

Turnaround Practices in Action

A Three-Year Analysis of School and District Practices, Systems, Policies, and Use
of Resources Contributing to Successful Turnaround Efforts in Massachusetts'
Level 4 Schools

July 2014

A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis conducted for the Massachusetts Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education by The Institute for Strategic Leadership and
Learning (INSTLL, LLC)



Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning
Advancing Innovation and Transformational Change

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Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without considerable support from, and collaboration with, key leaders at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We are honored to have had the opportunity to work with the entire Office of District and School Turnaround team over the past 5 years and we have learned much from our work together - Thank You! In particular, we would like to thank Lynda Foisy, former Senior Associate Commissioner and Lise Zeig, Associate Commissioner, Statewide System of Support for their support and insight and for having the foresight to pose important questions and strive for learning from the onset of the Level 4 work. And this report would not have been possible without our close collaboration with Erica Champagne, Level 4 & 5 District and School Assistance Coordinator, who has provided her time and excellent thinking throughout, helping to guide the development of the three-year study and in being an active partner in using findings to inform ongoing support and assistance to districts and schools. Thank you – this has truly been a team effort!

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Please cite this report as:

Lane, B., Unger, C., & Souvanna, P. (2014). *Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis*. Baltimore, MD: Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning. Retrieved from www.instll.com.

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Executive Summary: Turnaround Practices in Massachusetts' Schools

In 2010, Massachusetts embarked upon an ambitious effort to turn around its lowest performing schools.

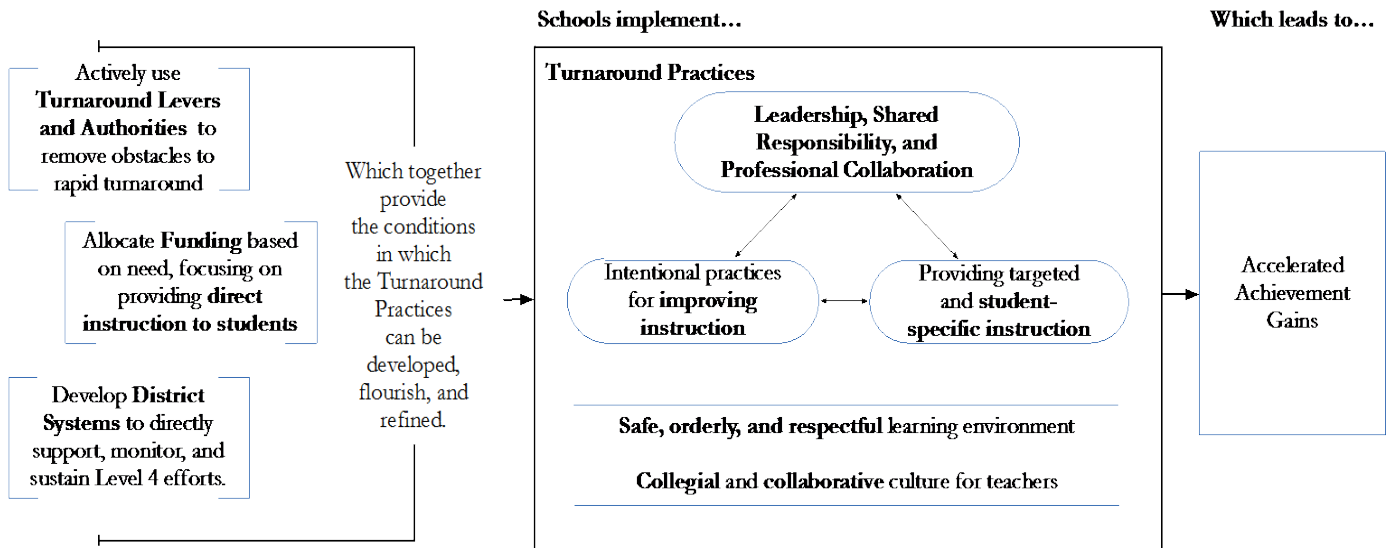
Voted into law by the state legislature in 2010, *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* provided districts with the authority to change the conditions that had hindered previous improvement efforts and the opportunity to take bold actions to close achievement gaps. At the same time, the federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) program provided financial resources that districts and schools could competitive apply for and use to jumpstart turnaround efforts. And the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (ESE) Office of District and School Turnaround engaged districts in planning and thinking strategically about turnaround efforts. This Practice Guide, based upon a detailed analysis of the experience of the initial 34 Level 4 schools during the first three years of turnaround (2010-11 to 2012-13), presents **key turnaround practices** to be considered by state leaders, districts, schools, and policymakers striving to improve and sustain ongoing and future turnaround efforts.

After three full years (2010-11 to 2012-13) of hard work on the part of the state, districts, and schools, the experience and results of the first 34 Level 4 schools is mixed, with some schools making substantial and dramatic gains in student achievement while other schools failing to realize similar success. Overall, 14 schools exited Level 4 status, 15 schools continued as Level 4 schools, and 4 schools were designated as Level 5 (and one school closed). However, the consistency in which achievement gains were made by some schools but not by others provides an opportunity to closely examine what happened in those schools making gains—Achievement Gain schools—compared to the experience in those schools not making gains.

What have we learned about how schools made substantial gains in student achievement?

Districts actively used the **Authorities** provided by the *2010 Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* to *get the right leaders and teachers in place* and to *modify conditions* that stifled previous improvement efforts. Nearly all of the Level 4 schools applied for and received SIG funding and **Allocated Funding** to implement a variety of initiatives, with Achievement Gains schools allocating a higher percent of funds to provide students with *additional, high quality direct instruction* specific to their individual needs. And districts took responsibility for Level 4 efforts, by re-organizing and developing new **District Systems** focused on *directly supporting and monitoring Level 4 schools*. Collectively, the use of Authorities, District Systems, and Funding provided the overall conditions needed by Principals to *lead turnaround efforts* and for key **Turnaround Practices** to be *developed, refined, and acted upon with precision*, leading to a *culture of accelerated improvement* in many schools.

Figure 1. A Roadmap to Sustainable Turnaround



Executive Summary: Turnaround Practices in Massachusetts' Schools

Over three years, Achievement Gain schools channeled the urgency implicit in being identified as a Level 4 school and then developed the technical expertise to initiate and sustain accelerated improvement.

Turnaround Levers and Authorities. Districts actively used Level 4 authorities (although not without some struggles and ongoing negotiations with leadership of local teacher unions) to get the right leaders and teachers in place and subsequently provide the principal with the autonomy to modify other aspects of the school, as needed to accelerate turnaround efforts. For instance:

- Nine of the exited Level 4 schools replaced more than 45% of teachers in the first two years of turnaround in an effort to get the right teachers in place.
- Districts modified key aspects of the hiring process (e.g., bidding and bumping) that often negatively impact the ability of a school to hire and retain the staff they need.
- Some districts partnered with outside organizations on leadership development initiatives specifically targeting the development of turnaround leaders.
- Within defined parameters and expectations for success, districts granted principals the autonomy to modify the school schedule and decide how to best use extended time and teacher collaborative time.

District Systems to Support Turnaround. Districts have continued to play a central role in supporting and monitoring school-level turnaround efforts and there is clear evidence that districts have become more thoughtful and strategic with respect to how they are working with schools. Specifically, districts have reorganized and re-tasked central office staff to work directly with schools, developing systems that allow for monthly and sometimes weekly monitoring of turnaround efforts. An important distinction is that the “monitoring” provided by district leaders is predicated on having a solid relationship with the school principal, to the extent that district/school interactions are supportive and intended to promote professional improvement and growth, rather than focusing solely on monitoring the implementation of a written plan.

Targeting Resources on Instruction and Professional Practice. Thirty-one of the original 34 Level 4 schools competitively applied for and received School Redesign Grant (SRG) funding. Excluding fringe benefits, **\$50.26 million** of combined SRG and Bridge Grant funding was awarded to 31 schools over 4 years (2010 to 2014).

- Achievement Gain schools allocated 42 percent of SRG funds towards instruction and direct support to students, substantially more than the 18 percent allocated towards instruction by Non-Gain schools.
- During the first two years, Non-Gain schools allocated more funds towards issues related to student behavior and providing formal professional development to teachers and then shifted their focus from student behavior and social-emotional issues to increased funding for oversight and coordination.

A Sophisticated and Precise use of Turnaround Practices. Over three years, a consistent set of Achievement Gain schools have exhibited a growing expertise and sophisticated use of practices—Turnaround Practices—that together have accelerated improvements in teachers’ instruction and in student achievement. Grounded in the development of a **safe, orderly and respectful learning environment for students** and a **collegial, collaborative, and professional culture among teachers**, principals cultivated a **community of practice with shared responsibility for all students and a strong culture of professional collaboration**. With these foundational pieces in place, school leaders and teachers engaged in **intentional practices for improving teacher-specific and student-responsive instruction**, such as using frequent observations and student-specific data to provide constructive feedback to teachers. Drilling down to the instructional core, teachers in Achievement Gain schools **have a clear and precise understanding of what high-quality core instruction means** and have developed a **sophisticated approach to using a wide array of assessments to identify student-specific Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports and subsequently assess the impact of such interventions**.

Executive Summary: Turnaround Practices in Massachusetts' Schools

Future Areas of Inquiry

While we have learned much from the schools that made substantial achievement gains, there is still much to be explored so that we have a more detailed and explanatory understanding of why turnaround efforts were not successful in more of the initial set of Level 4 schools. Why are some schools able to engage in successful turnaround and others not able to do so? Or more precisely, why did the Turnaround Practices flourish in some schools, but not in others? We offer two lines of inquiry and preliminary hypotheses to inform policy conversations and district actions.ⁱ

Ensuring Readiness for Turnaround. Getting the right leaders and teachers on board is an important first step. The right leaders and teachers are professionals who actively believe that they can make a difference and that have a shared commitment to improve, under the microscope of heightened accountability and urgency. It is likely that some schools did not have the right configuration of leaders and staff in place and thus did not have the internal capacity needed to engage in successful turnaround.

- Districts may have **underestimated** the importance of ensuring that the right leaders and teachers were in place or they **may have known that changes in staffing were needed, but did not have the political capital and support** needed to fully act upon such knowledge.
- Districts may have been **unable to identify enough “turnaround leaders” within their own district or surrounding communities**, as needed to place in all of the identified Level 4 schools. The experience in Massachusetts and from across the country is that turnaround leaders are in short supply.ⁱⁱ

Principal Autonomy to Use Authorities. There is strong evidence that principals in Achievement Gain schools had significant autonomy to organize and structure the school day (e.g., schedules, meetings, common planning time, extended time) as needed to implement turnaround strategies and to address the priorities identified in their turnaround plans. However, what is not known is whether principals had similar levels of autonomy across schools and districts, and in particular among Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools.

- Did some **principals have the autonomy** to use allowable authorities and make changes, but **lacked the skill and expertise to put all of the pieces together in strategic fashion?**
- Or did districts **withhold autonomy from certain principals** (for any number of reasons) and **limit the ability of principals to fully use available authorities?**

Fall 2014 Supplemental Findings

A supplemental report will be published in December 2014 to provide updated data from the spring 2014 MCAS administration on the 34 Cohort 1 Level 4 schools and preliminary outcome data on the 18 Level 4 schools identified since 2010. The supplemental report will also document how Massachusetts' Office of District and School Turnaround has learned from this work to create a more coherent and supportive system of monitoring and support for Priority Level 4 schools, and the impact of such supports on district capacity building.

Future reports may address the areas of inquiry posed above as well as additional questions that emerge as Massachusetts' continues efforts to improve teaching and learning among all schools and for all students.

Executive Summary: Turnaround Practices in Massachusetts' Schools

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Introduction

This practice guide and policy analysis is designed for state, district, and school-level leaders who are actively engaged in the hard work of district and school turnaround. As a **practice guide**, this document represents the culmination of three years of detailed and methodologically rigorous analyses of the experience of the initial 34 Level 4 schoolsⁱⁱⁱ, from 2010-11 through 2012-13. Two overarching questions have guided the analysis.

Turnaround Practices

What are the specific strategies or practices observed in Achievement Gain schools that explain how schools have been able to accelerate and sustain students’ academic growth?

Turnaround Levers and Authorities

What can we learn from districts and from Achievement Gain schools—those schools that exited Level 4 status—in contrast to schools that were not able to improve student achievement, with respect to: (a) how districts and schools used authorities afforded by state and federal law; (b) how districts and schools targeted resources; and (c) how districts organized to monitor and support turnaround efforts?

What is new in the 2014 study?

Our analysis of three years of data, including documentation of how districts have modified their systems and practices over time and in response to the successes and challenges faced by Level 4 schools, provides an opportunity to examine the relationship between state policy (the *2010 Act Relative to the Achievement Gap*), how districts used state policy to drive turnaround efforts, and how and why Turnaround Practices flourished in some schools but not in others.

The 2012 study examined the practices used in schools on a positive achievement trajectory compared to those not making gains and identified a preliminary set of **Emerging Practices for School Turnaround**.

The 2013 study confirmed that Achievement Gain schools were continuing to close achievement gaps and expanded upon and refined a set of **Emerging and Sustaining Practices for school turnaround**. The 2013 study also examined how **districts were developing systems and practices** to support turnaround efforts, differences in how **districts were allocating resources** among Level 4 schools, and the relationship between federal **Turnaround Models, Teacher Turnover, and preliminary gains in student achievement**.

The 2014 study provides a refined set of **Turnaround Practices** that have been consistently used in Achievement Gain schools and provides a detailed accounting of how districts used **Turnaround Levers and Authorities**, focusing on the strategic use of human capital, how districts and principals used authorities to change conditions, and how districts organized to support turnaround. The 2014 study also provides a comprehensive four-year analysis of how districts and schools allocated School Redesign Grant (SRG) funding.

Table 1. Topics and Areas of Analysis in Emerging Practices Reports, 2011-2013

In 2012 Report	In 2013 Report	In 2014 Report
Achievement Trends	Achievement Trends	Achievement Trends
Emerging Practices	Emerging and Sustaining Practices	Turnaround Practices
	District Systems and Practices	Turnaround Levers and Authorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Use of Human Capital • Using Authorities to Change Conditions • Organizing the District for Successful Turnaround; and • Targeting Resources on Instruction and Professional Practice (four-year analysis)
	Teacher Turnover Trends	
	Use of Resources (two-year analysis)	

Analysis

A comparative qualitative analysis was employed to identify, confirm, and describe the Turnaround Practices observed in Achievement Gain schools and to isolate key differences in how the practices were not used, implemented, or refined in Non-Gain schools.

Achievement Gain Schools. Achievement Gain schools are defined as schools that exited Level 4 status in 2013^{iv}. The Non-Gain schools are schools that exhibited little to no gains in student achievement over three years or that remained in the bottom third of the Level 4 schools, with respect to meeting Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs). There is a clear distinction between the academic performance of Achievement Gain schools and Non-Gain schools, reflected in MCAS assessment results and in the practices employed by these schools. As in previous years, a number of Level 4 schools (n=9) were excluded from the analysis due to uneven or inconsistent achievement gains between 2010 and 2013 (see Appendix A for additional detail regarding the selection criteria for Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools.)

Data Sources. The primary data sources used throughout the three-year study include annual Monitoring Site Visit (MSV) Reports (from 2011, 2012, and 2013), SRG renewal applications, and the original turnaround plans and SRG applications submitted by each district and school. Additionally, we examined the district-level portions of SRG proposals in 2013 and 2014 to document changes in districts systems and shifts in how districts and schools were deciding to use policies and authorities to change conditions. The budget analysis is based on the 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13 amended budgets for each school. MCAS performance data was used each year to identify trends in student performance within each school (to link trends in student performance with specific school-level practices) and across schools, to confirm achievement trends among Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools. Finally, information from Turnaround Plans^v informed study findings.

Report Organization: Practice Guide and Policy Analysis

The Practice Guide and Policy Analysis begins with a brief description of **Achievement Trends in Level 4 Schools** followed by a refined description of the **Turnaround Practices** used by schools and that characterize how some schools have improved student achievement and exited Level 4. Then, we provide a detailed description of **Turnaround Levers and Authorities** that have been used by districts to support school-level turnaround, including a summary analysis of how Level 4 schools **Targeted Resources on Direct Instruction and Professional Practice**.

The sections on Turnaround Practices and Turnaround Levers and Authorities may be used as stand-alone guides to support districts and schools as they develop and fine-tune turnaround strategies and as a tool for reflecting upon and assessing the progress of turnaround efforts over time.

Achievement Trends in Level 4 Schools: 2010 to 2013

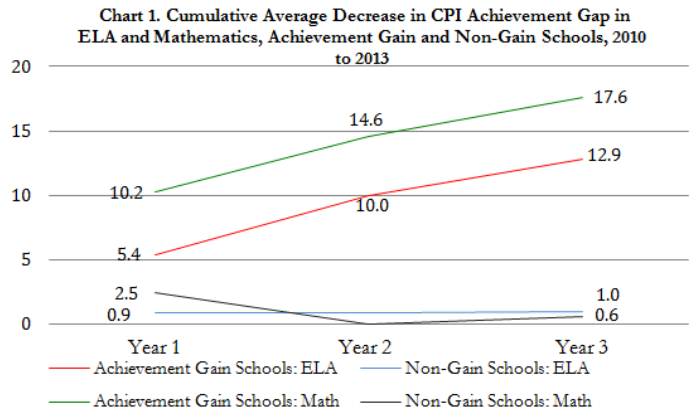
Summary Observations Regarding Achievement Trends

Of the original 34 schools designated as Level 4 in 2010, 14 schools made substantial progress in closing achievement gaps and officially exited Level 4 status^{vi}. For these 14 schools (the Achievement Gain schools), the Level 4 experience has led to substantial increases in student achievement. However, 11 of the original 34 schools made minimal progress in improving student achievement over three years and are characterized as Non-Gain schools (See Appendix A for additional detail). The remaining 9 schools made some progress over the past four years but still have much work to do. In fact, it is important to acknowledge that all of the original Level 4 schools, even those that exited, have work to do to sustain gains and to continue to close achievement gaps.

The Composite Performance Index (CPI) Achievement Gap—a measure of the extent to which schools have closed achievement gaps between students in their own schools and the state average—illustrates the dramatically different levels of success observed across Level 4 schools. Between 2010 and 2013 Achievement Gain schools **decreased** CPI Achievement Gaps by an average of 12.9 points in ELA and 17.6 points in mathematics. In contrast, Non-Gain schools made little to no progress in closing achievement gaps (an average gain of 1 point in ELA and .6 points in mathematics), with some schools actually increasing already large gaps in performance.

A central finding over the three-year experience of Level 4 schools is the emergence of a relatively consistent achievement trajectory among the Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools.

Of the 14 Achievement Gain schools, 11 closed achievement gaps (as measured by the CPI) in each of the three years. Notably, 10 of the schools identified as making rapid gains in 2010-11 (in their first year as a Level 4 school) continued to make progress and exited Level 4 status in 2013. In contrast, Non-Gain schools typically made no progress in their first two years or made small gains in one content area that were not sustained in subsequent years. The fact that 11 schools made little to no progress despite having considerable authority to change conditions and funding to support turnaround efforts illustrates how difficult it is to bring turnaround efforts to scale.



As described in previous reports, middle schools and high schools continue to have considerable difficulty in making changes that lead to increased student achievement. While there are exceptions (Harbor Middle School, Orchard Gardens K-8, and Burke High School, all in Boston Public Schools), initial turnaround efforts in middle and high schools do not appear to have been successful, especially in increasing student achievement in mathematics. However, it is notable that in 2012-13, the four Level 4 high schools (Burke High School and English High School in Boston, Dean High School in Holyoke, and High School of Commerce in Springfield) made considerable gains in ELA, decreasing the CPI achievement gap by an average of 8.5 points. The four high schools did not, however, achieve similar gains in mathematics. Tables 2 and 3, presented on the following pages, display the schools included in the analysis and provide descriptive information on each school.

Table 2. Overview of Level 4 schools used in the analysis: Exited Level 4 schools (Achievement Gain schools) and schools not making gains (Non-Gain Schools) in the 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13 school years by final Level 4 status and three-year change in CPI Achievement Gap.

	Districts	School	% LEP	In Analysis	Model	SIG Cohort	Aggregate 3-year change in CPI		
							ELA	Math	2013 PPI
Exited Level 4 Schools Schools closing achievement gaps (Achievement Gain school)	Boston	Trotter ES	6.6	Yes	Turnaround	1	14.3	23.0	100
	Boston	Harbor MS	9.4	Yes	Turnaround	1	8.5	9.0	86
	Boston	Orchard Gardens K-8	43.3	Yes	Turnaround	1	7.6	21.1	86
	Boston	Blackstone ES	58.8	Yes	Turnaround	1	8.9	N/A	82
	Boston	J. F. Kennedy ES	57.0	Yes	Transformation	1	7.6	9.7	71
	Fall River	Doran ES	22.6	Yes	Transformation	2	9.8	6.6	75
	Lowell	Murkland ES	39.4	Yes	Transformation	2	10.8	20.2	91
	Lynn	Connery ES	47.3	Yes	Transformation	3	15.7	14.7	94
	Lynn	Harrington ES	43.2	Yes	Transformation	2	24.2	9.8	77
	Springfield	Homer Street ES	17.5	Yes	Turnaround	2	16.7	29.6	82
	Springfield	Zanetti K-8	5.5	Yes	Transformation	2	14.0	22.7	100
	Springfield	Gerena ES	21.8	Yes	Transformation	2	14.4	26.3	89
	Worcester	Union Hill	43.0	Yes	Transformation	2	17.5	22.9	99
School not having success in closing achievement gaps (Non-Gain Schools)	Boston	Holland ES	43.2	Yes	Transformation	1	-1.2	3.1	52
	Boston	Dever ES	48.3	Yes	Turnaround	1	-5.7	5.1	58
	Boston	English HS	38.7	Yes	Transformation	1	10.4	-2.0	67
	Holyoke	Morgan ES	42.7	Yes	Transformation	2	3.3	7.5	61
	Holyoke	Dean HS	29.7	Yes	Restart	2	18.2	-4.4	60
	Lawrence	Arlington ES	49.2	Yes	Transformation	2	-8.4	8.0	54
	Springfield	White Street ES	27.4	Yes	Turnaround	2	-0.9	3.7	47
	Springfield	Kiley MS	18.4	Yes	Transformation	1	-1.0	1.9	37
	Springfield	High School Of Commerce	20.5	Yes	Turnaround	3	15.2	-2.1	51
	Springfield	Chestnut Street MS	24.3	Yes	Transformation	2	-7.3	-8.6	25
	Springfield	Kennedy MS	1.4	Yes	Turnaround	2	-11.4	-5.7	23

Notes: The following Level 4 schools were not formally included in the analysis of emerging and sustaining practices: Boston: Burke HS, East Greenwood MS, Dearborn MS; Lawrence: South Lawrence East Middle Schools and SPARK Academy; Fall River: Kuss MS; New Bedford: Parker ES; Springfield: Brightwood ES, Brookings ES; Worcester: Chandler ES (Please refer to Appendix A for additional detail).

Table 3. Level 4 schools used in the analysis: Exited Level 4 schools (Achievement Gain schools) and schools not making gains (Non-Gain Schools) by federal model, SIG Cohort, and Teacher Turnover rate.

	Districts	School	Model	SIG Cohort	Teacher Turnover Rate			
					2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2011-12
Exited Level 4 Schools Schools closing achievement gaps (Achievement Gain school)	Boston	Trotter ES	Turnaround	1	34%	64%	19%	19%
	Boston	Harbor MS	Turnaround	1	39%	48%	32%	16%
	Boston	Orchard Gardens K-8	Turnaround	1	39%	78%	13%	18%
	Boston	Blackstone ES	Turnaround	1	12%	82%	17%	49%
	Boston	J. F. Kennedy ES	Transformation	1	18%	52%	18%	7%
	Fall River	Doran ES	Transformation	2	24%	47%	29%	25%
	Lowell	Murkland ES	Transformation	2	18%	19%	25%	13%
	Lynn	Connery ES	Transformation	3	37%	73%	31%	24%
	Lynn	Harrington ES	Transformation	2	30%	34%	15%	20%
	Springfield	Homer Street ES	Turnaround	2	11%	68%	38%	17%
	Springfield	Zanetti K-8	Transformation	2	18%	38%	12%	21%
	Springfield	Gerena ES	Transformation	2	22%	41%	22%	14%
	Worcester	Union Hill	Transformation	2	5%	54%	32%	15%
School not having success in closing achievement gaps (Non-Gain Schools)	Boston	Holland ES	Transformation	1	9%	21%	16%	19%
	Boston	Dever ES	Turnaround	1	18%	58%	38%	26%
	Boston	English HS	Transformation	1	27%	35%	55%	45%
	Holyoke	Morgan ES	Transformation	2	4%	35%	24%	13%
	Holyoke	Dean Voc Tech HS	Restart	2	6%	17%	21%	38%
	Lawrence	Arlington ES	Transformation	2	18%	19%	59%	
	Springfield	White Street ES	Turnaround	2	9%	46%	32%	26%
	Springfield	Kiley MS	Transformation	1	23%	40%	54%	37%
	Springfield	High School Of Commerce	Turnaround	3	11%	23%	33%	32%
	Springfield	Chestnut Street MS	Transformation	2	18%	24%	33%	34%
	Springfield	Kennedy MS	Turnaround	2	26%	33%	25%	31%

Notes: Nine of the 13 Achievement Gain schools replaced over 45% of their staff in 2010-11. Turnover rates in subsequent years stabilized at 23% and 20% respectively, in 2011-12 and 2012-13. Two of the Non-Gain schools replaced over 45% of their staff in 2010-11. In 2011-12, three schools replaced over 50% of their staff, which may reflect an awareness that turnaround efforts were not proceeding as anticipated, leading to high rates of staff turnover (by teachers opting out or by the district intervening to bring in new staff).

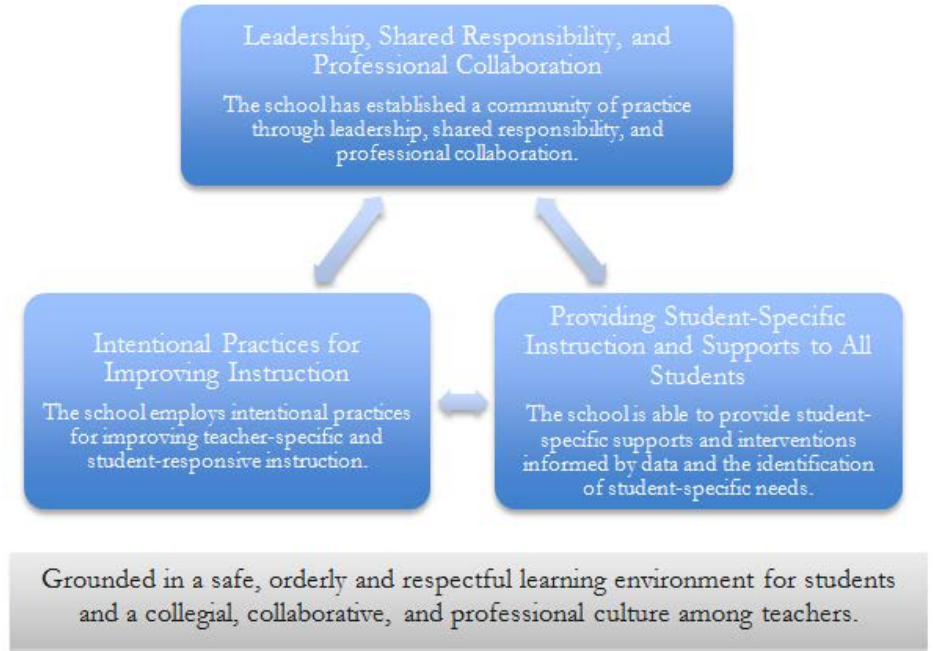
Turnaround Practices

Key Practices that distinguish schools making substantial gains in student achievement

Through three years of analyzing the practices used by Massachusetts' Level 4 schools and exploring differences between Achievement Gain schools—those schools that improved student achievement and ultimately exited Level 4—and Non-Gain schools, the Key Practices that distinguish Achievement Gain schools have remained consistent.

Schools that exited Level 4 are characterized by: (1) strong individual and distributed leadership that cultivates collective responsibility among all staff; (2) the provision of targeted instructional interventions and support for all students needing additional support, and (3) ongoing systems to establish, monitor, and improve instructional quality among all teachers and classrooms. The key turnaround practices reinforce each other to contribute to improvements in

student achievement, and are grounded in two foundational features: a safe, orderly and respectful learning environment for students and a collegial, collaborative, and professional culture among teachers.



A Culture of Accelerated Improvement. As documented in three years of Monitoring Site Visit reports and confirmed by school renewal applications, Achievement Gain schools first implemented these Turnaround Practices and then **over time become experts in using these practices—their work became more sophisticated, targeted, and strategic.** Leaders and teachers set goals and outcomes for what they expected to see in their school (e.g., school climate and culture, student behavior) and in classrooms (e.g., instructional expectations and improved student achievement) and they actively measured their progress, reflected upon the impact of their work, and made real-time changes to their work as needed to continue to improve. In effect, Achievement Gain schools have institutionalized a culture of “accelerated improvement”.

Leadership and Sustainability. The importance of leadership in driving school turnaround should not be underestimated. Our analysis has highlighted the singular importance of leadership in initiating and sustaining turnaround efforts through the first three years of work. However, it is also clear that Achievement Gain schools have developed systems for continuing to improve that should be able to be sustained through the inevitable transitions in leadership. To the point, strong Turnaround Leadership is needed to jumpstart and implement turnaround efforts, but the resulting Turnaround Practices, if implemented and embedded in how the school operates, should be sufficient to sustain achievement gains.

A Turnaround Narrative

The following provides a brief narrative^{vii} of successful school turnaround in Massachusetts, as a way of illustrating the path that many schools took towards improving student achievement. Clearly, the story for each school is individual and there is no “correct” path to take—part of the journey is figuring out how to put all the pieces together that will lead to sustainable turnaround. The turnaround narrative provided here is an amalgamation of the journey taken by multiple schools, and we expect that schools will recognize many of the strategies outlined in the narrative and that are documented in greater detail in the two-page practice guides (one for each Turnaround Practice) that follow.

Turnaround in Achievement Gain Schools

Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration. In year 3, Achievement Gain schools expanded teachers’ leadership roles throughout the building, whether that be in grade level teams, vertical teaming, data teams, or in guiding and supporting the schools’ use of data to inform instruction and tiered interventions. Teams were granted and took responsibility for the outcomes of their students and the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) played an active role as a representative monitoring and decision-making body. School leadership in the form of administrators, the ILT, and teacher leaders all engaged in the ongoing review of data to monitor student achievement, continually assess the impact of their turnaround efforts, and facilitate communication throughout the school regarding their efforts. **Notably, schools enhanced and increased the attention given to the deliberate monitoring of student achievement, tiered instruction, and classroom instruction.** Teacher teams, ILTs, and administrators monitored student outcomes and the implementation of tiered interventions. Leaders and teachers became even more deliberate in their focus on instruction throughout the school community by using a specific instructional framework and/or set of practices (for example, the workshop model or guided reading) as the basis for setting instructional expectations. And principals and others in the school allocated additional and significant time and effort on observing the delivery of classroom instruction and providing constructive feedback where needed based on established and shared instructional expectations.

Providing Student-Specific Instruction and Supports for All Students. Over the course of the three-year turnaround effort, schools making achievement gains developed and continued to refine and broaden their collection and use of student data to inform instructional responses, classroom-based responses and tiered interventions. Based on teams’ analysis of data, teams developed an appropriate instructional response, whether that involved regrouping students according to their needs, re-teaching, or identifying specific Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. Schools making the greatest gains over the three years of Turnaround were those **that collected a wide variety of data frequently *and then* put that data to use in revising, refining, and informing responses to students’ needs.** For example, Achievement Gain schools supplemented assessments administered quarterly or on 6-week intervals with a variety of other instruments to readily and frequently assess students’ proficiency and needs. In some schools, grade-level teams have developed end-of-week classroom-based assessments to determine student learning for the week and whether instruction would need to be revised accordingly. Schools not making or sustaining their achievement gains either were not collecting a wide variety of data frequently to determine student needs and/or were not *using* that data to inform instruction or interventions.

Intentional Practices for Improving Classroom Instruction. While mobilizing a system of data collection and tiered responses allows for an adaptive response to student-specific needs, Year 3 Achievement Gain schools began or continued to **focus on a school-wide shared instructional model or practice which was**

reinforced through ongoing monitoring by administration and/or instructional coaches throughout the building, inclusive of frequent classroom- and teacher-specific feedback. Achievement Gain schools focused professional development (summer and job-embedded) and classroom observations and feedback on the implementation of specific instructional priorities, for example, the workshop model, guided reading, or guided practice. Summer professional development was often used to provide teachers with intensive training, and followed up with ongoing professional development throughout the school year to ensure that teachers were well-assisted in knowing and being able to enact the instructional model and specific practices associated with the model. In addition the principal and participating administrators and coaches made frequent observations across *all* classrooms throughout the building to monitor and ensure that the instructional model and practices were indeed being implemented *and* to provide constructive, useful feedback to teachers regarding their implementation of the practices as observed.

School Culture and Climate: A Safe, Respectful, and Collegial Culture for Students and Teachers

Finally, observations of school climate continued to be highly correlated with achievement gains across the schools, in providing **a safe, orderly, and supportive learning environment for students** but also **a collegial, collaborative, and professional culture** for teachers. Achievement Gain schools evidenced a great degree of collaboration, shared responsibility, and teamwork in their turnaround efforts in pursuit of greater student achievement. And this effort extended into ensuring that classrooms maintained a focused and positive learning environment by ensuring that students (when needed) were provided with additional and targeted supports to meet their academic and social-emotional needs.

Turnaround Practices in Action – A Practice Guide for States, Districts, and Schools

The following pages serve as a Practice Guide for states, districts and schools. Building upon the Turnaround Narrative provided above, the Practice Guide provides an **overarching summary of highlights** and **specific examples and details** for each of the three Turnaround Practices and School Culture and Climate. Districts and schools are invited to reflect upon their own systems and practices in light of the described Turnaround Practices.

Each Turnaround Practice is presented in two complementary views:

1. **SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS by Year:** The first page provides a summary of Turnaround Practice Highlights as documented in Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools, for each of the first three years of turnaround. This view can be used to quickly compare and contrast what turnaround looked like at different stages (e.g., years) of turnaround and provides a good starting point for conversations around how schools are progressing over time and the identification of areas that may need additional work.
2. **DETAILED EXAMPLES:** The second page for each Turnaround Practice provides detailed examples of what the practice typically looks like in year 3, for both Achievement Gain and Non-Gain school, as well as additional detail on what the turnaround practice means for schools moving from year 1 through year 3. This view can be used to inform or jumpstart a deeper conversation of what the practice means in a school or district and how the practice connects with other turnaround practices, as well as with district systems and policies.

Practice #1: Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration

SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS

The school has established a community of practice through leadership, shared responsibility for all students, and professional collaboration.

Through three years of turnaround, Achievement Gain schools pursued distributed leadership and within-school collaboration focused on impacting school-wide student achievement **with an explicit focus on improving core instruction and tiered interventions systems using a variety of data.**

Through 2013-14, Achievement Gain schools displayed evidence of creating and sustaining a distributed leadership structure and array of leadership practices that created and sustained shared responsibility for the pursuit of greater student achievement. In contrast, many of the 11 Non-Gain schools had not developed a coherent set of shared leadership practices across staff with a laser-like focus on increasing student achievement through a rigorous analysis and use of data, deliberate use of administrators and coaches to provide teacher-specific constructive feedback.

Achievement Gain Schools	Non-Gain Schools
<p>Year 1 Highlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has an instruction- and results-oriented principal who has galvanized both individual and collective responsibility for the improved achievement of all students through a variety of deliberate improvement structures, expectations, practices and continuous feedback. <p>Year 2 Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals are actively sustaining an effective system of shared leadership and responsibility throughout the school with an articulated focus on high-quality instruction and immediate response to student needs. • Leaders and teachers are jointly committed to and have assumed shared ownership and collective responsibility for improving student achievement. • The professional environment is one of mutual respect, teamwork, and accountability. <p>Year 3 Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principals have instituted multiple efforts and processes to ensure that high quality instruction is being offered throughout the school. ○ Principals and administrators engage in ongoing (weekly and daily) observations and formal and informal visits in classrooms, followed by the provision of constructive feedback to teachers. ○ Leadership has created a culture of shared ownership and improvement throughout the building. 	<p>Year 1 Highlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership was not able to mobilize the same level of urgency and shared focus on student achievement through leadership structures and practices, and provision of goals, including the collection and analysis of student data or expectations of instruction. <p>Year 2 Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not have an effective system of shared leadership and shared responsibility for all students around an articulated focus and definition of high quality instruction. • Are places where the entire school community (principal, teachers, and professional staff) has yet to come together to commit to a sustained effort for the improvement of student achievement. • May not have a coherent, school-wide system through which teacher teams are enabled to work together to improve student achievement. <p>Year 3 Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lacked multiple leadership capacities (e.g., skill, processes, meetings, communications) to press and support a focus on shared instructional practices. ○ Lacked an ongoing and deliberate focus and/or process to observe classrooms and provide feedback to teachers to enhance teaching throughout the building.

Practice Guide: School-Level Turnaround Practices for Accelerating Student Achievement

Turnaround Practices in Action

Practice #1: Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration

DETAILED EXAMPLES

In Achievement Gain Schools...

In Non-Gain Schools...

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 3
<p>SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IS DELIBERATE, DISTRIBUTED, AND FOCUSED ON INCREASING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT</p>	<p>A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE HAS BEEN DEVELOPED THROUGH DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP, SHARED RESPONSIBILITY, AND PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION</p>	<p>A STRONG, DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE IS ACTIVELY MONITORING AND PURSUING EFFORTS TO INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH A ROBUST SYSTEM OF ONGOING STUDENT ASSESSMENT INFORMING TIERED INTERVENTIONS AND THE DELIVERY OF HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTION THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING</p>	<p>THE SCHOOL HAS NOT DEVELOPED A LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE TO COLLECTIVELY AND STRATEGICALLY MONITOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND INSTRUCTION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL, PROACTIVELY RESPONDING TO THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND ITS TEACHERS.</p>
<p>An instructional- and results-oriented principal has galvanized individual and collective responsibility for the improved achievement of all students through:</p> <p>An explicit focus on continuously improving instruction that involves regular structures for collecting and analyzing data that directly informs teacher-specific instruction.</p> <p>Frequent and ongoing visits to classrooms that provide positive and useful feedback to teachers, as perceived by teachers.</p> <p>Ongoing modeling of and support for a safe, orderly, and engaging environment for teachers and students.</p>	<p>School leaders and professional staff in Achievement Gain schools have assumed collective responsibility and ownership of the pursuit of greater student achievement. Strong leaders and proactive leadership teams intentionally foster collective responsibility by mobilizing structures, strategies, practices and the use of resources for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of instruction.</p> <p><i>Principals</i> are actively sustaining an effective system of shared leadership and responsibility throughout the school with an articulated focus on high-quality instruction and response to student needs.</p> <p><i>Leaders and teachers</i> are jointly committed to and have assumed shared ownership and collective responsibility for improving student achievement.</p> <p><i>The professional environment</i> is one of mutual respect, teamwork, and accountability.</p>	<p>Sustained Leadership pursues increased student achievement through the development of robust and effective systems of ongoing student assessment and tiered responses by teachers, the deployment of student-specific interventions, a focus on the improvement of classroom instruction through targeted training and teacher-specific feedback and coaching, which is actively managed and monitored throughout the building by teachers.</p> <p><i>School leadership</i> is actively monitoring student achievement, student assessments, instruction, and effectiveness of tiered responses to student needs throughout the school.</p> <p>Where needed, school leadership provides targeted instructional guidance, support, and feedback to teachers.</p> <p>The school has created a culture of shared ownership improvement throughout the building for the well-being and achievement of their students.</p>	<p>School leadership has not developed a robust system for the collection, review, and use of student data to drive tiered responses, nor has it created a system of frequent and specific teacher-feedback for the improvement of instruction throughout the building. School priorities are often not well known by the school community. A common focus on instruction has not been shared with the community.</p> <p>School leadership is not actively monitoring student data to inform the need or effectiveness of instruction and tiered interventions for students.</p> <p>School leadership has not developed or is not actively pursuing strategies to provide their teachers with frequent and constructive instructional feedback.</p> <p>The goals and priorities of the schools' efforts for improvement are unclear to staff as is how these efforts are to contribute to students' achievement.</p>

Practice #2: Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction

SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS

The school employs intentional practices for improving teacher-specific and student-responsive instruction.

Through three years of turnaround, Achievement Gain schools continued to develop internal practices designed to spread effective instruction among all classrooms and student, and that involved student-specific instruction and individualized support for teachers (e.g., teacher-specific coaching). Moving through year three, Achievement Gain schools **refined their use of observations and student-specific data so that constructive feedback to teachers was provided and student-specific needs were clearly identified, to inform instructional responses.** Specifically, leaders in Achievement Gain schools provide teachers with constructive instructional feedback and teachers and leaders use data to determine student-specific instructional responses. In contrast, most of the Non-Gain schools continued to lack such systems for teachers as well as for students. If observations were employed and feedback provided, the feedback was not specific enough to provide direct constructive and useful feedback to individual teachers, as perceived by them.

Achievement Gain Schools	Non-Gain Schools
<p>Year 1 Highlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is actively using instruction-specific teacher teaming and teacher-specific coaching and professional development for pursuing ongoing instructional improvement. <p>Year 2 Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is ongoing collective review and use of student data to inform instructional strategies and use of resources, including how the school implements its tiered system of instructional support. • Principals spend significant time in classrooms, observing teachers and providing teachers with constructive, teacher-specific feedback. In some cases, peer-observation by teachers is used to support learning among teachers within and across grade levels. • Professional conversations, targeted coaching, and professional development is perceived as effective and is informed and driven by data and observations around what is working and what is not. <p>Year 3 Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear instructional priorities are identified and shared. ○ The school uses a variety of assessments to frequently assess student learning and student-specific needs and then used those assessments to inform Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. ○ Principals and administrators visit classrooms frequently and visits are used as opportunities to provide feedback and targeted responses to teachers framed by a common understanding of, and expectations for high quality instruction throughout the building. 	<p>Year 1 Highlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school lacks mechanisms and activities to focus on instruction, including the collection and use of data as well as teacher-specific coaching and observations to provide effective and useful feedback. <p>Year 2 Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have not deliberately focused on the improvement of classroom instruction or fully implemented a tiered system of instructional support. • Have not instituted processes (or expectations) for the principal and other personnel (e.g., coaches) to actively visit classrooms and provide teachers with useful teacher-specific feedback based on observations. • There is a lack of professional conversations, targeted coaching, and professional development that directly supports professional development across teachers. <p>Year 3 Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Did not assemble, organize, or employ a sophisticated array of assessments to frequently identify and then respond to students’ academic needs. ○ Did not deliberately use frequent observations grounded in a shared understanding of high quality instruction to inform changes in classroom instruction across all teachers.

Practice Guide: School-Level Turnaround Practices for Accelerating Student Achievement

Turnaround Practices in Action

Practice #2: Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction

DETAILED EXAMPLES

In Achievement Gain Schools...

In Non-Gain Schools...

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 3
<p>LEADERSHIP HAS DEPLOYED A DELIBERATE AND RESOURCE-INTENSIVE FOCUS ON EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY</p>	<p>THE SCHOOL IS EMPLOYING INTENTIONAL PRACTICES FOR IMPROVING TEACHER-SPECIFIC AND STUDENT-RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION</p>	<p>THE SCHOOL HAS RALLIED AROUND A SHARED VISION AND SET OF BEST PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION, AND IT IS WELL-KNOWN AND OBSERVED THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL BUILDING.</p>	<p>THE SCHOOL HAS NOT IDENTIFIED A CORE SET OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES TARGETING INCREASED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT—AS A RESULT, EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION IS NOT OBSERVED THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL BUILDING</p>
<p>Leadership has deployed teaming structures and deliberate, teacher-specific practices for pursuing effective improvement</p> <p>Pervasive and ongoing coaching is provided to individual teachers, informed by classroom observations, student assessments, and teacher need.</p> <p>There is weekly common planning time for ongoing teacher collaboration with a focus on attending to students’ specific academic needs through an ongoing analysis of data and the provision of instructional strategies.</p> <p>Administration regularly visits classrooms to provide feedback and commendations to teachers that teachers identify as helpful and of value.</p>	<p>School leadership, teachers, and coaches have refined their collection and use of student data to inform the evaluation and improvement of instructional practices that directly benefit student learning. Instruction-specific conversations are taking place throughout the school with the intent of improving instruction of each and every teacher.</p> <p>Professional conversations, targeted coaching, and professional development is perceived as effective and is informed and driven by data and observations around what is working (e.g., helping students to improve) and what is not.</p> <p>There is an ongoing collective review and use of student data to inform instructional strategies and use of resources, including how the school implements its tiered system of instructional support.</p> <p>Principals spend significant time in classrooms, observing teachers and providing teachers with constructive, teacher-specific feedback.</p>	<p>School leadership has identified a clear instructional focus with a shared understanding of expected practices. Teachers understand expectations and the school’s observation, monitoring, and feedback systems look very closely at the implementation of these practices throughout the school, and include informal and formal feedback by administration, peers, and coaches.</p> <p>Clear instructional priorities and practices have been identified and shared across all teachers and are observed throughout the building. Instructional expectations are specific rather than general and include specific classroom strategies to improve student learning.</p> <p>Resources, including use of principal observations, coaching, common planning time, and the ongoing review of student data are used for the active improvement of instruction.</p> <p>Administration and coaches are actively monitoring instructional practices throughout the building providing informal and formal feedback.</p>	<p>The school has not identified a core set of effective instructional practices for the purpose of raising student achievement. Instruction is not frequently and routinely monitored nor are teachers provided with frequent, classroom-specific recommendations for improving instruction. Instruction varies throughout the school, often falling short of multi-modal opportunities for student learning.</p> <p>Clear, strategy-specific classroom practices have not been identified and are not being monitored across all classrooms.</p> <p>Resources are not being allocated for the explicit purpose of increasing teachers’ classroom practices.</p> <p>Constructive, classroom-specific feedback is not routinely being offered throughout the school building by the principal or coaches.</p>

Practice #3: Providing Student-Specific Supports and Instruction to All Students

SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS

The school is able to provide student-specific supports and interventions informed by data and the identification of student-specific needs.

Through three years of turnaround, Achievement Gain schools continued to provide a robust system of tiered instruction, inclusive of Core Instruction and targeted interventions and supports for all student, **and have developed a sophisticated approach to using systems of assessments, responding to assessments to deploy interventions and resources, and continuously reviewing the impact of interventions with students.**

Achievement Gain Schools	Non-Gain Schools
<p>Year 1 Highlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has developed a well-orchestrated system of ongoing data collection and analysis that informs a continuously responsive and adaptive system of tiered instruction directly attentive to students’ specific academic needs. <p>Year 2 Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are provided with instruction and interventions in direct response to their academic areas of need, identified through focused analysis of student and/or skill-specific assessments. • The principal, coaches, and teachers actively monitor instructional effectiveness and the progress of students’ learning, across the school, in grades, in classrooms, and down to the student-level, for the purpose of deliberately informing classroom instruction. • Leadership and teachers have the autonomy and flexibility to quickly adapt and modify time (e.g., schedules,) resources (e.g., people and interventionists,) and interventions to directly and immediately meet student-specific needs. <p>Year 3 Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principals and teachers refined and/or further developed their system of instructional interventions across the school to ensure that students were provided specific academic supports and skill-specific guidance and instruction as determined by an array of frequent assessments. ○ The school continues to refine and further develop their use of time (e.g., schedules) and resources (e.g., school personnel) to provide student-specific instruction. 	<p>Year 1 Highlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has not developed a system of data collection and use of that data to inform student-specific targeted interventions or inform instruction. <p>Year 2 Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are collecting student data, but are not using this data to provide all students with instruction and interventions in direct response to their academic needs; the school lacks a deliberate approach for using data to inform student-specific instruction. • Have a fragmented, or not fully operational, system for monitoring classroom instruction and student achievement in individual classrooms. • Have not modified the school schedule or its use of resources in a manner that will dramatically improve teachers’ instruction and the culture of the school. <p>Year 3 Finding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Did not deploy a system of interventions that regularly responded to the specific academic needs of students throughout the school. ○ Did not develop an adaptive system of time or resource management to ensure the flexible provision of supports and interventions students needed on a regular basis.

Practice #3: Providing Student-Specific Supports and Instruction to All Students

DETAILED EXAMPLES

In Achievement Gain Schools...			In Non-Gain Schools...
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 3
<p>THE SCHOOL HAS DEPLOYED A SYSTEM OF STUDENT ASSESSMENTS TO PROVIDE STUDENT-SPECIFIC TIERED INTERVENTIONS</p>	<p>THE SCHOOL PROVIDES STUDENT-SPECIFIC SUPPORTS AND INTERVENTIONS INFORMED BY DATA AND STUDENT-SPECIFIC NEEDS</p>	<p>THE SCHOOL HAS CREATIVELY ALLOCATED STAFF, TIME, AND RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY MONITOR STUDENT DATA AND NEEDS TO INFORM TIERED RESPONSES TO STUDENT-SPECIFIC NEEDS.</p>	<p>WHILE THE SCHOOL MAY BE REVIEWING PERIODIC STUDENT DATA (EG., ANET DATA), THE ARRAY OF INSTRUMENTS USED AND FREQUENCY OF ANALYSIS AND USE OF THE DATA IS LIMITED.</p>
<p>The school has begun to deploy a well-orchestrated and deliberate system of continuous data collection and analysis that directly informs a continuously responsive and adaptive system of tiered instruction</p> <p>The school is engaged in the ongoing identification and placement of students throughout the school year into flexible groupings attentive to the specific skill needs of students in Tier I instruction as well as Tier II and Tier III interventions.</p> <p>The school applies Tier II and III responses that are directly attentive to the specific needs of students, not a general response to perceived needs of the larger group.</p> <p>The allocation (or reallocation) of staff, including coaches, support staff, and interventionists, to provide a continuously responsive system of tiered instruction for all students.</p>	<p>After 2 years, leadership, teachers, and coaches are rigorously using a well-orchestrated system of ongoing data collection and analysis to inform a continuously responsive and adaptive system of tiered instruction <i>attentive to students' specific academic needs.</i></p> <p>The school is employing a variety of assessments to determine student's specific academic needs and providing them with interventions in direct response to those needs.</p> <p>Students are provided with instruction and interventions in direct response to their academic needs, identified through focused analysis of student skill-specific assessments</p> <p>Leadership and teachers have the autonomy and flexibility to quickly adapt and modify classroom time, resources (e.g., people and interventionists), and interventions to directly and immediately meet student-specific needs.</p>	<p>The school has added to and/or refined their use of resources and strategies to continually assess and monitor student needs to <i>inform a variety of student-specific tiered responses dependent on student needs and inform adaptive forms of instruction.</i></p> <p>The school is employing a variety of frequent ongoing assessments (formative, benchmark, and summative) to regularly assess and monitor student needs and inform student-specific instruction.</p> <p>A variety of resources and responses are being employed to directly address student-specific needs dependent on those needs.</p> <p>The allocation of staff and use of resources has greatly increased the schools' capacity to effectively respond to and monitor student needs.</p>	<p>While the school may be collecting and reviewing student data, the array of instruments and frequency of analysis is limited not allowing for a robust system of assessment that can frequently respond to student needs and inform instruction</p> <p>The array and frequency of student assessments does not allow for a frequent adoption of tiered interventions catering to the specific needs of students</p> <p>The school has not significantly expanded its human and programmatic resources to substantively respond to and address their students' needs.</p> <p>The school has not adapted its use of resources to support the ongoing collection, analysis, and use of student assessments to identify and subsequently address student needs.</p>

Foundational Practice: School Culture and Climate: The Foundation of Successful Turnaround

SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS

A safe, orderly, and respectful environment for students and a collegial, collaborative, and professional culture among teachers.

Through three years of turnaround, Achievement Gain schools developed a safe and orderly climate that supports student learning within and outside the classrooms as well as a supportive and professional climate for teachers to collectively focus on and pursue efforts to increase student achievement.

Establishing a positive school culture and climate provided the foundation for the successful development and deep refinement of the Turnaround Practices, and subsequent improvement in student achievement. The lack of a safe and orderly school environment and/or continued challenges in the professional culture and leadership of the school, including communication and transparent decision making, were obstacles that hindered schools’ ability to actively use data systems, implement tiered instruction, and provide constructive and useful feedback to teachers.

Achievement Gain Schools	Non-Gain Schools
<p>Year 1 Highlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leadership set clear expectations for student behavior and teachers’ responses that established a safe and orderly school environment. • School leadership established school-wide professional expectations inclusive of teachers’ fulfilling their responsibilities. • School leadership created mechanisms for school-wide communication that supported turnaround activities throughout the school community. <p>Year 2 Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioral expectations are established and observed throughout the school, and students readily acknowledge these expectations including consequences for their actions. Interactions are polite and respectful, amongst students and between teachers and students. • The school exhibits a culture of collegiality and transparent decision-making evidenced by effective communication channels and structures that ensure a focused and collective effort to improve student achievement. <p>Year 3 Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The school has established an array of institutionalized practices for collegial planning and the implementation of common strategies with ongoing teacher support and a healthy culture of collaboration. ○ Teachers feel that leadership has empowered them to take leadership positions within the school and make professional judgments on actions they think can best support the success of their students. ○ The school has instituted a system of social-emotional supports and behavioral expectations that provides students with targeted, student-specific supports and fosters a safe, orderly, and respectful climate for teaching and learning. 	<p>Year 1 Highlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite attempts to provide a safe, orderly, and respectful environment, student behavior remained a challenge and impeded students’ opportunity to learn and teachers’ opportunity to teach. Programs, expectations, and structures to manage student behavior challenges either did not work or were not in place or implemented. • Professional expectations for collaboration and collegial work was neither established nor well-supported and communication between and amongst leadership and staff did not allow for a shared, collaborative effort to pursue greater student achievement. <p>Year 2 Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student behavioral expectations and disciplinary strategies in and outside of classrooms were not fully established and coherently employed throughout the school community. • Student behavior and discipline is addressed in an ad hoc fashion and, often, caustic fashion, e.g., yelling. • Student behavior remained an issue in almost all middle schools. <p>Year 3 Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schools continue to struggle to implement and deeply refine turnaround practices (e.g., using multiple assessments, having a system of tiered instruction), due to a lack of structures or practices that allowed for a collective pursuit of improvement efforts, including a shift in the climate and culture of the school to an orderly and respectful environment for both students <i>and</i> teachers.

Practice Guide: School-Level Turnaround Practices for Accelerating Student Achievement

Turnaround Practices in Action

**Foundational Practice: School Culture and Climate: The Foundation of Successful Turnaround
In Achievement Gain Schools...**

**DETAILED EXAMPLES
In Non-Gain Schools...**

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 3
<p>SCHOOL LEADERSHIP WAS ABLE TO DEVELOP A MUCH SAFER AND MORE ORDERLY AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p>THE SCHOOL ESTABLISHED STUDENT BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS AND A POSITIVE CLIMATE OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS, SUPPORT, AND COLLABORATION</p>	<p>SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ESTABLISHED AN ORGANIZED COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED, COLLEGIAL, AND COLLECTIVE FOCUS AND SCHOOL-WIDE ARRAY OF PRACTICES TO EFFECTIVELY PURSUE THE SCHOOLS' IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS</p>	<p>THE SCHOOL HAS NOT FULLY ESTABLISHED BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS AND A COLLECTIVE, COLLEGIAL SET OF PRACTICES THAT WOULD ENABLE THE SCHOOL (LEADERS AND TEACHERS) TO DEEPLY REFINE TURNAROUND PRACTICES</p>
<p>School Leadership instituted teacher and student behavioral expectations and practices to ensure a safe, orderly, and professional school environment throughout the school:</p>	<p>The school has established a community-wide set of student behavioral expectations and teacher responses, as well as a positive, professional culture of collaboration and shared efforts to increase student achievement.</p>	<p>The school has institutionalized an array of structures and practices to ensure a collective, collegial effort to improve student achievement, inclusive of a safe, orderly, and respectful environment that supports students' engagement in learning.</p>	<p>School leadership has not institutionalized a common array of practices to ensure that the school community can collectively and collegially pursue improvement efforts that result in greater student achievement, inclusive of a safe, orderly, and respectful school environment for supports.</p>
<p>There are clear and well-supported expectations for student behavior and teacher responses in the classroom (such as establishing clear procedures for arrival and dismissal and travel throughout the building)</p>	<p>School leadership has worked with the staff to establish and reinforce student behavioral expectations, and in many cases has established a positive discipline program to support a healthy, orderly, and respectful school environment</p>	<p>School structures and practices ensure healthy, collegial communication throughout the school that ensures a collective focus on overall improvement efforts to increase student achievement.</p>	<p>The school's structures and organizational practices tend to inhibit the development of a shared, collective effort to improve instruction.</p>
<p>There are clear expectations for teachers' professional behavior and fulfillment of responsibilities and duties.</p>	<p>School leadership is highly communicative with and supportive of teachers, establishing a responsive and inclusive leadership climate, resulting in a culture of collegiality and transparent decision-making and effective communication channels.</p>	<p>Teachers are empowered to take leadership roles throughout the school and entrusted to make professional judgments that contribute to the eventual success of their students.</p>	<p>Ongoing struggles in attending to student behavior and a lack of a fully collaborative culture limited the ability of schools to fully develop and leverage turnaround practices.</p>
<p>There are mechanisms for school-wide communication that supported turnaround activities throughout the community.</p>	<p>The school has established a mechanism for identifying and employing additional social, emotional, and/or behavioral supports for students in need of such resources.</p>		

Turnaround Levers and Authorities

How Districts and Schools used the authorities provided in *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* to accelerate improvement in Level 4 schools

Public policy^{viii} involves specific actions (e.g., laws and regulations) taken by the government to directly address a particular “issue” or problem and that are intended to improve society. Massachusetts’ *Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* and the federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) represent policies that are intended to improve public education by providing local communities with policy tools and resources to create the conditions for successful school turnaround and improvement. Signed into law in 2010, *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* presented an opportunity for the state and local districts to dramatically improve underperforming schools and provided a set of **policy instruments** to do so. *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap*, in combination with federal SIG funding, removed most of the obstacles that crippled previous efforts to dramatically improve schools and provides, in theory, the conditions for successful and sustainable turnaround. However, the passage of laws and availability of resources do not guarantee that districts and local communities have the political will to leverage and use policy to drive turnaround efforts. The political landscape is filled with policies that have never gained traction and have not addressed the issue at hand. And in fact, there is wide disparity across the nation with respect to how states have approached school turnaround.

Policy Instruments available to Superintendents with Level 4 schools, provided by the 2010 *Act*.

- Expand, alter, or replace the curriculum
- Reallocate budgets or provide additional funding
- Expand school day and/or year and add pre-K and full-day kindergarten
- Include job-embedded professional development for teachers and increase teacher planning time
- Differentiate compensation of school staff (bargained with union)
- Require all staff to re-apply for employment
- Limit, suspend or change 1 or more school district policy or practice related to the school
- Limit, suspend, or change collective bargaining agreements

One measure of the success of the *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* is the extent to which the state and local school districts and communities have actually used the law to make changes in local policies, regulations, and ways of working.

After five years, there is clear evidence that districts and local school committees have used state law and federal policy to change and vastly improve the conditions needed for successful turnaround. The fact that districts and local communities have altered local policies and ways of working is not insignificant, as policies are often not implemented as intended. Shifts in local policies and actions represent a departure from the status quo and reflect a new way of doing business in districts and in schools; however, districts still have much work to do if they are to institutionalize the changes in policies and practices that are making a difference, so that turnaround efforts may be sustained over time and improvement efforts can take hold throughout the district.

Districts and local communities have leveraged the 2010 *Act* and regulations tied to SIG funds by actively using the **authorities** outlined in the 2010 *Act* (even if it meant engaging in difficult negotiations with the teachers’ union), providing **autonomy** to principals and schools in using these authorities and funding, and developing **district systems** to actively support and monitor turnaround efforts. How districts used authorities, provided autonomy, and developed support and monitoring systems is described under the following categories:

- (1) The Strategic Use of Human Capital
- (2) Using Authorities to Change Conditions
- (3) Organizing the District for Successful Turnaround; and
- (4) Targeting Resources on Instruction and Professional Practice.

1) The Strategic Use of Human Capital

Districts have leveraged state law to get the right leaders and teachers in place in Level 4 schools, by negotiating changes in local collective bargaining agreements and then using the negotiated authorities to provide principals with the autonomy to staff the school (with district input) as needed to move forward with turnaround efforts. The “right” leaders and teachers are leaders with a skill set conducive to leading a turnaround effort and teachers who are 100% willing and able to engage in the hard work necessary for turnaround. In almost all Level 4 schools, principals **have the staffing authority** to recruit, hire, and retain professional staff and **have actively used this authority** to hire and retain professional staff. All of the exiting Level 4 schools chose to continue principal staffing authority as a key authority necessary to sustain turnaround efforts. Nine of the exited Level 4 schools replaced more than 45% of teachers in the first year of turnaround in an effort to get the right teachers in place (See Table 3, pp. 5). There is growing evidence of districts **acting strategically to cultivate turnaround leaders** by identifying the core competencies of “turnaround leadership” and providing training and networking opportunities for new and existing leaders, in contrast to the traditional practice of reactively moving top principals from one school to the next. Finally, the state’s development of the educator evaluation system has been noted as an important and potentially powerful tool to improve leaders’ and teachers’ practice.

2) Using Authorities to Change Conditions

In addition to providing principals with the autonomy to hire and retain staff, districts have used state law to provide principals with a host of additional authorities (often described as flexibilities) focused on accelerating improvement efforts. School principals have increased autonomy to make decisions and are using available authorities with respect to **curriculum, scheduling, staffing arrangements**, how to use **extended time for instruction**, how to organize and use **common planning time, professional learning** (e.g., peer observations), and **professional development**. Nearly all of the exiting Level 4 schools requested a continuation of flexibilities/authorities related to scheduling, curriculum, expanded time, and teacher collaboration time. Complementing the autonomy provided to principals, districts used the Level 4 designation to lengthen the school day and calendar and to provide additional professional development for leaders and teachers. Level 4 principals do not have unchecked autonomy; rather, districts have defined expectations for performance and have developed new systems for supporting and monitoring turnaround efforts.

3) Organizing the District for Successful Turnaround

From the beginning of the Level 4 effort, the state has emphasized the crucial role that districts have in supporting and sustaining school-level turnaround efforts^{ix}. While shifts in district practice have taken 2 to 3 years to materialize, there is clear evidence that districts responded to the Level 4 work by **(re) organizing district offices, policies, and resources to support, monitor, and expand turnaround efforts**.^x Almost all of the districts with Level 4 schools: (a) formed a high-level district office or established teams responsible for monitoring and supporting the Level 4 work; (b) assigned dedicated district-level staff to work directly with Level 4 schools and principals, responsible for monitoring schools and coordinating support to and with schools; and (c) developed a specific process for monitoring the progress of Level 4 schools that allows for quick, real-time response. These **new district structures and ways of working with schools represent an increase in district capacity**—districts now have systems capable of effectively monitoring and supporting schools and increasing the spread of innovative ideas and strategies across schools and among district leaders. The extent to which these district systems will be sustained over time is a question for future analysis.

4) Targeting Resources on Instruction and Professional Practice

Thirty-one of the original 34 Level 4 schools competitively applied for and received School Redesign Grant (SRG) funding. Among the 18 Level 4 schools identified since 2010, 17 have applied for and received SRG funding. While resources have been used differently among Level 4 schools, which is to be expected, our 4-year analysis of budget expenditures among the original cohort of Level 4 schools found that Achievement Gain schools **allocated 24 percent more funds than Non-Gain schools did towards direct instruction and support to students**. Additionally, funding for extended time and for job-embedded professional development provided substantial opportunities and time for teachers to engage in collaborative planning and conversations focused on instruction, although the extent to which schools were able to leverage this additional time varied considerably.

Autonomy for Accountability In Practice

A turnaround-specific version of the “autonomy for accountability” agreement that has served as the basis for charter schools, pilot schools, and Horace Mann schools is the overarching theme that emerges from a close examination of Massachusetts’ Level 4 Turnaround effort. On the *autonomy* side of the agreement, schools and principals have additional **autonomy** to make decisions, supported by increased **authority** and **flexibility** to modify many of the adult-focused policies that have limited previous efforts to accelerate improvement in underperforming schools. Districts with Level 4 schools are exercising these authorities and granting principals increased autonomy, when appropriate, to use authorities to get the right people in the school and to make sure that conditions are suitable for teaching and learning. On the *accountability* side, districts are moving beyond holding schools accountable for results at the end of each year (or after 2 or 3 years); instead, districts are developing systems for continuous and rapid improvement that involve a combination of intensive, proactive monitoring (e.g., monitoring for improvement, not compliance) and subsequent provision of supports and mid-course adjustments that are provided immediately, not at the end of the year. Districts are moving away from monitoring school improvement plans to monitoring actions that drive improvement^{xi}.

However, an important, but unexplored line of inquiry remains^{xii}

Evidence from exiting Level 4 schools suggests that principal autonomy and the use of authorities and flexibilities play a major role in schools’ ability to make changes that lead to dramatic improvement. And we suspect a principal’s skill in being able to strategically employ the most needed/useful authorities for school may help to explain some Level 4 schools were able to improve, while other Level 4 schools were not able to make similar gains.

Why did some schools improve while others did not, and what role did principal autonomy (or the lack thereof) and the strategic use of negotiated authorities have in these different outcomes for students?

We are confident that principal autonomy and district use of authorities did make a difference in the exiting Level 4 schools. However, we do not know if principals in Non-Gain schools had comparable autonomy and actively used authorities in ways similar to Achievement Gain schools and yet failed to improve, or if the Non-Gain schools had a categorically different experience with respect to principal autonomy and use of authorities^{xiii}. Similarly, we do not know if there was a difference in principals’ capacity to strategically use available authorities. The 2012 Principals’ Survey Technical Report^{xiv} suggests that principals (in 2011) experienced different levels of individual autonomy to make decisions (25% reported having full autonomy and 20% reported having little to no autonomy). A more detailed accounting of the extent to which principals had autonomy and skillfully exercised

their autonomy to use authorities and drive turnaround efforts is needed to fully understand the relationship between Turnaround Levers and successful Turnaround.^{xv}

We offer the following one-page policy snapshots that depict how districts have implemented key provisions of *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap*, focusing on **The Strategic Use of Human Capital, Using Authorities to Change Conditions, and Organizing the District for Successful Turnaround**. A detailed analysis of how districts have targeted resources on instruction and professional practice begins on page 24.

The Strategic Use of Human Capital^{xvi}: Getting the Right Teachers and Leaders in Place^{xvii}

An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap states that Superintendents may: (a) require all staff to re-apply for employment; (b) provide for a continuum of high-expertise teachers by aligning hiring, induction, evaluation, professional development, advancement, and culture; and (c) differentiate staff compensation.

Districts have used the state law and the Level 4 work as an opportunity to provide principals with staffing authority.

Building a Strong Teaching Staff

Principals have the **autonomy and authority to make staffing decisions**, including the authority to recruit, hire, and retain professional staff, as well as the ability, in coordination with the district, to excise professional staff.

At the onset of Level 4 work, district leaders **replaced 45% or more of the existing teachers in 12 out of 34 schools**. Of the 12 schools that brought in 45% or more new teachers, nine exited Level 4 status.

Districts have **modified other aspects of the hiring process that often negatively impact the ability of a school to hire and retain the staff they need**.

What does this mean in practice?

The following are examples of specific negotiated changes in collective bargaining agreements that were used in one or more districts and by Level 4 schools.

- Opt out provisions: At the beginning of the Level 4 initiative, **staff in designated Level 4 school are given the opportunity to “opt out” of the school**, by a given date, such as February 1.
- Principals have the ability to hire professional staff **without regard to seniority** or other criteria that would limit the ability of the principal to hire staff at his/her discretion.
- The school **is not impacted by, or has a waiver from, “bidding and bumping”**, in which a teacher with more seniority from another school who loses his/her position might take a position in a Level 4 school and “bump” an existing, less senior teacher from the Level 4 school.
- The district **moved up the timeline for hiring teachers** (e.g., from May to February) so that the principal/school would have the ability to hire from the entire pool of available teachers (within district and outside of the district) and not be at a competitive disadvantage with respect to hiring top teachers.
- The principal has the authority **to write job descriptions, and to include other teachers in interviews with prospective teachers and staff**.
- The principal has the authority **to modify staffing patterns** in the school.
- The district (e.g., the Superintendent and principal) has the ability **to excess teachers** (move teachers to another district school through an involuntary transfer).

Cultivating Turnaround Leaders

At the beginning of the Level 4 work, districts did the best they could to identify and place “turnaround leaders” in Level 4 schools.

After five years, districts are acting strategically to cultivate and place leaders in Level 4 schools, minimizing the impact that changes in leadership may have on other schools.

Boston Public Schools partnered with Boston College and the Lynch Leadership Academy to provide a full-year residency program (*The Lynch Principal Fellowship*) for Turnaround principals, who upon completing the program will be invited to lead Turnaround schools.

Lynn Public Schools implemented the *Lynn Leadership Initiative* that includes coaching and mentoring of existing Level 3 principals and the use of within and cross-school learning walks to develop common expectations for high-quality instruction. Building upon the success Lynn experienced with its Level 4 schools, the purpose of the *Lynn Leadership Initiative* is to replicate Level 4 leadership strategies and processes in Level 3 schools.

Worcester Public Schools brings cohorts of 6 to 8 principals together on a monthly basis for *Principal Leadership Accountability Network* meetings, providing an opportunity for principals to share best practices.

Using Authorities to Change Conditions: Provide leaders with autonomy to make decisions and increased authority to make changes to improve culture and instruction.

An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap states that Superintendents may: (a) expand, alter, or replace the curriculum; (b) reallocate existing budget or provide additional funding; (c) include job-embedded professional development with teacher input and feedback; and (d) increase teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction.

Districts have changed the conditions within which teaching and learning occurs.

In addition to providing principal with authority and autonomy regarding staffing, districts have provided principals with increased **autonomy** and **authority to modify the operating and instructional conditions in the school** and **leveraged key changes regarding expanded time, professional development, and other flexibilities.**

The majority of schools exiting Level 4 noted the critical importance of the listed authorities as directly contributing to the success of turnaround efforts, and subsequently requested an extension of authorities (See Appendix C for additional detail):

- 12 requested an extension of Budget Authority
- 10 requested an extension of Schedule Authority
- 12 requested an extension of Curriculum Authority
- 13 requested an extension of Expanded Time
- 13 requested an extension of Increased Planning and Professional Development

While districts and schools are using the listed flexibilities and authorities, there are differences across districts and even across schools within the same district.

What does this mean in practice?

Budget Authority: The principal has the authority to allocate the school budget as needed to directly accomplish school goals.

School Schedule Authority: The principal has the authority to modify the master school schedule.

Curriculum Flexibility: The principal/school is granted the flexibility to use portions of the district curriculum and/or other curricular programs and interventions, as needed to support school turnaround efforts.

Expanded Time: The school day is extended to provide direct instruction to students.

- Districts tended to lengthen the school day by 30 to 45 minutes a day, often for instructional blocks.
- In some instances, the school day for the student is lengthened 30 minutes for 4 days of the week, with the 5th day an early release day for students, allowing for additional professional development time for teachers.

Increased Planning Time, Collaboration and Professional Development: The school uses expanded time or makes changes in the school schedule to provide teachers with additional professional time focused on improving instruction.

- Increased school-year professional development time: Range from 3240 minutes (approximately 90 minutes a week) to 4500 minutes (approximately 125 minutes a week).
- Increased summer professional development time: 4 to 5 days (6 hours) in the summer.

Visits to Other Schools. Some districts negotiated a provision in the collective bargaining agreement whereby teachers would have up to 3 working days to visit other schools.

Compensation: Teachers in Level 4 schools received additional compensation if the school day was extended and the school received funding through the school redesign grant program.

Organizing the District for Successful Turnaround: Organize district offices, policies, and resources to support, monitor, and expand turnaround efforts.

<p>State policy guidance: The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education stipulates that to exit Level 4, a school must meet the majority of Measurable Annual Goals, implement the Conditions for School Effectiveness, and that the district must have systems in place to support, monitor, and sustain turnaround efforts.</p>	
<p>Districts have developed organizational structures and processes to support, monitor, and sustain successful turnaround efforts.</p> <p>District Team or Administrator responsible for management, monitoring, and coordination of Level 4 activities.</p> <p>District staff that work directly with Level 4 schools, on a weekly basis (to monitor, provided support, facilitate communication, and support implementation).</p> <p>Specific processes for monitoring the progress of Level 4 schools that allows for quick, real-time response</p>	<p>What does this mean in practice? (Examples from three districts)</p> <p>Springfield</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A district level Teaching and Learning Team meets weekly to oversee the districts’ Level 4 work and to coordinate all Level 4 activity. A dedicated Administrator for Redesign manages the coordination of day-to-day supports and monitoring activities for all Level 4 schools and each district office has a designated liaison for Level 4 schools. • Four Chief School Officers (CSOs) supervise and provide direct support to Level 4 schools. • Quarterly learning walks are used to formally monitor the progress of Level 4 schools and make mid-course corrections, when needed. <p>Fall River</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district assigns a School Review Partner from the Office of Instruction to work directly with each Level 4 school. School Review Partners provide mentoring to the principal, serve as a liaison between the school and the district, and are responsible for helping the school develop a professional learning community within the school. • A school review visit process (virtual and onsite) is the formal process used by the district to monitor turnaround efforts in each school. School reviews occur every other month, and include a detailed analysis of artifacts (e.g., meeting agendas and minutes) and data from regularly scheduled learning walks. A brief monitoring report is prepared after each visit, outline findings and next steps. <p>Boston</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District-level Network Superintendents supervise principals and monitor schools in geographic “networks” of 15-17 schools. Across the entire district, schools are grouped in one of three need-based tiers, with Level 4 schools located in the “transforming” tier. • A district-level Academic Turnaround and Transformation Unit and DART teams are organized to provide intensive (e.g., 2 to 3 weeks) support to Level 4 schools, up to three times a year. • Two review processes are used to assess the progress being made by Level 4 schools: (1) an annual review of school progress looks at student data and assesses schools’ progress in meeting benchmarks for high-achieving schools; and (2) a School Quality Review process that involves a self-study, a 3 day visit by district administrators, and the development of a formal action plan.

Targeting Resources on Instruction and Professional Practice

Trends in District and School Use of SRG and Bridge Grant Funds

The budget analysis covers the use of Bridge Grant and competitively awarded SRG funding by the initial set of 34 Level 4 schools identified in 2010, between 2010-11 and 2013-14. SRG funding for Boston's first cohort of Level 4 schools and one school from Springfield (Kiley) began in 2010-11 while SRG funding for the remaining Cohort 1 Level 4 schools began in 2011-12. Between 2010-11 and 2013-14, 31 schools successfully applied for and received SIG funding. Excluding fringe benefits, approximately **\$50.26 million** of SRG and Bridge Grant^{xviii} monies were provided directly to 31 Level 4 schools.

Key findings and observations are organized according to the **Budget Analysis Categories** developed in the Year Two report.

Budget Analysis Categories

Two analytic frames are used to present how districts and schools allocate funds:

The **Staffing, Time, and Resources** frame provides a snapshot of how districts and schools allocate funds for staffing, teacher stipends for expanded time, and additional funding for consultants, materials, and other aspects of the work, such as incentives or travel.

The **Improvement Focus** frame drills down into the particular improvement foci of each school's turnaround effort to explore how districts and schools allocated discretionary funding.

A summary of key findings and observations is provided on the following pages and a detailed budget analysis is provided in Appendix B.

Staffing, Time and Resources: *How and where schools allocate funds?*

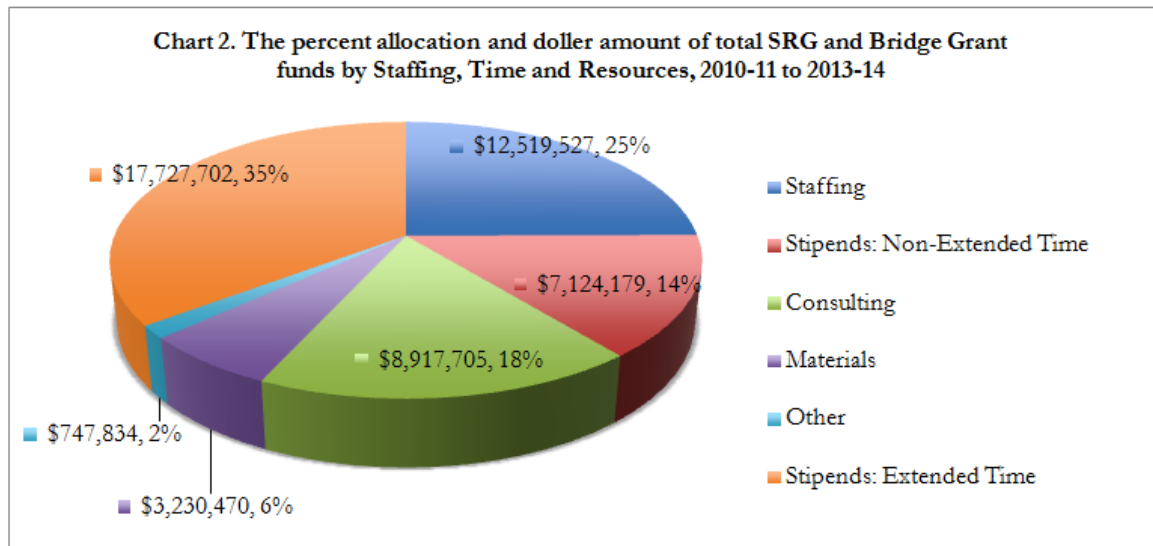
- **Direct Staffing:** Hiring full/part time staff
- **Stipends** for required extended time, for teachers and para-professionals.
- **Stipends** for administrators, teachers and substitutes (not part of required extended time) for professional development
- **Consultants**
- **Materials**, including technology
- **Other** (e.g., Incentives, Travel)

Improvement Focus: *What was the foci and target of SIG funds?*

- Implementation and oversight
- Redesign team planning
- Direct instructional support to students
- Formal professional development
- Job-embedded professional development
- Data (primarily new assessments)
- Materials, including technology
- Social-emotional programs and services
- Parent and community engagement
- Other/misc.

Staffing, Time, and Resources: How and where did schools allocate funds?

Approximately **\$50.26 million** of combined SRG and Bridge Grant funding was awarded to 31 schools over 4 years (2010 to 2014). As displayed in Chart 2, the largest portion (35% of total funds, \$17.72 million) was allocated to *compensate teachers and teacher assistants for extended time in school*. The next largest allocation (25% of total funds, \$12.52 million) went to *direct hiring and staffing of additional teachers and administrators*. After staffing, *consulting* (\$8.91 million) and *additional stipends for teachers* for professional development and summer work (at \$7.12 million) were the next highest areas of funding.



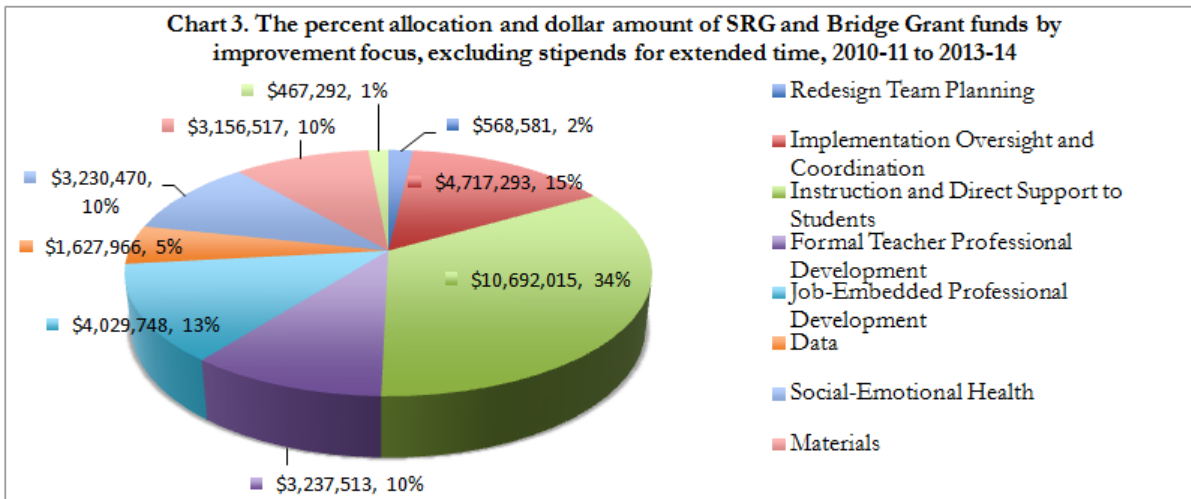
Summary Budget Analysis: Staffing, Time, and Resources

- There was very little difference in how Achievement Gain schools and Non-Gain schools allocated SRG funds towards **general staffing, staffing for extended time and other stipends, consulting, and materials**.
- Districts allocated funds quite differently, particularly with respect to the amount and percent of funds allocated for consultants and staffing. However, there was no direct link or connection between the allocation of funding for consultants, services or staffing and achievement gains made by schools.
 - **Funding for Consultants:** Boston, Holyoke, and Fall River allocated a greater percent of funds to consultants, compared to other districts.
 - **Funding for Staffing:** Lawrence and Lynn spent a higher percent of funds on staffing, compared to other districts.
- As noted in chart 2, funding for extended time represented approximately 35 percent of the overall allocation of SRG funding. A close analysis of district-by-district allocation of funds shows that some districts were able to find alternative (e.g., non-SRG) funding to pay for extended time while some districts used substantially higher portions of SRG funds to cover extended time. As a result, the amount of discretionary funding—SRG funds that districts and schools had at their disposal to allocate to other aspects of their turnaround efforts—ranged considerable across districts, from \$685 thousand per school in Lawrence to a low of \$113 thousand per school in Worcester.

Improvement Focus: What was the focus and target of SIG funds?

Excluding fringe benefits and funding for extended learning time^{six}, districts and schools had the ability to strategically allocate approximately **\$32.47 million** of SRG and Bridge Grant funding to implement local, school-based turnaround efforts. The following analysis is focused solely on how schools allocated non-extended learning time, discretionary funds.

Districts and schools allocated the largest portion of non-extended learning time SRG funds to the **direct instruction of students** (34%, \$10.69 million). Funding the direct instruction of students involves the hiring of teachers and staff to provide instruction, the use of stipends to pay existing teachers to provide additional instruction to students, and the hiring of consultants that work directly with students on academic content. After direct instruction to students, districts and schools allocated funds to support **implementation oversight and coordination** of turnaround efforts (15%, 4.71 million) and to provide **job-embedded professional development** (13%, 4.02 million).



Summary Budget Analysis: Improvement Focus

We did find substantial differences^{sx} in how Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools allocated SRG and Bridge grants funds with respect to the improvement focus of turnaround efforts, suggesting that Achievement Gain schools were better situated to immediately allocate funding on the provision of direct instruction to students. Additionally, Non-Gain schools shifted how they used resources over time, reallocating funding from social-emotional health (in the first two years) to increased funding for implementation oversight and coordination. How schools allocate resources directly impacts the practices used and employed by schools and that result in achievement gains.

- Achievement Gain schools **allocated substantially more funds** (42% of discretionary funds) **towards instruction and direct support to students**, compared to Non-Gain schools (18%).
- During the first two years of implementation, Non-Gain schools **allocated more funds towards issues related to behavior and providing formal professional development to teachers**, compared to Achievement Gain schools. Non-Gain schools then shifted their focus from social-emotional issues to increased funding for **oversight and coordination**, perhaps in response to data showing that turnaround efforts were not as effective as hoped.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Data Sources and Methodology

Appendix B: Budget Analysis

Appendix C: Count of Level 4 Exited Schools Requesting Continuation of Available Authorities

Endnote

Appendix A Data Sources and Methodology

Data Sources

- Monitoring Site Visit (MSV) Reports: Spring 2011, 2012, 2013
- School Redesign Grant (SRG) Renewal Applications: Spring 2011, 2012, 2013
- Original district and school-level SRG proposals
- District-level SRG Renewal Applications, 2013 and 2014
- District and School Budgets: Amended Budgets, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13 and proposed for 2013-14
- Turnaround Plans

Identification of Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools

1. For this analysis, we balanced MCAS performance data and Level 4 exit decisions made by the Commissioner in 2013 to develop the list of Achievement Gain and Non-Gain Schools. Schools that exited Level 4 status were identified as Achievement Gain Schools. A close analysis of MCAS performance data, including analysis of the extent to which schools were closing the Composite Performance Index (CPI) Achievement Gap in English/Language Arts and Mathematics, in multiple grades and across all students, was used to determine and confirm the initial lists of Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools.
2. The metric “percent of MAGs achieved” was used to confirm the list of Achievement Gain schools and to identify the Non-Gain schools. Schools that met less than 60% of MAGs within three years were identified as Non-Gain schools.
3. Four schools were specifically excluded from the analysis: Kuss Middle School in Fall River and Parker Elementary School in New Bedford because they never received SRG funding; Burke High School in Boston because their MAGs results were highly impacted by low graduation and drop-out rates; and South Lawrence East Middle in Lawrence because the school restarted and split into two schools. Arlington Elementary (Lawrence Public Schools) also restarted and split into two schools. Evidence for the Arlington Elementary (grades 2-4), including the Monitoring Site Visit conducted in 2012-13, was included in the full analysis.

Analysis of Turnaround Practices

1. Building upon the 2012 and 2013 analyses, we conducted a detailed document analysis of Monitoring Site Visit (MSV) reports and School Redesign Grant (SRG) renewal applications, among Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools, to identify common and discrepant themes and practices across schools, focusing on (a) the continued use of emerging practices and (b) identification of additional practices, or modifications to practices, across schools.
2. Once the significant themes and practices were identified and subsequently refined through an additional analysis of SRG renewal applications, each MSV report was again reviewed to test the assumption that each identified practice played an important role in the gains made by Achievement Gain schools. Specifically, we converted the identified themes and practices into components and subcomponents (e.g., constructs and indicators), which were then developed into a set of codes that we used to code the responses in the MSVs and school renewal applications. We coded the MSVs and a set of school renewal applications to confirm (e.g., to test our assumption) that the identified themes and practices were in fact in place and used more frequently in the Achievement Gain schools, compared to the Non-Gain schools. In this iterative process, the articulation of themes and practices was further

refined to include connections among various practices that could enhance the explanation of why certain Level 4 schools are having success and other not, yielding the findings as presented in this report.

Budget Analysis Methodology Notes

1. This evaluation did not closely examine the extent to which budgets were aligned with proposed activities and priorities as described in each school's original proposal or renewal applications.
2. Upon reviewing the SRG budgets, evaluators realized that an analysis of budgets based on ESE defined budget categories (e.g., administrators, instructional staff, and support staff) would not provide the nuance needed to understand exactly how schools were using SRG funds.
3. Evaluators carefully read the narratives provided in the budgets and budget amendments to develop two groupings of resource use (Implementation Focus and People and Resources) that provide different frames through which to analyze how schools are using SRG funds.
4. The budget allocations for 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14 were then hand coded and categorized, including Bridge Grant funds provided to some Level 4 schools in 2010-11.
5. Upon finding little trends or differences in how schools allocated funds from year one to year two, the budgets from 2010-11 through 2013-14 were combined, and then computed into a four year measure of how schools allocated SRG and Bridge Grant funding.
6. Categories are based on a careful reading and coding of budget narratives through each lens, and findings are likewise organized according to these two "analytic frames".

Appendix B Budget Analysis

Overview of Budget Analysis

The federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) program—known as the School Redesign Grant, or SRG, in Massachusetts—provides districts and schools with significant funding to accelerate district and school improvement efforts. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) encouraged Level 4 schools to apply for SRG funding. Of the 52 schools identified as Level 4, 48 have been awarded SRG funding.

Table 3. Number of Level 4 Schools Funded by SRG, and by Model

	# of Level 4 schools	Total Funded by SRG	Funded Schools by Federal Intervention Model		
			Turnaround	Transformation	Restart
Cohort 1 (2010)	34	31	12	18	1
Cohort 2 (2011)	5	5	0	4	1
Cohort 3 (2012)	6	6	1	1	4
Cohort 4 (2013)	7	6	3	3	0

The budget analysis provided in this report is focused on the 34 Cohort 1 Level 4 schools, inclusive of Bridge Grant funding provided to schools when initially identified for Level 4 (and prior to the availability of SRG funding) and the allocation of SRG funding to schools between 2010-11 and 2013-14. SRG funding is provided for three years. SRG funding for Boston’s first cohort of Level 4 schools and one school from Springfield (Kiley) began in 2010-11 while SRG funding for the remaining Cohort 1 Level 4 schools began in 2011-12. Between 2010-11 and 2013-14, 31 schools successfully applied for and received SIG funding. Excluding fringe benefits, approximately **\$50.26 million** of SRG and Bridge Grant^{xxi} monies were provided directly to 31 Level 4 schools.

Budget Analysis Categories

Two analytic frames are used to present how districts and schools allocate funds.

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The **Improvement Focus** frame drills down into the particular improvement foci of each school’s turnaround effort to explore how districts and schools allocated discretionary funding.

Staffing, Time and Resources: *How and where schools allocate funds?*

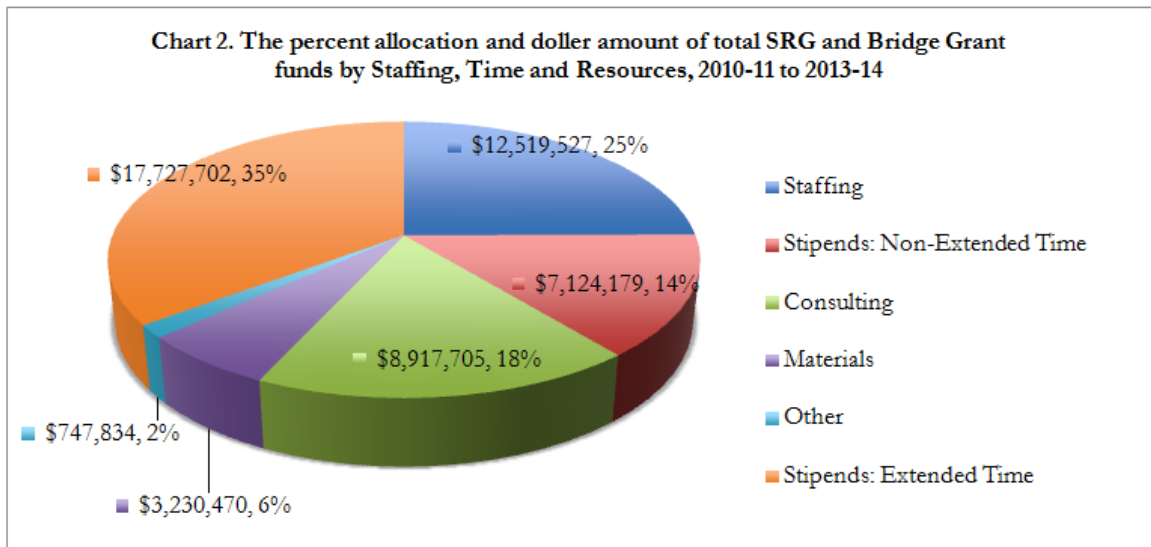
- **Direct Staffing:** Hiring full/part time staff
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- **Stipends** for administrators, teachers and substitutes (not part of required extended time) for professional development
- **Consultants**
- **Materials**, including technology
- **Other** (e.g., Incentives, Travel)

Improvement Focus: *What was the foci and target of SIG funds?*

- Implementation and oversight
- Redesign team planning
- Direct instructional support to students
- Formal professional development
- Job-embedded professional development
- Data (primarily new assessments)
- Materials, including technology
- Social-emotional programs and services
- Parent and community engagement
- Other/misc.

Staffing, Time, and Resources: How and where did schools allocate funds?

Excluding fringe benefits, **\$50.26 million** of combined SRG and Bridge Grant funding was awarded to 31 schools over 4 years (2010 to 2014). As displayed in Chart 2, the largest portion (35% of total funds, \$17.72 million) was allocated to *compensate teachers and teacher assistants for extended time in school*. The next largest allocation (25% of total funds, \$12.52 million) went to *direct hiring and staffing of additional teachers and administrators*. After staffing, *consulting* (\$8.91 million) and *additional stipends for teachers* for professional development and summer work (at \$7.12 million) were the next highest areas of funding.



Staffing, Time, and Resources: Analysis

Table 4 displays the allocation of SRG and Bridge Grant funding by Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools. Non-Gain schools allocated a slightly higher percentage of funds to cover stipends for extended time, although the overall allocation of funding for stipends (inclusive of extended time and non-extended time) suggests that the difference is minimal. Overall, there are no notable differences in how Achievement Gain schools and Non-Gain schools allocated SRG funds towards staffing, time, and resources.

Table 4. Percent allocation of SRG funding by Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools, by Staffing, Time and Resources, 2010-2012

	Staffing	Stipends: Non-Extended Time	Stipends: Extended Time	Consulting	Materials	Other	Actual \$ Amount
Ach. Gain Schools	27.0%	16.7%	31.0%	18.6%	5.7%	1.0%	\$19.64 m
Non-Gain Schools	24.1%	11.7%	39.9%	17.0%	5.3%	2.0%	\$18.59 m

Table 5 displays the allocation of SRG funding across districts and shows that districts have allocated funds differently for staffing, stipends, and consulting.

- **Funding for Extended Time:** Worcester and Holyoke allocated a higher percent of funds to pay for extended time compared to Boston, Springfield and other districts.
- **Funding for Consultants:** Boston, Holyoke, and Fall River allocated a greater percent of funds to consultants.
- **Funding for Staffing:** Lawrence and Lynn spent a higher percent of funds on staffing, compared to other districts.

Table 5. Percent district^{xxii} allocation of SRG funding, by Staffing, Time and Resources, 2010-2012

	Staffing	Stipends: Non-Extended Time	Stipends: Extended Time	Consulting	Materials	Other	\$ Amount; # of Schools
Boston	24.9%	8.4%	35.8%	26.0%	4.4%	0.5%	\$19.63 m; 11 schools
Springfield	28.0%	18.9%	33.3%	11.6%	7.0%	1.2%	\$16.62 m; 10 schools
Worcester	11.8%	6.5%	76.7%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	\$2.93 m; 2 schools
Holyoke	6.0%	13.1%	50.1%	24.2%	2.1%	4.6%	\$3.12 m; 2 schools
Lawrence	43.7%	17.3%	25.1%	8.2%	5.6%	0.0%	\$2.74 m; 2 school
Lynn	41.8%	10.3%	23.3%	8.6%	15.2%	0.9%	\$2.11 m; 2 schools
Lowell	23.5%	42.7%	10.1%	10.5%	4.4%	8.9%	\$1.52 m; 1 school
Fall River	0.0%	24.8%	0.0%	27.0%	37.6%	10.6%	\$1.55 m; 1 school
All Districts	24.9%	14.2%	35.3%	17.7%	6.4%	1.5%	

Table 6 displays how much funding schools had, on average, to allocate to turnaround efforts after accounting for stipends for teachers and other staff, for expanded time. As noted in Chart 2, funding for extended time represented approximately 35 percent of the overall allocation of SRG funding. A close analysis of district-by-district allocation of funds shows that some districts were able to find alternative (e.g., non-SRG) funding to pay for extended time while some districts used higher portions of SRG funds to cover extended time. As a result, the amount of discretionary funding—SRG funds that districts and schools had at their disposal to allocate to other aspects of their turnaround efforts—ranged considerable across districts, from \$685 thousand per school in Lawrence to a low of \$113 thousand per school in Worcester.

Table 6. Percent district allocation of SRG funding, by Staffing, Time and Resources, 2010-2012

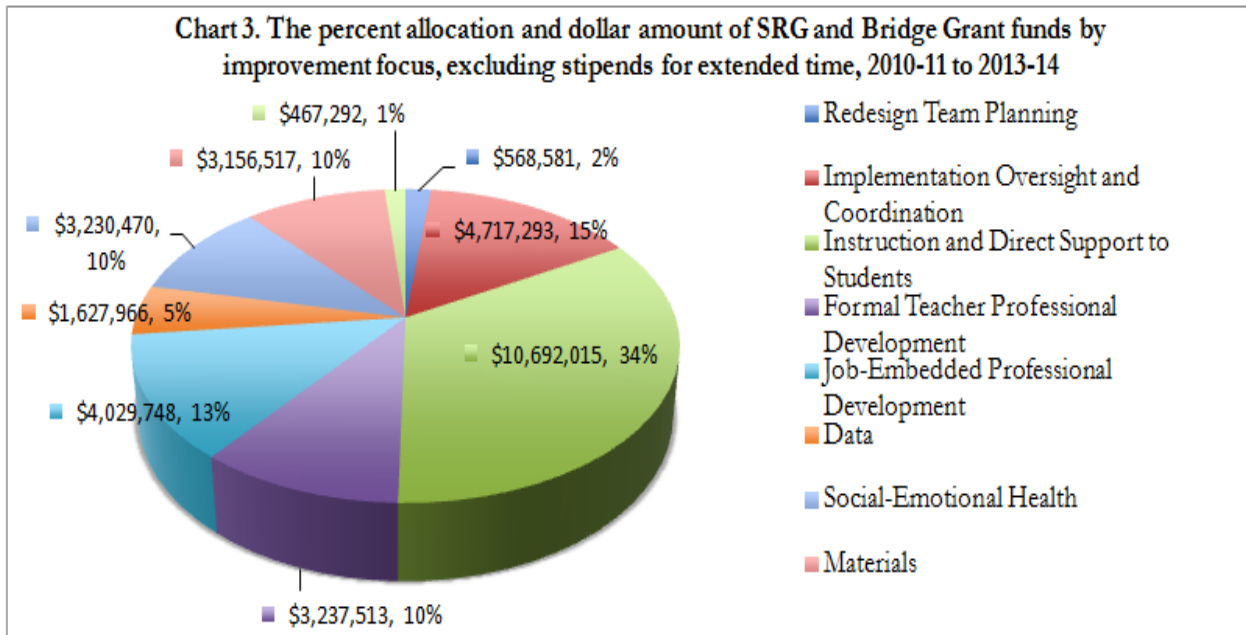
	Total Funding	Extended Time Funding	Discretionary Funding	# of Level 4 Schools	Annual amount of Discretionary Funding available per school
Boston	\$19.63 m	\$7.03 m	\$12.6 m	11	\$381,974
Springfield	\$16.55 m	\$5.53 m	\$11.02 m	10	\$408,421
Worcester	\$2.93 m	\$2.25 m	\$.68 m	2	\$113,930
Holyoke	\$3.12 m	\$1.56 m	\$1.56 m	2	\$260,152
Lawrence	\$2.74 m	\$.69 m	\$2.05 m	2	\$685,449
Lynn	\$2.11 m	\$.49 m	\$1.62 m	2	\$270,415
Lowell	\$1.52 m	\$.15 m	\$1.36 m	1	\$454,932
Fall River	\$1.55 m	\$0 m	\$1.55 m	1	\$518,183

Improvement Focus: What was the focus and target of SIG funds?

Excluding fringe benefits and funding for extended learning time^{xxiii}, districts and schools had the ability to strategically allocate approximately **\$32.47 million** of SRG and Bridge Grant funding to implement local, school-based turnaround efforts. The following analysis is focused solely on how schools allocated non-extended learning time, discretionary funds.

Chart 3 depicts the choices that districts and schools made with respect to how to allocate SRG funding. The chart displays the percent of total funds allocated to each of the nine Improvement Focus categories.

- Districts and schools allocated the largest portion of non-extended learning time SRG funds to the **direct instruction of students** (34%, \$10.69 million). From the standpoint of funding, the direct instruction of students involves the hiring of teachers and staff to provide instruction, the use of stipends to pay existing teachers to provide additional instruction to students, and the hiring of consultants that work directly with students on academic content.
- After direct instruction to students, districts and schools allocated funds to support **implementation oversight and coordination** of turnaround efforts (15%, 4.71 million) and to provide **job-embedded professional development** (13%, 4.02 million).
- The next largest allocations of funding went towards formal teacher development (10%, 3.24 million), social-emotional health (10%, 3.23 million), and **materials** (10%, 3.15 million)



Improvement Focus: Analysis

Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools allocated funds differently, suggesting that Achievement Gain schools were better situated to focus funding on the provision of instruction to students. The differences in how Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools allocated funding aligns with evidence provided in the Monitoring Site Visit Reports, which shows that Non-Gain schools were faced with considerably more challenges related to student behavior and overall school culture. So it is not surprising that Non-Gain schools allocated more funds

towards culture and climate and not towards the direct instruction of students. Additionally, Non-Gain schools shifted how they used resources over time, reallocating funding from social-emotional health (in the first two years) to increased funding for implementation oversight and coordination. As noted in our previous report, how schools allocate resources directly impacts the practices used and employed by schools and that result in achievement gains.

- In the aggregate, Achievement Gain schools **allocated substantially more funds** (42% of discretionary funds) **towards instruction and direct support to students**, compared to Non-Gain schools (18%).
- During the first two years of implementation, Non-Gain schools **allocated more funds towards issues related to behavior and providing formal professional development to teachers**, compared to Achievement Gain schools. Non-Gain schools then shifted their focus from social-emotional issues to increased funding for **oversight and coordination**, perhaps in response to data showing that turnaround efforts were not as effective as hoped.

Table 7 displays the percent of SRG funding allocated to each Improvement Focus category, by Achievement Gain, Non-Gain, and All Schools.

Table 7. Percent allocation of SRG funding (excluding stipends for extended learning time) in Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools by Improvement Focus, 2010-2012

	Implementation Oversight and Coordination	Instruction and Direct Support to Students	Formal Teacher PD	Job-Embedded PD	Data	Materials	Social-Emotional Health	Other
Ach. Gain Schools (After 2 years)	8.5%	41.8%	7.7%	9.5%	5.2%	9.4%	12.6%	5.3%
Ach. Gain Schools (After 4 years)	9.7%	42.0%	8.1%	14.5%	4.3%	8.0%	8.3%	5.1%
Non-Gain Schools (After 2 years)	12.2%	25.5%	14.3%	7.0%	6.7%	10.1%	18.0%	6.1%
Non-Gain Schools (After 4 years)	23.3%	17.8%	13.8%	10.4%	7.4%	12.4%	8.9%	6.0%
All Schools (After 4 years)	14.5%	32.9%	10.0%	12.4%	5.0%	9.7%	9.9%	5.5%

Achievement Gain schools consistently allocated approximately 42% of non-extended learning time funds towards the direct instruction to students. In contrast, Non-Gain schools allocated 25.5% of funding to instruction during the first two years of turnaround efforts and then decreased funding for instruction in years 3 and 4, to approximately 17.8% of total discretionary funds. Non-Gain schools allocated 18% of funds towards social-emotional health in years 1 and 2 and then appear to have reallocated these funds towards implementation oversight and coordination, which increased from 12.2% to 23.3%, over 4 years. and 14.3% of funds to formal teacher professional development.

Table 8 displays the percent of SRG funds allocated to each Improvement Focus category in Boston, Springfield, Worcester, and Holyoke.

Table 8. Percent allocation of SIG funding (excluding stipends for extended learning time) in Achievement Gain and Non-Gain schools, by district and Improvement Focus, 2010-2012

	Implementation Oversight and Coordination	Instruction and Direct Support to Students	Formal Teacher PD	Job-Embedded PD	Data	Materials	Social-Emotional Health	Other
Boston	10.6%	47.1%	2.8%	13.1%	3.6%	6.9%	13.5%	2.4%
Springfield	13.9%	30.8%	11.3%	11.2%	8.2%	10.6%	7.2%	6.8%
Worcester	0.0%	28.0%	0.0%	72.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Holyoke	33.5%	3.8%	22.6%	2.8%	4.8%	4.2%	19.2%	9.3%
Lawrence	27.0%	15.0%	26.5%	10.3%	2.9%	7.5%	7.5%	1.9%
Lynn	27.9%	22.7%	5.9%	8.9%	8.2%	19.8%	19.8%	6.5%
Lowell	6.1%	23.1%	31.2%	12.3%	0.0%	4.8%	9.1%	13.4%
Fall River	14.7%	7.4%	13.8%	5.2%	0.6%	37.6%	3.3%	17.4%

The data in Table 8 provides a starting point for a deeper analysis of how districts allocated scarce funds. There are no compelling trends, except to observe that districts allocated funds in very different ways, most likely in keeping with the specific priorities and needs outlined in schools' turnaround plans. We offer a few observations, with the caveat that we are looking at trends and that district leaders are best suited to explain why funds were used in certain ways, and not in others.

- Worcester, the district with the least amount of discretionary funding per school, elected to allocate funds solely to the direct instruction of students and job-embedded professional development.
- Three districts, Holyoke, Lawrence, and Lynn, allocated over 25% of its funds towards implementation oversight and coordination. Of the three districts, Lynn allocated the greatest percentage to instruction and direct support to students.
- Holyoke and Lynn allocated nearly 20% of funds to attend to students' social-emotional health.

What can we discern from how districts have allocated SRG funding?

It is clear that districts in Massachusetts have allocated SRG funds in different ways, reflecting differences in local context as well as the difference approaches used by districts to build district capacity and support local, school-based turnaround efforts. Our key takeaways from this analysis include the following:

1. Allocating resources in ways that directly support students, and in particular provide direct instruction to students, appears to be a strong indicator of successful turnaround, especially among elementary schools.
2. The percentage of funding allocated to stipends for teachers, to cover the required expanded time, varies considerably across districts and could serve as an obstacle to successful turnaround. Districts with less discretionary income may in fact be forced to be more strategic and targeted with respect to how they use scarce resources.
3. The different ways in which districts allocated fund suggests that districts intentionally coordinated other funding sources with SRG and Bridge Grant funding so as to effectively utilize funds from a variety of sources to support turnaround efforts.

Appendix C
Count of Level 4 Exited Schools Requesting Continuation of Available Authorities

Type of Flexibility or Authority requested by districts on behalf of schools exiting Level 4 status	Number of exited Level 4 schools requesting continuation of Authority
Budget Authority: The principal has the authority to allocate the school budget as needed to directly accomplish school goals.	12
Staffing Authority: The principal has the authority to recruit, hire, and retain professional staff as well as the ability, in coordination with the district, to excise professional staff.	13
School Schedule Authority: The principal has the authority to modify the master school schedule.	10
Curriculum Flexibility: The principal/school is granted the flexibility to use portions of the district curriculum and/or other curricular programs and interventions, as needed to support school turnaround efforts.	12
Increase or Differentiate Salaries	6
Expanded Time: The school day is extended to provide direct instruction to students.	13
Increased Planning Time, Collaboration and Professional Development: The school uses expanded time or makes changes in the school schedule to provide teachers with additional professional time focused on improving instruction.	13
Strategies to Address Mobility and Transiency	8
Student Policies	5

Endnotes

ⁱ We recognize that each school has its own story to tell, based on local context and the individuals in each school, and that unforeseen obstacles may have emerged and stifled turnaround efforts in many schools.

ⁱⁱ See: Kowal, J., & Hassel, E. A. (Public Impact). (2011). Importing leaders for school turnarounds: Lessons and opportunities. Charlottesville: University of Virginia's Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education. Retrieved from www.dardencurry.org

ⁱⁱⁱ The state's lowest achieving, least improving Level 3 schools are candidates for classification into Level 4 at the discretion of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

^{iv} Kuss Elementary was excluded from the entire three-year analysis due to contextual issues that resulted in Kuss not being comparable to other Level 4 schools.

^v All of the Level 4 schools completed and submitted a state required Turnaround Plans. Each Turnaround Plan was examined to confirm the specific negotiated changes in collective bargaining agreements that provided authority and flexibility to Level 4 schools.

^{vi} Three criteria were used to decide whether a school exited Level 4 status: The school had to (1) meet more than 85 percent of its measurable annual goals; (2) demonstrate evidence that the Conditions for School Effectiveness had been implemented, and (3) the district had to provide evidence that district systems of support were in place.

^{vii} This narrative focuses solely on practices in the school and does not address the important external shifts in policy that paved the way for these practices to be implemented (see Turnaround Levers and Authorities for a description of how districts used authorities and allocated resources), or the important role that external providers have in supporting schools.

^{viii} For the purposes of this report, policy includes laws passed by state and federal legislative bodies and the use of resources (e.g., Race to the Top funding and School Improvement Grant funding) that may require changes in policy.

^{ix} District capacity is integrated into all aspects of the Level 4 and SRG work.

^x There is a distinction between districts taking action to reorganize vs. district actions that grant autonomy and flexibility to schools. Reorganization efforts reflect an intentionality to building district capacity, systems, and structures to sustain turnaround, whereas a district could, hypothetically, grant schools autonomy but fail to actively monitor and support those schools.

^{xi} Federal guidelines and regulations regarding planning and monitoring continue to arise as obstacles that hinder the ability of districts to successfully implement a more innovative and fluid system for monitoring school performance. Federal regulations regarding Title I, SIG, Special Education, and English Language Learners impact how ESE is required to monitor districts, which in turn impacts how districts work with schools.

^{xii} Same Level of Autonomy: It is not unreasonable to assume that the "non-gain" schools had similar autonomies and flexibilities as the exiting Level 4 schools. If so, what might explain the differences in academic outcomes?

^{xiii} We do not have a school-level analysis of autonomy and use of authorities to answer this question. Specifically, we do not have the data needed to definitively know whether Level 4 schools (in the same district, across districts) were granted the similar levels of autonomy and subsequently used the available authorities to get the right leaders and teachers in place and to change conditions.

^{xiv} Shultz, G., Kaufman, L., Hunt, A., Breitbart, M., & Ellis, S. (2012). June 2012 Principals' Survey Results Technical Report. Hadley, MA: University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute.

^{xv} We pose the hypothesis that autonomy coupled with increased ability to change conditions (through authorities) is a possible long-term strategy for scaling up turnaround efforts.

^{xvi} Our analysis has focused primarily on how districts have modified policies to give principals increased staffing authority. Districts and schools also have active partnerships with organizations to improve the quality and overall pipeline of teacher with the requisite skills and willingness to work in Turnaround schools. Partnerships with organizations such as TeachPlus and Teach for America are a key component of district efforts to fill hard-to-fill jobs and increase teacher/professional capacity among existing teachers.

^{xvii} It is important to note that none of the listed policy instruments are meant to imply that teachers are "bad" or that the reason for a school's identification as a Level 4 school was due to teachers. Other factors, such as insufficient district monitoring and support, poor school leadership, and a pervasive culture of low expectations often make it extremely difficult for teachers to provide high quality instruction to students. For Turnaround, it is about getting the "right" teachers in the school, not about replacing "bad" teachers with "good" teachers.

^{xviii} Bridge Grant funding was provided to the state's lowest achieving schools to support planning for Level 4 required Turnaround Plans.

^{xix} Funding for extended time and fringe was removed from this portion of the analysis because these are not monies that can be manipulated by the schools. We want to examine how schools use discretionary funding.

^{xx} The overall sample of schools used in the analysis (<30) does not allow for an analysis of the statistical significance of differences in how schools used SRG funding. However, the connection between schools' use of funding (e.g., towards instruction and direct support of students) is corroborated by data in the monitoring site visit reports and the school renewal applications. To the point, the monitoring site visit reports provide evidence that Achievement Gain schools spent more time and effort on the provision of direct instruction to students and the budget analysis confirms this finding.

^{xxi} Bridge Grant funding was provided to the state's lowest achieving schools to support planning for Level 4 required Turnaround Plans.

^{xxii} Schools excluded from the analysis included Kuss and Lord from Fall River and Parker from New Bedford.

^{xxiii} Funding for extended time and fringe was removed from this portion of the analysis to examine differences in the amount of "discretionary" SRG funding available to districts and schools after using SRG funding to pay for extended time.