Can We All. Focusing on Camp 1, What Do I Give, the questions are

1. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
2. In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for good work?
3. Does my supervisor or someone at work seem to care about me as a person?

4. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?

(Buckingham, 1999)

The last two questions are important to the relational leadership. They speak to the relationship that needs to be built by the leader and those being led. The sense of caring and well-being, which goes back to basic needs as humans, is needed in the workplace as well. Kouzes and Posner (1995) references leaders needing the ability to create a community of shared values. (p.106) As a school leader he or she must to create a community of caring and shared concern, this feeling can invest others in the cause to improve the school.

People act because of who is around them. The leader with whom one feels a relationship will get greater production. Individuals will “run through walls” for the inspiring leader, while refusing to move whom they feel little connection. Naturally, the quality of the relationship drives the work. With quality relationships, individuals will step up to the challenge that doing business in a different way brings and feel they are doing it for the person, the leader with whom they are connected.

Researcher Mary Uhl-Bien (2006) described relational leaders is emphasizing the importance of “relating” and relatedness, and she considered leadership as “a process of organizing” focus on communication as the medium in which all social constructions of leadership are continuously created and changed. Relational leadership is also about the process of how decisions are made.

Fearless Leadership

Who are fearless leaders? They are district office administrators, building principals, coaches, and teacher leaders of various types, some of whom are anointed with titles, many of whom are not. They work in underresourced and overburdened schools that are often located in the deepest recesses of our nation's inner cities, but also can be found on country roads and suburban lanes. These leaders serve disproportionately large numbers of children who live in poverty, come from immigrant families, and face racism daily (Jackson & McDermott, 2012).

Fearless leadership refers to the shared leadership of a person at the helm with a strong set of beliefs, skills, and dispositions who mines the strengths of others to direct the most meaningful aspects of school life: the instructional program focused on learning and high intellectual performances, the relationships that build cohesiveness and a sense of belonging, and the organizational structures that enable learning and relationships to thrive (Jackson & McDermott, 2012).

Another way of looking at fearless leaders are as those leaders who:

- are unrelenting on student needs;
- can withstand the pressure of dissenter and negative elements above and below;
- speak truth to power;
- stay the course on a plan; and
- are flexible to say you are wrong and make a change when necessary.

Those leaders understand the challenge that is laid before them and will continue to press on. These leaders understand the numerous pressures associated with the walk of

turnaround and know that change is a process. An important element of this leadership style is the ability to speak to authorities in district and regulatory/monitoring agencies. These leaders are able to delineate clearly the challenges that will be faced and will talk about solutions. They will not make excuses but rather actively speak about the future and the map they will take to success.

Fearless leaders must also have courageous conversations since this is the ability to have difficult conversations about performance, cultural competency, and how people fit into the vision of the turnaround. Jackson and McDermott (2012) stated that the journey towards fearless leadership involves acknowledging reality, building buy-in, and embracing challenges.

Reflective Practice

On a continuous basis, leaders must look back and reflect upon their actions. Anyone who has tried to plan for and implement change understands the need to spend some time identifying and clarifying goals and commitments (Wagner et al., 2012). Leaders must understand the intentionality of their actions and how their actions affect their success. In short, how intentional are your actions and what are you doing to succeed?

1. EQ: How intentionally do I align decisions, actions, policies, and resources to meet our needs? What is an area that might benefit if you act with greater intentionality?

2. EQ: How aware am I of the status of learning and teaching in my school, our current needs, and my leadership role? What data sources might you need to examine in order to assess the impact of your leadership actions?
3. EQ: How do I know whether my leadership actions are positively affecting staff and school community? What could you do to better adjust to the changing needs of your leadership context?
4. EQ: How responsive am I to the results of my assessments and the changing needs of the school community? How often do you reflect? When do you reflect? What is your process for engaging in rich, deep, meaningful self-reflection? (Hall, Childs-Bowen, Cunningham-Morris, Pajardo, & Simeral, 2016)

Summary

According to Buckingham (2005), clarity is an antidote to anxiety; if one does nothing else, be clear (also see Schmoker, 2011). Leaders must be seen as clarifiers, focusers, keepers of the core in order to cut incessantly through the clutter to distinguish between what is really important and what is imperative, and leaders must never forget these aspects of their position (Schmoker, 2011). Implicit here is the important role that leaders must take in serving as the voice of change and direction, but they must do so in a clear and understandable way. Leaders must comprehend the challenges with which they must deal and be able to distinguish between technical and adaptive challenges, while also being prepared to change how they think to arrive at new ideas.

SECTION 3

SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

In the same way that changes in the earth's climate can affect all living beings on the planet, changes in school climate ultimately affect all beings within the school. School climate is the glue that holds a school together. In this section, we will explore some aspects of culture and climate that are important to develop for sustainable change in a school.

The climate within a school can be as healthy and nurturing as a blooming meadow or as toxic as a nuclear waste site. In a positive climate, the academic and developmental needs of students are being met. As those needs are met, student achievement can flourish. A definition of culture is the historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies and rituals, and traditions and myths which members of the school community understand to varying degrees. Another way to look at it is as follows, according to the National School Climate Center:

School climate refers to "*the quality and character of school life.*" It is based on patterns of school life experiences and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures. (Website)

Ignoring school culture is not an option at least if the goal is to sustain improvement. Principals should never assume that a year or two constitutes conclusive evidence of a culture change. The culture of schools that turn around and stay turned around manifest the ongoing mission of commitment, valuing of continuous

improvement, collective accountability, collaboration, coherence, and caring (Duke, 2015).

Building Trust

School turnaround work is completely relational. For anything to be accomplished, levels of trust must be established. Building the right levels of trust creates the relational respect among adults that should affect the relational aspects between adults and students and, at its best, can translate down to the relational aspects between students and other students. Building trust can be a difficult task to achieve. Based on established patterns of behavior among administrators, teachers, and students, developing trust can be an elusive and difficult task. When there is evidence of an adversarial relationship between administrators and teachers, those same teachers can be guarded about their practice and unwilling to share or discuss work.

A school cannot achieve relational trust simply through some workshop, retreat, or form of sensitivity training, although all of these activities can help. Rather, schools build relational trust in day-to-day social exchanges. Through their words and actions, school participants show their sense of their obligations toward others, and others discern these intentions. (Bryk & Schneider, 2003, p. 4)

Today's urban schools are often defined as failures, and too many urban educators live in fear of the repercussions of that negative label: increasingly punitive sanctions, loss of respect, even loss of livelihood (Jackson & McDermott, 2012). Working in such a climate will hamper the staff's ability to trust one another. The negative climate will make it difficult for people to be willing to work together and trust one another. The school is going to succeed through collaboration and knowing that there are teams of people working together who have each other's backs.

Clarity, transparency, and consistency are the strongest ways to build trust. As a leader, if staff can come to know what one's values are and that one will be consistent in them and true to one's word, people can begin to trust what is said and know the expectations that will follow. At both Central Elementary and Central High School, principals have worked diligently to establish a consistent pattern of expectations and reaction to situations. This consistency has allowed staff to trust in their leadership and decision making while the same consistency helps to boost culture among the students.

Adult-Adult Relationships

According to Jim Collins' (2001) work *Good to Great*, great companies start by getting the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats. In applying this principle to the school setting, turnaround leaders have to commit to getting those right teachers on the bus and in the right seats. They need teachers who will be able to succeed in the high-stress environment of a turnaround school. While the ability to move and change staff will vary greatly state to state and district to district, the selection of teachers to work in turnaround schools is important to the ultimate success of the school. Teachers by nature are altruistic people who are good people, but not every good person is a good teacher. Finding the right people to take the right seats will help advance the school.

In schools, relational trust is defined as "the social exchanges of schooling as organized around a distinct set of role relationships: teachers with students, teachers with other teachers, teachers with parents and with their school principal." (Bryk & Schneider, 2003, p. 20) Teachers are the linchpin of these social exchanges (Guin, 2004). The

climate within the school is affected by the relationships that adults have with other adults, adults with students, and students with students. The way in which adults communicate to one another sets the tone for the interplay between adults and students, and thus can affect how students and students interact with one another. Adults should not only be professional and cordial with one another, but they also need to be willing to have difficult conversations.

Adults need to be able to have critical discussions with one another and move away from a “culture of nice,” as described by Elisa MacDonald (2011). The culture of nice is the underlying culture that inhibits a team of teachers from reaching a level of rigorous collaborative discourse where teachers are challenging each other and their own thinking, beliefs, assumptions, and practices. Within a culture of nice, teachers shy away from critical conversations in order to remain nice rather than challenge the rigor. The culture of nice acknowledges the good job done by individuals, as opposed to the quality of the work. While the culture of nice can make the climate within a building seem palatable, it is an enemy of the goal of the turnaround, which is greater improvement and, ultimately, life outcomes for students. Teachers and administrators should grapple with how to have critical conversations with their peers in order to affect student achievement. Critical conversations include discourse among teachers where teaching practices and student outcomes are the main focus. These conversations about achievement and expectations happen at a peer-to-peer level as well as at the supervision and evaluative levels. For teacher and leaders to be effective in their roles, they must be able to speak critically with their team. This is an important issue because teacher accountability and student achievement work in conjunction with each other.

For teachers to have optimal effectiveness, they must be critical of their own practice and open to the critique of their peers. Through practices such as framing, active listening, honest labeling, exploration of options, and development of action strategies, teacher leaders can have the critical conversations needed to move their teams forward to improve student achievement. Other schools fall into a culture of nice that prevents them from advancing change through teacher leaders (MacDonald, 2011).

Within turnaround, this aspect of adult-to-adult relationships is important to building a learning community, where teachers are able to have open dialogues with peers in an environment where peers feel accountable to one another for student achievement; as a result, both teacher quality and student achievement will improve. In order to help teacher leaders have difficult conversations, there is a primary need to understand how best to have these conversations. Once teachers understand how to approach peers around difficult topics, there is an opportunity to improve peer-to-peer accountability for student achievement. Furthermore, Fullan's (2010) point that conflict is essential to change is equally true. Adults need to address conflict in order to move forward.

Teacher culture based on relationship is hugely influential in schools, often trumping administrative and legislative influence (Spillane, 2006). Although some administrators and policymakers might see this as a problem, strong relationships are teachers' most powerful leadership asset (Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, & Patterson, 2002).

As an example from the researcher's work, teacher leaders were unable to have critical conversations with their team members or other colleagues. The first example of

this issue was between a kindergarten teacher and a first grade teacher following the beginning-of-year assessments. The first grade teacher wanted to discuss the results of a writing assessment. Her critique of the students' results was "I don't know what the [kindergarten teachers] were doing last year, and my kids do not know how to write sentences." After being coworkers for 5 years, these two did not feel comfortable enough to be honest about concerns with one another. The team had met weekly for the past year, with the first grade teacher and kindergarten teacher as common team members.

In this example, two teachers who were familiar with each other and had considered themselves friends were not able to have a critical conversation. This was a moment when an effective teacher leader would be able to engage his or her colleague in conversation. The core issue is about training peer leaders to engage in critical conversations and understand that group members are indeed accountable for student achievement.

The second example of the need to develop teacher leaders stemmed from a school-wide professional development meeting. The administrative team arranged for the staff to have teacher-led discussions on grade-level expectations in numeracy and literacy. Prior to the meeting, the math lead teacher and the literacy lead teacher met. The group reviewed the goals of the meetings. Among the particular purposes of the meeting was having an open discussion about what is observed at each grade level as strengths and weaknesses of the students entering that grade. No administrators would attend the meetings to provide an opportunity for sharing without fear of evaluation by a supervisor (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008).

The numeracy meeting appeared to achieve the established goals. The teachers even sketched out a plan for vertical team meetings. After getting their feedback, it was time for the literacy meeting to take place, but it did not achieve its goals. In the case of the numeracy meeting, planning was efficient and focused on programmatic issues but little on teacher practice. In the case of the literacy meeting, questions about individual teacher practice were asked and the meeting unraveled. One teacher made accusatory statements about the preparedness of the students. The literacy lead teacher for the school tried to manage the meeting, but teachers “shut down” and did not participate fully after the initial questions about the quality of their instruction. The meeting failed on numerous levels, but its biggest failure was the inability to establish norms and trust. Bryk and Schneider (2003) explained that social trust is built on mutual dependencies focused on achieving shared goals. When an attempt is made to discuss the issues openly, all parties shy away from raising concerns with one another.

Adult Learning

The importance of ways of knowing is the understanding of the way teachers approach their meaning making. It is a developmental perspective offering a lens through which we can better view people’s attitudes, behaviors, and expectations and understand how to support growth in individuals with different ways of knowing. For example, some adults might appear resistant to new initiatives when there might be a developmental reason for their resistance. In effect, this theory enables us to understand how adults might experience participation in programs designed to support their learning (Drago-Severson, 2009).

The ways in which adults learn can play an essential role in how to approach these issues related to social environment within a school. Drago-Severson (2008) has extended the work of Robert Kagan to explain further the constructionist theory of the ways of knowing. She focused on three particular ways of knowing: the instrumental, the socializing, and the self-authoring. The ways of knowing are described as follows:

The Instrumental Way of Knowing

A person who has an instrumental way of knowing has a very concrete orientation to life. Adults who make meaning in this way have a “What do you have that can help me? What do I have that can help you?” perspective and orientation to teaching, learning, and leadership. Instrumental knowers understand that events, processes, and situations have a reality separate from their own point of view, though they understand the world in very concrete terms. Instrumental knowers orient toward following rules and feel supported when others provide specific advice and explicit procedures so they can accomplish their goals.

The Socializing Way of Knowing

A person who makes meaning mostly with a socializing way of knowing has an enhanced capacity for reflection. Unlike instrumental knowers, socializing knowers have the capacity to think abstractly and consider other people’s opinions and expectations of them. In other words, a socializing knower will subordinate her own needs and desires to the needs and desires of others. These adults are most concerned with understanding other people’s feelings and judgments about them and their work.

The Self-Authoring Way of Knowing

Adults with a self-authoring way of knowing have the developmental capacity to generate their own internal value system, and they take responsibility for and ownership of their own internal authority. They can identify abstract values, principles, and longer-term purposes and are able to prioritize and integrate competing values. Principals and teachers can help instrumental knowers grow by creating situations where they must consider multiple perspectives.

Teacher Voice

As mentioned throughout this handbook, teachers need to be given the opportunity to be involved in and contribute their voice to the turnaround process. Teachers possess a wealth of knowledge from the experience. They are an important element to the culture within the school and can help or hinder the climate. For teachers who were in the turnaround school before it reached turnaround status, the impression might be that they are the problem and the reason why the school is in need of turnaround. While some teachers may be part of the issue of the school as it was before the turnaround situation, these same teachers will remain part of the staff. Depending on the size of the district and the ability to move teachers, the current staff may be a significant portion with whom everyone will need to work on the other side of the turnaround.

The experience of veteran teachers cannot be easily dismissed; as a whole, they possess institutional knowledge and can offer clues to how to create a successful turn. The teachers will have to learn new ways of reaching students who may not be motivated

and, in some cases, may not have had positive experiences in the past between adults and students. Teacher voice is important to the collaboration and progress of the new plan.

As the turnaround plan is designed, teachers should be engaged in discussing what should go into the dual instructional model, how they can support this, and how they will be supported in moving the model. As the leader works to build a coalition to move forward, the school teachers can be a central part of this and should be able to give their voice. Teachers should have a degree of flexibility to use their craft to build a relationship and support student learning.

As teachers noted at one school, they felt as though they were starting from scratch. They saw the turnaround as an opportunity to recraft and refocus what they do. In both Central Elementary School and Central High School, both faculties engaged in a process to opt in to be a part of the new turnaround. Giving teachers the opportunity to choose to participate or not helps to build a commitment that is necessary to turn the school around.

With a voice in the discussion, teachers will also be required to meet high expectations for their involvement in deciding on which teachers and particularly teacher leaders can bring a sense of purpose to the work and complementary leadership styles. While turnaround was intended for all staff to be changing the direction in which they move teachers who have demonstrated success, they should be given some flexibility in how they carry out elements within the turnaround. Just as all students cannot be treated exactly the same, teachers also need to be valued for their individual unique skill sets and worked with according to individual learning styles. Depending on work conditions and environments, teachers need to treat staff with flexibility but with care. School leadership

must be directed toward the students, however, because perceptions and reality can drive the teachers' understanding and view of the turnaround process.

Adult-Student Relationships

Adult-to-student relationships constitute a very important element within the culture and climate of schools. The way students communicate with adults and vice versa speaks volumes for the level of respect and the social transactions that occur within the building. Based on the evidence of the focus groups, students have a variety of opinions about how they are treated by adults and their relationships with adults. In all instances, these relationships are varied and complicated. As one student put it, some student teachers are very "extra" (difficult over the top), others are easy to get along with, and still others are standoffish. Students frequently noted they wanted to talk to their teachers and see their work displayed.

Adults play multiple roles in the students' life within the context of school. They are instructors first and foremost, but also play a variety of other roles. Some adults serve as coaches, role models, and even surrogate parents in some cases. Frequently, of course, focus group students and adults alike described a family setting within their building. Some adults actively try to build that family aspect, while others want to maintain a more traditional adult and student relationship. Noted at both Central Elementary and Central High School was the level of concern that adults did have for the students' academic success and social-emotional well-being. Students identified at least one adult to whom they felt they were connected and whom they could seek out if they had an issue. This same result was borne out in the climate surveys, with high scores for connectedness.

To improve the culture within the school, leaders should explore the elements of this adult-student relationship. Leaders must examine how teachers speak to students as well as how students speak to teachers. There needs to be a level of respect that is bidirectional. Respect cannot be treated as a one-way street from student to adult which is not reciprocated from adult to student. At the secondary level, this can prove to be challenging because of varying concepts of what adolescents should be, combined with a false nostalgia of how students acted in the past. Numerous times in the researcher's experience, adults have noted that students "did not do ____." The blank line can be filled in with a variety of action words and different behaviors. The false narrative of nostalgia can make it seem as though students currently are worse than they had been at a previous point in history.

As the adults in the building, the teacher's social worker staff must see through this false narrative and treat students with a level of respect while also demanding that same level of respect back. The bidirectionality and intentionality of respect can be a strong foundation to correct the culture within a school that is in need of turnaround.

Student-Student Relationships and Student Voice

Students are an often-overlooked factor in turnaround. All efforts of the turnaround are designed to improve conditions for the students, yet their voice is lacking in the planning and execution of school turnaround. Over 80 years ago, John Dewey (1933) called for teachers to listen to students and be "alive" to their thinking, affect, and learning. Yet, educators rarely ask students what they know and/or what teachers in particular, and schools in general, can do to help them learn (Stefl-Mabry, Radlick, &

Doane, 2010). Smyth (2006) described the ignoring the student voices in the improvement of curriculum practice as one of the most urgent issues of our times.

Stefl-Mabry et al. (2010) noted Angus (2006) and Smyth (2006) works stating:

Despite claims that classrooms should be constructivist, student-centered, and empowering, school experiences are often controlling, oppressive environments for a large proportion of young people who are failing at and being failed by schools (Angus 2006; Smyth 2006a). (Stefl-Mabry et al., 2010, p. 66)

Further noted in the same article by Stefl-Mabry et al. (2010) was the following:

It is puzzling that if we are wanting to promote independence in inquiry and autonomy in learning that we so deeply mistrust students (Savin-Baden, 2003, p. 106)... Evidence has also suggested that students' learning is enhanced when teachers' pay attention to the "knowledge and beliefs that learners bring to a learning task" (Bransford et al., 2000) and use this knowledge to develop instruction by monitoring students' perceptions as instruction continues. (p. 66)

The student perspective offers insight that is unique to those who experience the education change at that moment. Without having the student perspective, administrators are working under an assumption. While the assumption may be grounded in professional experience and possibly personal recollections of individual experiences, it is still an assumption. As long as we exclude student perspectives from our conversations about schooling and how it needs to change, our efforts to reform will be based on incomplete pictures of life in classrooms and schools and how they can be improved (Cook-Sather, 2002).

Dr. Yvette Jackson (Jackson & McDermott, 2012) in *Aim High* suggested that schools need to "Amplify the Student Voice" (chapter 7). It is noted that in a typical classroom, the instruction is highly teacher dominated. The teacher controls the method of instruction, often as lecturing. or the sage on the stage. This method leaves little time

for student talk or discussion. The student talk is frequently limited lower-order responses (Jackson & McDermott, 2012).

At the secondary level, student voice can be effective in building success in school turnaround.

Increasing student voice in schools also is shown to help to re-engage alienated students by providing them with a stronger sense of ownership in their schools. Psychological research has demonstrated the connection between autonomy and motivation. If an individual has a sense of control over her environment, she will feel more intrinsically motivated to participate (Johnson, 1991). (Mitra, 2003, p. 290)

Recent research has reinforced the importance of teachers developing a learner-centered approach to instruction to increase student motivation. The more teachers become focused on student learning styles and needs in that particular classroom context, the greater the student interest in schoolwork and learning (Daniels et al., 2001; McCombs, 2001; Mitra, 2003).

From the focus groups, students noted the value of having the opportunity to think about their school and voice what could be different. A typical response was “To make the school better we need more stuff like this. I’d love to do this again, a couple times.” In each focus group, the students expressed the desire to have opportunities to share their ideas for what schools need. The ideas ranged from school day length to dress code to curriculum. Students universally wanted to engage with their schools about how they are run and what can be changed.

In the article “Student Voice in School Reform,” Dana Mitra (2003) discussed the formation of the Student Forum in Whitman High School in northern California. The adults who assisted with the focus groups learned quickly of the importance of having students participate in the analysis of the focus group data. Adults thought they

understood the data, but often they needed clarification from students about what had actually been said by the focus group participants and about how to translate the responses into “adult-friendly” language. The students and adults worked together to identify four main themes in the transcripts as the most pressing areas for reform at Whitman: (a) improving the school’s reputation, (b) increasing counseling and information resources for incoming ninth graders, (c) improving communication between students and teachers, and (d) raising the quality of teaching. The students then presented these findings to the school faculty. The enthusiasm generated from the focus group experience caused the students to want to continue to work on some of the problems that they had identified, so they organized a group called “Student Forum” (Mitra, 2003).

In Central High School, the principal created the President’s Council, which includes class representatives from all grades in the school. The Council is engaged in getting feedback on a variety of issues that are important to the school. The principal has spent significant time developing the group to understand the roles, responsibilities, and limitations of the role of councilors. The most important of these elements is understanding their limitations. While the students play an important role in the decision-making process, there is a point at which the principal as the building leader must make the ultimate decision. There is ongoing professional development both in cultural competency and community-building strategies to help teachers create a space for students to be heard, engaged, respected, and—wherever possible—brought into the planning process. This inclusivity has helped to improve the climate within the school and engage students in school improvement on an ancillary note based on their desire to participate in this school beyond their time of attendance.

The student as stakeholder has the ability to understand the realities of this schooling and the possibilities that can be produced in exchange for the school to create better life outcomes. They, the students, are the direct recipients of the turnaround. They can understand why the disruption of past practices are required and they can be engaged in solutions to make a success this time around. Student engagement is a core element of successful turnaround and successful education in all schools. At the secondary level, students who become disengaged have the ability to vote with their feet. In other words, teenage students can show their disengagement by not showing up and cutting classes or school all together.

STUDENT QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Culture/Climate

1. Culture and climate are many things within a school. They can be how students act in and out of class and/or how they treat others. They can be how teachers act, teach, and/or treat others. Thinking about these things, what best describes the culture and climate of your school?
 - What is good about them?
 - What is bad about them?
2. Think about student-to-student connections within the school. Please describe what these are like in your school.
 - How do students get along with students?

Follow-up

- If positive—What do you feel makes these strong student-to-student connections?
 - If negative—What do you feel are the problems that prevent strong student-to-student connections?
3. Think about adult-to-student connections within the school. Please describe what those are like in your school:

- How do students get along with teachers?

Follow-up

- If positive—What do you feel makes these strong adult-to-student connections?
 - If negative—What do you feel are the problems that prevent strong adult-to-student connections?
4. Think about adult-to-adult connections within the school. Please describe what those are like in your school:

- How do the adults get along with other adults?

Follow-up

- If positive—What do you feel makes these strong adult-to-adult connections?
- If negative—What do you feel are the problems that prevent strong adult-to-adult connections?

Leadership

1. Think about your principals and vice principals.
 - What are good characteristics about their leadership?
 - What are bad characteristics about their leadership?
2. What is important for school leaderships to do when running a school?

Turnaround

1. How long have you been at the school?
 - Were you at this school before or after turnaround began?
2. What do you think when you hear your school is a turnaround school?
 - What possibilities do starting over or changing open up for the school?

Follow-up

- If the school was starting from scratch, the beginning, what would you want to see happening in the school?

The insights gained from asking these questions provided the researcher with a number of ideas about what is important to students and, more importantly, how they perceive and understand all of the turnaround changes that are happening to them. Through their thoughtful reflections and opinions, the students demonstrated their understanding of the need to turn around, as well as the strengths that their schools currently possess and their own aspirations for what the school could be. Engaging students in this type of process can only enhance the experience of building a positive culture within the school by giving students responsibilities and opportunities to express their opinions. Students are observant and highly aware of what occurs within their

school. These schools belong to the students. They have ownership in the schools as much as do the adults who work in the schools.

Family Engagement

Moving away from aspects of student achievement that are directly related to what happens in the school building, family engagement has been shown to have a profound effect on school achievement. Carol Ann West (1985) found:

Parental involvement with the school social system was found to be related to reading achievement. Reading achievement was higher in those schools in which teachers reported that parents wanted feedback from the principal and teachers on how their children were doing in school. (p. 460)

Family and community engagement is being increasingly seen as a powerful tool for making schools more equitable, culturally responsive, and collaborative (Auerbach, 2009). Beyond what happens in the school day, each student lives a reality outside those walls. Although schools are attempting to increase engagement, the dimensions of family and community relations can be significantly affected if turnaround schools are located in economically depressed areas. Meanwhile, parents—particularly low-income and limited English-proficient parents—face multiple barriers to engagement, often lacking access to social capital and an understanding of the school system that is necessary to take effective action on behalf of their children (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). Without attention to training and capacity building, well-intentioned partnership efforts fall flat. Rather than promoting equal partnerships between parents and schools at a systemic level, these initiatives default to one-way communication and “random acts of engagement,” such as poorly attended parent nights.

Communicating with and involving family and community members, by contrast, breed understanding and trust, and often lead to community advocacy for teachers and administrators (Jackson & McDermott, 2012). This builds the capacity for schools to engage while also building the capacity of parents to respond to the engagement.

The Dual Capacity Framework

The Dual Capacity Framework calls for the rethinking of how family engagement is constructed. Essential to the framework is a shift from a compliance type of model family engagement to a shift that requires relationship-building collaborative work, a systematic approach outcome, and the establishment of a developmental model that can be sustained. When observing patterns of activities that typically occur in school, there is the beginning-of-year open house, parent-teacher conferences, and one-off events such as concerts and performances. These often do not build a partnership between the school and family because the transfer of information is usually unidirectional. It is coming from the school to the family and frequently not in the space that permits true engagement. Moreover, while concerts and performances allow students to have their showcases, they are not opportunities for the school and faculty to engage in the students' learning.

The Dual Capacity Framework strives to partner with families through activities that can support bidirectional transfer of information and support. This partnership can support climate with parents, who are stakeholders in their children's education, and help them become properly informed and invested in the improvement efforts of the school. More important, families can become advocates and cheerleaders for the change. See Figure 4 for a graphic depiction of the Dual Capacity Framework for Family-School Partnerships. See Figure 5 for shifts in the framework.

The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships



Figure 4. The Dual Capacity Framework

Source: <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/framework/images/cap-framework.jpg>

FROM		TO
Focus on Programs	➡	Focus on Relationship
Deficit-based and adversarial	➡	Strengths-based & collaborative
Random Acts	➡	Systemic
Individual	➡	Collaborative/shared responsibility
Compliance driven	➡	Learning and outcomes drives
Service	➡	Developmental
One-time project	➡	Sustained

Figure 5. Framework shifts supporting the Dual Capacity Framework (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013)

Efforts at Schools

In Central Elementary School, extensive efforts were created to engage parents in the school turnaround. This school chose to partner with an organization as part of its turnaround. At a point during the development of the turnaround efforts, parents were invited to participate in sessions to learn about the turnaround partners and allowed to provide a nonbinding vote on which turnaround partner they preferred. The vote chose between two different partners, but in the end the organization which both staff and parents preferred was ultimately the group chosen as partner by the turnaround committee.

Beyond engaging parents in this important task, Central Elementary School has created a variety of programs with parents as an opportunity to partner with the school in understanding their children's learning needs and the curriculum. Opportunities for students and families to see the school as its own little community center have also been created. For example, because of various neighborhood conditions, many elementary students do not participate in Halloween activities. Instead, the school created an opportunity for the students to have an afterschool party and trick-or-treat from classroom to classroom. Parents were very involved and supported the activity because they could give the students a safe and fun experience. This was also an opportunity for the school to recognize the realities of the community in which the school is situated and to work with families to provide social activities for their students.

At Central High School, the process of engaging parents was more difficult. The secondary level has had a historically low amount of parent involvement. The reasons for the lack of engagement are numerous. In secondary school, students tend to display their independence and have fewer opportunities to engage parents in the process of learning. The principal has worked with the school's governance council to engage parents and community leaders to bring forth the message about the turnaround. Annually, the administration, faculty, and community stakeholders go door to door to welcome new students coming to the school. This is an opportunity for families to engage one-on-one with school staff to share information about the upcoming school year and any new aspects of the school. While parent participation continues to be low, annual parent surveys indicated that parents felt they had good communication with the school.

While parent engagement may remain elusive, strategies such as the Dual Capacity Framework can create a systematic, collaborative approach to partnering with parents. Both schools have embraced and are working on improving their engagement. Parents are stakeholders who will be important in the turnaround. Every opportunity that leaders have becomes a moment that should be used to highlight the vision of where the school is going and how parents can be a part of that effort.

Community Engagement

Fullan (2010) delineated how the importance of change must be connected to the larger audience and that every person has a role in change, specifically connecting to wider community learning, both internally and externally. For true change, one must look at the happenings within the organization and then determine what will be the dip-stick of progress to monitor the efforts. A turnaround plan needs community stakeholders, business leaders, and politicians, in addition to internal stakeholders such as parents and students.

Setting the Expectations

Through no fault of their own, certain children are denied access to the rigorous education, high standards, and crucial resources that would enable them to cultivate their potential and meet those high standards. “The perpetrator in the crime of squandered potential is a systemic lack of opportunity, often fueled by lack of belief” (Jackson & McDermott, 2012, p. 8).

Jackson and McDermott postulated that if more focus is put on treating all students as though they are high-achieving, all students will tend to act in that way.

Building student capacity also requires capacity building on the part of educators. Educators, as much as students, have to believe that students have the capacity to succeed. From personal experiences, it can be noted that some teachers label students based on previous interactions, rumors, and perceptions of the students. In some cases, students have been labeled because of the perceptions educators have about the parents.

Expectations for behavior can be set by policy, but people are the ones who have to interpret and make decisions if those expectations are met. Each individual brings his or her preconceived notions of who can live up to those expectations and create labels for those not expected to meet given expectations. Jackson and McDermott's work on how perceptions of students can create their reality is reminiscent of Ann Ferguson's (2000) work with Black boys. Ferguson studied how Black boys, school rules, and discipline are viewed as a way to create labels and groups. These issues move students away from their status, as defined organically, to labels based on school-generated norms. "We come to know who we are in the world and we are known by others, through our socially constituted 'individual' difference rather than through an ascribed status such as race and class" (p. 53). Labels such as "good," "bad," "troubled," and the like can reinforce underachievement or worse within schools. These labels can lead to biases that can be both racial- and gender-based.

Because students' life chances are so regulated by the interactions they have with educators, it is crucial that educators accept that role. Linking to the work of Fullan (2010), it is again evident that each educator must be a change agent. The sense that students can achieve must be implanted early in their education in order for the notion to take root. In setting high standards for all students, a plan for how a student reaches those

standards is equally important. By showing students how they can truly make a partnership with their teachers in learning, they can achieve. This partnership leads to the principle of building a strong culture of achievement and perseverance. In order to reach achievement, students must know what achievement is and how to climb the ladder toward it.

Dr. Jackson identified seven practices of High Operational Practices to elicit High Intellectual Performance: identifying and activating student strengths, building relationships, eliciting a high intellectual performance, providing enrichment, integrating prerequisites for academic learning, situating learning interest in the lives of students, and amplifying student voice on elements of good teaching that should be common to every educator's practice. Using this skill set creates classrooms of high engagement, student ownership of their learning, and ultimately achievement (Jackson & McDermott, 2012).

Physical Environment

The physical environment can point to obvious issues within the system. On the surface, there may not be a clear correlation between the appearance of the physical plant and student achievement, but by looking more deeply, researchers have noted patterns. The school conditions in which students attend and teachers work have an intersection both in climate and achievement. When a school environment is unsafe, learning is not likely to remain as the primary focus (Buckley et al., 2005; Henry, 2000; Plank, Bradshaw, & Young, 2009). A basic safe environment is needed for teaching and learning to take place. Wilson and Kelling (1982) stated that "if a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all of the rest of the windows will soon be broken" (p. 31). Lack of maintenance can send a message that no one cares about the place; thus, giving

other license to further mistreat the environment (Plank et al., 2009; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Perhaps, this lack of care will lead to criminal activity among other undesirable occurrences. In their research of 33 middle schools in an application of the broken windows theory to schools, Plank and Bradshaw found the association between physical disorder and social disorder. They further concluded that the findings of the current study suggested that educators should attend to factors that influence student perceptions of climate and safety.

Fixing broken windows and attending to the physical appearance of a school cannot alone guarantee productive teaching and learning, but ignoring them likely greatly increases the chances of a troubling downward spiral. (Plank et al., 2009, p. 244)

School facilities exist to support the primary purpose of providing a quality learning environment. The custodial department is essential to the climate within a building. Through proper maintenance and basic upkeep services, administrators, teachers, and students have an environment that is safe, healthy, and supportive of the educational programming. To understand the physical environment, an audit of facilities needs to be performed. The facilities audits are accomplished by assessing buildings, grounds, and equipment; documenting the findings; and recommending service options to increase efficiency, reduce waste, and save money. Thus, an audit provides the landscape against which all facilities maintenance efforts and planning occur.

Summary

Culture and climate are the essential foundation on which all development within the school can be built. Building a positive culture within the school will permit the conditions to be created in order to make change and prepare students to learn. Until the

culture and climate are developed into positives, all other aspects of school turnaround will struggle. A positive culture encourages students to attend school and creates a mutual respect between adults and students. It engages both faculty and staff in the improvement of the school and invests them in the success. A positive culture creates pride, well-being, and caring among all stakeholders within the school. Adult-to-adult, student-to-adult, and student-to-student relationships all are built upon a positive culture. Extending out from that creates opportunities for both family and community engagement. All conditions for learning are predicated on a culture that allows learning to take place. Culture and climate are key to all of the elements within the development of a solid sustainable turnaround.

SECTION 4

STRATEGIC PLANNING

In his *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Covey (1989) cited Habit #3 as “put first things first things” (p. 145). Schools in turnaround have numerous issues to address. Choosing the important ones to tackle first can be the difference between a successful turnaround and a failure. With all the issues that turnaround schools have to face, how does one go about choosing which problem to address first?

Various experts have noted the pieces of a school that need to fit together like a puzzle. For example, Laura Pappano, working inside school turnarounds, noted the work of Dr. Stephen Adamowski, who designed a number of key strategies all lined up to fit together. These include the same aspects we see in effective schools: a school structure with an organized focus on teaching and learning (teacher leadership teams, collaboration, shared responsibility for student success, smart scheduling); a college- and career-ready curriculum and instruction that are project-based and engaging; academic and social supports for students; increased teacher and principal effectiveness; partnerships with other schools, community organizations, and educational institutions; the building of a culture of continuous improvement (Pappano, 2010).

1. Take time to include key stakeholders at the beginning of the planning phase of turnaround or school improvement.

2. Engage teacher unions and associations during the entire reform planning process. Negotiate a clause that will protect teachers who were specifically hired and trained for struggling or turnaround schools from seniority-based layoffs.
3. Keep stakeholders updated and informed; communicate with them frequently.
4. Emphasize the mission of improving schools for students; show data as often as possible as evidence of positive impact on students.
5. Find creative ways to work with parents and community members. Work with them from their current skill and knowledge level and provide them with tips to help them monitor their school and students.

Define Achievement

In order to understand what the school should look like after the turnaround, there needs to be a clear definition of success and, more succinctly, a clear definition of what achievement looks like. Innovation requires a wider definition of what counts as achievement and learning (MacDonald, 2011). Under the No Child Left Behind legislation, *successful* was delineated by performance on standardized tests; under the Every Student Succeeds Act, a variety of measures can be used to demonstrate achievement, but standardized tests are still part of the indicators.

- What does achievement look like?
- What are the criteria for success in a class?
- What can/should the student articulate to demonstrate understanding?
- What does success look like for students with special needs? EL?

- What does achievement look like for teachers?
- What data points will demonstrate success?
- What anecdotes will supplement the picture of success?
- What are the priorities?

Questions to Consider

1. What are student needs and school priorities?
2. Can students earn credits for mastery versus seat time?
3. How much time is dedicated to the core content areas, electives, other courses?
4. What are the priorities in the schedule?
 - What are the immovable components?
5. At the secondary level, are students taking enough courses to meet graduation requirements?
 - What is the correct number of classes for a student to take to be on track?
6. At the elementary level, what flexibility is key to creating the teachers' daily schedules?

Processes for Deciding and Collecting Feedback

Choosing the proper protocols will provide stakeholders with the opportunity to engage in the decision-making process. A delicate balance must be struck between including stakeholders in a decision-making role and giving leaders the ability to plot a direction and lead the group. Not every decision can fall to the group; otherwise, the efficacy and ability to move forward will falter. Not giving anyone a say is equally

detrimental because the stakeholders will feel the turnaround is “happening to them,” as opposed to them “being a part of the change.” In the case of another turnaround at an alternative education center, the changes were happening without stakeholder input. Turnaround became something that happened to them. In speaking with the leaders, they as stakeholders could not agree on a course of action. As McDonald (2011) noted, “Not everyone agrees is an excuse often for inaction” (p. 99). In the cases of Central High and Central Elementary, stakeholders were involved where possible. While some still felt as though this was happening to them, many felt they had some say in the process.

According to Hess and Gift (2009), reformers need to view school turnarounds as an all-or-nothing proposition to avoid the pitfalls caused by unclear or conflicting objectives. It is not a time to cherry-pick the more popular or painless components of reform or pursue them incrementally. Evidence from the private sector has suggested that incomplete or partial turnaround attempts leave organizations floundering (Hess & Gift, 2009).

The transformational leadership model discussed by Leithwood and Leithwood (1994) incorporated the key areas that a turnaround leader needs to exhibit.

The model of transformational leadership developed from our own research in schools, including factor analytic studies, describes transformational leadership along six dimensions: building school vision and goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualized support; symbolizing professional practices and values; demonstrating high performance expectations; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions (Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood et al., 1999). (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000, p. 5)

Consensus and Dissenters

The coalition can be a powerful force for change. A coalition should include those who want to see the changes made and key influencers within the building. An often-overlooked stakeholder is the dissenter, who has an important role in the process of change. Peter Block (2009) distinguished dissent in two ways: first, as dissent versus lip service; and second, dissent versus denial, rebellion, and resignation. Inviting dissenters into the process is how we show respect for a wide range of sentiments. The dissenters help us avoid echo chambers where we cannot see the flaws in plans. They offer an important source of feedback. Leaders must engage people of varying commitments in the change process. As Wagner et al. (2012) stated, engagement then does not necessarily imply total agreement. Rather, it means creating a culture where working together to address problems becomes the norm at every level in the organization.

A critical task of leadership is to protect space for the expression of people's doubts. The act of surfacing doubts and dissent does not deflect the communal intention of creating something new. What is critical, as well as hard to live with, is that leaders do not have to respond to each person's doubts (Block, 2009). When we think we have to answer people's doubts and defend ourselves, then the space for dissent closes down. When people have doubts and we attempt to answer them, we are colluding with their reluctance to be accountable for their own future (Block, 2009). Thus, it is important to build a leadership team of important stakeholders—including students—that is committed to improvement (Jackson & McDermott, 2012).

Resisters

An important distinction must be made between resisters and dissenters. When working with adults, a certain amount of attention must be paid to the resisters. Resisters are those who have experienced a wide range of changes and requirements over a long career. They do not embrace the fact that change is a part of the work and changes are necessary for growth. Rather, they take the attitude that “this too shall pass.” They are difficult to work with and will stymie the efforts of those who are willing to make change. Resisters can be problematic in a turnaround scenario because turnaround efforts are often associated with a funding source over a specific amount of time. They have become used to waiting out the latest initiative and expect they will be able to return to their core way of existing after the initiative is done.

In dealing with resisters, leaders require the resilience to maintain focus on the change and constantly challenge the resisters’ attitude that “this too shall pass.” Leaders need to project the vision continuously and project the permanency of changes as opposed to a temporary situation.

Goal setting and long-term planning are essential skills for a leader. Strategic planning requires a coalition, as has been evidenced from the work of Fullan (2010). To get this important work started, the following “playbook” is provided as a means of collecting notes.

Playbook for Turnaround Action Planning

School Climate and Turnaround

Purpose of the Playbook

- A. To encourage shareholders to define the work of planned school turnaround.
- B. To provide the Turnaround Task Force an opportunity to interact directly with constituents on the committee's role, goals, and milestones.
- C. To provide stakeholders with the opportunity to help inform the recommendations of the Task Force and encourage them to play a key role in their implementation.
- D. To engage informal leaders in the turnaround efforts

About the School Turnaround Committee

The Turnaround Committee consists of stakeholders representing: state department of education, school board, district administration, teaching staff, parents, and (when applicable) students.

Turnaround plans will include intensive and transformative strategies that are necessary to turn around _____(school). These plans must include:

- a. specific academic, developmental, and other student goals;
- b. a strong family and community connection to the school;
- c. a positive school environment, including a culture of high expectations;
- d. effective leadership;
- e. effective teachers and support staff;
- f. an instructional program that is based on student needs;
- g. a different approach from previous, unsuccessful efforts.

Lay the Groundwork

STEP #1: AFFIRM YOUR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING TURNAROUND

Notify the Task Force that you will help to be a designated point of contact for your Department, Teacher Association, Governance Council, PTO, Community Group, or informal network to voice opinions and recommendations on Turnaround within the process.

STEP #2: CONVENE IN-PERSON MEETING (IF POSSIBLE) WITH YOUR CONSTITUENT GROUP

Within two weeks, organizers should schedule a series of at least two calls and/or in-person meetings* with your stakeholder group to: 1) introduce the Committee goals, and 2) call upon stakeholders to voice their opinion on several important topics:

1. Do you believe that **[School]** can improve culture and climate?
2. What issues do you see related to school culture, climate, and student achievement?
3. Given your own experiences as a student, faculty member or parent at **[School]**, do you believe **[School]** has made progress on diversity and inclusion?
4. What should **[School]** be doing more of to ensure a positive school culture and climate and improve student achievement?
5. Are there best practices in school culture and climate and student achievement that you've seen or experienced from which **[School]** could learn?

*All organizers are encouraged to request the participation of a member of the Task Force for your calls and/or in-person meetings.

STEP #3: COMPILE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUR PEERS

Within two weeks of holding meetings/conference calls, work with your Committee point of contact to compile input and determine the top five recommendations for improving school culture and climate and student achievement.

STEP #4: AMPLIFICATION

Commit to helping to share Task Force milestones and announcements via social media and throughout your network by agreeing to help amplify and ensure successful implementation of the Committee's final recommendations.

Turnaround Committee Input Collection Form
(Adapted from *Diversity and Inclusion Playbook*, Yale University, 2016)

Your Name:

Organizing Body (if applicable, i.e., Department, Teacher Association, Governance Council, PTO, Community Group, or informal network):

Please check the box indicating how you collected input:

One or more teleconference calls

One or more in-person meetings

Email information collection

Please indicate below, in a paragraph or less, the top 3-5 Recommendations expressed by shareholders in your meetings:

Recommendation 1

Recommendation 2

Recommendation 3

Recommendation 4

Additional Notes

Finding Win-Wins

Covey (1989) postulated it is crucial that one work towards win-win. Getting win-wins is necessary in a collaborative process because they will often be competing interests within a coalition. Finding the win-win is the most important way to get all parties to achieve their individual goals. In a collaborative process, one may hope for altruistic motives by all parties, but reality shows individuals seek to fulfill their particular agendas. As individuals in the process, one must think about what guides oneself. One particular quote that speaks to the need for knowing what guides oneself is “Principles Are Lighthouses.” This quote is significant because it speaks to the ethics that each person involved in the process should bring to a collaboration and a vision. Without a guiding light, the vision can go astray.

The individual characteristics that any leader brings to the situation are essential to the process. The individual must be cognizant of all positives and negatives that he or she carries into a situation because these aspects of character will play out while leading this process. Because an individual brings such elements into a situation, guiding principles become extremely important since they should be evident in the proceedings, despite individual personality idiosyncrasies. With secure guiding principles, leaders can move to create the win-win situations necessary to advance their agenda.

In looking to create win-win situations, leaders must observe what the leverage points are and how they can be used to advance a cause or an agenda. As Covey (1989) pointed out, a high-leverage activity is delegation. In the sense of creating a strategic plan, delegating some duties to others, inviting others in, and getting them to be a part of the proceedings can create a high-leverage opportunity. As people become involved in a

process for a project, they can take greater ownership and accountability for the results. This leverage can be effectively used to create the momentum that pushes the strategic plan forward and creates the “buy-in” necessary to make the plan a success.

Capacity

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are a method within the school to help teachers teach other teachers how to go about making this change. Lead teachers and the administration have conversations with one another and outline plans; then the lead teachers share ideas with the rest of the teachers in small groups. By providing choices about how to approach change, the teachers embrace the change and react positively towards the larger goal that can come out of working in this manner. In this example, Fullan’s (2010) point that change as a journey holds weight becomes evident. By allowing the journey to take place, more staff members can understand and make change. If the change was laid out as a timetable blueprint, fewer teachers would be able to embrace the change.

Questions to consider:

1. What are the developmental capacities teachers might need to meet expectations inherent in these expectations?
2. What types of supports and challenges would teachers with different ways of knowing need to thrive in these school cultures?

Teacher effectiveness is noted as positively affecting student achievement. Ronald Heck’s (2009) work pointed out that, first, the effectiveness of successive teachers was related to student achievement in reading and math. Second, collective teacher

effectiveness, as an organizational property of schools, was positively associated with achievement levels. Third, the stability of the school's teaching staff and the quality of its academic organization and teaching processes were positively related to achievement levels (Heck, 2009).

In addition to Heck, Colvin and Johnson (2007) suggested that the most important school factor is how much children learn. It is now a well-established fact that even three years of fairly ordinary but effective teaching can completely change the academic trajectory of low-achieving students—vaulting them from the lowest to the highest quartile (Bracey, 2004; Sanders & Horn, 1994).

Building a talented staff with the capacity to change and take on a growth mindset is essential. Turnaround requires the capacity to teach students who traditionally underperform academically and have had their education disrupted in various ways as a result of the turnaround effort.

Professional development can be dirty words for educators when it is not properly organized. Duke (2015) offered the following cautionary advice about professional development:

- Do not assume that a single exposure to knowledge is sufficient.
- Do not assume that new knowledge automatically displaces old knowledge.
- Do not assume that people change without feedback.
- Do not assume that the source of feedback is unimportant.
- Do not assume that novices and veterans learn in identical ways.

Collective capacity is when groups get better—school cultures, district cultures, and government cultures. The big collaborative capacity and the one that ultimately

counts rely on when they get better conjointly—collective, collaborative capacity.

“Collective capacity generates the emotional commitment and technical expertise that no amount of individual capacity working alone can come close to matching. We must continue to build capacity across the entire learning community” (Fullan, 2010, p. xiii). Professional development needs differentiation to meet the needs of individual teachers as well as all teachers. Also, positive work conditions for teachers include opportunities to exercise leadership in consistent routines and open access to the principal (Duke, 2015).

Rebranding

As part of the change effort, the school must feel different, look different, and offer something different. A school must rebrand, reinvent, and illustrate how different an environment it is now. Symbols, logos, and mottos can be seen as superficial changes, but these emblems, when properly invested with the right message, convey an important message. A common uniform creates a sense of oneness and belonging. Marketing new instructional initiatives as choices and opportunities can demonstrate that a school has turned the corner. The rebranding needs a complete plan for public relations. How will the public know things have changed? How will we address the inevitable misstep and false start? How will the successes be amplified? To whom will the “new” school be marketed? Managing the message is crucial to the rebrand.

Central High School marketed its academies as career paths and had its various partnering organizations take part in fairs to showcase the new opportunities. Another powerful tool in the rebranding is a community walk to welcome the incoming class to

the school. Each spring and summer prior to the start of the year, administration, teachers, and community members go door-to-door to deliver welcome packets, a brief survey, and an introduction to the opportunities that await the freshmen. These walks give students and families the chance to ask questions and the school gains from a short interest survey to plan activities. The walks have been credited with giving the school a greater community feel.

Central Elementary School spent extensive time holding parent meetings and learning opportunities for families to see what was being offered and how it was different. As part of its branding, Central Elementary developed common vocabulary for staff to use. One area in which this common language came into play was calling all students to attention to start class. The common vocabulary led to discussions about common expectations which help the students know that the expectations were the same in all areas of the building.

Rebranding for both schools requires results to show there have been gains. At Central High School, graduation rates have increased to support the look of a better and improved school. At Central Elementary School, test scores have improved, also signaling a change. Ultimately, the rebranding can only be sustained if each school has symbolic distance from its past image as well as empirical results to show change. A detailed communication plan should accompany the rebranding to control how the school is marketed.

Models and Strategies

James Comer's (1993) research on child development has been at the forefront in demonstrating the link between academic success and social development. He summarized his observations by noting that all students are born learning but need caring adults to gain "the acquired taste" for commitment to academic success (p. 100; also see Jackson & Feuerstein, 2014). The Comer Project suggested the following steps: restructure guiding principles, no-fault problem solving, consensus decision making, and collaboration among all stakeholders. The no-fault problem-solving aspect can be an essential framework for choosing how to approach actions because the discussion of how to make change and what must be done can often be volatile with anger, frustration, and finger pointing. Using the no-fault problem-solving method may alleviate some of the frustration and defensiveness that teams implement to look at true problem solving. The Comer Model was successful in generating multiple opportunities for stakeholders to engage in processes by which they could be included in decision making (see Figure 6).

The School Development Program (SDP) was designed to create a school environment where children feel comfortable, valued, and secure. In this environment, children will form positive emotional bonds with school staff and parents and a positive attitude toward the school program, which promotes the children's overall development and, in turn, facilitates academic learning (Yale Child Study Center).

In addition to the management aspects, the Comer model supports climate through building adult-adult relationships. Important consequences play out in the day-to-day social exchanges within a school community. Recent research has shown that social trust among teachers, parents, and school leaders improves much of the routine work of

schools and is a key resource for reform. For example, Comer's School Development Project demonstrates that strengthening the connections between urban school professionals and parents of low socioeconomic status can improve their children's academic achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Comer, Haynes, Joyner, & Ben-Avie, 1996).

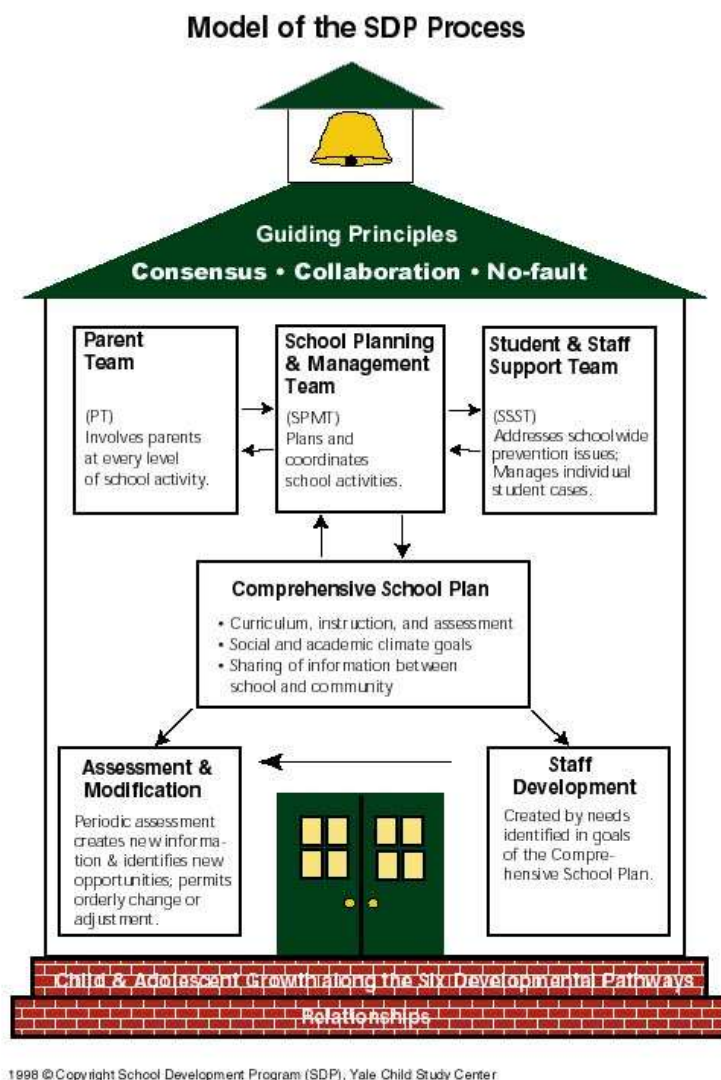


Figure 6. Revisiting Comer's school development approach

Operating at the intersection of social development and academic achievement, Comer's model embraces both the need for instructional improvement and the need to pay attention to the culture that creates the conditions for learning. As Jackson and Feuerstein (2014) noted, building relationships establishes a bond that generates a positive reciprocal culture value with possibilities.

Three principles underlie the Comer process:

- Schools must review problems in open discussion in a *no-fault* atmosphere.
- Each school must develop *collaborative working relationships* among principals, parents, teachers, community leaders, superintendents, and healthcare workers.
- All decisions must be reached by *consensus* rather than by decree.

This model combines in a distributed leadership as well as culture and climate underpinnings that value collaboration and engagement on multiple levels. This model has strengths that would be useful in supporting schools in the midst of turnaround and engaging in a true community-building process within the school.

Social-Emotional Learning and the SDP Model

With more brain research and increased understanding of the role of the social-emotional well-being of individuals to affect learning, strategies that promote development and approaches to turnaround that incorporate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) principles into their climate plan will find value. The concepts around SEL seek to create a climate for safety and learning.

Creating a Climate for Learning and Safety

Systemic intervention to create a safe, caring, and responsive school climate is the unifying goal for evidenced-based work in this area, as it provides the platform upon which we teach and learn. Research reveals that eleven factors define the climate of a school: structural issues (e.g., size of the school); environmental (e.g., cleanliness); social-emotional and physical order and safety; expectations for student achievement; quality of instruction; collaboration and communication; sense of school community; peer norms; school-home community partnerships; student morale; and the extent to which the school is a vital learning community. (Cohen, 2006, p. 213)

Looking at the work of Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the Five-Step Process of Social, Emotional, Ethical, and Academic Education includes:

1. Initial planning, discovery, and community-building.
2. Creating a climate for learning or systemic interventions designed to foster safe, caring, participatory, and responsive schools, homes, and communities.
3. Creating long-term school-home partnerships.
4. Pedagogy, or the process of teaching students to become more socially and emotionally competent and ethically inclined.
5. Evaluation. (Cohen, 2006, p. 211)

There are intersections with the Comer SDP model that can make for a modern hybrid to support a sustained turnaround. As the resurgence of attention to ESL occurs, models such as the Comer SDP deserve a second look.

The Split-Screen Strategy

Central High School is currently working with the “split-screen model.” Through the lens of MacDonald’s (2011) central argument that schools are not designed for what they are currently tasked to do, schools need to achieve improvement. Using structures

such as the “split screen” fostering innovation in a separate place. Essentially, an innovation incubator is created within the larger system. Large systems need a place where new ideas can be worked on in the interest of improving and adapting to the future. Due to the varied needs, interests, and abilities, many different kinds of schools are needed (MacDonald, 2011).

Central High School is making changes in a phase model. Changes began with the ninth grade and innovations will move up with the students as they go through the grades. This experience, observed as a “split screen,” had the lower grades of the high school managed by an Academy leader, with support from a partner organization and a mutually agreed-upon instructional team. Teachers have the option to join this team, and through a selection process, those who volunteered and were wanted by the administrative team were selected. Another part of the “split screen” was a second group of over-aged, undercredited students who were supported by case management to closely track and monitor their progress to get back on track for graduation. Through this phase-in/split-screen model, the rest of the school continued in standard practices. As MacDonald (2011) described it, the traditional school is unable to differentiate pace, content, and type of learning (MacDonald, 2011). As the model moves through the school, the split screen will merge back to a single image of a school and subsequent classes can enjoy the same success

The change at that school led other teachers to engage. The school system as it is now does not offer the opportunity for changes to address the way students learn. One aspect that fosters innovation and better support of learning is the smaller learning community. Smaller learning communities create an environment in which each student

is known and can be seen as an individual. As the leadership focused more intensively on students, fewer students have become lost in the shuffle. Students have a sense of being cared for and their actions are noticed. Within a smaller learning community, there is also greater accountability among staff and leaders for success. Students' progress can be monitored and adjustments made to have the school work for the students.

Central High School does differ from the complete split-screen strategy in that some elements do require people to change. While activities have not mandated that everyone change at the beginning, with grade-by-grade roll-out, eventually resisters and the last holdouts will have to make changes as well. The split screen does allow a lessening of the blow to those students because they have time to understand and see the change and come on board or else find alternatives to leave.

Taking on the Whole School

Central Elementary School took on a whole school change. The whole school approach can be managed with a smaller school, particularly at the elementary level. It is ambitious to take on a whole school in a large school and at the secondary level. By taking on an entire school, a leader needs to invest every person in the change process. In the example of Central Elementary School, Schmocker's (2011) points of simplicity, clarity, and focus were used. Schmocker expressed that by taking a focused approach, significant academic gains can be made.

As a whole school, the change was focused on how instruction was being delivered and what adult language would be throughout the building. With the work of the partner organization and a well-thought-out plan by the leadership team, the plan for

instruction delivery was executed. Moreover, a common language was developed for behavior expectations and rules throughout the building. The common language was a non-negotiable for the leadership team, and all staff were expected to follow it. While space was afforded for those who had differing opinions to express them, leadership made it clear that everyone had to share this common language. As stated before, it was non-negotiable for staff to do certain things in certain ways. While this may be contrary to teaching individuality, it is crucial in establishing a school-wide culture that everyone maintain the same expectations. By creating this universal reality across the building, students knew what to expect and were able to follow the expectations. This is significantly more manageable in an elementary school than in a secondary school, which could have three times the number of students and staff, yet it still can be done.

This was an effort to shift both culture and academic expectations at one time. Wagner et al. (2012) defined culture as the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors related to students and learning, teachers and teaching, instructional leadership, and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school. The assumptions in the expectations were that everyone in the school acted in the same manner and exhibited the same behaviors toward teaching and learning.

Ultimately, whether it is in schools or private firms, a successful turnaround requires transforming culture, expectations, and routines (Hess & Gift, 2009). In short, traits of a successful school is exhibited as a strong community of learning and leaders who focus on collaboration and engaging stakeholders.

Summary of Key Findings

Table 2

Summary of Key Findings and Source of Findings

Key Findings	
Finding	Source
Turnaround	
Turnaround work needs operators who are willing to struggle with complexities to bring about change. School improvement can be achieved through a leader with effective turnaround competencies and strong stakeholder relationships.	
<p>Turnaround Competencies</p> <p>Turnaround needs the correct environment of support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Initiative and Persistence</i> • <i>Monitoring</i> • <i>Team Leadership</i> • <i>Developing Others</i> • <i>Problem Solving</i> • <i>Modeling Shared Vision</i> 	Literature
<p>Change Process</p> <p>Early Wins/Small Wins needed</p>	Literature
<p>Context</p> <p>Understanding the context in which the school is operating is key to the reform process. No one plan can succeed in all environments. The history, customs, and feelings about the school and district must be considered. Turnaround Implementation must be tailored to the environment and context in which the school community operates. The work will need to be localized.</p>	<p>Focus Group</p> <p>Literature</p>

<p>Operational and District Support</p> <p>From an operational level, the school needs to create a process plan to decide and ensure that a system is being built. The school district must put elements in place for it to succeed; in particular, it must give school leaders autonomy to create the turnaround.</p>	<p>Literature</p>
<p>Investment in People</p> <p>For sustainable turnaround, investment in people is crucial. After the associated turnaround dollars dry up, a properly developed staff will be the enduring element of turnaround.</p>	<p>Focus Group</p> <p>Literature</p>
<p>Data-rich Culture</p> <p>A culture in which data are used to make informed decisions that will improve the students' life outcomes.</p>	<p>Literature</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Leadership Practices</p> <p>Leadership is crucial to the success of a turnaround. Leadership is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the efforts.</p>	
<p>Leading Through Change</p> <p>Change is one of the most difficult goals for individuals to achieve. Change is death, according to Reeves (2008). Change accompanies the same feelings of loss. People will resist change and refuse to move forward or stop at the first instance of difficulty. When there is resistance from teachers, students, or other stakeholders, leaders must persevere and stand on their principles.</p>	<p>Literature</p> <p>Focus Groups</p>

<p>Getting Others to ACT</p> <p>The leader has to inspire others to be partners in the revision. Sharing this vision and inspiring others to be a part of it manifest a coalition that needs to be built in order to make change.</p>	<p>Focus Groups</p> <p>Literature</p>
<p>Focus on Continual Improvement</p> <p>Turnaround leaders must keep focused on goal improvement. Recognizing improvement is not a final destination on the journey, but rather a moving target along the way. Improvement is a road marker that appears repeatedly in different forms.</p>	<p>Literature</p> <p>Focus Groups</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Climate</p> <p>Culture and climate need to build trust, establish strong relationships, enhance the voice of stakeholders, engage in the family, and build on the environment.</p>	
<p>Relationships</p> <p>Relationships and emotions are central to students' well-being. Leaders need to build strong:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult-Adult Relationships • Adult-Student Relationships • Student-Student Relationships 	<p>Focus Groups</p> <p>Surveys</p> <p>Literature</p>
<p>Teacher Voice</p> <p>Teachers have a crucial role to play in the change of a school.</p>	<p>Literature</p>
<p>Student Voice</p> <p>Student voice gives students the opportunity to share their learning experience as part of the collective in active learning.</p>	<p>Literature</p>

Chapter VI

PRODUCT VALIDATION SURVEY ANALYSIS

Reviewers were asked to review the handbook for adequacy of material, relevancy, and organization. Finally, reviewers were asked to provide general feedback on the section and offer any suggestions to strengthen the handbook as a whole. The following are summaries for each section.

Summary for Section 1

Table 15 presents the reviewers' responses to the introduction of the handbook. For the first question, *The Material Was Adequately Covered and Discussed the Topic*, 100% of participants rated it "Strongly Agree" or "Agree," with a Likert score of 4.85. For the second question, *Guidance in This Section Is Helpful and Relevant*, 100% rated it "Strongly Agree" or "Agree," with a Likert score of 4.71. For the third question, *This Section Is Well-Organized*, 100% rated it "Strongly Agree" or "Agree," with a Likert score of 4.71. For the fourth question, *Clear and Easy to Read*, 100% rated it "Strongly Agree" or "Agree," with a Likert score of 4.85. For the last question, *Based on My Knowledge, Material Is Accurate*, 100% rated it "Strongly Agree" or "Agree," with a Likert score of 4.85.

Table 15

Feedback for Section 1

	Response										Mean Likert Score
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		
Area evaluated	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Section adequately covers and discusses topic	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14.3	6	85.7	4.85
Guidance in section is relevant and helpful	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	28.6	5	71.4	4.71
Section is well organized	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	28.6	5	71.4	4.71
Section is clear and easy to read	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14.3	6	85.7	4.85
Based on my knowledge, material is accurate	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14.3	6	85.7	4.85

Reviewers made the following comments about Section 1. They felt the case for change and the use of the Root Cause Analysis was made. Reviewers also noted the “Perception vs. Reality or Not?” and the 5 Why’s Analysis were useful (“I appreciated the section on Root Cause Analysis”).

Suggestions for improvement included:

- Provide additional concrete strategies for turnaround leaders to address the notion of “perception vs. reality” with their teams, their students, and parents/the broader community.

Summary for Section 2

Table 16 presents the reviewers’ responses to Section 2 of the handbook. For the first question, *The Material Was Adequately Covered and Discussed the Topic*, 100% of participants rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.85. For the second question, *Guidance in This Section Is Helpful and Relevant*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.85. For the third question, *This Section Is Well-Organized*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.57. For the fourth question, *Clear and Easy to Read*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.71. For the last question, *Based on My Knowledge, Material Is Accurate*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.71.

In this section, the subsections on mindsets, turnaround competencies, and relational leadership were noted as strong and well-crafted. It was also noted that there

Table 16

Feedback for Section 2

Area Evaluated	Response										Mean Likert Score
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		
	n	%	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Section Adequately covers and discusses topic	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14.3	6	85.7	4.85
Guidance in section is relevant and helpful	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14.3	6	85.7	4.85
Section is well organized	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	42.9	4	57.1	4.57
Section is clear and easy to read	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	28.6	5	71.4	4.71
Based on my knowledge, material is accurate	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	28.6	5	71.4	4.71

was a need for good district-level leadership which was essential to the process. As well, fearless leadership was recognized as a necessary and important point to make.

Reviewers commented on the adaptive vs. technical challenges subsection: “leaders need to realize that they don’t have to reinvent the wheel for specific technical challenges in the turnaround setting and should seek already-established solutions!”

Suggestions for improvement included examples of how leadership teams should work. Another point was to add more information about how district and school leaders should actually collaborate to ensure the school’s turnaround (“The conversation about fixed vs. growth mindsets is important—very useful information!”).

Summary for Section 3

Table 17 presents the reviewers’ responses to Section 3 of the handbook. For the first question, *The Material Was Adequately Covered and Discussed the Topic*, 100% of participants rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.83. For the second question, *Guidance in This Section Is Helpful and Relevant*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.66. For the third question, *This Section Is Well-Organized*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.60. For the fourth question, *Clear and Easy to Read*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.66. For the last question, *Based on My Knowledge, Material Is Accurate*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.83.

Reviewers noted adult-adult relationships and adult learning are profound for understanding the study. Adult-to-student relationships were recognized as an essential

Table 17

Feedback for Section 3

Area Evaluated	Response										Mean Likert Score
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Section adequately covers and discusses topic	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16.7	5	83.3	4.83
Guidance in section is relevant and helpful	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	33.3	4	66.7	4.66
Section is well organized	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	40.0	3	60.0	4.60
Section is clear and easy to read	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	33.3	4	66.7	4.66
Based on my knowledge, material is accurate	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16.7	5	83.3	4.83

part of the work on culture. The relational working is also critical to the process. The importance of leadership to build trust and establish relationships with staff and students to support the change process is necessary. Finally, reviewers noted the importance of family engagement and the Dual Capacity Framework for Family Engagement (“so many leaders forget how parents as allies can turn the tide for a failing school”).

Improvements for this section included more anecdotal components because this is so very important in the turnaround process.

Summary for Section 4

Table 18 presents the reviewers’ responses to Section 4 of the handbook. For the first question, *The Material Was Adequately Covered and Discussed the Topic*, 100% of participants rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score 4.57. For the second question, *Guidance in This Section Is Helpful and Relevant*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.71. For the third question, *This Section Is Well-Organized*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.85. For the fourth question, *Clear and Easy to Read*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.71. For the last question, *Based on My Knowledge, Material Is Accurate*, 100% rated it “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with a Likert score of 4.71.

The reviewers for Section 4 noted the usefulness of the Playbook for Turnaround Action Planning and considered building coalitions a priority. There is a need to define achievement clearly and ensure all stakeholders are aware of this definition and working collectively to reach and surpass this goal. Also important was building capacity among

Table 18

Feedback for Section 4

Area evaluated	Response										Mean Likert Score
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Section adequately covers and discusses topic	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	42.9	4	57.1	4.57
Guidance in section is relevant and helpful	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	28.6	5	71.4	4.71
Section is well organized	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14.3	6	85.7	4.85
Section is clear and easy to read	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	28.6	5	71.4	4.71
Based on my knowledge, material is accurate	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	28.6	5	71.4	4.71

the staff to sustain progress after the “turnaround” support has been removed. The Playbook for Turnaround Action Planning gives schools a framework to guide their planning, which can be difficult to start given the complexities of turnaround (and the overwhelming number of needs to address). Also noted was the importance of acknowledging dissenters.

One suggestion for improvement was to add a section to discuss staff priorities vs. student priorities, particularly to address areas where priorities may come into conflict.

Conclusion

The researcher identified common themes from the climate survey, focus groups, and statements and perceptions of the participants. The common themes informed the various sections of the handbook. After concluding the validation portion of the handbook, the researcher made numerous changes to the handbook based on feedback. Changes included adding more information about staff priorities versus school priorities, expanding the discussion of adult-to-student relationships, suggesting ways to build stronger connections, and presenting more anecdotes about leadership.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Turning around a school is a commitment to make stakeholders better. Leaders, teachers, students, and families all should come out better because of the experience. The disruption that turnaround brings must be made worthwhile. Lives are overturned; in some cases, people's careers, livelihoods, and reputations are called into question during this time of change. Leaders who pay attention to the various aspects of the craft of leading can set a vision, inspire others, and guide the school through the rigorous and arduous task of turnaround. Following the competencies laid out in this handbook and embracing the ideas of *fearless leadership*, one has the ability to stabilize a school and implement the complex systems that can create improvement and sustainability. Many of the ideas suggested in this handbook will require investment in people. Such an investment in people can yield leadership and staff who can maintain the change over a sustained period of time. By creating new expectations, a new way of working turnaround can be sustainable.

The climate within a school will ultimately determine a school's ability to succeed. Until the leadership achieves the best climate, nothing else will succeed in a sustainable manner. Adult behaviors need to change in order to impact student behaviors. Leadership must create conditions for a climate to thrive, and within those conditions true turnaround can take place that will ultimately impact the life outcomes of the students. Student voice is a powerful tool that, when properly honed, will be the clarion call of the change that is needed. As students articulate the change and understand the need for it, their voices can become the cement holding the change steady and secure.

By redefining adult-to-adult relationships, adult-to-student relationships, and student-to-student relationships, a culture of achievement and success can be built as the foundation for the school. Combining leadership with culture can change the life outcomes of the students affected by the need for school turnaround.

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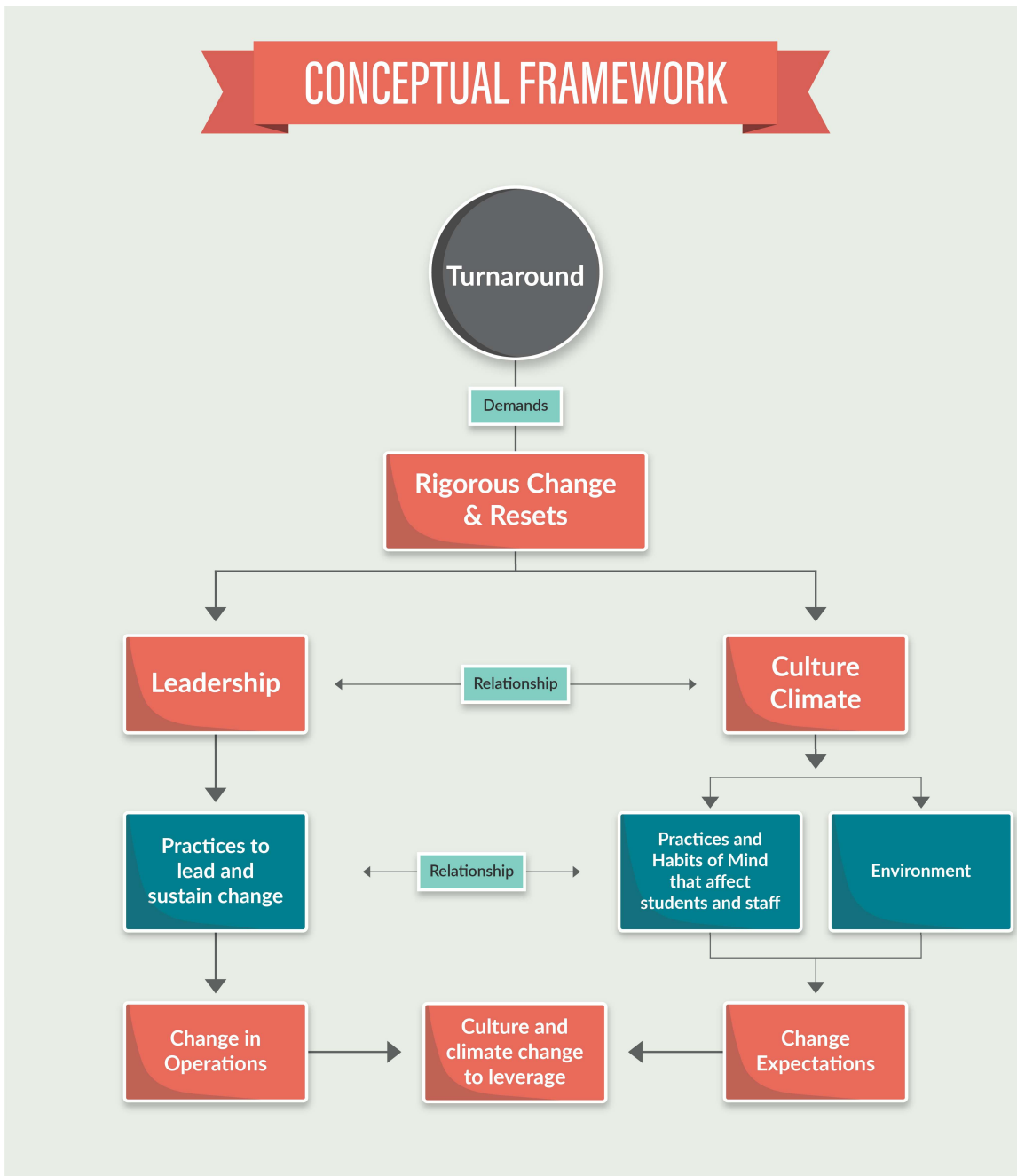
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Appendix A
 Conceptual Framework



Appendix B

School Climate Research Findings

School Climate Research Findings

I. Individual Experience:

- A positive school climate affects students' self-esteem and self-concept

II. Risk Prevention and Health Promotion:

- Effective risk prevention and health promotion efforts are positively correlated with safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climate settings

III. Academic Achievement:

- Student academic achievement is strongly correlated to a safe, caring, and responsive school climate setting

IV. Teacher Retention:

- Positive school climate is associated with greater teacher retention

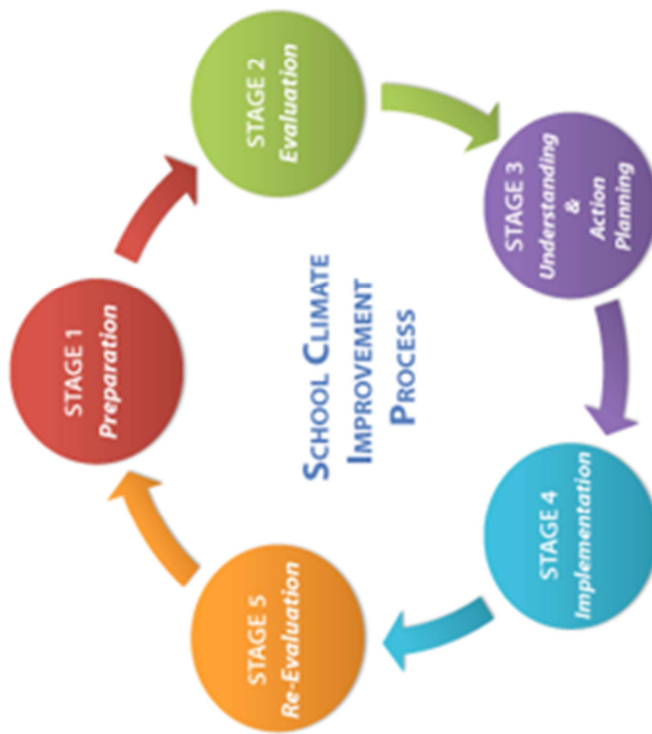
(For a summary of this research as well as a school climate research data base, see: www.schoolclimate.org/climate/research.php and/or Cohen, et. al 2009)

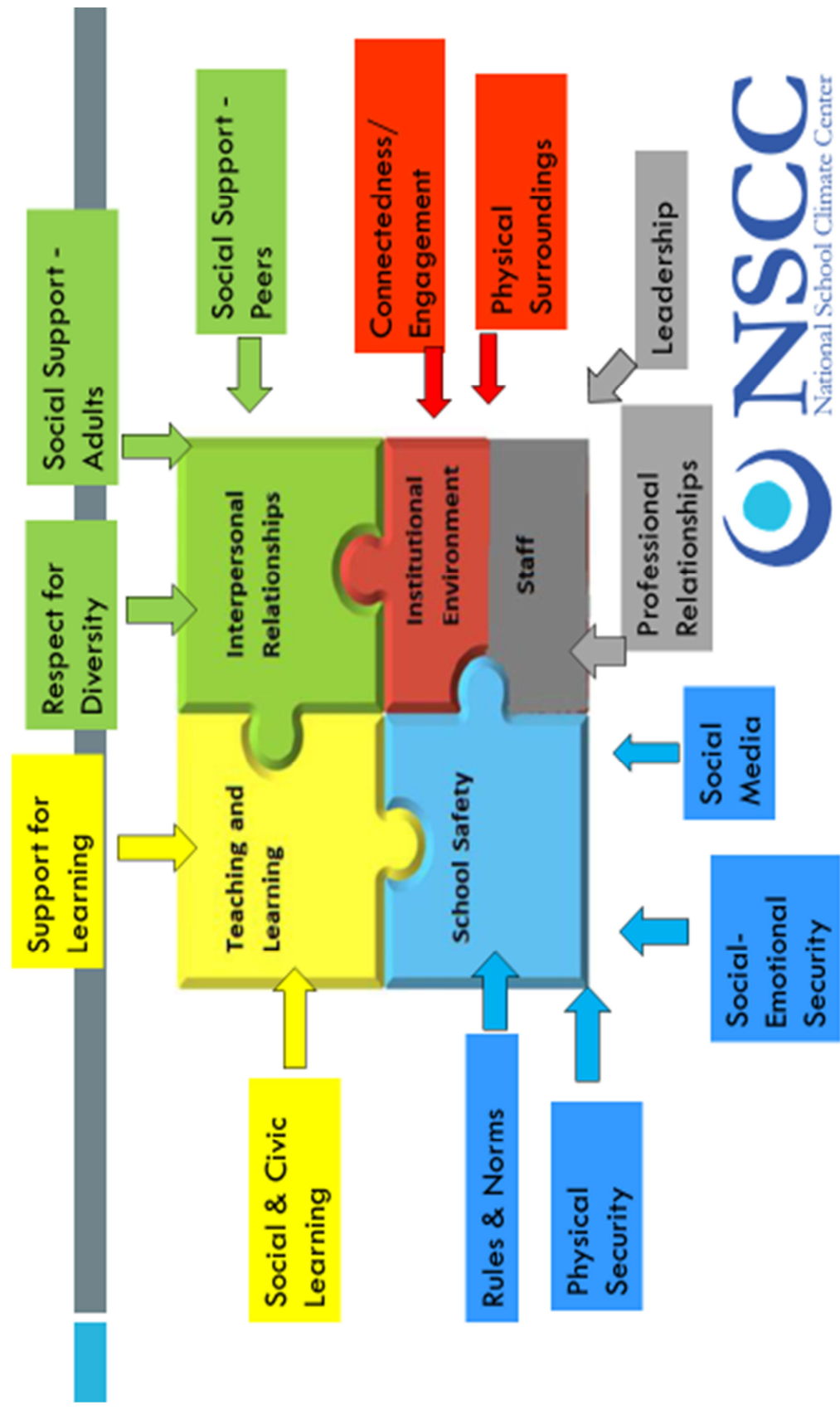


Appendix C

Five-Stage Process of School Climate Improvement

**The School Climate Improvement Model:
A five stage process of school climate improvement**





Appendix D

Priority Setting Decision Grid

<p>High Impact High Effort {Long-term Projects}</p> <p>Service Learning Program, Advisory, Peer-mentoring, etc.</p>	<p>High Impact Low Effort {Short-term projects}</p> <p>“Acceptance Day,” Staff training, themed lesson plans, etc.</p>
<p>Low Impact High Effort {Skip}</p>	<p>Low Impact Low Effort {Low Lying Fruit}</p> <p>Cleaning the bathrooms, painting the walls, etc.</p>