
Education and Innovation Theme

The Five Critical Steps for Turnaround Schools March 2013

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1. What is a turnaround school?

The study of school turnarounds is a relatively new phenomenon that borrows from the concept of business turnaround and other successful public sector turnarounds.¹

It developed from the recognition that for the lowest achieving high schools, the existing approach to school improvement was insufficient. Incremental change is not enough for the worst schools. They require comprehensive overhauls that target numerous aspects of failure.

School turnaround is a process that fully reforms the environment and practices in the lowest performing schools. Rather than changing one or two characteristics of the school, successful school turnarounds look at simultaneously improving leadership, expectations, teaching and learning methods and cultures, school culture and relationships with the wider community.

Schools that have turned around become places where students achieve strong learning outcomes. Teachers and students want to be there, and are proud of their school.

1.1 Which schools to turnaround?

There is little agreement on what constitutes a turnaround school, or which schools should be targeted for intervention.

Low performance can be measured in a variety of ways. Raw performance measures can be used such as students failing to reach a minimum performance benchmark, such as reading at their year level. However, this measure is likely to be affected by the composition of the student group – schools with high intakes of disadvantaged students are more likely to produce lower overall results.² Hence, measures of student progress or value-added can be used in some systems.³

But there is no consensus about how poorly a school should be performing on these metrics before they are a ‘very low-performing school’.⁴ Nor is there consensus on the range of metrics – such as parent satisfaction – that should be used in conjunction with student performance measures. In Shanghai, for example, where the empowered management program relies on the identification of low-performing schools, the answer lies not in specific targets, but on broader accountability and engagement practices that enable school districts to ‘know their schools’, and the ones that are struggling.

1.2 Common characteristics of low-performing schools

Failing schools have common characteristics. Even if it is difficult to put an exact figure on what level of performance is inadequate, the community often knows a low-performing school when they see it.

¹ Murphy and Meyers (2008); Peck and Reitzug (2012)

² OECD (2010c); Hansen (2012)

³ OECD, 2008

⁴ Corallo and McDonald (2002); Hansen (2012); A combined metric may be the most effective, for example, Hansen and Choi (2011), cited in Hansen (2012), suggest that to calculate the lowest 5% of schools, as targeted in current US federal policy, states will have to measure a combination of the lowest 15% of schools based on absolute performance measures, and the bottom 40% based on value added, as growth and absolute performance are not perfectly correlated.

In addition to very poor performance results, these schools often suffer from an absence of leadership, reflected in poor teaching, a lack of direction and, sometimes, budget problems.⁵

These schools are not necessarily underfunded. Poorly performing schools often end up with a multitude of programmes and funding streams to improve performance, without any coherent vision of how these resources will make a difference.⁶

Low morale among the school staff results in high teacher absenteeism and turnover, as teachers leave in search of better working conditions.⁷ This is disruptive and detrimental to children's learning.⁸ Failing schools often develop a reputation as unappealing places to work and struggle to attract effective replacements.⁹ Teachers at these schools often lack experience or skill.¹⁰ As a result of shortages, teachers are often not teaching the year levels they prefer or the subjects in which they are trained.¹¹

Low-performing schools are often located in poor areas, serving disproportionate numbers of students with special learning and language needs.¹² Expectations are low. Teachers believe that they are doing all they can, and the failure to achieve results is someone else's fault.¹³

Students do not want to attend schools that suffer from bullying, violence, truancy and discipline problems.¹⁴ This often results in declining attendance as students and families look for better education elsewhere (this is reduced where school choice is either not possible or limited).

⁵ Duke (2008);Leithwood (2010)

⁶ Housman and Martinez (2001)

⁷ Hanushek, *et al.* (2004)

⁸ McKinney, *et al.* (2007)

⁹ Productivity Commission (2011)

¹⁰ Leithwood (2010)

¹¹ Murphy and Meyers (2008)

¹² Leithwood (2010)

¹³ Barber (1998);Lawson (2002)

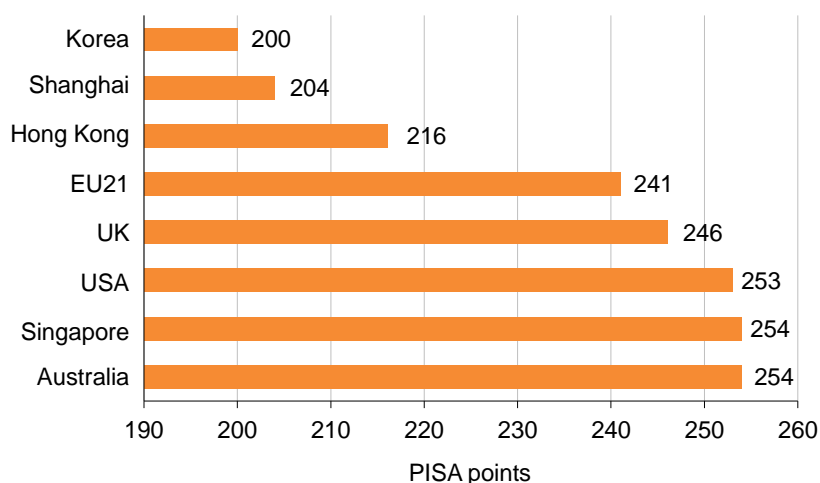
¹⁴ Leithwood (2010)

2. Why focus on turnaround schools?

While overall performance varies between the United States and Australia, policy makers in both countries are trying to combat equity problems.¹⁵

Several measures of equity highlight the need for improvement. Both countries have large differences between the top and bottom performing students. The 2009 PISA assessment shows little difference in the gap (of several years) between high and low performers (see Figure 1). This means that the highest performers are reading at a level over six and a half international school years ahead of their lowest performing peers.¹⁶

Figure 1: Low and high performing students: the difference between the bottom 10% and top 10% in reading (PISA 2009)



Source: OECD (2010d)

The absolute measures of performance between top and bottom alone are concerning. But additionally, a child's socio-economic background has a greater bearing on performance than in the highest performing PISA countries.

Australia suffers from clear equity problems among indigenous students, students in rural and remote schools, and children from poor or English as a second language backgrounds.¹⁷ In the United States, the problem can be compounded through local financing.

Achieving equity in education systems is not a process of 'levelling down' all students; the best performing systems deliver high quality across the whole education system.¹⁸ There is no trade-off between raising the equity of education outcomes and attaining a high performing education system.

¹⁵ OECD (2010d)

¹⁶ One international school year corresponds to 39 points in reading, on average, across OECD countries on the PISA scale. PISA 2009 data *ibid.*, conversion rate of PISA points to OECD education months Thomson, et al. (2010).

¹⁷ Thomson, et al. (2010); Productivity Commission (2011)

¹⁸ OECD (2010d)

An equitable education system maximises the use of talent, by enabling teachers to shape instruction to suit each student's learning path, ensuring the burden of under-developed talent is minimised.¹⁹

For policy makers, it is important to differentiate within and between school differences in performance. Within-school differences demonstrate the variation between students' performance within a school; between-school differences explain the variation of students' performance between schools. On both these measures, Australia and the United States have greater inequity than high-performing systems. Turnaround schools directly address between school differences. Indirectly, they can help reduce within-school inequality as effective schools generally have less inequality.

2.1 The benefits of turning around low-performing schools

There are numerous economic and social equity benefits to improving low-performing schools. Education attainment is associated with almost every positive life outcome.²⁰ High quality education for all is an important public good that helps create a successful, cultured and cohesive society.

The economic benefits to individual students are clear. A high-performing education system ensures students leave schools equipped to enter higher education and the labour market. The average unemployment rate across the OECD for those who have completed secondary education is five percentage points lower than those who have not.²¹

Poor education, leading to low-wage jobs and unemployment, is of concern for the national economic interest.²² Knowledge economies rely on good education to develop the key skills and aptitudes that employers require.²³ It is increasingly important that school-leavers are able to compete with high achievers across the world; if international workers can provide the same skills, or better, for a cheaper price, employment will move.²⁴

¹⁹ Hanushek and Woessmann (2007); Heckman (2011)

²⁰ Leigh (1998); Levin (2003)

²¹ OECD (2011)

²² Rouse (2005); *ibid.*; Hanushek and Woessmann (2007); *ibid.*; OECD (2010b); OECD (2010a); OECD (2011)

²³ Schleicher (2006); Ciccone and Papaioannou (2009)

²⁴ Friedman (2005); Schleicher (2006)

3. Five factors critical to successful turnaround

The evidence shows that five factors are critical to successfully turnaround the performance of a school:

1. Strong leadership that raises expectations
2. Effective teaching with an emphasis on professional collaboration
3. Measurement and development effective learning behaviours and outcomes
4. Positive school culture
5. Engaging parents and the community

The common thread of all five factors is behavioural – and often cultural – change. School leaders are embarking on a change process (but rarely receive training in this area). It is a difficult and time-consuming process that puts the emphasis on implementation that effectively changes behaviour, rather than the choice of specific programs and policies.²⁵

Underperforming schools are particularly challenging environments, and implementation needs to take account of the complicated and unpredictable context in which reforms occur.²⁶ But the change process can be a positive cycle. Early achievements boost morale, and make following changes more likely to succeed.²⁷

Change needs to be comprehensive as turnarounds are difficult.²⁸ The majority of attempts to dramatically improve low-performing schools fail.²⁹ It is not enough to enact one step or one programme. All too often the focus is on making small changes to programmes or staffing rather than overhauling the cultures and processes that have led to decline.³⁰

It is important to recognise that the steps found to be successful for turning around low-performing schools are generally the same for broader school improvement. This is not surprising. The difference lies in the magnitude of the change required, placing a greater emphasis on the behavioural and cultural change process.

²⁵ Murphy and Meyers (2008); American Institutes for Research (2011b); Stuit and Stringfield (2012)

²⁶ Balfanz and Mac Iver (2000)

²⁷ West, *et al.* (2005); Herman, *et al.* (2008)

²⁸ Duke (2008); Murphy and Meyers (2008); Fleischman and Heppen (2009); Hess and Gift (2009)

²⁹ Brady (2003); Kowal, *et al.* (2009); Public Impact (2009)

³⁰ Robinson and Buntrock (2011)

Box: Methodology and evidence

The evidence base on how low performing schools turnaround is limited to mainly qualitative case studies.³¹ These studies only look at turnarounds that have worked. This makes it difficult to know if these reforms specifically have caused the school's turnaround, or if we are missing an unobservable factor.³²

Literature was collected by searching web and electronic databases with the terms 'turnaround schools', 'how to turn around schools' and search terms with similar meanings, e.g. 'transforming', 'drastically improving', 'failing schools', 'struggling schools', 'low-performing schools'.

From this were excluded those studies which were not about 'turnaround', e.g. gradual school improvement and school effectiveness literature. This process generated 95 studies, of which: 21 were individual case studies; six were analyses of two-five case studies; 12 were analyses of six-ten cases; and one was an analysis of over ten cases. There were 15 reviews of existing literature, of which four outlined a relatively rigorous methodology. The remainder of the evidence was government documents and turnaround practice guides, and theoretical conjecture of varying quality.

The literature is heavily focused on the USA and the UK, where respective governments have, in recent decades, implemented several policies with the explicit aim of turning around low-performing schools. Evidence from Australia is very thin.

³¹ Herman, *et al.* (2008);Murphy and Meyers (2008);Murphy and Meyers (2009);Brownstein (2012) Murphy and Meyers (2009);Hansen (2012);Hochbein *ibid.*

³² Smarick (2010)

3.1 Strong leadership that raises expectations

Strong leaders are required to drive cultural change in schools. Leadership cultures and practices need to change for turnarounds to succeed. Past leadership will be associated with the cultures and practices that have led to failure, and new leadership helps to break these patterns.³³ In some systems, new leaders are installed to make a clear break in leadership patterns. In others, resources are focused on overhauling existing leadership teams in schools.

Leaders of turnaround schools successfully develop a clear and positive strategy that begins by defining effective learning and teaching practices in their school. The five success factors discussed here are then aligned to develop these newly defined learning and teaching behaviours.³⁴ Achieving these ends is a continual process of behavioural and cultural change.

Available resources need to be re-allocated so all is working towards the goal of changing learning and teaching behaviours.³⁵ School leaders should drive behavioural and cultural change to continuously improve learning and teaching.³⁶ Failing schools, often with disadvantaged intakes, need to cultivate an enthusiasm for new learning and teaching behaviours.³⁷ In many instances, staff need to be mobilised to work in ways that they did not think were possible.³⁸

Staff need to be constantly engaged in the change process to continuously build capacity in the school. Teachers in low-performing schools will have often been subject to community, government, and sometimes, media criticism of their work, so a sense of purpose within the school helps to address staff morale.³⁹ Team work and increased professional collaboration builds morale, improves teaching and acts to continually drive change.

Leaders need to effectively role-model these behaviours.⁴⁰ Distributed leadership should create a team of people who will drive the change process. Key staff are given additional and clearly articulated responsibilities.⁴¹ They demonstrate trust in the principal and help drive the change process. Overtime, distributed leadership helps to overcome potential succession problems, by growing the next generation of leaders within the school, ensuring that institutional memory is preserved.⁴²

Re-enforcement mechanisms further the change process, with teacher appraisal and feedback key levers. Leaders should acknowledge and reward success, and constantly encourage staff to take ownership of the change process.⁴³

Strong leaders drive effective community engagement that is important for cultural change. Leaders should be highly visible within the school and strongly engaged

³³ Watling, *et al.* (1998); Kowal and Hassel (2005); Herman, *et al.* (2008); Murphy and Meyers (2008); Hassel and Hassel (2009); American Institutes for Research (2011a)

³⁴ Stark (1998); Corallo and McDonald (2002); Harris and Chapman (2002b); Orr, *et al.* (2005); Harris, *et al.* (2006)

³⁵ Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) ADD ZBAR REFERENCE

³⁶ Harris (1998); Harris and Chapman (2002b); Duke (2008); Orr, *et al.* (2008)

³⁷ Day, *et al.* (2011)

³⁸ Murphy and Meyers (2009); Zbar, *et al.* (2008); Aladjem, *et al.* (2010)

³⁹ Harris and Chapman (2002b); Harris, *et al.* (2006); Day, *et al.* (2011)

⁴⁰ Fullan (2002); Kowal and Hassel (2005); New Leaders (2011)

⁴¹ Fullan (2006)

⁴² Fullan (2002); Fullan (2006); Benitez, *et al.* (2009)

⁴³ Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005); West, *et al.* (2005); Murphy and Meyers (2009)

within the community. This is often a difficult and time-consuming process given the likely state of community relationships in a poor performing school.⁴⁴

3.1.1 Raising expectations

High expectations are necessary to ensure that staff, students and parents are working towards the goals of high quality learning and teaching that produces strong student outcomes.⁴⁵ Many children at the lowest achieving schools come from poor or minority backgrounds, which are associated with underachievement in education. This is reflected in low self-esteem. Students need to feel like they can achieve to have the motivation and confidence to work towards better results.⁴⁶

Teachers in schools that have consistently failed to produce results may feel that they can have very little impact upon their students' attainment, and consequently do not teach to the best of their ability. Teachers need to believe that all students can achieve so that they can believe in their potential to make a difference.⁴⁷

Continuous evaluation helps teachers to develop personalised strategies for students to meet the expectations for a child their age.⁴⁸ If students are struggling, teachers must identify why and adapt their teaching accordingly, rather than painting the child as a low-achiever.⁴⁹

Children may still feel that these expectations are too high, so it is important that the school is able to show role models of success – other children that they can identify with who have successfully met high expectations.⁵⁰ This can help to reduce the 'clash of cultures' felt by children who may not value education, or have had a negative experience that has impacted on their self-esteem and attainment.⁵¹

High expectations of teachers improve their work behaviours and teaching practices.⁵² High expectations are fostered through increased professional collaboration and a shared responsibility for student achievement.⁵³

3.2 Effective teaching with an emphasis on professional collaboration

Effective turnaround comes with a clear change in the culture of teaching and learning within a school. School objectives illustrate the change required and reflect that outside of family background, teacher effectiveness is the largest factor influencing student outcomes.⁵⁴

Numerous aspects of effective teaching have been emphasised in turnaround schools. In some instances, more structured classes have been more effective than comparable classes in higher performing schools, with content delivered in smaller packages and subject to rapid evaluation and feedback.⁵⁵ This can be most

⁴⁴ Picucci, *et al.* (2002);Herman, *et al.* (2008)

⁴⁵ Housman and Martinez (2001)

⁴⁶ Duke (2008)

⁴⁷ Murphy and Meyers (2008);Zbar, *et al.* (2008);Barr and Yates (2010)

⁴⁸ Zbar, *et al.* (2008)

⁴⁹ Duke and Salmonowicz (2010)

⁵⁰ Orr, *et al.* (2008)

⁵¹ Barr and Yates (2010)

⁵² Orr, *et al.* (2008)

⁵³ Duke (2008);Murphy and Meyers (2008)

⁵⁴ OECD (2009)

⁵⁵ Muijs (2007);Mourshed, *et al.* (2010)

effective when it can also increase student engagement by connecting learning activities with students' everyday experiences so that they can see the relevance of the content they are learning.⁵⁶

Other strategies often aligned to turnaround schools include a greater focus on foundation skills. Students cannot engage with more advanced materials without strong literacy and numeracy so a 'back to basics' approach has been effective.⁵⁷ In addition, targeting low-performing students and those with special learning or language needs can be effective but often staff require specific training for this to be effective.⁵⁸

Regardless of the practices chosen, capacity building is essential for improving teaching and re-enforcing behavioural and cultural change. The school needs to support staff to ensure that they receive the professional development necessary for them to help improve student performance. Teachers in struggling schools often lack content and pedagogy knowledge.⁵⁹ Often this is because the teachers they are able to recruit are recent graduates or older, less effective teachers.

The most effective professional learning for teachers is feedback based on meaningful classroom observation.⁶⁰ For school leaders, it connects them to what is happening in the classroom, but most importantly it had a large positive impact on improving teaching and learning behaviours.⁶¹ Peer observation amongst teachers develops a culture of professional collaboration and the sharing of ideas to build best practice.⁶²

This process needs to be aligned to school objectives so the new teaching and learning behaviours are continually developed and re-enforced through observation and feedback. This might require an external coach to come into the school to help teachers develop the skills that are currently missing.⁶³

3.2.1 Professional collaboration

"Privacy of practice produces isolation; isolation is the enemy of improvement."⁶⁴ Professional collaboration recognises the complexity of teaching, and the need for teachers to receive input from their peers to improve their work. The skills and responsibilities that teachers develop through working collaboratively improves learning and teaching, and increases job satisfaction, helping retention and recruitment of effective teachers.⁶⁵

Shared practice, particularly based on data analysis, turns individual efficacy into collective efficacy.⁶⁶ Working together helps teachers to jointly develop solutions

⁵⁶ Parsley and Corcoran (2003);Muijs (2007);Doyle and Hill (2010)

⁵⁷ Muijs (2007);Doyle and Hill (2010)

⁵⁸ Doyle and Hill (2010)

⁵⁹ Herman, *et al.* (2008)

⁶⁰ Hattie (2009)

⁶¹ Harris, *et al.* (2006);Herman, *et al.* (2008)

⁶² Corallo and McDonald (2002)

⁶³ Turner (1998);Maxwell, *et al.* (2010)

⁶⁴ Elmore (2004)

⁶⁵ Hattie (2009)

⁶⁶ Zbar, *et al.* (2008)

and feel ownership for the changes in the school. Shared enthusiasm is important for the success of the turnaround.⁶⁷

Practice can be shared through team teaching, joint activities, less and grade groups, and research groups.⁶⁸ But, particularly in failing schools, collaboration will not happen spontaneously. The costs of teacher collaboration, space and time, need to be factored into resource allocation decisions.⁶⁹

Increased collaboration is also vital for behavioural and cultural change. New behaviours need to be constantly developed and re-enforced. This can only occur in a collaborative environment. Professional collaboration enables teachers to have ownership of the change process, increasing engagement and reducing resistance to change.⁷⁰

3.3 Measurement and development of effective learning behaviours and outcomes

Data-driven analysis is vital to a successful school turnaround.⁷¹ Before improvements can be made, it is necessary to know what the problems are and where they lie. Continuous assessment helps to ensure that small failures do not snowball into major failures.⁷²

Teaching that adapts to student needs is vital to improve performance. It is an integral component of effective teaching; identifying where students are on their learning trajectory and scaffolding teaching to the next stage of development.⁷³ Continuous assessments (both formative and summative) of students enable schools and teachers to set goals for student achievement and align teaching to individual student needs.⁷⁴ Traditional data releases, like annual exams, are insufficiently frequent to improve teaching in this manner but can be used for broader improvement and evaluative purposes.⁷⁵ Evaluation enables considered reform rather than piecemeal attempts at improvement.⁷⁶ Equally important, it can demonstrate if a change is not working so that it can be modified.⁷⁷

Continuous evaluation is also a helpful tool to persuade those more resistant to change.⁷⁸ Teachers can be suspicious of data and reforming their established teaching practices. Showing that data can be a useful means of establishing what works and does not, gains teachers' trust that changes are for the benefit of their

⁶⁷ Harris, *et al.* (2006);Hopkins (2007);Herman, *et al.* (2008);Benitez, *et al.* (2009)

⁶⁸ Henchey (2001);Harris, *et al.* (2006)

⁶⁹ *ibid.*;Harris and Chapman (2002b);Picucci, *et al.* (2002);Duke (2006);Harris, *et al.* (2006);Hopkins (2007);Winters and Herman (2011)

⁷⁰ Levin (2008)

⁷¹ Duke (2012)

⁷² Schaffer, *et al.* *Ibid.*

⁷³ Griffin (1990)

⁷⁴ Herman, *et al.* (2008)

⁷⁵ Barr and Yates (2010);Winters and Herman (2011)

⁷⁶ Zbar, *et al.* (2008)

⁷⁷ Fullan (2006);Harris, *et al.* (2006);Rhim, *et al.* (2007);Herman, *et al.* (2008);Murphy and Meyers (2008)

⁷⁸ Lachat and Smith (2005)

teaching and students' learning.⁷⁹ Evaluation should be sold in a positive light, showing how it is helping teachers.⁸⁰

The school needs to have the capacity for a data-driven system.⁸¹ Teachers need appropriate training in how to collect and use data.⁸² Initially, it is also important to monitor the culture surrounding evaluation. Students and teachers can be dissuaded from using data at an early stage if they feel like it is being used to simply highlight their failings.⁸³

3.4 Positive school culture

Low-performing schools are often not happy places to be – students underachieve and are disruptive, and often neither teachers nor students want to be there, leading to high rates of absenteeism and truancy. Changing the culture of the school is vital so that school is a place where students want to be and to learn.⁸⁴

Turnaround schools often enforce a positive discipline culture, which is unequivocal on what behaviour is acceptable, but also recognises that the causes of behaviour problems in these schools are often complex and may need long-term strategies.⁸⁵

Schools can change their culture by focusing on discipline and reducing violence, making facilities clean and tidy and above all else, developing and enforcing new social norms around effective learning and teaching.⁸⁶ Turnaround schools often take short-term remedial action to reduce truancy and work with families to emphasise the importance of staying in school.⁸⁷

Often underperformance at school is attributable to the non-academic needs of students, so school needs to be somewhere that children can feel safe and build relationships.⁸⁸ Positive teacher-student relationships help a student to value their education, improving attendance and attainment.⁸⁹ It also builds respect for teachers, improving motivation and discipline.⁹⁰

Schools can also provide emotional support for students through non-academic programmes, such as mentoring schemes, community service and peer support programmes.⁹¹ School support can also help to address more practical issues that might affect learning, for example, by running breakfast clubs so children start the day with a healthy meal, or support for uniforms and other school equipment.⁹²

⁷⁹ Timperley (2005)

⁸⁰ Fullan (2006)

⁸¹ Lachat and Smith (2005)

⁸² Timperley (2005)

⁸³ Fullan (2006)

⁸⁴ Fullan (2002)

⁸⁵ Cutler (1998)

⁸⁶ Herman, *et al.* (2008)

⁸⁷ Papa and English (2011)

⁸⁸ Tucci (2009); Herman (2012)

⁸⁹ Hallinan (2008); Doyle and Hill (2010)

⁹⁰ Fullan (2006)

⁹¹ Duke (2008)

⁹² Doyle and Hill (2010)

3.5 Engage community and parents

Family background is the biggest individual driver of student attainment. For turnaround to be successful and student outcomes to improve, it is often important that schools work with parents and communities to ensure that the successful work carried out within the school continues with the student after the end of the school day.⁹³

Schools should attempt to involve parents in their children's learning so that children receive support for education at home.⁹⁴ A culture of low expectations among students, staff and parents at failing schools, particularly in high-poverty areas, undermines the attempts of schools to improve performance. Some parents may actually be satisfied with the school as it is, and be resistant to changes that place extra stresses on their children, such as extra homework.⁹⁵ Schools should work to create shared high expectations among students, parents and staff, and understand that changes are necessary to improve the school.⁹⁶

One aspect of this is to get parents inside the school, to see the good work that their children are doing, and the areas for improvement.⁹⁷ Many parents may themselves have had a bad experience of education and have passed those feelings on to their children. Organising classroom visits or parent-teacher meetings provide good opportunities for parents to see the work that the school is doing, and how it has changed.⁹⁸ Running adult education classes from the school, for example literacy or ICT, gets parents inside the school and also helps to re-engage them with the culture of learning.⁹⁹

After years as a failing school, it is also necessary to engage the broader community in the turnaround effort, building a sense of community ownership of the school and the turnaround process.¹⁰⁰ This helps to build support to the turnaround strategy through clear signals that the school has started to change.¹⁰¹ Pride in the local community school can also help with more practical matters such as fundraising and enrolments.

Partnerships with businesses and universities in the surrounding area can also provide useful opportunities for transforming schools.¹⁰² Successful partnerships can raise the profile of the school, for positive reasons. Local businesses can provide internships for students, giving them work experience that they might otherwise find difficult to get.¹⁰³ Businesses can help raise funds and volunteer staff at schools.¹⁰⁴ Partnerships with universities can help school students to meet university students and gain positive role models, which can help to make university seem less intimidating.¹⁰⁵

⁹³ Harris, *et al.* (2006)

⁹⁴ Picucci, *et al.* (2002)

⁹⁵ West, *et al.* (2005)

⁹⁶ Corallo and McDonald (2002)

⁹⁷ Duke (2008)

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Harris, *et al.* (2006); Duke (2008)

¹⁰⁰ Kowal and Hassel (2005)

¹⁰¹ Herman, *et al.* (2008)

¹⁰² Corallo and McDonald (2002); Lawson (2002); Picucci, *et al.* (2002)

¹⁰³ Pappano (2010)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Picucci, *et al.* (2002)

Conclusion

Turnaround schools provide an important mechanism to address inequality in school education. Drawing together five critical success factors from the evidence of turnaround schools provides a blueprint for school leaders and allows policy makers and system leaders to shape policies and programs to address poor performing schools.

Behavioural and cultural change is at the core of successful turnaround schools. This has important implications for policy and leadership. Few policies and programs – for example, education and training – focus on implementing behavioural and cultural change. Such an approach is central to not only successful turnaround schools, but to high-performing systems around the world.

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