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Joseph F. Murphy
Joshua F. Bleiberg

School Turnaround Policies and Practices in the US

Learning from Failed School Reform

Springer

Education, Equity, Economy

Volume 6

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Part I
Getting Started

In the first chapter, we undertake three assignments. First, we unpack the concept of turnaround. We define school turnaround, explore its assumptions, and desscribe the theories underlied the concept. We also present the research framework that guided our work. Here we examine the conceptual framework we created to expose the flow of school turnaround. We also describe the methods that allowed us to move from written material to knowledge of the failure of turnaround.

In Chap. 2, we describe the major political, economic, and social forces that powered the expansion of turnaround reforms in the schooling sector. We also discuss the history of federal school turnaround efforts starting with School Wide Programs. We then discuss school turnaround under No Child Left Behind and School Improvement Grants. We conclude with an examination of state and local turnaround efforts.

In Chap. 3, we analyze the barriers that cofnront schools working on turnaround. These obstacles include the organizational and institutional characteristics of schools that render them resilient to reforms like school turnaround. We also address how a lack of resources contributes to minimizing the the beneficial effect of school turnaround.

Then in Part II, we discuss lethal, critical and important issues that explain the failure school turnaround. Chapter 4 addresses the lethal challenges including why the definition of school turnaround leads to implementation challenges. We also explore school turnaround's lack of focus on improving instruction or curriculum and how the policy almost entirely ignores care for students.

Chapter 5 describes the critical issues preventing the success of school turnaround. Here we discuss the ethical issues related to firing teachers and principals. We also investigate how school turnaround relies on a governance model that relies heavily on districts and schools for implementation.

We examine how a deficit-based view of schooling and the failure to leverage relationships with parents and communities to school turnaround.

Chapter 6 describes some important issues relevant to school turnaround that so far have remained mostly unaddressed in the literature. School turnaround represents a return to a scientific management approach to education reform. This applies tremendous pressure on a few stakeholders (teachers and principals) to improve outcomes (i.e., test scores).

In Chap. 7, we attempt to glean some learnings from previous school turnaround failures. This concluding section lays out principles that policy makers should consider as enabling conditions for successful school turnaround policies.

Chapter 1
Understandings and Research Methods

1.1 Understandings

In the history of modern education reforms, the concept of school turnaround is relatively new (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). The first known use of the term turnaround in an education context was by Rosenholtz in the mid-1980s (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015). A few years later the first actual case of school turnaround occurred in New York City. The Chancellor of New York City Schools sought the help of an organization called Turnaround for Children that was working to provide wrap-around services to students after the attacks on September 11th (Duke, 2012). Together they worked to develop a national program to help struggling schools. School turnaround gained prominence as a policy starting with the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002 (Peck & Reitzug, 2014). The focus on school turnaround increased further with the passage of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program in 2009 (Redding & Rhim, 2013). SIG was a central component of the Race to the Top (RTTT) program (part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, ARRA). SIG served as the main policy tool for improving the performance of historically struggling schools (Aladjem et al., 2010). These initiatives sought to apply "turnaround" improvement strategies that were utilized in the corporate sector (Murphy & Meyers, 2008).

The concept of turning around an organization is drawn directly from the private sector. Turnaround processes, including Total Quality Management and Business Process Reengineering, have a long history of use for the purpose of improving struggling firms (Hess & Gift, 2008; Murphy & Meyers, 2008; Smarick, 2010). The turnaround literature has its roots in corporate

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improvement strategies from the 1950s and 1960s (Peck & Reitzug, 2014). There are numerous case studies of individual companies that have undergone successful and dramatic turnarounds (Kowal & Hassel, 2005b). Unfortunately, these strategies in the business sector are defined by their high rate of failure. Smarick (2010) finds the, "limited success of turnarounds is a common theme in other fields" (2010, p. 25) and the vast majority (70%) of turnaround efforts fail (Kowal & Hassel, 2005a).

School turnaround draws its philosophical inspiration in part from a neoliberal approach to education reform. The so-called market-based approach to education involves removing regulations, privatizing services, and establishing a smaller role for public organizations (Johnson, 2013). Turnaround guides often call for "schools and districts to find ways to reduce collective bargaining, increase site-based autonomy over personnel and budgetary decisions, prioritize customer service, reduce waste, and introduce incentives and stronger accountability for teachers based on [student] test scores" (Trujillo & Renee, 2015, p. 11).

Although school turnaround represents an evolution from the business world, there are important differences between businesses and schools. Businesses cannot chronically struggle, but will rather fail all together. Conversely, schools are a public good and will remain open even after years of failure (Smarick, 2010). As a consequence, schools that are chronically failing face a substantively different set of challenges than struggling business. There are isolated cases of turnaround successes in both businesses and schools, but there is much reason to be skeptical that turnaround strategies can vastly improve average school performance (Hochbein, 2012; Murphy & Meyers, 2008; Smarick, 2010). Schools that have persistently failed will likely continue to struggle (Hochbein, 2012).

School turnaround policies make several assumptions about the functioning of schools that we explore in detail in Part II. First, and most critically, is the idea that all schools can achieve high levels of success (Meyers & Murphy, 2007). It is assumed that large improvement in a short time span is possible when there is little evidence to support this contention (Player & Katz, 2016). Second, a third party is well-suited for intervening and facilitating turnaround (Meyers & Murphy, 2007). In addition, professionals in schools lack the skills, capacity, or will to make these changes on their own (Meyers & Murphy, 2007). Teachers and principals in these schools may lack the information about how to turnaround schools that face so many unique challenges (Dee, 2012).

School turnaround is often discussed as a reform that happens in isolation, but in reality, it operates within a larger constellation of education reforms. The success of school turnaround is intertwined with other federal

education initiatives (Kowal & Ableidinger, 2011). For example, Kutash and colleagues argue that school turnaround "takes place in the context of performance improvement for the school system as a whole" (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010, p. 13). Education reformers were pursuing a variety of other policies that coincided with the rise of school turnaround including the adoption of content and curriculum standards, teacher evaluation, data-based instruction, and expansion of charter schools (Webber et al., 2014).

School turnaround appears to have an intuitive meaning. Despite this, there is a lack of precision and agreement regarding the definition of school turnaround (Huberman, Parrish, Hannan, Arellanes, & Shambaugh, 2011; Stuit, 2012). Confusingly, it refers both to the process of reforming an individual school in addition to a particular model employed for that same purpose (Kutash et al., 2010). The term school turnaround has developed a broad definition in the education reform zeitgeist, meaning positive changes for chronically failing schools (Kutash et al., 2010).

One reason for the lack of consensus around the definition of school turnaround is the plethora of factors that complicate the identification of schools in need of this intervention (Meyers et al., 2012). For example, school turnaround policies (particularly those overseen by the federal government) are relatively novel (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). As a consequence, these policies are still changing and developing. An additional complication is the cornucopia of terms used to describe schools in need of turnaround (e.g., failing, needing improvement, academically bankrupt) that are operationalized as technical terms, but have overlapping meanings (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). The lack of clarity about technical terms in the extant research causes further inconsistency.

This consistent confusion around the goals of school turnaround presents a challenge to school leaders, policymakers, and researchers. The most commonly cited definition of school turnaround—in the education literature—was developed by consultants at Mass Insight: "School turnaround is a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in low-performing schools that: a) produces significant gains in achievement within two years; and b) readies the school for the longer process of transformation" (Mass Insight, 2010, p. 4). Another well referenced definition describes school turnaround as a "documented, quick, dramatic, and sustained change in the performance of an organization" (Rhim, Kowal, Hassel, & Hassel, 2007, p. 4). Our survey of the education literature revealed four main components of school turnaround: the identification of failing schools, a large improvement in outcomes, the rapidity of the effect, and the sustainability of the change (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007; Copeland & Neeley, 2013; Herman et al., 2008).

Schools that policymakers target with this intervention are defined by chronically low performance (Aladjem et al., 2010; Huberman et al., 2011; Stuit, 2010). However, this term also lacks a clear definition. Performance on standardized tests is often the primary method used to identify chronically low performing schools. A recent practice guide published by the Department of Education defined low performance as schools where the proportion of students failing to achieve proficiency on mathematics and reading assessments is high (20% or more) over several years (two or more) (Herman et al., 2008). Stuit (2010) in his research on low performing schools argued for a more liberal definition. More specifically, he contends that schools with composite mathematics and reading proficiency rates in the bottom quartile of scores within a state and school type (e.g., elementary, middle) for several years should still be considered failures. More recently, the federal government has established a clearer definition of low performance. The SIG program targets the lowest 5% of persistently failing schools (Huberman et al., 2011). A noteworthy tradeoff of these proposed standards is their reliance on test-based normative comparisons of schools. A more sophisticated measure like value-added scores would more effectively estimate the individual progress of a given school (Murphy & Meyers, 2008).

Definitions of chronically low performance exclude important contextual measures that in part explain the struggles of failing schools. For example, the number of English Language Learners (ELL) or students with specialized learning needs are rarely considered (Cullen, Levitt, Robertson, & Sadoff, 2013; Trujillo & Renee, 2015). Many states rely on Title I eligibility to identify these schools, which is inconsistently reported across time (Trujillo & Renee, 2015). Complete reliance on test-based measures such as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is unlikely to validly and reliably identify schools in need of turnaround. As a result of all of these factors, the identification of chronically low performance is to some degree arbitrary (Meyers et al., 2012).

Equally important to understanding which schools are in need of turnaround is setting a standard for success. This question remains fully unresolved (Meyers et al., 2012; Player & Katz, 2016; Trujillo & Renee, 2015). There is no consensus on the size of gains needed on test scores, the number of years in which these gains must occur, or for the long-term sustainability of the gains needed for turnaround to be achieved (Trujillo & Renee, 2015). The systems that track the progress of school turnarounds are underdeveloped (Kutash et al., 2010; Trujillo & Renee, 2015). Beyond simple measures such as test scores and graduation rates, few education systems have the capacity to track these outcomes (Jochim & Murphy, 2013). As a result, definitions of school turnaround rely on unidimensional metrics (Trujillo & Renee, 2015).

Despite this lack of consensus, practitioners and researchers emphasize the tautological nature of school turnaround by including the interventions large positive effects on students in their own definitions (Kowal & Hassel, 2005b; Meyers et al., 2012; Meyers & Murphy, 2007). The change that occurs in the wake of successful school turnaround is described as qualitatively different from the change from more incremental reforms (Rhim et al., 2007). Positive change in a school improvement context is more gradual. Each cohort improves, which adds value for future students (Potter, Reynolds, & Chapman, 2002). But school turnaround is defined as an intervention that results in "dramatic" or "drastic" improvement, rather than small iterative changes (Kowal & Hassel, 2005b).

Several researchers have proposed test score increases that would constitute successful turnaround. A common starting point for policymakers and scholars is Cohen's (1988) seminal research that describes any effect size smaller than 0.2 standard deviations as small. Meyers et al. (2012) suggest that an average increase in math and reading test scores across 3 years for a given subject and grade of 0.25 standard deviations is indicative of successful turnaround. An expert panel convened by the Institute of Education Sciences defined school turnaround as substantial improvement in 3 years or fewer (Aladjem et al., 2010; Herman et al., 2008). The panel proposed several results that could provide evidence of successful turnaround, including schools that reduced the proportion of students that were not proficient on state exams by 10 percentage points, decreased the drop-out rate by 10 percentage points or more, or improved overall performance on tests by 0.25 standard deviations. Stuit's (2010) research uses a different measure that relies on improvement in proficiency rates. "Moderate Improvement" in this research is defined as gains large enough for the school to exit the bottom quartile of proficiency rates. He classified schools as having achieved turnaround if a school's gains were large enough to reach into the upper half of test scores. This operationalization of school turnaround success is incredibly lofty. Stanton and Segal (2013) who are turnaround experts for Mass Insight Schools suggest a similarly high standard. One of their suggested turnaround goals is that in a 3-year time span 80% of students in a school will be proficient or better.

State goals for turnaround also vary considerably and are often aspirational. The stated goal of North Carolina's school turnaround program (TALAS) was to improve passage rates on state assessments by 20 percentage points (Heissel & Ladd, 2016). In Massachusetts (Schueler, Goodman, & Deming, 2016), one of the state's goals for schools in turnaround (i.e. Lawrence Public Schools, 2016) was to close the test score (ELA and Math

proficiency) and graduation rate gaps compared to similar districts in the state within 5–7 years.

Empirical research has shown that schools with low standardized testing scores rarely improve. Overall, the average test scores of schools do not vary considerably over time. Loveless (2010) examines average test scores for California schools (1989–2009). He found that 63.4% of schools in the bottom quartile of test scores in 1989 were in that same quartile 20 years later. Similarly, 63.0% of schools in the top quartile in 1989 remained there in 2009. Stuit's (2010) findings are even less optimistic. He finds that 80% of schools that were in the lowest quartile of test scores in 2004 were also in the lowest quartile in 2009.

A prominent component of the school turnaround intervention is its description as innovative and disruptive. Embedded in school turnaround's theory of action are the hypothesized benefits in student outcomes from removing teachers and principals from their positions (Cucchiara, Rooney, & Robertson-Kraft, 2015; Heissel & Ladd, 2016; Peck & Reitzug, 2014). In practical terms, school turnaround often means that many teachers in a school are compelled to reapply for their own positions (Cucchiara et al., 2015). Many of these teachers (approximately 30–50%) are rehired to work at their old schools (De la Torre et al., 2013), while teachers with tenure are often reassigned to a non-failing school in the district. After a school is turned around, "the teacher workforce tend[s] to be younger, less experienced, and have provisional certifications; they [are] also…more likely to be white" (De la Torre et al., 2013, p. 31). Some models of school turnaround call for even more drastic changes where either the majority of a school's staff is replaced (often called reconstitution or restructuring) or the school is closed entirely (Strunk, Marsh, Hashim, Bush-Mecenas, & Weinstein, 2016).

The focus on removal of personnel is not accidental, but rather strategic. This strategy is in part owed to school turnaround's roots as an improvement strategy in the business community. There initiatives are intended to "introduce substantial departures from conventional practice" (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995, p. 8). School turnaround reforms take a more holistic approach that aims to change how schools operate (Heissel & Ladd, 2016). Failing schools are thought to have a professional network that is dysfunctional. The goal of school turnaround is in part to "deliberately disassemble professional networks in the hopes that more productive networks will be forged" (Rice & Malen, 2003, p. 650). However, removal of teachers and principals can only be effective policy if there is an adequate supply of high quality replacements. A key weakness of this policy is that turnarounds that require the removal of teachers are not equally suited for all communities. Small cities and rural areas will likely struggle to find teachers to replace those that were fired (Heissel & Ladd, 2016).

School turnaround's innovativeness is often defined in terms of its contrast with school improvement strategies. Rhim and Redding argue:

> School turnaround differs substantially from school improvement in that it calls for urgent and often disruptive change efforts. This is in contrast to incremental or continuous improvement that has been characteristic of change efforts for the last 20 years. Simply put, school turnaround is not more school improvement or school improvement plus. School turnaround efforts greatly challenge the status quo and significantly impact a wide variety of audience members, including school administrators, teachers, families, and community members. (Rhim & Redding, 2014, p. 14)

School turnaround is thus defined by its holistic approach that addresses a broad spectrum of issues through utilizing a wide variety of actors and institutions (Heissel & Ladd, 2016). Two clear differences are the broad scope of the proposed changes and their speed of implementation. Despite this, the "technical dimensions" (Trujillo & Renee, 2015) of school improvement and school turnaround are identical.

School turnaround is also defined by the short timeframe within which positive effects are seen (Baroody, 2011; Hess & Gift, 2008). There is not exact agreement about how many years school turnaround should take. Rhim (2011, p. 30) claims, "positive growth [should occur] in one to two years," which is consistent with other school turnaround specialists (Calkins et al., 2007; Kutash et al., 2010; Mass Insight, 2010; Peurach & Neumerski, 2015). Still others have argued that effects are expected within 3 years (American Institutes for Research, 2011; Marsh, Strunk, & Bush, 2013; Strunk, Marsh, Hashim, Bush, & Weinstein, 2012). Overall, school turnaround is expected within in 3 years or less, which is notably faster than previous school-level education reforms.

Successful school turnaround is expected not only to garner large gains, but to prepare the school for future changes (Mass Insight, 2010; Peurach & Neumerski, 2015). School turnaround is expected to produce rapid change and also to, "read[y] the school for the longer process of transformation into a high-performance organization" (Mass Insight, 2010, p. 4).

Foundations including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Barr Foundation, and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation have all had an active role in promoting school turnaround (Calkins et al., 2007). These groups have provided financial support to turnaround specialists. For example, the Gates Foundation and others provided grants for Mass Insight Education to create the *Turnaround Challenge* (Calkins et al., 2007) which serves to both exhort policymakers to pursue school turnaround as a reform and as a guide for how to design these policies. Another foundation (the Carnegie Corporation) awarded Mass Insight funding to partner with school districts and create small groups of turnaround schools (Duke, 2012).

The work of school turnaround is conducted primarily at the building level by teachers along with school and district leaders. But, school turnaround incorporates numerous other organizations that support the work of educators. These organizations go by different names including turnaround partners (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015), turnaround specialists (Trujillo & Renee, 2015), education or charter management organizations (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005; Stuit, 2012), external partners, (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005), and external support providers (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012; Scott, 2009). But, school turnaround initiatives also include the efforts of the full spectrum of organizations that are involved in the work of education reform including policy centers, educationally focused foundations, consultants, private management companies, non-profits, and professional research organizations (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012; Peurach & Neumerski, 2015; Trujillo & Renee, 2015). These turnaround partners support the process of transformation by evaluating schools, proscribing remedies, and increasing administrative capacity (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005; Peurach & Neumerski, 2015). Turnaround specialists are needed because many states lack the capacity and expertise to oversee the restructuring of schools. Districts and states rely on third party organizations to support implementation (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005; Scott, 2009). The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) in formal guidance strongly encouraged states and districts to develop relationships with turnaround specialists including, "institutions of higher education, regional technical assistance providers, other non-profits, and for-profit organizations" (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012, p. 6). USED contracted with Learning Point Associates to develop a guide to help central office leaders in choosing whether turnaround was appropriate for schools in their districts (Scott, 2009). The majority of states reported that they leveraged similar relationships with external providers to support school turnaround services (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012).

1.2 Conceptual Framework and Methods

1.2.1 Conceptual Framework

The framework for our analysis was developed to study turnaround in failing for-profit and not-for-profit (e.g., churches, hospitals) organizations (see Fig. 1.1). We also wanted to see if any lessons emerged from that work that might benefit schools (Murphy & Meyers, 2008).

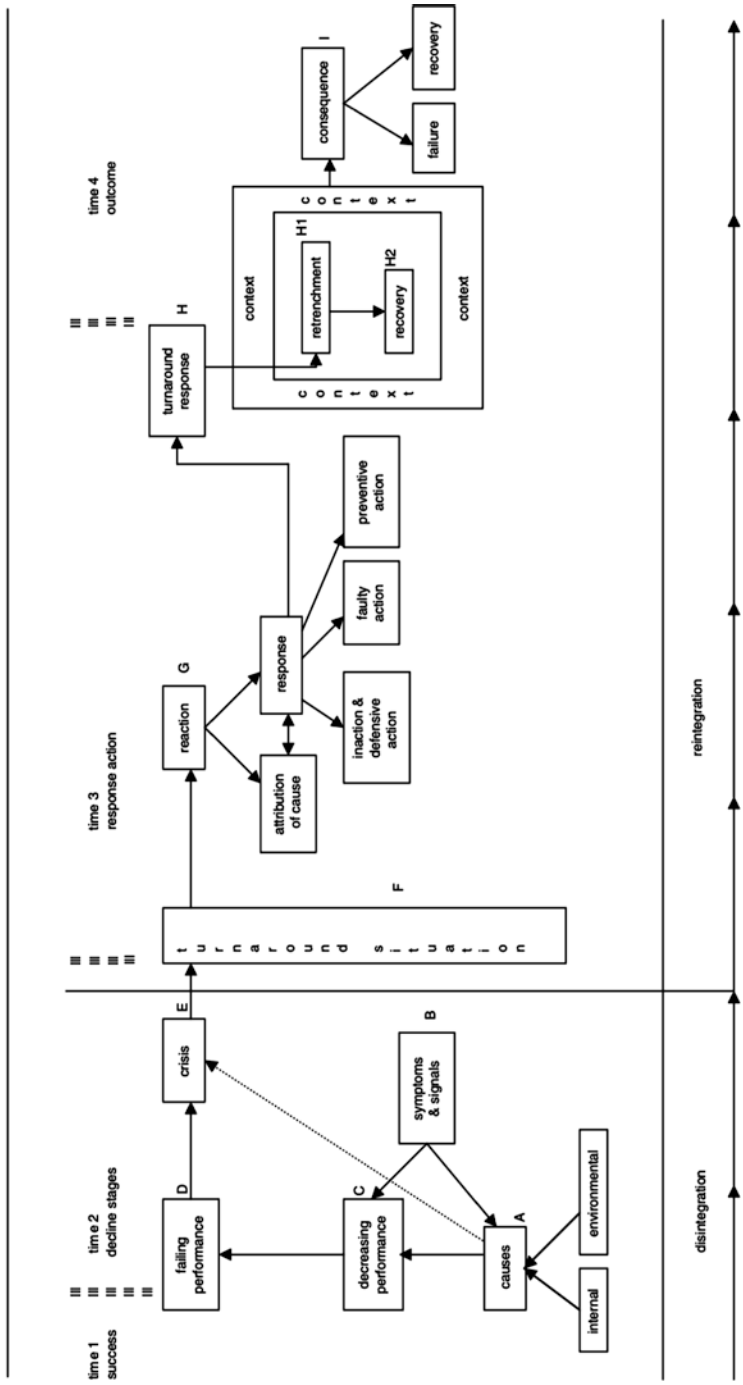

Fig. 1.1 Model of Organizational Turnaround. (Source: Murphy and Meyers, 2008)

In our model of turnaround, time flows from left to right. At the top of the figure, that flow unfolds across four time zones. Period 1 represents a state of success, or at least stability. Period 2 encompasses the time when the factors that push a school into a turnaround situation begin to occupy center stage. Period 3 includes the time when actions in response to decline, failing status, and crisis that are designed to stabilize the school are brought into play. Period 4 is the end game in the turnaround narrative, either recovery or death. Looking at the bottom of Fig. 1.1, we see that Period 2 can be described as the disintegration phase in the turnaround story, while Period 3 represents the attempted reintegration/regeneration phase of the turnaround process.

Turning to the dynamics of the model, the story begins at the lower left-hand corner [A] when a factor or set of factors (i.e., causes) from the school's environment or from inside the institution pushes the school onto the path of decline. Symptoms [B] with the potential to alert managers to the presence of problems, if not to the actual nature of the causes of the downturn, are generally visible here. These warning signals are also in play through the decline process itself. Decline [C] is defined as important decreases in performance, a condition that creates additional problems and often minor crises in the school. Unchecked or responded to inappropriately [C → D] (e.g., faulty action), decline continues through somewhat predictable stages until performance, and the school can be characterized as failing [D]. Failing performance in turn produces a crisis [E], and the school finds itself in a turnaround situation [F]], a condition that has critical consequences for the school and its members.

All previous school interventions—to alleviate symptoms, to tackle causes, or to address initial decline—were undertaken to prevent the school from reaching a turnaround situation. Now management action is employed in an attempt to save the school by implementing a turnaround strategy. The starting point is reaction to the troubled state of affairs [G], beginning with the attribution of causes and carrying through to responses—either potentially damaging responses (e.g., blaming and scapegoating) or more productive endeavors that we can label the turnaround strategy [H].

Finally, turnaround activities are linked to outcomes [I]: the restoration of stabilization of the formerly troubled school or failure, the inability of the school to recover and survive.

1.2.2 Methods

1.2.2.1 Narrative Synthesis

> In the early stages of theoretical development, function and form and pattern are often more important than statistical significance. (Lubinski, 2016, p. 902).

To complete our analysis of turnaround failure, we conducted a narrative synthesis. According to Popay et al. (2006), narrative synthesis is "an approach to the systematic review and synthesis of findings from multiple studies that relies primarily on the use of words and text to summarize and explain the findings of the synthesis … the defining characteristic is a textual approach to the process of synthesis to 'tell the story' of the findings from the included studies" (p. 5). According to Rodgers and team (Rodgers et al., 2009), the defining characteristic of a narrative synthesis is the use of a narrative rather than a statistical summary to the process of synthesis.

1.2.2.2 Research Focus and Questions

The research problem we confront is a lack of understanding why school turnarounds have such a limited record of success. Policymakers, practitioners, and developers have long pursued efforts to improve the performance of struggling schools. This goal has intuitive appeal for policymakers who have concerns about achievement gaps. We explore why policymakers return to this approach despite mediocre outcomes.

The purpose of the review is to develop propositions to explain turnaround failure. Our grounded work generates understanding from research data systematically obtained and analyzed through the constant comparative method (Creswell, 2007).

We have one central question: What are the reasons that school turnarounds routinely fail?

1.2.2.3 Data Collection

Our data were primarily research articles—with some books, scholarly papers, and reports. We began with sampling, conducting a theory-based search of materials using Google Scholar. This search engine identifies academic sources from a wide-variety of databases (e.g., JSTOR, Elsiever, Education Resources Information Center, Research Gate, and Proquest). We conducted an "exhaustive review" (Hallinger, 2014). That is, we pulled up all the articles on turnaround between 2002 and 2015, a total of 593 pieces.

We pulled abstracts on all pieces. After examining the abstracts "for appropriate content" (Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007, p. 1138), we concluded that 213 pieces did not address turnaround in a way consistent with the design of the study (e.g., an article on parent selection of private schools, improving a school through field-based clinical instructors).

1.2.2.4 Reading and Coding

Of the remaining 380 pieces, we read and coded 243 articles, until saturation on the research question was reached (Charmaz, 2014; Hatch, 2002). We coded using a general accounting for codes that is not content-specific but that points to the general domains in which codes would be inductively developed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Our codes at this point were descriptive and pre-figured headings: Understandings (1), Barriers (2), Turnaround Failures (3), and Lessons (4). We placed codes at the sentence and paragraph levels of the 243 articles we read.

1.2.2.5 Preparing and Organizing the Data and Data Analysis

We copied the 243 coded articles, cut out each code of each article, and taped each code to single sheets of paper, with the following points added: code, page number, author(s), and date of publication.

We organized each of the codes into the four separate domains noted above (e.g., Understandings, Barriers, Turnaround Failures, and Lessons). We then used pattern analysis and grounded theorizing (Glaser, 1978) and sense-making analysis (Lotto & Murphy, 1990; Weick, 1995) to divide the four sets of codes into a second level. That is, we developed themes. By revisiting the themes multiple times, we were able to code to the third level of analysis. This set of codes became the unit of analysis for further work.

1.2.2.6 Writing

We then began composing the narrative from the bottom up. We used quotes from the reviewed pieces to help in the development of the manuscript and to acknowledge seminal research in various areas. We used summative quotes at the beginning of themes and categories "to illustrate and substantiate assertions made" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 190).

1.2.3 Chapter Synthesis

In the first chapter we constructed a definition of school turnaround based on a survey of the literature. We started with an exploration of the theoretical antecedents of school turnaround in the business sector and examined the assumptions that support its theory of change. Technical definitions for failing schools vary, but broadly speaking for policymakers this refers to schools in the bottom 5% of test scores. There is even less consensus over the definition of successful turnaround. The literature describes the positive effect from school turnaround as occurring quickly or within one to 2 years. Experts describe the reform as innovative and disruptive. According to this line of reasoning, school turnaround transforms how schools operate and sets a course for sustainable, long-term improvements.

In the rest of the chapter, we provided a conceptual framework for school turnaround and discussed the research methods we employed in our work. The model, which was originally used to examine non-education organizations is useful for exploring the effects of school turnaround as well. This approach conceptualizes school turnaround as a process that unfolds over time: starting with the causes of failure and ending with the outcomes of the intervention. Subsequently, we described the narrative synthesis approach we used to examine school turnaround.

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Chapter 2
Powering Forces and History

2.1 Powering Forces

2.1.1 Political Understandings

Interwoven in turnaround are issues of democracy, constituent influence and control over organizational decisions, ownership of public institutions, trust, and organizational accountability. Proponents believe that turnarounds increase knowledge, about, access to, and participation in governance; make organizations easier to change; and prevent undue consolidation of power at geographically distant locations and hierarchically remote organizational levels. Lurking slightly in the background is the belief that increased responsiveness and accountability will result in more effective and efficient internal operations and the development of a better product or the delivery of a better service.

Turnaround analysts portray a growing discontent with activist government (Kunzman, 2009a, 2009b) and the rise and spread of an antigovernment philosophy (Apple, 2007). They describe a "fundamental concern that government simply 'doesn't work.' Planning is seen as inadequate, bureaucracy as inefficient and outcomes highly problematic" (Hula, 1990, p. xiii). They go on to argue that the consent of the governed is being withdrawn to a significant degree. In its softest incarnation, this cynicism leads citizens to argue that government is no longer a reasonable solution to all problems and to question the usefulness of much government-initiated activity. At worst, it has nurtured the belief that government is fated to fail at whatever it undertakes. In many cases, it has nurtured the development of a variety of antigovernment political and social movements. There is little question that this

J. F. Murphy, J. F. Bleiberg, *School Turnaround Policies and Practices in the US*, Education, Equity, Economy 6,
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widespread "disillusionment with government has extended to all sectors, including schooling" (Gaither, 2008, p. 93).

2.1.2 Economic Understandings

It is almost a fundamental law that the economy is undergoing a significant metamorphosis. There is widespread agreement that we have been and continue to be moving from an industrial to a postindustrial economy. What is becoming clearer to many analysts is that with the arrival of the postindustrial society, "we are seeing the dissolution of the social structure associated with traditional industrialism" (Hood, 1994, p. 12) and an environment that is less hospitable to government intervention. With the ascent of the global economy, there is an emphasis on new markets—conditions that provide many of the seeds for the debate about appropriate governance structures for society and its schools. At the same time that the economic policy habitat is evolving, the current foundations of the economy—especially the public sector—appear to be crumbling. In particular, the economic principles that have provided the grounding for government actions for most of the twentieth century have been called into question.

The important question here is: What accounts for this discontent and skepticism about the public sector of the economy that is helping fuel school turnaround? Given the cyclical nature of policy development and other value expressions in American society, it should surprise no one to learn that some of this rising tide of dissatisfaction with public sector initiatives can be characterized as a response to the nearly unbroken growth of government over the last three quarters of the twentieth century—a counter reaction to the progressive philosophy that has dominated the policy agenda for so long (Apple, 2007).

Another piece of the discontent puzzle focuses on the widespread perception that the state is overinvolved in the life of the citizenry. Critics note that more and more citizens are chafing under the weight and scope of government activity. They characterize a government that has gone too far. They argue that the state has become involved in the production of goods and services that do not meet the market failure test. The results are predictable: The state, it is claimed, occupies an increasingly large space on the economic landscape, welfare loss due to collective consumption increases, and citizens experience an increasing need for more nongovernmental space. Calls for a recalibration of the economic equation are increasingly heard.

Expanding numbers of citizens begin to experience "some public sector institutions as controlling rather than enabling, as limiting options rather than expanding them, as wasting rather than making the best use of resources" (Martin, 1993, p. 8). Of particular concern here is the issue of values. An increasing number of individuals and groups have come to believe that state intrusiveness includes efforts to establish value preferences—values that they believe often undermine their ways of life (Cooper & Sureau, 2007). Others argue that, at least in some cases, through interest group and bureaucratic capture, some public sector institutions have actually destroyed the values that they were established to develop and promote.

The wearing out of the economic foundations of the liberal democratic state can also be traced to recent critical analyses of the model of public sector activity developed to support expanded state control. The critique here is of three types. First, when examined as they are put into practice, the assumptions anchoring public sector activity over the last century look much less appealing than they do when viewed in the abstract (i.e., conceptually). The attack on extensive state control rests on the way in which its limitations have become visible. At the same time, much of the critique of the market economy upon which public sector growth has been justified, especially market failure, has been weakened with the advent of socio-technical changes associated with a shift from an industrial to a postindustrial society.

Second, "structural weaknesses inherent in the nature of public-sector supply itself … which undermine the whole basis on which it is established" (Petrie, 1990, p. 20) have become more visible—visible to the point that some analysts claim that state ownership and management are inherently flawed. Concomitantly, both the efficiency and effectiveness of governmental activities have begun to be questioned seriously.

Third, it is suggested that the reforms that created the large public sector are themselves much in need of change. Reform is increasingly seen in terms of alternative to, rather than the repair of the existing public sector.

The recasting of public sector economic policy can also be attributed to stories of gross government incompetence or scandal and a mounting body of evidence that government enterprises are often inefficient, that it costs more to accomplish tasks in the government than in the primary sector.

While widespread concern over the growing costs of government is an important variable in the algorithm of the discontent—especially perceived waste and inefficiency, an even more significant factor is the expanding disillusionment about the overall effectiveness of government action, particularly perceived inability of government to meet its goals. Perhaps nowhere is this perception more vivid than in the arena of the large-scale egalitarian

programs initiated in the 1960s and 1970s. A number of critics of government control argue that the conditions that led to the development of these policies have not been ameliorated. In fact, they maintain that such transfers often worsen the situation and create even more problems. They go so far as to suggest that many of our social problems are in reality cratogenic—that is, created by the state.

2.1.3 Social Understandings

> These data have implications for educators, Ms. Weitz said, noting that 'if we're serious about education reform, we have to also deal with other risks children experience, because in the end it will affect the performance of students'. (Cohen, 1992, p. 14)

The fabric of U.S. society is being rewoven in some places and is unraveling in others, resulting in changes that promise to have a significant impact on schooling. At the macro level, schools operate in an environment where social capital for increasing numbers of students and their families is limited.

One thread of these environmental phenomena is comprised of demographic shifts that threaten to overwhelm schools as they are now constituted. Minority enrollment in U.S. schools is rising, as is the proportion of less advantaged youngsters. There is a rapid increase in the number of students whose primary language is other than English. The traditional two-parent family, with one parent employed and the other at home to care for the children, has become an anomaly, constituting only one quarter of U.S. families.

At the same time that these new threads are being woven into the tapestry of U.S. society, a serious unraveling of other parts of that fabric is occurring. The number of youngsters affected by the ills of the world in which they live—for example, poverty, unemployment, crime, drug addiction, malnutrition—is increasing, as is the need for a variety of more intensive and extended services from societal organizations, especially schools.

A particularly troublesome aspect of this situation is the fact that, by and large, these are the students—low-income, minority, and disadvantaged youngsters—with whom schools have historically been the least successful.

The changing demographics of the United States are placing tremendous strains on the country's educational system. More and more of the types of students whom educators have failed to help in the past are entering our schools. Not only are educators being asked to educate them successfully,

but the definition of success has been dramatically expanded and higher levels of achievement are expected. Most critics see little hope that the ever-widening goals of education can be reached in the current system of schools. Reformers are attempting to accommodate to these demographic shifts by turning around failing schools.

2.2 History of Turnaround

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed into law by Congress in 1965 and utilized a student-based theory of change. ESEA focused on providing aid to students who were disadvantaged (e.g., racial minorities and the poor) when compared with their peers. ESEA aimed to provide additional resources to communities where disadvantaged students were clustered in high concentrations. But, this approach was found to be ineffective. Researchers including James Coleman and his contemporaries found that school resources like funding were weak predictors of student achievement after controls were added for race or socio-economic status (Marsh, Strunk, & Bush, 2013). At the same time, other studies identified school characteristics that were positively associated with student outcomes including: a safe learning environment, academic press, instructional leadership, assessment of students, community relations, and a clear mission (Trujillo & Renee, 2015). This research served as the basis for a new approach that focused on school-wide improvement strategies (Potter, Reynolds, & Chapman, 2002). The focus on education policies shifted from students to schools.

Title I –the primary funding mechanism in ESEA—provided funding based on the number of students in a school eligible for free and reduced priced meals under federal guidelines. Schools used this funding to support specific students by pulling them out of their regular classrooms for targeted instruction (Sunderman, 2001). An important step in the move towards school-based interventions was the creation of "School-Wide Programs" (SWP). Beginning in 1978, districts were able to use their Title I dollars for school level programs rather than interventions targeting funding-eligible students (Dee, 2012; Herman, 2012; Marsh et al., 2013). SWPs included reducing class size, professional development, and whole-school reform models with the support of outside organizations. They shared much in common with modern turnaround approaches (Sunderman, 2001; Wong & Meyer, 1998). Research during this time period repeatedly showed that student-focused programs were less effective than hoped which built momen-

tum for the shift to school-level approaches. In 1988, the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments to ESEA shifted policy further towards a school-based approach. Schools with at least 75% of students from low-income backgrounds were permitted to adopt SWPs (Sunderman, 2001). These changes created a strong incentive for more schools to implement SWPs.

In 1994, Congress passed the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), which made important changes to Title I of ESEA relating to school accountability changes, that would foreshadow future reforms in NCLB. The legislation required the development of content and curriculum standards. IASA mandated the administration of rigorous annual student assessments that were aligned with state standards (Wang, Wong, & Kim, 1999). In addition, states had to develop measurable goals, although without any accountability mechanisms that were enforced by the federal government (Picucci, Brownson, Kahlert, & Sobel, 2002; Sunderman, 2001). IASA also changed the criteria for SWP eligibility. Schools with at least 50% of students from low-income families were permitted to use Title I funds for SWPs for the first time (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009; Picucci et al., 2002). This change was particularly impactful for secondary schools because poverty levels of secondary schools were typically underreported (Rubenstein & Wodatch, 2000). In response to all of these changes, states started to adopt stricter accountability policies and develop their capacity to intervene in failing schools (Borman et al., 2000). This continued the shift of federal education policy from a student-focused to a school-focused approach.

In 1997, Congress created the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) demonstration program. CSR models included, "a prominent emphasis on the use of 'scientifically based' teaching and management methods and the school-wide integration of instruction, assessment, professional development, and school management" (Dee, 2012, p. 10). Schools were given 3-year grants that were used to hire whole-school turnaround specialists (e.g. Success for All, Direct Instruction, School Development Program, New American Schools) (Bifulco, Duncombe, & Yinger, 2005). The partnership with a school turnaround specialist represented a policy innovation that would influence future changes to ESEA and school turnaround efforts (Gross et al., 2009). The program was also innovative because CSR models were designed as the name implies to influence every aspect of a school (e.g., curriculum, instruction, professional development, community relationships) (Orland, 2011). CSR invigorated previously existing school-level reform efforts including the New American Schools project (Berends, Bodilly, & Kirby, 2002). Many schools and districts chose to adopt CSR models. The program provided just under $2 billion in funding that was allocated to approximately 6700 schools (Dee, 2012; Zimmer, Henry, &

Kho, 2016). This averages out to about $300,000 per school over the life of the program. Schools could choose from over 500 different reform models (Rhim & Redding, 2014). Some of the most popular were Accelerated Schools (1300 schools), Coalition of Essential Schools (1000 schools), Comer School Development Program (400 schools), Core Knowledge Schools (700 schools), and Success for All (1600 schools) (Datnow, 2000).

Table 2.1 includes a description of the funding for CSR. The funding reaches its zenith in the 3 years from FY 2002 to FY 2005 at just over $300 million a year. Funding for the program declines drastically starting in FY 2006. Congress ended funding for the program in FY 2008 and shifted appropriations to other turnaround reform efforts.

Research on the influence of CSR on student outcomes is mixed. A meta-analytic study found that a few of the CSR models (Success for All, Direct Instruction, School Development Program) yielded positive results for students (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003). But, studies that examined a larger range of CSR model found effects that ranged from small and negative to small and positive (Gross et al., 2009; Murphy & Datnow, 2003).

2.2.1 No Child Left Behind and National School Turnaround

The watershed NCLB legislation brought school accountability to the entire country. The omnibus legislation had numerous components, but the crux of the law related to the new requirements for schools to meet performance

Table 2.1 Comprehensive school reform program funding

Fiscal year	Appropriations
1998	$120,000,000
1999	$145,000,000
2000	$220,000,000
2001	$260,000,000
2002	$310,000,000
2003	$307,985,000
2004	$307,687,000
2005	$205,344,000
2006	$1,450,000
2007	$1,536,979
2008	$1,605,454

Note: Table adapted by authors (Doherty, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2008)

benchmarks and the accompanying sanctions if there were not met (Hamilton, Heilig, & Pazey, 2014). NCLB sanctions escalated over time and culminated with a form of school turnaround called restructuring (Murphy, 1991; Scott, 2009). From this perspective, it is accurate to frame NCLB as the first mandatory national school turnaround law.

NCLB was crafted with the view that learning opportunities were far from equal for all students. Improving achievement overall was not enough, it was necessary to also hold schools accountable for achievement gaps, "between ethnic groups, between children with disabilities and those without, and between English language natives and English language learners" (Redding & Rhim, 2013, p. 3). The law's authors assumed that no child would be left behind because, "education can overcome the effects of impacted poverty and deprivation without further broad-based support or social interventions. The implicit theory is that if greater pressure is placed on schools through increasingly severe sanctions, then positive changes and greater efficiencies will be forced onto the schools" (Mathis, 2009, p. 16). Accountability policies like NCLB are thought to realign incentives for teachers and principals in schools. Creating a set of punishments and rewards based on overall and sub-group student achievement was thought to strongly motivate teachers to change their behavior in a way that would benefit all students (Dee & Jacob, 2011; Murphy, 2010b). NCLB goes further even than this goal with logic that is parallel to that of school turnaround. Some schools are so dysfunctional as to be incapable of ever closing achievement gaps in their current form. As a result, the only way to help students in those schools is to close them and either send students to schools with more capable educators or to re-open the school with new staff (Rice & Malen, 2010).

NCLB required states to set performance standards for the percentage of students that would score at least proficient on standardized tests (Brady, 2003). The law required that every Title I school must reach 100% proficiency by the conclusion of the 2013–2014 school year (Perlman & Redding, 2011). Title I schools were those with high concentrations of disadvantaged students. NCLB did not require states to apply sanctions to non-Title I schools, but many states chose to do so voluntarily (Scott, 2008). The law gave states the flexibility to choose performance standards in a given school year (known as Annual Yearly Progress or AYP) for English/Language Arts and Mathematics (Reyes & Garcia, 2014). NCLB required states to choose an assessment to identify schools that did not meet AYP (i.e., "failing" schools). The law also required states to assess students once a year in grades 3–8 starting in 2005–2006 and once in high school (Scott, 2008).

NCLB applies sanctions based on the number of consecutive years a school has been failing. For example, in 2002–2003 school performance

was compared to the previous year to identify schools that were failing to meet AYP (Perlman & Redding, 2011). The subsequent year (2003–2004) was the first in which a school could fail for consecutive years. The first and second consecutive years of failure were labeled the "School Improvement" phase. After two consecutive years of failure, schools were required to provide supplementary education services or tutoring (Reyes & Garcia, 2014). Schools had considerable flexibility in developing these plans, but federal guidelines provided suggestions about permissible approaches. These approaches included the implementation of a comprehensive school reform model or "a thorough program designed to change multiple curricular, planning, communications, and other processes in schools in coordinated fashion around a coherent school design or philosophy" (Brady, 2003, pp. 4–5). Districts also needed to ensure that schools receive technical assistance, which may come from the district itself, the state, or a turnaround specialist. In the third year of consecutive failure, students in schools that have not met AYP are permitted to transfer to another school in the district that had met performance standards (Hamilton et al., 2014). Under NCLB, if at any time a school met AYP it exited this process and would begin again if found to be failing.

Schools that failed for three consecutive years entered the "Corrective Action" phase. In this phase schools implement a policy that was created during the school improvement phase. Overall, the steps for schools in corrective action are similar to school turnaround. Once the school has entered corrective action, NCLB mandates more prescriptive policies. Schools may "institute a new curriculum, significantly decrease management authority at the school, appoint an outside expert to advise the school, extend the school day or year, or restructure the school's internal organization" (Brady, 2003, p. 5).

If a school is still failing after four consecutive years then the school enters the restructuring phase (Brinson & Rhim, 2009; Huberman, Parrish, Hannan, Arellanes, & Shambaugh, 2011; Mathis, 2009). In the fourth consecutive year of failure, schools developed their restructuring plan. NCLB allowed them to choose among five options: (1) close and reopen as a charter school, (2) replace relevant school staff (i.e., reconstitution), (3) turn the school's governance over to the state, (4) contract with a private management company to operate the school, and (5) any other major restructuring designed to produce reform. If the school fails to meet AYP for a fifth consecutive year (6 total years of failure) then the district must implement its chosen restructuring plan. To exit restructuring a school must meet AYP for two consecutive years (Scott, 2008, 2009). Very few schools that entered the restructuring phase were ever able to exit (Smarick, 2010) (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Sanctions for a hypothetical persistently failing school

School Year	Consecutive year(s) of failure	Phase	Action
2001–2002	0	Baseline	None
2002–2003	0	Failing	Identified as failing
2003–2004	1	Improvement	Development improvement plan; allow students to transfer
2004–2005	2	Improvement	Supplementary education services (i.e. tutoring)
2005–2006	3	Corrective action	Implement improvement plan
2006–2007	4	Restructuring	Plan restructuring
2007–2008	5	Restructuring	Implement governance reform

Note: School year represents the year for a hypothetical school that never met AYP (i.e. failed every year). Table adapted by authors (Brady, 2003; Duke, 2012; Scott, 2008)

The first district option was to close the school and re-open as a charter school. Students in the enrollment zone of the now closed public school could then choose to attend the charter school (Hassel, Hassel, Arkin, Kowal, & Steiner, 2006). Typically, a conversion charter still receives support from the school district (e.g., maintenance, busing, managing pensions) (Loveless, 2010). By the 2010–2011 school year, the majority of states had policies the promoted the expansion of charter schools (Webber et al., 2014). But, few districts chose this option for their restructuring plans. Available estimates suggest that between 1% (Mathis, 2009) and 2% (Scott, 2008) of schools in the restructuring phase were converted to charter schools.

Reconstitution is the most drastic NCLB strategy for school turnaround. It involves, "vacating staff and administrative positions; appointing a new principal; and establishing a new school team, with some rehired teachers and some new teachers" (Meyers & Murphy, 2007, p. 647). The reconstitution approach bears much in common with the turnaround and transformation models later utilized in the SIG program (Hassel et al., 2006; Perlman & Redding, 2011). This approach was the second most common of the restructuring options; about 10% of schools used this model (Scott, 2008).

Another option was for the state to take over control of a school from a district. Typically, the state would replace the superintendent and often the school board (Ziebarth, 2002). Historically, this approach was used more often for schools in financial rather than academic distress (Mathis, 2009). This was the least utilized reconstitution method. In a survey of states the number of schools that reported using this approach in the sample was zero (Scott, 2008). A GAO study found the percentage of schools that were taken over was less than 1% (Mathis, 2009). States were likely reticent to use this

approach because of the capacity demands it would place on the SEA (Mathis, 2009).

The fourth approach to restructuring involved the district entering into a contract with a private organization to take over the failing school, which includes both for-profit and non-profit options. For example, some districts gave control of schools to private Education Management Organizations (EMOs) (e.g., Edison, Victory, Chancellor Beacon Academies) (Peterson & Chingos, 2009). But, others used this provision of the law to contract with foundations or universities. Very few schools entered into a contract with either a non-profit or for-profit organization (about 2% of schools in restructuring) (Scott, 2008).

The fifth permissible approach to restructuring under NCLB—colloquially known as the "other option"—was by far the most common school restructuring strategy. This was in part because of the flexibility it provided districts and states. The federal government approved a wide variety of reforms to qualify as restructuring under the "other option". These included:

> An astonishing array of improvement strategies, including different types of school-level needs assessments, surveys of school staff, conferences, professional development, turnaround specialists, school improvement committees, training sessions, principal mentors, teacher coaches, leadership facilitators, instructional trainers, subject-matter experts, audits, summer residential academies, student tutoring, research-based reform models, reconfigured grade spans, alternative governance models, new curricula, improved use of data, and turning over operation of some schools to outside organizations. (Smarick, 2010, p. 23)

In the 2006–2007 school year, 90% or more of schools in restructuring used the "other strategy" (Scott, 2008). The vagueness of the NCLB's "other approach" makes it difficult for researchers to understand exactly what school turnaround efforts were taken as a part of restructuring. An additional complication is that districts need only report their restructuring strategies, but NCLB did not require states to ensure these strategies are actually implemented (Scott, 2008).

Despite this complication, there were differences in state approaches to restructuring schools. This is likely attributable to differences in the accountability systems of states prior to NCLB (Hamilton et al., 2014) and the variation in funding available for school improvement (Scott, 2008). In addition, state education officials likely interpreted the vague language to have different meanings that aligned with their own policy preferences (Scott, 2008). Individual states pursued different strategies under the "other option." Sixty-four percent of restructured schools in Maryland and 87% of restructured schools in Michigan appointed a school turnaround specialist (Scott, 2008). Restructured schools in Ohio reported pursuing a variety of changes includ-

ing bringing in an outside expert (11%) and redesigning the curriculum (9%) (Scott, 2008). Another study found that 62% of schools reported hiring an outside expert and 61% changed the internal structure of the school (Mathis, 2009).

In 2007, almost 3000 schools were in the corrective action or restructuring phase (Duke, 2012). In the 2008–2009 school year 1598 schools were in the planning phase of restructuring and 3419 schools were implementing their restructuring plans (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The number of schools in restructuring rose for the next few years until the ESEA waivers went into effect (Aladjem et al., 2010; Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010).

The percentage of schools in restructuring varied from state to state (Scott, 2009). Some states received less Title I funding than was originally envisioned by NCLB to support school improvements and restructuring activities, which resulted in "flat or declining" appropriations. The differences in funding were a driver of the varied state approaches to supporting schools in the improvement and restructuring phases. NCLB required SEAs to develop "statewide systems of support" to aid school improvement efforts, but practically speaking many states lacked the institutional capacity to do so. Some states utilized offices that provided technical assistance, hired school turnaround specialists, or sent teams of coaches and administrators. The common theme was to provide schools with additional sources of school turnaround expertise (Le Floch, Boyle, & Therriault, 2008). The most commonly reported supports that school districts received from states were training about school turnaround (e.g., seminars, professional development), supplementary funding, and school based experts (e.g., content experts and mentors).

The primary mechanism for funding school improvement was Title I. But, NCLB also authorized a separate category of funding in section 1003(g) of the omnibus law (Council of the Great City Schools, 2015; Scott, 2011). At the time, section 1003(g) was known as the School Improvement Fund (SIF). The first year that Congress appropriated funding for the program was FY 2007. In 2009, the ARRA infused considerably more money into the program and it was renamed School Improvement Grants (Trujillo & Renee, 2015).

There are few differences between SIF and SIG besides the name and the influx of money appropriated under ARRA. SIF grants were provided to states and in turn school districts would then apply for the additional funding. States were supposed to give priority to the "lowest achieving schools that demonstrate … the greatest need for the funds" (U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 5) and the strongest commitment to providing them to

struggling schools. The school improvement strategies that schools were required to use under SIF shared much in common with SIG program strategies. Districts that received SIF grants were supposed to provide customized technical assistance and/or professional development based on measurable outcomes. They could also choose to establish partnerships with turnaround specialists to promote their own work.

The funding history of CRS, NCLB, SIF, and SIG is relevant for understanding federal school turnaround efforts. Table 2.1 shows that Congress invested considerable funding into school turnaround in the form of CSR until FY 2006. One year later in FY 2007, Congress appropriated $125 million for the SIF program (Council of the Great City Schools, 2015). This was 1 year prior to the first year that a school (SY 2007–2008) could have entered restructuring under NCLB. The federal government was heavily invested (at least $100 million) in funding school turnaround prior to SIG for every year from 1998 to 2009 (except for FY 2006). When also considering the slow expansion of SWPs this historical view elucidates the decades long involvement of the federal government in school turnaround efforts.

2.2.2 School Improvement Grants: ARRA Supercharges Section 1003(g)

ARRA gave the School Improvement Fund a new moniker (School Improvement Grants) and made three main changes to section 1003(g) of ESEA. First, SIG specifically targeted the worst performing schools or those in the bottom 5% of test scores (Hurlburt, Therriault, & Le Floch, 2012). Second, schools were required to implement one of the 4 SIG models: turnaround, transformation, restart, or school closure. These models were thought to be more "aggressive and comprehensive" than previous approaches to turnaround (Hurlburt et al., 2012). Finally, ARRA infused a massive amount of funding into SIG, doubling down on what Congress had already appropriated for the SIF (Floch et al., 2016).

The goal of SIG was to turn around persistently low performance schools (Kober & Rentner, 2011; Peck & Reitzug, 2014). The policy focused on so called drop-out factories (Jambulapati, 2011; Redding & Rhim, 2013). Although they were relatively few in number, drop-out factories accounted for a disproportionately high number of failing secondary schools (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). In a speech not long after the passage of ARRA, President Obama commented, "Because we know that about 12% of America's school's produce 50% of America's dropouts, we're going to focus on help-

ing states and school districts turn around their 5000 lowest performing schools in the next five years" (Education Resource Strategies, 2012, p. 1). In addition, grant size was no longer determined by a formula based on the characteristics of students attending a school. Rather, school districts had to apply to the state for the grants demonstrating their capacity to successfully deploy the four SIG interventions (Yatsko, Lake, Bowen, & Cooley Nelson, 2015).

Researchers and analysts have described the SIG interventions as innovative, i.e., departing from previous reform efforts. In their guide on school turnaround best practices, Redding and Rhim (2013) describe SIG as, "largely driven by the shortcomings of prior efforts" (p. 19). Dee (2012) characterizes SIG as a "novel amalgam" of the "no excuses" accountability of NCLB with the broader approach emphasized in school leadership culture. SIG does allow state's additional flexibility with how to evaluate the performance of schools. Whereas NCLB only permitted states to use proficiency-based measures of success, under SIG, states where permitted to use other measures of growth over time to identify struggling schools (Jambulapati, 2011). Despite the framing of the SIG interventions as innovative in the literature, caution is warranted because previous school turnaround efforts including CSR and NCLB received similar praise. In addition, resources on SIG make few references to these past reform efforts, suggesting the framing of SIG as innovative is ahistorical (Peck & Reitzug, 2014).

NCLB and SIG have much in common. SIG's focus on the bottom 5% of schools builds on NCLB's approach of identifying schools that failed to meet AYP (Perlman & Redding, 2011). The persistently low-performing schools that SIG was trying to turnaround were likely also schools that were placed into restructuring under NCLB. SIG advocates highlight the competitive nature of the grants. But the SIF and CSR grants had a similar structure. Finally, the actual school improvement strategies including changes to teachers and leadership; rigorous curriculum; and improved community relations are found in NCLB, CSR, and other turnaround programs. Providing technical assistance and outside expertise from the state or turnaround specialists are not new education reforms.

School Improvement Grants assume that the impoverished communities in which turnaround schools are often located are the cause of chronic low levels of performance. High levels of poverty cause overlapping and self-perpetuating issues related to leadership, teacher quality, and available resources (Dee, 2012). The inherent difficulty in turning around "drop-out factories" necessitates dramatic action to improve these schools (Jambulapati, 2011). To improve the odds of success, SIG models were intended to have multiple complementary features. The SIG models from this perspective are

an attempt to marshal external resources to improve instructional and leadership practices (Dee, 2012). The theoretical assumptions underlying SIG are driven by a market-based approach to education policy. Similar to accountability policies like NCLB, "[SIG] assumes that strong external threats motivate teachers and principals to improve, that standardized test scores are a reliable measures of student performance, that meaningful sustainable changes can be spurred by competition, and that outcome-oriented accountability reforms can effectively interrupt historical patterns of low performance" (Trujillo & Renee, 2012, p. 5).

Despite past struggles with improving persistently low-performing schools, advocates pointed to "lighthouse schools" (Mathis, 2009). The theory was that if it was possible for these exemplar schools to succeed in communities with endemic poverty then it would be possible for others schools to succeed as well (Murphy, 2010a). A benefit of this strategy is that the concentration of dropouts in a fraction of SIG schools meant that successful turnaround would only need to happen in a small subset of schools for the program to have large benefits overall (Anrig, 2015).

2.2.2.1 SIG Program Organization

SIG schools were required to implement one of 4 models discussed earlier: turnaround, restart, closure, or transformation (Hurlburt et al., 2012; Kober & Rentner, 2011). School districts with more than nine eligible schools were prevented by regulation from using the same models for all schools (Scott, 2011). When explaining how SIG differed from past turnaround efforts, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary Judith Wertzel commented that previous reform efforts, "(a) did not 'embrace flexibility' when it came to certain aspects of school operations such as the allocation of instructional time and (b) failed to focus squarely on school staffing and the quality of teachers in low-performing schools" (Duke, 2012, p. 18). Each SIG model has slight differences, but they also have much in common (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015). In each state, districts pursue changes to the governance, administration, and finances of the targeted schools. Both the state and the district are also responsible for providing technical support to improve educational processes.

The turnaround model has four main components (McMurrer, 2012a). First, the school must replace the principal. Second the new school leader must receive additional operational flexibility relating to staffing, school calendars, and budgeting to improve student outcomes. Third, all teachers are evaluated in terms of their effectiveness and at least half are fired. Fourth,

the school institutes "comprehensive instructional reforms." This could include using data to differentiate instruction or formative assessments to provide staff with high quality professional development.

The transformation model has much in common with the turnaround model except there is no requirement to replace at least half of the school's staff (U.S. Department of Education, 2014b). Because the transformation model does not require teachers to be replaced, it assumes that "the core instructional staff members at a failing school are competent but need new leadership, programs, training, and support" (Huberman et al., 2011, p. 1). The principal is replaced and strategies are utilized to improve teacher effectiveness (e.g. evaluation based on data, data-driven instruction) (Mass Insight, 2010). Policies to retain high quality teachers and recruit new ones are put into place (Lachlan-Hache, Naik, & Casserly, 2012). Learning time is extended and efforts are taken to promote a community-oriented school. School leaders are also provided operational flexibility and additional support from the state.

The restart model converts a traditional public school into one run by a management organization (Perlman & Redding, 2011). The success of this model rests on the assumption that non-district schools will use innovative approaches that will benefit students (Huberman et al., 2011). Charter school operators, Charter Management Organizations (CMOs), and Education Management Organizations (EMOs) may oversee a restart school. But, the typical case for a school utilizing the restart model was charter conversion (Huberman et al., 2011). In addition, the converted school is required to accept students that previously attended the pre-conversion school (Tanenbaum et al., 2015). In theory, because of the dramatic change involved with a school restart, this approach has the greatest potential to produce large effects (Kutash et al., 2010). At the time that SIG was passed into law, the research on converting traditional public schools into charters (i.e., the restart model) suggested the intervention was ineffective. So called conversion charters had uneven results when compared to either typical charter schools or traditional public schools (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005).

School closure is perhaps the most straight forward SIG model. The school is closed and its students are enrolled in other schools that have higher achievement. Students may attend new traditional public schools or charters schools (Tanenbaum et al., 2015). Embedded in the theory of action for the closure model is that it is both possible and practical for students to attend a higher achieving school. If no such school exists, then the closure model is not viable. As we report in Chap. 5, communities will often attempt to resist actions that close local schools and result in additional travel for students. SIG schools that used the closure model received 1-year awards as

opposed to the 3-year awards given for the other models. Closure model recipients were permitted to use these funds for: "notifying parents and the community of closure; transferring students, teachers, and other school staff to new schools; and supporting schools receiving transfer students" (Hurlburt et al., 2012, p. 29) (Table 2.3).

Federal guidelines require that SIG grants target the persistently lowest performing schools. SIG divides these schools into three tiers, of which Tiers I and II have top priority (Hurlburt et al., 2012). Schools that do not meet these criteria were not eligible for SIG grants. States submitted applications to the federal government describing how they would identify schools that fell into these three tiers. They also had to provide information about how they planned to prioritize funding, the criteria they would use to evaluate district applications, and how they would monitor implementation and outcomes (Hurlburt et al., 2012). The SIG federal guidelines are fairly prescriptive. But, they do provide states some flexibility by allowing the use of optional measures for eligibility (Scott, 2011). States were also permitted to make changes to their eligibility criteria after Cohort I received their

Table 2.3 School improvement grant tiers

Tier	SIG regulation
Tier I	Tier I includes any title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (1) is among the lowest-achieving 5% of those schools in the state; or (2) is a high school that has had a graduation rate below 60% for a number of years. States have the option of identifying title I-eligible elementary schools that (1) are not higher achieving than any title I school in tier I; and (2) have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for at least two consecutive years or are in the state's lowest quintile based on proficiency rates.
Tier II	Tier II includes any secondary school that is eligible for but does not receive Title I, Part A funds and (1) is among the lowest-achieving 5% of such secondary schools in the state; or (2) has had a graduation rate below 60% for a number of years. States also may identify as Tier II schools Title I eligible secondary schools that (1) are no higher achieving than the highest-achieving school identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school in Tier II, or have had a graduation rate of less than 60% over a number of years; and (2) have not made AYP for at least two consecutive years, or are in the state's lowest quintile based on proficiency rates.
Tier III	Tier III includes the remaining Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that are not Tier I schools. States have the option of identifying as Tier III schools Title I eligible schools that (1) do not meet the requirements to be in Tier I or Tier II; and (2) have not made AYP for at least two consecutive years, or are in the state's lowest quintile based on proficiency rates.

Note: Table adapted by authors (Hurlburt et al., 2012, p. 3)

grants. For example, 25 states changed their criteria for tier eligibility and renewal after the first cohort and 22 made changes to the capacity requirements (Hurlburt et al., 2012). Districts were also permitted to continue previous turnaround efforts if those efforts matched one of the 4 SIG models "in whole or in part" and they intended to transition completely to a SIG model (Lachlan-Hache et al., 2012).

Schools that met these criteria were eligible to receive a SIG. However, districts were still required to "compete" with other districts based upon their application to the state (Herrmann, Dragoset, & James-Burdumy, 2014). To demonstrate the strength of their application, school districts had to make three commitments (Lachlan-Hache et al., 2012). First, school districts and states were required to demonstrate the capacity to turn around the school. Second, districts were required to submit a detailed plan and budget materials. Finally, states were required to discontinue the grant if districts were not able to show annual improvement.

2.2.2.2 SIG Funding

All 1003(g) grants provided 3 years of funding. In some years the appropriations covered all 3 years of implementation and in others just a single year. Funding for FYs 2007 and 2008 covered pre-ARRA guarantees for SIF grants. In FY 2009, $3 billion in ARRA funding supplemented the money already appropriated for 1003(g) programs to cover 3 years (2010–2011 to 2012–2013) of the SIG grants for Cohort I (schools that first received a SIG grant in SY 2010–2011). Regular appropriations for SIG covered funding for subsequent cohorts on a rolling basis (Dragoset et al., 2017) (Table 2.4).

Perhaps the biggest difference between SIG and previous turnaround efforts is the amount of the money that was invested (Jambulapati, 2011). ARRA appropriated $3 billion on top of the $546 million that Congress was already scheduled to spend on SIGs (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012). However, when considering the fiscal crisis that states and districts were experiencing (that necessitated the passage of the ARRA) this difference also becomes less salient. During this time, overall expenditures on education practically froze. The dramatic increase in federal education spending from ARRA that included SIG spending essentially replaced the drastic cuts at the state and local levels. Real education expenditures for SIG recipients likely changed very little for schools in the first two cohorts, which constituted the vast majority of SIG recipients (Hurlburt et al., 2012). Paradoxically, SIG is the largest federal turnaround program ever, but still provided relatively meager funding given the baseline for SIG eligible schools.

Table 2.4 Section 1003(g) funding by Cohort

FY	Amount	What the funds pay for
2007	$125,000,000	School improvement fund
2008	$491,265	School improvement fund
2009	$3,546,000,000	(2010–2011 to 2012–2013) cohort I grantees: Years 1,2,3 of implementation
2010	$546,000,000	Cohort II year 1 of implementation (2011–2012)
2011	$535,000,000	(2012–2013) cohort II year 2 of implementation; cohort III year 1 of implementation (2012–2013)
2012	$523,120,801	(2013–2014) cohort II year 3 of implementation; cohort III year 2 of implementation; cohort IV year 1 of implementation
2013	$505,756,165	(2014–2015) cohort III year 3 of implementation; cohort IV year 2 of implementation
2014	$505,756,000	(2015–2016) cohort IV year 3 of implementation

Note: Table adapted by authors (Hurlburt et al., 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2015)

2.2.2.3 State Supports for SIG Schools

Critical to the success of SIG grant recipients is the investment of state resources. Embedded in the theory of change for school turnaround is the belief that a failing school (and implicitly the school district) will be unable to improve itself without externally induced dramatic change. In the SIG program the responsibility for providing additional technical and human resources falls to the state.

Every state provided guidance to schools and districts about choosing the appropriate SIG intervention model (Webber et al., 2014). A majority of states reported providing a variety of supports for the first SIG cohorts, including: technical support, monitoring and data review, and professional development (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012). States also aided the development of partnerships between schools and turnaround specialists including non-profits, universities, and consultants. In addition, to "matchmaking" districts and turnaround specialists, many states also created a list of authorized external providers (McMurrer, Dietz, & Rentner, 2011). The majority of states reported that turnaround specialists participated in school turnaround activities "to a great extent" or "to some extent" (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012). Schools and districts also reported receiving help with the development of school improvement plans and effective improvement strategies (Herrmann et al., 2014). Many states hired dedicated school improvement specialists to supplement these services along with regional technical assistance providers. Seventy-four percent of states provided SIG schools

support from at least two organizations (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012). States also pursued other strategies including the development of improvement tools to help diagnose the needs of SIG schools. Others supported the creation of turnaround networks to improve communication and share useful strategies (Hurlburt et al., 2012). Nearly every state reported that staff from the SEA provided oversight and monitoring. State's also made ancillary policy changes to support the improvement of struggling schools that received SIG grants. For example, nine SEAs took steps to expand the number of charter schools and a few made changes to teacher evaluation systems (Webber et al., 2014).

The state supports that were given to schools that received SIG grants were often also given to schools that did not receive SIG grants. Overall, schools that received SIG reported receiving more supports on average than non-SIG schools (Kober & Rentner, 2011; McMurrer et al., 2011). The supports that schools implementing SIG interventions reported receiving more frequently than non-SIG schools were identifying turnaround strategies, identifying effective instructional leaders, and supporting data use (Herrmann et al., 2014). States were split overall on whether the types of assistance that were given to states as a part of the SIG grants differed from previous turnaround and improvement efforts. About half felt that supports to SIG schools were "different" or "very different" and the remaining half reported they were "similar" or "very similar" (McMurrer et al., 2011).

States were permitted to change the supports they gave to SIG schools after the first year of implementation and the vast majority availed themselves of this option (Hurlburt et al., 2012). States reported adding several supports to SIG districts including assigning a SEA staff member to monitor implementation and to arrange for targeted professional development (Hurlburt et al., 2012). In the second SIG cohort, a majority of states reported they were providing additional supports such as: online tools to support instruction, mental health services, and liaising with school boards (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012).

Despite these efforts to support school turnaround at the local level, SEAs faced a number of challenges related to capacity. Eighty-four percent reported that they faced at least one major challenge in providing support for low performing schools. Chief among these were concerns from educators about the SIG interventions. About half of states cited opposition from teachers about closing or restructuring schools (Webber et al., 2014). About half of states reported they had adequate SEA staff expertise and/or fiscal resources to support SIG models in Cohort I. But, lack of state capacity to support turnaround was more apparent in other areas. Only one-third of states reported having an adequate number of staff members and staff time

to support school turnaround (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012). The vast majority of states also reported that teacher hiring practices and budgeting autonomy for schools and districts was a challenge. About half of states found that extended school time (a popular SIG intervention) was also a barrier encountered when implementing SIG (Webber et al., 2014). Even though every state was providing information to districts about partnerships with school turnaround specialists, more than half of states expressed a concern about a lack of expertise in this area (Webber et al., 2014). States also remained unconvinced that the 3-year length of the grant was sufficient. More than two thirds reported that 3 years was either not enough time or were unsure if it was enough time to improve the lowest achieving schools (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012).

Overall states had generally positive views about the SIG program components (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012). The vast majority agreed that the criteria for identifying struggling schools was appropriate (Kober & Rentner, 2011; McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012). Conversely, due to some of the challenges discussed above, there was disagreement about the usefulness of some program elements. The vast majority of states reported they either disagreed or were unsure about whether concentrating large federal grants on a small number of struggling schools was an effective strategy (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012). Among school districts eligible for SIGs, 58 percent, "agreed or strongly agreed that concentrating large amounts of federal funds on a small number of low-achieving schools is an effective means of improving these schools" (Kober & Rentner, 2011, p. 6). Conversely, schools that were ineligible for SIG grants thought this approach was weak. State officials were more confident in the size of the SIG grants. Eighty-five percent of officials thought the size of the grants were very adequate or somewhat adequate in terms of their ability to improve struggling schools (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012).

There was a lack of consensus about whether the features of the SIG grants were adequate for districts and schools. A majority of urban districts with SIG grants reported they did not have enough time to create professional development programs, to recruit high quality teachers and principals, and to provide curriculum and materials (Lachlan-Hache et al., 2012). School responses varied in part depending on their eligibility for SIG funds. Schools that were eligible for SIG grants did not think that 3 years was a suitable amount of time to turnaround persistently low performing schools. Fifty percent agreed this was not enough time compared to the 33% who that it was sufficient (Kober & Rentner, 2011). About half of school districts disagreed that the competitive application process was an effective way of distributing the grants. Similarly, among SIG eligible districts, half thought

that partnering with external providers was an effective school improvement strategy and half did not (Kober & Rentner, 2011).

2.2.2.4 Characteristics of SIG Schools

Unsurprisingly, schools that received SIG grants were significantly different from schools that did not receive SIG grants. SIG schools in the first two cohorts had student bodies with about 20% more students who received free and reduced-price lunch than the average school. The racial makeup of SIG schools differed considerably from the average school as well. SIG schools had significantly more African American and Hispanic students and about 20% fewer white students than the average school (Hurlburt et al., 2012). SIG schools had about 10% more Hispanic students and about 30% more black students (Lachlan-Hache et al., 2012).

About half of SIG recipient schools were in urban areas, about two times higher than the national average. More than half of SIG recipient schools were located in cities (Lachlan-Hache et al., 2012). Although only 20% of rural schools received SIG interventions, this was a relatively large figure given previous federal education efforts (Hurlburt et al., 2012). For example, rural schools receive proportionately fewer Title I dollars than urban schools (Jambulapati, 2011).

A disproportionately large number of SIG grants went to high schools compared to elementary and middle schools. This is a product of SIG's focus on turning around high school dropout factories. SIG regulations prioritized funding for secondary schools that had not previously received Title I funding (McMurrer et al., 2011). About half of the schools that received SIG grants in Tier I and Tier II were high schools and the remaining half were elementary, middle, and other (Lachlan-Hache et al., 2012). Compared to the assistance that schools received under Section 1003(g) from the SIF, the majority of states have provided disproportionately more support to high schools (McMurrer et al., 2011) (Table 2.5).

The vast majority of schools selected the transformation model, which was the least demanding intervention (American Institutes for Research, 2011). In Cohort I, 94% of schools chose either the turnaround or transformation models. This was partially driven by the high usage of the transformation model in rural schools. In these communities, closure and charter conversion were not viable options (Jambulapati, 2011). Rural districts in which there was a short supply of teachers and relatively few schools meant that replacing a large number of teachers or closing a school was not possi-

Table 2.5 Characteristics of American schools and SIG awarded schools

Characteristic	Universe of schools	SIG Cohort I	SIG Cohort II
Free and reduced-price lunch (school average percent of students)	47.10%	72.50%	68.20%
Race/ethnicity (school average percent of students)			
White	54.00%	26.40%	20.20%
African American	16.80%	41.10%	40.6%
Hispanic	22.10%	27.20%	33.40%
Native American	1.30%	2.00%	2.20%
Asian	5.10%	2.90%	3.4%
Urbanicity (percent of schools)			
Large or midsized city	26.10%	52.40%	52.10%
Urban fringe or large town	41.5%	24.1%	28.80%
Small town and rural area	32.4%	23.6%	19.00%
School level (percent of schools)			
Elementary	54.60%	32.40%	37.90%
Middle	17.20%	22.00%	21.40%
High	21.30%	39.80%	35.50%
Nonstandard	6.90%	5.80%	5.10%

Note: Table adapted from Hurlburt et al. (2012)

ble (Rosenberg, Christianson, Angus, Rosenthal, & Wei, 2014). The number of schools that chose the restart model increases slightly across cohorts. SIG guidelines capped the number of schools that could implement the turnaround and transformation interventions at 9. This policy compelled increased usage of the restart model. Unsurprisingly given the political and administrative barriers to its implementation, only 21 schools out of 1399 chose the closure model (1.5%) (U.S. Department of Education, 2014a) (Table 2.6).

2.2.2.5 Improvement Practices Adopted in SIG Schools

SIG regulations required grant recipients to implement a variety of education reforms. For the transformation and turnaround models the practices fit into 5 categories: adopting comprehensive instructional reform strategies; developing and increasing teacher effectiveness; developing and increasing principal effectiveness; increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools; and having operational flexibility and receiving support (Herrmann et al., 2014). The transformation model requires the adoption of 24 practices and the turnaround model requires the adoption of 19 practices.

Table 2.6 Proportion of SIG awards, by cohort, by model

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3
Closure	2%	0%	1%
Restart	4%	3%	9%
Turnaround	21%	18%	25%
Transformation	73%	80%	65%
Number	775	471	153

Note: Table adapted from U.S. Department of Education (2014a)

Many schools had implemented the reforms required by transformation/turnaround as a school improvement activity under NCLB (Council of the Great City Schools, 2015). SIG intervention schools reported implementing more practices than schools that did not receive a SIG grant. However, this effect was substantively small. SIG schools reported implementing two more practices on average than non-SIG schools. No schools reported adopting all of the required practices for their intervention (transformation or turnaround). In addition, despite the differences in the required practices for the turnaround and transformation models there were no significant differences between the mean number of practices adopted (Herrmann et al., 2014). Almost every school reported implementing a different combination of required practices. But, there were some patterns in the use of required activities. About half of schools reported adopting the ten most common practices (e.g., using data and technology to improve instruction and providing professional development for various purposes). The least frequently adopted practice was using financial incentives to attract and retain principals and teachers Herrmann et al., 2014).

2.2.2.6 Non-SIG Programs in ARRA that Promoted School Turnaround

The ARRA also included a variety of other reforms beyond the expansion of SIG that influenced school turnaround. ARRA provided schools with large one-time grants through the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund ($70.6 billion) and Education State Grants ($39 billion) (Webber et al., 2014). The primary purpose of these grants was to prevent massive education spending cuts. But, the states that received them were also required to commit themselves to 4 specific educational reforms, which included "turning around the lowest performing schools" (Webber et al., 2014). The Race to the Top (RTTT) competitive grant program, which was also a part of ARRA promoted the adoption of school turnaround policies. RTTT

provided large grants to states in return for adopting the preferred education policies of the federal government. States were awarded grants based on a number of selection criteria. Among these was state commitment to "turning around the lowest performing schools" (Kutash et al., 2010). This strategy effectively empowered and provided additional resources to states that were already pursuing these reforms (McGuinn, 2012). ARRA also included the Investing in Innovation Fund (I3). This was another competitive grant program that awarded $650 million to non-profit/school district partnerships. Of the 49 grant recipients, 13 focused their efforts on turning around schools with historically low performance (Kutash et al., 2010). Around the same time that ARRA was reforming the SIG program, the U.S. Department of Education created the Office of School Turnaround (Redding & Rhim, 2013). Primarily, this office oversaw the administration of the SIG program and also provided support services to states and districts. The creation of the office indicated the commitment of the Obama administration to pursue school turnaround as a reform strategy (Reyes & Garcia, 2014).

Soon after the passage of ARRA, leaders in Washington were deadlocked about future changes to NCLB. In response, the Obama administration started issuing waivers to provide states with flexibility on meeting the requirements of NCLB. The waivers were granted on a competitive basis. Preference for flexibility was given to states that were willing to intervene in the state's lowest performing schools (Dougherty & Weiner, 2015a). Some state waivers expanded the proportion of schools that were eligible to receive state and federal turnaround resources to include the lowest 15% rather than the bottom 5% of performers (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015).

In 2015, Congress passed the Every Students Succeeds Act, which returned control of school accountability policies to states. Although, it's too early to know for sure, it is held that this change will decrease the federal role in school turnaround (Dougherty & Weiner, 2015b). The creation of the Office of School Turnaround, State Fiscal Stabilization Funds, Education State Grants, I3, Race to the Top, and ESEA Waivers each promoted state commitment to school turnaround. Finally, the SIG program required specific changes for schools, districts, and states. The overlapping and complementary influence of each of these education reforms that were packed tightly into a short period of time created a synergistic effect that promoted school turnaround as a policy above and beyond the effect of the SIG program (Webber et al., 2014).

2.2.2.7 State and District Turnaround Efforts

States have pursued a variety of educational reforms that bear much in common with school turnaround. One reform that has seen increased popularity in recent years is state takeover of failing schools. About two thirds of states have laws that allow either a district or state to takeover a failing school (Kowal & Hassel, 2005). The majority of the state turnarounds occurred in the decade prior to NCLB and were often district led (Ziebarth, 2002). This included high profile takeovers of Chicago, Cleveland, Baltimore, and Newark (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005; Wong & Shen, 2003). In this approach, the state assumes control from local school leaders (superintendent and school board). The state then goes about the work of school turnaround but at a district-wide scale. Prior to NCLB, Nevada required a flexible form of school takeover, where low performing schools were required to implement approved instructional strategies (Meyers & Murphy, 2007). Since the reform of their state takeover law in 2010, Massachusetts has assumed a more active role, taking over Lawrence Public Schools in addition to other districts (Schueler, Goodman, & Deming, 2016). A special form of state takeover is the creation of a so called "Achievement School District" (ASD) (Henry, Campbell, Thompson, & Townsend, 2014). Tennessee pursued this strategy using its RTTT grant to assume control of schools from districts across the state. The individual schools in the ASD where then administered by the state or handed over to a CMO. Other states including Michigan and Maryland have also experimented with special turnaround zones (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015).

Some states have taken even more innovative approaches to fostering school turnaround by forging partnerships and creating new offices in their departments of education. In 2004, Virginia created the UVA Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education (PLE), which was a partnership between the SEA and the University of Virginia. The PLE provides executive education and training to principals and central office workers pursuing school turnaround (Redding & Rhim, 2013). Other states like North Carolina, Maryland, and Ohio have created a division or an office specifically dedicated to turnaround schools (Peck & Reitzug, 2014; Scott, 2009). States with such offices often pursue ambitious turnaround projects. For example, in North Carolina the District and School Transformation division oversees Turning Around North Carolina's Lowest-Achieving Schools (TALAS), an effort that focuses on turning around low performing middle and high schools (Heissel & Ladd, 2016).

Many school turnaround efforts were independent of federal policies like NCLB and SIG (Lachlan-Hache et al., 2012; Peurach & Neumerski, 2015).

Prior to 2001, several school districts including New York and Washington, DC were intimately involved in turning around low-performing schools (Meyers & Murphy, 2007). Many school districts have experimented with a "portfolio model", which falls within the broad category of school turnaround. The district seeks to bring in a diverse set of providers (traditional public schools, charters schools, academies, and magnets). The district shepherds the portfolio of schools by closing low performers and encouraging the expansion of best practices in other schools (Marsh et al., 2013). In New Orleans, the state created the Louisiana Recovery School District (RSD) after Hurricane Katrina. The RSD made some radical changes including eliminating attendance zones, firing all teachers, and allowing the teachers union contract to expire (Harris & Larsen, 2016). Chicago Public Schools experimented with a school turnaround model called Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) that started only a few years after the passage of NCLB. Pre-dating the SIG intervention models, in the AUSL model the district takes over a school and replace administrators and teachers (Peck & Reitzug, 2014). The AUSL turnaround model—which in Chicago is referred to as reconstitution—was popular with then CEO of Chicago Schools, Arne Duncan, who would later become U.S. Secretary of Education and oversee the implementation of SIG (Duke, 2012).

The operationalization of the four SIG models also presents some unique challenges. An avowed benefit of SIG when compared with previous turnaround efforts is the flexibility that schools and districts have to choose the model that best fits their needs (Duke, 2012). However, political and practical factors effectively constrained the choices available to school and district leaders. The SIG models differ in the degree to which each will encounter political opposition (Kutash et al., 2010). The closure of a school can generate significant political opposition from the community. Closing a local public institution can be seen as anti-democratic. In addition, administrators are wary of pursuing a strategy that will alienate parents.

The restart model presents a variety of challenges. Restart hands control of a school to a charter operator that is less accountable to the public (Kutash et al., 2010). Charter schools themselves are a popular education model and were a favored reform of the Obama administration (Stuit, 2012). However, not every state allows charters to operate and some have caps on the number of permitted schools. As a result, the viability of the restart intervention will depend heavily on a particular state's charter policies (Webber et al., 2014).

Charter school operators also lack interest in restarting schools. CMOs were strongly encouraged by the Education Department to engage in turnaround activities, but prominent networks like KIPP and Green Dot Public Schools balked (Zehr, 2011). The rationale was that, "it's easier to be suc-

cessful when parents and students have chosen their schools" (Zehr, 2011, p. 3). Turning around a school represents a risk for a charter organization that may suffer from the political blowback associated with converting a traditional public school. Many CMOs prefer to open new schools from scratch for this reason.

For these reasons, the closure and turnaround models were chosen by school and district leaders for very few schools (about 5%). The remaining two SIG models (transformation and turnaround) had much in common with each other. Seventy-three percent of the practices that were required by the Education Department for schools implementing either the transformation or turnaround models were the same. School and district leaders can in theory choose from a menu of options, but realistically the transformation/turnaround model is the only broadly viable SIG model. As a rresult, turnaround in its current form is highly inflexible (Table 2.7).

Table 2.7 Federal school turnaround funding by fiscal year

Fiscal year	Appropriations	Program
1998	$120,000,000	Comprehensive school reform
1999	$145,000,000	Comprehensive school reform
2000	$220,000,000	Comprehensive school reform
2001	$260,000,000	Comprehensive school reform
2002	$310,000,000	Comprehensive school reform
2003	$307,985,000	Comprehensive school reform
2004	$307,687,000	Comprehensive school reform
2005	$205,344,000	Comprehensive school reform
2006	$1,450,000	Comprehensive school reform
2007	$1,536,979	Comprehensive school reform
2007	$125,000,000	School improvement fund
2008	$1,605,454	Comprehensive school reform
2008	$491,265	School improvement fund
2009	$546,000,000	School improvement Grants
2009	$3000,000,000	American reinvestment and recovery act
2010	$546,000,000	School improvement Grants
2011	$535,000,000	School improvement Grants
2012	$523,120,801	School improvement Grants
2013	$505,756,165	School improvement Grants
2014	$505,756,000	School improvement Grants
Total	$8,167,732,664	
Average	$408,386,633	

Note: Table adapted by author (Doherty, 2000; Hurlburt et al., 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2008, 2015). This table does not include Title I spending for schools that were in the restructuring phase during the NCLB era

2.2.3 Chapter Synthesis

In Chap. 2, we began with an exploration of the political, economic, and social forces that have driven interest in school turnaround interventions. Embedded in the support for school turnaround is an anti-statist understanding of public policy. This reflects a belief in the merits of privatizing certain schooling functions, but also a lack of confidence in public organizations. The social fabric of the country more broadly is under duress due to escalating poverty and other challenges.

In the next section of this chapter we explored the history of federal school turnaround. The pre-cursor to contemporary federal school turnaround efforts were SWPs. The federal government provided grants for schools to implement policies such as reductions to class size, professional development, and whole-school reform models with the support of outside organizations. Over time support for these programs was expanded. The passage of NCLB introduced the first national school turnaround effort. The law allowed states to reconstitute schools that had persistently low test scores. These school turnaround programs were supercharged with the creation of SIGs. This ambitious effort provided billions of dollars in grants to schools in return for implementing one of four models (transformation, turnaround, restart, and closure). We then end this section with a discussion of state and local school turnaround efforts. Here we examine how states have overseen and districts have implemented school turnaround.

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Chapter 3
Barriers to Turnaround

> Case studies have documented numerous obstacles to turnaround efforts. (Tanenbaum et al., 2015, p. 4)
>
> The obstacles to quantifiable success are formidable, even when school leaders and teachers follow a path that aligns with the best research available about how to improve schools. (Anrig, 2015, p. 17)

3.1 Existing Context: Structure and Culture

"The conventions of school contexts" (Griffin, 1995, p. 44) and school social conditions exert a dramatic influence on turnaround. As Rosenholtz (1989) concluded in her landmark volume on teacher work: "Teachers like members of most organizations, shape their beliefs and actions largely in conformance with the structures, policies, and traditions of the workday world around them" (pp. 2–3).

The first link in our chain of analysis is that impediments and barriers confront the institutionalization of turnaround, and that these "barriers exist at all levels" (Manthei, 1992, p. 17). These obstructions can be clustered into the broad categories of structure, support, and occupational and professional norms.

On a general front, the literature confirms that "the way [schools] are organized, structurally and normatively, is not amenable to experimentation … or rethinking" (Fullan, 1994, p. 243), "that organizations possess powerful conserving forces that often make persistence paramount to change" (Smylie, 1995, p. 6). More specifically that "the culture and organization of many schools does not readily foster the spirit of collaboration" (p. 13)—

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"that environments that support and nurture turnaround are not endemic to many schools routines, norms, and conventions" (Smylie, 1995, p. 6) and tenacious habits of mind and deed make the achievement of turnaround a remarkable accomplishment "not the rule, but the rare, often fragile exception" (Little, 1987, p. 493).

Scholars in the area of turnaround have consistently discovered that turnaround activities have been undercut by "constraining contexts" (Mitchell, 1997, p. 2). This is the case, as we recount below, because turnaround reform proposals challenge long-standing and deeply rooted current school practices. They defy most "cultural, institutional, and occupational precedents" (Little, 1988, pp. 80–81).

Scholars who ply the domain of organizations have carefully documented how "the structure of the organization directs and defines the flow and pattern of human interactions in the organization" (Johnson, 1998, p. 13), how "the work-related attitudes, activities, and behaviors of teachers and principals are functions of the organizational contexts of the schools in which they work" (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992, p. 155). Because "organizational contexts" (Doyle, 2000, p. 19) and "the actual organizational structure" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 79) reflect important values and beliefs, they exercise considerable pull on turnaround in a school, primarily through their "impact [on] school community and school change" (Doyle, 2000, p. 19). Indeed, there is plentiful evidence that organizational conditions are critical to the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of turnaround.

Unfortunately, as we explore below, this context—"the organizational structure of schools" (Kowalski, 1995, p. 244)—with its "organizational and structural barriers" (Chrispeels, 1992, p. 75) has regularly thwarted efforts at school turnaround. In particular, analysts suggest that "the highly bureaucratic, axiomatic configuration of schools" (Suleiman & Moore, 1997, p. 3), with its "hierarchical culture of authority" (Lambert, 2003, p. 32), creates a framework that does not accommodate the behaviors associated with "new roles and norms" (Keedy, 1999, p. 787).

A number of dimensions of the organizational dynamic merit attention. First, in a real sense, the current structure of schooling has worked—if not to educate all youngsters well, then at least to help meet the goal of universal access (Murphy, Beck, Crawford, & Hodges, & McGaughy, 2001). Second, existing organizational arrangements benefit some people: actors who are not simply willing to promote the development of new structures and forms in which their deep-seated values are undermined and advantaged positions are negated (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002).

Third, for most educators, the current organizational system is the only one they have known. It is difficult to move to the unknown even when one

can glimpse its contours. In addition, even if the change process can be engaged, there are strong inclinations to regress to the familiar. As Lieberman and Miller (1999) remind us, "new behaviors are difficult to acquire, and in the end it is easier to return to old habits than to embrace new ones" (p. 126); needed changes are often "abandoned in favor of more familiar and more satisfying routines" (Little, 1987, p. 493). Or as Heller (1994) observes, "people become used to a hierarchical structure which can be comforting. Someone else is responsible. Someone else takes the blame, finds the money, obtains the permission, and has the headaches" (p. 289).

Fourth, the current arrangements are not especially malleable (Donaldson, 2001). The "forces of organizational persistence" (Smylie & Hart, 1999, p. 421) and "institutional precedent" (Smylie, 1992, p. 55) are quite robust. Hierarchy has an extensive and deep root structure and enjoys a good deal of legitimacy (Murphy et al., 2001). The system also displays considerable capacity to engage in the ritual of change (Meyer & Rowan, 1975) and to absorb new ideas and initiatives in ways that leave existing organizational structures largely unaffected (Cohen, 1988; Elmore, 1987; Weick, 1976). Finally, while some currents buoy concepts such as turnaround, equally powerful if not stronger currents support the movement to centralization and to the hardening of the hierarchical forms of schooling. Thus, while it is discouraging, it should not be surprising given the dynamics described above that "in many cases teachers and administrators have actively resisted the creation and implementation of new roles" (Boles & Troen, 1994, p. 8), structures, and procedures.

Hierarchical organizations also define power and authority in ways that dampen the viability of turnaround (Clark & Meloy, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1991; Sykes & Elmore, 1989). Simply put, "the hierarchical structure of schools works against multilevel access to policy debate and decision making" (Manthei, 1992, p. 15). Two elements are featured in these structures: time schedules (Coyle, 1997) and systems for dividing up work responsibilities (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Printy, 2004). Both of these strands promote segmentation (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). They slot teachers into self-contained classrooms (Buckner & McDowelle, 2000). All of this promotes the use of an "egg crate" (Boles & Troen, 1996, p. 59) structure that "buttress[es] teaching as a private endeavor" (Little, 1990, p. 530), that (1) "block[s] teachers' ability to work together" (Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000, p. 789) and "makes genuine interdependence among teachers rare" (Little & McLaughlin, 1993, p. 2)—and (2) promotes "individual rather than collective accountability" (Duke, 1994, p. 270). The consequence is "an assemblage of entrepreneurial individuals" (Little, 1990, p. 530) who

"rather than work[ing] collectively on their problems … must struggle alone" (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 1988, p. 151).

Unions as a piece of the organizational mosaic require attention here. At the macro level, unions can act as a brake on the development of turnaround throughout the profession (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997). This is most likely to occur when turnaround is seen as unsettling well-established patterns of collective bargaining. By design, bureaucracy in general and labor relations in particular separate school administrators and teachers. More likely is the possibility that "the tension that exists between teacher unions and school district administrators [will] discourage teachers from engaging in roles beyond the classroom" (Killion, 1996, p. 75). And under existing structures and relationships, "the possibility that turnaround might actually mean union control" (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2001, p. 6) is not lost on school administrators. Clearly, if turnaround is to flourish, hierarchical perspectives of labor embedded in school organizations will need to experience a transformation, as will "labor-management relationships" (Boles & Troen, 1994, p. 8).

Turnaround introduces important changes in the work of individuals and essential transformations in relationships in schools. In addition to new structures, it requires a web of supporting conditions to take root and blossom (Frost & Durrant, 2003a, 2003b). That is, careful attention to "the organizational conditions necessary to function effectively" (Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002, p. 166) is needed.

Factors that hinder development include "a lack of time, unsatisfactory relationships with teachers and administrators, and a lack of money to get the job done" (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995, p. 8). Supportive factors, on the other hand, "enable [teachers] to engage in collaborative relationships" (Wasley, 1991, p. 136). According to Little (1987), they include (1) "symbolic endorsements and rewards that place value on cooperative work and make the sources of interdependence clear; (2) school-level organization of staff assignments and leadership; (3) latitude for influence on crucial matters of curriculum and instruction; (4) time; (5) training and assistance; and 6) material support" (p. 508). For Hart and Baptist (1996), supportive conditions cluster into three categories: (1) "interpersonal support," (2) "tangible support," and (3) "enlarged opportunities" (p. 97).

It appears that structures that feature leadership at both the classroom and school levels enjoy greater legitimacy among teachers. In particular, dual structures allay general concerns about expansion of the bureaucracy (Crowther et al., 2002) and teacher worries about the creation of status differentials and a "new oligarchy among teachers" (Hart, 1995, p. 15).

Scholars investigating the nature of teacher work in general (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989) and teacher work redesign (Hart, 1990) have uncovered a thick vein of knowledge about how "professional norms and school culture" (Wilson, 1993, p. 27)—"the occupational structure of teaching work itself" (Little, 1990, p. 511)—exert a powerful and often negative sway on the birth and development of turnaround in schools. At the broadest level, it is argued that "that teachers who adhere to the current norms of the profession are … a barrier to changing the role of teachers in our schools" (Odell, 1997, p. 121). In particular, in the narrative that unfolds below, we reveal how norms of "privacy, autonomy, and egalitarianism" (Smylie, 1996, p. 576) define the teaching profession (Murphy, 2005). We describe how these standards provide "the yardstick[s] most teachers use to measure … acceptability" (Whitaker, 1995, p. 80). On the other hand, attempts at turnaround are "influenced substantially by patterns of belief and practice that define old work roles and by socialization pressures from the workplace that resist new work roles or reshape them to conform to those prevailing practices and pressures" (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992, p. 155). Not only are "established social patterns … resilient" (Hart, 1994, p. 477), but the tendency to regress to prevailing norms and practices is actually "heightened" (p. 477) during periods of change such as those associated with turnaround. In "the absence of traditions for mutual work" (Little, 1988, p. 92), forays into turnaround often violate cultural foundations that define schools, foundations that are often "fatal to new work configurations" (Hart, 1990, p. 504).

3.2 Time

> Administrators mentioned several challenges … First was the relatively short window between the time the schools were notified of their eligibility … and their application's due date. (Scott, 2011a, 2011b, p. 17)

An essential barrier for school turnaround for districts and schools was limited time to get work accomplished, especially to get their start-up plans implemented (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, and Tallant, 2010; Lachlan-Hache, Naik, and Casserly, 2012). Researchers refer constantly to the "tight clock" (Klein, 2012a, p. 6) and "short timelines" (McMurrer, 2012a, p. 9) under which most of the turnaround schools worked, creating what Yatsko and colleagues (2015, p. 47) call a "frenzied" application process and Scott (2011a, 2011b, p. 15) talks about as a "scrambling." It was

not unusual for schools to have only a month or two to go from ground zero to operational plan.

Time barriers cascaded over many schools nurturing adjunct hindrances (Hess, 2003; Klein, 2012a). We know that plans were often less solid than would have been the case if districts and schools had additional time. Finalizing plans often were pushed right up against due dates, often compromising the quest for school improvement (Malen, Croninger, Muncey, & Redmond-Jones, 2002; McMurrer, 2012a; Scott, 2011a, 2011b). For example, in one school the principal "reported that several issues were left out of the application due to the fast timeline" (Scott, 2011a, 2011b, p. 8). Often "school personnel moves were either chaotic or nonexistent" (Yatsko, Lake, Nelson, & Bowen, 2012, p. 26)—"delays in state dispersal of funds hampered both planning and implementation activities" (O'Day & Bitter, 2003, p. xiv). In particular, as we take up below, under these tight timelines hiring new personnel often "created considerable stress" (McMurrer, 2012a, p. 3).

Schools and districts were often not provided "enough time to figure out the [SIG] program's tricky framework" (Klein, 2012a, p. 7). The results of "late hiring" (Gold, Norton, Good, & Levin, 2012, p. 38) generally undercut school improvement at SIG schools. Gains were less than they might have been (Lachlan-Hache et al., 2012). One way that school improvement was handicapped was the fact that when many of the SIG schools were ready to hire in mid-to-late summer most of the best teachers had already been hired (McMurrer, 2012a). Program implementation was often compromised (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012). For example, because of the tight timelines for some districts "a fully developed and well executed turnaround plan was not seen as an option" (Yatsko et al., 2015, p. 32). Many districts had woefully insufficient time to "sell the reforms to the community" (Klein, 2012a, p. 7). The nature of communication and understanding "was suppressed" (Marsh, Strunk, and Bush, 2013). There is also a hint in the turnaround literature that the collapsed time clock may have inclined districts to select the least robust of the four turnaround models, what Yatsko et al. (2015, p. 33) refer to as "light interventions." We also know that "fundamentally transforming the culture of deeply troubled schools in impoverished environments is extremely difficult to accomplish over a fairly limited time frame of 3 years, even with a large surge of funding" (Anrig, 2015, p. 2). The final time barrier in the turnaround literature addresses the need oftentimes for additional time to nurture reform efforts: "As research has shown, current policy too often ends support when recently turned around schools are still fragile" (American Institutes for Research, 2011, p. 11).

3.3 Sustainability

> While the amount of funding is significant, much of it is short term, and states and districts have expressed concerns about how to sustain their turnaround efforts in the longer term. (Kutash et al., 2010, p. 4)

> Most principals were simply punting the sustainability issue to a later date. (Yatsko et al., 2015, p. 43)

There is a clear theme in the turnaround literature that sustaining work was a major barrier for schools (Marsh, Strunk, Bush-Mecenas, & Huguet, 2014; Tanenbaum et al., 2015). The most visible aspect of the barrier is what could be done to continue gains made during the initial period of funding—"to sustain any academic gains after the substantial federal resources expired" (Anrig, 2015, p. 9). An essential problem here is that recipients generally treated extra resources "as 'extra' rather than as seed money for a new long-term strategy" (Yatsko et al., 2015, p. 33). In a real sense, schools responses to the "funding cliff" (Kutash et al., 2010, p. 20) were often dysfunctional, allocating funds to operational costs rather than to "developing long-term capacity" (Kutash et al., 2010, p. 23).

A second and related dimension of the sustainability barrier was how to improve work for schools that had made almost no progress during the initial funding period—the same funding cliff problem but with quite different strategies than the ones initially put into play. Sustainability here was of two kinds: continued help for schools that had simply failed to find new avenues of school improvement and continued help for schools that were on the cusp of success to mature.

A third dimension of the sustainability barrier was how to bring schools that were initially unfunded into the school improvement family, to sustain by "reach[ing] a larger number of academically needy schools" (Scott, McMurrer, McIntosh, & Dibner, 2012, p. 9) without damaging gains made elsewhere in the districts (Anrig, 2015).

3.4 Attracting and Retaining Staff

> Officials interviewed … often characterized hiring good teachers and principals as their greatest challenge in implementing the SIG requirements. (McMurrer, 2012a, p. 8)

> By far, districts and schools have had the toughest time with the SIG program's resource requirements, which demand big changes in how schools deal with staff. (Klein, 2012a, p. 7)

The ability to hire new staff and retain existing staff was a given in much of the early school turnaround literature. However, the entire personnel issue proved to be a markedly disruptive barrier for many districts and schools (Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2012; Scott, 2009, 2011a, 2011b), anything but a given. In many cases, there were simply not pools of high quality staff to move into open slots. To the extent that schools were to improve via stronger personnel, this created an often insurmountable problem for districts (Klein, 2012a; Scott, 2009).

> Replacing and retaining teachers and principals was the challenge most frequently mentioned by all study participants. (Scott & McMurrer, 2015, p. 218)

> Existing studies identify serious challenges faced by districts in accessing an adequate supply of capable and committed staff. (Strunk et al., 2012, p. 6)

On the one hand, there was a good deal of incestuousness as schools often fought over staff in the pool of effective educators in and around the home district (Thompson, Brown, Townsend, Henry, & Fortner, 2011). On the other hand, schools were often reduced to the need to hire teachers and leaders viewed as less-than-satisfactory in their most recent positions from a pool of applicants consisting mostly of teachers dismissed from other turnaround schools (Scott, 2011a, 2011b, p. 2). That is, much of the pool of available staff were educators let go, often in response to a marked lack of performance in their schools, and generally in the same district (Klein, 2012a; Le Floch et al., 2016). Other more effective teachers were sometimes transferred into SIG schools against their will, often creating disgruntlement and lack of participation, hardly conditions promoting school improvement (Le Floch et al., 2016). Similarly, the practice of forcing teachers into "less desirable places to work" Scott et al., 2012, p. 29) and schools with large numbers of "high need students" is hardly a recipe for success (McMurrer, 2012a, p. 10). So too with the traditional "hard to staff" schools (Klein, 2012b, p. 9). Districts and schools were often overwhelmed by the necessity to rely on new teachers and school leaders in the hiring process and/or alternatively certified educators (Dee, 2012; Heissel & Ladd, 2016; Peck & Reitzug, 2014). This was especially burdensome as hiring decisions pushed into the second and third years of SIG grants when fewer of the best teachers were unplaced.

And let us not forget that recruitment of good teachers into troubled schools was often a real barrier for SIG schools. This was especially true in rural areas (Scott et al., 2012; Lachlan-Hache et al., 2012; Le Floch et al., 2016). And recruitment was followed closely by efforts to remove ineffectual teachers (Lachlan-Hache et al., 2012; McMurrer, 2012a). District officers (McMurrer, 2012a) and unions (Council of the Great City Schools,

2015; Scott, 2008) were sometimes seen by schools as hindrances on top of barriers. So too was geographical location both rural (Rosenberg, Christianson, Angus, Rosenthal, and Wei, 2014) and urban (McMurrer, 2012a). All of this often promoted a "brain drain" (Hamilton et al., 2014, p. 196).

> Finding qualified teachers in challenging urban areas can be extraordinarily difficult if not impossible. (Mathis, 2009, p. 13)

> It is hard to attract people to the middle of nowhere. (Rosenberg et al., 2014, p. 8)

3.5 Insufficient Help from the State

> NCLB required that state education agencies assume substantial responsibilities, which strained their capacity to support districts and schools. (American Institutes for Research, 2011, p. 10)

One of the most visible barriers to making SIGs work was a quite noticeable gap in services available from states to school districts and schools. States often saw themselves as mentors and facilitators (Tanenbaum et al., 2015) but they focused their efforts primarily on compliance (Yatsko et al., 2012), and rarely did an above average job in any of these domains (McGuinn, 2012). Indeed, "states suffer from a 'capacity gap' that undermines their ability to monitor and enforce mandates and provide technical assistance" (McGuinn, 2012, p. 139). States working to provide substantive assistance were also hard to find (Tanenbaum et al., 2015). While there are legitimate reasons for lack of assistance, e.g., shortages of time, funds, and expertise (Yatsko et al., 2015), they are of small notice for struggling districts and schools.

> The experience of NCLB implementation made it abundantly clear that most state departments of education were ill-equipped to monitor compliance with their own policies or engage in district-and-school-level interventions. (McGuinn, 2012, p. 139)

> Many states report having insufficient numbers of staff and time to assist districts and schools with implementation. (McMurrer & McIntosh, 2012, p. 14)

More important still is the knowledge of the costs of absence of capacity, expertise, and time from states (Kober & Rentner, 2011), costs which Yatsko et al. (2012, p. 31) tell us are crippling for local school districts: "States need to realize that although SIG is a federal program it cannot be successful if states do not take an active leadership role in its implementation" (emphasis added). And "again while perhaps possible for a small number of positive

outliers managing these challenges is likely to be beyond the capacity of the modal state agency" (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015, p. 410).

3.6 Union Regulations

> The legal and union requirements related to firing and rehiring staff have also created major challenges for districts and schools. (McMurrer, 2012a, p. 18)

> The current policy means that the union retains the power to shape or to reject altogether a SIG plan. (Yatsko et al., 2015, p. 46)

Although there is some discussion about freedom from union activities and bargained contracts in the general literature on turnaround, because SIG plans required union sign off that narrative does not line up well with diminished power and influence (Baroody, 2011; Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Scott, 2009). For example,

> in districts where there are severe collective bargaining constraints on teacher and principal hiring, transfer, and scheduling, district leadership must work with unions to negotiate changes or exception for these schools to allow school leaders to assemble the right staff and provide them with the time and support they need to serve the high-need student populations in these schools. (Baroody, 2011, p. 16)

"There are also legal and contractual/collective bargaining challenges that may seem daunting" (Steiner, 2009, p. 7). (See Rhim & Redding, 2014, for an alternative perspective). Also, Klein (2012b, p. 10) reminds us that "even interventions with broad political support … bumped up against such realities as teacher contracts. For example, "our site visit data reveal that when replacing teaches, many principals reported being unable to request the departure of specific teachers. Union contracts required that principals ask for voluntary transfer, and if more transfers were required the teachers with the lowest seniority, irrespective of quality, were transferred to other schools" (Le Floch et al., 2016, p. 51).

3.7 Mirage Options

> The state officials we interviewed expressed frustration with the ARRA SIG program in general, noting that its requirements and reform models fail to address the unique challenges and needs of rural schools. (Scott et al., 2012, p. 4)

> As a small, rural school system, the first four restructuring options outlined by federal legislation were impractical or impossible. (Mass Insight, 2010, p. 24)

A major barrier to turnaround is a lack of attention to the context in which reform efforts unfold (Rosenberg, Christianson, & Angus, 2015). Specifically, turnaround in rural schools was in many ways an impossibility, something that is simply not a viable option using SIG requirements. Given the fact that a significant number of troubled schools in the nation are in rural areas (Klein, 2012a), this made turnaround as defined in the SIG legislation a mirage (Le Floch et al., 2016). That is, profound isolation almost always caused nearly insurmountable constraints with regard to the hiring of new leaders and teachers (Clifford, 2013; McMurrer, 2012a; Rosenberg et al., 2014).

3.8 Lack of District Know How and Support

> Most districts seemed to be flying blind. (Yatsko et al., 2015, p. 42)

> The lack of school-level change is not surprising, given that district personnel generally failed to provide strong guidance, support, and oversight to ensure dramatic change in student learning. Districts made almost no effort to invest in new capacities to support low-performing schools, generally failed to recruit principals with turnaround expertise, had no theory of action about the kinds of schools they wanted to see, and made little effort to hold schools accountable. (Yatsko et al., 2012, p. 27)

There were two almost unquestioned assumptions at the beginning of the turnaround era: (1) that what was absent in terms of knowledge and resources at the school level was present at the district level and (2) that these assets would flow smoothly to schools. Research tells us that there was little cause for such optimism: "districts were either not well versed in how to track progress or failed to communicate it to schools, or both" (Yatsko et al., 2015, p. 34). As we just reported in the case of states, many districts simply used a compliance model of improvement (Picucci, Brownson, Kahlert, & Sobel, 2002a, 2002b). "Teachers across districts described feeling anxious, given the uncertainty around who would lead their schools [and] what the turnaround plan would entail" (Yatsko et al., 2012, p. 10).

> The relatively weak implementation of design during scale up was associated with … an incoherent district infrastructure that did not match the needs of design implementation. (Berends et al., 2002, p. xxxviii)

3.9 Passive Resistance to Reform: Preference for the Status Quo

> Just as their business and nonprofit counterparts, these schools typically suffer from staff and leadership that have become accustomed to such consistently low performance that they cannot envision better results and are unable to create the sense of urgency necessary to initiate dramatic changes. (Kowal & Hassel, 2005, p. 9)

A number of "resistance forces" in turnaround schools routinely present barriers to engaging successfully in change initiatives. One of the most obvious, but oftentimes overlooked, is the fact that for all the external noise about failure, many people inside schools see things differently. Conditions and results are accepted as "givens" and people begin to live peacefully in those conditions (Duke, 2012; Perlman & Redding, 2011). "No matter how deeply a school has failed, it is likely that some people, and perhaps many people, will come to its defense" (Hassel & Steiner, 2003, p. 5). Even when change efforts seem desirable, many members of the school community consider things as "locked down" (McMurrer, 2012b). Relatedly, it is not unusual for schools to be more concerned about running afoul of existing regulations and rules than about improvement (Yatsko et al., 2015). For example, Yatsko and team (2015) found that districts were far more concerned with the consequences of improperly spent funds than the consequences of unsuccessful turnaround efforts. History tells educators that trouble is much more likely to follow violation of procedures and rules than failure to improve. Coupled with all this is: (1) the inclination to stay with the status quo; (2) knowledge that when change does occur things are likely to regress to the old way, and (3) the knowledge that norms follow "pathways of least resistance" (Baroody, 2011, p. 17).

> Staff may be convinced that the school does not have the potential to change or will never change. Some staff believe that reforms "come and go," so they can patiently wait out this set of reforms. (Herman et al., 2008, p. 13)

3.10 Active Resistance to Reform: The Politics of Change

> Although the program's approach may be different from that of earlier federal education programs, many of the political and institutional obstacles to sustaining meaningful reform at the federal and state levels remain largely the same. (McGuinn, 2012, p. 153)

> Policies and conditions in districts and states are frequently at odds with what is necessary for success in turnaround. (Kutash et al., 2010, p. 43)

Resistance to turnaround is often active as well as passive. To start, there is often a good deal of resistance at the state level because SIGs are grant-determined as opposed to formula-driven (Klein, 2012a). Resistance to specific turnaround strategies, such as closure, is often distinctly visible. Where the government sees possibility, some parents and teachers see loss (Duke, 2012), loss that can destroy local communities (Kutash et al., 2010; Mead, 2007). Where the government sees possibility, community members discern a lack of evidence of turnaround success. They also at times disagree with "core assumptions" of turnaround (Marsh et al., 2013), especially parents touched by the most aggressive models. They harbor distrust of government's claim of "parent voice." At times, intense "political realities" (Mead, 2007, p. 54) result in intense political infighting among school staff (Huberman, Parrish, Hannan, Arellanes, and Shambaugh, 2011) and between districts, schools, and communities (Council of the Great City Schools, 2015; Steiner, 2009)—"conflicting demands from various stakeholders" (Council of the Great City Schools, 2015, p. 31).

3.11 Chapter Synthesis

In this chapter we investigated the salient barriers to school turnaround. Schools have several organizational and institutional characteristics that render them resilient to change. Schools are successful in their provision of near universal access to education. Teachers and administrators have sketched out roles that are largely beneficial and are resistant to organizational changes that would disrupt this arraignment. Schools are path dependent and actors are reluctant to depart from the old industrial model. Schools are flexible rather than recalcitrant organizations that allow for superficial adoption of new roles and policies without making substantive changes. The hierarchal nature of roles and the assignment of teachers to specific spaces for proscribed lengths of time contributes to this dynamic. School turnaround necessitates the adoption of new roles for teachers and administrators. Because of the prevailing relationship both stakeholders are reticent to pursue a change.

Schools often lack the necessary resources to implement school turnaround. State and district leaders do not typically provide enough time to school administrators and teachers for planning or for rolling out implementation. Policymakers funded school turnaround with grants that expired after a few years. This approach threatened the long-term sustainability of any gains made. School turnaround models require a supply of excellent teachers. However, in many communities (e.g., impoverished, rural) the pool of

such teachers is small. In addition, existing collective bargaining agreements sometimes limited the flexibility that administrators had to replace teachers. Districts and states did not develop the necessary capacity (political or labor) to turnaround schools. This led to strong organized resistance to school turnaround from a variety of educational stakeholders.

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Part II
Explaining the Failure of School Turnaround

Chapter 4
Why School Turnaround Failed: Lethal Problems

> Given the widespread current attention to turnaround schooling, it is important to analyze and critique the origins, practices, and outcomes associated with the reform movement. (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, p. 27)
>
> Successful turnaround remains the exception rather than the rule. (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015, p. 382)

4.1 A Definition that is More Harmful than Helpful

> Turnaround is a highly innovative and comprehensive intervention that differs from school improvement that dramatically increases organizational performance and student learning in rapid fashion, i.e., in a very short period of time and brings the school to the door of sustainability. (Huberman et al., 2011, p. 1)

The definition of school turnaround almost ensures that any turnaround effort will fail. There are a variety of criteria in the definition of turnaround that are unsupported at any time in any situation. Using such criteria can end up having a devastating impact on everyone associated with turnaround, from state legislators to children. To begin with, there is no empirical support that all failing schools can be turned around. There is no empirical evidence that most failing schools can be turned around. There is no empirical evidence that many failing schools can be turned around (Loveless, 2010; May & Sanders, 2013; Peurach & Neumerski, 2015; Stuit, 2010). For example, only 26 of the original 2025 low-performing schools in the Stuit (2010) study "made it into the top half of their state's proficiency ranking within five years" (p. 5). There is considerable evidence across industry and

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Table 4.1 Definitional elements of turnaround without evidence

All Failing Schools can Succeed.
Challenging Goals.
Dramatic Improvement.
Highly Innovative Strategies.
Significantly different than School Improvement.
Rapid Change.
Reference Only to Academic Gains
Sustainability.
Scalability.

time that organizations do best when leaders help set challenging goals. But it is foolish to establish foolish targets (Table 4.1).

A second and related definitional criterion, dramatic improvement (Herman et al., 2008) also finds almost no support in the research. It has not happened in the past (Berends et al., 2002; Malen et al., 2002), is not happening now (Hochbein, 2012; Huberman et al., 2011), and there is strong evidence that it is unlikely to happen in the future (Murphy & Meyers, 2008).

Proponents also hold without evidence that highly innovative strategies will define school turnaround (see Le Floch et al., 2016; Peck & Reitzug, 2014; Trujillo & Renee, 2015). There is also in play a very fallible claim that turnaround work will be significantly different than the school improvement work from 1975–2000. Again, these claims not only lack empirical support, but the evidence we do have informs us that they are false (Herman, 2012; Yatsko et al., 2015). It is nearly impossible to find SIG strategies that were not employed by school improvement researchers 40 years ago (Trujillo & Renee, 2015; Orland, 2011). If there is a problem in the area, it is that the SIG work leaves out critical elements of school improvement (e.g., meaningful involvement of parents, a topic we take up in Chap. 5).

Turnarounds are expected to produce these dramatic increases in outcomes in a rapid period of time. First, there is no empirical reason to form this assertion (Gill, Zimmer, Christman, and Blanc, 2007; Meyers & Hambrick Hitt, 2017; Strunk, Marsh, Hashim, & Bush-Mecenas, 2016). Second, there is no evidence that rapid change is occurring at the current time (Aladjem et al., 2010; Anrig, 2015; Thompson et al., 2011). Third, there is no empirical evidence that the concept of rapid change will appear in the future (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015; Ylimaki, Brunderman, Bennett, & Dugan, 2014).

The seventh criteria of turnaround is that improvement is to be determined solely by reference to academic gains in reading and mathematics, a decision that solidifies for many the understanding that academic achievement is the sole purpose of schooling (May & Sanders, 2013) or as Booher-Jennings (2005, p. 260) puts it, "the singular focus on increasing aggregate test scores rendered school-wide discussion of the best interests of children 'obsolete' "

The eighth criterion of the definition is that successful turnaround schools should maintain sustainability "over an appreciable period of time" (Aladjem et al., 2010, p. 67). Most tellingly, obviously sustainability is impossible for turnaround efforts that never take root and develop, i.e., the overwhelming majority of turnaround efforts: "if this is a guide, few schools across the nation are likely to make quick and sustainable gains in student achievement that sustain over time" (Orland, 2011, p. 3).

The ninth and final element contained in the definition of turnaround is scalability. This is the notion that success should breed further success and over time we should see expanding coverage of "the school failure map" with much better schools (Kutash et al., 2010). Again, there is almost no empirical support for this claim.

4.2 Lack of Evidence for Starting Turnaround Work

> None of the four variants encouraged since 2009 were based on research evidence, and little evidence of effectiveness has since appeared. (Lubienski & Mirón, 2012, p. 1).

Turnaround work failed because when it was formalized in 2009 there was almost no evidence to suggest it could work (Gill et al., 2007; Hess, 2012). That is "research on school restructuring that preceded expanded federal improvement grants did not provide much support for this approach" (Lubienski & Mirón, 2012, p. 2; Murphy, 1991). The kindest interpretation is that the evidence needed to launch the reform strategy was missing (Anrig, 2015; Strunk, Marsh, Hashim, Bush-Mecenas, & Weinstein, 2016). While beliefs, hopes, "unsubstantiated" assumptions (Waddell, 2011, p. 10) and "unsubstantiated claims" (Trujillo & Renee, 2015, p. 1) were placed in the service of turnaround (Herman et al., 2008; Stuit, 2012), empirical data were largely conspicuous by their absence. Indeed, some of the limited data that were available actually suggested that transformation may harm efforts at improvement (Anrig, 2015; Booher-Jennings, 2005; Rice & Malen, 2010), especially as we will see below via unintended consequences. Equally

important, the evidence narratives cover all four of the SIG models covered in Chap. 1 (Raymond, 2009; Hamilton et al., 2014; Trujillo & Renee, 2015).

Not only was there a lack of evidence to ground turnaround improvement work in 2009, that picture has grown darker over the ensuing years (Anrig, 2015). Yet the policy and practice worlds continued to privilege turnaround as the pathway that could improve failing schools even when we knew that it could not. That is, not only did the definition almost guarantee failure, so too did the claim that the reform efforts would work.

Reports between 2009 and 2015 revealed the continued absence of much positive news of the SIG programs, i.e., "there is no evidence of widespread success of turnaround schooling" (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, p. 28). Overall the gaps we just discussed continued to widen and deepen (Anrig, 2015; Heissel & Ladd, 2016; Trujillo & Renee, 2015), with documented turnaround efforts being quite rare (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015). For example, as noted above, Stuit (2010) tells us that only 26 of 2025 low-performing schools "made it into the top half of their states' proficiency rankings within five years." In an earlier study, Loveless (2010) reveals that only 4 of 115 turnaround schools (3.5%) moved from below the 10th percentile to at or above the state average from 1989 to 2009. Peck and Reitzug (2014, p. 28) lay out the paradox here quite nicely: "There is no evidence of widespread success of turnaround schooling, yet the concept receives high priority in federal education policy." The potential to improve school performance remains suspect (Rice & Malen, 2010, p. 7) and the research suggests that it is very hard and relatively infrequent for a school to successfully sustain a turnaround (American Institutes for Research, 2011): "studies. .. offer little evidence that school turnaround or similar approaches are an effective way to improve academic performance dramatically across multiple schools" (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, p. 11).

4.3 Firing the Wrong Person

> Indiscriminant replacement of principals and teachers simply because they work in poorly performing schools seems a recipe for continued trouble rather than success. (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, p. 22).

In the turnaround legislation, as discussed in Chap. 1, various venues for school improvement are underscored: turnaround (reconstitution), transformation, school closure, and turning the school over to a private provider (e.g., an educational management organization). The turnaround option requires the school to fire all of its teachers and allows the school to rehire

up to 50% of those educators. There is no evidence anywhere that suggests that taking half of one's employees to the wall is a useful strategy for turning around a failing organization. Nothing in the research on turnarounds in the corporate or non-profit sectors even raise the notion of mass terminations of employees (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). "Little attention has been given to the theoretical underpinnings of replacing existing staff on achieving the goals of policymakers" (Hamilton et al., 2014, p. 189). There is no empirical evidence on this strategy.

Turning to formal leadership change, there is no mention anywhere of firing mid-level managers. And thus there is no empirical evidence to follow the solution pathway of hiring all new principals (with less than 2 or 3 years experience in their current schools).

> Turnaround-style reforms are not only based on unwarranted claims; they ignore contrary research evidence about the potential of mass firings to improve organizational performance. (Trujillo & Renee, 2015, p. 1).

> Wholesale staff replacement is not typically part of successful turnarounds across sectors. (Rhim et al., 2007, p. 19).

The person to be fired is the chief executive officer (CEO) of the organization. In the case of schooling, this is the school superintendent. It is really inconceivable that the developers of school turnaround could have completely missed "the law of CEO change" (Murphy & Meyers, 2008, p. 141). Here is what an investigation of this law tells us about executive turnover in turning around failing organizations:

> It is usually a foregone conclusion that the CEO will change in a turnaround. (Rindler, 1987, p. 12).

> Recovery from decline is often facilitated by replacing the CEO and other top executives. (Barker & Duhaime, 1997, p. 20).

> One of the most unanimous assertions of past researchers is that a declining firm's chief executive officer or top managers will usually be removed to initiate the turnaround process. (Arogyaswamy, Barker, & Yasai-Ardekani, 1995, p. 505).

> The literature generally posits that turnarounds required the appointment of 'chief executives' who are outsiders and unfettered by allegiance to organizational traditions or precedents and untarnished by past disasters. (Khandwalla, 1983–1984, p. 20).

It is important to point out that management change is a core element and a dominant theme in the turnaround literature that recovery from decline is often facilitated by replacing the CEO (Barker, & Duhaime, 1997, p. 20): "One of the most unanimous assertions of past researchers is that a declining firm's chief executive officer or top managers will usually be removed to initiate the turnaround process" (Arogyaswamy et al., 1995, p. 505; Grinyer

& Spender, 1979; Slater, 1999)— "The evidence suggests more often than not management should be changed" (Gerstner Jr, 2002; O'Neill, 1986, p. 87). Visible in the literature is a clear message that, in general, there is a "need for an infusion of new top managerial blood to revitalize the company and direct the turnaround" (Modiano, 1987, p. 174).

The logic here is that almost all other elements of the turnarounds are dependent on and "inexorably linked with management cognition and interpretation" (Short, Palmer, & Stimpert, 1998, p. 154), that "though many variables are involved in turnaround success or failure, competent management can impact most of them" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2002; Zimmerman, 1991, p. 6). In particular, as Stopford and Baden-Fuller (1990) found, the role of the chief executive is "critically important both in triggering the initial change and in acting as teacher during the ensuing steps" (p. 412). In organizational turnarounds, it is leadership that provides "a sense of direction by setting priorities and short-term goals; establish[es] a sense of urgency; define[s] responsibilities; resolve[s] conflict; convey[s] enthusiasm and dedication; and give[s] credit where it is due and reward[s] it accordingly" (Slatter, 1984, p. 148; Gadiesh, Pace, & Rogers, 2003; Lohrke, Bedeian, & Palmer, 2004).

And to be clear, superintendents, not principals, are the "chief executive officers" of school districts and the "top managers" are other officers of the school districts. Research on the competencies that define "turnaround leaders" is in very short supply (Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Rhim et al., 2007). What we do know is that it is often difficult to recruit leaders to turnaround positions (Peck & Reitzug, 2014; Yatsko et al., 2012) and that it is often difficult to retain leaders who move to turnaround schools and are successful (Hamilton et al., 2014, p. 202).

4.4 Turnaround has Little to do with Children

Surprisingly, the turnaround literature generally ignores students (Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015; Peck & Reitzug, 2014). We think that there are two main reasons for this lethal flaw. First, it is often difficult to hone in on missing parts of a picture, especially in an area that is underdeveloped. Second, there is an "assumption of children" whenever we talk about schooling. In some sense, "they are there." But when you run the tape across the literature base on turnaround schools, it becomes fairly clear that they really are not there: at best they are background material to be worked on—uninvolved, unseen, and unheard. Neither are there more than a handful of studies or reviews in

which they play any role in helping plan what their "new" schooling experiences might look like, either formally or informally (Quaglia & Corso, 2014). For example, in the few turnaround studies where interviews and surveys were employed, the "student" voice was almost never picked up. In the one place where we begin to "see" students, they are universally presented as "a product," oftentimes as numbers, a raw material that is worked on by adults. Peck & Reitzug (2014) aptly capture the picture: "The core constituents and members of schools are children, yet there is scant mention of students and their needs in the turnaround literature. Indeed, students are rarely separated from their achievement and thus are essentialized as concepts rather than being treated as living beings" (p. 24).

At best, students have been cast in largely passive terms (Alderson, 2000; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004), "almost entirely as objects of reform" (Levin, 2000, p. 155). In addition, recent forces on the accountability front in schools have reinforced nondemocratic foundations of schooling (Mitra & Gross, 2009) employing "conceptions of childhood that regard young people as dependent and incapable" (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004, p. 3), based on the idea of children as "recipients" (Levin, 2000, p. 156).

This is problematic because nowhere is the literature on organizational recovery clearer than in the area of customer focus. While trouble has many roots in turnaround organizations, the taproot is generally failure to stay close to customers and to organize the enterprise based on customer needs. In case after case—in churches, hospitals, political parties, universities, and in nearly every sector of private enterprise, both manufacturing and service—we see that decline can be traced to a disconnect from the customer (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). We are exposed to an almost limitless supply of examples in which attending to internal dynamics (Goldstein, 1988; Rindler, 1987; Slater, 1999), "where work is determined by department requirements rather than customer requirements" (Shelley & Jones, 1993, p. 80), failure to know and understand customers (Bratton & Knobler, 1998; Yates, 1983), focusing primarily on "completing tasks and procedures" (Shelley & Jones, 1993, p. 79), and creating a producer-driver culture can cause organizations to derail (Murphy & Meyers, 2008).

On the flip side, we see repeatedly in every sector of the recovery literature that turnaround efforts that "look outside in" (Mirvis, Ayas, & Roth, 2003, p. 105) and that "build the [organization] from the customer back" (Gerstner, cited in Slater, 1999, p. 173)—that "put the customer first" (Slater, 1999, p. 177); that pay "continuous attention to the market and what the customers want" (Grinyer, Mayes, & McKiernan, 1988, p. 123); that make "listening and staying close to customers. .. part of the fabric of the organization" (Rindler, 1987, p. 135); and that create structures and processes

predicated on customer needs—that, in short, provide the infrastructure for a "customer-driven" (Shook, 1990, p. 166) organization—offer real promise for important improvement in performance (Murphy & Meyers, 2008).

Almost all of the scholars working on student perspective understand and therefore "see" the importance of knowing schooling partially through student eyes (Murphy, 2016a, b). However, in the overwhelming bulk of the turnaround literature, especially on the center stage issue of academic press, there is a profound silence on the issue of student voice.

We move to two essential grounding points. First, "it is not what the teacher or researcher sees that is the immediate cause of the student's behavior. It is what the student sees that counts" (Maehr & Midgley, 1996, p. 87). The consequence is clear: "We need to try to understand where young people are coming from and how such understanding can help us with the task of school improvement" (Rudduck, Chaplain, & Wallace, 1996b, p. 170). Or as Mergendoller and Packer (1985, p. 581) capture it, "thorough understandings of these perceptions is necessary if appropriate interventions are to be made in school organization and classroom instruction."

Second, there is a growing belief that "students can contribute a valuable perspective on education" (Spires, Lee, Turner, & Johnson, 2008, p. 497), that students should contribute to the work of strengthening schools: "Students are the experts on their own perceptions and experiences as learners" (Oldfather, 1995, p. 131).

"We must cease developing strategies to rectify various illnesses without asking the patients questions" (Howard, 2001, p. 132), without consulting the children (Burke & Grosvenor, 2003; Mitra & Gross, 2009; Quaglia & Corso, 2014). "It seems illogical if the very people who are at the heart of these initiatives are not consulted about the things that might be done to help them achieve" (Rudduck, Chaplain, & Wallace, 1996a, p. 20). Young persons "are central to the work of teachers, and they see teacher merit and worth from a point of view unlike those of administrators, teachers, parents, or researchers" (Peterson, Wahlquist, & Bone, 2000, p. 135).

Two broad notes merit attention. To begin with, schooling is nested in a larger society that has developed in ways that do not devote much attention to student perspective (Cook-Sather and Shultz, 2001). The "traditional exclusion of young people from the consultative processes, this bracketing out of their voice, is founded upon an outdated view of childhood which fails to acknowledge children's capacity to reflect on issues affecting their lives" (Rudduck et al., 1996b, p. 170), from a societal perspective that views "children as incompetent and incomplete" (Holloway & Valentine, 2004, p. 5). Children need to be told what to do, not to be empowered to participate

in the development of social institutions such as schools (Rudduck & Flutter, 2004). Children are to be seen and not heard (Lodge, 2005).

On the education front specifically, Cook-Sather (2002, p. 3) helps us see that the concept of "student perspective runs counter to US reform efforts which have been based on adults' ideas about the conceptualization and practice of education." "The social organization in traditional classrooms is constituted and controlled by teachers" (Dillon, 1989, p. 254). Students have been cast in largely passive terms (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Weinstein, 1983), "almost entirely as objects of reform" (Levin, 2000, p. 155). In addition, recent forces on the accountability front in schools have reinforced non-democratic foundations of schooling (Mitra & Gross, 2009), employing "conceptions of childhood that regard young people as dependent and incapable" (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004, p. 3), based on the idea of children as "recipients" (Levin, 2000, p. 156).

4.5 Turnaround has Little to Do with the Core Technology of Schools

4.5.1 Instruction and Curriculum

The core technology of schools is comprised of three broad domains: instruction, curriculum, and assessment. We learn little about the "teaching" or instruction that goes on in turnaround schools. The nine core elements of instruction are: academic care, challenge, task-focus, active learning, engagement and vitality, cooperative learning, meaningfulness, student-anchoredness, and evidence-based feedback. Given what we see in the turnaround literature, we say only that "evidence-based feedback" is prevalent. There is very little information provided about the other eight elements of quality instruction. If we had to make an informed judgment from information found in other areas (e.g., assessment), we believe that there is little of the dynamics of great instruction in turnaround schools. Given that quality instruction is the key variable in student learning, this is a very troubling conclusion.

Curriculum is the what of the instructional program, the content to which students are exposed. At a core level, it is useful to describe curriculum in terms of quality or rigor and quantity or content coverage (Carbonaro & Gamoran, 2002; Hallinan & Kubitschek, 1999). On the topic of quality, the spotlight is focused on the breadth and depth of content standards (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010; Conchas, 2001), concepts

that are established by curricular frameworks and the scope and sequence of courses (Wilson & Corbett, 1999). In addition to inspecting the power of individual courses, it is also helpful to define quality in terms of the rigor of the sequences of courses available to students (Oakes & Guiton, 1995).

Building on the work of Brophy, Leithwood et al. (2004) outline the elements of a robust curriculum.

> This is a curriculum in which the instructional strategies, learning activities and assessment practices are clearly aligned and aimed at accomplishing the full array of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions valued by society. The content of such a curriculum is organized in relation to a set of powerful ideas. Skills are taught with a view to their application in particular settings and for particular purposes. In addition, these skills include general learning and study skills, as well as skills specific to subject domains. (p. 62).

In a quality curriculum, "what is taught is worth knowing in the first place and is treated in sufficient depth to engage students' interests and offer them a challenge" (Cotton, 2000, p. 10). The touchstones are meaningfulness and challenge, what Louis and Marks (1998, p. 537) refer to as "intellectually serious work" and Carbonaro and Gamoran (2002, p. 819) label "intellectually challenging content."

On the quantity side of the curriculum ledger, the essential issue is content coverage or "opportunity to learn" (Murphy, 1988; Murphy & Hallinger, 1989). That is, quantity is determined by the overall amount of work students complete in individual courses and across their programs (i.e., sequence of courses) (Carbonaro & Gamoran, 2002). Quantity opportunities are defined not only by "credit accumulation" (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, p. 16) but by a press to do more intellectually challenging work (Murphy, 2016a, b; Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, & Mitman, 1982). Opportunity to learn also has a good deal to do with the pacing of content over individual classes and over time across schooling (Bryk et al., 2010; Goldenberg, 2004).

As was the case with instruction, curriculum is comprised of key elements. Two of those elements are authenticity and cultural relevance. Authenticity in the domain of curriculum refers to the ability to match learning context to the ways in which students learn most effectively. It refers to curriculum that moves from abstract concepts to include tangible work. It carries meaning for students to learning activities. That is, authentic work is grounded not only in relevant standards but, given what we reported above, also in the values, goals, and interests of students (Noguera, 1996; Roney, Coleman, & Schlichting, 2007). Relevance is a core concept here, embedding learning in "contexts in which students are interested and [involving them in] topics about which they are curious" (Roney et al., 2007, p. 290). In short, curriculum is seen through the eyes of students as well as the eyes

of the disciplines (Cook-Sather, 2006; Murphy, 2016a, b). Considerable attention is devoted to "valid educational content" (Newmann, 1992, p. 206). Authentic work also has value and meaning beyond the instructional context. It includes "linking academic instruction to examples in students' everyday experiences" (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005, p. 86). It features real life problems (Johnson Jr. & Asera, 1999), problems, often emerging from young people themselves (Eggert, Thompson, Herting, & Nicholas, 1995; Farrell, 1990); a "broad curriculum base" (Day, 2005, p. 576); "active and inquiry-based learning" (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002, p. 87); project-based learning (Shear et al., 2008); and co-construction of products, including support from peers as well as teachers (Eggert et al., 1995; Farrell, 1990; Johnson Jr. & Asera, 1999; Murphy, 2016a, b).

Culturally relevant curriculum extends the notion of authenticity to the backgrounds of children (Gault & Murphy, 1987), especially children (and families) that have been marginalized in the traditional curriculums in schools (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006; Shannon & Bylsma, 2002). More specifically, in many schools "there often is a mismatch between curriculum and students' values" (Mukuria, 2002, p. 434). The curriculum often "devalues the home and experience" (Eckert, 1989, p. 10) of those from non-mainstream backgrounds (Quiroz, 2001). In short, in a culturally relevant curriculum there is greater sensitivity to the assorted cultures at the school (Datnow, Borman, Stringfield, Overman, & Castellano, 2003; Scanlan & Lopez, 2012) and in the community and nation (Burns, Keyes, & Kusimo, 2005). This means, more concretely, that "the formal and informal curricula reflect the cultural values and political realities of the communities and provide students with educational and social experiences closely aligned with community and cultural resources" (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006, p. 410).

Analysts who focus on culturally relevant curriculum have distilled a number of its defining elements. Such curriculum "connects students' lives at home with their lives at school" (Scanlan & Lopez, 2012). There is direct attention to "crossing racial and ethnic borders [and] integrating cultural, linguistic, and historical connections in the curriculum" (Galletta & Ayala, 2008, p. 1971). Culturally relevant curriculum "challenges the notion that assimilation is a neutral process" (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006, pp. 412–413). There is a conscious link of academic content with the cultural and ethnic lives of students (Blair, 2002; Scanlan & Lopez, 2012), especially the use of relevant materials (Antrop-González, 2006; Galletta & Ayala, 2008). Underlying this perspective is an embedded belief that "students bring something of value to contribute to the curriculum" (Ancess, 2003, p. 99) as well as "a commitment to provide students with important

historical knowledge grounded in their identities" (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006, p. 417). Schools marked by cultural relevance assume an additive approach to schooling (Antrop-González, 2006; Steele 1997).

The third domain of curriculum to which leaders need to attend is coherence and alignment (Wellisch, MacQueen, Carriere, & Duck, 1978) or what we have called "tightly coupled curriculum" (Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, & Mitman, 1985, p. 367). We preface this work with some important reminders. To begin with, we see that curriculum coherence is nested in the larger concept of overall "organizational integration" (Youngs & King, 2002, p. 646). This operational coherence addresses the extent to which the various systems and domains of the school are integrated and are all pulling in the same direction (Balfanz, Herzog, & MacIver, 2007; Stringfield & Reynolds, 2012). One way to describe this has been provided by Mitchell and Castle (2005, p. 422) who talk about "the degree of order within and consistency across various directions and instructional movements in a school." On this point, Robinson (2007) notes the "importance of overall guidance through a common set of principles and key ideas" (p. 13). Another strategy is to focus on the cohesion among systems and areas of work such as personnel management, instructional program, school operations, support activities, student services, and so forth. Here we see a school that "operates more as an organizing whole and less as a loose collection of disparate systems" (Murphy, 1992, p. 98). Bryk and team (2010, p. 63) put the direction and systems strategies together in the concept of "strategic orientation." Strategic orientation creates a theory of action for how and why actions work and provides a center of gravity for the various systems so they all hold together (Murphy et al., 1985). In so doing, each of the domains and systems takes on life beyond itself. Each ends up touching one or more of the other domains (Spillane, Diamond, Walker, Halverson, & Jita, 2001).

There are a number of ways to link content together, various methods for leaders to engage program integration and alignment. An important strategy has to do with creating alignment between the curriculum in special programs (e.g., special education, English Language Learners) and that in the regular program. A second is the coordination of the curriculum with district and state standards and objectives (Johnson Jr. & Asera, 1999; Murphy, Hallinger, & Mesa, 1985). A third has to do with the classes where the curriculum unfolds: (a) the integration of curriculum standards in a course (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000); (b) the same subject across classes (e.g., writing across the curriculum) (Bryk et al., 2010); (c) integra-

tion among classes in a discipline (i.e., sequenced program of study) (Burch & Spillane, 2003); (d) among subjects (e.g., science and history); and (e) the alignment with higher education courses (Kleiner & Lewis, 2005). A fourth lens on curriculum coherence is to see through the experiences that occur for each student, whether they experience "academic drift and curricular debris" (Murphy, Hull, & Walker, 1987, p. 351) or well-cohered programs of study (Oakes & Guiton, 1995). Of special importance here is how well new material links to students' prior learning (Huberman et al., 2011). All of these aspects of curricular coherence find space in the idea of "curriculum mapping" (Eilers & Camacho, 2007, p. 614), "the subject matter that students are exposed to as they move across grades" (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 74).

There are also principles of operation and systems of support that influence curriculum alignment for better or worse. One is the linkage between school vision and goals and curricular content (Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1995; Spillane et al., 2001). As Leithwood and Montgomery (1982, p. 324) reported at the start of the effective schools era, the difference between ineffective and effective school leaders on coordination of the curriculum was "the relatively precise focus of the effective principal on curriculum goals as the basis for integration rather than the more ambiguous diffuse goals of the typical principal on curriculum work being done in the school." Because "curriculum alignment is a social activity as well as a technical act" (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 117), the principle of collaborative teacher work in a reciprocal manner comes into play in the curriculum alignment narrative. Or, alternatively, curriculum alignment work is most productive in the context of professional learning communities. So also, we see supportive policies around how time is allocated and protected in the curriculum coherence storyline (Eilers & Camacho, 2007; Firestone & Wilson, 1985). Relatedly, longer time commitments and consistent policy environments support program alignment (Desimone, 2002; Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001). Finally, policies and guidelines that link resources and the curriculum help build alignment (Halverson, Grigg, Prichett, & Thomas, 2007), especially professional development (Newmann et al., 2000).

The turnaround literature has even less to say about curriculum in turnaround schools than it does about instruction. All we can say for sure is that there is a curriculum in each school. There are also hints that the curriculum, whatever it is, has been shaped with regard to state standards (Strunk, Marsh, Hashim, & Bush-Mecenas, 2016). Given that "opportunity to learn" is the second most critical variable in the academic press side of the "good schooling" equation, this is another particularly damaging conclusion about the state of turnaround in America's schools.

4.5.2 Assessment

Assessment is the third point on the instructional program triangle, in combination with pedagogy and curriculum. While we address the technical dimension of assessment below, we are concerned primarily with exploring the overarching narrative of a climate or culture of inquiry (Eilers & Camacho, 2007; Halverson, et al., 2007), "a school environment conducive to data-based decision making" (Ingram, Seshore-Louis, & Schroeder, 2004, p. 120). Supovitz and Klein (2003, p. 2) refer to this conception of assessment as a "culture of systematic inquiry into the relationship between the instructional practices of teachers and the learning of their students." And Wohlstetter, Datnow and Park (2008) remind us that this culture is about the development of widely shared norms and expectations about how data is employed.

Research underscores the essential elements and principles of productive assessment systems. While these ingredients are blended in schools and districts, we pull them apart for analysis. We discuss them under the following descriptors: actionable, coherent, professionally anchored, and supported.

Actionable assessment systems, as noted above, are purpose and goal driven. Actionable means also that assessment programs are understandable (i.e., user friendly) (Datnow, Park, & Kennedy, 2008; Kerr, Marsh, Ikemoto, Darilek, & Barney, 2006) and that the information produced is valid, relevant, and useful (Datnow et al., 2008). Actionable systems offer guidance and concrete data (Hayes, Christie, Mills, & Lingard, 2004; Wayman & Stringfield, 2006). There is efficiency in access to data. Teachers view the data as necessary (Levin & Datnow, 2012). It allows them to see "how they [can] address emerging issues in their classrooms" (Halverson et al., 2007, p. 41). It pushes the spotlight onto instruction. In the words of Wayman and Stringfield (2006, p. 569), actionable systems "help teachers use data rather than being used by data." Data is accessible but not intrusive (Friedkin & Slater, 1994). Information is made available in a timely manner (Kerr et al., 2006; Lachat & Smith, 2005) to "enable teachers to quickly analyze data for instructional decision making" (Datnow et al., 2008, p. 32). Actionable systems provide comparable data (Blanc, Christman, Liu, Mitchell, Travers, & Bulkley, 2010). There is a focus on authentic measures of demonstrating learning (Bryk et al., 2010). They promote the unpacking and disaggregation of data (Lachat & Smith, 2005; Murphy, 2010).

Analysts routinely describe a second element of productive assessment systems— coherence—as well as the principles that help define the element. Coherence covers a good deal of space in the assessment narrative. One principle of coherence is the continuous nature of assessments (Huberman

et al., 2011; Kerr et al., 2006). So too is the reliance on a comprehensive platform of both internal and external forms of data collection (Ingram et al., 2004). Coherent assessment features multiple and varied types of data to provide insights into quality instruction and student learning (Lachat & Smith, 2005; Leithwood, 2008).

A core principle here is that there is "breadth and depth to data-related functions" (Young, 2006, p. 544). That is, coherence arises in part from multiple and overlapping functions. Mayrowetz and Weinstein (1999, p. 423) capture this aspect of coherence when they report that "redundancy" is a critical dimension of productive assessment systems. Another principle developed during the effective schools era highlights the linkage between assessment and the larger task of school improvement (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Because data-driven decision making is not something that can be brought to life in isolation, in cohesive assessment systems these two domains are intricately linked (Datnow et al., 2008; Lachat & Smith, 2005). We also find in a coherent world that adult learning and assessment are deeply intertwined (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007; Murphy, Hallinger, Weil, & Mitman, 1983). Coherence here also means that there is planful alignment between assessments and the other domains of the instructional program, i.e., curriculum and instruction (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Wohlstetter et al., 2008).

This third element carries us into the domain of culture, what we refer to as a professionally anchored assessment system (Datnow et al., 2008; Young, 2006). Cosner (2011, p. 794) characterizes this as "an inquiry-oriented schoolwide culture," a climate in which "using data to guide instruction become[s] a habit of mind for teachers" (Cooper, Ponder, Merritt, & Matthews, 2005, p. 12). There is a culture of collective development of and use of assessment systems and the resulting data (Young, 2006; Wohlstetter et al., 2008). Here we find teachers that talk more "of collaboration that [is] academic and professional" (Wayman & Stringfield, 2006, p. 565). In professionally anchored assessment systems, "teachers are provided with opportunities to work collaboratively in building their capacity to use data" (Lachat & Smith, 2005, p. 236). "Norms of interaction" (Young, 2006, p. 540) and deprivatization hold high ground where professionally grounded assessment cultures flourish (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Murphy & Torre, 2014). Collaborative work and learning norms are underscored (Halverson et al., 2007; Murphy, 2015). The reflective sense making we explored earlier is a sense of ownership of results from data collection and analysis (Levin & Datnow, 2012), teachers coming together to make data their data (Lachat & Smith, 2005). The front side of this ownership is commitment and sense of responsibility for student learning (Johnson Jr. &

Asera, 1999; Murphy, 2015), a collective and "overwhelming consensus about the importance of using data to improve teacher performance and student achievement" (Datnow et al., 2008, p. 5). The backend is mutual accountability (Murphy & Torre, 2014; Wohlstetter et al., 2008), "a community that holds its members accountable for learning" (Young, 2006, p. 538).

Support is the final piece in the assessment system. Support includes leadership, resources, and systems and structures, i.e., "school conditions and practices that. .. promote staff use of data" (Lachat & Smith, 2005, p. 334). We begin with a central theme of the book: leadership is a required support for productive assessment systems to take root and grow (Beck & Murphy, 1996; Hallinger & Murphy, 2013). In the best sense of the term, leaders are "instigators" (Supovitz & Klein, 2003, p. 2), and advocates and champions (Lachat & Smith, 2005). In a real sense, leadership helps the other supports to materialize (Murphy et al., 2001). The research illuminates a number of important leadership activities, all of which center on creating organizational capacity (Young, 2006).

> Principals have been found to be pivotal in modeling effective data use and in enabling teachers to use technology. Principals are also critical in providing ongoing learning opportunities for teachers to discuss and analyze their students' data. (Levin & Datnow, 2012, p. 180)

> Four roles individually enacted by principals include (a) establishing, communicating, and reinforcing an evidence-based agenda and necessary work tasks, (b) modeling data use and maintaining an organizational routine that made public the practice of evidence-based grade-level collaboration, (c) buffering and filtering the school from the district in ways that support evidence-based grade-level collaboration, and (d) supporting and shaping shared leadership in service of evidence-based grade-level collaboration. (Cosner, 2011, p. 801)

Leaders in schools and districts with effective assessment systems are key in getting the goals of measurement in place (Blanc et al., 2010; Supovitz & Klein, 2003). They are often in a unique position to move financial and human resources to assessment work (Blanc et al., 2010), especially individual and collective capacity-building activities (Lachat & Smith, 2005; Wayman & Stringfield, 2006).

In robust assessment programs, we see considerable energy linked to the following interconnected resources: money, time, people, training, and tools. Where assessment works well, money is dedicated to developing the required pieces of the continuous data system (Brunner et al., 2005; Cosner, 2011). Funds are set aside to provide time for teacher to learn about the workings of assessment programs (Young, 2006). Ample time for collaborative work is routinely cited in the research (Ingram et al., 2004). Time to

collect, analyze, and put data to use is essential (Kerr et al., 2006; Wayman & Stringfield, 2006). Particularly salient is "furnishing instructional resources linked to issues arising from data analysis" (Young, 2006, p. 540), helping teachers master more effective teaching strategies (Dannetta, 2002; Datnow et al., 2008). At a more concrete level, resources include tools and protocols to use with the data system and in turning information into more effective instruction (Kerr et al., 2006; Levin & Datnow, 2012).

Also important is time for professional development, the building of individual and collective knowledge and skills in the assessment domain (Blase & Kirby, 2009; Cosner, 2011) or the "building of strong human capacity for data-driven inquiry" (Kerr et al., 2006, p. 498). Targeted assistance or "data support personnel" (Datnow et al., 2008, p. 34) is a resource in the area of professional development often seen in the assessment research. Here, we find the provision of help in the form of data coaches and opportunities to work on data teams (Kerr et al., 2006). This work is designed to mentor "teachers in managing and using data" (Datnow et al., 2008, p. 34). This type of mentoring is sometimes extended to include the new instructional practices that derive from thoughtful use of data (Johnson Jr. & Asera, 1999; Young, 2006). Overall then, we find time being devoted to understanding the data system and to learning how to strengthen teaching and learning (Kerr et al., 2006; Young, 2006).

The final resource is the presence of a well-developed system of assessment that guides data-based inquiry (Kerr et al., 2006), what Cosner (2011, p. 793) calls "enabling organizational conditions that offer support for the substantive inquiry-oriented work embedded in evidence-based collaboration." Halverson et al. (2007) refer to this support as a "data-driven instructional system" while Kerr and team (2006, p. 508) call it a "data management system." We know that these systems attend to both the "infrastructure and methods" of assessment (Datnow et al., 2008), especially the needed structural supports (Lachat & Smith, 2005; Levin & Datnow, 2012). These structures provide frameworks for the data collection inquiry cycle (McDougall, Saunders, & Goldenberg, 2007; Supovitz & Klein, 2003), frameworks that are essential to "establish[ing] coherent and high-level data-system capability" (Lachat & Smith, 2005, p. 336).

Assessment systems adhere to the elements and principles noted immediately above are expected to have positive impacts on teacher and students. The theory of action and the empirical evidence that powers this assumption relies on the creation of more productive schools by strengthening teaching and learning. The end point in this theoretical and conceptual chain is that "when teachers use indepth analysis of assessment information to assist them to modify their programme, student achievement is raised" (Robinson,

2007, p. 15). That is, "previous research suggests that data-driven decision making has the potential to increase student performance" (Wohlstetter et al., 2008, p. 239).

The intermediate point between productive assessment and student learning is more informed, more responsive, and more effective teaching. More specifically, research on teacher perceptions reveals that well-grounded assessment systems lead to a number of improved conditions. There is an increased sense of clarity about teaching, a stronger sense of focus (Stringfield & Reynolds, 2012) in general and enhanced focus on student learning and success in particular (Lachat & Smith, 2005). Professionalism grows (Wayman & Stringfield, 2006). That is, "[S]tudies indicate that effective use of data. .. enhances the ability of schools to become learning organizations" (Datnow et al., 2008, p. 10). In important ways, there is a tightening up of the looseness of instructional practice in schools (Bryk et al., 2010). Data focuses attention, concentration, and action (Blanc et al., 2010). Especially important here is that teachers often get to know their students better (Supovitz & Klein, 2003). That is, a productive assessment system "allow[s] them a deeper and more rounded view of their students' learning" (Wayman & Stringfield, 2006, p. 563), more "detailed pictures of their students' strengths and weaknesses" (Johnson Jr. & Asera, 1999, pp. 146–47). This, in turn, leads to "improved identification of students' learning needs" (Kerr et al., 2006, p. 501), particularly the needs of students "who are in need of additional assistance" (Supovitz & Klein, 2003, p. 19). The use of data to identify needs is associated with more and better responses to those needs (Wayman & Stringfield, 2006). This includes increases in expectations (Gray, Hopkins, Reynolds, Wilcox, Farrell, & Jesson, 1999) and more appropriate diversification and differentiation of instruction (Datnow et al., 2008; Johnson Jr. & Asera, 1999) including more productive use of student groups (Wayman & Stringfield, 2006). Concomitantly, highly functional data systems allow teachers to discern their effectiveness with greater clarity and validity (Supovitz & Klein, 2003).

The one area of the technical core where turnaround scores well is in the domain of assessment. It is a routine activity in schools as teachers and formal school leaders work to overcome low test scores. They often give locally developed tests which they then use to determine areas needing additional attention. These examinations are often reviewed by teams of teachers who plan together. Thus there is an element of professional development in the assessment process. The assessments are also coherent (e.g., aligned with the standardized tests and appropriate curriculum), actionable, and buttressed with needed supports. However, we also see that these "test based assessments" are often quite limited in breadth and scope.

4.6 One Half of the Equation of Successful Schools Is Missing in Turnarounds (Care)

> A press toward higher academic standards must be coupled with ample personal support. (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 60)

Schools that serve children and young people well are defined by two anchoring pillars, strong academic press and supportive culture. Ancess (2000, p. 595) refers to this as "a combination of nurture and rigor or affiliation and intellectual development" and Bryk and team (2010, p. 74) characterize it as "a press toward academic achievement … coupled with personal support from teachers." Focusing primarily on the academic side of the equation is insufficient (Murphy, 2016a, b; Shannon & Bylsma, 2002; Thompson & O'Quinn III, 2001), especially for students placed in peril by poverty (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Rumberger, 2011). Academic press alone "does not attend sufficiently to the quality of social relations required for effective teaching and learning" (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000, p. 493). That is, schools with strong press can still prove inadequate if they provide little attention to the social and relationship dimensions of education (Crosnoe, 2011; Quint, 2006).

We also know that because there is a "fundamental relation between learning and social interaction" (Eckert, 1989, p. 183) that press and support work best when they are viewed as an amalgam (Murphy & Torre, 2014), or conceptualized as two strands of DNA that wrap around each other (Dinham, 2005; Strahan, 2003). "Rigor and care must be braided together" (Fine, cited in Antrop-González, 2006, p. 274) to work best. There are some differences in the literature, however, about the relative importance of each strand and the order in which they load into the success equation. What is not in question is the fact that both need to be present and that the specific context will help determine issues of importance and timing (Murphy, 2013).

4.6.1 The Power of Relationships

Pastoral care for students is "a philosophy of caring and personalization" (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2002, p. 79). These elements are most powerful when they are in play at both the classroom and school levels and in both individual and group relationships. Efforts here are designed both to deinstitutionalize the school climate and to add community assets to the culture.

We know that positive relationships are essential to all forms of community in schools. (Ancess, 2003). As Bryk et al. (2010) and Rumberger (2011) remind us, these relationships are a hallmark ingredient in school improvement work, the "most powerful driving force of schools" (Ancess, 2003, p. 127). This is the case because "schools are fundamentally social institutions that depend daily on the quality of interpersonal relations with which they are imbued" (Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky, 2009, p. 293).

More specifically, analysts help us see that "student-teacher relationships matter for the development of children" (Adams, 2010, p. 258), that positive linkages between students and teachers are foundational for creating personalized communities for students (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). These relationships are heavily responsible for establishing the educational value of classrooms. They make academic press a possibility for many students (Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Ort, 2002; Rodríguez, 2008). Because many students "learn only from teachers promoting healthy personal relationships" (Opdenakker, Maulana, & Brock, 2012, p. 99), "the power of positive teacher-student relationships is critical for learning to occur" (Hattie, 2009, p. 118) and for students to experience academic success (Darling-Hammond et al. 2002; Goddard, 2003). These relationships have "far-reaching significance in terms of the various trajectories that children follow throughout their schooling experience" (Birch & Ladd, 1997, p. 69). Positive connections create the social capital needed for effective work to unfold in classrooms (Adams & Forsyth, 2009; Croninger & Lee, 2001). They provide the engine and the drivetrain to power the norms in personalized communities (Epstein & McPartland, 1976; Farrell, 1990; Patterson, Beltyukova, Berman, & Francis, 2007).

These positive relationships are of singular benefit for students from low-income homes and in schools with high concentrations of students in peril (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995; Marks, 2000). When these relationships do not exist, students are placed in a compromised position relative to learning (Rodríguez, 2008). Or as Croninger and Lee (2001, p. 569) assert, "an absence of positive social relationships and contacts with teachers denies students resources that help them develop positively." Deteriorating and negative relationships are even worse (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). They are "destructive to student outcomes and development" (Opdenakker et al., 2012, p. 95). In short, "relationships mediate student performance" (Ancess, 2003, p. 82).

According to Sweetland and Hoy (2000, p. 705), culture is a "concept used to capture the basic and enduring quality of organizational life." It encompasses the values and norms that define a school (Dumay, 2009; Franklin & Streeter, 1995). It is "those facets of organization that reflect

underlying assumptions guiding decisions, behavior, and beliefs within organizations" (Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999, p. 155). It can be thought of as the personality of the school (Hoy, Hannum, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998).

School culture is well described in terms of community, a construct that is defined in a variety of overlapping ways (Beck & Foster, 1999). Battistich et al. (1995, p. 628) use community to capture "the psychological aspects of social settings that satisfy group members' needs for belonging and meaning." It consists of ingredients such as membership, integration, and influence (Baker, Terry, Bridger, & Winsor, 1997; Osterman, 2000). Community stands in juxtaposition to institutionalism and hierarchy as an organizational frame of reference (Beck & Foster, 1999; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Scribner et al., 1999).

> Communally organized schools are marked by three *core components*: (1) a set of shared and commonly understood organizational values and beliefs about institutional purpose, what students should learn, how adults and students should behave, and students' potential as learners and citizens; (2) a common agenda of activities that defines school membership, fosters meaningful social interaction among members, and links them to school traditions; and (3) the distinctive pattern of social relations embodying an ethic of caring visible in both collegial and student-teacher relationships. (Shouse, 1996, p. 51)

Understanding of such communities is critical because at the heart of the educational narrative is this essential truth: "It is students themselves, in the end, not teachers, who decide what students will learn" (Hattie, 2009, p. 241) and students do not volunteer effort when they are detached from school (Crosnoe, 2011; Newmann, 1981; Weis, 1990). Creating attachments is key to the work of educators and we need to learn all we can about accomplishing that goal (Murphy et al., 2001). Analysis is also critical because, as we document below, supportive community for students exercises strong influence on school improvement defined in terms of student learning (Carbonaro & Gamoran, 2002; Rodríguez, 2008; Rumberger, 2011), "it explains a large amount of the variation in school effects" (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach,1999, p. 83). Indeed, "failure to examine school culture can easily lead to ineffective reform" (Rodríguez, 2008, p. 760, emphasis added).

Schooling for students is profoundly voluntary. Children have to "go to school." They need to debark from the bus and go into the building. Beyond that, especially as they mature, the decision to "do schooling" is substantially their own. This means, of course, that they are key decision makers in the learning production. The major purpose of supportive learning community is to positively influence students' willingness to learn what the school believes they require to be successful in life, to cause students to embrace

academic challenges, and to help them reach those ends. Two corollaries arise here. First, to a much greater extent than has been the case, schooling needs to be understood through the eyes of students (Murphy, 2016a, b), not as a goal in itself but rather because it provides the framework for a school to achieve its mission: ensuring that all children reach ambitious targets of academic success. Second, adult actions need to be shaped based on those insights from students.

Educators here have three choices, ignore this reality, fight to change it, or use it as a platform for action. The first and second options have been the tools of choice for education historically. This is hardly surprising given the institutional nature of schooling and the managerial logic of school leadership (Callahan, 1962; Cuban, 1988) and the institutional approach to school turnaround. The problem is, however, that these choices have not been especially effective (Boyer, 1983; Crosnoe, 2011), especially for students placed at risk by society and schooling (Alexander, Entwisle, & Horsey, 1997; Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Supportive learning community for students moves us to option three, weaving the wisdom, needs, concerns, interests, and worries of students deeply into the "doing of schooling" without sacrificing academic press. Or more globally, it requires educators to acknowledge that achieving valued outcomes for students "involves, as a first step, recognizing that school culture is the setting in which [students] are being educated" (Crosnoe, 2011, p. 40). For example, we know that social concerns form the caldron of interest for students in schools (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamburn, 1992; Patterson et al., 2007). We also understand that to reach working-class youngsters we need to address social connections beyond the schoolhouse (Eckert, 1989; Farrell, 1990). The charge for school people is to learn how to work these and related realities productively in the service of helping students master essential academic goals.

School communities in which many young persons find themselves, especially older students and youngsters in peril (Adams, 2010; Baker et al., 1997; Quint, 2006) do not exert the positive influence and support necessary for them to commit to "do schooling" (Balfanz et al., 2007; Croninger & Lee, 2001). Student disengagement, often passive, sometimes active, is common in schools (Hattie, 2009; Patterson et al., 2007; Quint, 2006). This is hardly surprising given that one of the pillars of institutions and bureaucracy is impersonality (Murphy, 1991). As Ancess (2003, p. 83) reminds us, because of this "schools are conventionally organized as though relationships are not only unimportant and irrelevant, but an obstacle to efficient operation."

We know that students arrive at school ready to learn. They naturally engage in the work of schooling. As they progress, many youngsters divert

from the pathway of active engagement. They pull away from school. Some of these students become passively engaged. They attend school, collect Carnegie units, stay quietly at the back of the room of academic pursuits, do not work especially hard, and do not receive a quality education. These are the withdrawn and anonymous. Other youngsters exercise a more aggressive form of disengagement. They move in opposition to school values and expectations. These are the resistant and the alienated. Some from each of these two groups, the passive and actively disengaged, simply withdraw from the game altogether, dropping out of school.

We know that the actions of schools have a good deal to do with the engagement choices of students. Particularly salient here, as we reported above, are the relationships between teachers and students. Good schools keep students actively engaged by demonstrating an ethic of care and robust systems of academic and social support. Because some students in all schools are free to disengage and many students in some schools are free to do so, schools are filled with a good number of unconnected youngsters. Care helps close the door to disengagement and failure.

4.6.2 The Tablets of Care

4.6.2.1 Teachers Work to the Best of Their Ability

Although it is much too infrequently discussed as such, students routinely remind us that a cardinal element of the norm of care is teachers who work to the best of their ability, who consistently bring their "A" games to the classroom—who challenge students to do their best work (Felner, Seitsinger, Brand, Burns, & Bolton, 2007; Marks, 2000; Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Students also document what an instructional "A" game looks like. It includes working hard to make classes meaningful, and to show that meaningfulness to youngsters. It means teachers not simply going through the motions, doing their jobs, but rather demonstrating palpable interest in whether students learn or not (Fredricks et al., 2004; Newmann et al., 1992). Teachers who work to peak performance, acknowledge the difficulties of teaching, especially teaching students who are struggling, but they embrace those challenges—not offer excuses and justifications (Roney et al., 2007). They, according to Shouse (1996, p. 66), "appreciate the rugged demands of learning." They are firm and orchestrate structured classrooms (Ancess, 2003; Wilson & Corbett, 1999). These teachers are painstaking in their efforts to ensure that all students are brought along and successfully complete learning journeys, not jettisoned on the trip (Ancess, 2003; Wilson &

Corbett, 1999). According to students, teachers accomplish this by establishing clear goals, maps, and benchmarks of success and by providing close monitoring, abundant feedback, and targeted encouragement and help (DeRidder, 1991; Wilson & Corbett, 1999). They work hard to connect with students, not simply to present information (Murphy, 2015; Wilson & Corbett, 1999). Teachers who routinely strive for personal excellence in the classroom put learning in perspective for youngsters and work hard to align and integrate goals, activities, and structures for learning (Battistich et al., 1995; Marks, 2000). According to students, caring teachers demonstrate considerable imagination, live beyond the textbook, and unearth multiple pathways to accomplish work and show success (Wilson & Corbett, 1999).

4.6.2.2 Teachers Reveal Themselves as Persons

Another hallmark element of caring relations in schools is the willingness of teachers to reveal themselves to children as persons, not solely as organizational functionaries (Adams & Forsyth, 2009; Antrop-González, 2006). They do this by opening aspects of their non-professional lives to their pupils, especially incidents that are relevant to the decisions and struggles that confront youngsters (Rodríguez, 2008): "The self that teachers offer is a student self rather than a career self" (Farrell, 1990, p. 25). According to Adams (2010), part of this opening process is the willingness of teachers to allow themselves to be vulnerable in front of their students. This stance "humanizes the teacher as a person" (Rodríguez, 2008, p. 765) and helps establish a frame of authenticity for student-teacher connections (Raywid, 1995). It also permits students to feel safe in sharing their "hopes, dreams, problems, and disappointments" (Reitzug & Patterson, 1998, p. 167).

4.6.2.3 Challenging Students

Care is also fundamentally about standards and about challenging students to meet and exceed robust expectations (Alexander & Entwisle, 1996; Johnson Jr. & Asera, 1999; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). There is abundant evidence on this point: "Teachers who push students prove to be an important dimension to the personalized student-adult relationship" (Rodríguez, 2008, p. 772). Perhaps the essential point here is the integration of push and press with other elements of care discussed above (Murphy 2013), a practice labeled as "hard caring" by Antrop-Gonzalez and De Jesus (2006, p. 413) and "rugged care" by Shouse (1996, p. 48). There is an especially valuable line of research that confirms that many students, especially students in peril

will not benefit unless the elements of care and the other norms of personalization are blended (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). When this cocktail of push and support is in place, students are able to see challenge "as coming from a place of teacher concern about the students themselves" (Patterson et al., 2007, p. 136). Challenge also means providing students with as much responsibility as they can handle (Joselowsky, 2007) and upholding a commitment to help them succeed (Wilson & Corbett, 1999). Obstacles are acknowledged but they are not accepted as explanations for lack of performance (Rodríguez, 2008; Shouse, 1996).

Challenge for students in a caring environment is laced with clear and high expectations (Rodríguez, 2008; Wilson & Corbett, 1999). Teachers ask more of students. There is strong academic and social press (Ancess, 2003; Johnson Jr. & Asera, 1999). They place higher order cognitive demands on students, moving beyond basic skills to higher order thinking (Battistich et al., 1995; Marks, 2000). They expect students "to be active interpreters of knowledge, rather than docile recipients" (Newmann, 1992, p. 185). In schools where care is engrained in the culture, teachers provide more challenging assignments and tasks (Fredricks et al., 2004),"more complex and cognitively challenging class work" (Marks, 2000, p. 157), and greater depth of understanding (Newmann, 1981). They expect students to take intellectual risks and reward them for doing so (Cooper, 1996, 1999).

In strong communities, care is more than providing high expectations and challenge, i.e., academic and social press. Caring teachers take away the possibility of passive involvement. Students cannot check out or drift through class (Ancess, 2003; Huberman et al., 2011). They are pulled into the game. No spectators are allowed. Neither are students allowed to easily accept failure. "Teachers not only believe that students [can] complete their work, they do everything possible to make that happen" (Wilson & Corbett, 1999, p. 77). In caring environments, "teachers make it harder to fail than succeed" (Ancess, 2003, p. 74). They "stay on students" to complete their work (Wilson & Corbett, 1999, p. 80). Teachers are there to help students succeed, not simply teach subject matter. They push and pull students to the goal line (Ancess, 2003; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Oakes & Guiton, 1995) and acknowledge and celebrate successes along the way. Classes are rich with extra help and teacher-guided second chances (Wilson & Corbett, 1999). Teachers are particularly adept at addressing "patterns of behaviors and performances that are unproductive and problematic" (Ancess, 2003, p. 76) for student development (Cooper, 1996).

Earlier, we argued that high functioning communities for students close down opportunities for students to select pathways of disengagement and disaffiliation. Here we suggest that they also preclude the selection of failure

in the face of rigorous expectations and standards (Ancess, 2000; Huberman et al., 2011; Shear et al., 2008). Efforts here pivot on the positive perspective of assets-based analysis we outlined above and the commitment to the elimination of deficit-based thinking (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006; Hattie, 2009). Possibilities hold the high ground: "Youth are resources to be developed, not problems to be fixed" (Bloomberg, Ganey, Alba, Quintero, and Alvarez-Alcantara, 2003, p. 50). All of this "hard care" is layered over significant opportunities for students to be successful (Antrop-González, 2006; Strahan, 2003).

4.6.2.4 Knowing Students Well

A fourth dimension of caring is knowing students well, a quality Ancess (2003, p. 65) refers to as "intimacy" and a condition that Bryk et al. (2010, p. 58) establish as "essential to the effective design of classroom lessons that advance academic learning for all." In a caring environment, teachers make efforts to learn about the youngsters they teach (Antrop-González, 2006). They commit the time necessary for this understanding to form and grow (Ancess, 2000). Teachers know what is unfolding in the lives of their students, "socially and at home. They know their students as learners in the class and in the classes of their colleagues" (Ancess, 2003, pp. 65–66). They are cognizant of the social and cultural worlds in which their pupils live (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006; McLaughlin, 1994). Teachers employ this knowledge to help students learn and to pursue their personal goals (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Murphy & Torre, 2014; Newmann, 1992).

4.6.2.5 Valuing Students

In personalized communities, caring is defined also by students being valued by their teachers (Battistich et al., 1995; Conchas, 2001; Scheurich, 1998). According to Reitzug and Patterson (1998), this translates into teacher efforts to connect with students on a personal level, rather than on a categorical basis (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). More specifically, it means that each student is accepted as a person, someone who has value as an individual and as a member of communities in the school (Ancess, 2003; Conchas, 2001; Rodríguez, 2008), someone "worthy of mentorship and guidance" (Antrop-González, 2006, p. 288). In caring communities, being valued is conveyed through teachers being "person centered" (Hattie, 2009, p. 119). Valued status is communicated to youngsters when teachers express concern for what is happening in the world of the student and when they invest time

and energy in developing and maintaining personal linkages to students (Farrell, 1990; Hattie, 2009; Wilson & Corbett, 1999). Included here is a not-so-subtle switch from seeing students as problems to seeing them as "willing and capable human beings" (Reitzug & Patterson, 1998, p. 168) who need help to address challenges in their lives. In these valued relationships there is a tendency to avoid blaming youngsters when things do not go well (Patterson et al., 2007).

In a related vein, caring is demonstrated when teachers take interest in and invest in their students (Croninger & Lee, 2001; Galletta & Ayala, 2008; Wilson & Corbett, 1999). This includes devoting considerable personal and professional capital into one's work with children (McDougall et al., 2007; Strahan, 2003) and the development and honoring of reciprocal obligations (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006). It includes being accessible to students on both academic and personal fronts (Goddard, 2003; Hattie, 2009; Noguera, 1996), "in their education and their lives" (Patterson et al., 2007, p. 128). Investment tells students that they are acknowledged for who they are as persons and for their potential (Ma, 2003; Steele, 1992). At the deepest level, it includes a ferocious unwillingness to permit students to founder or fail (Farrell, 1990). Students see "teachers as truly interested and invested in enabling [them] to succeed" (Wilson & Corbett, 1999, p. 73). They feel that adults are willing to provide personal attention (Cooper et al., 2005; Cotton, 2000; Rodríguez, 2008).

Caring means that teachers are accessible to students (Kennedy, 2011; Mitra & Gross, 2009). A dimension of accessibility is willingness to help, an ingredient that cuts across the norms of care and support (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979). Another aspect is making time available to students, of building closeness (Birch & Ladd, 1997) in the context of warm relationships (Opdenakker et al., 2012, Strahan, 2003). Invitational threads are also woven into the fabric of accessibility (Ancess, 2003). So too are efforts to pull students into active participation. That is, accessibility means not exiting in the face of student resistance or oppositionality and not permitting youngsters to exit either (Newmann, 1981). The literature refers to this as maintaining beliefs in students through hardships and refusing to give up on students (Ancess, 2003). More aggressively, it is appropriate to think about accessibility in terms of advocacy for youngsters (Ancess, 2003). In strong, personalized communities of care, teachers stand up for students to ensure that conditions for success are forthcoming (Rodríguez, 2008). Students feel that their teachers are looking out for them. They are not left to pursue success on their own or only with the help of peers (Roney et al., 2007): "Teachers can be counted on to be accessible, accepting, and helpful" (Ancess, 2003, p. 68).

4.6.2.6 Seeing Through the Eyes of Students

Another theme in the chronicle on the norm of care in personalized communities is constructed around the ability and willingness of teachers to see things through the eyes of students (Flutter & Rudduck 2004; Murphy, 2016a, b), in popular parlance to know where students are coming from (Rodríguez, 2008). It includes a willingness to see and understand the developmental needs of students (Ancess, 2003) and to "embrace students' priorities" (p. 8). It means taking the world of students seriously (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984), remembering that things that are important to students are important regardless of whether they are important to teachers or not (Murphy, 2013). More importantly, it entails efforts to adapt schooling to the needs of students, not requiring students to constantly remold themselves to fit the school (Bulkley & Hicks, 2005; Day, 2005; Quint, 2006). This in turn requires seeing children as whole and in a positive light, not as defiant and damaged (Becker & Luthar, 2002). Viewing from the perspective of students requires an active responsiveness to youngsters. It means that when the norm of care is present, teachers listen to students (Adams & Forsyth, 2009; Antrop-González, 2006), and that students believe that they are heard (Reitzug & Patterson, 1998; Rodríguez, 2008).

4.6.2.7 Seeing Students as Trustworthy

As we described above, trust is the foundation for relationships (Adams & Forsyth, 2009). Thus we should not be surprised to learn that an important piece of the caring storyline is teachers assessing youngsters as trustworthy (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997) and students reciprocating (Adams, 2010; Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006). The rule here is universal: no trust, no relationship (Bryk et al., 2010; Newmann, 1981). As with other dimensions of care, we find asset-based as opposed to deficit-based assessments in our analysis of trustworthiness (Ancess, 2003). Teachers need to earn the mantle of trustworthiness from pupils. This they do by being open, reliable, honest, benevolent, and competent in the eyes of students (Adams & Forsyth, 2009).

4.6.2.8 Treating Students with Respect

Treating youngsters with respect is a tenth dimension in the web of care (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006; Hattie, 2009). Central points here are that teachers must give respect to receive it in return (Rodríguez, 2008) and

"that for many students respect precedes engagement" (p. 767). One half of the storyline here is the avoidance of actions that demean or belittle youngsters (Antrop-González, 2006). The other half of the narrative is the use of positive actions that demonstrate the fact that students are held in high regard (Raywid, 1995; Rodríguez, 2008). Treating students as young adults is important here (Ancess, 2003), with a sense of dignity (Leithwood et al., 1999). So too is the provision of opportunities for participation and voice. Actions that affirm students' cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds show respect (Gonzalez & Padilla, 1997; Noguera, 1996; Scanlan & Lopez, 2012). So too do behaviors that honor the assets students bring to the classroom more generally (Hattie, 2009).

4.6.2.9 Treating Students Fairly

Students possess a refined sense of equity. For that reason, care is often defined in terms of fairness, especially the perceived fairness of teachers in their treatment of students (Ma, 2003; Patterson et al., 2007; Wilson & Corbett, 1999). Reliability and consistency are key elements of fairness for students (Adams, 2010; Adams & Forsyth, 2009).

4.6.2.10 Recognizing Students

Finally, recognizing the link between the learning environment and motivation (Opdenakker et al., 2012), care includes students experiencing success and opportunities to receive recognition for that success (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; Foster & St. Hilaire, 2003; Sather, 1999). That is, schools create a "culture of success" for students (Rodríguez, 2008, p. 776) and opportunities for acknowledgement. Newmann and his colleagues (1992, p. 22) underscore this element of care when they report that "if the school is to nurture a sense of membership, its most important task is to ensure students experience success in the development of competence."

4.6.3 Chapter Synthesis

We have explored the problematic nature of the definition of school turnaround definition. When the SIG program greatly expanded school turnaround efforts there was almost no evidence (available at the time) that the strategy would work. The SIG approach to turnaround was flawed from the

start. The emphasis in the SIG models of firing half of teachers is unsubstantiated by the turnaround literature. In the broader research on turnaround the CEO (i.e., the superintendent) is the official who policymakers should focus on replacing. The school turnaround policy casts children in passive terms as the object of reforms. This is problematic because it perpetuates the disconnect between student needs and the goals of schools. School turnaround focuses on only a single element of high quality instruction (evidence-based feedback). There is also no discussion about curriculum in the research on turnaround schools. The lone area where turnaround succeeds is with regard to assessment, which is a strong focus of the school turnaround process.

Beyond challenging students, turnaround has very little to say about school climate in general or student care specifically. For example, in the literature we read there are no hints about how cultures should be defined and assessed. Peck and Reitzug (2014, p. 23) capture this finding in their analysis as follows: "Education and society as a whole are increasingly cognizant of the influence of cultural factors on all aspects of human endeavor, yet the literature on turnaround schooling has until recently given little, if any, explicit attention to the cultural aspects of schooling."

Equally troublesome is the fact that the critical ingredient that explains about one-half of student success, care, is not visible. It is in the background at times, but it is heavily veiled when it is. The reason for this neglect is clear: School turnaround is focused nearly 100% on academic press and success on standardized tests.

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Chapter 5
Explaining the Failure of School Turnaround: Critical Issues

5.1 An Absence of Attention to Morals

> It has become increasingly apparent that teachers in low-achieving schools, who must generate larger gains than those in high achieving schools, have strong incentives to adopt practice that inflates test scores. (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009, p. 355)

> The moral-ethical perspective of educators [has been] supplanted by an instrumental concern for moving a designated number of "accountable" children above a particular bar. (Booher-Jennings, 2005, p. 260)

On one level, it is difficult to critique school reform activity such as turnaround that rests on the value of equity, a concentrated effort to increase the quality of education and life chances of students who have traditionally been ill served and marginalized by society. At the same time, it is as if commitment to this powerful value exempted policy makers and school personnel from considering the ethical implications of further actions as they pursue this goal. On a regular basis where, one would expect to observe the hand of ethics in play, it is missing. One of the places we find this to be true is in the cart blanch dismissal of principals and some teachers in models of SIG. Even though the warning signs have been blinking, the failure of some should not be an indictment of an entire school's faculty. Second, even though these actions are mandated, we never see the "evidence" used to make judgments at the district or state levels—nor a hint of evidence that policy makers and school leaders struggled over these decisions.

Even if school leaders "got it right," is it then ethical to simply assign released teachers to other schools in the district as sometimes occurs? (Malen, Croninger, Muncey, & Redmond-Jones, 2002; Gold, Norton, Good,

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& Levin, 2012; Yatsko, Lake, Nelson, & Bowen, 2012). How do leaders address the fact that they suspect (or know) that replacement teachers are worse than the teachers who were fired? And how are dismissed teachers treated? We know that it is somewhat unusual to see concern for balancing race in faculty and leader turnover. "The new teaching staffs [are] whiter, younger, less experienced, and more likely to have provisional certification than teachers who were at the schools before the intervention" (Lipman, Smith, Gutstein, & Dallacqua, 2012, p. 22; Hamilton, Heilig, & Pazey, 2014). And this is to say nothing of the fact that "teachers in low performing schools are denied due process when they are terminated en masse, without regard to individual teacher performance" (Waddell, 2011, p. 5). And how does a leader deal ethically with the large number of teachers whose youngsters are not tested (Waddell, 2011)? It may be backstage and unseen by those who are engaged in the practice or study of turnaround. However, given the high stakes environment, it is disturbing, we argue, that the words "right and wrong" never appeared in the turnaround literature we reviewed. "The literature concerning school reconstitution. .. offers scant evidence that drastic reform measures such as replacing a staff wholesale represent an effective avenue toward school improvement" (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, p. 22). If this is the case, it is unethical (immoral) to fire employees as is called for in the turnaround literature.

5.2 Absence of Attention to Context

> The most effective managerial form for an organization is contingent on the technical and environmental circumstances affecting the core work of the organization. (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010, p. 67)

> Low-performing schools are not blank slates, on which new interventions and individuals can be imposed and assumed to stimulate better outcomes for children. These new policies are inserted into a complex policy context, history, and set of assumptions about each school. (Le Floch et al., 2016, p. xv)

Researchers examining turnaround arrive at the conclusion that regardless of the "reform agenda" context is a cardinal, but not determinate, variable in the change process (Jimerson, Anderson, & Whipple, 2002; Murphy & Hallinger, 1993; Penuel, Riel, Joshi, Pearlman, Kim, & Frank, 2010), not simply a "container" for the work (Spillane, Diamond, Walker, Halverson, & Jita, 2001). Context helps set the rules and norms as well as the constraints that shape improvement work (Adams, 2010; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986; Mitchell & Castle, 2005). Because situations are idiosyncratic,

reforms must be molded to fit the context at hand (Le Floch et al., 2016; Prestine, 1993).

To begin with, it is important to remember that district context can heavily influence school-based improvement work—for better or worse (Mangin, 2007; Rumberger, 2011; Shear et al., 2008). Relatedly, evidence is accumulating that community contexts create powerful forces that can bolster or hinder turnaround initiatives (Bryk et al., 2010; Crosnoe, 2011; Heck, 2000). SES, ethnicity, language, housing conditions, urbanicity, history, and so forth all matter.

Hattie (2009) in his hallmark meta-analysis documented that classroom contexts exert considerable pull over improvement efforts as well (see also Birch & Ladd, 1997; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010). Teachers bring their own cultural understandings, skills, and backgrounds to the job (Grossman, Wineberg, & Woolworth, 2001; Palincsar, Magnusson, Marano, Ford, & Brown, 1998). Each develops a grammar of instruction that impacts how he or she views and engages with change (Hattie, 2009; Scheerens, 1997). The importance of teacher as "person-in-context" (Ford, cited in Geijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2003, p. 232) is an important theme that is often overlooked in examining school turnaround work. For example, investigators often report that younger teachers with fewer years of experience are more apt to actively engage in reform efforts. Subject matter taught and department affiliation also have a role in this narrative.

School context also influences the viability and meaningfulness of turnaround efforts, both directly and through the way it shapes activities in classrooms and the sensemaking of individuals. We know, for example, that "level" often produces different interpretations of change efforts. Geographical location has been found to be influential. Lack of enrollment stability, or high student mobility, also shapes turnaround efforts. Because youngsters from different environments view education and schooling in different ways, demographics of the student body is regularly uncovered as a school-level contextual variable that influences turnaround work. The nature of the community of adults in the schools is also consequential, especially the nature of relationships in place.

Leaders need to acknowledge the place of situation in school improvement work, to understand that reform does not "occur in a vacuum, devoid of its surrounding context" (Coldren & Spillane, 2007, p. 387). Included here is the understanding that what works easily or smoothly in one school may require the investment of considerable capital and energy in another school. It also means acting in ways that honor the limitations of telling and mandating as engines of turnaround. Improvements have to play out at the street level. While the prize is never abandoned, localization and cus-

tomization are needed (and appropriate) to gain it. Strategies must be formed to fit the situation while working simultaneously to influence context in directions that support improvement. To be sure, the process cannot be permitted to produce "lethal mutations" (Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007, p. 931) of reforms, but adaptation will be the norm. Leaders also need to be cognizant of the fact that this adaptive turnaround work is likely to produce unintended consequences, an issue we take up below.

The difficulty here is that turnaround efforts often pay very little heed to what we know about school context. In the turnaround literature, schools are often treated as blank slates on which nearly any reform policy can be drawn and expected to materialize. We reported earlier that there is little evidence that community culture plays much of a role in school turnaround efforts to date (Le Floch et al., 2016). Differentiation by the variety of schools in trouble is missing, e.g., why failure occurred. There is little targeting based on types of schools either, urban and rural in particular (Rosenberg, Christianson, & Angus, 2015; Bell & Pirtle, 2012), or by level of schooling, elementary versus secondary (Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow, & Martin-Glenn, 2006). All schools are treated the same. Neither is much differentiation paid to subject area context (Lauer et al., 2006) nor types of pedagogical practice (Koyama, 2015). Equally important, it is the norm for turnaround initiatives "not to take into account the diverse demographics of the students" (p. 552). In short, "the government's efforts to impose order and standardization in education. .. is complexified by the inter-related, the local, the specific, and the idiosyncratic" (p. 552).

From the turnaround work we learn that none of these strategies "stand out as universally effective or sufficiently robust to overcome the power of local context" (Mintrop & Sundermann, 2009, p. 356; Corallo & McDonald, 2001; Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll, & Russ, 2004; Picucci, Brownson, Kahlert, & Sobel, 2002a, 2002b). "There is no one best approach; context matters greatly" (Zavadsky, 2013, p. 7). Each school has a unique context and factors contributing to its chronic underperformance (Knudson, Shambaugh, & O'Day, 2011). More specifically, we know that "prior history as well as existing routines, beliefs, and cultures of the school will influence how interventions are interpreted, implemented, and interact to produce the results specific to that context" (Aladjem, Birman, Orland, Harr-Robins, Heredia, Parrish, & Ruffini, 2010, p. 69). A single approach will not be appropriate for every environment; turnaround efforts must be customized to the individual needs of a given school" (Knudson et al., 2011, p. 22).

> [O]ur conceptual framework depicts schools as complex social systems in flux that have a variety of internal stakeholders and prior histories of reform. The characteristics of schools and the various improvement strategies they employ interact and overlap. Schools also are situated in a variety of district, state, and community contexts. Implementation of any program, such as SIG, depends on how school level actors interpret the performance problems of their schools, the approaches they take to address these problems, and conditions schools face. Increasing the school's capacity—both human and organizational—to improve student outcomes in the face of such complexity is thought to be a particularly difficult challenge facing many low-performing schools. (Le Floch et al., 2016, p. 11)

5.3 Reliance on High Stakes Unproven Assumptions

In addition to an absence of empirical evidence of success, turnaround is tarnished by the fact that it rests on decayed assumptions, core ideas that prove inadequate to support turnaround efforts. Seventeen of the most prominent of these faulty perspectives are:

- Human costs associated with turnover are small.
- Accountability driven reform can power large-scale sustainability.
- Turnaround unfolds on a level playing field.
- New teachers will be better than the ones let go.
- As conditions change for schools, turnarounds continue unabated and unfettered.
- Learning is wholly "under the control" of schools.
- Districts and schools are blank slates.
- Teachers and families are completely open to new ways of doing schooling.
- Districts will search for principals with turnaround experience.
- Turning to people outside the system is a good way to get better.
- New teachers are available.
- Market-based strategies will enhance turnaround.
- New teachers will be better than the ones fired.
- Policies will be implemented as laid out.
- Principals are qualified to lead the instructional program.
- Problems are school-based, not district or state-based.
- Turnarounds are sustainable.

In each of these cases, there is strong to very strong evidence that these assumptions are simply wrong, a poor basis on which to build successful turnaround initiatives.

5.4 Turnaround Employs a Deficit Model of Improvement

> The well-intentioned remedies mandated by the U.S. Department of Education are highly speculative, minimally effective, and overly punitive toward educational professionals. (Waddell, 2011, p. 4)

Deficit-based models of improvement have been hard wired into attempts to strengthen academic progress for students. In contrast, a positive construct is defined by an asset-anchored approach to schooling (Burrello, Beitz, & Mann, 2016; Owens & Hekman, 2012), an "essential humanism aligned with humanistic psychologies and philosophies" (Fineman, 2006, p. 273). The "focus is on what is best in people" (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 188). In Positive School Organizations, if there is fault it looks first to causes in the social environment rather than in finding out who is to blame (Fineman, 2006, p. 273). Rather than looking at a student trouble-maker or a teacher whose skills are deficient, the positive perspective goes beyond the absence of valued states (Sandage & Hill, 2001) to consider why and how the environment can be re-arranged to help the student become more engaged to provide the teacher with opportunities to learn that are not punitive.

What does it mean to have a virtuous, asset-based school? In place of negativity and deficiencies in schools, a positive orientation is about "facilitating the good life and structuring talents" (Sandage & Hill, 2001, p. 241), about human "strength, resilience, and virtue" (p. 251), about strength-based strategies (Burrello et al., 2016) and optimal human functioning (Avey, Hughes, Norman, Luthans, 2008). These are orientations and not specific behaviors that others routinely "see" but they are felt and can be described by others.

Positive School Organization is also about positive psychological capital, a concept initially formulated by Luthans that combines hope, resilience, optimism, and efficacy, and ties this bundle to the capacity to mobilize others (Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2004). Whether scholars like the positive psychological capital bundle or prefer to focus on the separate elements such as hope (Peterson & Byron, 2008) is irrelevant to our main argument, which is that school turnaround requires fusing "positive assumptions about human nature with moral rectitude" (Fineman, 2006, p. 272).

We have been more "concerned with what is wrong with organizations, teams, leaders, and employees than what is right with them" (Luthans, 2002, p. 703). A positive construct in contrast is defined by an asset-based approach to school leadership, a view that extends beyond the absence of valued states (Sandage & Hill, 2001), "an essential humanism aligned with humanistic psychologies and philosophies" (Fineman, 2006, p. 273). Descriptive words include "genuine, reliable, trustworthy, real and veritable" (Luthans &

Avolio cited in May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio, 2003, p. 248). In replacing images of negativity and deficiencies in school, positive school organization is about "facilitating the good life and structuring talents" (Sandage & Hill, 2001, p. 241) about "human strength, resilience, and virtue" (p. 241), about strength-based approaches (Burrello et al., 2016), and about "optimal human functioning" (Avey et al., 2008, p. 112).

Positive school organizations are "first and foremost concerned with values and beliefs that provide humans with a moral compass regarding decisions about life and professional practice" (English & Ehrich, 2016, p. 1). Positive organizations are also about developing "positive psychological capital" (Avey et al., 2008, p. 112), which exists at both the individual and group level and engenders greater optimism about the future among all members of the group (Newman, Ucbasaran, Zhu, & Hirst, 2014). Perhaps most importantly, an asset-based approach focuses on "fusing positive assumptions about human nature with moral rectitude" (Fineman, 2006, p. 272), providing a link to the value base of positive school organizations.

A problem with the turnaround work to date is that it has ignited deficit thinking in states, districts, and schools. In the turnaround literature we read, there is almost no attention paid to positive organizations.

5.5 Little Treatment of Cascading in Turnarounds

While it is rarely noted (at best), turnaround work has a second goal: To reconfigure the relationship between the federal, state, and local levels of government around school reform and improvement. We saw no direct analysis of this objective in the turnaround literature we analyzed. Embedded in the literature, however, are a small number of snapshots of relations between levels of government as turnaround work unfolds.

To begin with, we find no theory or model of what might be effective in helping reach the reconfiguration goal. Not surprisingly then, there is no evidence. What we did discover, however, was an "implied" model of action—a cascading endeavor that was expected to reshape and empower reform at each succeeding level. We also discerned that the cascading of power, beyond information within the four models, was accompanied by little guidance and advice and few work-related examples. What it looks like behind the screen is that the federal government, becoming increasingly aware of failed attempts at vigorous top-down reform, decided "to get out from under" by pushing influence to states. However, while this was successful, it was more of a dumping than a cascading. Beyond the distribution

of funds, the use of the federal pulpit, and the creation of regulations, it is difficult to see that at the top level of the strategy, the federal level, government did much in terms of support.

With cascaded resources in hand, states in turn set about to guide and shape action at the district level. There is variation in how states undertook this assignment. Regulations and assessments were routine in SIG-funded states. However, realities often undercut state actions (McGuinn, 2012). First, there is little evidence here [or from past analyses] that states had the financial resources, human capital, or knowledge to undertake well the assignment they had been handed. There was no cascading here, just unloading. Second, states were loath to invest resources for actions (i.e., hiring new staff) that would add financial burdens that would remain after federal resources ceased to flow. This was especially true because of the economic decline prevalent at the time (McGuinn, 2012). This is a major reason for the failure of turnaround itself as we report below. What happened is that many states became judges at first and then little more than "compliance officers," offering little new support to districts.

The outcome of this is that the state-to-district cascade was considerably less robust than states had hoped for. And what we observed with the federal to state, and state to district push throughs also unfolded a good deal more than anticipated in the movement from district to school. And all of this unfolded for the same two reasons noted above: lack of district expertise and an unwillingness to burden themselves with financial obligations that extended beyond the life of the grant.

5.6 Nesting Problems Within the School

> The primary source of inequality lies in children's disparate non-school environment. (Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004, p. 632)

> Our review of the research on turnarounds revealed that almost all authors continue to focus primarily on the within-school factors that may shape the potential of schools to turn around test performance, in place of research that situates schools within their broader socio-political and normative contexts. (Trujillo & Renee, 2015, p. 19)

Scholars "offer a long list of potential explanations for test score gaps" (Stiefel, Schwartz, & Ellen, 2006, p. 9). Nearly all reviewers highlight two broad clusters of explanations: a family and society category and a school cluster (Carpenter, Ramirez, & Severn, 2006; Downey et al., 2004; Murphy, 2010; Reardon, 2003); that is, they "tease out the extent to which variability

in achievement is accounted for by a child's background versus particular schooling factors" (Chatterji, 2006, p. 492).

While some analysts maintain that "it is difficult to determine whether disadvantaged children experience lower achievement because of school or non-school influences" (Downey et al., 2004, p. 615), the weight of the empirical evidence finds that while both social/family and school factors are implicated in the test score gap—that gaps in test scores result from "deficiencies that originate outside schools and problems that are caused partially by the schooling experience itself" (Hughes, 2003, p. 298)—social/family factors dominate the narrative (Rothstein, 2004). That is, social/family factors explain more of the gaps (Grissmer, Flanagan, & Williamson, 1998; Hanushek & Raymond, 2005; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Test score gaps can be traced primarily to economic, political, social, and cultural capital issues (Hall, 2001; Murphy, 2010; Stiefel et al., 2006).

A sizeable portion of these differences in attainment can be traced to non-school conditions, conditions that we label environmental factors: "Research has found that factors outside the classroom—such as economic, family, and personal characteristics—have a strong influence on achievement" (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p. 9). Indeed, these factors explain more of achievement gaps than do school-based factors (Miller, 1995; Rothstein, 2004). For example, Lee and Burkam (2002) find that "almost half of the racial/ethnic gaps in achievement is explained by taking children's social class into account" (p. 81). Fuchs and Reklis (1994) conclude that "child and household characteristics explain much more of the black-white difference in test scores than can be explained by school characteristics" (p. 8). The corollary is that an exclusive focus on schools in explaining achievement gaps is inappropriate (Rothstein, 2004): "To ignore the aspects of students' lives outside the school walls that contribute to achievement gaps would be irresponsible and ineffectual if the goal is to understand the problem fully and strive to ameliorate it" (Reynolds, 2002, p. 11). For low-SES youngsters and for students of color then, "the problems of inequality of access to many environmental supports that undergird pro-academic behavior in schools. .. are critical factors" (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 260).

What this has meant is that for nearly as long as public schools have existed explanations for achievement have been very heavily attributed to children, their families, and the communities in which they reside. Educators and policy makers over the last two decades set about putting schooling in the accountability spotlight, to ensure that educators are no longer excused for poor student academic outcomes. Unfortunately, this effort has flipped the problem: Inadequacies of school leaders and teachers have become the cause of school failure. So we are in the same bad place (poor achievement)

for a different reason (inadequacies in schooling). There is almost no discussion of the economic and social forces in communities that could be addressed to attack problems of school failure. Problems of failure and addressing it are assigned almost exclusively to teachers and leaders in schools.

5.7 Failure to Meet the Expectation of Robust Parental Engagement

> Although schools pay lip service to the benefits of parental involvement, their actual behavior reflects mixed feelings about how much and in what ways they actually want parents to be engaged. That is, although schools insist they want parental participation—and complain loudly about the lack of involvement of parents—in actuality, schools only want parents to be involved on the school's own terms. (Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1996, p. 129)

Research has shown that when parents are involved with their children's education within the home, children tend to do better academically (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Goldenberg, 2004; Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010). In fact, several researchers claim that improving the home educational environment, also called the "curriculum of the home," may yield the most leverage for increasing student achievement (Goldenberg, 2004; Mulford & Silins, 2003), and for older students can increase graduation rates (Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992).

Epstein (1996) found positive outcomes for students who discussed academics with family members on a regular basis. In a study of high achieving, black, low income students, Finn and Rock (1997) found that parents were actively engaged in creating a supportive, encouraging home education environment. Parents who have higher expectations for their children also tend to be more involved with their child's education (Alexander, Entwisle, & Horsey, 1997; Griffith, 2001). Moreover, students internalize those high expectations and are likely to perform better in school (Hattie, 2009) and be more resilient (Finn & Rock, 1997). Indeed, the attitudes and expectations that parents have for their children regarding their schooling are more important than family structure in predicting student achievement (Hattie, 2009).

More broadly, aspects of the home environment not directly related to schooling influence student achievement (Bierman, 1996). Some research shows that socio-psychological components of the home, measured by indicators such as how parents use punishment, how responsive they are to children's needs, and the types of enrichment materials present at home, are closely linked to student learning (Hattie, 2009). Other research indicates

additional non-academic characteristics of the home environment that are related to student achievement, including parents establishing clear boundaries and acting as an authority, consistently enforcing rules, having numerous books, being nurturing and supportive, and respecting the intelligence of their children (Garmezy, 1991). Garmezy also finds that a home environment characterized by minimal conflict is positively associated with student learning.

Unfortunately, the home environment can also be "a toxic mix of harm and neglect with respect to enhancing learning" (Hattie, 2009, p. 33). Neglect and abuse, as well as less extreme behaviors such as using external rewards and negative controls to influence child behavior, are negatively correlated with achievement. Also, the number of hours of TV a student watches each day, which can be regulated by parents, is negatively related to student academic outcomes, and this relationship becomes stronger as students progress through school (Hattie, 2009).

Parent's sense of efficacy in relation to their children is linked with how involved they are with their children's academic life (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Parents with a strong sense of efficacy, defined as the belief that they have the "skills and knowledge to help their children, that they can teach or assist their children, and that they can find extra resources for their children," are more likely to be involved in their child's education in the home environment (Sheldon, 2002, p. 303).

Involving parents in schools has been shown consistently to increase the academic achievement of students at all grade levels (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005) and subjects (Bryk et al., 2010; Epstein, 1996). Parent involvement in the school and the community is also related to higher rates of high school graduation and college enrollment (Goddard, 2003). An increased proportion of involved parents in a school are related not only to individual student achievement, but also to the effectiveness of the school as a whole (Auerbach, 2007).

Parent and community involvement is also associated with improved culture in the school (Bryk et al., 2010). For example, research shows that parent involvement can increase the sense of caring within a school (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Moreover, strong relationships between parents and the school are related to increased safety and order within the school (Bryk et al., 2010). When there is alignment between the home and the school on the values and beliefs regarding the education of the child, parents are more likely to be involved, and students are more likely to have positive, trusting relationships with teachers (Adams, 2010). Students also report having more positive attitudes towards homework and being more engaged when their parents are involved in their education (Epstein, 1996).

Increased parent involvement also influences teacher perceptions (Esptein, 1996). Goldenberg (2004) relates that when he began reaching out to parents early in the year to seek their support in achieving mutually devised goals for the student, he was able to cultivate a more asset-based view of parents. As teachers increase their contact with families, they may also better understand the communities of the children they teach and thus be better able to support those children (Haynes & Ben-Avie, 1996).

For all of these reasons, we would expect a good deal of attention devoted to the importance of bringing families meaningfully into the struggle to turn around failing schools. Indeed, in the larger body of work on school turnaround all of these points are acknowledged and honored. However, when one studies actual turnaround, such ideas are often neglected or actively dismissed when they run up against the market-based principles on which turnarounds are scaffolded (Trujillo & Renee, 2015). The result: "missing from most turnaround projects are steps to strengthen engagement with local schools"… [And] trying to change schools in isolation from surrounding families and neighborhoods does not work" (Lubienski & Miron, 2012, p. 2). Peck and Reitzug (2014, p. 25) sum up the reality here as follows: "The involvement and support of parents has long been held to be essential to effective schooling, yet parent involvement is given only marginal mention in the school turnaround literature. "And as Trujillo and Renee (2015, p. 23) remind us, the absence of community voices in the SIG policy and the literature speak volumes about the lack of democratic input both in the development of these policies and their implementation." At best, in the turnaround work parents and community are marginalized.

5.8 Absence of Attention to the Turnaround Cycle Inside Schools

> If failing schools are ever to be turned around, much more must be learned about how schools age as institutions—how they got to where they are and the factors influencing where they are going. (Loveless, 2010, p. 25)

> The research suggests that it is very hard—and relatively infrequent—for a school to successfully sustain a turnaround. (American Institutes for Research, p. 10)

There are only fuzzy concepts on the theory of action inside the turnaround literature. More important, there is a great scarcity of information about how turnaround works on the ground level. Details are difficult to uncover.

To begin with, because research on school decline is virtually non-existent, we know almost nothing from the turnaround research that could have

been put into play to prevent decline. "Although most educational reforms and turnaround strategies are logically defensible, their foundations rely heavily upon deduction and conjecture to explain the pathologies of school failure. Equally troublesome is that "early-warning indicators of deteriorating school performance" (Trujillo & Renee, 2015, p. 21) are rarely specified. We also are provided little empirical evidence about the causes and patterns of decline (Duke, 2006a; Hochbein, 2011)—what Burbank (2005, p. 56) refers to as "situational analysis." We generally enter turnaround narrative when failure has materialized. We know that schools have reached bottom and little more.

There is very little data on tactics that fail to lift turnaround schools to success. Likewise, there is very little empirical data about actions that did help school reach success. And even when we see success, there is no way to discern which moves were critical and which were unneeded. There is also almost no information about how reform strategies interact (or not) to strengthen or weaken turnaround work. Finally, there is "very limited" (Muijs et al., 2004, p. 167) research on the factors and conditions that hold schools in success mode (sustainability), or allow schools to decline and fail again (Anrig 2015; Strunk, Marsh, Hashim, & Bush-Mecenas, 2016). In short, there is insufficient knowledge about the "rare examples of dramatic improvement" (Aladjem et al., 2010, p. 169). There is no information on: (1) the stabilization of rocky but not declining schools; (2) factors that prevent decline; (3) actions that explain "the process of decline" (Duke, 2006b, p. 2); (4) activities that could help schools that have entered the pathway to failure, actions that would likely be a good deal less arduous than the work to right a failed school; (5) actions that could stabilize turnaround work when confronted by the emergence of "an often chaotic and sometimes irrational environment" (Aladjem et al., 2010, p. 69), (6) actions that could sustain turnaround success—that could prevent slow drainage and return to pre-turnaround practices, and (7) action related to successful scale up (Schueler, Goodman, & Deming, 2016; Strunk, Marsh, Hashim, Bush-Mecenas, & Weinstein, 2016; Villavicencio & Grayman, 2012).

Overall the narrative that we do have is less than sanguine as many schools in the turnaround mix "focused on reestablishing basic operating procedures and reverted to prior, familiar practices" (Malen et al., 2002; pp. 124–25). The largest bundle of evidence we do have concerns obstacles to successful turnaround, especially in steps 4 (recovery work) and 6 (sustainability) above. We know, for example, that there is often "the anticipated loss of teachers and principals" (Le Floch et al., 2016, p. 120). The loss of resources dedicated to turnaround after a few years is viewed as particularly harmful, as is the lack of the wherewithal to secure replacement funds (American

Institutes for Research, 2011; Silva, 2012; Strunk, Marsh, Hashim, & Bush-Mecenas, 2016). "The hiring of novice teachers was cited by many respondents as one of the issues fermented by the school turnaround process—novices not only in their years of teaching experience but also in their training and skills in teaching core subjects" (Hamilton et al., 2014, p. 196). As Anrig (2015, pp. 18–19) tells us, so too does inadequate time.

> With some exception three years has generally proved to be an inadequate length of time to fundamentally transform a troubled school's culture in ways that can be sustained. On the front end, many school administrators at both the state and local level said that they had inadequate time to plan how to implement SIGs when the surge of new funding became available beginning in 2010, leading to a multitude of problems. On the back end, when the extra resources essential to extending learning time and deepening the team of talented educators disappears, the framework bolstering whatever progress has been made suddenly weakens.

While policy makers anticipate valuable gains associated with replacement of large numbers of teachers—and often fail to acknowledge the absence of a supply of "better teachers," faculty express a keen awareness of the disruptions and downsides of staff turnover (Le Floch et al., 2016).

Local conditions at schools "such as poor school reputation, stressful school environment, or long commutes to schools" (Le Floch et al., 2016, p. 53) often contributed to the difficulties of turning around academically troubled schools. The commitment of the federal government to engage for the long haul is also a concern for educators and policy makers at the state level (American Institutes for Research, 2011, McGuinn, 2012). So too is its beliefs that short term federal aid will deflect attention from the larger agenda, that the support does little to alter policies "that continue to reproduce. .. inequalities [and] may weaken rather than strengthen" school staffs (Trujillo & Renee, 2015, p. 24). Schools are also hampered by the fact that success is expected in turnaround initiatives, when such beliefs deny the reality of the "risk of failure" (Strunk, Marsh, Hashim, Bush-Mecenas, & Weinstein, 2016, p. 22). They are also hampered by the belief that new teachers can be found and that they will be supported and work seamlessly into their new schools (Le Floch, et al., 2016). There is also evidence that "oversell" by districts, promising a good deal of things that never materialize, can be placed in the obstacle bucket (Malen et al., 2002).

The uptake of all this is, as we reported earlier, that "turnarounds rarely materialize" (Orland, 2011, p. 3). When they do, the knowledge that they will "continue to be a recurring event, not a one-time activity" (Hassel, Hassel, Arkin, Kowal, & Steiner, 2006, p. 10) remains exceedingly difficult to find.

5.9 Chapter Synthesis

In this chapter we have examined the critical issues that contribute to the failure of school turnaround. The firing of teachers and administrators is ethically fraught. A precondition for this strategy would be a clear link between massive teacher layoffs associated with improvements in student outcomes. School turnaround responsibilities were "dumped" by the federal government onto states who in turn held districts accountable. This process was not strategic and ended with districts scrambling to turnaround schools without adequate resources. School turnaround models are an inflexible approach, assuming there is a single best strategy for pulling schools out of failure. This approach is flawed because it ignores important local contextual factors. School turnaround work views schools only through their deficits and eschews a positive view of schools. This approach ignores existing capacities in the schools, which if leveraged could aid turnaround efforts. Another concern is that turnaround policies assume disparate educational outcomes are primarily due to within school factors. School turnaround does little to effect systematic poverty or other out-of-school factors that are relevant to student lives. Improving relationships with parents and communities are an avowed part of school turnaround plans. But, practically speaking turnaround focused on the schools themselves. A related issue is that school turnaround employs a multitude of strategies akin to throwing everything against the wall to see what sticks. A consequence is that we are not able to parse which school turnaround strategies effectively prevent future declines or lift schools from failure. We turn now to our last set of reasons for the failure of school turnarounds, important issues.

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Chapter 6
Explaining the Failure of School Turnaround: Important Issues

> Reconstitution, in and of itself, may do little to improve staff quality, school organization or school performance. Indeed, reconstitution may impede progress on those fronts. In so doing, this analysis exposes the fragile, tentative character of the cardinal assumptions that undergird this approach to education reform. (Malen, Croninger, Muncey, & Redmond-Jones, 2002, p. 126)

6.1 Missing Parts & Collateral Effects

> The noneducation turnaround literature consistently underscores costs and efficiencies in the turnaround algorithm. This focus is conspicuous by its absence in the educational turnaround literature. (Meyers & Murphy, 2007, p. 654)

There is almost no information on the costs of turnarounds at the school level. While we know a good deal about the "reforms" as they are adopted by schools, we found no estimates of the real (monetary and non-monetary) costs of turnaround (e.g., cost of faculty time to interview principal and teacher candidates) and nothing beyond some relation to what the funds produce in terms of achievement score gains. "Tracking reform cash—and determining whether schools have gotten their money's worth—remains daunting" (Klein, 2012, p. 11).

Earlier we discussed the invisibility of students in active roles in school turnarounds. We reported that they were almost always passive recipients. Not surprisingly, "there is little scholarship focused on the role of young people in school intervention processes. .. in low performing schools" (Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015, p. 1).

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We found no discussion/analysis of "other staff" in schools, i.e., adults who are not teachers or administrators. Actually, they were rarely even mentioned. Given their importance in creating a culture of care, this seems like a key oversight.

Even more critical, we saw almost no spotlighting of school board members. If they have more than a perfunctory role in turnaround, it is untreated in the research we reviewed. At best, they at times lurk unseen in the background (Scott, McMurrer, McIntosh, & Dibner, 2012; Stanton & Segal, 2013) as silent players in turnarounds.

Discussion of players that one would expect to be influenced by the turnaround movement is also missing. This is most obvious by the non-treatment of turnaround's impact on teacher preparation programs and the professional development community.

There are three critical domains of enhanced learning outside the regular school day that were conspicuous by their absence in the turnaround literature we examined. First, discussions of co-curricular activities are missing. Second, there is no treatment of service learning. Third, only a couple of articles raised the critical issue of pre-K education, although there is a good deal of attention given to the generic concept of an "extended school day." We also note that the power of technology in any aspect of schooling was unexamined in the research we reviewed.

6.2 Ungrounded Beliefs

Over the past 15 years, researchers have documented unanticipated factors that help explain the failure of school turnarounds. One large bundle of these factors can best be described as the fairy tale storyline (Duke, 2006a) and Johnson (2013, p. 242) refers to as a belief in strategies that can "magically turn around districts." Among these ungrounded beliefs are the following:

- Schools are neutral places. They have no baggage that will interfere with the acceptance and smooth sailing of turnaround efforts.
- Markets and private providers (i.e., "dream merchants") (Stuit, 2010, p. 5) can turn around (save) schools more effectively than traditional public schools.
- All schools can be turned around.
- There is an eagerness to "throw in" on this work.
- The best can be assumed by all parties in turnaround efforts.
- People will ignore personal costs of turnaround, or at least not let them get in the way.
- Implementing turnaround is not difficult work.
- Assumptions carry as much weight as empirical evidence.

6.3 Unanticipated Consequences

> Adaptation does not always lead to enhancement of the original policy, or necessarily promote the desired performance outcomes. (Berends, Bodilly, & Kirby, 2002, p. 9)

In this domain, we see things and/or discern outcomes that were not factored into turnaround strategies. Perhaps the most critical is that turnaround efforts "will deter and distract schools and school districts from exploring more promising approaches of achieving the goal of a sound basic education for every child" (Mathis, 2009, pp. 17–18), that it will promote a focus on "short-term gains at the expense of demotivating educators from pursuing continuous improvement" (Fullan, 2005, p. 178). A second unanticipated consequence is that turnarounds will lead to the exclusion of children. This we find can occur in two ways: (1) not attending to students who are doing either exceptionally well or exceptionally poorly in classes, i.e., focusing on children who are closest to being successful on high stakes tests (Booher-Jennings, 2005; Hess, 2003) or (2) or more aggressively pushing out low-achieving students (West, Ainscow, & Stanford, 2005).

Considerable worry has emerged that the curriculum in schools will be damaged, reduced and simplified, during turnaround. This occurs first when devoting large blocks of the school day to tested subjects (i.e., mathematics and English) diminishes attention paid to other coursework (i.e., science and social studies) and to the "developmental needs of students" (O'Day & Bitter, 2003, p. xi). It also occurs when non-tested subjects are given over to the teaching of English and mathematics (Sunderman, 2001). Researchers also find that test taking practice consumes large segments of the school day (Sunderman, 2001). Additionally, within tested areas the "taught" curriculum can be "narrowed … [to] what will be tested" (Koyama, 2015, p. 554).

6.4 Compounding Problems

There is remarkably little information how turnaround impacts school districts. In terms of operations, we know that existing employees are sometimes moved into new turnaround positions, often to "save money." At times new employees are hired. Beyond this though we do not get much sense of what these employees actually do. When we do uncover some evidence, it appears that turnaround employees at the district level are primarily engaged with compliance matters. Equally important, we saw only one reference to how the turnaround initiatives are impacting other schools in the district—a

disheartening finding given the potential of turnaround efforts to impact entire districts.

Deeply embedded in the turnaround literature is a sense that teachers are investing too little into their work and thus a major part of failure is marked with their fingerprints. Concomitantly, there is a clear theme in the turnaround literature that if teachers would invest more time during the current school days (e.g., in after school programs) and add days to their workload that low-performing schools would improve. We found no analysis to support the first claim. We did see evidence that extended school time can positively impact student learning. Yet we saw no analysis of how to garner this benefit besides hauling the burden onto the backs of teachers.

Turnaround stories often sound a good deal like "fairy tales" (Duke, 2006b, 2012). We touched on that earlier in terms of misconceptions. Here we note also that there is remarkably little analysis of the political nature of turnarounds at the district and school levels. Things run smoothly we are told. But there is little discussion of the political give and take through which the turnaround process unfolds.

6.5 A Movement Back to Scientific Management

For the last 25 years, schooling has been in a quest to transform the educational industry from an institution scaffolded on hierarchy and bureaucracy to a post-industrial institution underscoring concepts such as authority based on expertise (not role), decision making as a collective activity, and collaboration and community in lieu of isolation.

6.5.1 Going Forward

A more robust understanding of the education production function has been translated into new ways of thinking about learning and teaching. The strongest theoretical and disciplinary influence on education—behavioral psychology—is being pushed off center stage by constructivist psychology and newer sociological perspectives on learning (Hutchins, 1988). Underlying this change are radically different ways of thinking about the educability of children. Those who were at the forefront of transforming schools that were historically organized to produce results consistent with the normal curve, to sort youth into the various strata needed to fuel the economy, saw education being transformed to ensure equal opportunity for all learners (Fisher, 1990).

New views about what is worth learning have characterized emerging perspectives on the core technology of schooling. The traditional emphasis on acquiring information was replaced by a focus on learning to learn and on the ability to use knowledge. New perspectives on the context of learning were also being developed, directing attention to active learning. A century-old concern for independent work and competition—a focus on the individual dimension of human existence, especially on individual ability—was slowly receding in favor of more cooperative learning relationships—a focus on the social dimensions of human existence (Petrie, 1990).

Learner-centered pedagogy was featured in post-behavioral conceptions of the core technology. The model of the teachers as content specialists who possess relevant knowledge that they transmit to students through telling was being replaced by an approach in which teaching was more of a guiding function. The student was becoming a primary actor. Substantive conversation replaced conventional classroom talk and didactic instruction. Learning was seen as the construction of understanding, and search was viewed as facilitating this development (Petrie, 1990).

There was also a growing sentiment in the 1890–1920 period that the existing managerial and organization structures were beginning to fail, that the reformers of the last century produced "bureaucratic arteriosclerosis, insulation from parents and patrons, and the low productivity of a declining industry protected as a quasi monopoly" (Tyack, 1993, p. 3). It was increasingly being concluded that the existing bureaucratic system of administration was incapable of addressing the problems of the public education system (Hawley, 1989).

This tremendous attack on the bureaucratic infrastructure of schools led to demands to develop alternative methods of operating that are grounded on new values and principles. Concomitantly, new forms of school organization and management are emerging. The basic organizing and management principles of schooling are giving way to more proactive attempts to govern educational systems. In addition, there is enhanced attention to issues of social capital. The hierarchical, bureaucratic organizational structures that defined schools over the past 80 years were giving way to more decentralized and more professionally controlled systems that created new designs for school management. In these new postindustrial educational organizations, there are important shifts in roles, relationships, and responsibilities: traditional patterns of relationships are altered; authority flows are less hierarchical; role definitions are both more general and more flexible; leadership is connected to competence for needed tasks rather than to formal position; and independence and isolation are replaced by cooperative work. Furthermore, a traditional structural orientation is being overshadowed by a

focus on the human element. The operant goal is no longer maintenance of the organizational infrastructure but rather the development of human resources. Developing learning climates and organizational adaptability were being substituted for the more traditional emphasis on uncovering and applying the one best model of performance (Gottfried, 1993; Murnane & Levy, 1996; Murphy, 1999a).

Many chroniclers of the changing institutional arrangements during the 1890–1920 period envisioned the demise of schooling as a sheltered government monopoly heavily controlled by professionals. In its stead, they forecast the emergence of a system of school and improvement designs driven by economic and political forces that substantially increased the saliency of the market and viability of forms of direct democracy. Embedded in this conception are a number of interesting dynamics, many of which gained force from a realignment of power and influence between professional educators and consumers (Beers & Ellig, 1994; Gaither, 2008; Murphy, 1996).

The role of parents is dramatically being redefined in turnaround schools. Often on the outside looking in, parents become partners in those communities that are engaged in transforming their educational systems. Four elements of this evolving role receive the most attention in the literature: choice in selecting a school, voice in school governance, partnership in the education of their children, and enhanced membership in the school. The traditional dominant relationship—with professional educators on the playing field and parents on the sidelines acting as cheerleaders or agitators, or, more likely, passive spectators—was replaced by rules that advantage the consumer (Apple, 2007; Elmore, 1993; Murphy, 1999b).

6.5.2 Going Backwards

In many ways the turnaround work of the last two decades has stopped movement found in creating a post-industrial view of schooling. More importantly, it has begun to push schooling backwards to what it looked like prior to 1990 in terms of the core technology, management, and governance.

> At its most extreme, turnaround policy can evoke the sense that it is a dehumanized and dehumanizing approach to education, in which all that matters is the mass replacement of defective personnel to increase numerical production by student laborers, whose test scores define school success. (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, p. 29)

As we mentioned earlier, we do not learn a great deal about instruction and curriculum in the turnaround literature. What we do know about the core technology comes in the domain of assessment, processes that require teachers to impact student test scores and then work in depth with those youngsters to master the material on which they did poorly. While we cannot say with complete certainty, what we see tells us that turnaround privileges traditional models of teaching and learning, rather than constructed teaching and engaged learning. It often looks punitive (Trujillo & Renee, 2015) with a good more said about deficiencies than assets. It **is** often seen by teachers "as blanket indictment of teacher competency and commitment" (Malen et al., 2002, p. 120).

The other thing we see in the teaching learning domain has to do with ramping up the quality of teaching, an issue we raised above under hiring. Here we simply remind the reader that because "SIGs [School Improvement Grants] are essentially academic red lining, the bottom 5% threshold brands a school as anathema and the entire faculty is convicted of guilt by association," the likelihood of strengthening teaching with an influx of new teachers is more wish than reality" (Rice & Malen, 2010, p. 4).

On the management/organization dimension, we see quickly that some of the turnaround initiatives are more about "condemnation than intervention" (Waddell, 2011, p. 18). Legal administrative enforcement and mandates have been pushed back into schooling more prevalently via turnaround work. "High stakes accountability [often] works to achieve short-terms gains at the expense of demotivating educators from pursuing continuous improvement" (Fullan, 2005, p. 178). Deficit-based thinking is under the bright lights in turnaround (Cucchiara, Rooney, & Robertson-Kraft, 2015).

In addition, we learn that turnaround pushes models of individual leadership (Johnson, 2013; Malen et al., 2002). The conception of less directive leadership often read about in the turnaround literature often fails to materialize (Le Floch et al., 2016). Leadership in turnaround schools often takes on the form of the top-down, hierarchical style seen in the industrial era. Because principals play an "outsized role" in success or failure in turnarounds (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, p. 27), several studies report that at both the elementary and high school principals responded to the threat of reconstitution by becoming more directive and controlling (Rice & Malen, 2010).

In the area of governance, we perceive the same oddity we saw above. That is, the general literature on turnaround is robust with references to the growing influence and power of parents in shaping schooling, a shift consistent with a post-industrial understanding of education. However, the bulk of the studies reveal a quite different result. That is, the strong links between

schools and parents rarely materialize. They remain no more robust than they did in the industrial era of schooling.

Collectively, the lack of forward momentum in the domains of learning and teaching, organization and management, and governance have proven to be less than helpful for the creation of successful turnaround in public schooling. And, as we argued above, if turnaround work has actually pushed movement in these three dimensions of schooling into reverse, that places a significant handicap on the likelihood of productive turnarounds.

The collective storyline is that in the period from 1920 to 1990 reform was done "to people." As the post-industrial world entered, we saw more and more reform that was done "for people." Turnaround, instead of carrying us forward to reform done "with people" is as likely to carry us backward to a world of reform done "to people." "Students serve as the baseline laborers" (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, p. 25) and everything else represents mechanized approaches to turnaround (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009). Educational policy in the turnaround era has "increasingly become technical, rational, comparative, and quantified" (Koyama, 2015, p. 548)—"scientified" (p. 554).

6.6 An Inadequate Testing Platform and Measure of Test Results

> Standardized achievement tests should not be used to evaluate the quality of education. That is not what they are supposed to do. (Harris & Larsen, 2016, p. 3)

Accountability is at the heart of turnaround. And testing is at the heart of accountability. There is a diverse set of research conclusions that the heart is failing and because of that undercutting the development of positive effects from turnaround. Analysis of the turnaround testing program grounded in standardized tests is less than desirable. As Popham (2004, p. 9) poignantly reminds us:

> The teaching of a nation's children is too important to be left unmonitored. But to evaluate quality by using the wrong assessment instruments is a subversion of good sense. Although educators need to produce valid evidence regarding their effectiveness, standardized achievement tests are the wrong tools for the task.

Turnaround has taken us backwards in our efforts to improve schooling, to reliance on thinking and ways of working that powered the scientific research movement of the early twentieth century. (See earlier section.)

> In the past decade, there have been expanded expectations for assessments to not only measure educational achievement but to bring it about. Assessments are

> increasingly viewed as tools to document the need for reform by holding schools and students accountable for learning, and also as leverages of reform. (Fair Test, 2007, p. 147)

Below we identify some of the dysfunctionalities that have accompanied this change.

To begin with, measurement experts agree that "test scores by themselves are inadequate for evaluating schools and teachers" (Koretz & Jennings, 2010, p. 14) and that decisions should never be made on the basis of test scores only. "No test is good enough" (Fair Test, 2007, p. 14). Making matters worse is the fact that turnaround tests are cross sectional, given only one time per year. Complicating matters further, efforts to correct the weaknesses of using a single test, i.e., "teacher value-added" measures are extremely imprecise, and even school-level estimates are imprecise enough to seriously limit their uses. This imprecision is well documented in the scholarly literature. That is, tests scores should be used only for the purpose for which they were created—to measure student learning (Camara, 1997; Green & Carl, 2000). And "many of the most visible misuses of tests occur when scores are used for unintended purposes" (Camara, 1997, p. 149). There is almost no justification for using this tool for evaluating teachers or schools, even when the best controls (e.g., value-added measures) are brought into the process.

> There is broad agreement among statisticians, psychometricians, and economists that student test scores alone are not sufficiently reliable and valid indicators of teacher effectiveness to be used in high-stakes personnel decisions, even when the most sophisticated statistical applications such as value-added modeling are employed. (Baker et al., 2010, p. 2)

> The research base is currently insufficient to support the use of VAM for high-stakes decisions about individual teachers or schools" (Rand Corporation, cited in Baker et al., 2010, p. 3)

> Students are being tested on material they never had an opportunity to learn. The conclusion: Standardized tests should not be used to evaluate educational quality. (Popham, 2004, p. 4)

The most examined issue in the area of testing under turnaround is using high stakes standardized tests, tests which have damaging effects on the educational program and sometimes on teachers (Baker et al., 2010; Riffert, 2005)—"standardized testing has negative impacts on the teaching and learning process" (Riffert, 2005, p. 237): "that human nature will trump psychometrics" (Fair Test, 2007, p. 11).

Curriculum is the first area where we find problems. We have known for some time that uniform assessments for students can negatively impact individual learning objectives as "teaching tends to become an attempt to main-

tain a lock step march to goals" (Scates, 1938, p. 527). We also know that standardized testing often rearranges the value of domain areas in schools both within and across subjects (Koretz & Jennings, 2010). The point is made by Riffert (2005) when he reminds us that testing should adapt to the district school curriculum and not the other way around. We know that under school turnaround oftentimes the overall curricular program is narrowed as untested subject areas are de-emphasized. We also know that turnaround introduces a new type of curricular tracking, "a kind of instructional divide. The wealthy kids get the full package—instruction that is not rote, books that are rich in content. And the poor kids get the stripped-down model—only what they are perceived to need" (Popham, 2004, p. 9).

> On the one side external standardized testing does not do justice to the unique situation of schools that have developed their own profiles; it provides objective, valid, and reliable data that are irrelevant to the unique situation of the single school. On the other side, those who know their school—the teachers, but also the parents and the students—are not able to elaborate adequate measurement tools for this unique school; their self-interested area is reduced. (Riffert, 2005, p. 243)

Relatedly we learn that formats for conducting curricular assessment in tested subject areas often begin to mirror paper and pencil multiple choice models. In a parallel fashion, we see that time devoted to tested areas tends to increase while time devoted to untested areas is reduced.

Turning from curriculum to instruction, one thing we know is that high stakes assessment can restrict the range of instructional approaches to correspond to the testing format. It also appears that high stakes reduce incentives for collaborative instruction (Baker et al., 2010; Fair Test, 2007). There is also a fair amount of research on teaching to the test and test taking skills (Koretz & Jennings, 2010, p. 21). These cover the gambit from coaching to cheating (Fair Test, 2007), or from troubling to threatening the reliability of the test.

Spending considerable amounts of time in test taking sessions is not uncommon (Riffert, 2005; Fair Test, 2007). External testing leads to "teaching to the test" and cramming test relevant content only. As a consequence, the attitudes of creative, adventurous exploration is undermined and substituted by simple pattern recognition. Indeed, Koretz and Jennings (2010, p. 5) "found that a sizeable portion of teachers considered acceptable various forms of test preparation that experts consider inappropriate and likely to bias scores."

> The now widespread practice of giving students intense preparation for state tests—often to the neglect of knowledge and skills that are important aspects of the curriculum but beyond what tests cover—has in many cases invalidated the tests as accurate measures of the broader domain of knowledge that the tests are supposed to measure. (Baker et al., 2010, p. 7)

Tests, not the classroom or school, become "the educational unit" (Riffert, 2005, p. 235). All of this is exacerbated by the fact that tests are not secure, nor are they designed to be so (Fair Test, 2007).

The outcome of all this "pushing up scores in nefarious ways" (Fair Test, 2007, p. 11) is "score inflation—increases in scores substantially greater than the real improvement in students' skills in the tested area—preparation that generates inflation rather than meaningful gains" (Koretz & Jennings, 2010, p. 18). Such inflation damages the validity of high stakes standardized tests such that it can "vitiate estimates of relative performance (hence) comparisons of schools and teachers" (p. 18) and "makes most of the available data potentially worthless for research people" (p. 18). In particular, "evidence is beginning to emerge that score inflation is often severe for low achieving and disadvantaged students, which can create an illusion of increased equity (Koretz & Jennings, 2010, p. 27).

Poor attitude is also at times an unfortunate consequence of high stakes standardized tests. For example, "recent survey data reveal that accountability pressures are associated with higher attrition and reduced morale, especially among teachers in high needs schools" (Baker et al., 2010, p. 19). It also "discourages teachers from wanting to work in schools with the neediest students….Teachers' attrition and demoralization have been associated with test-based accountability effects, particularly in high-need schools (Baker et al., 2010, p. 4).

6.7 Misunderstanding of Why Parents Select Schools

> It is important that schools and LEAs avoid a total preoccupation with academic standards. There is clear evidence that there are often equally important determinants of parental choice. (Coldron & Boulton, 1991, p. 178)

> Government policy often assumes that academic achievement is the primary objective of education. But is this what society values most highly? (Jacob & Lefgren, 2007b, p. 1603)

Considerable attention has been devoted to the critical role of parents in the call for school turnaround. For example, Schneider, Teske, Marshall, and Roth (1998) remind us that "new reforms are based on a belief that education cannot be improved unless power is shifted toward parents, changing the way in which educational policy is made" (p. 774). Very little attention, however, has been devoted to parental contributions to change efforts. That is, parent involvement is strong on paper but weak in practice (Bosetti, 2004). In this section, we add to our analysis of the marginalization of par-

ents in the turnaround work. Specifically, we suggest that the turnaround engine, i.e., high test scores, is not the major reason that parents select schools for their children (Zeehandelaar & Northern, 2013) and that the failure of turnaround work to acknowledge this realty has contributed to the failure of these reform efforts.

Some caveats and notes are in order at the outset. First, most all of the empirical work on parental preferences in the turnaround era is on parental selection of schools in some variety of "open enrollment" strategy. Second, references vary "across" studies. It is necessary to look across studies to develop firm conclusions on the parental preference question. Third, parent "preferences are very heterogeneous" (Hastings, Van Weelden, & Weinstein, 2007, p. 6). Fourth, there seems to be a divide between the preferences of high and low-income families when it comes to what they value from schools. "Low-income parents place lower implicit weights on academics when changing schools" (Hastings et al., 2007, p. 3). That is, "preference attached to a school's mean test scores increases with student income" (p. 6). Fifth, we also learn "that parent preferences are strongly tied to school context" (Jacob & Lefgren, 2007b, p. 1606).

Here is what we know about parents' preferences:

> Studies that examine the actual choices made by parents in selecting a school generally have found that parents consider the location and racial or socioeconomic composition of a school more important than its academic quality. (Jacob & Lefgren, 2007b, p. 1604)

> Our data show that race is fundamentally important to parents. These results are congruent with studies of actual behavior showing that race and class strongly affect choice. (Schneider & Buckley, 2002, p. 142)

The summative points of our review are that: (1) test scores are very important in parental selection of schools, but are not the overwhelming criterion in the participation storyline. At least three characteristics are equal to or surpass academic quality: the student body (race); sibling attendance; and location (proximity) (Fossey, 1994; Glazerman, 1997; Goyette, Farrie, & Freely, 2012); (2) "parents, whilst considering it to be important consistently put other considerations before academic/educational criteria" (Coldron & Boulton, 1991, p. 174); and (3) even though it is the sole focus of accountability for the federal government, preferences are described by parents in different ways—ways that lay fallow as the government undertakes efforts to strengthen schools. The central point is as follows: although academic achievement is heralded as the top criteria in the parent preference algorithm, it is not true.

We also know that government has thrown down a single answer for valuing and assessing school turnarounds. And it is here that we see the seeds of

failure. Failure follows because the turnaround movement, as we noted earlier, ignores the participation and wishes of parents in determining what is valued. One hundred percent of the answer (i.e., high test scores) has been set by "government" not parents, nor professionals for that matter (Jacob & Lefgren, 2007a).

6.8 Lack of Clarity

Almost all of the work in the domain of school turnaround violates "the first law of school improvement": that is, while changes in structures (e.g., forms, policies, and procedures) do not automatically equate with school success, turnaround work presumes that they do. Or as Duke (2006b, p. 3) captures it, "the mere presence of interventions is obviously insufficient to insure improved student achievement." Turnaround planners systematically ignore the reality that it is the quality of DNA inside the interventions that promote success (McGee, 2004; Silva, 2012). Absent the DNA, the changes are meaningless, or potentially damaging. "What we learned bore out the wisdom of emphasizing essential functions rather than specific organizational forms" (Thompson, Brown, Townsend, Henry, & Fortner, 2011, p. x). "An important concluding observation is that public policy that attempts to change school characteristics is not likely to produce better results" (McGee, 2004, p. 115).

We also learn that turnaround often collapses because the path to success is uphill. We also know that as turnaround creates opportunities it is more likely to open the door to "restoration of familiar routines and stifle the prospects for meaningful reform" (Malen et al., 2002, p. 124) as it pushes desired changes.

Equally important, turnaround is often undermined by: (1) the continued desire to question the reform; (2) the inability of staff to see sustainability and as a result make unnecessary and/or unhelpful moves; (3) the routine infusion of confusion into the change effort (Strunk, Marsh, Hashim, & Bush-Mecenas, 2016); and (4) a replacement of the good of improving learning with the idea of enhancing test scores (West et al., 2005); that is, a confusion of change and improvement (Hess & Gift, 2008). As a result "successful turnaround remains the exception rather than the rule" (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015, p. 385). The result is that, "upon closer examination, education's latest silver bullet in the form of turnarounds appears a bit tarnished" (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, p. 11).

It may seem odd to the reader, but turnover also often fails because there is no "single definition for what it means for a school to turnaround" (Player & Katz, 2016, p. 678)—or fail to turnaround (Henig, 2008; Huberman, Parrish, Hannan, Arellanes, & Shambaugh, 2011; Meyers, 2012).

> The delineation of organizational performance often relies upon confusing and ambiguous constructs. Frequently, terms synonymous with "success" are substituted for both "growth" and "improvement" just as "failure" is commingled with "decline." Authors, researchers, and practitioners utilize these and other incongruent terms to contrast differing organizational performances. (Hochbein, 2011, p. 283)

As such, failure in one place is sometimes success in the other and vice versa.

6.9 Failure to Capitalize on Opportunity to Learn

> Most past reviewers of the research on extended school time have generally argued that any positive relationship between allocated school time and achievement is tentative at best and that policies designed to increase the school year or the school day are misplaced without first addressing the quality of instruction or the misuse of existing school time. (Patall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010, p. 414)

We believe that turnaround failure can also be attributed, at least in part, to the failure of the movement to devote much attention to one of the three variables that most prominently explain student learning, i.e., opportunity to learn during the current school day. That is, almost all of the focus on SIG require additions to time occur after the regular school day, not during the current time available to learn. That is, the focus in turnaround is on more time, not better use of existing time. In effect, the huge upside available by enhancing the use of current time is nearly completely overlooked. While clear gains are available from adding more time "to" the school day or year (Fitzpatrick, Grissmer, & Hastedt, 2011; Patall et al., 2010), such changes often: garner medium level effects, come at a significant increase in expenditures, and are not sustainable. Given the poor use of time in schools currently, research pushes us to look at better use of time (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). That is, adding 60 min per day when schools currently lose 60–190 min per day is not the best way forward, especially when we remember that only between 12 and 23 min of that time will be on-task work. Thus, to prevent failure, a wiser pathway would aim first at the use of available opportunity time.

> A robust accountability system would recognize that more instructional time can be used to meet goals, but that more time is neither a perfect substitute for, nor the same thing as, better use of time. (Marcotte & Hansen, 2010, p. 57)

6.10 Chapter Synthesis

In this chapter, we discussed issues that are important to understanding school success. A few pieces of information that are critical to analyzing the policy of school turnaround are missing from the research. There remains an unquestioned assumption that the federal grants are sufficient and there is little discussion of administrative costs. Furthermore, non-educators, school board members, and mid-level administrators are barely addressed. School turnaround introduces considerable accountability pressures, which in turn may focus teachers on achieving short term improvements in test scores. School turnaround is thus a reform done to schools rather than in collaboration with them, which in part explains its lack of success. Policymakers chose an arbitrary cutoff to determine the lowest performing schools and then placed a tremendous amount of pressure on principals to realize test score improvements. School turnaround focuses almost exclusively on standardized testing scores as the outcome. Standardized tests were not originally designed for this purpose and this strategy is likely to lead to the gaming of tests by educators. School turnaround attempts to change the DNA of the school via a change in policy and procedure, which is likely to have unexpected and deleterious effects.

Notes

1. This section is adapted from our framework of turnaround in the corporate and non-profit sectors (see Murphy & Meyers, 2008).
2. The statements supporting our arguments in this section are taken from Murphy & Torre, 2014.

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Part III
Moving Ahead

Chapter 7
Insights from Turnaround Failure

In this final chapter we present insights from research and practice in the domain of school turnaround. We begin with a short description of the three core changes that turnarounds are designed to nurture in schools. In the second section of the chapter, we present a list of 35 insights that we have culled from our work on school turnaround. All come from the earlier chapters. The goal here is simply to make them explicit. In the final section, we set out eight lessons to employ in understanding turnaround.

7.1 Core Domains

7.1.1 Organization and Management

For some time now, "critics have argued that the reforms of the Progressive Era produced bureaucratic arteriosclerosis—and the low productivity of a declining industry" (Tyack, 1993, p. 3). There is an expanding feeling that the structure of schooling that was hard wired into the system between 1890 and 1920 and that has dominated education ever since has outlived its usefulness. In particular, it is held that the management tools of the bureaucratic paradigm pull energy and commitment away from learning. Reformers maintain that the structure cemented in place during the first recreation of schooling between 1890 and 1920 is not capable of supporting excellence in education and that, even worse, bureaucratic management has actually been damaging learning.

It is also argued that bureaucracy has led to siloed schools, that the structure that defined twentieth century schooling is counterproductive to the

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needs and interests of educators in post-industrial schools. In particular, these reviewers find that the existing structure is incompatible with a professional orientation (Curry, 2008). They maintain that the hierarchical foundations laid during the reform era (1890–1920) of the industrial period have neutered teachers and prevented the development of collegial ties. Researchers contend that "it has become increasingly clear that if we want to improve schools for student learning, we must also improve schools for the adults who work in them" (Smylie & Hart, 1999, p. 421).

As might be expected, given this tremendous attack on the basic organizational structure of schools, stakeholders at all levels are clamoring for significant reform, arguing that the bureaucratic framework of school organization needs to be rebuilt using different blueprints and materials (MacBeath, 2009). There is widespread agreement that the top down, authoritarian approach to leadership has taken us about as far as it can (Gronn, 2009). There is a significant demand for new ways of organizing schools especially changes in the way they are managed.

New perspectives of education such as turnaround feature these new methods of organizing and managing schools. In the image of schools for the twenty-first century, the hierarchical bureaucratic organizational structures that have defined schooling since the early 1900s are giving way to systems that are more focused on capacity building and that are more organic.

In these redesigned, post-industrial school organizations, there are basic shifts in roles, relationships, and responsibilities: Traditional patterns of relationships are altered; authority flows are less hierarchical, for example, traditional distinctions between administrators and teachers begin to blur; role definitions are both more general and more flexible—specialization is no longer held in such high regard; because influence is based on expertise, leadership is dispersed and is connected to competence for needed tasks as well as formal positions; and independence and isolation are replaced by cooperative work. Furthermore, the traditional structural orientation of schools is overshadowed by a focus on the human element. The operant goal is no longer maintenance of the organizational structure but rather the development of human resources (Tichy & Cardwell, 2004). Building learning climates and promoting organizational adaptively replaces the more traditional emphasis on uncovering and applying the one best model of performance. A premium is placed on organizational flexibility and purpose and values (Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010).

A new model for turnaround acknowledges that shared influence strengthens the organization (MacBeath, 2005). Institutional perspectives no longer dominate the organizational landscape. Rather, schools are reconceptualized

as communities, professional workplaces, and learning organizations. Professional community-oriented conceptions that challenge historical bureaucratic understandings of schools as organizations move to center stage (Bulkley & Hicks, 2005). Ideas such as community of leadership, the norms of collaboration, inquiry communities, and the principle of care are woven into the fabric of the school organization (Robinson, 2007). The metaphor of the school as community is brightly illuminated (Murphy, 2013).

7.1.2 Environmental Dynamics

Some analysts of the institutional level of schools— the interface of the school with its larger (generally immediate) environment—argue that the industrial approach to education led to a privileging of government and a cult of professionalism and to the "almost complete separation of schools from the community and, in turn, discouragement of local community involvement in decision making related to the administration of schools" (Burke, 1992, p. 33). Critiques of extant governance systems center on two topics: (1) frustration with the government-professional monopoly and (2) critical analyses of the basic governance infrastructure—bureaucracy.

Many chroniclers of the changing governance structures in schools envision the demise of education as a sheltered government monopoly dominated by professionals. As noted above, in its stead they forecast the emergence of a system of schooling driven by economic and political forces that substantially increase the saliency of market and democratic forces. Embedded in this conception are a number of interesting dynamics. One of the key elements involves a recalibration of the locus of control among levels of government. Originally called democratic localism, it has more recently come to be known simply as localization or, more commonly, decentralization. However, it is labeled, it represents a backlash against "the thorough triumph of a centralized and bureaucratic form of educational organization" (Katz, 1971, p. 305) and governance of the industrial era of education.

A second ideological foundation of turnaround can best be thought of as a recasting of democracy, a replacement of representative governance with more populist conceptions. While we use the term more broadly than does Cronin, our conception of the solidifying convergence here shares with his grounding in: (1) the falling fortunes of representative democracy, a "growing distrust of legislative bodies... [and] a growing suspicion that privileged interests exert far greater influence on the typical politician than does the

common voter" (Cronin, 1989, p. 4), and (2) recognition of the claims of its advocates that greater direct voice will produce important benefits for society.

A third foundation encompasses a rebalancing of the control equation in favor of lay citizens while diminishing the power of the state and (in some ways) educational professionals. This line of ideas emphasizes parental empowerment. It is, at times, buttressed by a strong strand of anti-professionalism that underscores citizen control, and local involvement.

The ideology of choice is a fourth pillar that is also rebuilding linkages between the school and parents and community stakeholders. Sharing a good deal of space with the concepts of localism, direct democracy, and lay control, choice is designed to open up both the demand and supply side of markets (Murphy, 2012).

7.1.3 Learning and Teaching

From the onset of the industrial revolution, education in the United States has been largely defined by a behavioral psychological model of learning—a model that fits nicely with the bureaucratic system of school organization. This viewpoint in turn nurtured the development of the factory and medical models of instruction that have dominated schooling throughout the twentieth century. Under these two models, the belief that the role of schooling is to sort students into the able and less able—those who would work with their heads and those who would work with their hands—became deeply embedded into the fabric of schooling.

A shift in the operate model of learning is a fundamental dynamic of the struggle to turn around schools. Of real significance, if rarely noted, is the fact that this new model reinforces the democratic tenets embedded in turnaround views of governance and administration discussed above. The behavioral psychological model that highlights the innate capacity of the learner is replaced by cognitive or constructivist psychology and newer sociological perspectives on learning. Under this approach to learning, which is at the heart of real turnaround efforts, schools that historically have been n the business of promoting student adaptation to the existing social order are being transformed to ensure equality of opportunity for all learner.

The emerging redefinition of teaching means that teachers, historically organized to carry out instructional designs and the implement curricular materials developed from afar, begin to exercise considerably more control over their profession and the routines of the workplace. Analysts see this

reorganization playing out in a variety of ways at the school level. At the most fundamental level, teachers have a much more active voice in developing the goals and purposes of schooling—goals that act to delimit or expand the conception of teaching itself. They also have a good deal more to say about the curricular structures and pedagogical approaches employed in their schools. Finally, teachers demonstrate more control over the supporting ingredients of schooling—such as budgets, personnel, and administration—that affect the way they carry out their responsibilities.

Advocates also see teaching becoming a more collegial activity. Isolation, so deeply ingrained in the structure and culture of the profession, gives way to more collaborative efforts among teachers. At the macro level, teachers are redefining their roles to include collaborative management of the profession, especially providing direction for professional standards. At a more micro level, new organizational structures are being created to allow teachers to plan and teach together and to make important decisions about the nature of their roles. A culture that recognizes the importance of collaborative efforts at professional development also characterizes teacher role redesign in turnaround schools.

7.2 Insights from Failed Turnarounds

We close with lessons that we learned by studying turnaround over the last 15 years. Some lessons were quite visible. Others became visible by examining missing material, material that if present would have helped prevent failure.

- Students need to be the center of gravity
- Things work best when customers (parents) are active supporters
- Decisions should be based on evidence
- Schooling is a moral enterprise
- Positivism trumps negativism
- Collective community works better than individual cells
- Failure is the norm
- Structures do not predict performance
- Specific interventions are less critical than the process
- Turnarounds are never permanent
- Getting turnaround right is hard work
- Turnaround should anchor on “academic press” and “care”
- There is no universal panacea
- Leadership is essential

- District and state support is essential
- Turnaround is uneven in implementation and unpredictable in process
- Use test results appropriately
- A comprehensive set of strategies seems wise
- Turnaround work is really costly
- Capacity building is essential
- Relationship building is critical
- Evidence free strategies are problematic
- Doing turnaround right is hard to do
- Ongoing assessment is essential
- Help people be successful before deciding that they are not capable
- Watch for unintended consequences
- Context is key
- Teachers must believe in the work being undertaken
- Address both internal and external problems and issues
- Telling professionals what to do does not work particularly well
- Be proactive in establishing goals
- Develop goals that are a stretch but attainable
- Address problems when things do not operate as expected
- Share leadership
- Focus on the quality of instruction

7.3 Lessons for Moving Forward

1. Turnarounds can work, although success is not guaranteed. Of the turnaround initiatives, no one intervention appears to be significantly more successful than others. Such interventions are difficult to sustain, especially stronger ones that seem to be more difficult to manage as well as more costly.
2. Since single turnaround interventions do not always succeed, mixing and matching to develop a comprehensive approach seems promising. A comprehensive approach to turnaround failing schools for contextualized packages that are able to address specific concerns for a given school.
3. Successful turnaround schools almost always have good, if not exceptional, principals. As a common strand across successful school turnarounds, leadership is crucial. The principal typically sets the turnaround agenda while leading teachers, involving the community, and building general capacity.
4. Capacity building appears to be an imperative component of turning around failing schools. Developing relationships is integral in creating a positive environment in which to learn and in establishing a shared vision. Cooperation and human development are two elements of capacity building that failing schools often lack but need to move forward.

5. Teachers must believe in the turnaround interventions being implemented. Their opinions should be weighed when deciding upon turnaround strategies, especially considering their role in implementing the plans. When teachers do not buy in to the turnaround intervention(s), failing schools do not improve. Therefore, teachers should be seen as partners.
6. Connecting with parents is another important aspect of school turnaround. Since many of the students in failing schools face disruptive factors to learning outside of school, turnaround initiatives should engage parents on some level.
7. Failing schools need ample fiscal resources to turn around. Some failing schools lack these resources at the outset, while some others receive significant financial support immediately after being deemed failing. However, there are cases where the additional financial resources have ended too soon for the schools to completely implement their interventions fully.
8. In their attempts to turn around, failing schools should consistently assess themselves. State and federal measures do not address some aspects of failure. Self-analysis enables failing schools to monitor successes as well as focus on areas that continue to lag.

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