

## Program Monitoring

### 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

Through disciplined and precise progress monitoring of implementation, strategic and effective adjustments can be made to turnaround and transformation initiatives to meet the needs of students, teachers, leaders, and the context of the school setting. Sustained improvement over time, however, requires course adjustments to maintain a focus on improvement to student achievement. Schomoker (1996) encourages schools to set small, measureable goals that can be achieved monthly, quarterly, or annually. Small, measureable successes are the seeds of large-scale success and can release optimism and enthusiasm, or “zest” as Schaffer (1988) calls it. Dramatic improvement of student learning requires swift, rapid-fire experimentation and decisive action (Hassel & Hassel, 2009). AIR helps our partner schools develop the governance and monitoring processes that support successful implementation of the transformation plan.

### Service Description

A collection of diagnostic tools—to create a well-aligned improvement plan at the beginning of the process and to monitor the effectiveness of each strategy throughout the process in order to modify or change course—is essential for effective and sustained improvement. We support district and school leadership teams with establishing expectations for the systematic review of data that guides classroom instruction, monitors program effectiveness, and informs strategic planning and action. Our Reality Check process engages stakeholders in a thorough analysis of the data, resulting in the prioritization of key areas of improvement and an immediate course-correction plan.

### Value We Bring

Our team will ensure that school leaders are looking at the most strategic, timely, and relevant information gathered from a variety of available data points—from student work and teacher-generated assessments to data that reside in a data warehouse and observations of instructional practice in the classroom.

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