



Center on School Turnaround at WestEd

School Board Training

Purpose of the Project

All Local Education Agencies (LEAs) continuously manage two central processes: (1) the process by which the LEA itself improves; and (2) the way the LEA directs and supports the improvement of each of its schools. Many LEAs tackle a third task: facilitating turnaround in their lowest performing schools. Local school boards carry a huge responsibility in setting the policies that underlie LEA and school improvement processes and the LEA's management of school turnaround. The Center on School Turnaround (CST) created this training to help a local school board build its own capacity to set effective policy on improvement and turnaround processes

Objectives for the Project

The objectives for school boards using the CST School Board Training are to:

Phase I

1. Assess the school board's areas of strength, inconsistency, and opportunity relative to its oversight of district improvement, school improvement, and turnaround.
2. Learn from the experience of other school boards by reading and discussing a report about school boards and two case studies.
3. Understand the CST's *Four Domains for Rapid Improvement* and how this frameworks might provide a conceptual structure for district and school improvement processes.
4. Itemize possible "next steps" the board may take in response to the information and understandings acquired through the training.

Phase II

5. **Option:** Develop an action plan for strengthening the school board's effectiveness in: (a) setting policies related to continuous district improvement, school improvement, and turnaround; (b) overseeing the implementation of these policies. Implement the action plan and monitor the progress for several months.

Timeline and Time Commitment

Phase I of the project is conducted over the course of six months, with discussion during meetings (20 to 30 minutes each) for six monthly meetings (with 30 to 45 minutes of reading by board members between meetings). The optional Phase II guides the board in creating, implementing, and monitoring a plan to strengthen the board's policies relative to district improvement and school improvement and turnaround. Phase II requires about 20 to 30 minutes per monthly meeting on the board-selected project over the next six months. A small amount of time is required for the Facilitator to make copies of materials for distribution to board members at meetings.

Outcomes

Change in school board understanding and practice on improvement and turnaround processes is measured by a pre- and post-self-assessment survey completed by school board members. An optional board improvement project selected by the board in light of the first survey results includes board-created criteria to determine effectiveness.



Key Roles in the Project

- **Center on School Turnaround:** CST provides the School Board Toolkit, Facilitator's Online Portal, readings, and pre-recorded introductory webinar; supports State Partner.
- **State Partner:** A Regional Comprehensive Center, SEA, or state school board association or any combination of these entities may serve as the State Partner. The State Partner's role is to recruit interested LEAs, conduct the introductory webinar for them (with Q & A following pre-recorded content), and support the LEA Facilitator.
- **LEA Facilitator:** The LEA Facilitator coordinates the project for the LEA. The Facilitator may be provided by the State Partner or the LEA itself (superintendent, board member, or consultant).
- **School Board:** The school board members complete an initial online survey, read brief reports outside of meetings, discuss the reports in meetings (20 to 30 minutes), and optionally select a board-improvement project based on the survey results, implement the project, and complete a follow-up survey.
- The CST School Board Training process may be administered by the school board itself or with the assistance of an external Facilitator. The toolkit provides the Facilitator with all of the resources he/she may need to manage the training program. Facilitators can contact boards@adi.org with specific questions.

Resources Provided by CST

The toolkit is designed to take a limited amount of time from each monthly board meeting over the course of six months. Elements of the training and toolkit may be used by new board members, who take office after the initial six-months of focused training is completed. This toolkit includes case studies of two school boards that played particularly strong roles in their Local Education Agencies' (LEAs) efforts to dramatically improve student performance. The case studies are supported by guiding discussion questions and brief self-assessments.

The CST School Board Training guides board members through a series of readings and activities. Boards may speed up or slow down the proposed timeline based on their members' needs. For example, if the board is able to meet for large blocks of time, activities for multiple months may be combined. The proposed timeline is based on the assumption that the school board must schedule this project within its regular, monthly business meetings at which much other work must be done. This timeline limits the time required during board meetings by asking school board members to read case studies and complete self-assessments individually, outside the board meetings.

Getting Started

The first step is to confirm a State Partner's (RCC, SEA, and/or school board association) relationship with the Center on School Turnaround. Then CST will provide a webinar and instructions for the State Partner to equip the Partner with necessary information and access to the online system to conduct the project with the school boards the Partner recruits for the project. The project may start at any time for a school board and begins simply with the naming of the Facilitator and the Facilitator's enrollment with CST.

For a State Partner to get started, email one of the following:

- Julie Corbett at: jcorbett@corbetteeducation.com
- Carlos McCauley at: cmccaul@wested.org
- Sam Redding at: sredding@adi.org