

Planning and Preimplementation

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

The quality and level of implementation of the improvement plans are critical to successful school improvement (Herman et al., 2008). The conditions for successful implementation of the school's transformation plan must be established through context-specific development of leadership and instructional talent guided by clear project plans. Case study research shows that no single intervention works consistently in every case, and that strategies that enable one school to improve may not succeed elsewhere (Scott & Kober, 2009). AIR is an expert in helping schools and districts establish leadership and instructional practices that improve student learning. We help our partner schools develop the governance and monitoring processes that support successful implementation of their transformation plans.

Service Description

We believe that context matters; therefore, AIR support, provided by experienced turnaround leaders, is customized for the specific planning and preimplementation needs of the school and district. AIR values and works to build collaborative partnerships with our schools and districts. Through weekly on-site services, our experienced transformation team supports the selection and development of school leaders and teachers, helps with development of plans and policies to extend learning time, and guides development of progress-monitoring systems that support improved teacher practice and student learning. AIR facilitates the work of a stakeholder School Improvement Grant steering committee that will advise on the priorities and actions for implementation as well as guide district governance and support.

Value We Bring

AIR's planning and preimplementation support is designed to facilitate school and district engagement and understanding of the transformation plan. Districts and schools who work with AIR develop the preconditions needed for transformation, including effective leadership and instructional practices that promote student engagement and learning, the skill to monitor improvements and adjust implementation to meet student needs, and the capacity to sustain teacher and student learning into the future.

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