



HOW DISTRICTS AND STATES CAN SUPPORT INSTRUCTIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE TURNAROUND CONTEXT

Dallas Hambrick Hitt & Coby V. Meyers,
University of Virginia Darden/Curry
Partnership for Leaders in Education

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Introduction

Because the quality of teaching is the most important school-based factor for student learning,¹ a focus on instruction is pivotal for successfully turning around failing schools and districts. These school systems need to abandon instructional practices that are not working, usher in new approaches that lead to improved instruction, and create conditions that enable and inspire effective teaching that allows students to achieve their full potential. But as local systems take on this instructional transformation challenge, they often lack guidance on how to enact rapid instructional change and create an infrastructure to support and sustain effective instruction. Similarly, state education agencies (SEAs) intent on providing assistance to districts have limited practice- and research-based clarity on which district actions to support and how best to support them.

To help address these gaps, the Center on School Turnaround (CST) designed a project to examine the practices of two districts — both members of the University of Virginia Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education, a CST partner — that are successfully improving instruction within their multiple turnaround schools. Our CST research team conducted a series of interviews, using protocols based on the framework defined in our *Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement: A Systems Framework*,² to determine how these districts enacted two key instructional transformation practices: (1) diagnosing and responding to student learning needs, and (2) providing rigorous, evidence-based instruction.³ We then analyzed the responses in light of existing CST knowledge from the landscape of turnaround research and practice, and derived a set of guidelines for districts striving to rapidly transform instruction in turnaround schools. From this same knowledge base, we also extrapolated recommendations for SEAs on the kinds of SEA support that can most effectively bolster districts' efforts.

This paper presents those guidelines and recommendations. In Part I we define instructional transformation in a turnaround context and present guidance for districts on enacting the diagnostic and instructional improvement practices that are key to instructional transformation. In Part II we describe how educators in two key district leadership roles — principal supervisors and principals — can make pivotal contributions to instructional transformation.

Finally, in Part III we suggest how, and at what points, an SEA can best apply its expertise, resources, and perspectives to support districts' instructional transformation efforts.

1 Nichols, S. L., Glass, G. V., & Berliner, D. C. (2012). High-stakes testing and student achievement: Updated analyses with NAEP data. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 20(20). Retrieved from <http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/1048>

2 The Center on School Turnaround. (2017). *Four domains for rapid school improvement: A systems framework* [The Center on School Turnaround at WestEd]. San Francisco, CA: WestEd. Retrieved from http://centeronschoolturnaround.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CST_Four-Domains-Framework-Final.pdf

3 Note: A third practice, removing barriers and providing opportunities, is also included in the CST's Instructional Transformation domain. It is defined as (1) systematically identifying barriers to student learning and opportunities to enhance learning for students who demonstrate early mastery; (2) partnering with community-based organizations, such as health and wellness organizations, youth organizations, and other service providers, to support students in overcoming obstacles and developing the personal competencies that propel success in school and life. Given its focus on external partnerships, this practice was beyond the scope of this project.

Part I: District Practices and Actions Leading to Instructional Transformation

Instructional transformation is a process that creates the infrastructure needed to support rapid improvement of teaching and learning. Because instructional quality in low-performing schools is commonly low or inconsistent, this process is at the core of any effective turnaround approach. In such schools, educators' capacity to significantly alter instructional practice likely needs to be developed, suggesting that those charged with supporting teaching should consider redesigning and rethinking how to systematically facilitate instructional improvement. Leaders can develop systems to diagnose and respond to student learning needs, ensure rigorous and standards-based instruction, remove barriers, and provide opportunities for learning enhancement — changes that allow instructional transformation to take root and be sustained.

This section offers guidance on two key district practices and related actions that can create this kind of sustainable instructional infrastructure. This guidance is supported by findings from our interviews with superintendents, associate superintendents, executive directors for curriculum and instruction, and principal supervisors from two successful districts that work in partnership with the CST. (See the appendix for a description of the project methodology.) We analyzed the experiences reported by interviewees, identified areas of alignment across the districts, then categorized actions taken within the CST's larger knowledge base on effective instructional turnaround, using the Four Domains framework.

Table 1, on page 3, presents an overview of the key practices and related actions. Discussion follows the table.

Table 1. How Districts Enact Two Key Practices in Instructional Transformation

Practice 1: Diagnosing and responding to student learning needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnose student learning needs and use identified needs to drive all instructional decisions. • Incorporate effective student supports and instructional interventions. • Use fluid, rapid assessment and adjustment of instructional grouping and delivery to adapt to student learning needs. 	
District Action	Description of District Action
Collecting and rapidly providing data from interim assessments	Ensure that interim assessment data are available to schools and teachers as soon as possible.
Posting data in teacher work areas	Require schools to make data public for purposes of increasing transparency and collective responsibility and helping teachers identify sources of peer expertise for curricular and instructional support.
Facilitating reflective conversations among school-level educators	Provide dedicated time for schools to debrief about practice and identify what needs to be changed.
Requiring that teacher action plans be based on interim assessments	Provide dedicated time to schools for teachers to engage in strategic planning for individual students.
Designing and implementing school calendars that include time for teachers to collaborate and plan	Provide time, within the regular school schedule, for teachers to work together, with expert support, on instructional improvement.

Practice 2: Providing rigorous, evidence-based instruction

- Set high academic standards and ensure that access to rigorous standards-based curricula.
- Provide supports to ensure that evidence is used in instructional planning and facilitation of student learning.
- As gaps are identified in the curriculum or instructional delivery, develop plans to strengthen develop plans that address problems and strengthen curriculum and instruction.

District Action	District Action Description
Creating topic teams	Coordinate districtwide teams with demonstrated expertise that can be deployed to support teachers in specific areas of the curriculum.
Developing pacing guides	Facilitate topic teams' development of companion documents for the curriculum, to identify the amount of time needed to effectively teach topics.
Aligning interim assessments to pacing guides	Develop districtwide assessments that track student progress aligned to the pacing guide.
Aligning common formative assessments to interim assessments	Facilitate teacher-team development of assessments that differ by school to track student progress between administration of the interim assessments.
Planning instructional support	Dedicate time to schools for teachers to strategize how to move forward on student learning challenges.
Educating principals about high-quality instruction	Identify principals' needs and develop aligned supports.
Conducting classroom walkthroughs and debriefs	Visit classrooms to engage in the walkthrough cycle.

Practice 1: Diagnosing and responding to student learning needs

The foundation for instructional improvement is understanding collective and individual student needs. Strategic diagnosis and response to student learning requires that leaders set up processes to facilitate the collection, sharing, and analysis of achievement data and the development of plans for adjusting instruction based on demonstrated needs.

Collecting and rapidly providing data from interim assessments. Interim assessments aligned to summative assessments provide snapshots of or updates on student mastery in advance of the summative assessment. Interim assessments are administered districtwide at intervals throughout the school year — often quarterly. Student performance data on interim assessments should be made available the day after the tests are administered, so that teachers and leaders can quickly begin developing action plans to address student learning needs. Districts can identify and provide resources such as additional staffing and scoring systems to ensure that student data are ready immediately after testing.

Posting data in teacher work areas. Teacher- and student-level data can be posted in teacher work areas to make them public. Posting data helps to de-privatize teachers' practice, with the goal of creating a culture of collective responsibility for student learning — i.e., all teachers holding themselves and their peers accountable for meeting learning expectations. Teachers who struggle with teaching certain concepts can examine peers' data to identify a colleague more successful in that curricular area, who could serve as a model or mentor.

Facilitating reflective conversations among school-level educators. Processes that support regular analysis and reflection on data can help teachers shift mindsets, from assuming they know reasons for students' low performance to instead using evidence to identify root causes. To that end, reflective conversations between principals and teachers should occur after interim assessment results are released. The principal/teacher conversations are guided by what the assessments reveal as areas of student strengths and weaknesses in each curricular area. They include such questions as, "What does the pacing guide indicate for coverage" and "What does it look like to teach this concept on pace with the pacing guide?" (See more in the "developing pacing guides" section on the following page.)

Principal supervisors need to have similar conversations with principals. These discussions should focus on instructional leadership and on the actions a principal can take to support teachers to better serve students who did not perform well on the interim assessment and to hold teachers accountable for student learning.

Additionally, at regular intervals, districts should convene the principal supervisor(s), deputy superintendent(s), directors of curriculum and instruction, and turnaround school principals to discuss next steps for teacher and student support. The purpose of these discussions is ensuring that the district is providing principals with high-quality supervision and support. Principal support often entails leadership or instructional coaching, or creation of a topic team that collaborates with the principal to address instructional needs. (See also "creating topic teams" on the following page.)

Requiring action plans based on interim assessments. Ideally, the district processes the interim assessments overnight, provides results the next day, and adjusts teachers' schedules to allow for an immediate teacher workday for analysis of the resulting data. During that workday, teachers collaborate in teams, and also work individually, to develop action plans to support struggling students. Each student in need of remediation has an action plan tailored to his or her needs.

Designing and implementing school calendars that include time for teachers to collaborate and plan. Teachers need regularly scheduled time to work collaboratively to align instruction to improved curriculum standards and to determine how to re-teach or otherwise adjust instruction, based on insights from their data inquiry. Without that time, structured into the regular school schedule, real instructional change is unlikely to occur, no matter how good the teachers' diagnostic work is. In addition to time, teachers may also need assistance, in the form of resources and content expertise, as they think through and develop their new instructional plans. They will also benefit from classroom coaching as they work to put new and unfamiliar instructional approaches into practice. Districts should consider creating new positions or reconfiguring existing roles to provide teachers with these critical instructional supports.

Practice 2: Providing rigorous, evidence-based instruction

Instructional improvement requires developing structures and mechanisms that help strengthen teachers' knowledge of academic standards, their understanding of curricular

frameworks aligned with the standards, and their repertoires of effective instructional strategies and practices.

Supportive actions districts can take include creating topic teams with expertise on aspects of the curriculum, developing pacing guides and aligned assessments, and providing just-in-time support for schools and teacher teams.

Creating topic teams. Topic teams consist of directors of curriculum and select master teachers who are district experts on content and instruction. Ranging in size from five to 12 people, topic teams focus on creating and refining pacing guides for each grade level and subject area and on developing interim assessments. Additionally, they provide principals with instructional leadership advice on effective ways to improve teachers' knowledge in specific subjects and their skill in using particular instructional strategies and practices.

Developing pacing guides. A pacing guide organizes topics within the curriculum so that teachers understand how to cover all the content in the course of a given time period. The guide highlights each essential component of the curriculum, along with the exact number of hours and days needed to teach each one. It also indicates when the interim assessments should be administered during the instructional cycle.

Aligning interim assessments to pacing guide. Some states provide interim assessments, aligned with the state's summative assessment, that districts can use to check for student learning in accordance with what teachers have taught during a given time interval. In states where this is not the case (as with the districts in this project), district topic teams may create interim assessments, aligning them with the pacing guides, so that teachers in each subject or grade level are equipped with data they can use to adjust instruction.

Aligning common formative assessments to interim assessments. Districts in this project empowered each school to develop its own teacher-generated assessments, known as common formative assessments (CFAs). Created by teacher teams, these formative assessments are common across each grade at the elementary level and across each subject at the secondary level. CFAs are a means of checking for student understanding and mastery of subject matter between district administrations of interim assessments. However, one problem reported by the districts in this project is that students often do well on the CFA, but not on the subsequent interim assessment suggesting weaknesses in the CFA. These districts use this gap as an opportunity for district instructional support staff to discuss with teacher CFA development teams the importance of rigorous curricula and appropriately aligned assessments. It may also be important for districts to provide training in assessment development for teachers.

Planning instructional support. In the two studied districts, teachers and principals are able to request assistance and support from the district. When, for example, an elementary school's fifth-grade teacher professional learning community requests support for improvement of math CFAs or of lesson plans, district instructional support staff respond by developing and enacting an instructional support plan tailored to the needs expressed for the specific unit or concept.

Educating principals about high-quality instruction. Principals receive ongoing support and coaching to strengthen their knowledge and skills about instruction and instructional leadership, especially their ability to differentiate between levels of teacher quality and to identify where and how to intervene with support. For example, one of the districts in this project reported that, despite teachers receiving formal training on data and instruction, principals remained dissatisfied with student learning results. To address this challenge, the

district helped principals enhance their skills at analyzing key aspects of teacher practice. Specifically, district curriculum directors met regularly with principals to collaboratively review each teacher's lesson plans. By examining those plans alongside the curriculum directors, principals learned to better differentiate poor, mediocre, or high quality plans. Through that process, they realized that the number of low-quality lesson plans likely explained, at least in part, the disappointing student learning results.

Conducting classroom walkthroughs and debriefs. Principal supervisors and curriculum directors accompany principals on classroom walkthroughs at least monthly. After each series of walkthroughs at a given school, these leaders come together to debrief about the quality of the classroom interactions they have seen, the teacher data for the classes observed (in the form of CFA results), and the leadership implications for improving classroom instruction schoolwide. The district leaders work with the principal on how to provide effective feedback to teachers, and both the principal and the district leaders leave these meetings with itemized action plans for supporting teachers and students.

Part II: How Principal Supervisors and Principals Can Help Enact Instructional Transformation

While research shows that leadership is a key factor in student learning,⁴ it can be difficult for site and district leaders to determine exactly how to support instructional transformation in the turnaround context. This section provides guidance on specific actions that those in two key leadership roles — principal supervisors and principals — can take to promote rapid instructional improvement.

Role 1: Principal supervisors

Turnaround principals need to orchestrate instructional support that enables all teachers at their sites to rapidly and continuously improve their effectiveness. Because the challenges involved are complex, and because instruction success is dependent on principals' skills in evaluating and supporting quality instruction, principals require routine support, guidance, and coaching from principal supervisors.

To ensure adequate principal support, formal structures and processes need to be in place wherein principal supervisors both evaluate and bolster principals' effectiveness as instructional leaders. Components include:

Scheduling regular meetings with predictable formats. Creating a routine of regularly scheduled meetings that follow a predictable format helps promote a sense of order and provides both the principal and the principal supervisor with opportunities to track accomplishments and ongoing challenges within a principal's practice.

Using the walkthrough cycle to structure the regular meetings. Successful instructional transformation is rooted in the walkthrough cycle — that is, the practice of having principals repeatedly observe each teacher and provide feedback. The cycle consists of observing the teacher, conducting a post-observation meeting to debrief with the teacher, and re-observing the teacher to check for implementation of agreed-upon actions.

Principal supervisors can use this cycle to frame principal support. Principal supervisors ideally meet with individual principals at their sites at least twice per month, for approximately two to two-and-a-half hours. These meetings can be structured so that, during each visit, the principal supervisor accompanies the principal on at least two classroom observations, observes the principal conducting a post-observation meeting with a teacher, and then engages in reflective conversation with the principal to provide advice, consultation,

4 Hitt, D. H., & Tucker, P. D. (2015). Systematic review of key leader practices found to influence student achievement: A unified framework. *Review of Educational Research, 86*(2), 531-569.

and coaching. This feedback to the principal, especially on how he or she handles the content and tone of the post-observation meeting with the teacher, helps the principal strengthen skills — e.g., how to glean important points during the teacher observation, communicate and describe what was observed in a non-threatening way, and help teachers advance their own practice.

Developing action plans to track progress. In tandem with their regular meetings, the principal supervisor and the principal can co-create an action plan that they then regularly update and use to track and analyze progress over time. The plan would, for example, reflect the actions the principal commits to, in consultation with the supervisor, to support the teacher(s) observed, including when to re-visit the teacher to check for improvements. This approach supports principals in dedicating time and effort to matters of instructional transformation. It also models an action planning process that principals can adapt and use as they support teachers and hold them accountable for improving their own practice.

Role 2: Principals

The systematic cycle of teacher observation, reflective dialogue, and pedagogical support described above is a fundamental way that principals lead and catalyze instructional transformation. Here we highlight two other ways the principal carries out that role.

Leading the assessment program. In districts that provide interim assessments, the principal must ensure that teachers have a deep understanding of the standards these assessments are aligned with — i.e., what students are expected to know and be able to do, by subject and grade level. Relatedly, principals need to facilitate teacher collaboration in developing and reviewing lesson and unit plans that ensure that each teacher's classroom instruction aligns with the district's pacing guides. Principals can also facilitate teacher design and use of weekly or biweekly CFAs. A common dilemma, noted in Part I, involves misalignment between CFA results and interim assessment; a student may do well on a CFA, but not on the subsequent interim assessment. To address this disconnect, principals can facilitate conversations with their teachers about ensuring that the level of rigor on the CFAs reflects that of the interim assessment. They can also enlist the help of district coaches and coordinators to determine the types of support teachers need — to rethink not only their CFA approach but also their concept of mastery.

Leading school-based data analysis. In turnaround schools, it is critical for principals to facilitate teachers' analysis and use of CFA and interim assessment results. After each interim assessment, all teachers in the district need to have a workday dedicated to data analysis and intensive, individualized action planning for any student who has not demonstrated mastery. Principals, meanwhile, provide support to help their teachers build skills for data analysis and for identifying and using instructional strategies and practices tailored to student needs that assessments reveal.

Part 3: Implications for State Support

This section identifies high-leverage strategies and actions that SEAs can employ to support the district practices addressed above. These are summarized in Table 2, followed by a discussion of each.

Table 2. Implications for State Education Agency Support

Support for diagnosing and responding to student learning needs (Practice 1)

- Facilitate design of a standards-aligned assessment program.
- Facilitate efficient and effective data collection and analysis.
- Facilitate training on data analysis and data-informed instruction for district instructional staff.
- Encourage rapid response, innovative practices, and discontinuation of ineffective approaches.

Support for providing rigorous, evidence-based instruction (Practice 2)

- Co-create strategic plans with timelines for developing and implementing components of data-informed instruction with districts.
- Assist districts in developing local curriculum standards aligned to state learning standards.
- Facilitate district design and implementation of job-embedded teaching planning.

Support for principal supervision for instructional transformation

- Assist districts in determining standards for principal supervisors in a turnaround context.
- Provide districts with information and resources for effectively supporting principal supervisors.
- Provide support for defining the principal supervisor role.

Support for diagnosing and responding to student learning needs (Practice 1)

SEAs play a key role in ensuring an effective statewide assessment system as well as timely data collection and sharing. They can also provide districts with resources and support to incorporate teacher planning time into school schedules, a change that enables teachers to plan adjustments to classroom strategies, based on assessment results.

Facilitate design of a standards-aligned assessment program. One of the highest-leverage contributions a state can make to student learning is to design and implement a standards-aligned assessment program. Doing so requires that the state lead the

establishment of learning standards as well as development of curriculum frameworks aligned with those standards. The state then also takes the lead in ensuring that there is a suite of assessments to measure student progress on the standards, starting with statewide assessments developed or chosen by the state and including aligned interim assessments, across grades and subjects, that districts can use formatively to help track student progress and make instructional adjustments.

Some states provide interim assessments that districts can opt to use. That was not the case for districts in this project, which took on the complex task of developing their own interim assessments. In such cases, SEAs can play a major role by co-developing the assessments with districts or by providing planning, content, and design support as well as exemplars of interim assessments.

Facilitate efficient and effective data collection and analysis. As noted previously, districts need to provide teachers with immediate and accurate results on interim assessments — at the student, class, and school levels — to ensure that no time is lost for planning next steps and building momentum for improved teacher and principal practice. This kind of quick turnaround and action on assessment results requires that districts have systems in place for data collection, posting, analysis, discussion, and action planning. Because district leaders who are deeply involved in turnaround planning may have limited capacity for developing such systems, SEAs can help by providing direct assistance for doing so or by establishing a bank of approved, reputable providers that districts can contract with to provide that assistance.

Facilitate training on data analysis and data-informed instruction for district instructional staff. To jumpstart turnaround, and also to provide a solid foundation for improving instructional infrastructure, districts need to articulate an instructional vision that helps teachers understand the purpose and value of data. A clear instructional vision also helps teachers build their capacity to interpret, analyze, and use the data to make instructional decisions to meet student needs. SEAs can support these efforts by helping district instructional staff build their capacity to provide teachers with professional development in data inquiry and use. Again, SEAs can directly provide training or establish a bank of approved, reputable providers that districts can contract with.

Encourage rapid response, innovative practices, and discontinuation of ineffective approaches. When students, classes, or schools continue to demonstrate a lack of mastery or progression, schools and districts need to make changes that disrupt business as usual and put more-effective practices in place. Because time is of the essence, and because district leaders may be too close to the problems and too habituated to ways of operating to clearly see where interventions should best occur, the outside perspective and influence of the SEA can matter significantly. For example, assigning students to a teacher who displays masterful teaching in an area of the curriculum that students have not mastered makes sense, but is often a step not taken because it is “out of the box” to disrupt teaching and student assignments midyear. Similarly, lengthening the school day or week can provide time to reinforce or reteach lessons, but this option is often not used because of financial or other perceived constraints. SEAs can work with districts to solve problems, propose options to pursue in lieu of accepting the status quo, and identify and/or provide additional resources.

Support for providing rigorous, evidence-based instruction (Practice 2)

To support high-quality instruction, states can work with districts to help ensure that the districts have in place solid strategic plans for instructional improvement, high-quality curricula aligned to state learning standards, aligned assessments, and collaborative teacher planning time.

Co-create strategic plans with timelines for developing and implementing components of data-based instruction with districts. Districts can benefit from high-level planning support. The process of developing goals and anticipating needs and resources for attaining the goals is a key component of instructional transformation. Districts may shortcut this process, though, due to perceived time constraints or pressures, or even lack of expertise in strategic planning. States can help ensure that districts develop solid plans by providing the needed resources and expertise to help them do so.

Assist districts in developing local curriculum standards aligned to state requirements. As discussed earlier, establishing rigorous curriculum standards, with aligned pacing guides to facilitate enactment of the curriculum, is foundational to instructional improvement. In states that do not provide statewide curriculum frameworks aligned to state standards, SEAs can provide districts with guidance for developing them, including helping districts establish processes to gain educators' input on and ownership of the curriculum standards as well as processes for implementing them. To jumpstart curriculum development, SEAs can identify models of finished products from other districts engaged in turnaround and instructional transformation.

Facilitate district design and implementation of job-embedded teacher planning. To encourage districts to schedule teacher planning and collaboration time into the regular calendar at turnaround schools, SEAs can identify and highlight effective models for making such scheduling changes. SEAs can also support teachers' collaborative learning by developing or sharing protocols to guide teachers' conversations and actions as they diagnose student assessment results, plan next instructional steps, and engage in dialogue with principals or coaches. Moreover, SEAs can identify ways for districts to reallocate resources so that they can reconfigure existing roles or create new positions — such as content experts and instructional support coaches — that can help bolster teachers' capacity to analyze data, tailor instructional plans, and implement new instructional approaches.

Support for principal supervision for instructional transformation

Those who supervise principals need to receive adequate and appropriate support themselves. Yet there is often little guidance for those who manage principal supervisors, typically associate superintendents. States can fill that void with anticipatory guidance on how to support principal supervisors.

Assist districts in determining standards for principal supervisors in a turnaround context. As the role of principal supervisor becomes more common across districts, attention is being focused on how this position should be effectively enacted. Some standards have been developed for this role in general, calling for principal supervisors to cultivate both instructional and organizational leadership in the cadre of principals they supervise.⁵ However, in a

5 Honig, M. I., Venkateswaran, N., & McNeil, P. (2017). Research use as learning: The case of fundamental change in school district central offices. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(5), 938–971.

turnaround context, principal supervision may call for additional or adapted versions of these standards. States can be thought partners with districts in considering how standards can be enacted to support their particular turnaround situations.

Provide districts with information and resources for effectively supporting principal supervisors. To address the need for job-embedded professional learning and support for principal supervisors, SEAs can create and develop resources and protocols for coaching and mentoring these key leaders. SEAs can also serve as developers, collectors, and/or disseminators of existing best practices in terms of the conceptualization and management of districts' principal supervision programs. They can help determine principal supervision standards, facilitate design of effective principal supervision, and support districts in defining the role of the principal supervisor.

Provide support for defining the principal supervisor role. Research reveals that for principal supervisors to conduct their work well, districts should carefully limit the number of principals each supervisor leads, particularly when the role of supervising principals is just one part of the supervisor's broader responsibilities.⁶ At the same time, districts need to ensure that the nature of the role is not too narrowly defined. While the supervisor's primary responsibility is to help each principal grow as an instructional leader, he or she is also the principal's liaison and advocate in the central office, communicating specific school and principal needs to appropriate district personnel and helping remove barriers to meeting those needs. States can help by engaging in dialogue with districts about how to construct job descriptions and expectations that appropriately conceptualize the principal supervisor's role as a coach of a limited number of principals and as a supporter whose work includes serving as a central office advocate for each principal's needs.

6 Goldring, E. B., Grissom, J. A., Rubin, M., Rogers, L. K., Neel, M., & Clark, M. (2018). *A new role emerges for principal supervisors: Evidence from six districts in the Principal Supervisor Initiative*. New York, NY: Wallace Foundation, Mathematica Policy Institute. Retrieved from: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/A-New-Role-Emerges-for-Principal-Supervisors.pdf>

Conclusion

Achieving turnaround requires that state, district, and school leaders examine and fundamentally alter their leadership and facilitation of instructional practices, so that all students learn. To achieve lasting change, districts must redesign how they support schools and commit to collaborating with schools to co-create solutions for the most critical instruction-related challenges. To enable lasting change, states must reconsider how they support districts' efforts to enact redesign and collaboration.

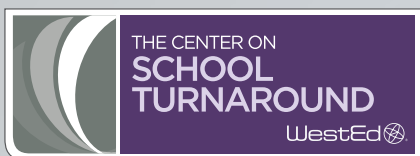
The increasing consensus on these new district and state roles is embodied in the recent federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA calls on districts to lead interventions that address instructional needs systematically and shifts states' focus from compliance oversight to serving as assistance provider for districts and schools. By basing approaches on research and the most promising practices, districts and states can help ensure rapid instructional improvement in schools most in need of turnaround.

Appendix

Methodology

For this project we identified two districts that had multiple turnaround schools that showed improvement within two years. These two districts partnered with the University of Virginia Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education (UVA/PLE), a CST partner, and were known for their dedication of effort for instructional transformation. Our team interviewed the superintendent, the associate superintendent, the executive director for curriculum and instruction, and a principal supervisor from each district. Interview protocols asked participants questions relating to instructional transformation within the Center on School Turnaround's Four Domains framework. The protocol also contained questions about UVA/PLE's concept of instructional infrastructure and other open-ended questions.

Interviews were 1.5 to 2 hours long. We recorded and transcribed each, then analyzed the transcriptions to find examples of instructional transformation. Where there was alignment, our researchers used the Four Domains practices to categorize the participants' reported actions. We then developed language to represent the groups of actions — termed “district actions” in Table 1. We also wrote descriptions of district actions to provide more detail about the district actions, based on the interview data. We then analyzed data to understand how the specific roles of principal supervisor and principal focused their efforts on instructional infrastructure, as reported during interviews.



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