

Governance

District and School Improvement at American Institutes for Research (AIR)

AIR's District and School Improvement Center (<http://revivingschools.org/>) provides a smart, real-world, hands-on approach to school improvement that is based on a framework grounded in research and refined by practice. Instead of implementing a one-size-fits-all program, we identify the needs specific to districts and schools and provide guidance for modifying existing programming or starting fresh. District and School Improvement Center staff believe that sustained district and school turnaround and transformation can be achieved through building capacity at all levels of the educational system and developing a strong collaborative partnership among teachers, leaders, families, and communities.

Background

Our experiences in leading and coaching school turnaround efforts reinforce what research has found to date: The district role in supporting school turnaround efforts is vital for success (Kowal, Hassel, & Hassel, 2009; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstron, & Anderson, 2010; Perman & Redding, 2011). AIR not only understands the research on what it takes to support schools in transformation—we also have a track record of helping districts align policies and practices to support school turnaround.

Service Description

AIR's turnaround team can support district governance of priority schools through a spectrum of supports, including the following:

- Establishing a district office of school turnaround
- Delivering professional development and coaching district-level leaders charged with supporting the school transformation
- Detailing the roles and responsibilities for program oversight and monitoring
- Initiating turnaround project- and performance-management processes and tools
- Advising on the revision of human capital, budget, and staffing policies

Our approach to supporting district governance is based in a collaborative partnership that engages stakeholders in the process of guiding school transformation. We are not a management organization that takes over operations of the school. Instead we work to help our client district build sustainable practice for the future support of all the schools in the district.

Value We Bring

Our team will ensure that district leaders revise policies and build practices that support not only school transformation and turnaround, but also a systematic approach to continuous improvement and support for schools. District partnership with schools to support strengthened teacher practice and increased student learning provides for long-term, sustainable improvement.

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