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Turnaround Plan Guidance for Schools Requiring Assistance or Intervention

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# Overview

The Statewide System of Support (SSoS) in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) has created a plan template and accompanying guidance for district and schools identified under Massachusetts’ Next-Generation District & School Accountability System as requiring assistance or intervention (see Broad/comprehensive support and Focused/targeted support in chart below).

Schools without required assistance or intervention (approx.85%):

School of recognition - Schools demonstrating high achievement, significant improvement, or high growth

Meeting targets - Criterion-referenced target percentage 75-100

Partially meeting targets - Criterion-referenced target percentage 0-74

Schools requiring assistance or intervention (approx. 15%):

Focused/Targeted support - Schools with percentiles 1-10, schools with low graduation rate, schools with low performing subgroups, schools with low participation

Broad/comprehensive support - underperforming schools, chronically underperforming schools


Just as the new accountability system in Massachusetts was designed to meet federal [Every Student Succeeds Act](https://www.ed.gov/ESSA) (ESSA)[[1]](#footnote-1) requirements, this turnaround plan guidance and template was designed to support schools and districts in meeting federal ESSA planning requirements, as well as state planning requirements under the Massachusetts Act Relative to the Achievement Gap [M.G.L. Ch 69, Section 1J](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter69/Section1J).[[2]](#footnote-2) In addition to its alignment with state and federal planning requirements, this template and guidance promotes research-based evidence of best practice in high performing Massachusetts turnaround schools and the [turnaround practices](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/reports.html).

These materials were developed from the lessons learned across the state and based on some guiding principles:

* A streamlined plan with succinct narrative that is user-friendly and an **authentic guide** for all practitioners
* A systematic and intentional **strategic plan** to drive rapid school improvement
* A plan that is built on **benchmarks** that effectively measure growth throughout the school year to determine if the school is making progress towards meeting their annual goals
* A living document that can be used as a **communication** and **reflection** tool

While the resources below are intended to provide districts and schools the guidance and additional resources they need to effectively engage in the turnaround planning process, ESE’s [Statewide System of Support (SSoS)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/teams.html) regional assistance staff are available to provide support to schools engaged in this important work. You can reach out to leaders of the Coastal, West/Central, or Strategic Transformation regions to access these supports.

*A note for schools only designated as requiring assistance or intervention for one or more* ***low-performing subgroups of students****: We recommend that schools use this full set of guidance in developing a plan, focused throughout on analyzing data, selecting strategies, and monitoring progress towards improving academic outcomes for students in those subgroups.*

# Getting Started

Familiarize yourself with the Turnaround Template and Guidance

An excellent place to start is the Turnaround Template at A Glance document on page 3, which provides a summary of what schools developing turnaround plans will address in each of the seven sections of the turnaround plan template. The *Sample Timeline for Turnaround Plans* on page 4 also conveys that developing a turnaround plan is a sustained process that rolls out in stages throughout the academic year. The second page of the timeline focuses on the plan implementation process, which offers guidance for schools that are renewing plans on an annual basis.

The remainder of this guidance document maps directly onto each of the seven sections of the Turnaround Plan Template. [Download PDF Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/turnaround-plan-template.pdf) The guidance for each section includes:

* **Overview.** A brief description of the intent/purpose of the section
* **What to Consider before Writing.** Guidance on what your turnaround plan development team should consider (and do) before writing. This section includes links to key resources that we think you will find useful.
* **What to Write.** Guidance about what to address in the written plan. This includes recommended page lengths for each section, which are recommendations, not page limits.

The [online](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html?) version of this Turnaround Plan Guidance available on the DESE website also provides links to additional resources that your school might find useful at the end of most sections. We recommend that you check the Website regularly for updates and new resources.

Developing Teams and Processes

Deciding who will be on the team(s) that lead and implement the turnaround plan development process should happen early on – as should developing a process for soliciting ongoing input from local stakeholders (e.g., community organizations; parents and/or students reflecting the demographics of your schools; external partners providing supports in your school). [Section II: Stakeholder Engagement](#_Section_II:_) provides useful guidance as you think about creating these teams and processes.

### Turnaround Plan Template at a Glance

| **SECTION I:** **Executive Summary** | The Executive Summary offers a concise description of the turnaround plan that: provides a snapshot of the school, articulates its vision, outlines key improvement strategies and goals, indicates how success will be measured, and highlights what makes this approach to improvement bold and new. Someone should be able to read the Executive Summary and understand the essence of the turnaround plan without having to read the whole plan. |
| --- | --- |
| **SECTION II:** **Stakeholder Engagement** | Stakeholders serve a key advisory role in the turnaround process by offering their perspectives, feedback, and broad recommendations on how to address the school’s challenges. The turnaround plan should describe the composition of the stakeholder group; the process used to gather meaningful input; recommendations made by stakeholders and where they are reflected in the turnaround plan; and the school’s plans for ensuring regular, ongoing engagement with the stakeholder group. |
| **SECTION III:** **Envision the Future** | Envisioning the future is a powerful and effective early step in the planning process. Inviting participation in the visioning process will build ownership and advocacy for the resulting plan among both educators and the stakeholder community. The turnaround plan should articulate what the school’s long-term vision of success will look like, sound like, and feel like when the school successfully reaches its goals. |
| **SECTION IV:**  **Assessment of Assets and Challenges** | Before identifying strategies and approaches to implement, the school needs to ground itself in a thorough analysis of data to take stock of the school’s strengths and challenges and develop a common understanding of what needs to change in order to achieve the school’s vision for success. The turnaround plan should describe 2-5 key assets and challenges the school will address, along with a summary of the data analyzed and processes and procedures used to identify them as being the most critical. |
| **SECTION V:**  **Strategic Objectives and Initiatives Aligned to Turnaround Practices** | The strategic objectives and initiatives reflected in the turnaround plan are the coherent set of key approaches and levers for change aligned to the Massachusetts Turnaround Practices that address the key challenges and strengths of the school identified in Section IV. This integrated set of strategies is one that the school expects will lead to rapid improvement. The strategies should outline a multi-year roadmap that will guide the work of the school for at least the next three years. |
| **SECTION VI:**  **District Systems** | Districts play a critical role in supporting and facilitating school turnaround and ensuring conditions are in place for schools to improve and sustain that improvement. The turnaround plan should describe the actions that the district will take to support the school’s plan. |
| SECTION VII:  Goals, Benchmarks, and Progress Monitoring | While a strong, well-conceived turnaround plan is an important blueprint for change, improvements in teaching and learning will only happen if regular monitoring and assessment demonstrate that the plan is being well implemented and the strategies are leading to the desired outcomes. The turnaround plan should identify the measurable annual goals and benchmarks the school will use to monitor each of the strategies in the turnaround plan. It should also clearly describe the process the school and district will take to regularly monitor and assess plan implementation and outcomes and make any necessary mid-course adjustments to the plan. |

Sample Timeline for Turnaround plan Development

While some parts of the turnaround plan must happen in sequence, other parts can take place simultaneously. for example:

Stake holder engagement can add value throughout the entire turnaround plan development process, as all aspects of the process can benefit from the input and perspectives of a diverse range of individuals.

A thorough root cause analysis of assets and challenges must be compete before the school begins identifying key strategies for implementation, although the school can continues to revisit and refine their thinking about root causes as they implement, monitor, and adjust their plan.

 This graphic demonstrates on  way the various stages of turnaround plan development could take place, assuming the school takes a full school year to develop their plan:

Stakeholder engagement timeline should be ongoing, such as monther or quarterly during Fall, Winter, Spring and summer, 

Visioning timeline should be happened during late Fall to late winter.

Root Cause Analysis timeline should be happened during late Fall to late winter.

Strategy Development, District Systems and Benchmark Development should all be happened during mid winter to early summer. 

Prepare for Implementation timeline should be aroud late spring through out summer.



Plan Implementation: After the plan is in implementation phase, each year schools should update their plans along this general timeline:

Stakeholder engagement timeline should be ongoing, such as monther or quarterly during Fall, Winter, Spring and summer, 

Assessing Benchmarks timeline should be ongoing, such as monther or quarterly during Fall, Winter, Spring and summer, 

Revise plan based on Data timeline should be around  later winter to late spring

Resetting Benchmarks timeline should be around  later winter to late spring

Prepare for Implementation timeline should be aroud mid spring through out summer.


# Section I: Executive Summary

*An Executive Summary of a turnaround plan should stand on its own in describing the turnaround work at the school – someone should be able to read the Executive Summary and understand the essence of the turnaround plan without having to read the whole plan.*

## What to consider before writing

There are myriad resources available on how to write an executive summary. While DESE does not specifically endorse a particular one, some universal themes that appear throughout the literature are:

* Keep it concise
* Write the executive summary *after* the turnaround plan is written
* Should be a hook to the rest of the plan
* Should stand alone if the executive summary is all that is read
* Write in language that the average stakeholder can understand; limit jargon
* What’s unique and exciting about your school and the plan for the coming years
* The target audience for the Executive Summary is your stakeholders, not DESE – have one of them read the summary and ask them to share what they took away as the headlines.

## What to write

Summarize the following information in 1-2 pages, and in a way that will make sense to your key stakeholders such as students, teachers, families, school committee, and community.

1. A snapshot or brief profile of the school (examples include demographic information, what makes the school unique, among others)
2. Brief summary of the vision for the school
3. Outline key improvement strategies and goals that address root causes of challenges the school faces that will be used to accelerate improvement in each [turnaround practice](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/turnaround-practices-508.pdf)
4. How the school will measure the success of the new approach
5. How this plan represents a new approach to improving the educational experience for children and how will educators deliver that new experience

# Section II: Stakeholder Engagement

*To develop a high-quality turnaround plan, schools should gather meaningful input from an array of key stakeholders, incorporate that input into their Turnaround Plan, and continue to regularly share progress with key stakeholders as the plan is implemented.*

## What to consider before writing

Engaging key stakeholders in this way is a strategy that would benefit *all* districts and schools, not just schools engaged in turnaround. Districts and schools engaging in turnaround and in the state’s [Planning for Success](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) process tell us that soliciting input from an array of stakeholders:

* allows them to see multiple perspectives on the school’s turnaround needs,
* helps to ensure that the Turnaround Plan addresses the diverse needs of its community, and
* builds a shared sense of urgency and commitment to the turnaround planning and implementation process.

### Role of Stakeholders in the Turnaround Planning Process

Generally speaking, stakeholders serve an advisory role by offering their perspectives, feedback, and broad recommendations on how to address the school’s challenges. Their input informs the work of the school team charged with developing the Turnaround Plan, and provides insight and input throughout the implementation of the plan. The role of stakeholders, of course, may vary depending on existing relationships between the school and different stakeholder groups.

### Stakeholder Group vs. Redesign Team

While stakeholders generally serve an advisory role, it is important to determine who at the school and district level with serve on the school’s redesign team – a group of school and district staff that will be most affected by the anticipated changes in the school. This could be a team that already exists in the school, or may need to be developed with new staff. Establishing a redesign team early on is an essential step in the turnaround planning process. Team members should be informed of the intense nature of the work involved in school turnaround and they should be willing to make the commitment to this process. This work will most likely need to involve after school, evening and/or weekend meetings to complete the turnaround plan. Most importantly, the redesign team should be the entity that drives the implementation of the turnaround plan, supporting school and district leadership in monitoring school progress and making mid-course corrections.

Among the team members there should be individuals who are strong in areas of reading and math instruction, other key instructional areas (e.g. special education, English language learning), data analysis, technology, communication, community engagement, team building, and student services. The size of the team should be relative to the size of the school. For example, a small elementary school may decide to have only 8 members. A secondary school may have 12-14 members. Groups larger than 20 members may be too large for the core team. Sub-committees may be needed as planning intensifies.

### Identifying and Recruiting Key Stakeholders

The composition of your stakeholder group will depend on the unique context of your school community. Seek out individuals who can serve as champions and critical friends, who bring diverse skills and perspectives, and who serve the school in a variety of capacities. The number of stakeholders should be large enough to include an array of perspectives, but small enough for all stakeholders to make meaningful contributions to the process. Think about the students that your school serves and make certain that the stakeholder group includes representatives who can speak authentically to their perspectives and needs, particularly those who have been historically marginalized (African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, English learners, students with disabilities, etc.).

* ***Students.*** Students of all ages can be valuable partners in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of school improvement efforts. Throughout this guidance, when we refer to stakeholders or the Community, we include students as the first and most important customers to consider. As the recipients of the planned work, they have excellent insights into how well things are working and where they can work better.
* ***Consider existing advisory groups.*** School site councils, parent teacher organizations, Special Education Parent Advisory Councils, English Learner Parent Advisory Councils, school and district partners, and student leadership groups may yield members who are already active in the school’s turnaround and are likely to continue their involvement in the school’s implementation of the turnaround plan.
* ***Other key stakeholders.*** Other stakeholders may include union representatives, community organizations, SSoS regional assistance team members or social service organizations. For middle and high schools, members of the local higher education community may be relevant stakeholders. Likewise, for early grades, members of the local early education and care community should be considered.

**Developing a Process for Gathering Stakeholder Input**

* ***Seek input early.*** Begin seeking stakeholder input early in the process of turnaround planning so that stakeholders can make recommendations to inform the direction and priorities of the turnaround plan.
* ***Series of meetings.*** Many districts and schools gather stakeholder input through a series of about four or five meetings, which provides ample time for discussion of the school’s context, challenges, and opportunities.
* ***Facilitation.*** When convening discussions among groups of stakeholders, consider identifying a skilled facilitator to guide the group’s discussion and to document group recommendations. Whenever communication is a barrier, there should also be an interpreter available to support stakeholders not fluent in English.
* ***Deliverables*.** It has proven to be important for meetings to include a published/shared agenda, attendance records, notes/minutes, and a written set of recommendations, all translated to support stakeholders who are not fluent in English.
* ***Other strategies for gathering input.*** Districts may also choose to engage with stakeholders through focus groups, surveys, interviews, or other methods appropriate to their context and needs.
* ***Ongoing, two-way communication.*** Stakeholder input should not end once the turnaround plan is written. Following the guidance in the next section, include stakeholders in the vision setting process. Identify ongoing opportunities to share information about the turnaround process with the school community, and to receive formative feedback from your key stakeholders as turnaround progresses.

### Suggested Topics to Address with Stakeholders

* ***Why turnaround planning?*** Explain why the school is developing a turnaround plan, and what the timeline and process will look like.  Explain how voluntarily engaging in turnaround plan development and implementation process can help students. Share and explain the timeline for development and implementation of the turnaround plan.
* ***Explain how stakeholders can help.*** Provide stakeholders with a clear explanation of their role and purpose in the turnaround plan process. Explain that they are not charged with creating or implementing the turnaround plan, but with offering broad recommendations for how the school and district should address turnaround challenges. Clarify how you will be engaging with stakeholders (e.g. series of meetings, surveys, etc.)
* ***Discuss school and district context.*** Share and discuss data illustrating the school’s challenges and opportunities. Reflect on what it is like to teach, learn and be part of the school community, especially for those that have been historically marginalized.
* ***Turnaround research & best practices.*** Identify and discuss evidence-based research and best practices for achieving school turnaround. How can best practices be incorporated into the school’s context? How can stakeholders support the turnaround?
* ***Identify*** ***what problems must be urgently addressed and what key assets can be leveraged.*** What changes to collective bargaining contracts can be negotiated between management and unions?
* ***Funding considerations.*** Turnaround plans should be focused on altering structures and conditions in a way that does not rely on additional funds, but rather reallocates existing funds. The turnaround plan must be possible with current funds and accelerated and/or enhanced with federal[[3]](#footnote-3) and state targeted assistance funds. Stakeholders can provide guidance and/or suggestions on how turnaround efforts can be funded.

## What to write

Briefly describe in 1-2 pages:

1. the composition of the stakeholder group that provided input into your turnaround plan. In your description, be sure to address how the perspectives of historically marginalized groups are represented.
2. the process used to gather input from stakeholders
3. the recommendations made by stakeholders and where they are reflected in your turnaround plan (if available, attached a copy of written stakeholder recommendations)
4. your school’s plans for ensuring regular, ongoing engagement with stakeholder groups as the turnaround process progresses and who is responsible for ensuring that this happens.

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### Requirements for Underperforming Schools

State law requires that schools designated as underperforming assemble a group of stakeholders that meet specific criteria and under specific timelines. Underperforming schools only should use this resource in addition to the guidance above to ensure compliance with state law.

[Download Word Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/lsg-guidance-underperform-schools.docx) LSG Guidance for Underperforming Schools

# SECTION III: Envision the Future

*Envisioning the future with a diverse mix of interested parties is a powerful and effective early step in the planning process. Inviting participation in the visioning process will build ownership and advocacy for the resulting plan among both educators and the community. An inclusive approach will also contribute to a positive school culture, helping to build a shared understanding of the work required to serve all students as well as the relationships and trust among stakeholders that will support that work.*

## What to consider before writing

Visioning is especially important in a turnaround context, as it can be easy to focus only on the short term challenge of stabilizing a school. Engaging a wide range of stakeholders in a visioning process can help a school articulate an asset-based picture of the future they want for their school and their students, which can then inform a compelling road map for improvement. Visioning can also help a school begin to articulate the answer to the question: *How will this improvement effort be different from what we have done before?*

### What is the Vision?

The vision, as defined in the Massachusetts [Planning for Success](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) tool, articulates the school’s aspirations for students: what you value and why, and what future success will look like. The school’s vision, mission, and core values are the foundation of the school’s turnaround plan. The school’s vision should speak to the unique context of the school while also aligning to the larger vision for the district as a whole.

### The Visioning Process

School leaders will want to consider: *How can we design an inclusive planning process that creates a shared vision for all students while strengthening community understanding and support?*  The school should identify a visioning protocol and a process for using this protocol to conduct visioning sessions with educators (for example, during school faculty or departmental meetings) and with families, students, and community members (for example, during family meetings, student advisories, or high school student government meetings).

A number of visioning protocols and processes exist, and schools may choose to create their own process as well. One commonly used protocol is the Back to the Future Protocol, originally developed by Scott Murphy, which includes guidelines for facilitators in how to work with groups to conduct the visioning process. It is available [here](http://schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/future.pdf).

It is helpful if school leadership and planning teams are the first to participate in the visioning process, before bringing it to others. Their participation in visioning is, of course, essential to the planning process. In addition, these participants can also vet the protocol and the school’s design for conducting visioning sessions across the community. Having experienced the protocol and the effective facilitation of it, these participants will have some preparation should they choose to facilitate the protocol themselves in future sessions as part of the school’s visioning process.

### Using Visioning Results

Results from the visioning process are useful in two ways: they provide guidance for creating the plan’s vision statement, and more importantly, can be used by a planning team to identify strategic objectives, overarching goals, and key levers for improvement. This can serve as a starting point for the team’s development of strategic objectives.

## What to write

Briefly describe in 1-2 pages the vision for the school.

In your description, include:

1. Your long-term (3-5 years) vision of success for your school and your students and your hopes and dreams for them.
2. How will this improvement effort be different from what we have done before
3. How this vision relates to, fits within, and aligns with the district’s vision
4. How stakeholders were engaged in the process used to craft this vision
5. What it will look like, sound like, and feel like when you have reached it

# SECTION IV: Assessment of Assets and Challenges & Root Cause Analysis

*Before identifying strategies and taking action, the school needs to be grounded in a thorough analysis of data that helps district and school leaders, staff, and stakeholders take stock of the school’s strengths and challenges and develop a common understanding of what needs to change in order to achieve the school’s vision for success.*

## What to consider before writing

Rather than leaping straight to developing solutions and strategies, slowing down to take time for a deep analysis of assets and challenges can result in stronger turnaround implementation. Without it, schools may invest significant time, energy, and resources into implementing strategies that do not actually address the real challenge(s). Schools and districts may end up addressing symptoms rather than the real causes of the school’s challenges. Over the course of your analyses, it is recommended that you include opportunities to involve individuals with a range of perspectives in order to bring different interpretations to the data analysis. (e.g., in your stakeholder group)

Schools with the most successful turnaround plan implementation are those that take the time to use multiple data sources to engage in deep reflection about their assets and challenges and develop common understandings of the root cause of the challenges that are getting in the way of the school’s success. Districts and schools really need to dig to uncover an underlying factor or condition that is creating a problem, and that, if addressed, would eliminate or dramatically alleviate the problem. This type of root cause analysis helps a school narrow the field of potential causes until everyone can agree on strategies that will yield the biggest bang for the buck if they act on it together. Then the school can identify evidence-based strategies that will clearly address those challenges, and also identify which data points would be most helpful to monitor their progress in addressing that challenge.

### Assessment of Assets and Challenges

The goal for this section of the turnaround planning process is to thoroughly analyze school and district level quantitative and qualitative data to identify 2-5 key assets and challenges of the school aligned to the [Guiding Questions Aligned to the Turnaround Practices](#_Guiding_Questions_Aligned). Next, the school should probe for causation and identify potential root causes for the selected key assets and challenges. This process, when done well, can be a heavy lift for the school. Therefore we offer the following detailed guidance to support your team in this effort.

### Suggestions for a meaningful analysis

* Engage in analysis over multiple meetings, allowing for enough time to explore different angles on the same data and integrate additional data sources at each subsequent meeting.
* Articulate a few questions or lines of inquiry to guide your review of the data. What do you hope to learn?
* Explore data that aligns to the school’s vision. The data you explore and the findings you identify should all serve the purpose of helping the school excel in reaching its vision.
* Involve individuals with a range perspectives to bring different interpretations to the data analysis. Specifically, consider including students, families, and community partners in your analysis of the data.
* Revisit the [Turnaround Practices Research](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/reports.html) for examples of how ‘gain’ schools analyzed their data. Specifically, take a look at the [2016 Turnaround Practices Field Guide](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/turnaround-practices-field-guide.pdf).
* Ensure the analysis touches on all four turnaround practices as well as the cross-cutting themes by considering the [Guiding Questions Aligned to the Turnaround Practices](#_Guiding_Questions_Aligned) document. The guiding questions document is a critical resource the school redesign team should refer to often throughout this process.
* Consider using a neutral facilitator who can help the group push beyond their usual level of comfort and ensure a deep reflection of the data - someone who can skillfully engage participants in seeing data in new ways and lead to honest conversations about what is or is not working well at the school.

### Suggested Data Analysis Considerations

The suggestions below reflect just a few of the many ways a school could explore their quantitative data. In many cases, exploring multiple data sources alongside each other can help create a different picture than if a data point is seen in isolation.

* Engage with a wide range of data, including both qualitative and quantitative data related to student outcomes, student and staff demographics, stakeholder perceptions, and school processes (such as staff hiring, student referrals, curriculum review processes). Reference the additional resources provided below in this section.
* Probe for equity in school practices and outcomes, and explicitly examine whether historically marginalized groups (such as minority racial/ethnic groups, English learners, former English learners, students with disabilities, and students in poverty) disproportionately experience different outcomes. During your analysis take steps to offset any unconscious biases that might influence your review of the data. How do these trends compare to those for their counterparts?
* Consider the findings and data in the school’s most recent Turnaround Site Visit (TSV) or Monitoring Site Visit (MSV) reports. How do these findings align to local data on systems and structures to support turnaround efforts in place at the school and district?
* Be sure to look at data for each individual grade and classroom as well as for the school as a whole, and also look at data for low-performing student subgroups. If the school has low-performing subgroups, a deeper analysis of the data relative to those subgroups, as well as overlaps between subgroups (i.e., black and students with disabilities).
* Look at the key priorities in the current school and district improvement plans. Does the data show evidence that those strategies are making a difference for students?
  + If so, why do you think that is, and how can you keep building on those successes?
  + If not, why do you think that is, and what do you think needs to be done differently?
* Compare local school classroom observation data with that from external reviews, such as Monitoring Site Visits or Turnaround Site Visits.
* Compare MCAS proficiency rates with course pass/fail data.
  + Are students passing coursework but still struggling to demonstrate proficiency on MCAS?
* Compare student growth vs. proficiency on MCAS.
  + Which students are experiencing the highest growth, and what is contributing to that?
  + Which students are experiencing the lowest growth, and why might that be?
  + Are students experiencing higher growth in some subjects compared to others?
  + Are there any trends in which grades or student groups are experiencing higher or lower growth?
* Compare student attendance and teacher attendance. How often are students actually in front of their assigned teachers?
* Compare teacher discipline referrals, student suspensions, and student restraints with student perceptions of school culture and self-assessments on key social-emotional competencies.
  + Do students and teachers have the same perspectives of school climate?
  + If suspensions and restraints have declined, do you have additional data that shows whether school climate has actually improved?
  + Do different student groups get disciplined at different rates and/or in different ways? What do you think is at the root of this? Does the level of English language proficiency of the student, or the number of years in a Massachusetts school, affect discipline rates of students (or English learners in particular)?

### Root Cause Analysis

A meaningful root cause analysis requires participants to look closely at how their own policies, programs, practices and procedures impact the the key challenges and/or successes identified in the initial data analysis. In fact, root cause analysis protocols typically direct participants to focus explicitly on factors over which their actions can reasonably be expected to have influence, rather than factors out of their control (e.g., poverty).

Note that the same data you look at to determine your root cause can be translated into the data you use to benchmark progress. Schools should make direct connections between identified challenges, the selection of strategies to address the root causes for those challenges, and benchmarks to assess if progress is being made towards improvement. For example, if the school noticed a correlation between low performance of black students that are also students with disabilities, a strategy should be chosen to address the hypothesized root cause for these students low performance, and the school should set benchmarks for these subgroups to ensure progress is being made throughout the turnaround plan.

#### Tools to guide your root cause analysis process include:

* Sample Root Cause Analysis of School Challenges - provides case studies of root cause analysis in successful turnaround schools. [Download Word Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/sample-root-cause.docx)
* At the middle and high school levels, consider getting student insight on the root causes of identified challenges through focus groups or surveys.
* ESE’s District Data Team Toolkit ([Module 4: Knowledge](http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/district-data-knowledge.pdf)) and [Planning for Success](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) resources include good overviews of the root cause analysis process and its importance, multiple examples of root cause analysis protocols, and advice for facilitating a successful root cause analysis process.
* [The Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/ewi/)
* Explore root causes through lens of the Turnaround Practices Research. [Guiding Questions Aligned to the Turnaround Practices](#_Guiding_Questions_Aligned) provides a series of probing questions aligned to Turnaround Practices research.

## What to write

In 2-3 pages, describe **2-5 key assets and challenges** your school identified during the initial data analyses for additional exploration via root cause analysis. In your description, please incorporate information about:

1. The complete set of initial data analyses you conducted (e.g., data sources; aggregate analyses; disaggregated analyses by grade, student subgroup) to identify the key assets and challenges;
2. The evidence that led your school to single out these particular assets and challenges;
3. The process and additional data sources used to conduct root cause analysis for each key asset and challenge identified;
4. The key practices, policies, and systems at the district and/or school level that your school hypothesizes are at the root of each success and challenge;
5. The approaches you used throughout to identify key assets and challenges, as well as root causes, through the lens of the four Turnaround Practices and what you learned as a result.

# [Section V: Strategic Objectives & Initiatives Aligned to the Turnaround Practices](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html?#accordion)

**The strategic objectives and initiatives reflected in your turnaround plan are the coherent group of overarching initiatives and key levers that your team identifies as most likely to lead to rapid improvement in your school. The specific strategic objectives and initiatives of the school's plan emerge from:**

* Your school's vision of the future;
* A deep understanding of the school's current assets and challenges that is based on data and achieved through your school's self-assessment and root cause analyses;
* A deep understanding of Massachusetts' Turnaround Practices research; and,
* A knowledge of evidence-based practices that have helped similar schools and student populations make and sustain gains.

While providing the most detail for year one of implementation, the strategies should outline a multi-year roadmap that will guide the work of the school for at least the next three years.

## What to consider before writing

### Approaches to Brainstorming and Narrowing Down Strategic Objectives and Initiatives

The overall process your school takes will depend on how the planning process is shaped. The initial steps of taking all the preliminary self assessment and analysis work, brainstorming strategic objectives and initiatives, and then narrowing these down to a small, coherent set of strategies can be challenging and messy. However the time spent defining a few high-leverage strategies can pay off later when the school is able to focus on implementing those few strategies well, rather than trying to implement several big (or small) strategies at once.

In choosing which strategies are best suited for your school's unique context, look for cross-cutting themes that emerged from visioning discussions with stakeholders and from the analysis of assets and challenges. What 'big buckets' stand out? Those buckets should be addressed by the key strategic objectives of your school's turnaround plan.

### Select Strategies for Implementation Aligned to the Turnaround Practices

Once you have identified the key strategic initiatives, look at them from the lens of the four [Massachusetts Turnaround Practices [Download PDF Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/turnaround-practices-508.pdf)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/turnaround-practices-508.pdf). Do any strategies fall squarely under one turnaround practice? Or does the strategy span multiple Turnaround Practices, requiring actions related to all four practices? For example, ensuring effective instruction for English learners would have implications for school leadership and professional collaboration (Turnaround Practice 1), instructional practice (Turnaround Practice 2), student-specific supports (Turnaround Practice 3), and also for school climate and culture (Turnaround Practice 4). As you look at your key strategic initiatives from this lens, you will note that the four Turnaround Practices are not mutually exclusive, and changes in one turnaround practice are interconnected with and/or have ripple effects across the other three practices.

Reflecting upon and addressing the ways in which your key strategies align with all four turnaround practices will give your school a solid sense of how the work you are doing within each practice intersects with and reinforces the other three. Used back in Section IV to assess assets and challenges, the [Guiding Questions Aligned to the Turnaround Practices [Download PDF Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guiding-questions-turnaround-practices.pdf)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guiding-questions-turnaround-practices.pdf)can also be a great resource to support schools in identifying strategies for implementation. Also, DESE has developed the [Turnaround Practices Clearinghouse](http://www.turnaroundpractices.com/) as a one-stop shop for access to resources and tools aligned to the turnaround practices, which can help schools learn about successful strategies in other turnaround schools.

While the school's turnaround plan will need to address all four turnaround practices, this does not mean that the plan should have completely different strategies under each turnaround practice. Ideally the school would identify just a few key strategies, and then address them in an integrated way using the lens of the four Turnaround Practices.

### Identify and Select Evidence-Based Programs and Practices

In order to meet both state and federal requirements, schools developing turnaround plans must incorporate at least one strategy backed by evidence that meets the criteria from one of the top three evidence tiers [as defined by ESSA:](https://ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceuseseinvestment.pdf)

* **Tier 1: Strong evidence** from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study;
* **Tier 2: Moderate evidence** from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study (confined to Regression Discontinuity Designs according to the [What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/), or
* **Tier 3: Promising evidence** from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias

In an effort to help schools and districts more easily locate evidence-based programs and practices, DESE has created the [How Do We Know?](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/howdoweknow/) initiative. See the "Additional Resources" section below for more resources.

If your school selects a new curriculum as a strategy to support turnaround, DESE's Curriculum and Instruction team has generated [several tools](http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/) to assist schools in selecting high-quality, evidenced-based curriculum.

### Think Through What It Will Take to Implement Each Strategy/Initiative

Once your school has identified a set of strategic objectives and initiatives, a critical step in the process is to assess what it will take to implement these specific approaches in your school. In addition to the evidence-base, schools need to consider:

* *Usability:* whether the initiative can be adapted to meet the needs of your school context.
* *Required Supports:* identification of the supports required to train, staff and implement the initiative well. Required supports includes actions that may need to be taken at the district level, such as adjustments to policies, practices, and/or funding to address root challenges at the school.
* *School Capacity:* whether the school has enough resources to sustain staffing, coaching, training, monitoring, assessment, and funding to implement the initiative well.
* *Goodness of Match:* how well the initiative addresses the most critical needs identified.
* *Integration:* how well the initiative fits with other initiatives in the school/district.

Also, schools should consider scaffolding the selected strategies across multiple years (Year 1, Year 2, Year 3…) and implementation phase (buy-in/capacity development, pilot stage, scaling up, etc.).  We offer the following graphic organizer as a resource you may find helpful as you consider when specific strategies should roll out based on school context and implementation phase.

Creating a Three-Year Implementation Plan – How and When Are Strategies Implemented” – courtesy of the Cross State High School Collaborative (CSHSC)

 [Three-Year Implementation Plan Template [Download PowerPoint File](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/3year-implementation-plan-template.pptx)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/3year-implementation-plan-template.pptx)

### Anticipate Implementation Challenges

Turnaround work is hard! Identifying challenges ahead of time can help the team proactively and strategically plan to remove barriers to implementation. Alternatively, reflecting on implementation challenges can help a school discern if a strategy is the right match for the context, or if another approach would be more effective. The [2014 Turnaround Practices Report [Download PDF Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/practices-report-2014.pdf)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/practices-report-2014.pdf)includes side-by-side comparisons of strategies implemented in schools that made gains vs. schools that did not. Reviewing these comparisons can help schools anticipate challenges to implementation and make proactive plans to mitigate them. For the purposes of your turnaround plan, focus on only the most significant challenges anticipated for each set of strategies and your initial thoughts on how your school might address them.

### Think Ahead to Progress Monitoring

The challenges you identify at this stage of the process can help inform your process for monitoring implementation and outcomes. If, for example, one concern is the degree to which teams follow through on decisions, you might begin to think of implementation strategies to support follow-through, as well as data and evidence you could look at to see if decisions are in fact being acted on and having the desired impact on the student experience. You can make note of these ideas now and revisit them when you map out your approach for benchmarks and progress monitoring (Section VII).

## What to write

The Turnaround Plan template asks schools to categorize key strategies by turnaround practice. This framework reflects DESE's research finding that turnaround schools that effectively addressed all four of these turnaround practices succeeded in improving educator, student, and school outcomes, and, ultimately, exited underperforming status. However, it is acceptable for a turnaround plan to place a stronger emphasis on two or three of the turnaround practices and less emphasis on the others, as long as it is clear from the analysis of assets and challenges why this approach is likely to accelerate gains for students.

A comprehensive response for this section should be about 2 pages per turnaround practice. For each turnaround practice:

1. Describe the strategy or set of strategies you plan to implement, and how this strategy will help the school achieve its vision for the future as described in Section III.
2. In your response, please include information about your rationale for selecting the strategy (or strategies). Be sure to:
   1. Describe how the strategy (or strategies) builds on assets and addresses the root causes of the challenges identified in Section IV, and is appropriate for the school's unique context.
   2. Describe how the strategy (or strategies) addresses the school's reasons for designation as a school requiring assistance or intervention. For example, if your school is identified for low-performing subgroups, the turnaround plan is expected to include strategies designed to support those specific student groups.
   3. Describe how the strategy (or strategies) ensures equity, including racial equity, and the implementation of culturally proficient practices in the school.
   4. Indicate which strategy (or strategies) in the turnaround plan is backed by evidence that meets the criteria from one of the top three evidence tiers defined by ESSA and cite the research you reviewed in selecting each evidence-based strategy. (Remember, your plan as a whole must include at least one strategy that meets this evidence-based criteria).
3. Describe how the strategy (or strategies) will be implemented. In your narrative, be sure to:
   1. Indicate systems, structures, and processes that will be in place to ensure effective and coherent implementation.
   2. Address challenges you might encounter and how they would be handled.
   3. Outline a brief multi-year timeline for what will be implemented in years one, two, and three, highlighting key aspects of each strategy that may be phased in over time.

**TIPS:**

* A school may substitute an action planning template for portions of this section, as long as the narrative and action planning template as a whole address all the prompts above.
* In Section VII: Goals, Benchmarks and Progress Monitoring, you will be asked to describe the process the school and district will use to support and monitor the impact of strategies. You do not need to address that here.

# SECTION VI: District Systems

*Districts play a critical role in supporting and facilitating school turnaround and ensuring conditions are in place for schools to improve and sustain that improvement. The turnaround plan should describe the actions that the district will take to support the school’s plan.*

## What to consider before writing

District supports includes actions such as:

* Adjusting district policies that contribute to the root cause challenges of turnaround schools;
* Negotiating, facilitating, and supporting autonomies for turnaround schools;
* Assigning a district team or administrator responsible for the management and coordination of turnaround activities;
* Assigning district staff that work directly with turnaround schools on a weekly basis (to monitor, provided support, facilitate communication, and support implementation);
* Securing necessary resources for turnaround schools and ensuring that resource inequities are addressed; and
* Developing and implementing specific processes for monitoring the progress of turnaround schools that allows for quick, real-time response.

**Important Note:** Districts should carefully read DESE’s [District Standards and Indicators](http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators-18-19.pdf), revised in 2018, before completing this section of the turnaround plan. Also, a thorough review of the vast district strategic planning resources through DESE’s [Planning for Success Initiative,](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) which is referenced often throughout this turnaround plan guidance, will benefit districts as they engage in selecting strategies to support their lowest-performing schools.

### Policies and Autonomies

When a school is designated as underperforming, state law requires districts consider changes to policy and strategies (see “Changes in Policy and Strategies for Consideration Under State Law” document in the Additional Resources section below). The law also provides districts with statutory flexibilities to negotiate for policy and strategy changes in underperforming schools. While not currently provided for under [state law](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter69/Section1J), all districts with a school performing in the lowest 10 percentiles could benefit from actively pursuing similar changes to policy and strategies outlined in the law, regardless of whether its lowest performing schools have been formally designated as underperforming. Potential policy areas to consider include, but are not limited to, curriculum and instruction, financial and asset management, human resources, professional development and collaboration, and leadership and governance.

In this section, districts should identify the key changes in policy and address how they will directly support school-level turnaround efforts by describing:

* + 1. District policies and practices that currently exist that may promote or impede the implementation of proposed plans. What structural barriers exist at the district level (from needs assessment) and what will the district do to eliminate those barriers?;
    2. Modifications and changes in district policies, strategies, and use of resources that will enable the school(s) to fully implement the turnaround plan;
    3. Potential implications of the changes in district policy on low-performing schools and how the district will ensure that other district schools are not adversely impacted by changes to the policies and practices;
    4. A process for how the district will track which policies, strategies, and use of resources contribute to building the capacity of the district and its schools to sustain improvement efforts as low-performing schools move out of requiring assistance or intervention.

### Supporting English Learners

In addition, all schools with a significant population of students who are English learners (EL) are encouraged to consider the strategies that underperforming schools with substantial EL populations are required to incorporate to address EL achievement gaps.

[Download Word Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/required-actions-relative-ell-guidance.docx) *Required Actions Relative to English Learners (EL) - Guidance for Schools with EL Population* includes links to resources and additional guidance available through the Department. (This document is also included as an appendix at the end of this document.)

### District Strategies to Support the Turnaround Plan

District systems that actively and meaningfully support the implementation of the school’s turnaround plan are essential to each school’s success in achieving improved academic outcomes for students. Districts should identify the district-level teaming structures and other mechanisms, such as the use of coordinators, liaisons, coaches, or networking opportunities, to be used to support the implementation of school-level turnaround efforts within the district. These structures should be focused on providing differentiated assistance and support to schools engaged in turnaround. This section of the turnaround plan should include details of how the district will differentiate its support to schools implementing turnaround plans, and what specific supports will look like. Also, a district should describe both its human capital and external partnership strategies to support schools in implementing turnaround plans. In section VII, the district will be prompted to describe its system of monitoring the impact of each school’s turnaround plan.

#### Leadership and Staffing

One critical area where districts can provide high-impact support to school-level turnaround efforts is by taking deliberate actions to recruit, screen, select and place—through both internal staff development and external recruitment—effective principals, teacher leaders, and teachers who have the experience, skill, and expertise needed to implement the turnaround plan. District leaders should take stock of the effectiveness of current hiring and development processes in the district and identify specific strategies to improve these systems to support schools engaged in turnaround, ensuring each school has the most effective leaders and teachers in their buildings.

District leaders have a responsibility to ensure the principal of each turnaround school (either newly hired or existing) has the necessary competencies and experience to lead a successful redesign effort. A well-written “District Systems” section of a turnaround plan should provide data demonstrating that the new or current principal has a successful and demonstrated track record of improvement in other schools or in another district, including student performance data from previous schools. If a new principal has yet to be chosen, the district should describe how it will recruit, screen, and select a school leader that has a proven track record of rapidly advancing student achievement in a low-performing school.

Once leaders are in place, districts should identify specific systems and structures to support the continued development of turnaround leaders, including but not limited to use of the district's educator evaluation system, professional development, coaching, mentoring, and networking. See the “Additional Resources” section below for resources on turnaround leadership competencies and district support and development.

#### Supporting Partnerships

Districts also have a responsibility to coordinate and align external partners engaged in supporting turnaround efforts in low-performing schools. In this section, districts should describe how the district will recruit, screen, and select external providers with the requisite quality and expertise necessary to support and provide assistance to the district or to schools in implementing redesign plans. If the district has identified external providers who will assist it in implementing turnaround efforts, this section should include a description of the credentials, experiences, and qualifications of the selected providers for the relevant tasks. Once partners are brought on board, districts should provide detail on the systems and structures it will put into place for the coordination and alignment of partners to district and school turnaround strategies, and for holding external providers accountable for meeting agreed-upon performance benchmarks.

To support districts in this effort, the Department has established a system to vet partners engaging with districts and schools in Massachusetts called the [Priority Partners for Turnaround Initiative](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/partnerships/). This initiative is aimed at qualifying organizations from a pre-approved list of DESE vendors to support district and school turnaround in districts with low-performing schools. Having been vetted through a rigorous review process as having a demonstrated record of effectiveness in accelerating school improvement, Priority Partners are familiar with the context & requirements of Massachusetts school turnaround work.

DESE conducted research on successful partnerships in exited underperforming schools and developed a set of resources to support effective management of partnerships called the [Conditions and Habits of Successful Partnership Guidance](http://www.turnaroundpractices.com/resources/conditionsofeffectivepartnership?rq=partnerships). This guidance is grounded in the theory of action where districts and partners establish conditions for success and monitor these over time, then partnerships will be more likely to have greater academic return on investment, thereby increasing student achievement in high-needs districts.

### Equitable Resource Allocation and Three-Year Financial Plan for the School

Districts play a key role in ensuring that resources are equitably distributed to address student needs. New ESSA requirements direct low performing schools to “identify resource inequities, which may include a review of local education agency and school level budgeting, to be addressed through implementation of” a turnaround plan. Districts should consider using DESE’s [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/) and [EDWIN Student Learning Experience Reports](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/gateway/slereport-supp.html) as key resources to assess if inequities in access to resources for students in the district’s lowest performing schools exist, and to inform the strategies included in the turnaround plan. DESE also has a wealth of resources available through the [Massachusetts Plan for Equitable Access to Excellent Educators, 2015-2019](http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/equitableaccess/) that can be useful in this process. Districts should made connections to the data analysis and strategies identified in the Equitable Access to Excellent Educators section of the district's Consolidated Federal Grant Application.

Districts are expected to develop a three-year financial plan for each turnaround school. Note that a financial plan is not simply a school or district budget. The financial plan is expect to incorporate descriptions of:

* The process the district used to review local district and school level budgeting data to identify existing resource inequities, as required by ESSA, and how the implementation of the turnaround plan will address these inequities.
* How additional funds that may be provided by the district, commonwealth, federal government or other sources will support the implementation of the turnaround plan;
* How the district will align other resources (e.g., Title I Part A, Title II Part D, TItle III, Title IV, state, community, etc.) with the proposed interventions at the school;
* How the district anticipates it will fiscally sustain the improvements after three years;
* How the district and school demonstrate capacity to use School Redesign Grant (SRG) funds (if available) to implement interventions; and,
* Whether the budget contains sufficient funds to implement interventions described in the turnaround plan with fidelity.

Keep in mind that the financial plan must ensure that:

* Federal funds supplement rather than supplant
* Reforms will be sustained after funding ends
* Sustainability will be monitored regularly

### District Monitoring

The district’s role in monitoring the impact of the turnaround plan will be addressed in Section VII: Goals, Benchmarks, and Progress Monitoring

## What to write

In this section of the Turnaround Plan Template, describe in 2–3 pages the district actions that will be taken to support the school’s turnaround plan, including, but not limited to:

1. Changes in policies and autonomies, including support for English learners. (Also, use the checklist included in the template.)
2. District systems to support the school(s), including human capital strategy and partnership management.
3. Three-year financial plan for the school, including an analysis of equitable resource allocation

# SECTION VII: Goals, Benchmarks and Progress Monitoring

*“What gets measured gets done”*

*In turnaround schools that make gains, school and district leaders are actively engaged in monitoring implementation of turnaround efforts, use this information to prioritize initiatives and strategies, communicate progress and challenges, seek input from staff, and continuously and systematically monitor progress and make mid-course corrections.*

## What to consider before writing

The foundation of the monitoring process is the articulation of benchmarks that are agreed upon in advance by key stakeholders and that outline important outcomes the school plans to reach. Benchmarks are then reviewed at specific times during the implementation of a turnaround plan to evaluate the degree to which the activities or processes in the plan show progress toward the long-term goals. This progress monitoring can help a school identify successful progress, highlight areas that need more attention, determine what additional support and assistance is required, and inform mid-course corrections as needed.

Predetermined benchmarks can also help communicate expectations and provide a common understanding of where and how to focus time and resources. Stakeholders should be able to gain a solid understanding of the school’s priorities and focus areas just by knowing what targets the school is aiming to meet.

A school’s specific goals, benchmarks, and approach to progress monitoring are informed by:

* The school’s vision of the future;
* A deep understanding of the school’s current assets and challenges that is based on data, self-assessment and root cause analyses, including a deep understanding of systems, processes, and routines currently in place at the school, as well as those that will be needed to accelerate improvement;
* A deep understanding of [Massachusetts’ Turnaround Practices research](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/reports.html), in particular an understanding of the key changes in adult actions, interactions, and systems that are needed to improve student learning experiences and outcomes; and,
* A knowledge of evidence-based practices that have helped similar schools and student populations make and sustain gains, in particular the key elements related to implementation and progress monitoring of those evidence-based practices.

Benchmarks are a critical part of the turnaround plan, providing clarity and specificity about whether observable adult actions lead to improved teaching and learning. They can sometimes be hard to articulate. However, the time it takes to refine these benchmarks can pay off during implementation. Precisely articulated benchmarks can help the school maintain focus on key aspects of the work, and can help communicate the urgency, alignment, and coherence of everyone’s efforts.

### What We Mean by Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) and Interim Benchmarks

The turnaround plan template utilizes the framework in the table below as a way for schools and districts to monitor implementation and progress, and determine if their work is having the intended effects. Together annual goals and interim benchmarks help schools and districts answer the questions *what changed, for whom, by how much, and when* as a result of the actions we took?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) for Student Achievement** | These annual goals are indicators that overall student achievement is improving. Initial targets are set for all Massachusetts schools according to DESE’s [District And School Accountability System](http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/lists-tools.html). In addition, schools are encouraged to consider these [Sample Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs)](https://docs.google.com/document/d/10r3qQZ1OUGdyGjAlGSiXijfhYpQ6FdSLDyWW7vGGR7I/edit), in particular for Turnaround Practices 2 and 4, and customize them to their particular context. Taken as a whole, these MAGs should represent goals for both academic and non-academic areas of student success, aligned to the vision for the school. |
| **Interim Benchmarks for School Educators/ Practitioners** | Interim benchmarks for school educators/practitioners articulate what school leaders, teachers, and other staff will be doing differently as a result of implementing strategies for a particular Turnaround Practice. These benchmarks identify **meaningful changes in adult practice**, including *actions, discourse, beliefs, expectations, and instructional practice,* and should be specific, actionable, measurable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). What will be different as a result of the school’s turnaround efforts? (each week, month, or quarter) |
| **Interim Benchmarks for Students** | Interim benchmarks for students are indicators that **student learning and tasks** are changing as a result of the changes in educator practice, and that the school is making progress toward meeting its MAGs and other indicators of student success. Student benchmarks signal whether the school is on track for end-of-year student results, or that adjustments are needed to achieve these results. As with the MAGs, these interim benchmarks should address both academic and non-academic areas of student success. These benchmarks should also be specific, actionable, measurable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). |

As much as possible, interim benchmarks should focus on outcomes (such as how a training has changed instructional practice and improved student performance) rather than process, implementation, or outputs (such as the percent of teachers trained).

Some schools engaged in turnaround planning have found that action planning templates used in conjunction with the turnaround plan template can be a useful resource to outline more specific *process* or *implementation* benchmarks. While detailing specific action steps can be helpful to ensure effective implementation, it is not required for this turnaround plan. However, we have linked a few potential action planning templates for your consideration. If you decide to customize one of these templates or create your own, we ask that you include it in your turnaround plan submission.

[Download Word Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/temp-aip-action-planning.docx) AIP Action Planning Template

[Download Word Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/sample-esl-action-plan.docx) School ESL Action Plan Sample

[Download Word Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/temp-sfss-action-planning.docx) SfSS Action Planning Template

[Download Excel Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/srg-itb-workbook.xlsx) SRG Implementation Timeline and Benchmarks Workbook

### Advice for Setting Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) and Benchmarks

Just as schools are encouraged to select a few high leverage turnaround strategies in Section V, schools are also encouraged to identify just a few key benchmarks to focus progress monitoring throughout the year. The school should ensure that the data generated to measure each benchmark truly adds value to the school’s work, and is worth the effort needed to collect it, as well as the time needed to reflect on it and act on what is learned. Ideally, the evidence for each benchmark will be generated as part of the regular work of educators. If the benchmark requires a new form of evidence that has not previously been collected, it should be clear how the addition of that evidence will help contribute to the types of changes the district is seeking in skills, practices, mindsets, and discourse.

One strategy for identifying the highest-leverage benchmarks and goals is to revisit the themes you heard from stakeholders and the data you used for your root cause analysis of assets and challenges. Consider which data points provided the greatest insights. It may be that these data points could provide a baseline and inform targets the school plans to reach as a result of implementing the turnaround plan.

As you select your benchmarks consider the following questions:

* What evidence would most clearly and concisely show the school’s progress and/or illuminate challenges throughout implementation of the turnaround plan?
* What is the best *type* of evidence for the identified benchmarks? (e.g., a document/artifact? Interviews/focus groups? A survey? Observations?) Why is this? What is the most effective and efficient way to demonstrate progress?
* How and when will the school measure progress on the benchmark? Who will be involved in that process?
* Is it possible to meet all the benchmarks outlined in the turnaround plan and still not achieve the measurable annual goals for student learning for the year? If so, do the benchmarks need to be more rigorous? Or perhaps there are other benchmarks that would be better indicators of progress?

Benchmarks for the four Turnaround Practices should build on and reinforce each other, and represent a coherent set of metrics that will help the school monitor progress and impact. Setting goals and benchmarks is an iterative process, that is refined as the school continues with the cycle of planning, implementing, reflecting, and revising their work. Each year, in the spring, schools should assess overall progress on benchmarks and reset them for the following year. Interim benchmarks can and should evolve over time, becoming more refined and nuanced as the school implements strategies at greater levels of fidelity and quality, and becomes more savvy in the use of data to inform schoolwide work.

### Advice for Progress Monitoring

Benchmarks only add value if there is a system for people to come together and reflect on them. Monitoring systems should be established at both the school and district level to assess if benchmarks are being met and the school is on track to meet Measurable Annual Goals and achieve its larger vision. Describing these systems in the turnaround plan enables all school and district staff to know when progress monitoring will occur, who will be involved, what data will be collected and reviewed, and what will happen as a result.

Grounded in a cycle of continuous improvement, the specific goals of progress monitoring are to:

* Keep the turnaround plan a living document that focuses and guides the school’s work
* Use evidence and artifacts to reflect on the impact of strategies in the plan
* Use the results of this reflection to inform next steps, including re-allocating resources and refining practice in order to have greater impact

In turnaround schools that made gains, progress monitoring included:

* Daily monitoring of student work and teacher practice
* Weekly reflection on benchmarks in small teams, such as grade-level, content, student support, and instructional leadership teams
* Monthly reflection on school-wide benchmarks by school leadership and/or the whole faculty
* Quarterly reflection of these same benchmarks at a deeper level
* Annual reflection at an even deeper level, to make adjustments for the year ahead

### District Support in Monitoring Impact

As noted in Section V, districts play a critical role in supporting and facilitating school turnaround, including developing and implementing specific processes for monitoring the progress of turnaround schools that allows for quick, real-time response. District monitoring complements school-level systems to support implementation, to evaluate the effectiveness of the turnaround efforts at the school, and use the results of data analysis to target or refine supports, including policies and resource allocation. Section VII or a turnaround plan should include a description of both the school and district’s system for progress monitoring, with interim benchmarks that will be tracked.

## What to write

In this section of the Turnaround Plan Template describe the measurable annual goals and benchmarks the school will use to monitor each of the strategies in the turnaround plan, and the process the school and district will use to monitor and support implementation. While the turnaround plan as a whole should outline a roadmap for three years or more, these goals and benchmarks will focus only on the first year. At the end of that year, the school and district will step back, reflect on progress and refine goals, benchmarks, and progress monitoring systems for the subsequent year.

1. School progress monitoring process:For the turnaround plan as a whole, describe the systems and processes the school will use to support and monitor the implementation and impact of the turnaround plan. (1-2 pages)
   1. Describe the school-level **teaming structures** or other processes that will support implementation and ongoing review of benchmarks. Discuss the types of teams, benchmarks and other data to be reviewed, frequency, and who will be responsible. Describe which aspects of these teaming structures and processes already exist, and which will be new to the school.
   2. Describe how the school will ensure **follow-through** on mid-course corrections and other decisions that come out of the review of benchmarks.
   3. Provide candid explanations of possible **barriers** to achieving the benchmarks/goals and how they will be addressed.
2. District progress monitoring process:For the turnaround plan as a whole, describe the systems and processes the district will use to support and monitor the implementation and impact of the turnaround plan. (1 page)
   1. Describe the district-level **processes** that will support the ongoing review of benchmarks. Discuss the types of teams, benchmarks and other data to be reviewed, frequency, and who will be responsible. Describe which aspects of these teaming structures and processes already exist, and which will be new to the district.
   2. Describe how the district will ensure **follow-through** on mid-course corrections and other decisions that come out of the review of benchmarks.
   3. Provide candid explanations of possible district-level **barriers** to achieving the benchmarks/goals and how they will be addressed.
   4. Districts are encouraged to include district-level benchmarks within the turnaround plan template where applicable.
3. Goals and Benchmarks:Using the template provided, for each of the four turnaround practices:
   1. Articulate **measurable annual goals (MAGs)** that will demonstrate the school is making meaningful progress in implementing the key strategies and is moving towards realizing its longer-term vision.
      1. Please note that we expect all turnaround schools to meet or exceed customized accountability targets set by DESE for all students and the lowest performing students group. This language has already been added to the MAGs chart in the turnaround plan template.
      2. Schools identified by the Massachusetts accountability system as having a low-performing subgroup must include a Measurable Annual Goal for each low-performing subgroup that was identified to demonstrate how the school is monitoring progress for these students.
      3. Schools are also encouraged to add annual goals for additional indicators related to their vision and key strategies, such as college and career readiness and school climate.
   2. Identify no more than three (3) high-leverage **Interim Benchmarks for School Educators and Practitioners** for each turnaround practice.
   3. Identify no more than three (3) high-leverage **Interim Benchmarks for Students** for each turnaround practice.
      1. Schools identified by the Massachusetts accountability system as having a low-performing subgroup must include interim benchmarks for each low-performing subgroup that was identified to demonstrate how the school is monitoring progress for these students.

# APPENDICES

## Guiding Questions Aligned to the Turnaround Practices

The following **guiding questions** are designed to help foster a discussion among all stakeholders to reflect on current school practices in order to identify assets to build on and core issues of concern that need to be addressed relative to the four Turnaround Practices. These questions can be used during the initial Assessment of Assets and Challenges to help a school or district identify areas to address in the school’s turnaround plan. In addition, these questions can provide a helpful frame to reflect on a turnaround plan before it is finalized, in order to ensure the plan is as strong as possible.

These questions do not need to be answered directly in the turnaround plan narrative; they are intended to prompt reflection on and analysis of the school’s strengths and needs and put the school in a position to identify the highest leverage strategies to improve outcomes for students. Districts and schools should refer to the SRG Scoring Rubric, MSV or TSV rubrics, and exemplars of best practice highlighted in the [turnaround practices resources](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/reports.html) when addressing any of these areas in the school’s turnaround plan. References are made to these resources in parentheses throughout.

### Guiding Questions: Turnaround Practice 1

#### Leadership and the Use of Autonomy

* What turnaround leadership competencies and experiences do the principal and/or leadership team have? Is it sufficient to lead a successful school turnaround effort?How has the selected leader demonstrated results improving outcomes for English learners, students with disabilities, students in poverty, students who have experienced trauma, and other historically marginalized groups)? *(Rubric Item 4, Grant Requirement 1)*
* What type of autonomies does the principal have to set and administer the school schedule, calendar, curriculum, assessments, and professional development? *(Rubric Item 10, Grant Requirement 7)*
* To what extent does the principal have the staffing autonomy needed to effectively implement the turnaround plan? Does it include the ability to adjust “bidding and bumping” language to insulate staff selected to work at the school? Does the principal have the greatest amount of flexibility when hiring new staff? *(Rubric item 4, Grant Requirements 3, 4, and 5)*
* What strategies are used to hire, retain and promote instructional staff and school leaders that represent the races, ethnicities, and cultures of the students and families served by the school?
* In what ways do school leaders (principal and other administrators) use their autonomies to focus work on implementing the school improvement plan to improve the quality of teaching and learning at the school? (MSV/TSV)
* What competencies and experiences do the instructional staff have? Are these sufficiently widespread (i.e., widespread enough to undergird a successful school turnaround effort)? *(Rubric Item 5)*
* To what extent are the most capable instructional staff in the appropriate positions to do the urgent turnaround work? *(Rubric Item 5)*
* Are robust recruitment and retention activities in place to ensure the right instructional staff are in the right positions to rapidly advance student achievement at the school? *(Rubric Item 5, Grant Requirement 4)*
* What strategic hiring and assignment practices are used to place English learners and students with disabilities in classrooms led by teachers who are certified and skilled at teaching these populations? (EL/SWD report) How effective are these strategies?
* In what ways do leaders in the school use autonomies to engage staff in uncommon professional learning experiences (i.e. implicit bias training, cultural responsiveness, restorative practices)?

#### High Expectations and Positive Regard

* In what ways do school leaders demonstrate the importance of high expectations and positive regard between leadership, staff, and students and implement strategies or activities to ensure that these elements are in fact in place? (MSV/TSV)
* What proportion of staff believe leadership, the school staff, and students have high expectations and demonstrate positive regard? *(Rubric Item 18)*
* What strategies does the school use to ensure that every student has equitable access to the highest quality educational experiences?
* What evidence do you have that the school provides access to challenging, rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students? To what extent do students say they are being appropriately challenged? *(Grant Requirement 10)*
* What steps has school leadership taken to ensure the implementation of culturally responsive practices in the school? *(Grant Requirement 10)*
* In what ways does the school welcome and support students from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences?
* For middle and high schools: in what ways do staff demonstrate high expectations for students in the areas of academics, personal-social and workplace readiness? (new) To what extent are high expectations held for every student in the school?

#### Vision/Theory of Action and Buy-in

* In what ways does the school’s current improvement plan focus explicitly on instructional practice and accelerated student outcomes? *(Rubric Item 16)*
* To what extent Is there a common understanding/vision of what instruction should look like in order to accelerate student learning? Do the majority of staff buy in to the school’s vision? *(Rubric Item 16)*
* To what extent do staff share a common sense of urgency and ownership for the success of all students. What evidence supports this?
* What proportion of staff is familiar with the goals and benchmarks used to consistently monitor progress and identify and prioritize the next level of work? How often are these goals and benchmarks reviewed (e.g. monthly)?
* Are staff included in committees and decision making in ways that effectively ensure widespread buy-in and provide the opportunity for important feedback? (HS report)
* In what ways are students provided with structured, and regular opportunities to inform and reflect on the impact of school improvement efforts? (new)

#### Monitoring Implementation and School Progress

* What processes do school leaders use to actively engage in monitoring implementation and outcomes of improvement efforts? Are these processes ad hoc, or o school leaders continuously and systematically monitor overall progress?
* In what ways is information from monitoring used to prioritize initiatives and strategies, communicate progress and challenges, and seek input from staff?
* Have school leaders create clear instructional expectations for staff? In what ways and how consistently are they communicated to staff? What is the process for monitoring that these expectations are understood and acted upon appropriately by all staff? *(Rubric Item 16, Rubric Item 23)*
* What mechanism(s) do the school and district instructional leaders use to regularly analyze evidence of instructional practice along with student achievement, professional development (PD), and other data? What mechanisms are there for making any necessary mid-course adjustments? *(Rubric Item 16, Rubric Item 6)*

#### Trusting Relationships

* To what extent do staff members share a relational, trust-focused culture with each other and their instructional supports (e.g., coaches)?
* In what ways is the school’s culture solution-oriented and focused on improvement as exemplified by frequent collaboration in developing standards-based units, examining student work, analyzing student performance, and planning appropriate interventions? *(Rubric Item 11)*
* What mechanisms are there for educators to regularly share their strengths and struggles with each other, in the spirit of helping each other continually improve their practice?

#### Use of Time for Professional Development and Collaboration

* To what extent does the school incorporate PD as an integral part of daily routines (e.g., through coaching, staff meetings, and/or collaborative time)?
* How well does the amount of time dedicated to PD meet the needs of the school staff? *(Rubric Item 10, Rubric Item 6, Rubric Item 11)*
* How much time does the schedule allow for staff to plan and collaborate on lesson plans, including with special education and ESL instructors and interventionists? (HS report, EL/SWD report)
* To what extent are special populations personnel regarded as fully integrated members of the school faculty?Are special populations personnel (such as special education and ESL teachers) members of grade level/department teams? *(Rubric Item 9, Rubric Item 17)*
* How often do general education and special populations teachers plan together? *(Rubric Item 11, Rubric Item 17)*
* What systems and protocols are used to guide collaborative discussions in Instructional Leadership Teams, Common Planning Time/Teams, Grade Level Teams, Vertical/Content Teams, or other ad hoc teams and committees? How does school and district leadership ensure that these meeting times are maximized to accelerate teaching and learning? *(Rubric Item 9, Rubric Item 11)*
* What access do teachers have to instructional coaching that provides them with guidance and feedback on how they can improve their instruction overall? For improving instructional strategies to better support English learners and students with disabilities? (EL/SWD report)
* What formal and informal learning opportunities focusing on concrete instructional strategies for English learners and students with disabilities do all teachers receive?(EL/SWD report)
* How does the school identify professional development needs for the school as a whole and for individual teachers? Is the process systemic or *ad hoc*? What steps does the school consistently take to measure the implementation and effectiveness of whole school and individual teacher professional development? What actions does the school consistently take to revisit and reinforce professional development to reinforce previous learning and dive deeper into content? (HS report) *(Rubric Item 6, Grant Requirement 9)*
* Is professional development differentiated for teachers’ needs as identified in their evaluation practice goals? *(Rubric Item 6, Grant Requirement 9)*
* What opportunities do teachers have to observe and learn from each other’s practice? *(Rubric Item 11)*
* What steps does the school take to capitalize on the knowledge of existing staff by having them conduct whole-staff trainings or work with small groups of staff or teachers? (HS report)
* Is there a process in place for evaluating the schedule based on collected data to maximize opportunities for teacher professional development and ensure it helps all educators continually improve their practice (e.g. through targeted coaching, peer observations and collaboration time)?
* In what ways and how effectively does school leadership implement rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation and support systems for teachers and principal(s) that provide clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development in accordance with the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Frameworks requirements? *(Rubric Item 6, Grant Requirement 2)*

#### Communication with Staff

* What structures are in place to facilitate two-way communication across staff and school teams? Between administrators and staff?
* To what extent do staff view the communications shared through these structures as being open. Transparent and meaningful? *(Rubric Item 11, Rubric Item 9, Rubric Item 6)*
* In what ways do each school team foster staff input that influences school-wide decision-making? *(Rubric Item 9)*
* What strategies does the school use to ensure that the work of multiple teams is coherently integrated across the school? How effectively are these current strategies ensuring coherence? *(Rubric Item 9)*

#### Sustainability

* What strategies do school leaders currently implement to ensure that improvement efforts will be sustained over time or under new leadership? (e.g., succession plan, distributed leadership, new funding streams) *(Rubric Item 11, Rubric Item 24)*
* When the school works with external partners, what steps do school and district leader take to rigorously recruit, screen and select external partners to work with the school? Once selected, what steps are taken to hold external partners accountable for meeting agreed-upon implementation and performance benchmarks? *(Rubric Item 7, Grant Requirement 13)*

### Guiding Questions: Turnaround Practice 2

#### Instructional Expectations

* What messages about expectations for high-quality instruction are communicated to staff? How specific and precise are those expectations? How well are they understood by most staff? *(Rubric Item 11)*
* What process do school leaders use to consistently monitor classrooms to observe whether these expectations are evident and provide feedback to teachers ? *(Rubric Item 6, Rubric Item 23)*
* To what extent are these expectations consistently implemented by most teachers? *(Rubric Item 11, Rubric Item 16)*
* What does culturally responsive education look like in this school? To what extent do students have access to culturally responsive curriculum and teaching that includes references to their cultures in all aspects of their learning? *(Rubric Item 18, Grant Requirement 10)*
* How well are the curriculum maps/pacing guides used by instructional staff aligned to the state curriculum frameworks? *(Rubric Item 16)*
* To what extent is the taught curriculum the intended curriculum? *(Rubric Item 16)*
* To what extent is there a common understanding of what mastery looks like? What processes are in place for staff to align assessments and evaluate student work based on this common understanding? *(Rubric Item 16)*

Lesson Planning and Preparation:*(Rubric Item 16, Rubric Item 17)*

* What expectations for lesson planning are articulated by school leadership?
  + Are these expectations consistent across grade levels? How are they monitored?
* To what extent:
  + Are lesson plans based on curriculum maps/curricular guidance?
  + Do lesson plans reflect a common understanding of high expectations for all students?
  + Do lesson plans delineate in-class differentiation of core instruction to meet student needs?
  + Are lesson plans developmentally appropriate?
  + Do lesson plans engage students with content and address academic and social/emotional needs?
  + Do lesson plans promote higher-order critical thinking?
  + Do lesson plans designed for EL students consider their language proficiency levels?
  + Do lesson plans explicitly address students with disabilities and consider their IEP goals, modifications, and accommodations?
  + Do lesson plans address achievement gaps for low-income students?

#### Instructional Schedule

* To what extent does the school schedule provide adequate time for core instruction and, as needed, additional academic and/or behavioral supports?
* What kind of flexibility and fluidity are built into the schedule so that necessary adjustments can be made based on formative data and feedback?
* What opportunities do staff have to collaborate/provide input into the schedule to ensure coordination and alignment across grade levels and content areas? Is there enough time built in to the schedule for ESL as needed for English learners? *(Grant Requirement 7, Grant Requirement 8, Rubric Item 10, Extra Credit Item 1)*
* To what extent does the schedule ensure that instructional support staff are coordinated and aligned across grade levels and content areas to provide students with differentiated access to high-quality core instruction?
* Is there an effective process in place for evaluating and adjusting the schedule based on collected data related to the quality of instruction and student needs across grade levels and content areas?
* *Additional question for secondary schools:*  How easily can students access work-based learning or the pathway of their choice within the existing schedule?

#### Identifying and Addressing Student Academic Needs

* What kind of training and support in identifying and addressing student academic needs have teacher teams had in the following areas:
  + Teaming collaboration strategies, processes, and protocols:
  + Effective data use;
  + Identifying actions steps to address student needs
* To what extent are school teams consistently implementing teaming strategies and practices to address student needs? How are teams monitored and supported? *(Rubric Item 9, Rubric Item*
* What processes are in place for communicating action steps among all staff and teams? To what extent are these processes helping the school to build and sustain a culture of learning?
* Is there a formal process for teachers to quickly and easily flag students whom they notice are struggling (e.g. online forms, frequently scheduled meetings)?

#### Classroom Observation Data Use

* Is there a system of weekly/daily classroom observations that focus on strengthening teachers’ instructional practices? *(Rubric Item 16, Rubric Item 6, Grant Requirement 2*

To what extent do:

* + observers provide specific and actionable feedback on instruction?
  + the observational data inform instructional conversations and the provision of targeted and individualized supports/resources for teachers, as needed?
* In what ways do leaders regularly gather evidence on instructional practice (e.g., classroom observations, looking at student work, looking at student assessments)? How does this information help inform PD planning? *(Rubric Item 6, Grant Requirement 9)*
* How often do teachers receive formative feedback on instructional practice? How is it delivered, and by whom? What follow through measures are taken to ensure feedback results in improvement? *(Rubric Item 6)*
* To what extent are the feedback process and substance of the feedback delivered professionally valued by teachers? To what extent does it promote a school-wide mindset to collectively improve adult practice? *(Rubric Item 6)*

#### Student Assessment Data Use (for schoolwide decision making)

* In what ways do teachers and other school staff use student results on benchmark assessments, common assessments, and state assessments to make decisions regarding schoolwide practices? How consistently is this done? *(Rubric Item 6, Rubric Item 16, Rubric Item 23)*
* How do district and school level progress-monitoring systems function? How do data from this system drive instructional decisions in core instruction and throughout the tiered process? *(Rubric Item 22, Rubric Item 23)*
* What process do leaders and instructional staff use to monitor the effectiveness of the core curriculum/instruction? *(Rubric Item 6, Rubric Item 9, Rubric Item 16, Rubric Item 23)*

#### Student Assessment Data Use (for classroom instruction)

* What types of assessment data do teachers use to determine progress in student learning outcomes?
* In what ways do teachers use data to determine appropriate action steps and monitor the results of those actions?
* What proportion of staff consistently use student assessment data in these ways?
* How often do teachers collaboratively reflect upon student data across content and grade levels to identify student needs and necessary support?
* Do teachers have protected time in their schedules to regularly review student data across content and grade levels to identify student needs and necessary supports?

#### Structures for Instructional Improvement

* Does the school consistently implement structures, practices, and use of resources to support data-driven instruction, the use of research-based instructional strategies, and differentiation?
* Do these structures result in rigorous instruction, reflective of the shifts in cognitive demand for the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks?
* Does instruction meet the needs of each student?
* *Additional question for secondary schools:* To what extent are students actively involved in choosing their courses and activities within their classrooms?

#### Career Development Education/Contextual Learning (new)

* What programs programs and practices are in place to prepare and promote college and career readiness (e.g. career-focused curricula, career and technical education courses or programs, career-themed small learning communities, and dual enrollment)? (EDIT when MSV is final)

#### Systems for Postsecondary Planning and Workplace Readiness (new)

* Is at least one staff member dedicated to working with students to determine postsecondary plans? (EDIT when MSV is final)
* What kinds of supports do students receive throughout the college and employment application process? To what extent do these supports reflect best-practice? Does the school leverage community organizations to support this process? (HS report)

### Guiding Questions: Turnaround Practice 3

#### General Academic Context

* Do all students receive Tier I instruction and have access to universally designed academic, behavioral, and social emotional curriculum and instruction that integrates culturally responsive pedagogy that is linguistically appropriate?
* Is academic instruction engaging and personalized to allow all students to access grade-level standards in all content areas?
* Do all students have time to engage in rigorous academic work in their regular schedule? Are academic interventions implemented systematically during regularly scheduled school time and for all core content areas through a robust tiered system of support?
* *Additional question for secondary:* Do interventions support students in all grades beyond preparation for MCAS and graduation?
* Are students experiencing research-based academic interventions appropriate for their specific needs? (*Grant Requirement 11, Rubric Item 17*)
* What kind of in-class support options are provided for students with special needs (e.g., co-teaching, support facilitation, and the use of peers)z? *(Rubric Item 17)*
* Do service personnel such as occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech pathologists provide services within the general education classroom when appropriate? *(Rubric Item 17)*
* In what ways do students receive specific feedback based on formative assessments/student work to continue to close gaps and reach grade level standards? *(Rubric Item 17)*
* How fluid Is the tiered system of support? What processes are used to adjust intervention, enrichment, and support assignments throughout the school year, based on student progress and need? *(Rubric Item 17)*
* What kinds of resources that support a range of academic needs do staff have access to? How well utilized are these resources? *(Rubric Item 17)*

#### Teacher Training to Identify Student Needs (Academic and Nonacademic)

* In what ways are school staff trained and supported to ensure that they: (1) identify cues when students need additional assistance (both academic and nonacademic) and (2) respond appropriately to those cues? *(Rubric Item 17, Rubric Item 18)*
* How is instructional staff supported in identifying issues arising in the lives of students (e.g., poverty, mobility, etc.) and in working to address issues in order to minimize impact on learning? *(Rubric Item 17)*
* How do district staff and systems support and provide students with necessary assistance? *(Rubric Item 2)*

#### Determining Schoolwide Student Supports (Academic Interventions and Enrichment)

* Is student learning and academic performance reviewed regularly throughout the school year, using a wide array of ongoing assessments to identify student-specific and schoolwide emerging needs? Who, or what team is responsible reviewing these data and developing and implementing strategies to address emerging needs? *(Rubric Item 17, Rubric Item 9, Rubric Item 16, Rubric Item 23)*
* What are the roles and responsibilities of the Student Support Team?
  + Are instructional staff included on Student Support Teams along with guidance and mental health staff?
* In practice, is it functioning in the way it is intended? To what extent do all stakeholders understand this team’s purpose and protocols? Do they know how to access the Student Support Team? *(Rubric Item 9)*
* What procedures are in place for Student Support Teams to follow up with referring teachers regarding supports provided to their students? Are teachers involved in discussions to determine whether the supports have been successful? (HS report)
* What processes and procedures does the school have for rapidly identifying and responding to the various needs of students in the school?

#### Implementing a Multi-tiered System of Supports for Student Intervention (Academic, Behavior, and Social Emotional)

* What does the multi-tiered system of support look like in this school? To what extent does it meet the following conditions?

(1) staff members follow consistent rules and procedures when identifying students in need of additional assistance;

2) a specific set of criteria and protocols are consistently used to identify students for interventions and enrichment;

(2) a team of appropriate staff and stakeholders makes decisions about needed interventions and supports; and

(3) staff members follow consistent rules and procedures when monitoring the delivery and effectiveness of interventions and supports.

*(Rubric Item 17)*

* Do teachers regularly review a range of data sources, including discipline and social-emotional data in addition to academic performance and attendance data?
* When a student is referred based on one particular difficulty he or she is experiencing, is additional information routinely gathered to determine if the student is facing other challenges that may need to be addressed?

#### Academic Supports and Services for English Learners

* To what extent are all English language learners experiencing research-based academic supports and services appropriate for their specific needs? (*Grant Requirement 11, Rubric Item 17*)

#### Academic Supports and Services for Students With Disabilities

* To what extent are all students with disabilities experiencing research-based academic supports and services appropriate for their specific needs? (*Grant Requirement 11, Rubric Item 17*)

#### Planning for Incoming Students (new - update once secondary rubric is final)

* What programs and practices are in place to support the transition to secondary school (e.g., summer bridge program, freshman academy, peer mentoring, and 4-year graduation plans)?
* Are leaders and teachers expected to actively review early warning indicator data (including performance, attendance, English language proficiency benchmarks, and discipline data) for all incoming students (both at the start of the school year and students entering mid-year)?
* What are the criteria and protocols for using early warning indicator data to identify needs and assign appropriate supports to get and keep students on track?
* In what ways do teachers plan their instruction and coursework to align with identified student needs?

### Guiding Questions: Turnaround Practice 4

#### Safe and Supportive Learning Environments

* In what ways do school staff model, promote, and practice behaviors that nurture respect, positive relationship building, and self-awareness?
* Do students participate in the development of behavioral expectations?
* Are there opportunities to reflect on and productively resolve issues that arise, to provide students with learning opportunities in addition to providing consequences? Are consequences non-exclusionary?
* To what extent do staff members respond to student behaviors consistently throughout the campus and school year?
* How is the school climate monitored through the lens of behavior or discipline data (at least twice annually)?
* How is time set aside and used both at the start of the year and periodically throughout the year to review schoolwide expectations with students?
* To what extent do schoolwide expectations focus on cultivating positive student characteristics?
* When counterproductive behaviors occur, are system in place for staff to engage in conversations with students to get at the root of the behavior?
* How is discipline data examined for variations to identify teacher who have strong classroom management skills and can serve as exemplars for colleagues, as well as those who may need support?
* Is there a common understanding/vision of what a safe and supportive culture and climate should look like in this school? How is this vision embraced by all staff and students? *(Rubric Item 18)*
* What structure/systems/processes are in place to ensure that all classrooms create predictable environments and a climate that supports learning? *(Rubric Item 18)*
* Does the schoolwide behavior plan include a defined set of behavioral expectations? Are the systems and set of structures for positive behavioral supports aligned to those expectations? Do most (if not all) staff members consistently implement the procedures outlined in the schoolwide behavior plan? Do leaders monitor implementation using data? *(Rubric Item 18, Grant Requirement 12)*
* What systems and practices are in place to encourage and support students to take responsibility for their own learning and behavior? (*Rubric Item 18)*

#### Adult-Student Relationships

* What structures are in place (e.g., structured advisories, mentor programs) in place to support relationships among students and adults and deliver social-emotional supports?
* How are adult-student relationships developed and supported through culturally responsive classroom management?
* How are these supports monitored actively to determine whether they are meeting the needs of the school? *(Rubric Item 17, Rubric Item 18)*

#### Expanded Learning

* What kinds of expanded learning opportunities, that are well defined and well supported, are available to students? Do all students have access to them?
* How are data analyzed and expanded learning opportunities developed to support high-need students?
* How are external partnerships used strategically to provide expanded learning opportunities to students?
* How are in-school and after-school instructional programs used to provide remediation and enrichment to students?
* What highly effective strategies are used to immediately and effectively improve student graduation rates, dropout rates and credit recovery for secondary students?
* Are students culture, race, ethnicity or personal interests considered and infused throughout expanded learning opportunities?

#### Wraparound Services and External Partners

* What kind of wraparound services (e.g., health, housing referrals) and connections to external partners supporting these types of services are available through the school?
* Do leaders and staff share individual and mutual responsibility for building the capacity of families to support education through a systemic system of wraparound services?
* In what ways do leaders and staff assess the needs of students and families throughout the school year? *(Rubric Item 19)*
* Do all staff know whom to contact when a student needs wraparound supports?

#### Family and Community Engagement

* What steps does this school take to ensure that all parents feel welcome at the school in a way that honors their linguistic, cultural, and racial identity? *(Grant Requirement 10)*
* Are families treated as an asset to the school and their child’s learning?
* What regular activities are planned throughout the year to engage families and community members in planning for and collaborating in the implementation of academic and nonacademic supports?
* What communication system is in place among staff, families, and community partners that ensures coordination of services in support of learning? *(Rubric Item 19, Grant Requirement 10, Grant Requirement 14)*
* To what extent are families involved in school life and the academic achievement of their students? *(Rubric Item 19, Grant Requirement 10, Grant Requirement 14)*
* Are there interpretation and/or translation services available for families whose primary language is not English?
* Is there a Parent Advisory Committee focused on English Learners, if applicable to the school context? *(Rubric Item 19, Grant Requirement 10, Grant Requirement 14)*
* Is there one or more staff members dedicated to the coordination of family and community engagement activities? Are regular events planned throughout the year to engage families and community members? *(Rubric Item 19, Grant Requirement 14)*
* In what ways do staff members routinely reach out to families to communicate information about their children’s progress and needs? Are these routine or ad hoc communications?
* Are communications with families made available in multiple languages, as needed? *(Rubric Item 19, Grant Requirement 10, Grant Requirement 14)*
* Which key stakeholders (e.g., parents, community members) engaged in the development of the school’s turnaround plan? Are they actively involved in the ongoing improvement efforts of the school? *(Rubric Item 19, Grant Requirement 14)*
* What steps does the school take to address the social service and health needs of students and families?
* Does the school need to take steps to improve or expand child welfare services, or as appropriate, law enforcement services in the school community to ensure a safe and secure learning environment? *(Rubric Item 18, Rubric Item 19)*
* If applicable to the school’s context, what types of workforce development services (meaningful employment skills and opportunities) provided to students at the school and to their families? *(Rubric Item 18, Rubric Item 19)*

## Guiding Questions - Cross-Cutting Themes

(as described in the Turnaround Practices Field Guide)

### Cross-Cutting Theme #1: Turnaround leaders who have a sense of urgency, expertise, and relational leadership skills.

* **Urgency**: Does the principal and leadership team have a strong sense of urgency to change the lives of students in the school? To what extent are they willing to ‘do whatever it takes’ to improve? Does the principal have a mantra of high expectations and no excuses, and is this communicated clearly and consistently to staff?
* Do all staff demonstrate that they believe that they can directly impact their students achievement regardless of the students’ circumstances?
* **Expertise**: Do the principal and leadership team set a few key non-negotiables and expectations for instructional practices and student behavior?
* **Relational**: Does the principal build an organization where leaders and teachers share ownership of students and are empowered to learn from one another as colleagues?

### Cross-Cutting Theme #2: An improvement mind-set that permeates all school behaviors, decisions, discourse, and actions.

* Does the school have an ‘improvement mindset’ and a culture in which leaders and teachers work closely with one another to actively identify and address specific problems of practice?
* Does the school have a system of high-functioning teaming structures and communication channels that accelerate the ability to diagnose a problem; develop, implement, and test new practices; and then share and spread practices that work?

### Cross-Cutting Theme #3: Highly consistent, aligned, and rigorous instructional practices.

* Does the school have tightly aligned and consistent curricula, expectations instructional strategies and assessment tools?
* Are teachers working together to develop vertically and horizontally aligned instruction and strategies? For example, do teachers develop common units and lesson plans? Do teachers use similar prompts, note-taking techniques, and common strategies to help students access content?
* Is the school an effective learning environment for adults, with the infrastructure and know-how to quickly and effectively implement proven instructional and organizational improvements?
* How deeply have teachers analyzed curriculum standards? How well do they know precisely what students need to know and be able to do from one grade level to the next? Do teachers intentionally use standards-aligned key words, phrases, and essential questions to support students? Are these used within and across grades?
* Do students know exactly what to expect in each class, and can they employ the same tools to access and apply information?
* Do teachers have autonomy and ownership over the development of lessons, routines, and strategies?
* Are grade-level and team-developed strategies implemented across the school after testing, reflection, and evidence demonstrates that they have impact, so effective strategies can be scaled across the entire school?

## Required Actions Relative to English Learners (EL) - Guidance for Schools with EL Populations

[An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2010/Chapter12) lays out specific strategies for addressing achievement gaps in schools identified as underperforming. These schools are granted statutory flexibilities to enhance their efforts to implement the strategies. The Achievement Gap Act requires that as part of their turnaround plans, underperforming schools with English Learners (ELs) “shall develop alternative English Language learning programs for limited English proficient students, notwithstanding the requirements of Chapter 71A.” G.L. c. 69, § 1J(c). This allows districts/schools to implement programs other than Sheltered English Immersion (SEI), without having to meet the requirements outlined in [Chapter 71A, English Language Education in Public Schools](http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71A).[[4]](#footnote-4) This flexibility recognizes that SEI may not be meeting the needs of all ELs and that underperforming schools must have the flexibility to swiftly develop the program that best meets the needs of their EL population.

If as part of the turnaround planning process, a school would like to implement an alternative ELE program, the district should include the following information in the turnaround plan:

1. A short description of the proposed new ELE program, including the educational theory behind the program, plans for providing ESL and partner language instruction, information related to curriculum and educator professional development, and plans for the ongoing monitoring of the program.
2. The demographics of the student population to be served by the proposed new ELE program.
3. Confirmation that the district consulted with the English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC), if applicable.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Examples of Alternative ELE Programs Include, but are not limited to:**

* **Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE):** a program designed to allow English learners to achieve long-term academic success through English-medium instruction in general education classrooms; provided, however, that the native language of the English learner is used to support the student’s development of English and content learning and is then gradually phased out of instruction as a student’s English proficiency increases; and provided further, that “transitional bilingual education” may be initiated at any level, including middle and high school, but shall not be intended as a method of instruction for a student’s entire academic career.
* **Dual Language Education/Two-way Immersion:** “Dual language education” or “2-way immersion”, a program designed to promote bilingualism and biliteracy, cross-cultural competency and high levels of academic achievement for both native English speakers and English learners from a single language background; provided, however, that students shall develop and maintain their first language while adding a second language and shall receive the same core curriculum as all students in the state; provided further, that the instruction for such students shall be provided in 2 languages throughout the program; and provided further, that “2-way immersion” programs may begin in the early grades, including pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, and may continue through the secondary level
* **A combination of programs, or other proposal,** to be reviewed and approved by ESE as part of the school’s Turnaround Plan submission. As with TBE and two-way immersion, this may include programs that incorporate native language supports and/or instruction.

**EL Parent Advisory Council (PACs)**

Underperforming schools that offer an EL program(s) must establish an EL PAC comprised of parents/guardians of students that are enrolled in EL program(s) in the school. The role of the EL PAC is to advise the school on matters that pertain to the education of these students, to meet regularly with the school to help plan and develop programs that will improve the education of ELs, and to participate in the review of the school’s turnaround plan. More guidance on establishing and implementing EL PACs can be found on the [Department’s website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/default.html).

DESE offers a number of resources related to professional development for teachers of ELs, such as:

* [RETELL Extending the Learning](http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/courses.html)
* [ESL Model Curriculum Unit Videos](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/curriculum/mcu-videos.html)
* [WIDA Implementation Guidance (2013)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/wida/Guidance-p1.pdf)
* [ELE Leadership Networks](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/ele-leaders/)
* [Other EL Professional Development resources](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/profdev.html)

## Changes in Policy and Strategies to Consider under State Law

**Curriculum and Instruction**

 **Expand, alter, or replace curriculum**: The Superintendent may expand, alter or replace the curriculum and program offerings of the school, including the implementation of research based early literacy programs, early interventions for struggling readers and the teaching of advanced placement courses or other rigorous nationally or internationally recognized courses, if the school does not already have such programs or courses

 **Expand use of time**: The Superintendent may expand the school day or school year or both of the school

 **Add Kindergarten or pre-Kindergarten**: The Superintendent may, for an elementary school, add prekindergarten and full day kindergarten classes, if the school does not already have such classes

**Financial and Asset Management**

 **Reallocate school budget**: The Superintendent may reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the school

 **Reallocated district budget**: The Superintendent may provide additional funds to the school from the budget of the district, if the school does not already receive funding from the district at least equal to the average per pupil funding received for students of the same classification and grade level in the district. (If the school receives funding at least equal to the average per pupil funding, with the approval of the School Committee, the Superintendent can direct additional funds to the school.)

**Human Resources**

 **Attract and retain leaders and teachers:** The Superintendent may provide funds, subject to appropriation and following consultation with applicable local unions, to increase the salary of any administrator, or teacher in the school, to attract or retain highly qualified administrators, or teachers or to reward administrators, or teachers who work in underperforming schools that achieve the annual goals set forth in the turnaround plan

 **Make staffing changes:** The Superintendent may, following consultation with applicable local unions, require the principal and all administrators, teachers and staff to reapply for their positions in the school, with full discretion vested in the superintendent regarding his consideration of and decisions on rehiring based on the reapplications

 **Implement new systems**: The Superintendent may establish steps to assure a continuum of high expertise teachers by aligning the following processes with a common core of professional knowledge and skill: hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture and organizational structure

 **Leadership development:** The Superintendent may establish a plan for professional development for administrators at the school, with an emphasis on strategies that develop leadership skills and use the principles of distributive leadership

**Professional Development and Collaboration**

 **Embedded professional development**: The Superintendent may include a provision of job embedded professional development for teachers at the school, with an emphasis on strategies that involve teacher input and feedback

 **Expanded teacher planning time:** The Superintendent may provide for increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction

**Leadership and Governance**

 **Change Collective Bargaining and Policies:** The Superintendent may limit, suspend or change 1 or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement, as the contract or agreement applies to the school; provided, that the superintendent shall not reduce the compensation of an administrator, teacher or staff member unless the hours of the person are proportionately reduced

 **Change District Policies**: The Superintendent may limit, suspend or change 1 or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices relate to the school

**Additional Strategies**

 **Study best practices:** The Superintendent may develop a strategy to search for and study best practices in areas of demonstrated deficiency in the school

 **Address mobility and transiency**: The Superintendent may establish strategies to address mobility and transiency among the student population of the school

 **Additional strategies**: The Superintendent may include additional components based on the reasons why the school was designated as underperforming and the recommendations of the local stakeholder group

1. ESSA requires that schools in the lowest 5th percentile must work with local stakeholders to develop and implement a comprehensive support and improvement plan. By law, these plans must be informed by all the indicators in the state’s accountability system, include evidence-based interventions, be based on a school-level needs assessment, involve stakeholders in planning and implementation, and identify resource inequities that must be addressed. The plan must be approved by the state and once approved, the state is responsible for monitoring and reviewing implementation of the plan. Schools with consistently underperforming subgroups (targeted support and intervention schools) are subject to the planning requirements for schools in the lowest 5th percentile, but the state is not required to approve or monitor the plans. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. All schools named as “underperforming” must meet several requirements in developing a turnaround plan under [M.G.L. Ch 69, Section 1J](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter69/Section1J). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The School Redesign Grant (SRG) program is a source of federal funding for some low-performing schools; however, the SRG program is administered on a competitive basis – it is not an entitlement. It is important to note that turnaround plans written in application for competitive SRG funding must meet stated grant requirements and meet a scoring threshold on the SRG Scoring Rubric. In the event that the district does apply for federal SRG funding, the content of the funding requests in the SRG proposal must supplement rather than supplant district funding. SRG funds should be considered an investment in school capacity because participants need to consider the long-term sustainability of proposed efforts. Federal SRG funding can only be used for up to three years – then the district is responsible for maintaining the improvements in that school without the additional funding source. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Chapter 71A was amended by the [LOOK Act](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/look-act.html). Under the LOOK Act, signed into law in November 2017, a district that intends to offer a new SEI program or an “alternative instructional English learner program” (a program other than SEI) for ELs must submit certain information for the Department’s review. The alternative instructional English learner program may be transitional bilingual (TBE), Two-Way Immersion (TWI)/Dual Language Education (DLE), or another program type. Programs must be research-based and include both subject matter content and an English language acquisition component, and must be based on the linguistic and educational needs of the ELs in the school district. By law, a district that intends to offer a new SEI or alternative instructional English learner program in the next academic year shall submit, not later than January 1 of the current academic year, to the department and the district’s parent advisory council, on a form prescribed by the department, a description of:

   (i) the new instructional program selected;

   (ii) how the new SEI or alternative instructional program meets the needs of the population to be served;

   (iii) the number and expected qualifications of the program’s educators; and

   (iv) the number, native language and English proficiency levels of students expected to be enrolled in the program. G.L. c. 71A, § 4; 603 CMR 14.04. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Any district that serves 100 or more ELs or in which ELs comprise at least 5% of the student population must establish an ELPAC. Any school designated as underperforming or chronically underperforming that operates an ELE program, must also establish an ELPAC. 603 CMR 14.09. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)